



OUR UNKNOWN PACIFIC ISLANDS

AMERICAN OUTPOST NO. 3

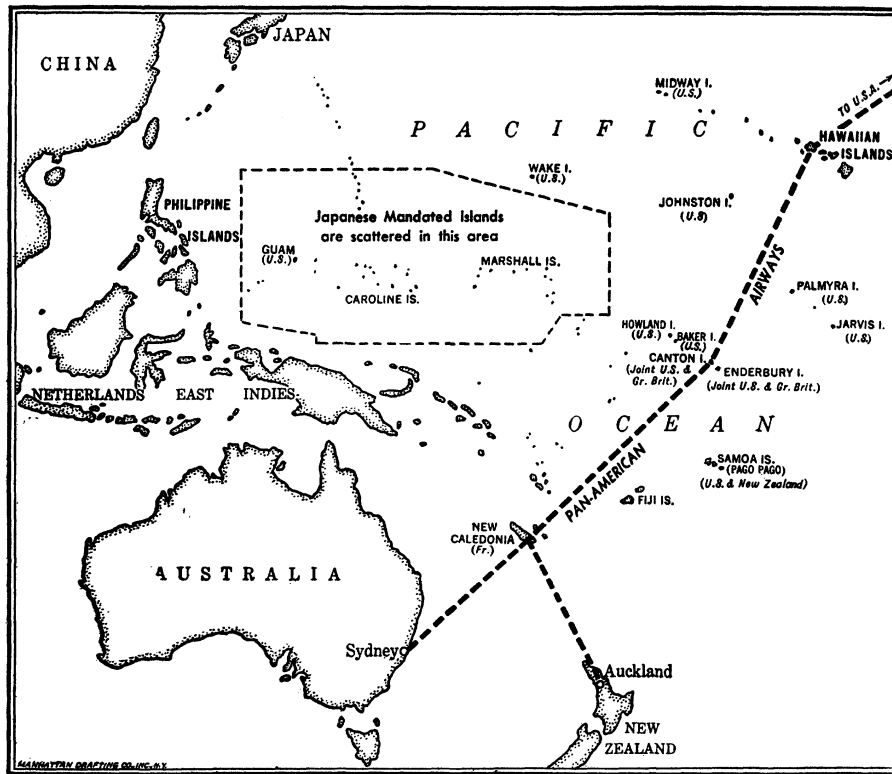
BY C. HARTLEY GRATTAN

IN RECENT months—largely because of the activities of the Pan-American Airways and because of apprehensions of war in the Pacific—Americans have discovered with some surprise that the United States is the owner of a chain of little islands that stretch south of Hawaii toward Australia and New Zealand. These islands, little more than stepping stones, are Johnston, Palmyra, Jarvis, Howland, Baker, Canton, Enderbury, and Samoa. Samoa, in spite of having at Pago Pago the best harbor in the South Sea Islands, remains a relic of an old dream that never came true. Right now the air liners go straight from Honolulu to Canton and then directly to the French island of New Caledonia on their way to New Zealand. But it is possible that a new scheme—a plan of naval strategy which few Americans have thus far taken seriously—will shortly give Pago Pago surprising usefulness and that the other islands will really be steps toward it. It is time that we understood how we happen to own those strategic parcels of property and what they may mean to us.

All through the South Seas, in New Zealand and Australia, and along the west coast of South America there are traces of American activity running back for a century and a half and more. American whalers, missionaries, traders, and sailors of high and low degree have left their impress at various points throughout the Pacific below the equator.

Often their stories are highly romantic, like those which Herman Melville wove into his great books, but just as often they are practical. Someone had a scheme for extending American power far to the south of Hawaii that would give reality to an imperial dream. What the Americans did in these distant places long ago is now a part of local legend, but seemingly with only a tenuous relation to the present.

