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Excerpt

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PART I

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THE EARLY VOYAGERS.

Luis Vaez de Torres was second in command to Pedro Fernandez de Quirós in his voyage from Callao to Melanesia. Having discovered Espiritu Santo in April 1606, Quirós returned to Acapulco, but Torres went west, and about the middle of July 1606 he fell in with a coast, which he called “the beginning of New Guinea”, apparently the Louisiade archipelago, as de Bougainville subsequently [1768] named it. He bore to the south side of New Guinea, along the Gulf of Papua, and eventually passed through “an archipelago of Islands without number. . . . Here (at the end of the 11th degree) were very large Islands. . . they were inhabited by black people, very corpulent, and naked: their arms were lances, arrows, and clubs of stone ill fashioned. We could not get any of their arms” (James Burney, *History of voyages in the South Sea*, pt. II, 1806, Appendix No. 1, p. 475).

“Torres passed through this strait in 1606, but despite the great importance of the discovery, its existence remained unknown until 1762, from the jealousy of the Spanish monarchy, which kept the reports of its navigators a secret from the world. At the time in question, however, Manilla fell into our hands, and in the archives of that colony, a duplicate copy of Torres’s letter to the King of Spain was found by the hydrographer, Mr Dalrymple. The passage was now made known, and in tardy justice to the discoverer it received the appellation of Torres’ Strait” (J. Lort Stokes, 1846, I, p. 368). The date 1762 is taken from Flinders, but Dalrymple himself admits that as late as 1790 he had not yet seen the document. H. N. Stevens maintains that Don Diego de Prado was really in command on this voyage and not Torres (*New Light on the Discovery of Australia*, London, 1930).

There had, however, long been a suspicion that New Guinea was an island. Lord Amherst and Basil Thomson (*Discovery of the Solomon Islands by A. de Mendaña*, Hakluyt Society, 1901) give (p. lxxii) a map “From a chart dated 1592 in the ‘Orbis Terrarum’ of Abraham Ortelius” in which Nova Guinea is separated from Terra Australis by a wide strait, but with the remark “quae ansit insula, aut pars continentis Australis, incertum”. Another map by Abraham Ortelius in *Theatrum orbis terrarum*, 1589 (and London, 1606) does not add this qualification. It seems reasonable, therefore, to assume that some navigator had discovered Torres Straits at least seventeen years before Torres passed through them. I have a note that the strait is shown in a map of 1571.

Willem Janszoon of Amsterdam sailed in the *Duifken* or *Duyphen* from Bantam, Java, on November 28, 1605, hoping to discover more about New Guinea. He reached the coast of New Guinea in lat. 5° S. and followed the coast round Prince Frederick Henry Island to the entrance of Torres Straits. Thence he steered south and traced the eastern shores of

the Gulf of Carpentaria to lat. 13° 45' S.; he thought it was part of New Guinea. This is the first record of the discovery of Australia (March 1606).

Jan Carstensz in 1623 anchored well within Endeavour Strait, but easterly winds hindered his progress and he became entangled in the shallows round Muralug and with fervent thanksgiving he escaped westwards.

Abel Tasman reached Torres Straits in 1644, but he mistook it for a gulf and went on to explore the Gulf of Carpentaria.

These Dutch voyagers held the commonly believed opinion that New Guinea and Australia formed one continent.

James Cook, coming from the east, rounded Cape York in 1770 and finally demonstrated the validity of the discovery by Torres that New Guinea was separated from Australia.

