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ART. XI.—*Australia's Antarctic Dependency.*

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[Read 14th September, 1933; issued separately 7th May, 1934.]

The history of the eastern coast of Australia begins with the first voyage of Lieut. James Cook in the *Endeavour*. The history of the great land which surrounds the South Pole may also be said to begin with Commander James Cook, whose second voyage with the *Resolution* and *Adventure* is remarkable for three achievements—

1. The crossing of the Antarctic Circle for the first time in history, on 17th January, 1773.
2. The high latitude reached by the *Resolution*,  $71^{\circ} 10' \text{ S.}$ , in longitude  $106^{\circ} 54' \text{ W.}$ , on 30th January, 1774.
3. The circumnavigation of the globe in a high southern latitude with its revelation that the Great South Land did not, as believed by the map makers of that time, extend into the temperate regions.

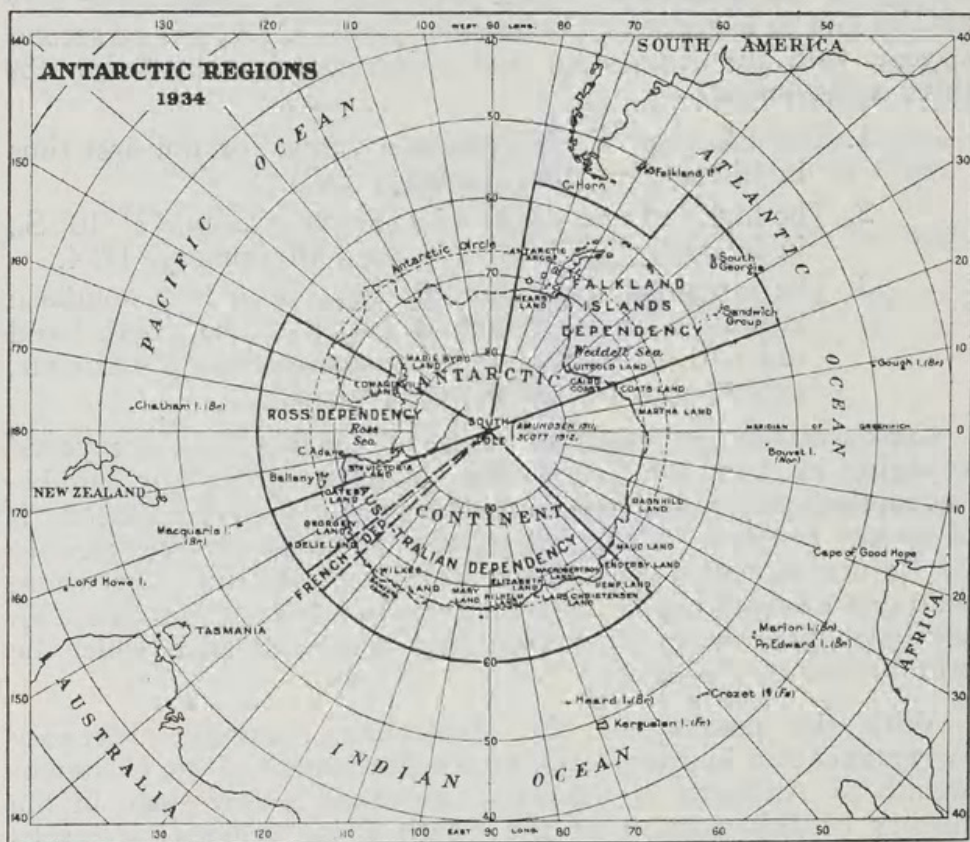
Cook's account of what he observed (during his three years' voyaging in Antarctic Seas) forms depressing reading, but his description may still be accurately applied to Antarctica as it is known to-day: "Countries condemned to everlasting rigidity by Nature, never to yield to the warmth of the sun; for whose wild and desolate aspect I find no words; such are the countries we have discovered; what then may those resemble which lie still further to the South?"

With the passing of the Australian Antarctic Territory Acceptance Act in June, 1933, by the Parliament of the Commonwealth of Australia at Canberra, we reach a new stage in the history of this portion of the South Polar regions; it marks the culmination of the progress made in this area since Cook's time by explorers of many nations, who have sought to unveil one of the last hidden portions of this world of ours.

The area over which the authority of the Commonwealth has recently been proclaimed is about half that of Australia itself; extending from the meridian of  $160^{\circ} \text{ E.}$ , the western boundary of the New Zealand (Ross) Dependency, to  $45^{\circ} \text{ E.}$ , it has a coastline measured along the Antarctic Circle of about 2,600 miles. It includes Oates Land in the east, and extends through King George V. Land, Wilkes Land, Queen Mary Land, Wilhelm Land, Princess Elizabeth Land, Kemp Land, and MacRobertson Land, to Enderby Land in the west.



The Australian sector is divided into two portions by Adelie Land, which was discovered by Dumont d'Urville in 1840 and was constituted a French Dependency by a decree signed by President Millerand in 1924. With a coastline of 130 miles, the French territory extends from longitude  $142^{\circ}$  E. to  $136\frac{1}{2}^{\circ}$  E. Cape Denison, the site of the main base of the Australasian Antarctic Expedition of 1911-1914 under Sir Douglas Mawson, is situated in longitude  $142^{\circ} 40'$  E., and is therefore within the Australian territory, some 16 miles from the eastern boundary of the French Dependency. Fifteen hundred miles of stormy ocean



separate the south coast of Tasmania from Antarctica, and it is then over 1,400 miles from the coastline of the continent to its central point, the South Pole, where it attains an elevation of 10,000 feet.

