THE MAN BEFORE DEWEY.

STORY OF THE FIRST ANNEXATION IN THE PACIFIC.

Capt. David Porter's Cruise in the Essex during the War of 1812—How He Annexed an Island of the Marquesas Group.

WITHIN the space of a single week the people of the United States and the world at large have seen American dominion extended over two archipelagoes in the Pacific Ocean, over the Ladrones by a small conquest and over the Hawaiian islands by Congressional action. This annexation business in the Pacific is really no new thing, novel as it may seem. Few are aware that eighty-five years ago a start was made in annexing the islands of the Pacific. Gazetteers make no reference now to Madison Island in the South Pacific; to its seat of government, Madisonville; to Fort Madison (pierced for sixteen guns), which defended it; to Massachusetts Bay, at the head of which the capital was situated. Yet all these places were once incorporated with the territory of the United States. The tattooed savages who lived there were admitted into "the great American family, whose pure republican policy approaches so near their own," and as annexation was proclaimed by a Captain of the navy of the United States, the fort bellowed out a salute of seventeen guns. Massachusetts Bay was crowded with ships which had summarily been converted into an auxiliary navy of high efficiency, of which, however, neither Congress nor the Secretary of the Navy had any information. From each of these ships was bellowed back the salute to the flag and to the new territory over which it was raised. The military Governor of Madison Island of the United States of America had a small force of regulars, sailors and marines, and several thousand citizen soldiers of Madison, throwers of stones with singular precision and fighters for fair. With his combined forces he waged campaigns of conquest, the memory of which has all but passed away. He and his savage republicans fought out the great Typee war and the no less glorious Happah war; but Time's envious tooth has gnawed these victories from the blazon of honor. With an army, with a navy, with town and fort, with proclamation and sound of guns, enough has been presented in this brief sum to make it clear that Madison Island was just as solemnly annexed to the United States as it was possible for a public officer to perform the high act of sovereignty.

For a nation which makes no pretension to being one of the great military powers, the United States seems to have got into trouble with somebody at pretty regular intervals, so timed that there has always been a chance to talk about "the late war." The events connected with the annexation of Madison Island were a somewhat disconnected but highly interesting chapter in the history of "our late war with England," the war of 1812.

In the record roll of the naval victories of that war, no vessel is better entitled to be bracketed with the Constitution than the Essex, 32-gun frigate. Her commander, Capt. David Porter, even if he were unknown for his own high deeds, could not be forgotten for having given to the navy of the United States its two Admirals, D. G. Farragut, his ward, and D. D. Porter, his son. But in the years when he commanded the Essex frigate, the nation had not the foresight to enter his steerage and pick out young Midshipman Farragut, lately joined, as a special cause of thankfulness. Nations rarely do appreciate the potential glories of their midshipmen and such like. The first duty to which the Essex was put was to act with the squadron of Admiral Bainbridge in an attack on English commerce in the equatorial Atlantic. Missing his commanding officer, apparently after a very care ful search to avoid him, Porter cut himself loose from his base of supplies and with only enough provisions for half rations until he could get into the Pacific and no provisions at all for getting back, he boldly put his frigate around the Horn and began a career among the English whaling fleet which ended only when the ships were sunk or taken, every one. At that enormous distance from a port in which the prizes might be condemned, Porter enlisted them into the navy of the United States and cruised up and down the eastern waters of the South Pacific with a fleet so large that one time every officer of the Essex was in command of a vessel of his own with the solitary exception of the surgeon's mate, as the "young doctor" of the day was rated. It is probable that this is the first and only time in naval history when chaplains and officers of marine had command of armed vessels. As to the marine officer, it will be seen that he had all the talents of the line officer of the navy.

When Porter brought the Essex around into the Pacific there was not a British naval vessel in that ocean, but the ships of the English whaling fleet carried arms and were provided with letters of marque in order that they might attack the American whalers. The arrival of the Essex overturned this plan; the whaling privateers of Great Britain, despite their heavy armament, were captured or sunk, inflicting a loss to their owners of $5,000,000, and the American whalers were enabled to leave the protection of the neutral ports of the South American coast in which they were laid up in the hope of better times. Porter followed the whales as zealously as a Nantucket boat steerer, for where the whales were there were the British whalers on whom he was preying. This kept him generally in the neighborhood of the Galapagos Islands, for that was the best-known feeding ground of the great sperm whale. But the arid Galapagos with the strong currents driving past their rock-bound shores afforded little to commend the group for a naval depot. The vegetation was almost entirely restricted to an acrid grass valuable in treating scurvy, but as unpleasant as most medicine. The landings were few and dangerous. The only source of water to be relied upon was the mawkishly sweet and tepid contents of the stomachs of the giant tortoises of the islands.