On August 22, 1770, Cook landed on Possession Island in Endeavour Strait with a party of men, accompanied by Mr Banks and Dr Solander. He says: "The Eastern Coast [of Australia] from the Lat. of 38° S. down to this place, I am confident, was never seen or Visited by any European before us; and notwithstanding I had in the Name of his Majesty taken possession of several places upon this Coast, I now once More hoisted English Colours, and in the Name of His Majesty King George the Third took possession of the whole Eastern coast from the above Lat. down to this place by the Name of New Wales,¹ together with all the Bays, Harbours, Rivers, and Islands, situated upon the said Coast; after which we fired 3 Volleys of small Arms, which were answer'd by the like number from the Ship...". "Before and after we Anchor'd we saw a Number of People upon this Island, Arm'd in the same manner as all the others we have seen, Except one man, who had a bow and a bundle of Arrows, the first we have seen upon this Coast... We saw upon all the Adjacent Lands and Islands a great number of smokes—a certain sign that they are inhabited—and we have daily seen smokes on every part of the Coast we have lately been upon. Between 7 and 8 o'Clock a.m. we saw several naked people, all or most of them Women, down upon the beach picking up Shells, etc.; they had not a single rag of any kind of Cloathing upon them, and both these and those we saw yesterday were in every respect the same sort of People we have seen everywhere upon the Coast. 2 or 3 of the Men we saw Yesterday had on pretty large breast plates, which we supposed were made of pearl Oyster Shells; this was a thing, as well as the Bow and Arrows, we had not seen before" (*Captain Cook's Journal*, ed. Capt. Wharton, 1893, pp. 311–12). Thus the first Torres Straits islanders reported on by a European were Kauralaig, armed with bows and arrows and apparently with javelins, and wearing pearl-shell breast-plates. The nudity of the women can be attributed to their close relations with Australians of Cape York peninsula.

Capt. Cook expresses his "no small satisfaction, not only because the danger and fatigues of the Voyage was drawing near to an end, but by being able to prove that New Holland and New Guinea are 2 separate Lands or Islands, which until this day hath been a doubtful point with Geographers" (*l.c.* p. 314). In a footnote, Capt. Wharton adds, in reference to Luis Vaez de Torres: "He afterwards passed through the Strait separating New Guinea from Australia, which now bears his name. This fact, however, was little known, as the Spaniards suppressed all account of the voyage; and though it leaked out later, the report was so vague that it was very much doubted whether he had really passed this way. On most charts and maps of the period, New Guinea was shown joined to Australia, and to Cook the establishment of the Strait may fairly be given".

¹ "The Admiralty copy, as well as that belonging to Her Majesty, calls it New South Wales" (*fn.* p. 312).

After the mutineers of the *Bounty* in 1789 had forced their commander, Lieut. William Bligh, to embark in the launch, he steered for Timor and came up inside the Great Barrier Reef, sailed between several islands [Albany Islands] and “a high mountainous island with a flat top [Mount Adolphus], and four [three] rocks to the S E of it, that I call the Brothers, being on my starboard hand. Soon after, an extensive opening appeared in the main land, with a number of high islands in it. I called this the Bay of Islands” (Bligh, 1790, p. 64). The following is taken from Ida Lee, 1920, p. 61: “He afterwards wrote in his Journal: ‘I have little doubt that the opening which I have named Bay of Islands is Endeavour Strait, and that our track was to the northward of Prince of Wales Islands’. He continued to steer through Torres Strait where he saw several islands; the northernmost was a mountainous island [having on it a very high round hill] (Banks Island on which is Mount Augustus) and a smaller one ‘was remarkable for a single peaked hill’ (Mount Ernest Island). Bligh passed round Wednesday Island which he named, fell in with a reef to the north-west of it (North-West Reef), and passing between it and Wednesday Island went through Prince of Wales Channel out of Torres Strait [in June 1789]. By passing north of Prince of Wales Island, while Cook had passed south of it, Bligh opened up a new channel” (p. 62). “A small island was now seen bearing W, at which I arrived before dark, and found that it was only a rock, where boobies resort, for which reason I called it Booby Island. . . I find that Booby Island was seen by Captain Cook, and, by a remarkable coincidence of ideas, received from him the same name” (Bligh, p. 66).

Capt. E. Edwards in H.M.S. *Pandora* on August 25, 1791, when returning from Tahiti with the mutineers of the *Bounty*, made for Torres Straits and discovered a “reef composed of very large stones and called it Stony-reef Island” [? Bramble cay or the Black rocks to the southwest], later he saw an island to the west [probably Erub]. Next day he “discovered four islands, to which the name of Murray’s Islands was given. On the top of the largest, there was something resembling a fortification. We saw at the same time three two-masted boats” (Hamilton, 1793, p. 101). The mistake of “four islands” was due to his not visiting them; the “fortification” was probably the fissured rocks of the crater at the top of the hill Gelam, in Mer, cf. Haddon, etc., 1894, pl. xxiii, fig. 2. One of his boats found a passage through the Great Barrier Reef, but, before he could utilise it, the *Pandora* was wrecked on August 28, and the frigate’s boats passed through Torres Straits and arrived at Timor. He gave the name of Wolf’s Bay to a bay apparently on the north coast of Muralūg and named Hawkesbury’s Island (*l.c.* p. 125). For the account of his landing on Muralūg, see p. 65.