The Australians like to recall that the first trading vessel to enter Sydney harbor was an American ship, the brigantine *Philadelphia*, Captain Patrickson, out of Philadelphia with miscellaneous goods. It sailed into Port Jackson on November 1, 1792, when the first Australian settlement was approaching its fifth birthday and Captain Patrickson sold the authorities much needed beef, wine, pitch, tar, and notions. The New Zealanders remember that American whalers in the early eighteen hundreds began to visit the Bay of Islands in the North Island to establish shore stations and trade for food with the Maoris. This was decades before the British took formal possession of the country and began systematic settlement. American whaling captains have the credit for discovering, between 1791 and 1840, no less than twenty-five South Sea Islands, mostly small, and the contacts between sailors off these ships and the natives provide many a lively passage in old logbooks. It was these early visitors who gave the Fiji Islands



their romantic reputation as the home of dangerous adventure, and how many American sailors augmented the cannibal food supply the record fails to say.

But with all their pioneering and high adventure, the Americans took permanent possession of only a few small islands in the Samoas. For the rest it is a matter of more or less shadowy claims to still smaller islands, claims which we considered worth asserting only twice so far in our history—once when guano figured importantly in the fertilizer trade; again when landing places for trans-Pacific air clippers became a matter of vast importance. South of Honolulu sounds like the title of a new movie melodrama, but to-morrow it may become a fascinating chapter in the story of American politics in the Pacific Basin.

That the United States is overlord of almost as many Polynesians as any other nation is something about which few Americans ever reflect. The Polyne-

sians inhabit the islands which fall within a great Pacific triangle the base of which extends from Hawaii in the north to New Zealand in the south, the point being formed by Easter Island to the east. Within this triangle, which includes in addition to the islands named, Tonga, French Oceania, and hosts of small groups, live two hundred fifty thousand brown people of Mongoloid-Caucasoid-Negroid origin, called Polynesians to distinguish them from the Micronesians who are chiefly under the Japanese flag and the Melanesians who are under the Australian and British flags. Taking the Hawaiians and the people of American Samoa together, about thirty per cent of all Polynesians are living in American territory. Only New Zealand—with her Maoris at home, plus the natives of her portion of Samoa, and the inhabitants of the Cook Islands which she administers—has more. How does the United States happen to be in Samoa?

II

The Samoan Islands were first seen by a Dutch Explorer, Jacob Roggenwein, in 1722, but the records of his voyage were lost for many years, and most stories of the islands begin with a Frenchman, Bougainville, who visited them in 1768 and, because of the skill of the native boatmen, called them the Navigator Islands.

In the late eighteen thirties the United States Government sent Captain Charles Wilkes, U.S.N., on an exploring expedition in the South Pacific. One of Wilkes's assignments was to locate ports of call for American whalers, and he turned in an especially enthusiastic report on Pago Pago in the Samoan island of Tutuila. In 1839 he fixed up an agreement with the local chiefs to govern relations between the visiting ships seeking water and food and the natives, and also made arrangements to govern the treatment of shipwrecks and shipwrecked sailors. That Wilkes fastened upon Pago Pago is very significant, for while the economic development of the Samoas took place on the larger islands to the west, Pago Pago is the best harbor in the South Sea Islands and ranks with Pearl Harbor and Manila Bay among defensible points in the Pacific generally. Moreover, Wilkes was probably aware of the fact that the Samoas are centrally located in the South Sea Islands and perhaps he perceived that they are fairly central with regard to the Pacific Ocean, taking its entire sweep from north to south. Certainly these considerations, and others of a more commercial flavor, were in the mind of Admiral Meade when in the course of a South Seas cruise in 1872 he negotiated a treaty with the native rulers granting the United States the right to build a naval base at Pago Pago. This treaty was rejected by the Senate which had, as it happened, the habit of rejecting all of President Grant's experiments in territorial imperialism.

The Samoas were regarded as a promising field for commercial enterprise. There was so much of it by 1845 that

the British appointed a consul; in 1853 the Americans followed suit; and in 1861 the Germans sent a man to join them. The elements of the Samoan controversy were assembled. Samoa, geographical focal point of the Pacific, became a focal point of conflicting imperialisms.

