











Sebastian  
del cano

Arms granted to SEBASTIAN DEL CANO, Captain of the *Victoria*, the first vessel that circumnavigated the Globe  
[For a description, see pp.129-30]



# **The Story of Geographical Discovery**

**How the World Became Known**

By Joseph Jacobs

With Twenty-four Maps, &c.



## PREFACE

In attempting to get what is little less than a history of the world, from a special point of view, into a couple of hundred duodecimo pages, I have had to make three bites at my very big cherry. In the Appendix I have given in chronological order, and for the first time on such a scale in English, the chief voyages and explorations by which our knowledge of the world has been increased, and the chief works in which that knowledge has been recorded. In the body of the work I have then attempted to connect together these facts in their more general aspects. In particular I have grouped the great voyages of 1492-1521 round the search for the Spice Islands as a central motive. It is possible that in tracing the Portuguese and Spanish discoveries to the need of titillating the parched palates of the mediævals, who lived on salt meat during winter and salt fish during Lent, I may have unduly simplified the problem. But there can be no doubt of the paramount importance attached to the spices of the East in the earlier stages. The search for the El Dorado came afterwards, and is still urging men north to the Yukon, south to the Cape, and in a south-easterly direction to "Westralia."

Page vi Besides the general treatment in the text and the special details in the Appendix, I have also attempted to tell the story once more in a series of maps showing the gradual increase of men's knowledge of the globe. It would have been impossible to have included all these in a book of this size and price but for the complaisance of several publishing firms, who have given permission for the reproduction on a reduced scale of maps that have already been prepared for special purposes. I have specially to thank Messrs. Macmillan for the two dealing with the Portuguese discoveries, and derived from Mr. Payne's excellent little work on European Colonies; Messrs. Houghton, Mifflin, & Co., of Boston, for several illustrating the discovery of America, from Mr. J. Fiske's "School History of the United States;" and Messrs. Phillips for the arms of Del Cano, so clearly displaying the "spicy" motive of the first circumnavigation of the globe.

I have besides to thank the officials of the Royal Geographical Society, especially Mr. Scott Keltie and Dr. H. R. Mill, for the readiness

with which they have placed the magnificent resources of the library and map-room of that national institution at my disposal, and the kindness with which they have answered my queries and indicated new sources of information.

J. J.

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## LIST OF MAPS AND ILLUSTRATIONS

**Coat-of-arms of Del Cano** (from Guillemard, *Magellan*. By kind permission of Messrs. Phillips).—It illustrates the importance attributed to the Spice Islands as the main object of Magellan's voyage. For the blazon, see pp. 129-30.

**The Earliest Map of the World** (from the Rev. C. J. Ball's *Bible Illustrations*, 1898).—This is probably of the eighth century B.C., and indicates the Babylonian view of the world surrounded by the ocean, which is indicated by the parallel circles, and traversed by the Euphrates, which is seen meandering through the middle, with Babylon, the great city, crossing it at the top. Beyond the ocean are seven successive projections of land, possibly indicating the Babylonian knowledge of surrounding countries beyond the Euxine and the Red Sea.

**The World according to Ptolemy**.—It will be observed that the Greek geographer regarded the Indian Ocean as a landlocked body of water, while he appears to have some knowledge of the sources of the Nile. The general tendency of the map is to extend Asia very much to the east, which led to the miscalculation encouraging Columbus to discover America.

**The Roman Roads of Europe** (drawn specially for this work).—These give roughly the limits within which the inland geographical knowledge of the ancients reach some degrees of accuracy.

Page 10 **Geographical Monsters** (from an early edition of Mandeville's *Travels*).—Most of the mediæval maps were dotted over with similar monstrosities.

**The Hereford Map**.—This, one of the best known of mediæval maps, was drawn by Richard of Aldingham about 1307. Like most of these maps, it has the East with the terrestrial paradise at the top, and Jerusalem is represented as the centre.

**Peutinger Table, Western Part**.—This is the only Roman map extant; it gives lines of roads from the eastern shores of Britain to the Adriatic Sea. It is really a kind of bird's-eye view taken from the

African coast. The Mediterranean runs as a thin strip through the lower part of the map. The lower section joins on to the upper.