And Porter with his fleet of captured whalers stood in great need of a depot. He had sailed 10,000 miles and had been in several actions, and he knew that in no great time British ships of war would be sent in search of him to wreak revenge for his success in obliterating, and, as it proved, forever destroying, the British South Sea whale fishery. With the Essex depleted of her officers, detached as prize masters, and with the whole fleet in need of repairs to fit it for the combat which was inevitable, it was an absolute necessity for Capt. Porter to establish himself at least temporarily on shore. Having satisfied himself that the Galapagos were not available for his needs, he stretched himself away to the southward and made the Marquesas. These islands, discovered by Quiros and named in honor of the Viceroy of Peru, who equipped this and other expeditions in the sixteenth century, had been visited in 1791 by Capt. Ingraham, of the Boston brig Hope, and in 1793 were named the Washington Group by Capt. Roberts of the Jefferson of Boston. After sighting the northernmost islet of the group and calling for a few hours at Rooahooga the American fleet, on Oct. 25, 1813, came to anchor in a spacious bay on the island of Nukahiva, the largest of the group. The narrative of a later visitor has made this island better known to the world in general, perhaps, than any other spot of land in the South Seas.

Capt. Porter approached his South Sea island with a bad case of enthusiasm for the gentle savage. He is not the only one who has been thus affected. Successive travelers have done their best to endow the islander with all the virtues, and each has been forced to paint the picture in even more glowing colors than those who went before. Porter was prepared to take the noble cannibal to his heart, and he did so. He found him a very Greek god in physical beauty, and it must be confessed the Polynesian young man is robust and well modeled for a very few years before he takes on the fat that comes from the common custom of overfeeding and underexercising. The commander of the Essex was willing to accept the copious complexity of tattooing as a satisfactory substitute for clothing. Their eagerness to supply pigs and other food and their satisfaction with a piece of iron hoop or a few beads he looked upon as a generosity, not recognizing that the smallest bit of iron was a great treasure to them. He entered into solemn engagements with their chiefs and expected to find them truthful. With one chief and another he exchanged names and in return for such a name as Gattanewa he endowed this savage with the name of Opotee, which is as near as the Kanaka tongue can get to David Porter. Had he known it, he could have owned the whole island and everything on it for the goods and trinkets which he and his crews lavished upon the greedy natives. His case of enthusiasm for the savage was so bad that he groaned aloud when he saw that the first canoe which came off to meet him as he entered the bay at Nukahiva contained white men. A beachcomber is a bad lot, but he is not so black as he is painted. In fact, one of these white men proved to be a midshipman in the navy of the United States, John M. Maury, whose brother, M. F. Maury, became the great scientific worker of the old navy. And without the services of the other as interpreter Porter would have found difficulty in executing his plan of annexation.

The coast of Nukahiva is cut up with deep bays corresponding to precipitous valleys in the mountain slopes. At that time each valley was the seat of a numerous population whose normal state was the prosecution of a relentless war with the people of the neighboring valleys. Porter chose the bay in which to make his settlement solely through considerations of naval convenience and with, of course, no knowledge or interest in the natives and their belligerency except in so far as it might affect his own security. The valley at the head of Massachusetts Bay was known as Tienhoy, and the six communities dwelling in it were called collectively Taeeh. Capt. Porter had no sooner given the chief of this valley the right to be called Opotee, and himself assumed the designation of Gattanewa, than he was invited as the most powerful member of the tribe to destroy its hereditary enemies, the Happahs. When he declined to take up a quarrel of which he had never heard until that moment, and with which he had no concern, the newly adopted tribesman was informed that he must wash out the insult, the Happahs having cursed the bones of the chief's mother, who had now become the mother of the captain. Not even such a deadly insult, and one brought so near home to him, could move Porter to immediate hostilities; but from the general air of belligerency ashore he recognized that it would be proper to take precautions for safety, and with purpose a stockade of casks was formed about the tent with which the stores and their guard were protected from the weather. So small was the beginning of Madisonville, destined to become the capital of the first foreign acquisition of the United States, and to contain at the period of its greatest prosperity six houses, a sail and rigging loft, a ropewalk, a cooperage and a bakery, as well as quarters for the Captain and the officers, a hospital, a guardhouse and a covered way for the sentinel to walk his sentry-go.