The Germans, beginning about 1855, took the leadership in all commercial affairs. The spearhead of their economic activities was the Hamburg firm of Goddefroy and Son, which was mainly interested in copra. This concern set up headquarters at Apia in the island of Upolu, which was then and still remains the chief commercial center of Samoa. (It was at Apia that Robert Louis Stevenson spent his last years writing, among other things, caustic comments on the German activities.) The British and the Americans never got very far in a strictly commercial way. From the beginning the Americans, or rather that tiny minority of them who took any active interest at all, seem to have been obsessed with the idea of hanging on to Pago Pago for strategic reasons. The British were chiefly concerned to protect their missionaries and to block annexation by either of their rivals without a *quid pro quo* for themselves. Only the New Zealanders among the British people really coveted Samoa. New Zealand, under the leadership of Sir Julius Vogel, was then aiming to become the center of an Anglo-Saxon commercial empire in the South Seas.

What the Americans actually did has its comic side, but it was a prelude to something perilously close to tragedy. Some of the most fantastic aspects of the story circle round two individuals both of whom have now become pretty shadowy figures, William H. Webb and Colonel A. B. Steinberger. In 1869 Webb launched a scheme for a steamship line from San Francisco to New Zealand and Australia, Pago Pago to be a port of call. He applied to the United States government for a subsidy and was refused, but the New Zealand government, then in the first stages of the policy of

borrowing London money freely to spend on local development, granted him one. (This was the domestic phase of the policy of Sir Julius Vogel, aforementioned, and the whole outlook is known to New Zealand historians as "Vogelism.") Webb's line lasted three years. In addition to having his ships call at Pago, Webb tried to create some business there. Acting with one James Stewart, he bought up a quantity of land and tried to launch a speculative boom. This never came to anything. It also appears that Webb was somehow tied up with Admiral Meade who, in 1872, just as Webb was fading out, turned up at Pago and negotiated the treaty granting rights for a naval base. Such a base would have created trade for Webb's ships. This was twelve years before Pearl Harbor came into American hands!

When the Senate turned down Meade's treaty General Grant used his executive power to dispatch an agent to Samoa to investigate and report. The agent was the redoubtable and mysterious Colonel A. B. Steinberger. Webb and Stewart figured in Steinberger's list of friends. He made a tremendous hit with the natives, gave them the idea that he could get them under American protection with himself as Governor, and returned to Washington with a glowing report. This report is still used as a source in the latest government literature on Samoa. Although he could not redeem his promise of American protection, Steinberger returned to the islands and exploited his prestige to set up a native government in which he took the post of Prime Minister. But he overreached himself, for Webb and Stewart became convinced that he had somehow doublecrossed them and they let it out that he had, between visits to Samoa, been in Hamburg and made a deal with Goddefroy and Sons whereby he would favor their interests once he gained political power. This angered all hands except the Germans and in 1875 the American Consul and the commanding officer of a visiting British ship of war cooked up a scheme

whereby Steinberger was practically kidnapped and deported in the British ship to Fiji where he was released. This created a great scandal and the Consul was fired. The British officer resigned. But Steinberger was effectively eliminated from Samoan politics. President Grant had little luck with his friends.

Three years later the Samoans, feeling keenly the constant pressure of the Germans, sent a representative, La Mamea, to Washington to negotiate a treaty. La Mamea conducted his negotiations with Assistant Secretary F. W. Seward, son of the Seward who in 1867 had extended American Pacific interests by purchasing Alaska and taking over Midway Island. The result, says Samuel Flagg Bemis, was "a treaty of amity, most-favored-nation commerce, extraterritoriality, and quasi-protection." The treaty included also the right to maintain a naval station at Pago Pago. To testify to the reality of this right the government sent out a cargo of coal in 1880. From this time on the American interest in Samoa—or at least Pago Pago—became plainly "official."

