

A
V O Y A G E
TO
T E R R A A U S T R A L I S ;

UNDERTAKEN FOR THE PURPOSE OF COMPLETING THE DISCOVERY OF THAT
VAST COUNTRY,

AND PROSECUTED IN THE YEARS

1801, 1802, AND 1803,

IN

HIS MAJESTY'S SHIP THE INVESTIGATOR,
AND SUBSEQUENTLY IN THE ARMED VESSEL PORPOISE AND
CUMBERLAND SCHOONER.

WITH AN ACCOUNT OF THE

SHIPWRECK OF THE PORPOISE,

ARRIVAL OF THE CUMBERLAND AT MAURITIUS, AND IMPRISONMENT OF THE
COMMANDER DURING SIX YEARS AND A HALF IN THAT ISLAND.

BY MATTHEW FLINDERS,

COMMANDER OF THE INVESTIGATOR.

IN TWO VOLUMES, WITH AN ATLAS.

VOL. II.

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1814.

1802.
October.
Saturday 30.

high enough for altitudes to be taken for the time keepers. Soon after daylight, the natives were with us again, in seven canoes; some of them came under the stern, and fifteen or twenty of the people ascended on board, bringing in their hands pearl-oyster shells and necklaces of cowries; with which, and some bows and arrows, they obtained more of the precious *tooree*. Wishing to secure the friendship and confidence of these islanders to such vessels as might hereafter pass through Torres' Strait, and not being able to distinguish any chief amongst them, I selected the oldest man, and presented him with a hand-saw, a hammer and nails, and some other trifles; of all which we attempted to show him the use, but I believe without success; for the poor old man became frightened, on finding himself to be so particularly noticed.

At this time we began to heave short for weighing, and made signs to the Indians to go down into their canoes, which they seemed unwilling to comprehend; but on the seamen going aloft to loose the sails, they went hastily down the stern ladder and ship's sides, and shoved off; and before the anchor was up they paddled back to the shore, without our good understanding having suffered any interruption.

The colour of these Indians is a dark chocolate; they are active, muscular men, about the middle size, and their countenances expressive of a quick apprehension. Their features and hair appeared to be similar to those of the natives of New South Wales, and they also go quite naked; but some of them had ornaments of shell work, and of plaited hair or fibres of bark, about their waists, necks, and ancles. Our friend Bongaree could not understand any thing of their language, nor did they pay much attention to him; he seemed, indeed, to feel his own inferiority, and made but a poor figure amongst them. The arms of these people have been described in the voyage of captain Bligh (Introduction, p. xxiii); as also the canoes, of which the annexed plate, from a drawing by Mr. Westall, gives a correct representation. The two masts, when not wanted,

are laid along the gunwales; when set up, they stand abreast of each other in the fore part of the canoe, and seemed to be secured by one set of shrouds, with a stay from one mast head to the other. The sail is extended between them; but when going with a side wind, the lee mast is brought aft by a back stay, and the sail then stands obliquely. In other words, they brace up by setting in the head of the lee mast, and perhaps the foot also; and can then lie within seven points of the wind, and possibly nearer. This was their mode, so far as a distant view would admit of judging; but how these long canoes keep to the wind, and make such way as they do, without any after sail, I am at a loss to know.

1802.
October.
Saturday 30.

Murray's largest island is nearly two miles long, by something more than one in breadth; it is rather high land, and the hill at its western end may be seen from a ship's deck at the distance of eight or nine leagues, in a clear day. The two smaller isles seemed to be single hills, rising abruptly from the sea, and to be scarcely accessible; nor did we see upon them any fires, or other marks of inhabitants. On the shores of the large island were many huts, surrounded by palisades, apparently of bamboo; cocoa-nut trees were abundant, both on the low grounds and the sides of the hills, and plantains, with some other fruits, had been brought to us. There were many Indians sitting in groups upon the shore, and the seven canoes which came off to the ship in the morning, contained from ten to twenty men each, or together, about a hundred. If we suppose these hundred men to have been one half of what belonged to the islands, and to the two hundred men, add as many women and three hundred children, the population of Murray's Isles will amount to seven hundred; of which nearly the whole must belong to the larger island.

The *latitude* of the highest hill, deduced from that of the ship at the following noon, is $9^{\circ} 54'$ south, and *longitude* by the time keeper corrected, $144^{\circ} 2'$ east; being $3'$ north, and $20'$ east of its position by captain Edwards. A regular *tide* of about one knot an hour set