

All of the participants agreed that development could have the potential of being extremely disorganizing and detrimental to the landscape without the implementation of a development plan or strategy. Furthermore, participants discussed the fact that many Rapanui lack the practical knowledge and/or economic resources to develop their land. To avoid potential problems, participants repeatedly stressed that some type of development plan must be established to ensure effective land-use and that the government of Chile provide educational and economic resources to assist landowners with development projects.

The second half of this study was extremely important because it provided Rapanui participants an opportunity to voice their concerns, express their opinions, and give shape to their visions of the future of development on the island. Although the Chilean government has been the main voice directing development strategies in the past, after conducting this research, it was evident that Rapanui officials and community representatives, despite their own disagreements, are determined to play a strong role in the decision making process regarding future development plans. Undoubtedly, the future will not be exempt of conflicting views and unsettled debates, but it is clear that the Rapanui are concerned about future development initiatives as well as their potential impacts on the island and therefore are intent on participating in the next phase of modernization.

With my research completed on Easter Island, I have temporarily relocated to the East Coast of Canada to complete my thesis. First, I wish to thank my family for their unconditional support. I would also like to thank my supervisor Douglas Porteous for his continued support, both academically and financially, and the Easter Island Foundation for providing the opportunity to return to paradise one more time. More importantly, I would like to thank the people of Rapa Nui. Without their endless cooperation and generosity, I would not have been able to finish the research. I cannot possibly begin to list all of the individuals who have helped me through this incredibly difficult and challenging task, but would like them all to know that I thank them from the bottom of my heart. I will have the experience of Rapa Nui with me forever and plan on returning in the near future.

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## A LOOK BACK

### THE SOUTH SEAS OF TO-DAY. BEING AN ACCOUNT OF THE CRUISE OF THE YACHT ST. GEORGE TO THE SOUTH PACIFIC

By Major A. J. A. Douglas, F.R.G.S. and P.H. Johnson, B.A., B.Sc., F.R.G.S. Cassell and Company Ltd, London 1926.

*The following is a chapter plus some text from the Introduction of a book published in 1926, describing a scientific expedition that cruised the Pacific in 1924. The group visited the Marquesas, Tahiti, and Rapa Iti before stopping, briefly, at Easter Island. What science was conducted is unclear. They did make a film record of the journey and the whereabouts of the footage they shot would be of interest, if it still exists. Of particular concern is the presence on Easter Island of a Ford automobile, described as "very, very old and decrepit". This apparition, belonging to Mr. Edmunds, is a real mystery of Easter Island. How did it get to the island? And when?*

#### From the Introduction:

The *St. George* was a three-masted barquentine of 694 tons gross, with a length of 191 feet, a beam of 32 feet, and a draught of 17 ft. 6 inches. She was built as a yacht by Ramage and Ferguson of Leith, in 1890, has an inner hull of iron encased in a sheathing of teak, and is fitted with auxiliary steam engines of about 800 horse-power. Her ordinary cruising speed was between 6 and 7 knots. She was fitted up specially for this voyage and proved herself to be a wonderful sea boat....

Many of these islands can only be visited by means of a ship chartered or bought especially for the purpose, for they lie far off the track of regular shipping; some of them are so remote that many months elapse without a sail appearing above the horizon.

Books without number have been written about the South Seas, but very few have been innocent of exaggeration, and few, if any, give a true picture of life as it exists there to-day. We, the writers of this book, have striven to paint this picture as we saw it, frankly to avow of disappointments, to confess to the vanishing of many a cherished illusion, and to face the fact that the old island life has gone for ever and that change and decay are everywhere.

And yet some of us, at least, found happiness on these palm-girt shores, and know that even to-day the magic works, and he who looks can find the golden key to unlock the door between this prosaic world and the dream-lands of childhood's fancy. Old Polynesia is dead, but her spirit lingers and the pitiful remnant of her people still preserves something of that charm which has ever proved so attractive to the stranger.

Man has changed and is changing, but Nature cannot alter, and even we moderns can still see what Cook, Bougainville and others saw: a loveliness of landscape, a vision of sea and sky, a depth of colour amazing in its beauty; the fairest spots on earth and the gardens of the world.

## CHAPTER XX: EASTER AND IT'S MYSTERIES

Of all the islands of the South Pacific, many of them interesting and remote, there is one that stands out far above the others, and immediately strikes all who visit it with a sense of mystery and of awe. Situated some two thousand miles from the coast of South America, Easter Island lies in the midst of a wild and trackless sea, its rocky coastline forever beaten by the tireless surf, its barren uplands swept by unrelenting winds.