The landing was made in the prosecution of the repairs which the condition of the Essex and her consorts called for, and the first care was the protection of the men and the property against the enemies of the Taeeh tribes, with whom for the present the fortunes of the Americans were involved. From the top of the cliffs which overhung the gorges of Tienhoy the fierce and hostile Happah tribesmen could look down upon the store tent and its cask stockade. Moved by contempt for the one and greed for the other, the Happahs sent word below that they would soon come down to the camp and carry away the sails and other articles. This threat moved Capt. Porter far more than the insults to the bones of his adopted mother, and he resolved to teach the hostile savages such a lesson as would fill them with respect for the white men. The Taeehs undertook to carry a 6-pounder to the crest of the mountain, which at the head of the Tienhoy Valley attains an elevation little short of 5,000 feet, and, greatly to the surprise of the Americans, the heavy gun was slung on poles and carried by relays of bearers over precipices where no eye but that of the islander could trace the path, and he alone could find foothold. Others of the Taeeh accompanied Lieut. Downes and his party of bluejackets and marines. This was the first introduction of gunpowder on these islands, and the natives were absolutely unacquainted with the effects of artillery and musketry fire. The Happah war was, therefore, easily finished in a campaign of a single day, in which the allied forces routed thousands of the enemy who had been strongly entrenched in a log fort. The six tribes of Happahs accordingly acknowledged their defeat and submitted to Capt. Porter, suing for peace. This was granted on the condition of a weekly tribute of breadfruit, hogs and fish.

As the knowledge of this victory with new and fearsome weapons spread from bay to bay of the eighteen miles of extent of Nukahiva, every tribe brought food and submission to the white chief of the Taeeh. In his report Capt. Porter notes but two exceptions to this peaceful surrender, "the warlike Typees and the unpronounceable Hatecaaheottwohos;" the latter it has proved impossible to identify among the scanty remnants of the Marquesans, and the wisest of the Nukahivans say that the name is certainly an error. For several weeks the Americans feasted on pigs and taro, and profound peace existed. But at last Temaa Tipee, chief of Showeme, reported that the Typees had called him a coward and had threatened to drive him from his valley if he continued the payment of his weekly contribution of food to the white Taeehs. Once again did Porter exchange names. This timorous chieftain went away inspirited by the cognomen Tavee and the knowledge that something would be done to his insolent neighbors. In reply to Porter's proposals of peace on the same terms of tribute in kind, the Typees replied that, having lived so long without the friendship of the Americans, there was no particular reason why they should seek it now, and that if provisions were short with Porter he was welcome to come and try if he was strong enough to forage in Typee Valley.

As the only answer to this defiance was prompt war, and as Capt. Porter intended to push it by land and by sea with the help of his 6,000 Taeeh and Happah allies, the security of the small party left in Madisonville and the non-combatants who would flock thither in the absence of their fighting men had to be considered. Just at the beach, and only a short distance from the site of the town, a steep knoll some seventy feet high offered an excellent place on which to mount guns. The chief of Tienhoy Valley was quite willing that a fort should be erected on his territory, but the manifest impropriety of this warlike occupation of the possessions of a foreign potentate clearly troubled Porter, and he began to develop the idea of annexation. The islanders went ahead with the building of the fort, which was faced with oil casks ballasted with rock and sand, and was pierced for four guns on each of its four faces, but actually mounted only four in all. The present state of the flattened summit of the knoll shows that the fort must have been so laid out as to bring two guns to bear on the bay and along the beach and two at the beginning of the paths up the valley. This defensive work was called Fort Madison and was completed on Nov. 14, 1813. Five days later, in the presence of all the white men and a large crowd of natives, the flag of the United States was hoisted over the fort and possession of Nukahiva taken by the United States under the name of Madison Island. Porter's annexation proclamation announces his act and the reasons therefor, and is really a unique specimen among all American state papers. It reads as follows:

Proclamation.

"It is hereby made known to the world that I, David Porter, a Captain in the navy of the United States of America, and now in command of the United States frigate the Essex, have on the part of the said United States taken possession of the island called by the natives Nukahiva, generally known by the name of Sir Henry Martin's Island, but now called Madison Island. That by the request and assistance of the friendly tribes residing in the valley of Tienhoy, as well as of the tribes residing on the mountains whom we have conquered and rendered tributary to our flag, I have caused the village of Madison to be built, consisting of six convenient houses, a ropewalk, bakery and other appurtenances, and for the protection of the natives I have constructed a fort calculated for mounting sixteen guns whereon I have mounted four, and called the same Fort Madison.