Capt. W. Bligh came a second time to Torres Straits in 1792 with H.M.S. *Providence* and the brig *Assistant* commanded by Lieut. N. Portlock. The objects of his mission were to transport the bread-fruit tree from Tahiti to the West Indies and on his way to explore a new passage through the Straits; in both of these he was successful. As no account of this voyage had been published, Mathew Flinders, who was a midshipman on the *Providence*, gave extracts from his own journal in his *Voyage* (I, 1814, pp. xix–xxx). Miss Ida Lee (Mrs C. B. Marriott), who had access to Bligh’s log-books, has given (1920) a full account (pp. 173–200) of this memorable voyage, which laid the foundation of our present charts of Torres Straits and gave the first account of its inhabitants. Miss Lee also gives extracts (pp. 248–78) from Portlock’s journal, written on board the *Assistant*, which supplement Bligh’s journal.

Bligh sighted “Island A”, Ērub, on September 4, 1792, and subsequently named it

Darnley Island. The next day he saw and described from a distance "Islands B and C", which unbeknown to him had been named the Murray Islands by Edwards in the previous year. He discovered and named the following islands: Darnley, Nepean, Stephen, Campbell, Dalrymple, Rennel, Marsden, Keats, Yorke islands, Warrior, Dungeness, Arden, Turtle-backed, Long, Cap, The Brothers, Mount Cornwallis, Banks and Mount Augustus (the "mountainous island"; 1st voyage), Cornwallis, Burke, Turnagain, Jervis, Mulgrave, Mount Ernest (the peaked hill of the 1st voyage), Possession (now North Possession), Tobin, Portlock, Bond, Passage and Black Rock. Apparently the only islands on which landing took place were Dalrymple and (North) Possession. The following keys (cays) were named: Canoe, Clifton's, Tobin's, Pearce's, Nichol's, Watson's, a large number of sandbanks, shoals and coral reefs were charted. September 17: "The small Isles next to us were without inhabitants. I therefore sent Lieutenant Guthrie with two boats to land on the northermost to hoist our colours and to take possession of it. We named it Possession Island" (Lee, p. 194). Flinders says Possession was taken "of all the islands seen in the Strait, for His Britannic Majesty George III, with the ceremonies used on such occasions: the name bestowed on the whole, was Clarence's Archipelago" (Flinders, p. xxvii). The observations of Bligh and Portlock on the natives are given on pp. 72, 73, and a brief account of the unprovoked attack by the natives of Island P [Tutu] which probably for this reason was called Warrior Island.

W. Bampton and M. B. Alt, commanders of the English merchant ships *Hormuzeer* and *Chesterfield*, passed through Torres Straits in 1793. An abstract of Capt. Bampton's MS. journal is given by Flinders (*Voyage*, I, pp. xxx-xlv). They sailed from Norfolk Island, saw Mer (June 20), went to the coast of New Guinea, "The land here forms a large, unsheltered bay...the country round the bay is described as level and open, and of an agreeable aspect" (p. xxxii); the mouth of a considerable river was seen. On arriving at Darnley Island (the native name of which is erroneously given as Wamvax), the natives exchanged bows and arrows for knives, etc. His account of the natives is given on p. 185. On July 3 a boat, carrying Messrs Shaw and Carter, Capt. Hill and five seamen landed presumably at Bikar Bay on the north-west side of the island, and Capt. Hill and four men were murdered. Shaw and Carter were severely wounded, but with Ascott, the remaining seaman, they got into the boat and escaped. They were without provisions and compass, and it being impossible to reach the ships, which lay five leagues to windward, they bore away to the west through the Straits and on the tenth day they reached Timor. Their companions on the ships had no knowledge of what had taken place, and on July 7 two boats were sent to look for them, they went round the island and saw a great concourse of natives armed with bows and arrows, clubs and lances. On July 10 an armed party of forty-four men under Mr Dell landed on the island. "After hoisting the union jack, and taking possession of this, and the neighbouring islands and coasts of New Guinea, in the name of His Majesty" (p. xxxv), they found several things which had belonged to Capt. Hill, Mr Carter and Mr Shaw, etc., "so that no doubt was entertained of their having been murdered. In the evening the party arrived from having made the tour of the island, having burnt and destroyed 135 huts, 16 canoes, measuring from 50 to 70 feet in length; and various plantations of sugar cane". The natives had retired to the hills in the centre. The bay was named "Treacherous Bay".