**The World according to Ibn Haukal** (from Lelewel, *Géographie du moyen âge*).—This map, like most of the Arabian maps, has the south at the top. It is practically only a diagram, and is thus similar to the Hereford Map in general form.—Misr=Egypt, Fars=Persia, Andalus=Spain.

**Coast-line of the Mediterranean** (from the *Portulano* of Dulcert, 1339, given in Nordenskiöld's *Facsimile Atlas*).—To illustrate the accuracy with which mariners' charts gave the coast-lines as contrasted with the merely symbolical representation of other mediæval maps.

**Fra Mauro Map, 1457** (from Lelewel, *loc. Cit.*).—Here, as usual, the south is placed at the top of the map. Besides the ordinary mediæval conceptions, Fra Mauro included the Portuguese discoveries along the coast of Africa up to his time, 1457.

**Portuguese Discoveries in Africa** (from E. J. Payne, *European Colonies*, 1877).—Giving the successive points reached by the Portuguese navigators during the fifteenth century.

Page 11**Portuguese Indies** (from Payne, *loc. Cit.*).—All the ports mentioned in ordinary type were held by the Portuguese in the sixteenth century.

**The Toscanelli Map** (from Kretschmer, *Entdeckung Amerikas*, 1892).—This is a reconstruction of the map which Columbus got from the Italian astronomer and cartographer Toscanelli and used to guide him in his voyage across the Atlantic. Its general resemblance to the Behaim Globe will be remarked.

**The Behaim Globe.**—This gives the information about the world possessed in 1492, just as Columbus was starting, and is mainly based upon the map of Toscanelli, which served as his guide. It will be observed that there is no other continent between Spain and Zipangu or Japan, while the fabled islands of St. Brandan and Antilia are represented bridging the expanse between the Azores and Japan.

**Amerigo Vespucci** (from Fiske's *School History of the United States*, by kind permission of Messrs. Houghton, Mifflin, & Co.)

**Ferdinand Magellan** (from Fiske's *School History of the United States*, by kind permission of Messrs. Houghton, Mifflin, & Co.)

**Map of the World**, from the Ptolemy Edition of 1548 (after Kretschmer's *Entdeckungsgeschichte Amerikas*).—It will be observed that Mexico is supposed to be joined on to Asia, and that the North Pacific was not even known to exist.

**Russian Asia** (after the Atlas published by the Russian Academy of Sciences in 1737, by kind permission of Messrs. Hachette). Japan is represented as a peninsula.

**Australia as known in 1745** (from D'Anville's *Atlas*, by kind permission of Messrs. Hachette).—It will Page 12 be seen that the Northern and Western coasts were even by this time tolerably well mapped out, leaving only the eastern coast to be explored by Cook.

**Australia**, showing routes of explorations (prepared specially for the present volume). The names of the chief explorers are given at the top of the map.

**Africa as known in 1676** (from Dapper's *Atlas*).—This includes a knowledge of most of the African river sand lakes due to the explorations of the Portuguese.

**Africa** (made specially for this volume, to show chief explorations and partition).—The names of the explorers are given at the foot of the map itself.

**North Polar Regions, Western Half** (prepared specially for the present volume from the *Citizen's Atlas*, by kind permission of Messrs. Bartholomew).—This gives the results of the discoveries due to Franklin expeditions and most of the searchers after the North-West Passage.

**North Polar Regions, Eastern Half**.—This gives the Siberian coast investigated by the Russians and Nordenskiöld, as well as Nansen's *Farthest North*.

**Climbing the North Pole** (prepared specially for this volume). Giving in graphic form the names of the chief Arctic travellers and the latitude N. reached from John Davis (1587) to Nansen (1895).



## INTRODUCTION

How was the world discovered? That is to say, how did a certain set of men who lived round the Mediterranean Sea, and had acquired the art of recording what each generation had learned, become successively aware of the other parts of the globe? Every part of the earth, so far as we know, has been inhabited by man during the five or six thousand years in which Europeans have been storing up their knowledge, and all that time the inhabitants of each part, of course, were acquainted with that particular part: the Kamtschatkans knew Kamtschatka, the Greenlanders, Greenland; the various tribes of North American Indians knew, at any rate, that part of America over which they wandered, long before Columbus, as we say, "discovered" it.