It was on Easter Day in the year 1722 that the island was first sighted by Europeans, the discoverer being the Dutch Admiral Roggeveen. Various famous travellers followed him, among them Gonzalez, Cook, and La Pérouse, all of whom commented on the desolate aspect of the island, and marvelled at the great stone statues which, in those days, stood on platforms all round the coast. Many are the speculations as to their origin and meaning, and the mystery was heightened by the discovery of old wooden tablets covered with extraordinary hieroglyphics, which have never been satisfactorily deciphered. To this day many of its mysteries still remain unsolved.

Our first sight of Easter Island was at sunset on our twentieth day out from Rapa, and in the slanting rays of the sinking sun the rocky shores stood up dark and forbidding. Passing close under the towering cliffs of Rana Kao, the great extinct volcano at the south-western corner of the island, we skirted along the southern shores where the surf was breaking in spouts of foam on the black volcanic rocks.

The light was growing dim, but sufficient remained to enable us to recognize the dark mass of Rana Raraku, the sacred mountain where the giant images were quarried and where many still stand in silent majesty.

The island runs out to the south-east in a high bluff, and, passing close round the point, we were much struck by the wild and barren aspect of the land and by the general sense of desolation. The colouring of this part of the island is peculiar, being a warm shade of red, and on the top of the cliffs the loose soil was blowing in clouds of dust under the force of the strong wind. Easter Island provides no safe anchorage for ships at any time, and it was thought advisable, owing to the darkness and to the freshening wind, to stand off and on for the night.

Next morning at dawn conditions were favorable for landing, and, steaming in towards the land, we dropped our anchor in Anakena Bay, the only place where there is a sandy beach.

In the clear morning light the island looked much greener and the grassy slopes were dotted with sheep and cattle. At the head of the bay lay the beach already mentioned; behind it the land sloped up to ridges covered with rocky outcrops. Across the landscape ran the long lines of stone wall built to keep in the cattle, and numerous sheep pens, also of stone, were scattered here and there. Except for a few clusters of gnarled and stunted trees which grew in the more sheltered hollows, there was no sign of vegetation beyond the short wiry grass, mottled by the shadows of passing clouds.

In the southern corner of the bay rose two flat-topped hills, which from their shape were obviously small extinct cra-

ters, and others were visible towards the interior of the island.

We landed at 9 A.M., some of us to walk across to the village of Hanga Roa, about ten or twelve miles away on the other side of the island; others prepared to camp for scientific purposes, and a third party intent on crossing to Rana Raraku to see what they could of the quarries and great stone statues.

Landing was easy as the beach was sheltered, and, wandering along the slopes of the nearest miniature volcano, we almost at once found an old stone adze lying in the grass. Above the beach were the remains of two image platforms, and lying face downwards beside one of them was the image itself. Previous descriptions and photographs had taught us what to expect, but we examined this, the first image we encountered, with the greatest interest and curiosity.

The dark volcanic stone of which the image was composed showed signs of much weathering, but the outlines of the arms and the hands, with their abnormally long fingers, all five of exactly the same length, clasping each side of the abdomen, were clearly visible. Owing to being face downwards, the features were nearly hidden; still, one could make out the long, rather flat nose, the pendent ears and the deeply cut hollows of the eyes. In spite of its recumbent position, this image gave the impression of massive dignity.

We had not gone more than two hundred yards when we met with a great circular mass of reddish coloured rock, evidently carved by human agency. In the flat top was a well-marked depression, and we realized that this was one of the gigantic hats which used to crown the heads of the images set up round the shores of the island on stone platforms. Probably it had been destined for the prostrate image we had just quitted, and for some reason had been left where we found it. The quarry from which the hats were obtained is near the village of Hanga Roa, eight or nine miles from this spot. It may once have crowned this image and subsequently have been removed, but it could not conceivably have rolled so far when the image was overthrown, especially as it lay at a higher level. After examining the hat we proceeded in a south-westerly direction towards Mataveru, the residence of Mr. Edmunds, the manager of the ranch that leases Easter Island from the Chilean government. We were the bearers of a letter to him from our captain, inviting him on board.