[S. McFarlane says (1888, p. 29) he heard from the natives the following account of what may refer to this episode or possibly to a later similar one: "The captain sent in two

boats to get water at the only place on the island where there is water throughout the year. I have known the people there to be eight months without rain, and all the wells on the island dry, except this pool in Treachery Bay. The natives did not object to their filling the casks, because there was plenty of water for all; but having filled them and towed them off to the ship, a number of the sailors returned with a bundle of dirty clothes and a bar of soap, and began washing and bathing in the only drinking water the natives had. The natives very naturally objected; but the sailors, thinking themselves masters of the situation on account of their revolvers, persisted, and the consequence was, as stated in the sailing instructions, every one of that boat's crew was murdered. Of course many of the natives were killed, some during the affray and others by the revenge party sent on shore by the captain immediately afterwards, who did all the mischief they could, both to the people and their houses and plantations, besides taking away a number of girls as prisoners". Dumont d'Urville (ix, p. 217) says: "I knew that a short time previously [this was written in 1840] the savages who inhabit this little islet had attacked the boat of a trading vessel and killed the captain and some sailors". It is not clear whether this refers to Bampton and Alt or to some later occurrence, if the latter it may be that alluded to by McFarlane.]

An armed party was sent ashore on Stephen's Island to obtain intelligence about the lost whale boat. The natives were in hostile array on the hills and sounded conches, "but after lancing a few arrows they fled". Several were wounded by the shots fired in return and the huts were burned. The island was traversed all over, the people having fled in a canoe (Flinders, I, p. xxxviii).

Campbell's Island was visited, on which there were no "plantations, cocoa-nut trees or fixed inhabitants". Bristow Island close to New Guinea was discovered and named.

Although Mr Dell, acting under Capt. Bampton, took possession on July 10, 1793, of Ērub and the neighbouring islands and coast of New Guinea, it was not till April 4, 1883, that the region of New Guinea east of the 141st Meridian was officially annexed to the Empire by Henry Marjoribanks Chester (a police magistrate in the service of the Queensland Government) at the order of Sir T. McLlwraith. But the British Government disavowed the annexation.

Mathew Flinders, who served under Bligh and Portlock in 1792, revisited the Murray Islands on October 29, 1802, as Captain of H.M.S. *Investigator*. He says that forty or fifty Indians came off in three canoes holding up coconuts, joints of bamboo filled with water, plantains, bows and arrows and vociferating *tooree! tooree!* and *mammoosee!* There was a lively barter and quite friendly relations. He describes them as of a dark chocolate colour, active muscular men of about the middle size, and their "countenances expressive of a quick apprehension". They were quite naked, but some wore "ornaments of shell work and of plaited hair or fibres of bark, about their waists, necks, and ankles" (vol. II, p. 110). His account of the canoes is reproduced in iv, p. 212; apparently he did not land on the islands.

He visited Half-way Island, which he describes "as scarcely more than a mile in circumference but it appears to be increasing both in elevation and extent. The island is little better than a bank of sand, upon a basis of coral rock; Yet it was covered with shrubs and trees so thickly, that in many places they were impenetrable. The north-western part is entirely sand, but there grew upon it numbers of *pandanus* trees and around many of them was placed a circle of shells of the *chama gigas*, long slips of bark are tied round the

smooth stems of the pandanus, and the loose ends are led into the shells of the cockle placed underneath. By these slips the rain which runs down the branches and stem of the tree is conducted into the shells, and fills them at every considerable shower; and as each shell will contain two or three pints forty or fifty of them placed under different trees will supply a good number of men" (Flinders, II, pp. 112–15).

Capt. P. P. King in July 1819 came from the south through Torres Straits crossing north of Wednesday Island, but he did not land and does not say anything about the natives. In July 1821 he passed the same way, which he recommends as the best route (King, 1827, vol. 1).

