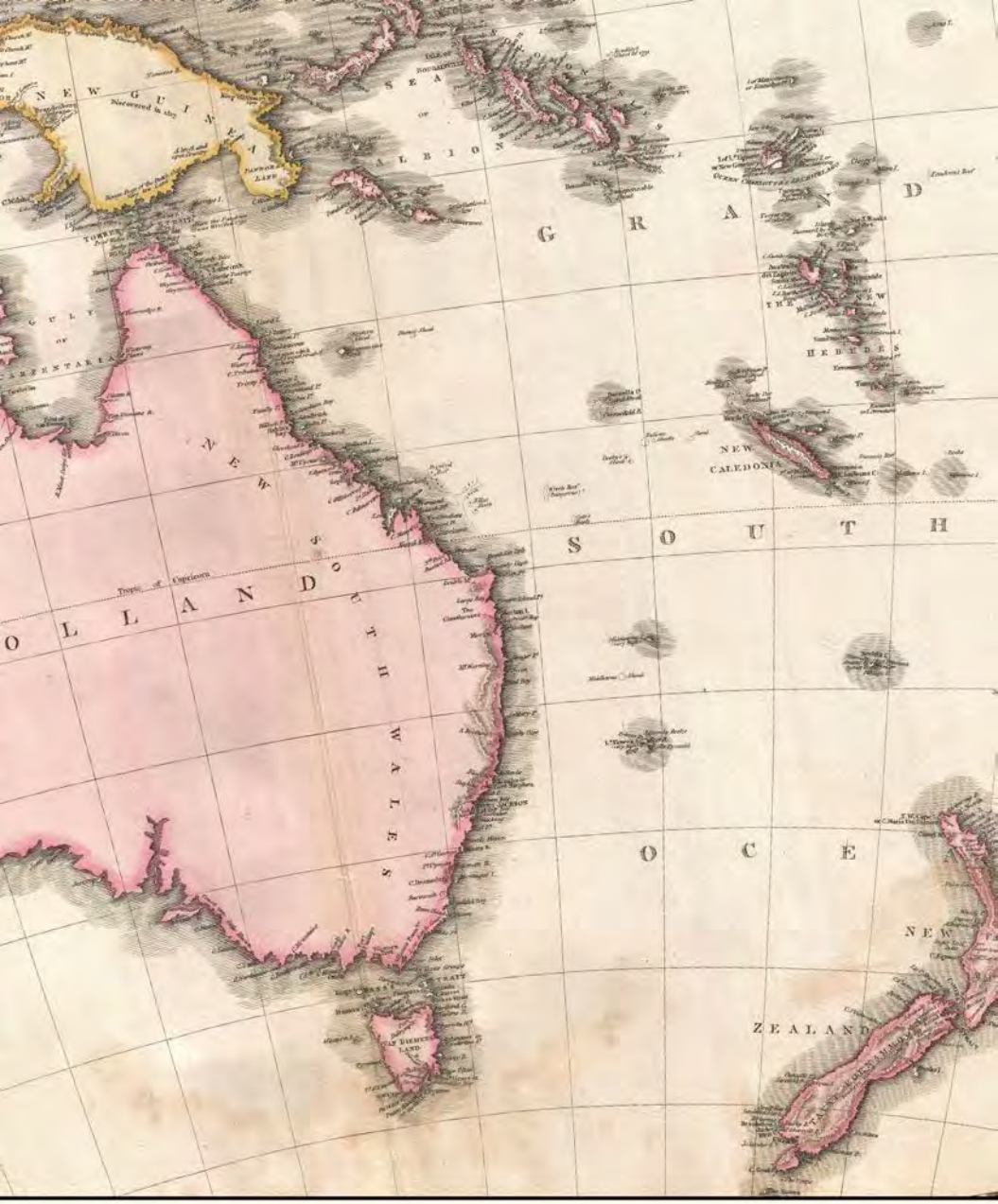


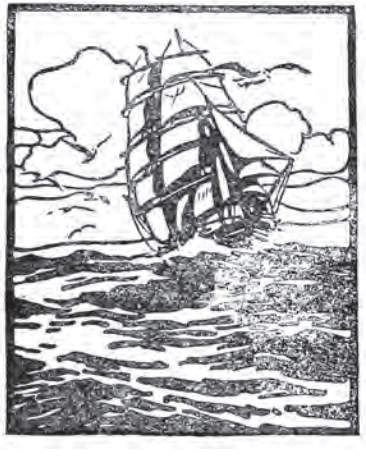
Our Australasian Story

H.E. Marshall

Our Australasian Story

Stories of Australia and New Zealand

Told to Children by H.E. MARSHALL
With pictures by J. R. SKELTON



LIVING BOOK PRESS

AUSTRALIA

NEW ZEALAND

ABOUT THIS BOOK

"The Empire upon which the sun never sets." We all know these words, and we say them with a somewhat proud and grand air, for that vast Empire is ours. It belongs to us, and we to it.

But although we are proud of our Empire it may be that some of us know little of its history. We only know it as it now is, and we forget perhaps that there was a time when it did not exist. We forget that it has grown to be great out of very small beginnings. We forget that it did not grow great all at once, but that with pluck and patience our fellow-countrymen built it up by little and by little, each leaving behind him a vaster inheritance than he found. So, "lest we forget," in this book I have told a few of the most exciting and interesting stories about the building up of this our great heritage and possession.

But we cannot

> "Rise with the sun and ride with the same,
> Until the next morning he rises again."

We cannot in one day grid the whole world about, following the sun in his course, visiting with him all the many countries, all the scattered islands of the sea which form the mighty Empire upon which he never ceases to shine. No, it will take us many days to compass the journey, and little eyes would ache, little

brains be weary long before the tale ended did I try to tell of all "the far-away isles of home, where the old speech is native, and the old flag floats." So in this book you will find stories of five of the five chief portions of our Empire only, that of Canada, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, and India.[1] But perhaps some day, if you greet these stories as kindly as you have greeted those of England and of Scotland, I will tell you in another book more stories of Our Empire.