The American treaty led the Germans and the British to negotiate similar treaties, but the Germans continued to push for special advantages, and by 1884 the natives were appealing to Britain to take over the islands. Germany's reply to this was to stir up an insurrection to bring her native friends to the top. Meddling in native political disputes and wars was a favorite pastime of the representatives of the contending governments. In June, 1885, the State Department protested to Germany against this action and eventually asked for a conference at Washington to settle the whole issue. Before it was convened in 1887 the British made a deal with the Germans, agreeing to give way to them in Samoa in return for their support in Egypt and the Near East. The conference, therefore, ended in stalemate. The Germans proceeded to organize their power and to discriminate against both the British and the Americans.

The New Zealanders once more put pressure on Britain to take over, but nothing happened. In January, 1889, President Cleveland submitted the whole muddle to Congress, and by March Britain, Germany, and the United States all had ships of war in Apia harbor. Hostilities seemed imminent—tragedy to replace comedy at Samoa. But on the sixteenth of the month as the ships swung at anchor a great hurricane blew up. The American and German ships were piled up on the beach, total wrecks, but the British vessel got away to sea. The New Zealanders to this day say proudly that it was New Zealand steaming coal that saved the British vessel!

It is sometimes romantically alleged that the modern American Navy was born of this disaster, for it revealed what poor ships America really had and how few. The hurricane eliminated the entire American Pacific fleet. However, the Sprouts, our leading naval historians, show that reconstruction actually began in 1881 under President James A. Garfield; that Alfred Thayer Mahan, who supplied the ideological impulse for real progress, did not publish *The Influence of Sea Power on History* until 1890, clearing the “way for a revolutionary advance in American thinking on the subject of naval strategy and defence”; and that the Apia hurricane was really significant because it provided “first-rate arguments for a program of *accelerated* naval construction.” [My italics.]

Instead of leading to war, the concentration of naval vessels led to a conference in Berlin the issue of which was a joint protectorate of the three powers, a solution which, strangely enough, the Senate accepted. President Cleveland was, however, hostile to the whole arrangement and it really settled nothing. In 1899, when the results of the Spanish War were being digested, the islands were partitioned between the United States and Germany, the British receiving compensation from the Germans in Tonga (now included in New Zealand's Cook Islands), the Solomons

(now controlled by Australia), and in West Africa (now under the Union of South Africa). Thus by 1900 the United States had complete control of Tutuila with the harbor of Pago Pago as well as a number of smaller islands, the Germans having taken Upolu and Savaii, the two largest islands in the group, and also some scattered small islands.

When the American naval authorities sent out an expedition in 1900 to establish a “station” at Pago the commanding officer persuaded the chiefs of Tutuila to offer sovereignty to the United States. Four years later the chiefs of the smaller islands followed suit. But it was not until 1929 that these generous gifts were formally accepted by the United States—by Public Resolution No. 89, 70th Congress. The Germans kept control of their portion of Samoa until 1914, when the New Zealanders seized it as part of their war. At the Versailles Peace Conference German Samoa was assigned to New Zealand under a C-class mandate after Woodrow Wilson had blocked the drive for outright annexation. Thus it comes about that in the South Pacific the United States has a common frontier, not with Germany, but with the Dominion of New Zealand.

After all this struggle and risk what did America get? It got, reading from east to west, Rose Island, an uninhabited coral atoll, the Manua group consisting of Tau, Olosega, and Ofu islands, Aunuu Island and Tutuila. (Dr. Margaret Mead wrote *Coming of Age in Samoa* after studies in the Manua group.) In 1925 Swain Island, 210 miles north of Tutuila in the Tokelau group, all the rest of which is controlled by New Zealand, was added to Samoa for administrative purposes. It had long been owned by an American citizen. The total area of American Samoa is 73 square miles, a little more than the District of Columbia. The island of Tutuila has an area of 40 square miles and it is there that the marvellous harbor of Pago Pago is found.