Dr T. B. Wilson, Surgeon R.N., says: "On the 25th of June, 1822 I sailed from Sydney in the ship *Richmond*, in company with the *Mary Anne* and *Almorah*. On the 11th of July, the three ships passed through the Great Barrier reef in safety, and anchored off Murray's Island" (Wilson, 1835, Appendix, p. 306). His account of the natives is copied on pp. 95, 96. He continues: "We got under weigh, and proceeded on our voyage, passing safely through Torres Straits, when the ships parted company. In a few days afterwards, the ship *Richmond*, in which I was a passenger, was totally lost on a coral reef, in the Java sea, and all the curiosities I had collected at Murray's Island were left to the Malays, whose proas were approaching the wreck in great numbers" (p. 314).

Dr Wilson sailed under Capt. Young of the *Governor Ready* in 1829: he writes: "Imagining we could reach Half-way Island long before sun-set, we did not stop at Murray's Island; greatly to the disappointment of the natives, many of whom were seen running along the beach, and inviting us, by every means in their power to stay. I regret, individually, that I had not an opportunity of renewing an acquaintance formed with several of these interesting islanders some years ago" (p. 11). The vessel was wrecked near Half-way Island and the crew in three boats proceeded westwards to Timor. The next night was spent on one of an unknown group of islands south of Badu, which they named Duncan's Isles (p. 33).

Various voyages through the Straits from 1791 to 1825 are mentioned by James Horsburgh, *India Directory, etc.* II, 3rd ed. 1827, pp. 578–86, but nothing new is recorded.

"A naval officer" [Rutherford] visited Mer in June 1833. An abstract of his account of the natives is given on pp. 96, 97.

The *Charles Eaton* sailed from Sydney for Canton on July 29, 1834. The passengers were Capt. D'Oyly of the Bengal Artillery, his wife and their two children, George (seven years of age) and William (two years old), their Bengali nurse, and Mr Armstrong. The ship's company consisted of Capt. Moore, Mr Clare, chief mate, Mr Grant, the surgeon, and twenty-three others including two cabin boys, John Sexton and John Ireland. On August 15, owing to bad weather, the ship struck on a reef near the entrance to Torres Straits. The captain declared the vessel was totally lost and ordered the long boat, the two cutters and a dandy to be got ready and provisioned, with a view of getting to Timor. One cutter was swamped, the other was provisioned and provided with arms, etc.—this was seized by five seamen who made off, abandoning the others. They reached Timor Laut in about fifteen days, where they had to remain for more than thirteen months. On October 7, 1835, they got to Amboina and reached England in June, 1836. The account they gave of themselves proved to be quite unreliable. The subsequent fate of those left on the *Charles Eaton* is given on pp. 84–86; only William D'Oyly and John Ireland ultimately survived.

Capt. Owen Stanley gives (in Stokes, 1846, I, pp. 440–2) an account of his cruise in March 1839 to Timor Laut and other islands; at the first he obtained information about the five seamen who went thither. He also gives a graphic account of the story obtained from Ireland by Capt. P. P. King which was published in Sydney in 1837. This was also partly reproduced in *The Nautical Magazine*, VI, 1837, pp. 654 ff. Stanley says (p. 448) that Bōydān island “is probably that on the chart called No. 1 to the eastward of Hannibal Island” [about lat. 11° 30' S.], but Stokes (p. 361) concludes “that No. 4 of the group [S. of Cairncross] is Bōydān island, a name given by the Murray islanders to the spot” of the massacre. See also Brockett, 1836.

