CHAPTER IX

ALL ROADS LEAD TO TIMOR

Farewell Australia, as Cape Fourcroy, on the western edge of Bathurst Island, recedes away and below. Now the Lockheeds is climbing toward the stratosphere to get above the monsoon for the 510-mile crossing of the Timor Sea. Higher we go, and soon are above silvery clouds forked with lightning, and we are alone with the sun in the blue.

Far below the shadow of the plain is projected on the topside of the woolly clouds, which form a screen between us and the shelly waters. The clouds are so dense that it looks as though a steam-factory has been working overtime.

Opposite me in the cabin dozes George Noble, a cameraman from London, suffering a recovery from his last night in Sydney. He is four-eyed like myself, and has the paunch of prosperity which I hope to achieve.

Two hours and fifty minutes after taking off from Darwin, a buzzing in my ear told me that we were descending. The plane sank through the kapok-like clouds; then lo! entrancing glimpses of palm-girt beaches laved with green breakers, dashing on the white sand—the emerald isle of Timor!

We circled and landed at Koepang. Many a shipwrecked mariner has made for this port, and here I am without being either shipwrecked or sky-wrecked. What a thrill to be in the East Indies at last! The plane landed at ten past nine, which was actually twenty to eleven Darwin time, but the clock had its face pushed back ninety minutes during the westering. Thanks to this providential time-cheating arrangement, we men who go up to the sky in ships are entitled to another breakfast, so we mooch across to the rest-house and put on the nosebags for the second time.

As many a shipwrecked mariner has been well fed by the Dutch at Koepang, so was I.

While I am gobbling rice and twin eggs, take a quiz at your map and you will see that the Dutch East Indies is a vast Archipelago, extending athwart the north of Australia along the Equator. This Dutch Empire is seventy-two times bigger than Holland. It forms a tremendous bridge of islands—like stepping-stones—from the mainland of Asia to New Guinea, for a distance of almost 3000 miles. The islands are in two main groups.

The biggest, on the north, are Borneo, Celebes, Ternate, Ceram, Aru, and New Guinea.

On the southern chain, the islands are so close together that you could almost go from one to the other with a hop, skip, and jump. Naming the principal ones from the western end, this sequence of stepping-stones consists of Sumatra, Java, Bali, Lombok, Soembawa, Soemba, Flores, Alor, Timor, and Timor Laut.

To avoid confusion, Timor Laut is nowadays known as Tenimber.

There are hundreds of smaller islands in the Archipelago, which consist of volcanic groups and coral cays, washed by the silvery seas. The total population is about 60,000,000 souls, with many shades of pigmentation in their epidermis—from Dutch white to Chinese yellow, Javanese brown, and Polynesian black, not forgetting the well-known brindle variety, with a mélange of Malay. This multi-coloured polyglot multitude worships many gods—including the Christian, Mohammedan, Hindu, Buddhist, Confucian, and pagan deities.

The island of Timor, which is the nearest link in the chain to Australia, is half Dutch and half Portuguese.

The city of Koepang (population 6500) where I am now, is Dutch, and is situated on the western end of the isle. The Portuguese possess the eastern end, and an enclave on the north. The chief industries of the Timorese are the production of tin, rubber, and sandalwood. They also manufacture toddy (toak) from palm-sugar, the strongest drink on earth; it would make even a worm turn.

The gollywog pagans of Timor, who are coal-black, also practise witchcraft. Their island contains prairies overgrown with the curse of Australia (lantana) and in its marshes lurk water-buffaloes and pythons. The capital city of Koepang is a rendezvous for the recruitment of crews for the Australian pearl-fishing fleet. These "Koepangers," for untold centuries, have visited Australia's north shores in search of trepang and bêche-de-mer.

Europeans have dwelt in Timor for over 400 years, since the Portuguese percolated into the East Indies in the year 1509. It was the sweet-smelling sandalwood and the sour-smelling trepang of Koepang which made this port an entrepôt for Portuguese and
Dutch traders. Timor means “east,” and Koepang was the farthest eastern outpost for European trade, prior to the settlement of Botany Bay by the English in 1788.

In those days Koepang was Sydney’s nearest neighbour.

Which reminds me . . .

The timorous Timorese, who had inhabited their island for ever and aye, enjoying the pleasures of head-hunting, witchcraft and toddy-drinking, were introduced to the pleasures of up-to-date religion about the year 1500, when Arabs in dhows arrived and swore by the Beard of the Prophet that they would slit every throat in Timor unless the Timorese joined up with the True Faith.

The Crescent of Islam was hoisted over the island, and five times daily the Timorese were taught to pray: “There is no God but Allah, and Mohammed is his Prophet.” In consideration of forgoing the flesh of the wild pigs that abounded in the bush, and the alcoholic toddy that oozed from the sugar-palms, the converts were taught Algebra, guaranteed a free pass to Paradise, and as many wives and slaves as they could afford. It was Kismet.

Just as the Timorese were settling down to the new dispensation, their peace of mind was disturbed by a visit from the clove-ship *Vittoria*, with Magellan’s Christian Spanish globe-trotters on the first circumnavigation of the earth.

Magellan’s men, after the death of their great Commander at Mactan, in the Philippine Islands, arrived at Timor on 26 January 1522. On board their ship was an old native who told them tall tales of “a large island named Aruchete, the inhabitants of which are not more than one cubit high, and they have ears as large and as long as themselves, so that, when they lie down, one serves for a mattress, and with the other they cover themselves.”

Ear! Ear!

At Timor, the Spanish circumnavigators put a clove hitch on a profiteering chieftain, and held him to ransom until the village bought his liberty with five goats, two pigs and a buffalo.

The pig-fed Spaniards, as Pigafetta narrates, thus made no attempts to Christianize the Moslemized Timorese, but merely de-pigged, de-goated, and de-buffaloed them. Then Magellan’s men sailed away, to commence their traverse of the Indian Ocean, Spainward bound, via the Cape of Good Hope—to prove that the world is round, by sailing right around it.

In the meantime, Spain’s neighbours and competitors in Empire-building, the Portuguese, also arrived in the Indies.