Dotted over the landscape were cairns of stones marking either burial-places or ancient boundaries. Sheep and cattle trails were everywhere, crossing and recrossing each other, but there was generally one that led, more or less, in the required direction. Far away to the south lay the coastline—rocky and surf beaten. At one spot near the shore was an iron windmill for pumping water from an underground spring and looking singularly out of place in its desert surroundings. Around it were congregated numbers of horses, sheep, and cattle. They were almost the only living things in sight, and there was no sign of the inhabitants.

Bird life was almost non-existent; twice we flushed what we thought at first was a species of partridge, but which turned out to be examples of the interesting bird known as the Tinamu, which links up the group of running birds, such as ostriches, emus, etc., with the remainder of the class of birds. Occasionally a small bird, apparently of the lark family, rose from

a clump of grass. Of insects, a few flies and innumerable black crickets among the stones were all that could be seen. Apart from these, the place seemed dead, and an indescribable feeling of loneliness and melancholy was in the air.

Soon the slopes gave place to more level ground which stretched away to rise again in a long ridge against the skyline. On this ridge grew a solitary misshapen tree which formed an excellent landmark. Directly across the route ran a high stone wall topped with strands of barbed wire, and this proved an awkward obstacle to surmount. Further on the going became very bad and large areas of loose stones had to be crossed, making walking difficult and even painful. Once or twice we came across low walls surrounding deep pits in the bottom of which banana plants were growing. This is the only way in which the natives can grow fruit, as it will not stand exposure to the strong wind.

Having accomplished what we estimated to be half our journey, we sat down to consume our lunch in a spot sheltered by overhanging rocks. While thus engaged we saw a solitary horseman galloping at a furious rate along the foot of the slope above which we were sitting, and evidently bound for the landing-place which we had left a few hours before. We tried in vain to attract his attention, but, failing to do so, continued on our way having slightly appeased our hunger.

Surmounting another ridge we were surprised to find ourselves only a short distance from what looked like quite an extensive ranch, of which our map gave no indication, and of which there was no mention in any of the books we had read. It lay a little off the direct line to Mataverí, but we decided that it was worth investigation. It consisted of several long low sheds, with galvanized iron roofing; several smaller buildings were dotted around, and there was a maze of wire fencing, forming paddocks, in which were a variety of stock.

A few natives, men and boys, were to be seen, some afoot and some galloping around in true cowboy fashion. Practically every islander possesses at least one horse, as we learned later, for their market value is about five shillings, though a good saddle will cost three or four pounds. From their earliest years they thus become accustomed to bareback riding, and they grow up to become wonderful horsemen.

Addressing ourselves to one of these riders, we were directed to a small bungalow at the far right-hand corner of the ranch, and there we were delighted to meet a real Britisher in the person of Mr. McKinnon, whose ruddy countenance, sturdy build, and delightful Scots accent seemed to bring with them a whiff of the Old Country. McKinnon must be a specialist in solitary places. His previous residences have been in the Island of Lewis and the solitudes of Tierra del Fuego. He is also a specialist in stock breeding, and had come over to Easter Island to do what he could in the way of improving the breeds of sheep and cattle which are raised there. He seems a little despondent as to the possibilities of doing so. To him the place seems too restricted, while the grass is not what it should be. A new variety of grass has recently invaded the island, so hard as to be uneatable by the young stock when changing over from their milk teeth to their permanent dentition. As a result they become very thin and lose a couple of years of their lives in the effort of overcoming these lean years. The better pasture is gradually

being ousted by this coarser variety, in spite of all his efforts to destroy it by burning off the seeding grass.

We enjoyed an excellent lunch with Mr. McKinnon – stewed beef, roast duck, bread and butter with honey, all the produce of the island, except the bread. While enjoying it we were surprised to see through the window of the bungalow the approach of what looked, at first sight, to be a squadron of cavalry. Eight rather ragged-looking horsemen were revealed on their closer approach, but their leader only gained in magnificence by a nearer view. This was a bearded individual with military cap and a wealth of gold braid all over his dark blue uniform. We learnt from McKinnon, who went out to converse with him, that he was the representative of the Chilian government on the island. As the communication with that country is restricted to the possible call of one little schooner per annum, and as practically the whole of the inhabitants of Easter Island are the employés of Mr. Edmunds and regard him alone as entitled to exercise authority over them, this poor official finds his position something of a sinecure. It was, moreover, an open secret of the village that he had a tyrannical wife, so that he found no outlet for his magisterial activities in that direction.