The loss of the *Charles Eaton* and the uncertainty as to the fate of the crew and passengers caused great excitement in Australia and England. Mr Bayley, brother of Mrs D'Oyly, besought the Admiralty to send out a frigate to rescue the survivors, if any. Capt. Wiseman of the *Augustus Caesar* (which had sailed in company with the *Charles Eaton*, but was obliged to separate on account of the gale in Torres Straits) had on August 31, 1834, picked up wreckage from the *Charles Eaton* on the south side of Double Island [Nālgi]; he gave evidence before the Lord Mayor of London and stated that, “as Torres Straits is now frequented by a number of valuable British Ships on their way from Australia to India and the Isle of France, a correct survey of the several channels, and in particular of places of safe anchorage, is much wanted, and a few beacons might be placed on the reefs at no great expense”. In a communication addressed by Sir George Grey to Mr Bayley [in January 1835] it was stated “that one of his majesty’s ships is about to be despatched to that quarter for this object”.¹ Despatches were sent to Sir Richard Bourke, Governor of New South Wales, by Lord Glenleg to adopt measures to ascertain the fate of the shipwrecked persons and for rescuing them. Similar instructions were despatched to Rear-Admiral Capel, Commander-in-Chief on the East India station, who ordered one of his squadron to proceed to Torres Straits. Meanwhile, in an article in the *Canton Register* of February 16, 1836, Capt. W. Carr of the *Mangles* stated that he arrived at Murray’s Island on September 18, 1835. On one of the canoes was a white person, quite naked like the savages; from inquiry, it was “found that he was an Englishman wrecked some ten months since in the *Charles Eaton* and wished very much to come on board, but the natives would not allow him”. Later they tried to induce him to come on board but he refused. Capt. Carr made another attempt but failed, “they brought a little European boy down close to the beach but would not allow me to touch him”.² The Bombay Government sent the East India Company’s brig of war, the *Tigris*, in March 1836 to Torres Straits, but on arriving at Sydney it was found that his Excellency, Sir Richard Bourke, had sent the Colonial schooner *Isabella* by orders of the Home Department eight days previously. The *Tigris* was delayed at Sydney for repairs, and arrived at Murray’s Island on July 29, 1836, where the commander was given a letter left there by Capt. Charles M. Lewis, of H.M. Schooner *Isabella*, and dated June 26, 1836, in which he says he found only two survivors of the *Charles Eaton*, John Ireland and William D'Oyly. “The father and mother, and the whole of the passengers with the whole of the crew, were all murdered by the savages on the island, which the natives call Boydang; consequently those are the only two living,

¹ Wemyss, 1837, p. 15.

² In *The Nautical Magazine*, 1837, p. 660, it is stated: “Ireland’s account [which is given] of the visit of the *Mangles* is so different from what Captain Carr describes that the discrepancy must be received with much caution”. See also Stokes, I, 1846, footnote, p. 444.

whom I purchased from the natives for axes. These survivors have been well treated on this island [Mer]; indeed these people saved and resaved [rescued] them from the savages of Boydang, an island to the westward, which it is also my object to visit, although I am rather at a loss which it is, owing to the circumstance that there is no native name on the charts to any of the isles within the straits. The natives of this place I consider very harmless, but great thieves, and also very much afraid of a gun, or small arms" (*The Nautical Magazine*, 1837, p. 110). He buried a memorandum in Half-way Island on July 28 in which he gave further particulars; he adds: "After searching all over the straits for this mysterious island ['Aureed'], I at last found it, and saw no inhabitants there, having left the previous night, when the ship hove in sight of their isle. I, however, found the skulls of the unfortunate people on the middle of the island, covered with a kind of shed, and arranged near a place where they generally feasted on the dead. These heads of different people were placed round like the figure of a man [the head-like figure of a man], and painted with ochre. I observed long sandy hair on one of the skulls, also great marks of violence on them all. Having satisfied myself of the truth of this detail, I set the whole of the house [houses] on fire, and also destroyed every cocoa-nut tree in the place, which those savages generally exist on. I at the same time conveyed the skulls on board, and destroyed the skull-house" (*The Nautical Magazine*, p. 111). Wemyss (pp. 27–9) gives a copy of the letter and memorandum which differs in a few verbal points from the preceding, the more important ones I have inserted within []. The *Tigris* met the *Isabella* at Double Island and the surgeon of the *Tigris* pronounced fourteen of the forty skulls to be European. Further information about Aurid and the mask will be found in the section on Aurid, pp. 88–90.

The following is taken from *The Nautical Magazine*, 1837, pp. 654 ff., which, as previously stated, is taken from King, 1837.