They established themselves at Sumatra in 1509, and commenced their penetration of the isles. Arriving at Timor in 1526, hot on the heels of the Moslems, they built a fort, and crowned it with the Sign of the Cross.

The Pope’s missionaries, following the Portuguese traders, reached Timor in 1559. Then the classic struggle of the Cross of Christ versus the Crescent of Mohammed was waged, and the Timorese were taught that they could eat pork and drink toddy, provided they had only one wife, and ate fish on Friday. They also had to believe that: “There is no God but Jehovah, and Peter is his Prophet.” . . .

Enter the Dutch, warring against the Portuguese in 1613. Being Protestants, they informed the much-converted Timorese that the Catholics were all wrong and that: “There is only one God and Luther is his Prophet”—and that they could eat pork on Friday or any other meat.

The argument convinced the ruling Rajah of Timor, who became Lutherized, and, being a pliable convert, handed over part of his lands to the Hollanders. This was contrary to Timorese tenets. The Rajah was a backslider, and the Portuguese re-occupied Timor, repelling in 1665 an unsuccessful Dutch attempt to recapture it.

Then Portugal waned in the West, and the Hollanders gained in the East, and, before the end of the century, the Dutch flag was flying over Fort Concordia at Koepang at one end of the island—while, at the other end, the Portuguese standard fluttered over the idyllic town of Dili.

The natives did their best to understand the fine shades of meaning of the Arab, Portuguese, and Dutch religions and lingoës, but finally gave it up and returned to their toddy and pigs . . .

Enter an Englishman.

In the year 1687, the buccaneer William Dampier in the ship *Cygnet* sailed by Timor, after Captain Swan, the owner of the ship, had been marooned at Mindanao in the Philippines. Says Dampier: “I have been informed that the Portuguese do trade to Timor, but I know nothing of its produce besides coir, for making cables.”

After passing Timor, without stopping, the pirate noted: “Being now clear of all the islands we stood off south, intending to touch at New Holland, a part of Terra Australis Incognita, to see what that country would afford us.”

On 4 January 1688, says Dampier: “We fell in with the coast of New Holland in the Lat. of 16 d. 50 m.”

But the “winking people of New Holland” gave him a pain in the neck and, after careening the *Cygnet* on a sandy beach.
(now known as Cygnet Bay inside King Sound, near the present-day town of Derby) the buccaneers departed on 12 March 1688 from New Holland, and subsequently marooned Dampier on the Nicobar Islands!

From there he eventually made his way to England; published his *Voyage Around the World*; made himself famous; and then was appointed a warship captain in command of H.M.S. *Roebuck* with orders to proceed to the Cape of Good Hope "and from thence to stretch away towards New Holland and then to New Guinea and Terra Australis."

Carrying out these instructions the promoted buccaneer sailed from England on 14 January 1699, and jogged along until he reached New Holland at Shark Bay, Western Australia on 7 August of the same year. He anchored here for a week, named the Bay, dug wells, scrubbed his ship, and then coasted northwards to an anchorage in Roebuck Bay near the present town of Broome.

Says Dampier: "And thus having ranged about a considerable time upon this coast, without finding any good fresh water, and my men growing Scorbuck, for want of Refreshments, I resolved to leave this coast and on the 5th September set sail for Timor."

Western Australia's first Englishman reached Timor on 22 September 1699, and surprised the Dutch by sailing at them through Rote Strait, which was the private passage to the south of Koepang Bay. Dampier was also surprised when he saw the Governor of Fort Concordia in a sloop with forty soldiers, who was of the opinion that Dampier must be a pirate who had seized a Dutch ship and stolen their secret charts.

For this reason the Concordians did not welcome Dampier cordially. Says Dampier: "I sent up my boat with a present of some beer for the Governor, which he would not accept of, but sent me off about a Ton of Water."

The Governor also sent a message: "You are come to inspect into our Trade and Strength, and I will have you therefore begone with all Speed."

So Dampier bent. He sailed along the northern coast of Timor till he arrived at the Portuguese settlement at the other end of the island in Laphao Bay. Here he was made welcome, and, after loading up with presents of pigs, buffaloes, goats and fruit, "those of my Men, that were sick of the Scurvy, soon recovered and grew lusty."

Now Dampier returned to Koepang Bay to caulk ship with dammar resin. The lusty Roebucks gave the uncordial Cordians the go-by, and anchored in Babao Road—at the other end of the wide bay, several miles from the Dutch Fort. In this anchorage the *Roebuck* remained while the crew made lime by burning shells on the beach, overhauled their gear, and replenished their larder by hunting buffalo on shore, and by catching fish.

Seven days after their arrival, a diversion occurred, when the patriotic ex-pirate ordered a salvo of guns to be fired on 5 November, in honour of Guy Fawkes Day. Never having heard of Guy Fawkes, the surly Dutch Governor of Concordia "sent one of his officers to us to know who we were."

Dampier told him that he held the King of England's Commission. Then the Governor relaxed and invited William the Reformed to come and dine with him at the Fort. Says Dampier: "There was plenty of very good Victuals, and well-drest: and the Linnen was white and clean: and all the Dishes and Plates of Silver or Fine China. Our Liquor was Wine, Beer, Toddy or Water."

Until 12 December 1699, the *Roebuck* remained at her anchorage in Koepang Bay, and then sailed away, out of our story, towards New Guinea.

For a hundred years thereafter, nothing much occurred in Timor except births, marriages, and deaths from natural causes, while the Dutch dug themselves in at Koepang, and the Portuguese held their own end up at Dilli.

War occurred in Europe between the English and the Dutch in 1797, and, while their admirals were fighting it out in the English Channel, the small fry were fighting it out elsewhere. Cape Colony was lost. India was lost, but Timor refused to surrender. Says the Dutch historian, Lieutenant-Colonel de Klerk: "In Timor the remarkable event occurred, that, though the commander surrendered at once, his lieutenant opposed the decision of his superior, and so bravely conducted himself that the English were compelled to withdraw."