The stories are not all bright. How should they be? We have made mistakes, we have been checked here, we have stumbled there. We may own it without shame, perhaps almost without sorrow, and still love our Empire and its builders. Still we may say,

"Where shall the watchful sun,
England, my England,
Match the master-work you've done,
England, my own?
When shall we rejoice agen
Such a breed of mighty men
As come forward, one to ten,
To the song on your bugles blown,
England—
Down the years on your bugles blown?"

H.E. MARSHALL

Oxford, 1908

1. This collection only includes the sections featuring Australia and New Zealand.

AUSTRALIA

NOTE.—The verses in this part of the books are by Australian writers.

TIMOR SEA
ARAFURA SEA
INDIAN OCEAN
SOUTH PACIFIC OCEAN
New Guinea
Torres St.
C. York
Port Darwin
Arnhem B.
Arnhem L.
Gulf of Carpentaria
Cape York Pen.
Cooktown
Great Barrier Reef
NORTHERN TERRITORY OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA
Mt. Stuart
Tropic of Capricorn
QUEENSLAND
WESTERN AUSTRALIA
SOUTH AUSTRALIA
NEW SOUTH WALES
VICTORIA
TASMANIA
North West C.
Shark Bay
Geraldton
Perth
Fremantle
C. Leeuwin
Albany
King George Sd.
Great Australian Bight
Oodnadatta
L. Eyre
Eyre's Pen.
Port Augusta
Adelaide
Kangaroo I.
Encounter B.
Riverina
Darling Downs
Moreton B.
Brisbane
Sydney
Melbourne
Ballarat
Albury
Bass St.
King I.
Hobart
Launceston
English Miles
Long. East 130 of Greenwich
Barthalomew

CHAPTER I

"THERE IS NOTHING NEW UNDER THE SUN"

WISE people tell us that the land of Australia is perhaps the oldest in the world. At a time when the wide ocean swept over the continent of Europe, when our little island still lay far beneath the rippling waves, the land of Australia stood above the lone waters.

Yet to us Australia is a new discovered country. Long ages ago indeed travellers and learned men told tales of a Great South Land which lay somewhere in the Southern Seas. But no eye had seen that fabled country, no ship had touched that unknown shore. It was a country dim and mysterious as fairyland. On ancient maps we find it marked with rough uncertain lines, "The Southerne Unknowne Lande," but how it came to be so marked, how the stories about it first came to be told, and believed, we shall very likely never know.