What wonder then that he regarded our coming as a god-send! And had we not delivered ourselves into his hands by failing to land at the official port of Hanga Roa over which he ruled as Port Captain? In voluble Spanish he communicated, through MacKinnon, the instructions that we were at once to return to our ship in his company.

MacKinnon was frankly amused, and I trust that it will not be imputed to him as high treason to the Chilian government that he advised us to do nothing of the sort. We certainly did not wish to waste the whole day in travelling backwards and forwards between the ship and Mataverí, but there was the posse of police to be considered, for such we discovered to be the temporary role of the officer's companions.

A brilliant idea struck us. We invoked the cause of science. We explained that we had not come to annex the island, nor had we any sinister intentions against either government or inhabitants; we were merely a harmless party of scientists engaged in collecting specimens for the British Museum.

The poor official found himself in a quandary. He had no desire to disturb international relations, but he had to consider his own dignity. Even a minor official likes to proclaim proudly, "What I have said, I have said." After a little further persuasion, however, he was at last prevailed upon to let us continue our way towards Mataverí, but it must be in his company. And now a further difficulty arose – we had no horses! He proposed to dismount three of his police and to mount us on their steeds. We refused; we had come out for a walk after our long confinement on board ship, and walk we would. There were still some six miles to cover to Mataverí, and the officer had most likely never walked so far in his life; moreover, he had on his official boots, and probably they were more ornamental than comfortable. But politeness forbade him to ride while we walked. With a deep sigh he resigned himself to the inevitable, and, instructing his minions to carry our rather heavy packs for us, he bravely set out to walk back with us to Mataverí.

His bravery, however, was not put to so severe a test, for we had not proceeded more than half a mile when we met Mr.

Edmunds, coming towards us in a most remarkable specimen of a very, very old and decrepit Ford car.

The presence of this mighty potentate solved all difficulties. We were consigned to his care, and the officer, with every sign of extreme relief, remounted his horse, which had been following us in charge of one of the police, and soon was galloping back towards the ship, where the rider might hope to make a better show of his authority, than in trying to coerce three obstinate scientists.

We saw him no more, but we heard of his subsequent adventures, which were of a thrilling character, but must here be told very briefly. Picking up McKinnon on the way to act as interpreter, he reached the ship and went on board. The captain very quickly soothed him by a drink and a good dinner, after which they spent a pleasant evening together. The captain offered to proceed next day to Hanga Roa and the officer rashly accepted an invitation to stop the night on board and to proceed next day with the ship. Alas for his hopes! That night there sprang up a strong north-westerly wind, and for two and a half days the *St. George* rolled and wallowed in a heavy sea, beating up and down from fifteen to forty miles out at sea. To all on board it was a time of much discomfort, but for the two visitors it was a tragedy over which it were kinder to draw a veil.

But to return to our own adventures. It was rather rude of us, after having refused the offer of a horse ride from the Chilean, to accept a motor ride from our compatriot, but the temptation of enjoying one in this outlandish spot was too great to be resisted. There are not many people who can boast of having had a motor ride in the most mysterious island in the world, and we felt that the opportunity was not one to be neglected.

And that car was almost as mysterious as the island. Its inner tubes had long ago succumbed to the trials of running on roads that were no roads, but mere cattle tracks; their place was taken by a stuffing of sheepskins. The outer tyres had a quaint habit of leaving the wheels every now and then and of rolling away into the wayside fields. By some uncanny instinct Mr. Edmunds recognized when this had occurred, and one of us would get out to retrieve the wanderer and to replace it on the rim; but in spite of these idiosyncrasies that wonderful car bore the five of us, for we had now been joined by Curtis, over the bumpy tracks at quite a fair speed, so that, before we had really grown accustomed to the unusual experience, we found ourselves safe and sound at Mataveru.

We talked long that night over an excellent dinner, plain but substantial, and many an interesting yarn we had from our delightful host. He has been twenty-six years on the island, and for most of that time he has been the only white man there. He leaves it, he told us, about once in five years for a holiday, when he usually pays a visit to his native city of Birmingham; but as soon as has been a few weeks away from the island he longs to get back to it. He could not exactly explain its attraction to him, but from his conversation I should gather that the chief is its intense peacefulness. To some this would doubtless spell intense boredom, but I believe I can recognize his point of view. He is a great reader of apparently omnivorous tastes. He seemed to consider it his duty to inquire what had happened in the world since he had last heard news of it, which was some seven months previously; but he showed little disappointment when

we informed him that we had scarcely anything to tell him, for we too had been practically cut off from the world for several months.