When Napoleon established the Kingdom of Holland in June 1806, and, by a fraternal feat of nepotism, put his brother Louis on the throne, the Napoleonic Marshal Daendels became the Governor-General of the East Indies. That was an invitation to the Boys of the Bulldog Breed—who were fed on lime-juice and putrid pork, or whatever they built the breed on.

The invitation was accepted, and, in the year 1812, Timor became British. Three cheers for the red, white and blue. The Timorese were now taught that there is only one Church of England, and that Henry the Eighth is its prophet.

Napoleon lost his Waterloo in 1815, and the victory terms decreed that Holland should become once again an independent Kingdom, freed of the Domination of France. In gratitude to
the Prince of Orange, for shedding his blood on behalf of the British at Waterloo, the Englishers magnanimously handed back Timor to their former Dutch masters.

"Vivat Orange," shouted the Timorese, as they toasted William the First, Prince of Orange, in palm-tree toddy.

Another little nip won't do us any harm.

The western end of Timor has been Dutch ever since, and the eastern end is still Portuguese. The two nations started an argument over the boundary in 1859. This long-drawn-out dispute came in very handy for thieves, thugs, absconding company directors, and head-hunters, who dodged across the elastic frontiers from one jurisdiction to another, and couldn't be served with writs of habeas corpus and suchlike.

But the totalitarians of Timor settled their disputes and fixed the boundary finally in 1916...

Hark back to the never-to-be-forgotten year of 1770, when Lieutenant Cook, of H.M.S. Endeavour, after mapping New Zealand, felt homesick, called a council of his officers, and decided that the temperature was too cold, and the Endeavour too leaky to weather the weather of Cape Horn. Says Cook: "It was therefore resolved that we should return by the East Indies, and that with this view we should steer westward till we should fall in with the east coast of New Holland, and then follow the direction of that coast to the northward."

And that's how Cookie discovered Australia.

He reached New Holland, alias New South Wales, followed it north until, on 21 August 1770, he hoisted the English colours on Possession Island near Cape York, and wended his way through Torres Strait, westward bound for the Indies. On 10 September: "We saw clearly that what had appeared to be land was Timor."

It was Timor, but the commander did not stop, and, as the crew repined, he decided to anchor at the neighbouring island of Savu, where the Endeavour stocked up with high-priced buffalo and low-quality eggs—topped off with "several hundred gallons of palm-syrup."

Toddle for the tars.

The scene changes to faraway Tahiti, in the year 1789, on Tuesday, 31 March—with Lieutenant William Bligh, of His Majesty's armed transport Bounty, carefully counting 1115 bread-fruit plants stowed in 774 pots, 39 tubs and 24 boxes. The Bounty was a floating conservatory, and Bligh was pleased at having successfully carried out the instructions of the King:

"that measures should be taken for procuring some bread fruit trees and conveying them to the West India Islands."

Dampier in 1688 told the first bread-fruit tale, and Cook, in 1779, reported that there was plenty of bread-fruit in the Sandwich Islands, that only required a little cooking to be well baked. This marvellous tree seemed as if it would solve the high cost of living on the slave plantations of Jamaica and Cuba, so the mercenary merchants of London put it up to the King, and the King had put it up to Bligh.

After Bligh and his bully boys had filled the pots with plants, and taken fond farewell of the dusky Tahitian belles on 4 April, 1789, the Bounty up-anchored. Heart-rending were the scenes as the sailors parted from the friends of their twenty-three weeks' botanical sojourn. The girls they left behind them wept and wailed, and the not-so-jolly tars gnashed their teeth as they realized that for them paradise was ended.

The Bounty made sail and the crew began their toilsome work of acting as nuremaids to the nursery. Twenty-four days later, on 28 April, just before sunset, as Breadfruit Bligh was enjoying his dawn-dreams, he was rudely awakened, when Mr Fletcher Christian, the mate, with three others, entered the captain's cabin, seized him, tied his hands, and said with perfect naval politeness, "Hold your tongue, Sir, or you're a dead man!"

Act One of the "Mutiny of the Bounty" had occurred.

With much "Damn your eyes, Sir," the mutineers launched the ship's longboat and lowered into it "Bully" Bligh and eighteen of his bread-fruiters, who were loyalists.

The disloyalists—who numbered twenty-five—stayed aboard the Bounty, shouting "Huzza for Otehei!" as they announced their intentions of returning to the shielahs of the South Seas.

Huzza for the shielahs!

The Navy-disciplined mutineers politely veered the longboat astern, and threw it into the victuals, cutlasses, a compass, and curises. Then the painter was cut, and the nineteen castaways were left to drift upon the open ocean, while the Bounty mutineers hauled on, shellah-bond, tossing their pot plants overboard.

Did Bligh swear? My oath! I'd do the same. He was 3600 miles from the Dutch settlement of Koepang in Timor, which, as far as he knew, was the nearest point of civilization. Botany Bay was nearer, but Bligh wasn't sure whether the English penal colony had been established there, as yet, so he set his face towards the west and gave the order, "Timor."

Then began an amazing voyage, 3600 miles across the Pacific Ocean; through seas for the most part uncharted; in an open
boat, 23 feet long, 6 feet 9 inches broad, and 2 feet 9 inches deep.

The gunwales were almost awash, as the eighteen loyalists said "Aye, aye, Sir," hoisted the sail, and started on their historic journey.

Why did the sailors mutiny and maroon Bligh in his longboat? Frothy and fierce are the dialectics among historical tomefillers as to whether Bligh was a bully or benign. Was he a martyr or a martinet? It all depends whether you have the blue blood of the patrician on the quarter, or the plebeian red blood of the forecastle in your veins.

As an underdog, having been booted, buffeted, and clinked by captains on land, and captains on sea—in many lands and many seas—my sympathies are all for the proletarian of the Bounty's forecastle. According to Gunner James Morrison who was "skilled in Vulgar Arithmetic and knew how to sort or round the thickness of the metal of a cannon at the touch-hole, trunnions, and muzzle," Captain Bligh got into a brogoliage with his second-in-command, Mr Fletcher Christian, on the night before the mutiny, when all the officers were ordered to bring their coconuts on deck. Bligh then took a coconut-census, and cruelly asked the officers whether their nuts were bought or pinched.

