

BOOK REVIEWS

Spanish Voyages to the Northwest Coast of America in the Sixteenth Century. By HENRY R. WAGNER. (San Francisco: California Historical Society. 1929. Pp. viii, 571. \$15.00).

The story of the gradual uncovering of the western coast of America is one of mixed motives and thrilling adventure. In that exploration Spain led the way. Owing to Marco Polo's error, geographers supposed Asia to be contiguous to America or at any rate to be separated only by a narrow waterway. The vast Pacific was undreamed of. The questions to be settled included, for example: How far westward did America extend? Was it joined to Asia? If not, what was the intervening distance? To find the answers, to discover harbors for the use of the richly-laden Philippine ships, to seek out mines of gold and treasure, and to Christianize the heathen, Spain sent many expeditions from Panama northward and westward. How far she was really in earnest to find the Strait of Anian is, as our author points out, a debatable question (p. 284); claiming the exclusive fishery, commerce, and navigation of the Pacific Ocean she had all to lose by finding and making known a short route whereby her competitors might enter the South Sea.

This volume shows some of the early faltering steps of the Spaniard north and west: Ulloa, 1539-40; Mendoza and Alvarado, 1540-41; Bolanos, 1541; Cabrillo, 1542; Isla and Gali, 1582; Cermeño, 1595; and Vizcaino, 1596 and 1602-3. Before Ulloa's voyage Jiminez had discovered the southern part of Lower California, then and for many years believed to be an island. Ulloa traced the Gulf of California to its head and doubling Cape San Lucas followed the ocean coast as far as Cedros Island. The viceroy, Mendoza, arranged with Alvarado to prosecute discoveries to the northward and westward. As partners they despatched an expedition under Alarcon in 1540 to complete Ulloa's work in the Gulf of California. Two years later Mendoza sent out Cabrillo who, on his return, claimed to have reached 44° north latitude, though no landing was made beyond about 34°. Then came a lull for forty years. Gali, whom the viceroy esteemed as the best trained and most distinguished man in Mexico, sailed in 1582 from Acapulco to the Philippines, on to Macao, and thence to the American coast in latitude 37° 30' north, as given by Linschot and in the Portuguese account in this volume pp. 134 f; but by an error or worse the French translation of Linschot gave this as 57° 30' and thereby caused great confusion. Cermeño's expedition in 1595 from the Philippines to explore the port

of San Francisco, to ascertain its usefulness for the Manila galleons, is only interesting for the ill fate that befell it. Of all the voyages dealt with the only one that touches the Northwest Coast (taking that term to be synonymous with the coast of Old Oregon) is the second voyage of Vizcaino, 1602-3. His vessels separated. One sighted Cape Mendocino and reached 42°; but that in which were Martin d'Aguilar and Flores stretched northward to 43° where they found a large river. Father Antonio de la Ascension says, p. 255:

"After the wind and sea calmed down, she went close to land, and on January 10 1603 Antonio Flores, the pilot, found himself in 43°. Here the land makes a cape or point, which was named "Cabo Blanco" and here the coast begins to trend to the north-east. Close to it a very copious and deep river was discovered on whose banks there were very large ash trees, willows, brambles, and other trees of Castile. On attempting to enter it the force of the current did not permit it. Ensign Martin d'Aguilar, who commanded the *Fragata*, and the pilot, Antonio Flores, decided to return to New Spain, as they already had reached a higher latitude than the instructions of the Viceroy laid down. The *Capitana* did not appear, and they themselves as well as almost all the men on board were sick. Having charted the country, and named the river "Santa Inez," they set out."

And here the book ends. The subsequent Spanish work down to 1795 and which particularly interests the students of Northwest Coast history remains to be taken up, as we trust it will be, either by the California Historical Society or by some of the institutions of the Old Oregon region.

The plan adopted has been to give a translation of the account of the voyage with an introduction linking together the various expeditions and co-relating them; to the voyages are added notes, bibliographical, biographical, cartological, and general, into the preparation of which a vast amount of study has plainly entered; and to round out and complete the whole there are included photographic reproductions of some of the maps and many of the original manuscript reports. Though, as already stated, the work barely touches the coast north of 42° yet as a careful unfolding of the approach to that region this scholarly volume, embodying the latest research, will be welcomed by every student of the history of Old Oregon.

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