After we had given what little news we could, we inquired as to the happenings on the island. They were far more romantic than those we had imparted. About a year before our arrival they had had their annual schooner from Chili, bringing stores, etc., for the ensuing year. These had been unloaded, and a cargo of the island products loaded in their place. There was ample opportunity, in Mr. Edmunds' opinion, for the schooner to have got away safely, but chances were missed and, when at last she did make a start, the weather was anything but favourable. The result was that before she could get out of Cook's Bay, as the anchorage at Hanga Roa is called, she was driven on the rocks, and there she lay a total wreck, as we saw when we went down to Hanga Roa later on. In the panic that ensued two of the crew lost their lives, but the remaining five, with the captain and his wife, managed to get to shore.

The captain, it appeared, took the loss of his vessel much to heart. For weeks he strolled aimlessly about the island keeping a sharp lookout for passing ships. Two of these were seen, but neither called at the island. After six months of weary waiting to be taken off, he seems to have given way to despair, and one morning went out and shot himself with his revolver. A day or two later a Norwegian vessel called with letters from Valparaíso inquiring as to the fate of the *Falcon*, as the wrecked schooner had been called. The Norwegian vessel was not returning to Valparaíso, but brought information that another schooner would be sent to fetch away the stranded cargo, and might be expected about February.

This vessel was now three months overdue, and the non-native residents – whose number had been largely increased by the presence of the shipwrecked crew and by that of sundry workmen who should have been taken off by the *Falcon* – were beginning to run short of supplies, especially groceries.

The *St. George* had at first been mistaken for the long-expected schooner, and I fear that our appearance was something of a disappointment to them, but they concealed it admirably.

Before dinner we had a walk down to the village of Hanga Roa, where the scattered inhabitants of the island are now all gathered together to the number of a couple of hundred. It was not at all an inspiring place, the lack of vegetation being a very striking contrast to the other South Sea villages that we had visited. A shower of rain drove us into the shabby little church, where the proud native pastor gave us a special display of its beauties by hanging up gaudy German lithographs on each of its wooden pillars. It was touching to see his manifest pride in the result, but it was a little difficult to counterfeit an ecstasy of delight in their artistic merits.

After a grand night's rest on a pile of trade blankets we felt quite prepared next day for the journal along the south coast to the image quarry at Rana Raraku. Mr. Edmunds provided us all with horses, and about nine o'clock we set forth.

A strong wind was blowing, and the sea was a grand sight as it broke against the rugged coast, rolling up in great green masses which hid the rocks for a moment and then fell back into the sea in cascades of snowy foam, from which the wind

plucked off masses of spindrift, which it bore far inland.

After about two hours' riding we came well within reach of the crater. For most of our ride it has been plainly visible ahead, and the dark objects we could see on its slopes were, we knew, the famous statues.

Soon we reached the actual slopes and were admiring the first upright image we had come across. We had passed many a fallen one in the course of our ride. The highest one now standing on the island has a most impressive appearance. Its height, which is about thirty-seven feet, is accentuated by the fact that it faces down a steep slope, and one has to look up at it. Alas! That it should have to be recorded, but even in this remote and lonely spot vandals have been at work, and round the neck of the statue was blazoned, in great letters of white paint that stood out against the dark grey weathered stone, the word "Baquedano." Up till two years ago, when for some reason it was discontinued, a Chilian warship had paid regular annual visits to Easter Island, and the name of the last vessel to call had been the *Baquedano*, so this was obviously the work of some of her crew. It was a horrible shock to find that this, the finest statue now standing, should thus have been defaced by those who, in their ignorance, could not appreciate these wonderful remains at their true value.

Farther on, and continuing round the lower slopes of the mountain, were more images, arranged in no apparent order and in every conceivable position. Most of them were partially buried in the loose soil, which had evidently slipped from time to time and had gradually engulfed them. Some stood buried up to the shoulders, others with only their heads above ground. Some were upright, some tilted forward or backward; others again lay face downwards, and in these cases the whole image was exposed. Here and there the upper part of a gigantic face peered above the soil, or the tip of a mighty nose. Everywhere there were images, and constantly one discovered that what had appeared a mere fragment of rock, sticking up through the soil, was actually the remains of one of these strange carvings.