Says Morrison: "Mr Christian answered, 'I do not know Sir but I hope you don't think me so mean as to be Guilty of Stealing yours.' Mr Bligh replied, 'Yes you damn' Hound I do—You must have stolen them from me or you could give a better account of them—God dam you, you Scoundrels, you are all thieves alike, and combine with the men to rob me—I suppose you'll Steal my Yams next, but I'll sweep you for it, you rascals, I'll make half of you Jump overboard before you get through Endeavour Straights.'"

After this spleenetic outburst, Bligh gave orders "Stop these villains' Grog," but little did he know that, before the sun arose next morning, he was the one who would be made to jump overboard—and would also do a bit of sweating before he got through.

Thirty-six days after the mutineers had cast the longboat adrift, Bligh and his castaways reached "Endeavour Straights," about sunset, and sheltered for the night under the lee of an island. Next day, Wednesday 5 June 1789, Bligh named "Wednesday Island," and so started the fashion of calendar nomenclature, which has littered Endeavour Straights with islands named after nearly all the days of the week.

Westward went the wanderers for nine more days and then declares Bligh in his journal—"Friday the 12th. At three in the morning with an excess of joy we discovered Timor. It appeared scarce credible to ourselves, that in an open boat, and so poorly provided we should have been able to reach the coast of Timor in forty-one days after leaving Tofua, having in that time run, by our log, a distance of 3618 miles."

Hats off to "Bully!" No doubt he had hair on his chest, but he was a good navigator. Two days later, on 14 June, the longboat anchored—off a small fort and town which the pilot told me was Coupang. Our bodies were nothing but skin and bones, our limbs were full of sores, and the people of Timor beheld us with a mixture of horror, surprise and pity."

While the horror-stricken Timorese were bandaging the sores and putting flesh on the bones of the marooned mariners, Captain Bligh gave thanks to Almighty God for having "enabled me to be the means of saving eighteen lives."

But "Bully"'s second-in-command, John Fryer, also wrote a journal at Timor, in which he said that when Bligh skited how he'd got the men out of their trouble, the men replied that he'd got them into it....

In the haven of Coupang, Bligh dallied for more than two months, while his men recuperated, and botanist David Nelson died, and was buried with Dutch honours. Cap'n Bligh then bought a 34-foot schooner, which he christened H.M.S. Resource, and on 20 August, sailed with his seventeen survivors to Batavia, after taking "an affectionate leave of the hospitable and friendly inhabitants of Coupang."

On the first of October, the "Resourceful" Bountyites anchored in Batavia Road: "Where we found riding a Dutch Ship of war and 20 sail of Dutch East India Ships, besides many smaller vessels."

Sixteen days later, having sold his schooner by auction, Bligh sailed for England on the Dutch packet Vlydte, taking with him two of his salvaged men, with instructions to the others to follow as soon as possible. He circulated a police description of the mutineers of the Bounty to all ports—including Port Jackson, where Governor Phillip was ready to give Christian and his heatheens a hemon welcome if the Bounty ever arrived there....

All roads lead to Timor. After Bligh's small-boat marathon he returned to London and raised merry hell, damning Fletcher Christian's eyes, and bullying the Admiralty to send out a punitive expedition in search of the piratical mutineers. Thus commenced another sequence of small-boat voyages via Torres Strait to Timor, worthy of record.

The High and Mighty Lords of the British Admiralty nearly
died of apoplexy when William Bligh told his tale. An atrocious act of piracy and mutiny on board one of His Majesty's ships made the Admiralty determined to catch the perpetrators of so foul a deed. Ordinary hanging was not sufficient for such a heinous sin, it had to be conflagration punishment for the truant twenty-five, who had mutinously run away with a vessel and deserted from His Majesty's service.

So a man-o'-war, the *Pandora* frigate, 24 guns, commanded by Captain Edward Edwards, was commissioned to Bring 'Em Back Alive, and sailed from Jack-in-the-Basket, Portsmouth, on 7 November 1790, eight months after Bligh's boundless return. The *Pandora* was manned by 160 men—mostly landlubbers, as ye mariners of England were all wanted for Lord Howe's Armada.

After beating round Cape Horn, the *Pandora* sailed past Pitcairn Island, all unaware that there were some interesting people living there. The police boat anchored in Matavia Bay, Tahiti, on 23 March 1791. The *Bounty* was not there. She had fitted, at midnight on 29 September 1789, with eight mutineers commanded by the piratical Christian, nine white men in all together with nine native men, and ten native women.

They hadn't been heard of since.

On Tahiti the mutineers had left sixteen of their number a-dallying. Two of these had died, and the remainder had built a schooner, thirty-five feet long, which they named the *Resolution*, intending to sail her away. But, says Mutineer Morrison: “Finding that our hopes of reaching Batavia or any other place without sails, and finding that even Mats could not be had, we dropt any further attempts that way.”

So the fourteen mutineers—still dallying with the belles of Tahiti—were nabbed by the *Pandora* policeman. Captain Edwards, who was the most inhuman monster ever perpetrated into the world since Nero arstoned Rome, ordered the carpenter to construct a jewel-case for the abode of his guests—which they named “Pandora’s Box.”

The size of this deck-cell was eleven feet by eighteen, and the only orifice was a scuttle, eighteen inches square, in the top. Into this tank the fourteen prisoners were lowered, leg-cuffed and hand-cuffed. Says one of the captives, Midshipman Heywood: “We were treated with great rigour, not being allowed ever to get out of this den; and, being obliged to eat, drink, sleep and obey the calls of nature there.”

Another prisoner, Morrison, says that the heat of Pandora’s Box was so intense that the sweat of the mutineers ran in streams to the scuppers. Thus Captain Edwards fulfilled the orders given by the Admiralty, to confine the mutineers so closely as to preclude all possibility of their escaping, and to bring them home to undergo the punishment due to their demerits.