It is hard to tell too, who, among white men, first set foot on this great island. If one of the brave sailors of those far-off times did by chance touch upon its shore, he found little there to make him stay, or encourage him to return. For in those days what men chiefly sought was trade. And in Australia there was no place for trade. It was a great, wide, silent land where there were no towns, or even houses. It was peopled only by a few

black savages, who wore no clothes, who had no wants, and who cared for nothing but to eat and drink.

But in the seventeenth century, when Holland was mistress of the seas, and the Dutch planted their flag on every shore, they found their way to the Great South Land.

It was a Dutchman who discovered Tasmania. He called it Van Dieman's Land in honour of the Governor-General of the Dutch East Indies. But the name was afterwards changed to Tasmania, by which name we know it now. The great Gulf of Carpentaria is named after another Dutchman, and all round the northern, western and southern shores, here and there may be found names to remind us of those old Dutch adventurers. But the name New Holland which the Dutch gave to the whole land has long since been forgotten.

The Dutch did little more than discover the coast. They founded no colonies, they built no towns, and so their hold on the land was hardly real. They marked New Holland upon their maps, but they knew little about it. No man knew what a vast land New Holland was, or how far stretching were the rolling plains of which they had had only a glimpse.

Soon Holland as a great sea power gave way to another which was to become still greater. Van Tromp the Dutchman was beaten by Blake the Englishman. And after that the Dutch seem to have lost all interest in the Great South Land.

Then in 1699 a British sailor called Dampier set out on a voyage of discovery to the Southern seas. He was more than half a pirate and had led a life of wild adventure. But he was a daring seaman, and had already been to New Holland more than once. And so King William III. chose him to lead an expedition of discovery.

One February day Dampier sailed out from England, and six months later anchored in a bay on the west coast of New Holland, which he called Shark's Bay, because his men killed and

ate many sharks there. It is still called Shark's Bay.

For some time Dampier cruised along the shores taking note of all that he saw, of the land, the birds, and beasts. Among the birds, Dampier saw gaily coloured parrots and cockatoos, and black swans. Among the beasts, the chief was a curious-looking animal with a long tail and long hind legs upon which it leaped and hopped about. The natives called it Kanguro.

He saw a few natives. They were tall, thin, and black, with blinking eyes and frizzled hair. They had no weapons except wooden spears, they wore no clothes, and their houses, which he only saw in the distance, looked to him like haycocks. But some had no houses at all. "They lay in the open air without covering, the earth being their bed and heaven their canopy. They had no possessions of any kind. Not soe much as a catt or a dog." With such people there was no hope of trade, and in those days no one thought of taking possession of a land unless there was some trade to be done.

Having cruised about for some time and finding no fresh water, Dampier feared to stay longer, lest his men should fall ill in that desert land. So he steered away to the East Indies and from thence sailed homeward.

Many years passed. Now and again a ship touched upon the shores of New Holland but no one took much interest in it. It was a barren, useless land most men thought, a stony desert for the greater part, good enough for the few wild black fellows who lived there, but never a home for white men. Besides this, the British, who were now the great sea power, were busy fighting in India and America, and had little time and few ships to spare for peaceful exploration.

But in the long reign of George III. , when after much fighting Britain was at length at peace with all the world, men once more turned their thoughts to peaceful things. Then in 1768 Captain James Cook was sent upon an exploring expedition.

James Cook had had a very exciting life, but there is no room to tell about it here. As a small boy he was sent to serve in a draper's shop, but at the age of fourteen he ran away to sea, and from then till now when he was forty, his life had been full of excitement and adventure.

In this voyage, Captain Cook sailed all along the eastern coast of Australia, a thing which no white man had ever done. He landed in many places, naming capes, bays, and points, as he passed. One great bay he named Botany Bay, because of the many plants and flowers to be found there. And here he set up the Union Jack, cut the name of his ship and the date of his landing on the trees near, and claimed the land for King George.

