

Life of Laperouse

Ernest Scott

Table of Contents

<u>Laperouse</u>	1
<u>Ernest Scott</u>	1
<u>DEDICATION</u>	1
<u>FOREWORD</u>	1
<u>Chapter I. FAMILY, YOUTH and INFLUENCES</u>	2

Laperouse

Ernest Scott

This page copyright © 2001 Blackmask Online.

<http://www.blackmask.com>

- DEDICATION
- FOREWORD
- Chapter I. FAMILY, YOUTH and INFLUENCES
- Chapter II. THE FRENCH NAVAL OFFICER.
- Chapter III. THE LOVE STORY OF LAPEROUSE.
- Chapter IV. THE VOYAGE OF EXPLORATION.
- Chapter V. THE EARLY PART OF THE VOYAGE.
- Chapter VI. LAPEROUSE IN THE PACIFIC.
- Chapter VII. AT BOTANY BAY.
- Chapter VIII. THE MYSTERY, AND THE SECRET OF THE SEA.
- Chapter IX. CAPTAIN DILLON'S DISCOVERY.
- Chapter X. THE FAME OF LAPEROUSE.

This etext was produced by Col Choat colchoat@yahoo.com.au

DEDICATION

To my friend T.B.E.

FOREWORD

All Sydney people, and most of those who have visited the city, have seen the tall monument to Laperouse overlooking Botany Bay. Many have perhaps read a little about him, and know the story of his surprising appearance in this harbour six days after the arrival of Governor Phillip with the First Fleet. One can hardly look at the obelisk, and at the tomb of Pere Receveur near by, without picturing the departure of the French ships after bidding farewell to the English officers and colonists. Sitting at the edge of the cliff, one can follow Laperouse out to sea, with the eye of imagination, until sails, poops and hulls diminish to the view and disappear below the hazy-blue horizon. We may be sure that some of Governor Phillip's people watched the sailing, and the lessening, and the melting away of the vessels, from just about the same place, one hundred and twenty four years ago. What they saw, and what we can imagine, was really the end of a romantic career, and the beginning of a mystery of the sea which even yet has not lost its fascination.

The story of that life is surely worth telling, and, we trust, worth reading; for it is that of a good, brave and high-minded man, a great sailor, and a true gentleman. The author has put into these few pages what he has gleaned from many volumes, some of them stout, heavy and dingy tomes, though delightful enough to "those who like that sort of thing." He hopes that the book may for many readers touch with new meaning those old weatherworn stones at Botany Bay, and make the personality of Laperouse live again for such as nourish an interest in Australian history.

Chapter I. FAMILY, YOUTH and INFLUENCES

Jean-Francois Galaup, Comte De Laperouse, was born at Albi, on August 23, 1741. His birthplace is the chief town in the Department of Tarn, lying at the centre of the fruitful province of Languedoc, in the south of France. It boasts a fine old Gothic cathedral, enriched with much noble carving and brilliant fresco painting; and its history gives it some importance in the lurid and exciting annals of France. From its name was derived that of a religious sect, the Albigeois, who professed doctrines condemned as heretical and endured severe persecution during the thirteenth century.

But among all the many thousands of men who have been born, and have lived, and died in the old houses of the venerable city, none, not even among its bishops and counts, has borne a name which lives in the memory of mankind as does that of the navigator, Laperouse. The sturdy farmers of the fat and fertile plain which is the granary of France, who drive in to Albi on market days, the patient peasants of the fields, and the simple artisans who ply their primitive trades under the shadow of the dark-red walls of St. Cecile, know few details, perhaps, about the sailor who sank beneath the waters of the Pacific so many years ago. Yet very many of them have heard of Laperouse, and are familiar with his monument cast in bronze in the public square of Albi. They speak his name respectfully as that of one who grew up among their ancestors, who trod their streets, sat in their cathedral, won great fame, and met his death under the strange, distant, southern stars.

His family had for five hundred years been settled, prominent and prosperous, on estates in the valley of the Tarn. In the middle of the fifteenth century a Galaup held distinguished office among the citizens of Albi, and several later ancestors are mentioned honourably in its records. The father of the navigator, Victor Joseph de Galaup, succeeded to property which maintained him in a position of influence and affluence among his neighbours. He married Marguerite de Resseguier, a woman long remembered in the district for her qualities of manner and mind. She exercised a strong influence over her adventurous but affectionate son; and a letter written to her by him at an interesting crisis of his life, testifies to his eager desire to conform to his mother's wishes even in a matter that wrenched his heart, and after years of service in the Navy had taken him far and kept him long from her kind, concerning eyes.

Jean-Francois derived the name by which he is known in history from the estate of Peyrouse, one of the possessions of his family. But he dropped the "y" when assuming the designation, and invariably spelt the name "Laperouse," as one word. Inasmuch as the final authority on the spelling of a personal name is that of the individual who owns it, there can be no doubt that we ought always to spell this name "Laperouse," as, in fact, successors in the family who have borne it have done; though in nearly all books, French as well as English, it is spelt "La Perouse." In the little volume now in the reader's hands, the example of Laperouse himself has been followed.

On this point it may be remarked concerning another navigator who was engaged in Australian exploration, that we may lose touch with an interesting historical fact by not observing the correct form of a name. On maps of Tasmania appears "D'Entrecasteaux Channel." It was named by and after Admiral Bruny Dentrecasteaux, who as commander of the RECHERCHE and ESPERANCE visited Australian waters. We shall have something to say about his expedition towards the close of the book. Now, Dentrecasteaux sailed from France in 1791, while the Revolution was raging. All titles had been abolished by a decree of the National Assembly on July 19th, 1790. When he made this voyage, therefore, the Admiral was not Bruny D'Entrecasteaux, a form which implied a territorial titular distinction; but simply Citizen Dentrecasteaux. The