Loud were the lamentations of the women of Tahiti as they realized that their fourteen white lovers were to be taken away from the idyllic isle in durance vile. Morrison moans: “The women with whom we had cohabited on the island came frequently under the stern, bringing their children of which there were six born, and several of the women big with child, cutting their heads till the blood discoloured the water, their female friends also making bitter lamentations.”

The obdurate heart of Edwards was not melted by these heart-rending maternal laments, as the *Pandora* up-anchored and sailed from Tahiti on 8 May, looking for the other nine villains to put in the box.

The mutiny-built schooner *Resolution* was added to the King’s Navy as a tender, and the great round-up commenced, as Edwards with his frigate, his schooner, two yaws and a cutter, combed the beaches, bays and cays of the island-studded sea. But no trace of Christian or the runaway *Bounty* could he find, so he kept on searching, as he wended his way westward towards Torres Strait. During the search the frigate lost a cutter with five men, and also became separated from the schooner *Resolution*, which was manned by two petty officers and seven men.

Leaving these strays to their fate, the callous Edwards pushed the *Pandora* towards Timor. On 28 August, after discovering the Murray Isles, the ship of justice, *Pandora*, struck on the Great Barrier Reef, at seven in the evening, about ninety miles from Cape York. A shudder shivered the timbers of the ship, and all hands manned the pumps. It was a dark and stormy night, and, as the seamen tired at their labour, three of the prisoners were released from the dungeon on the poop to help at the pumps. All night they laboured, and, although guns were thrown overboard, His Majesty’s ship settled lower in the water and the sea poured in at the gun-ports.

At dawn the *Pandora* sank, while the crew, with awful yells, leapt overboard, and some launched the boats. Every man for himself—especially the skipper, who clambered over Pandora’s Box en route to safety, heedless of the pleas for mercy of the drowning rats within the British Navy’s Black Hole of Pandora.

But the boatswain’s mate, William Moulter, directed by Divine Providence, heard their cries, unbolted the trapdoor, and so the mutineers had a chance to swim for their lives. On a
nearby coral cay, a muster of the saved revealed that thirty-five seamen and four pirates had been drowned.

The ninety-nine survivors, including the ten rescued pirates, embarked in four life-boats, and steered for Timor, 1,100 miles away. Terrible were their hardships 'neath the vertical sun, as they toiled in the classic track of Bligh and his boat crew, of over two years previously. By a spin of the wheel of fate, the punitive expedition was now suffering the same hardships as those whom they were avenging—while the captured mutineers had to endure the same tortures as those endured by the men they had so heartlessly cast adrift.

Make the punishment fit the crime.

While the Pandora's police and prisoners are struggling onwards, drinking the blood of boobies and going mad with thirst, let us halt in our narrative to relate the epic of still another small-boat marathon along the Bligh Route to Timor.

Great are the coincidences of history and subtle is the spinning of the cobweb of fate. On 28 March 1791, while the Pandora was naffing the mutineers at Tahiti, His Majesty King George was losing some prisoners at Botany Bay. Sydney Cove was aog with excitement at the news that the principal fisherman of the port, named William Braund, had absconded in the Governor's cutter—taking with him his wife, two infant children, and seven convict cobbers.

They were making for Timor, 2,500 miles away. More open-boat odysseys of the Barrier Reef, in the gallant seventeen nineties.

In his list of exclusive First Fleeters, Governor Phillip states that William Bryant was convicted on 20 March 1784, at Launceston, England, and sentenced to seven years. He had served three years before leaving England on board the transport Scarborough for Botany Bay, and, at the time of his escape in the fishing cutter, he was a time-expired man by eight days.

His wife, whose maiden name was Mary Broad or Braund, had been a compulsory passenger from England on board the transport Charlotte, as Watkin Tench informs us; and she was "delivered of a fine girl between the hours of three and four," on 7 September 1787, at sea near Rio de Janeiro, as Surgeon White tells us. The baby was named Charlotte Spence, as we discover from the Kerrison James Index at the Genealogical Society's Office, Sydney. This child was the thirteenth born in the Fleet, since it assembled at the Isle of Wight, on 16 March 1787. Mary, the mother, was then twenty-two years of age, having been baptized on 1 May 1765, at Fowey in Corn-
Now that we have succeeded in not clearing up the paternity of the September baby, we have another point to elucidate. What was the crime for which Mary Braund or Broad was transported to Botany Bay? Mr Rawson's book, published in 1938, informs us on page twenty-one that her crime was aiding and abetting her lover to escape. He quotes in support of this theory Basil Thompson, whose edition of the *Voyage of the "Pandora"* was published in 1915, and Dr G. Mackaness, whose *Life of William Bligh* was published in 1911. Thus we have three votes for the crime of aiding and abetting.

But the late Mr Arthur Wilberforce Jose, in his article in the *Australian Encyclopaedia*, published in 1927, states: "Bryant's wife had been sentenced to death for stealing a cloak, but was given seven years at Botany Bay in lieu of hanging."

There's one vote for the crime of cloak-stealing. Just as we are wondering what's what, we turn to page 283 of Geoffrey Rawson's book, where he calmly prints an extract from the Gaol Book Assizes of Devon Lent Circuit 1786, in which Mary Braund's crime is declared to be "Feloniously assaulting Agnes Lakeman Spinster in the King's Highway feloniously putting her in corporal fear and danger of her life in the said highway and feloniously and violently taking from her person and against her will in the said highway one silk Bonnet val 12d. and other goods val 11s. 11d. her property."

Highway robbery for short, committed by Mary in company with other female gangsters, who were also sentenced to be hanged without benefit of clergy and were let off, like Mary, with seven years' transportation. As Mr Rawson himself prints, on page 285, the exact charge on which Mary was committed, why does he, on page twenty-one, fabricate a charge of aiding and abetting her lover to escape? His only excuse is that Basil Thompson and Dr Mackaness make the same blooming error. It all goes back to Louis Becke, and his co-romancer Walter Jeffery, who haunted the Bohemian circles of Sydney in the naughty eighteen nineties. These two vivid romancers, on the prowl for hot topics from our murky past, must have seen a copy of the newly published (and quickly suppressed) *Historical Records of New South Wales*, in which there are some references to Mary Bryant. The romantic penman decided to write her life-story, and what they didn't know they invented. Their book, entitled *A First Fleet Family*, pretended to be "A hitherto unpublished narrative, compiled from the papers of Sergeant William Dew of the Marines."