On June 3, 1836, the *Isabella*, under the command of Mr C. M. Lewis, left Sydney and arrived at Mer on June 19. The natives showed "signals of peace by extending their arms". On approaching in canoes "they began to make signs of friendship by rubbing the hand over the abdomen, and calling out in loud voices 'poud, poud'... Their object was to trade; and for that purpose they had brought tortoise-shell, cocoa-nuts, and other trifles; which as they approached the ship, they held up, calling out 'tooree' and 'toolick', meaning iron tools, such as knives and axes". After careful negotiation Ireland was handed over and Duppar suitably rewarded. With difficulty, but quite amicably, William was rescued on the 20th. Duppar and Oby spent the night on board and made Mr Lewis promise to land next day. On landing he "was immediately surrounded by upwards of one hundred Indians, who expressed great delight at the meeting, by hugging and caressing him, and shaking hands". At first the women were frightened but soon they gained confidence and were given presents. Mr Lewis visited Dauer and Waier. The observations on Waier are given on p. 99. On the 22nd they tried to get water from a well on the S.S.W. end of the island [Mer], but there was very little and that unfit for use. Whilst filling the cask of water, one of the Indians, "an ugly fellow, without a nose or mouth (these necessary appendages having been eaten away by a cancerous complaint which appears to be very prevalent amongst them), took the opportunity of stealing a cask"—which was recovered. He refers to the collection of water in the valves of the "chama gigas" under trees. Lewis left Mer on June 26 (or 27) having previously given to the natives some letters addressed to "The Master of the Vessel off the Island".

On their way to Erub they were detained between the reefs by a gale which lasted seven days. On July 5 they anchored in Treacherous Bay, Ērub; the account of the islanders by Mr Lewis is given on p. 185. The *Isabella* passed by Nepean (Attagore) and Stephen (Hoogar) Islands. No natives were observed on Campbell Island (Jarmuth) [Lewis calls it Japcar = Damut], but a few fenced-in huts were seen: other islands were seen, and they visited Marsden Island (Sirreb according to Ireland, but Lewis calls it Ouean); finding no inhabitants or dwellings there, "they pulled over to Keat's Island, which is formed by two islets, the northernmost called Massied or Massieb and the southernmost, Cuderal, surrounded and connected by a reef. . . Massied. . . had many cocoa-nuts on it; and, according to Ireland, is always inhabited; they cultivate cocoa-nuts and the banana, and there is a spring of water in the centre of the island. . . These Indians are of the same character as those of Murray and Darnley Islands, and speak the same language. . . They denied having them [the skulls] in their possession. . . that all the white men had been murdered, and that some of the skulls had been sent to New Guinea. . . These islanders told them that their principal food was cocoa-nuts and yams, and that they were frequently robbed of them by the Indians of other islands" (*N.M.* p. 801). Mr Lewis named Keats, Marsden, Arden and other islands, Sir Richard Bourke's Group. On July 25 they reached Aurid; I have copied the account of the visit on p. 89. They visited other islands, and on their way westwards they met the *Tigris* commanded by Capt. Igglesdon, who informed Mr Lewis that "he had received the letter, which had been left with Duppar at Murray Island, and had also found the one that had been buried at Half-way Island. . . The surgeon of the *Tigris* visited the *Isabella*. . . and examined the skulls; seventeen of which he was satisfied were the heads of Europeans" [they visited Wednesday Island (p. 66) and left the Straits] (*N.M.* pp. 800-4). "The fate of George D'Oyly and Sexton is still in some remote degree uncertain" (*N.M.* p. 806). One account says that George lived for about three months and was then killed.

I have dealt at considerable length with the fate of the survivors of the wreck of the *Charles Eaton*, as the original sources give us the most detailed account we have of those occurrences which justified the bad repute in which the Torres Straits islanders were then held by navigators, and also as it illustrates the kind of life led by the Central islanders. For the custom of killing shipwrecked persons, see p. 196 and v, p. 279. On the other hand we have very little information about the treatment of the natives by white men and South Sea islanders who traversed the Straits about this time. The discrepancies in the various accounts show how difficult it is to obtain a reliable account from witnesses of the same happenings. There can be little doubt that this tragedy led to a more accurate survey of Torres Straits and ultimately to the establishment of a Government Station to control affairs. A settlement at Cape York was advocated in 1848 by Adam Bogue, as even at that time thirty-two vessels from Sydney passed through Torres Straits in one year (Simmonds, *Colonial Magazine*, xiv, 1848, p. 314), but this was not done till 1862, by which time fifty to eighty vessels passed through from the south.

In 1835 Capt. Hobson of H.M.S. *Rattlesnake* erected a flagstaff on Booby Island and placed in a box, labelled "Post Office", printed forms on which ships were to give information. Ships which touched here were in the habit of leaving letters for transmission by any vessel proceeding in the required directions (Stokes, I, p. 371).

In July 1839 J. Lort Stokes in H.M.S. *Beagle* did some surveying in Endeavour Strait, but he does not say anything about the natives.