Cook and his men had many adventures. At one time they were nearly wrecked. The ship struck upon a rock and stuck fast. The water began to come in so quickly, that although the men worked hard at the pumps, it seemed as if the ship would sink. But luckily the sea was smooth, and there was little wind, and after much hard work they were able to steer into a safe harbour. Here they ran the ship ashore, and found a hole in the bottom big enough to have sunk it. But by good fortune a piece of coral rock had stuck in the hole, and this had saved them.

Having mended the ship as best they could they once more set sail, and at last readied what is now known as Torres Strait, having explored the whole eastern coast of Australia.

At Torres Strait Cook landed. Once more he set up the British flag and claimed the whole eastern coast with all its bays, harbours, rivers, and islands, for King George. And to this great tract he gave the name of New South Wales. There in that far-off land, their little ship, a mere speck between blue sky and bluer sea, this handful of Britons claimed new realms for their king. And to attest their claim, volley upon volley of musketry rolled out, awakening the deep silence of that unknown shore. There was none to answer or deny the challenge, and when

the noise of cannon died upon the quiet air there was only the sigh of trees, the ripple of waves, and the scream of wild birds to break the stillness.

CHAPTER II

THE FOUNDING OF SYDNEY

AFTER Cook sailed away the great island-continent was left once again to silent loneliness. Cook made other voyages, but did not discover much more of Australia, and for many years few white men touched upon the shores of the Great South Land.

Then came the war in which Britain lost all her American colonies. It was a great loss, how great at the time perhaps few knew. But in one way the loss soon began to be felt.

The British in those days instead of keeping evil-doers in prison at home, used to send them to work upon the farms or plantations in America. When America was no longer a part of the British Empire, convicts, as such evil-doers were called, could not be sent there. The prisons at home became full to overflowing. Something had to be done, and at last it was decided to make use of New South Wales and found a colony there to which convicts might be sent.

So on 13th May 1787, the "First Fleet," as it afterwards came to be called by Australians, sailed out on its long voyage. In the eight or ten ships there were about a thousand people. Nearly eight hundred of these were convicts, both men and women, the rest were soldiers and marines to guard them.

With the fleet, as Governor-General of the new colony, went Captain Arthur Phillip.

On the way out the ships stopped at Teneriffe and at Cape Town, where the Dutch Governor received them kindly. Here they took aboard so many cocks and hens, sheep and cattle, that the ships looked more like Noah's arks than anything else.

In June 1788 the new colonists arrived at Botany Bay, where it had been decided to found the colony. But Captain Phillip did not think it a good place, and went exploring in a small boat further north until he found the beautiful Jackson Bay.

Here Captain Phillip decided to found the new colony. He landed and set up the Union Jack, and gathering round the flagstaff, he and his officers drank to the king's health, and to the success of the colony.

The convicts were landed, the soldiers were drawn up in line, guns were fired, and Captain Phillip made a speech to the convicts. He told them that now under a new sky, in a new home, they had once again a chance to forget their evil ways, and begin a new life. Once again they had a chance to prove themselves good British subjects. This was the first speech in the English language that had ever been made in that far-off land, and when Captain Phillip had finished, a British cheer rang out.

Thus the city of Sydney was founded.

Now began a busy time. The stillness of that silent land was broken for ever. All day long the woods rang with the sound of the axe. All day long the ring of hammer and anvil was heard, the tinkle of the mason's trowel, the sighing of the carpenter's saw. There was everything to do. There were houses to build, roads to cut, harbours to make. The land had first to be cleared of trees, and wood and stone had to be quarried and hewn for building. With all this to do, there was little time left for farming.

Besides, among the soldiers, and sailors, and convicts, there were no farmers. None among them knew how to set about the work. The season was dry, the seed which was sown did not sprout, or was eaten by rats, and there was little or no harvest.

The sheep and cattle died, or ran away into the forest and were seen no more.

Soon the food which had been brought from home grew scarce, and the promised ships which were to bring more, did not appear. The little colony began to starve. Convicts and freemen alike grew gaunt and pale. The governor himself knew what it meant to go hungry, for he would not fare better than the others, and he gave up his private stores for the use of all. "If any convict complains," he said, "let him come to Government House, and he will see that we are no better off there."