Round many of these images were traces of excavation made by Mr. and Mrs. Scoresby Routledge during their expedition of 1914, which has been so excellently described by them in their book, 'The Mystery of Easter Island.' Every suitable outcrop of rock on this side of the mountain had been used as a quarry, and it was easy to discover the places from which the statue had been cut. In the quarries, still incorporated with the living rock, were the giant faces of the statues in the making, in every stage of development, some only just begun, others practically completed. Everywhere were the traces of this gigantic work, and literally every rock bore signs of the ancient sculptors.

Here in the midst of these solemn statues one felt a mysterious melancholy; things seemed unreal and the modern world very far away. Over all brooded the spirit of the past; the place was haunted, and one half expected to see the long-dead workers spring to life to continue the mighty tasks they had so abruptly abandoned. The most vivid impression of all was that of an intense silence; except for the faint rustle of the wind in the dry grass there was not a sound – everything seemed spell-bound.

Climbing as high as we could round the face of the moun-

tain, our progress was checked by a sheer drop, and here the workings ended. Below lay level ground stretching away for nearly a mile to the long line of the boulder-strewn shore, where stood the remains of the great *ahu*, or image platform, of Tongariki, the largest and most important of the platforms which formerly extended at intervals right round the coast of the island.

We now retraced our steps and, leading our horses over the steep edge of the crater, made our way into its interior. The slides sloped gently down to a circular reed-covered lake of very gloomy appearance. All over the southern slopes were more images dotted here and there and, like the others, in every sort of position. Behind them, high up on the very rim of the crater, were the quarries from which they had been cut.

Of the numerous problems connected with the mystery of Easter Island it seemed to us that the most puzzling was that of how these giant images had been transported from the quarries to the image platforms, scattered round the shores, often many miles away, and of how they had been set upright and then crowned with the great stone hats.

Inside the crater, but hidden behind a pair of the images so that we had not at first spotted him, we found our cinematographer snugly encamped. We were amused to hear of the means he had employed for getting his heavy gear and camp equipment transported from Anakena Bay to the spot at which we found him.

In the letter we had borne to Mr. Edmunds the previous day there had been a request that he should provide pack horses for this very purpose, but a later message had come countermanding the instructions.

We now learned that, while the representative of the Chilian government had been parleying with our captain, and his police posse had dismounted for a rest, Harcourt had calmly commandeered half a dozen of their horses and had made his way to Rana Raraku, leaving them to pursue him when they discovered their loss. His method of appeasing their wrath, when they assailed him with reproaches, struck us as peculiarly simple and effective. It apparently consisted in his asking them in a very aggrieved tone, "How dare you speak to me like that?"

Anyhow, they subsequently all became the best of friends, and the police gave him great assistance in settling down for the night in his very windy quarters. In fact, it was they who suggested to him the cosy nook behind the two images that sheltered him from the worst of the wind. We became so well acquainted with those two images in the course of our stay in camp, that we readily adopted Harcourt's suggestion of christening them "'Erbert and 'Orace," and by those names they will ever live in our memories.

Their memory is the more vividly impressed on our minds by the view we had of them a few hours later, lit up by brilliant magnesium flares and wrapped in clouds of smoke, which made it seem almost as if the dead volcano had burst once more into activity.

In a neighboring spot, but not quite so well sheltered, Chubb and I set up a little bivouac tent, and therein we spent a part of the night, but only a part, for it was a night of full moon and the call of the mysterious images drew us from our blankets to go and wander among them in the pale moonlight. It was a

wonderful but indescribable experience. Suffice it to say that all their grotesqueness seemed washed away by the magic rays, and there was left only a sense of awe and majesty which seemed to pervade our very souls.

No work of man has ever filled me with such a keen wonder and admiration as did those silent images as I peered up into their calm and stately countenances, vainly asking, "Who made you? And why?"

How we regretted that scarcity of time compelled us to be satisfied with a mere glimpse of the wonders of Rana Raraku! But the captain could only spare us a day or two for our stay, so that we were compelled to put up with a few hours' hasty study of marvels that might well claim as many years for their thorough examination.

The very next day we had to make our way back to Mataveri. To the astonishment of the natives, who had come with pack ponies to transport our baggage, I elected to return on foot all by myself; and a wonderful tramp I had along that surf-beaten coast, with frequent stops to examine *ahus* and fallen images, to rummage among the bones of the long-forgotten dead, to peer into the numerous caves and to trace the remains of the great road along which travelled the ancient inhabitants of the island.