Very often these savages not only know their own country, but can express their knowledge in maps of very remarkable accuracy. Cortes traversed over 1000 miles through Central Page 14 America, guided only by a calico map of a local cacique. An Eskimo named Kalliherey drew out, from his own knowledge of the coast between Smith Channel and Cape York, a map of it, varying only in minute details from the Admiralty chart. A native of Tahiti, named Tupaia, drew out for Cook a map of the Pacific, extending over forty-five degrees of longitude (nearly 3000 miles), giving the relative size and position of the main islands over that huge tract of ocean. Almost all geographical discoveries by Europeans have, in like manner, been brought about by means of guides, who necessarily knew the country which their European masters wished to "discover."

What, therefore, we mean by the history of geographical discovery is the gradual bringing to the knowledge of the nations of civilisation surrounding the Mediterranean Sea the vast tracts of land extending in all directions from it. There are mainly two divisions of this history—the discovery of the Old World and that of the New, including Australia under the latter term. Though we speak of geographical discovery, it is really the discovery of new tribes of men that we are thinking of. It is only quite recently that men have sought for knowledge about lands, apart from the men who inhabit them. One might almost say that the history of geographical discov-

ery, properly so called, begins with Captain Cook, the motive of whose voyages was purely scientific curiosity. But before his time men wanted to know one another for two chief reasons: they wanted to Page 15 conquer, or they wanted to trade; or perhaps we could reduce the motives to one—they wanted to conquer, because they wanted to trade. In our own day we have seen a remarkable mixture of all three motives, resulting in the European partition of Africa—perhaps the most remarkable event of the latter end of the nineteenth century. Speke and Burton, Livingstone and Stanley, investigated the interior from love of adventure and of knowledge; then came the great chartered trading companies; and, finally, the governments to which these belong have assumed responsibility for the territories thus made known to the civilised world. Within forty years the map of Africa, which was practically a blank in the interior, and, as will be shown, was better known in 1680 than in 1850, has been filled up almost completely by researches due to motives of conquest, of trade, or of scientific curiosity.

In its earlier stages, then, the history of geographical discovery is mainly a history of conquest, and what we shall have to do will be to give a short history of the ancient world, from the point of view of how that world became known. "Became known to whom?" you may ask; and we must determine that question first. We might, of course, take the earliest geographical work known to us—the tenth chapter of Genesis—and work out how the rest of the world became known to the Israelites when they became part of the Roman Empire; but in history all roads lead to Rome or away from it, and it is more useful for every Page 16 purpose to take Rome as our centre-point. Yet Rome only came in as the heir of earlier empires that spread the knowledge of the earth and man by conquest long before Rome was of importance; and even when the Romans were the masters of all this vast inheritance, they had not themselves the ability to record the geographical knowledge thus acquired, and it is to a Greek named Ptolemy, a professor of the great university of Alexandria, to whom we owe our knowledge of how much the ancient world knew of the earth. It will be convenient to determine this first, and afterwards to sketch rapidly the course of historical events which led to the knowledge which Ptolemy records.

In the Middle Ages, much of this knowledge, like all other, was lost, and we shall have to record how knowledge was replaced by imagination and theory. The true inheritors of Greek science during that period were the Arabs, and the few additions to real geographical knowledge at that time were due to them, except in so far as commercial travellers and pilgrims brought a more intimate knowledge of Asia to the West.

The discovery of America forms the beginning of a new period, both in modern history and in modern geography. In the four hundred years that have elapsed since then, more than twice as much of the inhabited globe has become known to civilised man than in the preceding four thousand years. The result is that, except for a few patches of Africa, South America, and round the Poles, man Page 17 knows roughly what are the physical resources of the world he inhabits, and, except for minor details, the history of geographical discovery is practically at an end.

Besides its interest as a record of war and adventure, this history gives the successive stages by which modern men have been made what they are. The longest known countries and peoples have, on the whole, had the deepest influence in the forming of the civilised character. Nor is the practical utility of this study less important. The way in which the world has been discovered determines now-a-days the world's history. The great problems of the twentieth century will have immediate relation to the discoveries of America, of Africa, and of Australia. In all these problems, Englishmen will have most to say and to do, and the history of geographical discovery is, therefore, of immediate and immense interest to Englishmen.

[*Authorities: Cooley, History of Maritime and Inland Discoveries, 3 vols., 1831; Vivien de Saint Martin, Histoire de la Géographie, 1873.*]