Hollow-cheeked and faint, every man looked eagerly, longingly, out to sea, straining weary eyes to catch a glimpse of a white sail upon the blue waste of water. Day after day passed. No sail appeared. Little work was done, for men who are always hungry cannot work.

The colonists had brought food for two years. Now three had passed, and still no help came from home. With hundreds and hundreds of miles between them and Britain, they seemed to be cast away and forgotten. They knew nothing of what was happening in the world. They had no means of knowing if they were really forgotten, or if some mischance had befallen the ships sent out to them. There was no way by which they could send a message home. They could do nothing but wait.

At last one morning a ship came in sight What joy there was! The women wept, the men cheered.

Eagerly the colonists crowded round the new arrivals asking for news of home. They heard with joy that they had not been utterly forgotten and neglected. Ships with stores had been sent, but had been wrecked on the way.

Soon another ship arrived, then another and another, The long pain of hunger was at an end, and for a time at least the little colony was saved from starvation. But famine came upon them again, and at one time things were so bad that people who

were asked to dine at Government House were told to bring their own bread with them.

With the ships bringing food to the colony came a regiment of soldiers. They were called the New South Wales Corps. The Marines and their officers, who had come out in the "First Fleet," then went home; and Captain Phillip was not sorry that they should go, for although they had been sent out to help to keep the convicts in order, they had themselves been very unruly, and had added much to the governor's difficulties. These difficulties were great, for it was no easy matter to rule a colony made up of wild, bad men, sent there in punishment of their misdeeds. But, as will be seen, the New South Wales Corps was not much help to the governor.

In December 1792 Governor Phillip, worn out by five years of hardship, gave up his post and sailed home.

He was succeeded by Captain Hunter, but until he arrived the colony was left in the hands of Major Grose, leader of the New South Wales Corps.

Captain Phillip had been gentle and just. He had shared every hardship with the colonists, and had tried to make the convicts better. Grose cared nothing for the improvement of the convicts, and he was utterly unfit to rule. He allowed the soldiers to do as they liked, and they very soon became wild, riotous, and drunken. They took everything into their own hands, and soon from being merely soldiers, they became the merchants and rulers of the colony. Everything coming into the colony had to pass through their hands. But the thing they traded in most, and made most money out of, was rum.

Some free settlers had now come to Sydney, and they were allowed to have convicts to help them on their farms. The officers and men of the New South Wales Corps also took land, and had convict labourers, whom they paid for their work in rum. The soldiers made friends of these convicts, and they

drank and gambled together, so that the convicts, instead of becoming better, became worse, and when Governor Hunter arrived, he found that all the good that Governor Phillip had done was destroyed. The whole colony was filled with riot, disorder, drunkenness, and misery.

Captain Hunter tried to put things right again. He tried to stop the trade in rum, but he was not strong enough to do it. The "Rum Corps," as the soldiers came to be called, had got the upper hand, and they meant to keep it. So during the whole time of Hunter's rule, he had to fight the men and officers of the Rum Corps.

This was the darkest time in the whole history of Australia. But dark though it was, it was now that the foundation of Australia's greatness in trade was laid.

With the New South Wales Corps there had come out a Captain John MacArthur. He, like so many others, received a grant of land, and began farming. He soon saw that the land was very good for rearing sheep, and began to turn his attention to them. But whereas others thought of rearing them for food, he thought of them for their wool. After a great deal of trouble he got "wool-bearing sheep," first from the Cape, and then from King George's own famous flock of Spanish merino sheep.

At this time the British got most of the wool they needed for their great factories from Spain. But Napoleon, who was fighting Britain in every way possible, now tried to ruin their trade by forbidding all the people of Europe to trade with them. When they could no longer get wool from Spain, the British wool trade began to suffer. Then it was that MacArthur stepped in. From his sheep-farm he was soon able to send shiploads of wool to the factories at home, thus preventing the ruin of British manufactures, and bringing wealth to Australia. From then till now the industry has grown, and now millions of pounds' worth of wool are exported every year.