Adieu to Dew. There was no such person, he was merely a figment of the fevered imaginations of Becke and Jeffery. The non-existent Dew started the furphy that Mary had helped her lover to escape from jail, and that this was the offence for which she had been transported. Sir Basil Thompson, Doctor George Mackaness, and Commander Rawson have all been hoaxed, hoodwinked and hooeyed by the fabrico-facts of Bohemians Becke and Jeffery.

Louis and Walter were perfectly entitled to embroider their facts and acts as much as they pleased, for they were romantic fablers and did not pretend to be anything else. But there is no excuse for learned historians to chronicle the fallacies of fictioners.

Thompson, page twenty-three, says: "William Bryant, the leader, had been transported for smuggling, and his sweetheart, Mary Broad, who was maid to a lady in Salcombe in Devonshire, for connivance in her lover's escape from Winchester Gaol."

Doctor Mackaness, volume 1, page 276 says: "The leader being William Bryant, who, transported to Botany Bay for smuggling, had there married his sweetheart, Mary Broad, who also had been transported for connivance in his own escape from Winchester Gaol."

Thus experts reach agreement, and literary detectives contract headaches.

The man who ought to know most about Mary Broad-Braud, to wit, Governor Phillip, Boss Cocky of the First Fleet, does not admit her existence; as in his list of 777 exclusive First Fleeters, he does not mention the name of Mary Broad, or Braund, or Bryant.

Nevertheless Mary and her bouncing baby Charlotte, aboard the *Charlotte*, got to Sydney Cove—Phillip or no Phillip—because, as a result of Governor Phillip's public discourse on 7 February 1788 (in which he "strongly recommended marriage and promised assistance to those willing to conform to morality and religion") fourteen marriages took place on the Sunday following.

Among these was the marriage of William Bryant and Mary Braund, solemnized by Chaplain Richard Johnson on 10 February 1788, being No. 5 of the Book of Registrations, according to Mr Herbert Rumsey, the genealogist, in his *Pioneers of Sydney Cove*.

The Rev. Dicky Johnson, Chaplain of the First Fleet, was described by Lieutenant-Governor Grose as "one of the people called Methodists, a very troublesome, discontented character," and the convicts had doubts as to whether marriages performed by the discontented Richard were valid and binding. According to Collins the lags had: "an erroneous opinion of the efficacy of Mr Johnson's nuptial benediction."
But Bill and Mary were well satisfied with Parson Johnson’s beatitudes of Botany Bay, and commenced their honeymoon without agnostic qualms. The newly-wed pioneers, and their bouncing baby girl, settled into happily-married convict life, in a hut on the shores of Sydney Cove. Twenty-eight-year-old Billy, who had followed the ancient and honourable profession of smuggling in Cornwall, dodged stone-breaking, and was given a nautical job as fishcatcher to the starving Colony, and manager of its trawling industry.

This was his chance. But, a year after the marriage, Judge Collins sadly declared, on 2 February 1789: “Bryan was detected in secreting and selling large quantities of fish. For this he was severely punished and removed from the hut in which he had been placed. Yet, as notwithstanding his villainy he was too useful a person to part with, he was still retained to fish for the settlement, but a very vigilant eye was kept over him.”

But not too vigilant, as smuggler Bill continued his clandestine trade in piscatorial luxuries. On 4 April 1790, his wife gave birth to a bouncing baby boy, and there was much joy in the fisherman’s hut. The child was named Emanuel.

On 17 December 1790, a Dutch vessel, the Waaksameynd (which means Good Look Out) commanded by Captain Delmer Smit (which means Smith) arrived at Sydney Cove from Batavia, with a holdful of rice for the always-hungry Colonials. Among Skipper Smit’s visitors was Sydney Harbour’s prince of prawners, ex-smuggler Bryan, who traded choice flathead, snapper, mullet and leather-jacket (sold to the gullible as butterfly) in exchange for a quadrant, a compass, a chart, some rice and some hints on the navigation of the Barrier Reef.

A grand plan was forming in the brain of Bill, who, on 20 March 1791, completed his term as a prisoner and became theoretically a free man. He was free to go back to England—if he could. He had been transported overseas for seven years, but had to find his own way of getting back to Cornwall.

The fly in the ointment was his wife, Mary, who—sentenced on 20 March 1786, to seven years’ banishment—had still two years of her sentence to serve, and would not be a free woman until 20 March 1793. Her three-year-old baby girl, Charlotte, and eighteen-months-old baby boy, Emanuel, were not felons.

Fisherman Bill decided to make a break for liberty with his family. He had heard of “Bully” Bligh’s boat voyage to Timor, two years previously, and thought to himself “if Billy Bligh can do it, so can Billy Bryant.”

On the twenty-eighth of March, eight days after Bryan’s sentence expired, the Dutch ship departed from Port Jackson for England, leaving no large vessel in the port. Bill’s big moment had come. That same night, while the Colony slept, Bill Bryant, his wife, his kids, and seven convict coppers were wideawake. Silently they prized up the boards of Bill’s hut, and, loading themselves with bags of rice, a keg of water, and the compass, quadrant, and chart hidden there, they sneaked down to the water-front, went aboard the fishing smack, and, muffling the six oars, rowed for their lives to the open sea. It was eleven o’clock.

The vigilant eyes of the sentries failed to notice the abscenders, and, before dawn broke, the cutter was tossing on the ocean, with sails set—bound for Timor. Her crew consisted of James Martin, James Cox, Sam Bird, Bill Allen, Sam Broom, Nat Lilly, and Bill Morton, in addition to Skipper Billy Bryant, his wife, and the two kids, eleven persons in all.

Jim Cox, who was a lifer, wrote to his girl, Sarah Young, before departing, sentimentally “conjoining her to give over the pursuit of vices,” leaving her his property, and assigning, as a reason for his flight, “the severity of his situation, being transported for life without the hope of ever quitting the country but by the means he was about to adopt.” The rest of the crew left their girls behind them without qualming about their vices.

