

## NEW MOLLUSCS FROM VANIKORO.

By

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(Plate V.)

Vanikoro is famed in the history of conchological science through the collections made there by Quoy and Gaimard about one hundred years ago. These celebrated naturalists were on board the French exploring vessel the "Astrolabe," which was at Hobart when news arrived of the fate of the missing *La Pérouse*. This ship immediately sailed for Vanikoro to verify the report, and while there these naturalists gathered a rich harvest. Many molluscs were collected, and many beautiful paintings from life of these animals were secured. The French Government of that time financed the publication of these in an excellent style, and this work has never been surpassed. The lifelike figures are excellent, full of action, and their reproduction is unequalled. Many new species were named in this account, and through the beautiful figures presented they were easily recognized. Moreover, the material, being deposited in the Paris Museum, was always available to the French malacologists who were busy working at that time.

Since then no expedition has touched Vanikoro and brought back molluscs, and in the present day usage of geographical forms this was a matter of regret. In the Australian Museum there are fairly large collections from New Britain, Funafuti, New Caledonia and Queensland, and species described as from Vanikoro are commonly represented in these series, Vanikoro itself being about equidistant from each. In some cases the same Vanikoro name had been allotted to two separable forms, and without topotypes the exact discrimination of the Vanikoro species was impossible.

Messrs. E. le G. Troughton and A. Livingstone, Zoologists of The Australian Museum, were invited by Mr. N. S. Heffernan, District Officer, to visit the Santa Cruz Group and make natural history collections, and this invitation was gratefully accepted.

The results are excellent and will be dealt with in detail later, but as this Vanikoro expedition is of universal interest this brief note is written to bring it before the scientific world at large.

Quoy and Gaimard recorded some seventy-five species from Vanikoro and Tukopia, while Messrs. Troughton and Livingstone brought back nearly two hundred and fifty species. Most of the species described by Quoy and Gaimard have been recovered, and these have proved invaluable in determining the forms.