CHAPTER III

THE ADVENTURES OF GEORGE BASS AND MATTHEW FLINDERS

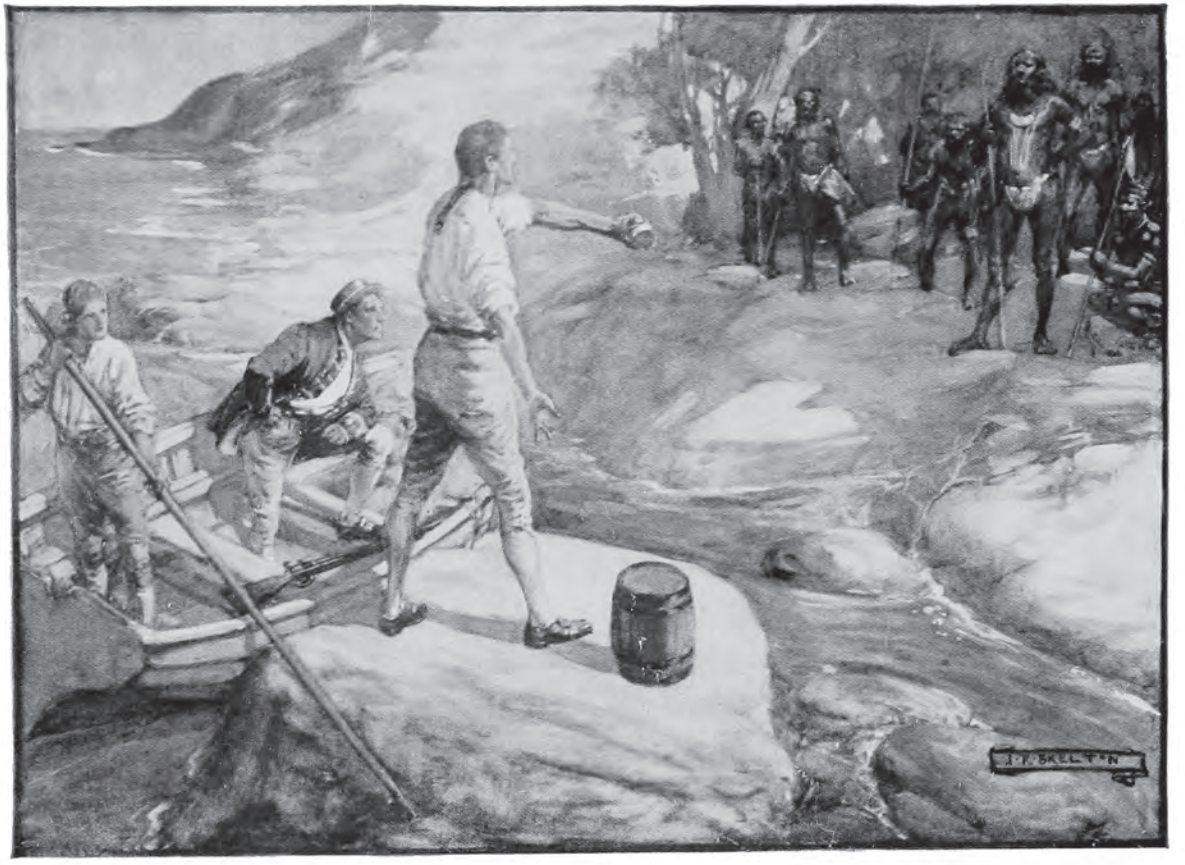
"See! girt with tempest and wing'd with thunder,
And clad with lightning and shod with sleet,
The strong waves treading the swift waves, sunder
The flying rollers with frothy feet.
One gleam like a blood-shot sword swims on
The skyline, staining the green gulf crimson,
A death stroke fiercely dealt by a dim sun,
That strikes through his stormy winding-sheet.

Oh! brave white horses! you gather and gallop,
The storm sprite loosens the gusty reins;
Now the stoutest ship were the frailest shallop
In your hollow backs, on your high arched manes."

A. Lindsay Gordon.

IT was not until the town of Sydney had been founded for some years that anything was known of the great island upon which it was built. But at last people became curious to know more about their new home.

When Captain John Hunter came out from home as Governor of New South Wales, there came with him two daring young men. The one was George Bass, the ship's doctor, and



"NATIVES GATHERED ROUND THEM."

the other Matthew Flinders, a midshipman. Flinders was only twenty-one, and Bass a few years older.