At dawn a hue and cry was raised when the absence of the cutter was noticed, and soon it was realized that the Colony’s star fisherman had escaped in the best fishing boat.

Pursuit was useless, as there was no vessel in harbour capable of overhauling the cutter, which had six hours’ start, and oöcles of ocean to optimize in. Two days later, coasting northwards in variable winds and weather, Bryant’s bonnies bore away for a small creek on the port bow, and, after beaching the cutter, caught some mullet for supper.

Says Bryant: “Walking along shore towards the entrance of the creek we found several large pieces of coal. Searching about a little, we found a place where we picked up with an axe as good coals as any in England, took some to the fire and they burned exceedingly well.”

Presumably this marks the discovery of the Hunter River, and the site of the present coalopolis called Newcastle, sixty miles north of Sydney. How about it, Newcastle? What about erecting an obelisk to William and Mary Bryant—the founders of your city?

For sixty-eight days the elusive cutter sailed their tiny craft among the shoals and dangers that beset the mariner between Sydney and Timor, frequently putting inshore for fresh water and cabbage-palms, and with their two muskets successfully defending themselves against the attacks of hostile Indians.
Driven out to sea by currents between latitudes 26 and 27 degrees, Admiral Bryant found turtles, and then closed again with the continent, but their boat got entangled with the surf and was driven ashore.

It was a close shave, but the escapees survived and went on their way singing a refrain which I imagine went like this:

**SONG OF THE BRYANTS**

(Verse by Iris O'Donnell, 1959)

Goodbye to Gaoler Phillip,
Good riddance to Botany Bay,
To the ball and chain
And the lash's pain,
The convicts' bitter pay.

We're bound for the Isles of Spice,
With a lead from Bully Bligh,
We'll keep afloat
In an open boat
Till a thousand leagues drift by.

So goodbye to Gaoler Phillip
Good riddance to Botany Bay,
We'll brave the main
Lose or gain
And take the rebels' way.

Says Captain Tench: "They passed through the Straits of Endeavour and, beyond the Gulf of Carpentaria, found a large freshwater river which they entered and filled from it their empty casks."

The Bryantites also found some Malay praus, fitted with sails and manned by ferocious Malays, but "they escaped by dint of rowing to windward," with their six oars. . . .

While they were at sea, on 16 May 1791, something happened in faraway London, which surprisingly will have a bearing on our tale. On that day, James Boswell, the boorish, published his famous and tedious *Life of Samuel Johnson, LL.D.*

Boswell was a member of the Faculty of Advocates. . . .

And so, on 5 June 1791, after sixty-eight days of hardship, the 2500-mile journey of the Botany Bay escapees ended at Fort Concordia in Koepang, Timor—where I'm having a second breakfast only twenty-nine hours after leaving Sydney, in February, 1939.

Bryant's eleven from Botany Bay were hospitably received by the warmhearted Dutchmen, when they pitched a tale that they were the survivors of the whaling ship *Neptune*, which had foundered in the coral seas. Kindly Mijnheer Timotheus Wanjon, Governor of Koepang, full of compassion for the ship-wrecked mariners, provided them with food and clothing, and accepted payment by a bill drawn by Bill on the British Government.

Bryant told the Mijnheer that he was the mate of the *Neptune*, and that, after the shipwreck, the captain and other members of the crew had gone afloat in another boat and no doubt would arrive at Timor in due course—if Providence guided them thither.

Enter the nark.

Just as the self-pardoned emancipists were settling down to a free and easy life, enjoying the schnapps of the Mijnheer, Koepang received another shock, as the four open boats of the *Pandora*, with eighty-nine shipwrecked mariners, and ten salvaged pirates of the *Bounty* aboard, came into Koepang harbour towards sunset, on 17 September 1791, fourteen weeks after the arrival of Bryant's boat from Botany Bay.

"Here comes your captain!" said a Dutch officer to one of Bryant's bravados, who was the worse for booze.

"What captain? Damme, we have no captain!" said the incautious escaper, who suffered from ossification of the noodle.

The fat was in the fire, and the enraged Mijnheer Wanjon, furious at having nursed a nest of schnapps-swilling vipers in his bosom, ordered the vipers to be thrown into Fort Concordia, until such time as they should pay for their booze and food. The escapees had out-drunk their welcome.

Bryant and his Mary bolted for the bush, but were soon captured and clinked.

While Wanjon's coppers were botching the boys from Botany Bay, the four boats of the *Pandora* hailed the fort, and declared that they were shipwrecked mariners of His Britannic Majesty's Navy. These boats had travelled 1100 miles in twenty days since their shipwreck on the Barrier Reef. Fortunately for the pilgrims, Captain Edwards was able to prove his purity, and that he was a dinkum naval officer and not a convict refugee.

The journey across the Timor Sea had been made without mishap, but with frightful tortures of thirst, as the bareheaded crews (who had lost their hats in the shipwreck) toiled on 'neath a vertical sun, which made the oarsmen horizontal. The resources of Koepang were strained to their utmost to provide the Pandora contingent with tucker and lodging. This time Mijnheer Wanjon did not hesitate to accept bills drawn on the British Government for services rendered.

Sadistic Captain Edward Edwards was overjoyed when Wanjon handed over to him the nine escapees of Botany Bay and Mary Bryant's two children. These captives compensated him for the loss of his four pirate prisoners who were drowned in
the foul "Pandora's Box" like rats in a trap when the ship went down, and for the loss of the nine mutineers, led by Fletcher Christian, whom he had failed to capture at Tahiti.

Thus the wonderful journey of William and Mary Bryant was in vain. The long arm of the law had reached out and seized them, just as it had seized the Bounty's mutineers, and the dual drama of the Pacific was reaching its finale. While in prison, navigator Bryant branched out as an author, and wrote an opus of his Odyssey entitled "Remarks on a Voyage from Sydney Cove, New South Wales to Timor." He handed this to the safe keeping of Timotheus of Timor, the Governor.