From 1900 the islands were governed

under the executive authority of the President as Commander-in-chief of the Navy. His powers were delegated to the naval officer who happened to be assigned to command the Pago station. Under this arrangement the government was "a thorough if diplomatic absolutism." In 1929 when Senator Hiram Bingham introduced his resolution accepting sovereignty he also included a provision for a Commission to investigate conditions in the islands—the native political pot had been boiling for a decade—and recommend changes in the government. This provision, like the rest of the resolution, followed suggestions made by interested persons in Honolulu. Testifying before Bingham's Commission in Samoa, such natives as had ideas asked for "civil government" and United States citizenship. To them "civil government" seems chiefly to have meant curbs on naval absolutism by giving some power to the natives; and the demand for citizenship appears to have arisen from the ambiguous status of the two or three hundred Samoans living in Hawaii and the smaller group living in California. The Senate accepted Bingham's suggestions for change, including the granting, in part, of the requests of the natives; but in February, 1933, the House rejected them. This left Samoa almost exactly where it was before, the sole difference being that sovereignty was clearly in American hands at last. To-day the Navy governs under the slogan, "Non-exploitation of the natives, non-alienation of the lands, and Samoa for the Samoans." The recent Annual Reports of the Secretary of the Navy contain no illuminating information on conditions in Samoa and, indeed, it would appear that whoever makes up the Report simply copies last year's remarks almost verbatim into this year's Report, changing only a few figures.

Barring the Naval Station, Samoa seems to be a native reserve, with the usual disabilities of such reserves. Private enterprise by whites is discouraged.

But as Professor F. M. Keesing remarks in his invaluable study, the islands have been subjected to missionizing, pacification, economic development, political domination, and educational penetration. These have produced a cultural-pathological situation common throughout Polynesia. The Samoans under American rule are perhaps a little better off than they would be under a power willing to allow whites to get an economic foothold among them. But that they are living in a tropical paradise one may doubt. And as their numbers increase—the population is now double what it was in 1900, totalling about 13,000 including 200 whites on the Naval Station—the pressure on the land resources is intensified. Trouble in Samoa is bound to recur in the future.

All told, the United States has spent about \$10,000,000 in Samoa since 1900 and it is spending now at the approximate rate of \$500,000 a year. Income from customs, harbor dues, and miscellaneous fees is small. The Navy helps the natives get a little income by marketing the copra crop for them and a few natives make a little more—perhaps a total of \$7,000 a year—by selling handicrafts to the tourists. (The last time I was in Pago I contributed \$2.75.) The ships of the Matson Line, an offshoot of the Hawaiian sugar and pineapple trade, call at Pago on the Pacific Coast-Australia run and they make money out of the call since few other ships ever visit the port. (William Webb and Admiral Meade were right!) The fact is that Samoan society in its present phase could not stand up if it were not for the subsidies obtained, directly and indirectly, from the Naval Station.

What role the Pago Station plays in the American defense system to-day is more than a bit mysterious. The most impressive thing on the Station is the radio tower. The naval vessel usually in port wouldn't impress anyone. There is no wharf at which vessels of the size of the Matson liners can tie up. It is necessary to anchor in the stream and

transfer both passengers and freight to shore by lighters. No fortifications were built before 1921 and after that date construction was forbidden by international treaty. The naval quarters are attractive, being built on the style used in the Panama Canal Zone. But the classic description is to be found in Somerset Maugham's story "Rain," that tart if somewhat libelous yarn of life in Pago:

The ship turned sharply and steamed slowly in. It was a great landlocked harbour big enough to hold a fleet of battleships; and all around it rose, high and steep, the green hills. Near the entrance, getting such breeze as blew from the sea, stood the governor's house in a garden. *The Stars and Stripes dangled languidly from a flagstaff.*

Soon, however, the situation may change. For as I write this, the Navy has asked for over eight million dollars to prepare a seaplane base at Pago Pago.