These two soon became fast friends. They both were eager to know more of the land to which they had come, and about a month after they arrived in Sydney, they set out on a voyage of discovery in a little boat of eight feet long. They called it the Tom Thumb, and the whole crew was themselves and a boy.

In this tiny boat they sailed out into the great Pacific, and made for Botany Bay. Here they cruised in and out of all the creeks and bays, making maps of everything, and after an adventurous time they got safely back to Sydney. But they were not long content to remain there. Soon they started out again, and again had many adventures.

Once they got into such a storm that their little boat was nearly swamped. They themselves were soaked to the skin, their drinking water was all spoiled, and, worst of all, their gunpowder was wet and useless.

So they rowed to shore, meaning to land and dry their things, and look for fresh water. As they landed, several natives gathered round them. Bass and Flinders hardly knew what to do. The natives about were said to be very fierce, if not cannibals. There were about fifty of them, armed with spears and boomerangs, against two white men and a boy, who had no weapons, for their guns were rusty and full of sand, and their gunpowder wet.

A boomerang is a native Australian weapon made of hard wood. It is made in peculiar shape, and the black fellows throw it in such a wonderful way that it hits the object it is aimed at, and returns to the hand of the thrower.

Although very uncertain what would happen to them, Bass and Flinders put a bold face on matters. They spread out their gunpowder to dry on the rocks while the natives looked on. They next began to clean their guns, but at this the black fellows became so angry and afraid that they were obliged to stop.

As neither could understand the other's language, talking was rather difficult. But the white men made the savages understand that they wanted water, and they were shown a stream not far off where they filled their cask. They would now have been glad to get away, but their gunpowder was not dry.

Then Flinders thought of something to keep the savages interested. A few days before he had cut the hair and trimmed the beard of a savage, much to his delight. So now he produced a large pair of scissors and persuaded some of those round to let him play barber.

Flinders did not make a very good barber, but that did not matter as the savages were easily pleased. They were very proud of themselves when the cutting and snipping was done, but some of them were very much afraid as the large scissors were nourished so near their noses. Their eyes stared in wild fear, yet all the time they tried to smile as if they liked it, and they looked so funny that Flinders was almost tempted to give a little snip to their ears just to see what would happen. But the situation was too dangerous for such tricks.

At last the powder was dry. Everything was gathered and put into the boat, and the three got safely away, well pleased to have escaped while the savages were still in good humour.

A few nights after this they were nearly wrecked. They had anchored for the night when a terrible storm arose. The waves dashed high over their tiny boat, there were cliffs on one hand, reefs on the other. They hauled up their anchor as quickly as they could and ran before the gale. Bass managed the sail, Flinders steered with an oar, and the boy bailed. "A single wrong movement, a moment's inattention, would have sent us to the bottom," says Flinders.

It was an anxious time, and the darkness of the night added to their danger. But suddenly, when things were so bad that they thought they had not ten minutes more to live, the boat

got through the breakers, and in three minutes the adventurers found themselves in the calm waters of a little cove. In thankfulness for their escape they called it Providential Cove. A few days later, having explored thirty or forty miles of coast, they reached Sydney in safety.

It was not long before Bass set out exploring again. This time Flinders could not go, as he had to attend to his duties on board ship. Alone Bass discovered more of the coast, but the greatest thing that he did was to make sure that Tasmania was not joined to Australia, but was a separate island. And the strait between Tasmania and Australia is called Bass Strait after him.

It would take too long to tell of all that Bass and Flinders did, and of all the adventures they had. After a little, Bass sailed away to South America on a trading expedition, and was never heard of more. It is thought that he was captured by the Spaniards, and made to work as a slave in the silver mines. If that is so, it was a terrible end for this brave sailor who loved the free life upon the ocean waves. It is pitiful to think that he, who had felt the sting of the salt spray upon his cheek, and the taste of it upon his lips, had henceforth to toil in a dark, close mine, a broken-hearted captive.