"Our rights to this island being founded on priority of discovery, conquest and possession cannot be disputed; but the natives, to secure to themselves the friendly protection which their defenceless condition so much required, have requested to be admitted into the great American family, whose pure republican policy approaches so nearly their own; and in order to encourage these views to their own interest and happiness, as well as to render secure our claim to an island valuable on many considerations, I have taken on myself to promise that they shall be so adopted; that our chief shall be their chief; and they have given assurances that such of their brethren as may hereafter visit them from the United States shall enjoy a welcome and a hospitable reception among them and be furnished with whatever refreshment and supplies the island may afford; that they will protect them against all their enemies, and that, as far as lies in their power, they will prevent the subjects of Great Britain (knowing them to be such) from coming among them until peace shall take place between the two nations.

"Presents consisting of the produce of the island to a great amount have been brought in by every tribe in the island, not excepting the most remote, and have been enumerated as follows: [Succeeds a list of thirty-one names, very few of which can be identified with the known tribes of Nukahiva.] Most of the above have requested to be taken under the protection of our flag, and all have been willing to purchase on any terms a friendship which promises them so many advantages.

"Influenced by considerations of humanity which promise speedy civilization to those who enjoy every mental and bodily endowment which nature can bestow, and which requires only art to perfect, as well as by views of policy which secure to my country a fruitful and populous island possessing every advantage of security and supplies for vessels, and which, of all others, is the most happily situated as respects climate and local position, I declare that I have in the most solemn manner, under the American flag displayed in Fort Madison, and in the presence of numerous witnesses, taken possession of the said island, called Madison Island, for the United States, whereof I am a citizen, and that the act of taking possession was announced by a salute of seventeen guns from the artillery of Fort Madison and returned by the shipping in the harbor which is hereafter to be called Massachusetts Bay. And that our claim to this island may not be hereafter disputed I have buried in a bottle at the foot of the flagstaff in Fort Madison a copy of this instrument, together with several pieces of money, the coin of the United States.

"In witness whereof I have hereunto affixed my signature this 19th day of November, 1813.

"DAVID PORTER."

Promptly all the newly made Americans marched away over the mountains in company with marines and sailors to prosecute the campaign against the Typees, a hard-fought war, that did not end short of the destruction of every house and every food tree in the Typee valley. The final victory of this sharply contested campaign completed the annexation of a beautiful and fertile island, eighteen miles long and ten broad, containing a population of more than 60,000. On this prosperous completion of his tasks of proclamation and subjugation, Capt. Porter sailed away with one squadron of his fleet on Dec. 9, 1813. To his native fellow citizens he made announcement that he would surely return a year later, and urged them to be good, since now they were all Americans. In his absence he appointed Lieut. Gamble of the marines Military Governor, and left with him two midshipmen, twenty men and six prisoners of war. The private orders of the marine were to await the return of Porter for five and one-half months, and then to make the best of his way back to the United States with one or all of the four ships which formed his squadron.

Promptly on the sailing of Porter the citizens of Nukahiva began to make things lively for their Military Governor and the residents of Madisonville. They stole pigs, they fell off in their tribute of country produce. Remonstrated with, they defied the marine. He landed six more guns and increased the artillery of Fort Madison to ten pieces. Despite all this warlike preparation the brown citizens vaulted over the Madisonville, and before vaulting back committed theft and burglary in the six convenient houses and the ropewalk and the appurtenances. Constant campaigning failed to keep them as close as they should be to their high ideal of a pure republican policy. The sailors, too, were a constant source of trouble. Gamble undertook to restrict the freedom of their shore leave, and they resented it. Some deserted in a boat and, settling on Hiva Oa, refused to return to discipline.

Mutiny broke out on May 7, 1814. The officers were clapped under hatches, while the thirteen mutineers assured themselves of the possession of the ship Seringapatam and spiked the guns of Fort Madison. That evening, when the mutineers had made an offing, the three officers were set adrift in a dingy to find their way back to Madisonville as best they could. When they reached the harbor they learned that the beachcomber whom they had employed as interpreter had been inciting the natives to attack the remnant of the party and to loot the ships. Midshipman Feltus volunteered to head a party to capture the renegade, but at midnight two survivors swam off and reported that the natives had massacred the remaining five members of the party, including their leader. The next day Lieut. Gamble, now reduced to the necessity of defending his two remaining ships, was forced to keep up a hot fire on Fort Madison, which was occupied by the natives, and in which the beachcomber was seen to be engaged in the attempt to make ready for use the guns which had been spiked by the mutineers. Just as the sun was setting on the following day, May 9, one of the ships was set on fire, and on the other Lieut. Gamble and the seven survivors sailed for the Hawaiian Islands, only two persons in the company fit for duty, and only one capable of taking charge of the ship.

Although the last scene in this South Sea Massachusetts Bay was one of mutiny, revolt and bloodshed; although old Gattanewa and the Taeehs, in