

Down the long Atlantic the staunch ship plowed her way; past Tenerife's towering peak, then into the doldrums where the heat shrunk the planks and the pitch oozed from every crack. The line was crossed on the 25th of October, and a month later anchor was cast in the beautiful harbour of Rio de Janeiro.

In those days Brazil was a Portuguese colony, and an English vessel was viewed with great suspicion. Only Lieutenant Cook was permitted to land and an armed guard accompanied him wherever he went. The English were great traders and the Portuguese Governor at Rio was in a panic lest in some manner the English should learn of the riches of Brazil and attempt a trading venture with the natives.

But all that the officers of the "Endeavour" wished was to obtain supplies of fresh vegetables for the crew and to re-fill the numerous water casks, which sailing vessels of those days must always carry. Rounding stormy Cape Horn, it was the end of February, 1769 before the weary sailors began to feel the influence of the mild Pacific waters. In April the "Endeavour" anchored in Matavai Bay, Tahiti.

What a change from the tossing seas and ice-strewn coasts of Tierra del Fuego! Here tall palm trees and luxuriant vegetation greeted the eye of the beholder. On the coral strand happy natives shouted a joyous welcome. All was bustle and hurry to get on shore as soon as possible. For this was the first goal of the long voyage which had taken eight months and brought them half way round the world.

Tahiti was the principal island of the Society group and had been chosen as particularly well-situated for astronomical work. Here a small observatory was set up and everything placed in readiness to observe the transit of Venus. The astronomers had decided this would occur on the 3rd of June.

That day dawned clear and cloudless, an ideal day for the little band of scientists so far away from home. In the written record of the voyage we read, "The greatest care was taken to make the observations as accurate as possible so that the learned scientists in England might make use of them in their intricate calculations."

And now it was decided to continue the voyage far to the westward in order that some of the lands known to lie in the vast Southern Pacific might be more carefully examined. Since the days of Van Diemen no one had troubled to go far south of the equator in crossing the Pacific. It now fell to the lot of Lieutenant Cook and his good ship, the "Endeavour," to make marvellous discoveries and thereby add millions of square miles of land to our Empire.

Keeping between the 30th and 40th parallels of latitude, they sighted land on the 6th of October. Coasting northwards they rounded a cape and soon this land was found to be an island with a larger island to the southward. It in turn was circumnavigated, charts were made of the whole, and this land we know today as the Dominion of New Zealand. The passageway which separates the North from the South Island is known as Cook's Strait, in honor of its discoverer.

All were in high spirits that the voyage had proved so successful. It was now April of 1770. But, nothing daunted, the bold sailormen