

No. 602.—NORTH ATLANTIC.

Bay of Biscay—Caution as to Crossing.

Notice is hereby given, that during the years from 1897 to 1906, both inclusive, five vessels crossing the Bay of Biscay have been wrecked in the vicinity of Cape Villano on the south side of the bay, and seven vessels on Ushant, or the rocks near it, on the north side of the bay. Although this is a small percentage of the many vessels crossing the bay, these disasters might have been prevented with proper caution.

These casualties occurred from two causes:—

1. A strong set to the eastward when crossing the bay.
2. The neglect to obtain frequent observations so that the exact set may be known and allowed for.

With regard to (1) it is well known that when crossing any bay with an onshore wind, and beam swell, a vessel is always set in, more or less, towards the shore, and although this inshore set has a tendency to run along the coast of the bay and out at the salient points at each end, or perhaps only at one end, it must be borne in mind that the outward set, although it may be running with some speed, is a narrow belt, crossed in a very short space of time, whereas the set experienced in crossing the bay may have affected the vessel for very many hours.

These general facts are intensified in the Bay of Biscay where the swell of the Atlantic is constantly setting in, and the prevailing wind is on shore; moreover, the off-set from the bay is confined to the north end, as on the south end the current more usually sets eastward along the north coast of Spain. A considerable easterly set may therefore be always expected when crossing the bay and proceeding either in a northerly or southerly direction, and the only outset is a narrow stream current at the north end by Chaussée de Sein.

In clear weather, when the heavenly bodies are visible, and the horizon is good, the effect of any set upon the vessel can readily be ascertained by obtaining frequent astronomical observations, more especially star observations at twilight, morning and evening, when both the latitude and longitude can be found accurately. But in thick weather, when the heavenly bodies are obscured, it is folly to attempt to round either Ushant or Finisterre at a distance of less than 30 or 40 miles, for the onshore winds generally bring cloud, which develops into fog, or heavy mist, when it reaches the elevated land at each end of the bay, and the fog signals are not heard against the wind. Moreover there is little to be gained by rounding Ushant at a distance of 10 instead of 40 miles.

For other cautions mariners are referred to the Sailing Directions for the West Coasts of France, Spain, and Portugal, 1900, pages 13, 32, 33, 35, 36, and 37.

These facts are published for the information of mariners, and in the hope that with proper consideration the disasters which occasionally occur when crossing the Bay of Biscay may be entirely prevented.

No. 603.—BRAZIL—BAHIA.

Bahia de Todos os Santos—Shoal in Approach.

Information, dated 6th June, 1906, has been received through the Board of Trade of the

existence of a shoal situated at a distance of 4½ miles S. 62° E. from San Antonio Point Light, Bahia de Todos os Santos.

Approximate position, lat. 13° 2' S., long. 38° 27½' W.

It has been placed on the chart as a rock with a depth of less than 6 feet over it.

[Variation 13° Westerly in 1906.]

This Notice affects the following Admiralty Charts:—River Tariri to Contas, No. 2262; Bahia, No. 540. Also, South America Pilot, Part I, 1902, page 127.

No. 604.—ENGLAND—SOUTH COAST.

Royal Sovereign Shoals—Non-Existence of Wreck Eastward of.

With reference to Notice to Mariners No. 488 of 1906:—

Information, dated 6th June, 1906, has been received from the Trinity House, London, that the wreck reported to be sunk at a distance of about 7½ miles to the eastward of the Royal Sovereign Light-vessel has been unsuccessfully searched for on more than one occasion, neither it nor any obstruction being found in this position. The wreck has, therefore, been erased from the chart.

Approximate position, lat. 50° 45' N., long. 0° 38½' E.

This Notice affects the following Admiralty Charts:—English Channel, No. 2675c; Owers to Dungeness, No. 2451; Royal Sovereign Shoals to Dungeness, No. 536. Also, Channel Pilot, Part I, 1900, page 309.

No. 605.—AFRICA, WEST COAST—CAMEROON COAST.

Kribi Light—Discontinued, New Light Intended.

With reference to Notice to Mariners No. 639 of 1904:—

The German Government has given further notice, dated 2nd June, 1906, that the red fixed dioptric light at Kribi, Cameroon Coast, was on 15th April discontinued. It is intended to replace it in about three months' time by a flashing light in the same position.

Approximate position on Chart No. 1361, lat. 2° 56' N., long. 9° 55' E.

Further notice will be given.

This Notice affects the following Admiralty Charts:—Fernando Po to Cape Lopez, No. 1361, Also, List of Lights, Part IV, 1906, No. 771; Africa Pilot Supplement, Part II, 1901, page 45; and Supplement, 1905, page 5.

ERRATUM.—With reference to Notice to Mariners No. 570 of 1906, the United States Government has given further notice, dated 25th May, 1906, that the period of Edgemoor light (occulting) is ten seconds, thus:—Light, eight seconds; eclipse, two seconds, and not twenty seconds as originally stated.

By command of their Lordships,

A. Mostyn Field, Hydrographer.

Hydrographic Office, Admiralty, London,
13th to 14th June, 1906.