Next day we paid a visit to the other chief attraction of the island, the summit of the mighty crater of Rana Kao, at the south-west corner of the island and just behind the bungalow at Mataveri. From a physical point of view it is even more impressive than that of Rana Raraku. Its height is greater, its slopes steeper, and its crater lake far gloomier.

From the summit one obtains a wonderful view over the Pacific, and in the foreground lie the two little islands of Motu Nui and Motu Iti, and the adjacent pinnacle rock. These islands are, at certain seasons of the year, the resort of countless sea-birds, and for some reason the Easter Islanders of old attached an enormous importance to the first egg laid by these birds each year.

Representative were chosen from the various tribes of the island, long in advance of the arrival of the birds, and on these chosen men devolved the task of watching for their coming. It was on the summit of Rana Kao that their long vigil was accomplished. At the best of times it is an exposed and wind-swept spot, but in bad weather their task must have been a most unenviable one.

As a shelter from the storm and as a refuge in the hours of darkness, they built themselves, up there on the crater rim, a village of curious-looking houses, which form the village of Orongo. Any ordinary native hut would have been blown away as soon as built, but these are of much sturdier build.

Slabs of shaly rock which builds up the crater walls were piled up to a height of some five or six feet in a sort of hollow mound, generally of elongated form, the length from twelve to fifty feet and the width only five or six. They have been compared to inverted canoes, and there is a possibility that their architectural form is based on this idea.

The whole was then covered with soil, in which there is now a rank growth of grass, which makes some of them appear as mere grassy mounds. The entrances to these huts, or caves, as the natives more appropriately call them, were extraordinarily

small, presumably as a safeguard against draughts. These doors, in fact, are only one foot in height and not much more in breadth; as the thickness of the walls forms a passage-way some six to ten feet in length, it will be obvious that the task of entering one of these dwellings is a considerable undertaking. It is quite impossible to crawl on hands and knees; the only method of procedure is a most undignified snake-like wiggling, which makes one appreciate the full significance of that primeval curse, "Upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat."

An examination of the interiors made one doubtful whether the trouble of entering was worth while. They were dark, dirty, and incommodious. Some allowance had to be made, however, for the fact that they had been long unoccupied.

It was interesting to discover that there were signs of mural decoration, and one could picture the ancient watcher spending the dark hours of their weary months of watching in adorning their walls with quaint drawings and carvings, the former often executed in vivid colouring.

The most interesting of these works of art is that which represents a three-masted vessel drawn with considerable skill and affording evidence that these huts have probably been inhabited in recent times. In fact, Mrs. Routledge discovered old people on the island who had actually played a part in the last of the egg hunts, and to her book we would refer those who desire information as to the details of this curious village.

In the daytime, still artistically inclined, the watchers seem to have passed the intervals not occupied in keeping a lookout for the birds, in carving the neighbouring rocks. There is a singular lack of variety about these carvings, more than two hundred in number, and covering every inch of the surface of the rocks, but all representing exactly the same figure. It is that of a semi-human creature with the body and limbs of a man, in a curious crouching attitude, but the head is that of a bird. From the peculiarities of this bird's head, which consist in a large circular eye, a beak sharply curved at the tip, and a swollen throat, it is suggested that it is meant to represent the frigate bird, which strangely enough is not found on Easter Island; but the Solomon Islanders, five thousand miles farther west, regard the frigate bird as of sacred significance, and frequently depict it on their houses and canoes.

If this representation be the fact, we have here an important piece of evidence as to the origin of the strange race of people who carved the images of Easter Island and who maintained this tedious watch for the coming of the sea-birds.

One would fain linger over these problems of the migrations of the Polynesian race, but so much has been written by those who are qualified to express opinions on them that we must be satisfied with referring the inquisitive reader to the numerous publications of the Polynesian Society.

We were still on the summit of Rana Rao when we caught sight of the *St. George* steaming in towards the island round the cape which forms the eastern boundary of Cook Bay. We had been so busily employed throughout our short stay that we had scarcely had time to think about the whereabouts of our ship. But our parting instructions from the captain had been that we were to be prepared to be taken off on Tuesday at Hanga Roa, and here he was to carry out his part of the arrangement.