It may be asked, what does this Antarctic Land look like? The fact is that, except in a very few places, the land cannot be seen, as it is completely covered by an immense shield of ice which flows outward and downward from a vast inland plateau to the seaboard, where it terminates in vertical coastal ice cliffs. Over considerable distances of the coast this huge continental glacier extends seawards in the form of glacier tongues and shelf ice.



Except for very occasional nunataks, which protrude from the marginal slopes of the glacier, the only visible land is where the ice cliff has receded and exposed, in the form of islands or small coastal areas, the rock it has previously covered. In Enderby Land, some rocky mountain summits emerge and are not now covered by the overwhelming ice flood. Constantly swept by icy winds, in winter shrouded by total darkness, the new territory is a land of desolation, and but for the whales, seals, penguins, and other birds, which thrive upon the abundant marine life in the surrounding seas, might be described as lifeless.

It is not intended to recount here the history of the exploration of this portion of the earth's surface, except to recall that the first land to appear on the map of what is now known as the Australian Dependency of Antarctica was named by John Biscoe (a retired Master R.N.), who, in 1831, while engaged on a sealing voyage, discovered Enderby Land. Biscoe had two small vessels under his command, the brig *Tula* of 150 tons, manned by 17 men, and the cutter *Lively* of 50 tons, manned by 10 men, both owned by Messrs. Enderby, of London. What stout fellows these old time seamen were may be gathered when reading the brief record of their doings from Biscoe's log, which is now in possession of the Royal Geographical Society of London.

The account of Biscoe's voyages, given by Dr. H. R. Mill, in *The Siege of the South Pole*(1), is based on this log. Land, now known as Enderby Land, was sighted on 28th February, 1831, from latitude  $66^{\circ}$  S. and longitude  $47^{\circ} 20'$  E. A prominent headland, named Cape Ann, was approached and its approximate position fixed as  $66^{\circ} 25'$  S. and  $49^{\circ} 18'$  E. Just as it seemed certain that the land could be reached a southeaster burst upon the ships, which became separated. After five days' battling against a hurricane, Biscoe again turned southwards in the *Tula* and again sighted Cape Ann on 16th March. He was, however, unable to reach the land and, being forced to retire, eventually made Hobart on 10th May, 1831.

After the *Lively* was separated from the *Tula* in the storm off Cape Ann, she eventually reached Port Phillip after the ship's company had been reduced from ten to three, including a boy whose hand had been crushed by a boat falling on it. On landing in Port Phillip they nearly died of starvation and the cutter drifted away. She was found ashore after a fortnight, and the party reached the Derwent on 3rd September to meet the *Tula* coming out. Biscoe then put back and waited until the *Lively* was refitted and her crew restored to health, before pursuing his southern voyages.



Further particulars of the adventures of the *Lively* are to be found in a report in the *Hobart Town Courier* on 17th September, 1831(2). As these particulars are not readily accessible and as Port Phillip is connected with the events, it seems pertinent to quote the following extract:—

“On parting company in the ice previous to making for this port for refreshment, this little vessel (*Lively*) reached Port Phillip with the greatest difficulty, near the entrance of Western Port, having on board only three individuals surviving out of a crew of ten men from the effects of scurvy and disease consequent upon it. So dreadful was the situation of these unfortunate men, that the bodies of two of the number who died below deck could not be got up for several days to be thrown overboard, the survivors being so reduced by sickness and infirmity as to be totally unable to perform the painful task. As last the master, partially recovering his strength, contrived to make a rope fast round their bodies, and by the help of the tackle succeeded in hauling up first one and then the other, and launching them into the deep. On making the land at Port Phillip(3) the survivors, after bringing the vessel to anchor, managed to get on shore in the boat with some provisions, where after some considerable time they gradually recovered. Meantime, however, a gale coming on drove the little bark from her anchor during the night up the inlet many miles out of sight. Their situation then became truly forlorn(4), their hope of regaining a civilized part of the country being torn from them. Having taken note, however, of the direction in which the wind blew when the vessel disappeared, as soon as they had recovered sufficient health and strength they contrived to travel along the shore, keeping the water always in view, until after a weary journey of nearly 40 miles they had at last the satisfaction to see the object of their pursuit stranded, but otherwise uninjured, on the beach. On a nearer approach, however, they found her beset by a tribe of blacks, busily engaged in plundering her. Here were their difficulties and dangers renewed afresh, but being fortunately furnished with guns and ammunition they at last succeeded in driving them off and regaining possession of the vessel, although we have not been able to learn the particulars of the rencontre. They at last managed, with almost inconceivable labour, to refit and launch her again into the deep, and ultimately to navigate her to Bull Bay, in the Derwent, where the *Tula* happily fell in with her.”

A further notice in the same paper on 8th October, 1831, reads: “Sailed this morning, the discovery ship *Tula* with her tender *Lively*, in prosecution of her voyage through the South Seas.”

## References.

1. *The Siege of the South Pole*, H. R. Mill. Alston Rivers Ltd. London 1905.
2. I am indebted to Miss Wayne, of Hobart, for obtaining these extracts and to Capt. D. S. Bull for sending me a copy of them.
3. Discovered by Lieut. Murray in the *Lady Nelson*, 1802.
4. An attempt to form a settlement at Sorrento, Port Phillip, was made by Collins in 1803. It was a failure, and was abandoned in 1804. Victoria was not settled until 1835, when John Batman arrived at Port Phillip and the site of Melbourne was chosen.





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