Even after his friend had gone, Flinders did a great deal of exploring. He sailed all round the coasts of Australia in a rotten, little boat called the *Investigator*. "A more deplorable, crazy vessel than the *Investigator* is perhaps not to be seen," said the captain who later, with great difficulty, brought her home to England. When Flinders reached Sydney he found that some of the planking was so soft that a stick could be poked through it. It was in such ships that those brave sailors dared the stormy seas! But Flinders was anxious to reach home, for he had made many maps of the coast, and had filled many note-books, and he wanted to have them published. So he left the *Investigator*, and sailed home as a passenger in another ship.

They had not gone far, however, when one dark and stormy night they were wrecked upon a coral reef. All night the storm raged, the winds blew, and the waves dashed over the wretched, weary men. But when morning came they saw a sandbank near, and upon this they managed to land, only three men being lost in the storm.

Luckily they were able to save most of the food and water out of the wrecked vessel, and were soon settled on their sandbank. They made tents of sails and spars, planted a flagstaff, and ran up a blue ensign with the Union Jack upside down as a signal of distress. And so they prepared to wait until some passing ship should find them and take them off. But it was by no means a likely place for ships to pass, and after a few days Flinders decided to take one of the ship's boats which had been saved from the wreck, and sail back to Sydney to bring help.

They named the little boat the *Hope*, and one fine morning Flinders, with thirteen other men, set sail. As they launched out they were followed by the cheers and good wishes of their shipwrecked comrades, and one of them, having asked leave of the captain, ran to the flagstaff, tore down the flag, and ran it up again with the Union Jack uppermost. This he did to show how sure they were that the voyage would be a success, and that Flinders would bring help.

So it was with cheerful hearts that Flinders and his brave followers began their long journey of two hundred and fifty leagues in an open boat. And like heroes they bore every hardship which came upon them. The weather became rainy and cold, and they were often drenched to the skin and had no means of drying or warming themselves. Tossed about on the huge, hollow waves like a cockle shell, in danger from sharks and whales, they yet escaped every peril, and after ten days of hardship and toil they arrived safely at Sydney.

Flinders at once went to Government House. Captain King

was by this time governor, and he was a good friend to Flinders, who now found him sitting at dinner. The governor stared in astonishment at the wild, unshorn, ragged man with lean, brown face and bright eyes, who walked into the room. It was some minutes before he knew him to be his friend Matthew Flinders, who he thought was many hundreds of miles on his way to England. But when he realised who it was, and listened to the tale of disaster, his eyes filled with tears.

At once the governor agreed to send help to the ship-wrecked men, but it was some days before ships could be got ready, and every day seemed to Flinders a week. He was so afraid that if he did not get back quickly the men on the sandbank would grow tired of waiting, give up hope, and try to save themselves in an open boat, and so perhaps all be drowned before help came.

But at length everything was ready. Three ships set sail and safely reached the narrow, sea-swept sandbank, and all the shipwrecked men were rescued.

Flinders then went on his way to England with his precious maps and plans, a few only of which had been lost in the wreck. But the ship in which he went was so small and so leaky that it could not carry enough food and water for so long a voyage. Flinders was therefore obliged to stop at every port he came to for fresh supplies. The French and British were again at war, and at Mauritius, which then belonged to France, he was taken prisoner, in spite of the fact that he had a passport from Napoleon.

Flinders was treated as a spy, and all his journals and maps were taken from him. And now his fate was little better than that of his friend Bass. For seven long years he was kept a prisoner, eating his heart out with desire for freedom. At last he was set free, and after some more adventures he reached home.

But his troubles were not at an end. He now discovered that a French sailor had stolen his maps and journal, and that he had published them in France as his own, having changed all the

names which Flinders had given the places into French names. The name Australis, which Flinders had been among the first to use, he had changed to Terre de Napoleon—that is, land of Napoleon. And for many a long day Australia was marked in French atlases as Terre de Napoleon.

It was a bitter blow. But broken in health and worn with long hardships and imprisonments though he was, Flinders was not yet beaten. He gave up the rest of his life to writing an account of his travels, which he called A Voyage to Terra Australis. But, sad to say, upon the very day that it was published, he died. To the end he was a sailor and adventurer. Almost his last words were, "I know that in future days of exploration my spirit will rise from the dead and follow the exploring ships."

It was by such men of daring, by such deeds of valour and of long endurance, that the outlines of Australia were traced upon our maps.