There was nothing for it but to hurry back to Mataveri, to

collect our baggage and hasten down to the shore. The whole population of Easter Island seemed to have collected to watch our departure, and we found that most of the men intended to pay a visit to the ship for the purpose of selling the curious carved wooden figures they produce in extraordinary numbers.

We took off with us a consignment of twenty sheep and a pig, a very welcome addition to our stores, and a quantity of greenstuff and vegetables. So heavily was the island boat laden on which we at first proposed to embark, that a rock on which she was lying pierced her bottom, and we were compelled to wait for our ship's boats to come and fetch us off.

In the course of the afternoon all were got safely on board, and as darkness came upon us we steamed slowing out of the bay and were off on our homeward journey northward over the wide Pacific.

*Our thanks to Thomas Christopher for supplying this gem*

### WMF Mission to Easter Island

At the request of the Consejo de Monumentos Nacionales from Chile and the Rapa Nui National Park (RNNP) on Easter Island, World Monuments Fund in collaboration with a grant from American Express, sponsored a mission to develop a monitoring system at the Ceremonial Center of Mata Ngarau in the archaeological site of 'Orongo, on Easter Island. The mission was carried out in collaboration with the National Park Service, through an agreement this institution has with the Chilean counterpart, CONAF. Blaine Cliver and Raul Vazquez, NPS, and Michael Schuller, Atkinson-Noland Associates, were in charge of the installation and surveying of reference points for the necessary monitoring measurements. The Mata Ngarau Ceremonial Center is located on the edge of the Rano Kau volcano, 300 m above sea level. The site was devoted to the bird-man cult and was only used in spring (during the month of September) while sea birds returned to nest on the three islets opposite this southwest tip of Easter Island. There are over 1,700 petroglyphs carved on the boulders of this site, some of which are perilously perched above the steep cliff. Concern about the possible movement of these boulders as the cliff slope erodes with time, prompted this mission. For monitoring purposes, minute pins were installed on the petroglyph-covered boulders to serve as measurement points in conjunction with benchmarks installed in the ground and on neighboring rock ledges. Measurements were taken with a laser distance-measuring theodolite as well as with a measuring tape, since this latter method will be used by the rangers of the RNNP to monitor the boulders regularly, i.e., twice a year, to detect any significant movement. If no movement is detected within three years, theodolite measurements should be re-taken at the site. In addition to measuring the stone positions, photographs taken by Dr. William Mulloy of the Mata Ngarau site in 1974 were replicated as closely as possible, to determine visually if there was any indication of movement over the past 27 years.

The mission also included, under the supervision of Dr A. Elena Charola and with the assistance of Antoinette Padgett, the training of park rangers in the measurement of carving depth of petroglyphs through the use of a profiling gauge. Although this low-tech approach is slow and labor intensive it can be easily



Measuring the petroglyph boulders at Mata Ngarau. Photograph by A. Elena Charola.

carried out by the rangers, and may prove useful in obtaining a more quantitative assessment of the deterioration rate of this rock art.

Finally, a three-day seminar on "Conservation of the Rapa Nui Archaeological Heritage" was carried out at the Museo Antropológico Padre Sebastián Englert (MAPSE). The seminar, addressed specifically to park rangers and tour guides, was co-organized with the RNNP and the Museum. An average of thirty participants attended these lectures each evening. Lecturers and topics included Marcos Rauch, Head of the RNNP, on site management issues; Francisco Torres, Head of MAPSE, on management and care of archaeological collections; Raul Vazquez, on the principles of the monitoring system installed at 'Orongo; Antoinette Padgett, on conservation problems of rock art and management of these sites; and, A. Elena Charola, on conservation issues of the archaeological heritage, i.e., monumental statues and petroglyphs, in light of the ethics and theory of conservation.

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### MOAI SIGHTINGS

ARRIVING IN A DEAD HEAT, we received two notices about cast resin *moai*, to be used in your own gardens as "...a sacred space for contemplation, whether in a quiet corner or as a centerpiece in a spectacular planting." Betsy Hamel sent us pages from a catalog at the same time as we got notice from Bill Liller in Chile (via email). Thanks guys. These heads/busts of scowling *moai* are two feet high and cost \$98.95 each. The ad states that they are replicas [sic] of originals dating from "380 A.D." The description: "Replicate the mystical presence of Easter Island in your own garden! Assumed to be depictions of deceased chiefs, heroes or gods, the giant statues on Easter Island are some of the world's most intriguing, mysterious and photographed archaeological artifacts."