

they were to enjoy for ten years the exclusive right to the track (!), and to receive the twentieth part of all profit accruing from their discoveries, with some special privileges in regard to the merchandise of the first voyage. Moreover, the Emperor agreed to furnish five vessels, and victual them for two years—an unusual act of liberality in those days, when the monarchs usually contented themselves with conferring patents, privileges, and titles merely, which cost them nothing, and yet were often the means of subsequently enriching them. The sailing of the expedition was retarded by the machinations of the Portuguese king, who now professed a willingness to employ Magellan, and, failing in this, is said to have spread reports that “the King of Spain would lose his expenses, for Fernando Magellan was a chattering fellow, and little reliance could be placed in him, and that he would never execute that which he promised.” But at last, on the 20th September, 1519, the squadron got under weigh.

In the month of December following Magellan anchored in a port on the coast of Brazil, which he named Santa Lucia. The natives appeared a confiding and credulous race, and readily bartered provisions for the merest trifles; “half a dozen fowls were exchanged for a king of spades” (card). Putting again to sea, Magellan sailed southward, touching at various points till he came to anchor in a harbour which he named San Julian, and where he made a stay of five months. Here discontent, and at length open mutiny, broke out, the ringleaders being certain Spanish officers who felt mortified at serving under a Portuguese commander. Magellan was not a man to stand any nonsense, and was utterly unscrupulous. He despatched a person with a letter to one of the captains, with orders to stab him whilst he was engaged in reading it. This commission being rigorously executed, and followed up by other stringent measures, his authority was re-established through the mutineers’ knowledge and fear of his determined character.

In October of the next year, after various minor discoveries, he arrived at the entrance of the great strait which now bears his name. After careful examination of the opening, a council was held, at which the pilot, Estevan Gomez, voted for turning to refit, while the more enterprising wished to complete their discovery. Magellan listened patiently and silently, and then firmly declared that were he reduced to eat the hides on the yards—which were, in fact, the sails—he would keep his faith with the Emperor. It was forbidden to speak of home or scarcity of provisions on pain of death!

Two vessels were sent to reconnoitre in advance, and these were driven violently by a gale into the straits, where the two coasts more than once seemed to join, and the mariners thought all was lost, when a narrow channel would disclose itself, into which they would gladly enter. They returned, and made their report to Magellan, who ordered the whole squadron to advance. On reaching the open expanse of water into which the second gut opens, an inlet to the south-east was observed, and Estevan Gomez was sent in charge of one of two vessels to explore it. He took the opportunity to incite a mutiny, threw the captain into chains, and steered back for Spain. When the western or Pacific end of the straits was reached,* and they saw a grand open ocean beyond, they named the headland at the entrance, *Il Capo Descado*—

* The Straits of Magellan are nearly 300 miles in length, and vary in breadth from one and a half to thirty-three miles. The rocky cliffs and mountains which bound it are in some places 3,000 to 4,000 feet in height. The passago has only been used extensively since the steamship era. Now it is a common highway for steamships and some sailing vessels, the latter being often towed through by steam tugs.