III

The story of the Americans in Samoa is odd and somewhat inconclusive. Their activities with regard to other islands south of Hawaii are also a bit odd. Those worth particular notice are Howland, Jarvis, Baker, Canton, and Enderbury Islands. Two others, Johnston and Palmyra, have already been absorbed into the Hawaiian defense system and can best be discussed in direct relation to it. Midway, Wake, and Guam are islands also owned by the United States but far away from this stepping stone chain. All are mere pin points on the map. But as things stand to-day, if they should suddenly sink beneath the waves they would all be missed.

On August 18, 1856, Congress passed an act which authorized American citizens to take peaceable possession of islands containing guano deposits wherever found, providing that they were not in the possession or occupation of any other government. It was just sixteen years since Justus von Liebig had started off the modern fertilizer industry by announcing that he believed that the

principal plant foods were nitrogen, phosphorus, and potash. His conclusions were quickly supported by the findings of two eminent English experimental agriculturalists, Sir John Lawes and Sir Henry Gilbert. Soon it was known that guano, the excrement of sea birds, was rich in nitrogen and phosphorus and contained also small amounts of potassium. Guano thus assumed commercial importance and for about thirty years the trade in it flourished. Since the turn of the century, however, other sources of the basic constituents of fertilizer have been found. But when guano was in demand American citizens scoured the Caribbean and the South Pacific looking for islands containing deposits of it. They found guano on Howland, Jarvis, and Baker islands among others, all of which were originally discovered by American whalers. Once the guano was exhausted the islands were promptly abandoned to the birds again. But the mapmakers, disliking white space, and assuming that any part of the globe not plainly in the possession of someone else must certainly belong to the British, colored these landspecks red to harmonize them with their nearest neighbors.

Back in 1924, before the prospects of establishing transoceanic air services were at all bright, Charles Evans Hughes, then Secretary of State for President Coolidge, stated that,

It is the opinion of the department that the discovery of lands unknown to civilization, even when coupled with a formal taking of possession, does not support a valid claim to sovereignty unless the discovery is followed by an actual settlement of the discovered country.

Since Howland, Baker, and Jarvis islands had been discovered by American whaling captains but only temporarily occupied, years later, by the guano hunters and then abandoned, the American title to them under this dictum was hardly valid. But by the same token, neither was the British. The status of the islands was, to say the least of it, indeterminate.

It was for that reason, one presumes, that when in 1936 the United States

suddenly decided that it had use for them once again the British raised no objection, in spite of their color on maps. In that year the Coast Guard cutter *Itasca*, acting under the direction of the Division of Territories and Island Possessions of the Department of the Interior, carried some young Hawaiians of the Kamehameha Boys' School of Honolulu to each of the islands, where it left them in charge of meteorological equipment. The government was bent upon improving its weather forecasting data from this general part of the world to assist aviation. On Howland Island a landing field was built. But the boys were also technically settlers and their presence was designed to give the United States valid title to the islands.

About this time Pan-American Airways was proposing to establish a clipper service from Honolulu to Auckland, New Zealand, by way of Kingman Reef—1,100 miles south of Honolulu—and Pago Pago. Several successful trips over the run were made by Captain Musick, but one unlucky day, just after taking off from Kingman, Musick's ship blew up into small fragments. So great an impression had he made on the citizens of Auckland that they are building a memorial to his memory on a point overlooking a lovely stretch of Auckland harbor.

When the Pan-American people revived their idea of a South Pacific service, following the disaster at Kingman, they shifted their run to the west and fixed on Canton and Enderbury Islands as convenient stopping places. The peculiar value of Canton Island is not its size but the fact that there is a superb lagoon there, perfect for the landing of seaplanes. Enderbury Island, near-by, lacks a lagoon and was apparently selected as a possible landing place for land planes. These two islands pretty definitely belong to the Phoenix Group, which is included in the British Gilbert and Ellice Islands Colony governed from Ocean Island under the authority of the British High Commissioner for the Western Pacific who makes his headquarters at Suva in Fiji.

In June, 1937, an amusing event took place at Canton Island. To view a solar eclipse, vessels from the United States and New Zealand carried scientists there. The Americans arrived first and occupied the only really good anchorage. When the New Zealanders arrived they summoned the Americans to give up the anchorage, for the island was a British possession. The Americans politely but definitely refused!

On March 6th of the following year, after significant rumors had appeared in the press, President Roosevelt issued an executive order putting Canton and Enderbury Islands under the Department of the Interior. It was made known that between 1860 and 1880 Americans had occupied Canton while engaged in the guano trade. But since under Mr. Hughes's dictum the island (and neighboring Enderbury as well) could hardly be claimed for this reason, it was stated on good authority that the State Department had adopted a new line of reasoning. In the future claims for coveted territory whose ownership was indeterminate (this chiefly involving Pacific Islands), would rest upon (a) discovery, (b) former occupation, (c) failure of any other nation to occupy; or (d) a combination of these points. The British, evidently very alert to protect their interest in stray islands useful for trans-Pacific air navigation, had taken time by the forelock; for in the previous September, after the contretemps over observing the eclipse, they had sent two radio operators (New Zealanders) and equipment to Canton Island. It was given out that they regarded the island as indispensable to a future Australia-Canada airline. The American occupiers, as usual Hawaiian boys trained to collect meteorological data, did not arrive until March 7, 1938, the day following the President's order. On the 9th Great Britain formally reserved her rights in both Canton and Enderbury islands.

The whole business thereupon went underground. It was announced, however, that no out-and-out dispute be-

tween the United States and Great Britain would take place, sarcastic remarks from Nazi bystanders notwithstanding.

All that the two nations were up to with their extraordinary maneuvers was to establish principles valid for any and all Pacific islands of doubtful status. The task of defining what America thought was wise and proper was handed over to a committee consisting of Jay Pierrepont Moffat, then Chief of the Western European Division of the State Department, now Minister to Canada, Admiral William D. Leahy, now Ambassador to Vichy France, and Ernest H. Gruening, then in charge of the Department of the Interior's Bureau of Territories and Island Possessions, now Governor of Alaska. The British case was presented from time to time by British Ambassador Sir Ronald Lindsay. It was probably formulated chiefly in the Colonial Office in London, though the governments of Australia, New Zealand, and Canada were consulted and also, no doubt, Imperial Airways. The final result is to be found in Executive Agreement Series, No. 45, where it is recorded that the parties agreed, "without prejudice to their respective claims," to administer the islands jointly for fifty years, the first such agreement into which the United States has entered since the short-lived arrangement for control of Samoa made in 1889. The United States—really Pan-American Airways—would install landing facilities and accommodations for passengers at Canton, these to be available at proper rental charges to all airlines incorporated in Great Britain or any of the dominions. (But as thus far the United States has consistently refused to allow the British to land anywhere in the Hawaiian Islands, this privilege is not of much use.) The Canton agreement was made public on April 6, 1939. It was an executive agreement because, unlike a treaty, such a document does not have to be ratified by the Senate. And so the matter rests.

IV

What sum one should get after adding up the foregoing items is impossible to say. There are no answers in the back of this particular book. But some conclusions suggest themselves. They are based on data both ancient and modern.

Back in 1887 Thomas F. Bayard, Secretary of State for President Cleveland, made a statement which is as clear an indication of what was in the minds of those who followed through the tortuous goings-on in Samoa as any ever put on paper. Bayard said that American interest in the Samoan Islands

. . . is mainly because of their geographical position. They lie in the pathway of a commerce that is just being developed. The opening of the northwest coast of North America to civilization and commerce by means of the transcontinental railways had given to this group of islands an interest which they had never had before. . . . Moreover, we all hope for the penetration of the isthmus in some way or other. If that occurs a new feature of interest will be added to them. . . . There is something beyond the mere material value of the land and products, and it is for that reason that the United States desires to see that group of islands maintained for the common use of all nations.

And, as later appeared, the United States was willing to take possession of all or part of them if circumstances required that solution.

The joker in this is that the trade Secretary Bayard saw developing has never come to very much, even after the Panama Canal had been built. In 1938 only 3 per cent of American exports went to Oceania (*i.e.*, the South Pacific Islands, New Zealand and Australia taken together) and only 0.8 per cent of her imports were obtained from there. The United States is in Samoa because men in high places were beguiled by a will o' the wisp—or so it has appeared.

The motivations with regard to the smaller islands are much more practical, or so we think to-day! Guano had its use, and the United States has long encouraged commercial aviation. A line to the South Pacific dominions is an

obvious complement to the line to Manila and Hong Kong. I understand that the clipper service to New Zealand has already justified itself commercially and, if an elaborate scheme for covering the islands with branch lines is carried out, it will be even more profitable.

But other values carry tremendous weight in these days of conflict between nations. Pick up a map outlining the naval zones in the Pacific Ocean, and you will find that the United States is supposed to have complete control of a vast area extending from beyond the Aleutian Islands of Alaska south to Pago Pago and a little farther. Realists may dispute the reality of the control of the southern reaches of this area. According to the same map, Japan has absolute control of East Asian waters and of a great sweep of the Pacific Ocean east of her main islands. There is a huge no-man's-land between the American and Japanese preserves in the North Pacific. The British, for their part, claim control of the area south of the equator, excepting where the Americans cut in at Samoa. These three great naval zones chiefly overlap in the Central Pacific where are found the Japanese mandated islands, the British Gilbert and Ellice Islands Colony, and the American outposts of Wake Island, Guam, and the Philippines, as well as Howland, Jarvis, Baker, Canton, and Enderbury Islands. The Pan-American clipper running from Honolulu to Canton Island, to French New Caledonia, and Auckland, New Zealand—prospectively to Brisbane and down to Sydney, Australia—goes straight through the particular part of the Pacific where all three naval powers are theoretically tight up against one another.

In 1937, when Amelia Earhart took off from New Guinea and disappeared, she was heading for the Howland Island landing field. To search for her the United States Navy combed 250,000 square miles of ocean around Howland Island, working west toward the Japanese mandates and the British Gilberts. In the dispatches recounting this effort

the area covered was consistently referred to as "strategical." It is the area in which the three naval zones meet.

The strategy of the Pacific is a puzzle to the layman and, this writer understands, far from being an open book to the navalists. But one thing is clear. As far as the United States and Japan are concerned they are supreme on their respective sides of the North Pacific Ocean. Neither can successfully attack the other across the Pacific, for the distance from bases is too great. By the same token, it will be difficult, if not impossible, for the United States to retain possession of the Philippines if Japan makes a sudden rush for them. They do not give the United States a secure foothold in Japan's naval zone. For these reasons any important warfare between Japan and the United States in the Pacific is rather apt to come in the central and southern areas of the Pacific; and that warfare will chiefly involve light ships and aircraft. (Significantly enough, Australia and New Zealand are to-day buying American seaplanes for patrol work in coastal waters and the islands.) It will be, on the American side, planned to define the outside limits beyond which the Japanese cannot be allowed to go. And it is in warfare of this character—pressure warfare it may be called—that the United States will, it is likely, collaborate with Australia, New Zealand, and perhaps Great Britain. The recent exchange of naval attachés between the United States and Australia is but one more straw in the wind.

If this proves true, then Pago Pago and the other islands may suddenly assume great importance. On that amazing day the ghosts of Captain Wilkes, Admiral Meade, William Webb, Colonel Steinberger, and the others will have a high old time in whatever heaven they inhabit. For at last they will be more than Americans with odd ideas of how the country should employ its resources. They will be prophets with honor. Pago Pago will have come into its own.