Edwards took his sailors, convicts and mutineers to Batavia en route to England. Before reaching Batavia, they stopped on 30 October at Samarang, on the island of Java, and there—to their great surprise—had the good fortune to find the long-lost pirate-built tender, Resolution, from which they had become separated in the middle of the Pacific Ocean on 22 June—over four months previously.

The tiny schooner, with her crew of nine, had navigated the Resolution through the coral cays and perils of the ocean, on the well-worn open-boat route to the Timor Sea, via the Fiji Islands and Endeavour Strait. They had passed by Koepang, and, on reaching Samarang, were arrested by the Governor, Mijnheer Overstraten, on suspicion of being escaped something or other. Edwards cheerfully paid their debts, and all hands went on to Batavia, to await a ship to England. . . .

In hospital at Batavia, Emanuel Bryant, the baby from Botany Bay, died on the first of December, and his father, William Bryant, the self-emancipated and time-expired convict, also died, twenty-one days later—of fever and a broken heart.

The tragic widow, with her daughter, Charlotte, was taken by Edwards to England—but baby Charlotte never reached there. She too died, on 6 May 1792, on board H.M.S. Gorgon, in the Atlantic Ocean.

So the child-bereft widow, Mary Bryant, arrived in England, and was immediately charged at the Old Bailey, on 7 July 1792, with being an escaped convict. Her past sufferings were not considered to be sufficient expiation of her crime of stealing a bonnet, valued twelve pence, and other goods, valued eleven shillings and eleven pence, way back in 1786. She was committed to Newgate Prison, and started to serve her sentence all over again. . . .

Enter the advocate. You will remember I told you that, while Mary Bryant was suffering on the Barrier Reef, on 16 May 1791, James Boswell, the Laird of Auchinleck, was suffering in The Poultry in London, as his publisher, Charles Dilly, was releasing from the press the quartos of Dr Samuel (Dictionary) Johnson's Life—comprehending his "epistolary correspondence, and conversations with many eminent persons, etc."

As Mary, the Waif of the Antipodes, suckled her baby and suffered the agonies of thirst, so did Boswell nurse his literary infant, and suffer the agonies of publication-day, when an author wonders agitatedly whether the public has enough sense to appreciate a chef d'oeuvre.

Since the great lexicographer had been laid to rest in Westminster Abbey, on 20 December 1784, his disconsolate friend, Boswell, for seven years, had laboured to immortalize the master's memory in a plenitude of phrase. A barrister of the Middle Temple, the Scotch Advocate could find nobody to pay fees for his forensic eloquence, so he used his spare time in writing one of the greatest masterpieces of the English language.

After writing and publishing Johnson's Life, Boswell once more found himself briefless and at a loose end. Being of a compassionate heart, he kept himself in practice as an advocate by defending poor criminals whom no one else would defend.

When Barrister-Biographer Boswell read, in the London Morning Chronicle, in July 1792, that Mary Bryant and the bad blokes from Botany Bay had been reconvicted, he hurried down Fleet Street to Newgate and interviewed the prisoners. They told him that Newgate was a paradise to what they had been through; but they thanked him tearfully for offering to prepare petitions to get them out of durance vile.

For months Boswell importuned his old school friends, Lord Dundas and Mr Secretary Nepean. Pooh-bah Nepean told Boswell that: "The Government would not do a kind thing to them, as that might give encouragement to others to escape."

Boswell the Benefactor persisted, and, at last, on 2 May 1793, after ten months spent in Newgate, Mary Bryant was given an unconditional pardon by the King.

The tragic widow of Timor was escorted by her emancipator to lodgings in Little Titchfield Street, and given money and good advice. Boswell's motives in befriending Mary were pure, paternalistic, and philanthropic. He was a friend of the downtrodden and despised, and a precursor of the modern Prisoners Aid Society.

As her patron, he received a message that her relatives in the Cornish village of Fowey would like to see her again, and would treat her kindly. So Good Samaritan Boswell paid her fare aboard the ship Ann Elizabeth, sailing from the Thames to Cornwall. On 12 October 1793, he went to Beale's wharf at Southwark to bid her farewell. Says Boswell in his voluminous journal: "I sat with her almost two hours, first in the kitchen,
and then in the bar of the publick house at the Wharf, and had a bowl of punch, the landlord and the Captain of the vessel having taken a glass with us."

So the prodigal daughter returned to Cornwall—back home to Fowey, the village of gossip and gasp—with five pounds in her purse and a promise from Boswell "of ten pounds yearly as long as she behaved well." The Good Samaritan did not forget his promise, and remitted the money through the local parson, the Rev. Baron, to whom he entrusted "the charge of paying the gratuity to Mary Broad."

Not satisfied with these good deeds, the Laird of Auchinleck next busied himself with securing the release of Mary's male compagnons de voyage, four of whom were languishing in Newgate. By being importunate he obtained clemency for them on 2 November 1793. They came direct from quod to his lodgings to thank him for writing Finis to their Botany Bay biography.

Poor old Bozzy did not live long to pay the annual gratuity to Mary, as on 17 May 1795 he died, and went straight to paradise for his saintly acts.

Obiit Boswell, the chronicler of Dr Johnson's obiter dicta, who has more right than his hypochondriacal and polysyllabic master to be enshrined in Westminster Abbey.

As for the captured pirates of the Bounty, some were hanged and some were let off—but that is a well-known story, which has been told in dozens of tomes and two films of Bountyania. Some of these accounts are true in some parts; none of them are true in all parts; but they all make good reading or seeing, as narratives of the greatest fright-thrill the British Admiralty ever had.

Bryant's journal, which he left at Koepang, was seen and partly copied in October 1792, by Breadfruit Bligh, who called at Timor on his second voyage around the world in H.M.S. Providence—a voyage unmarred by mutinies or maroonings. It was at Timor that Bligh heard with sorrow of the wreck of the Pandora, and with joy of the salvaging of some of the mutineers. On the heels of the wind, he raced home to England to attend the Court Martial and did his best to have the accused men hanged, halved and quartered.

Billy Bligh paid a tribute to Billy Bryant, as "a determined and enterprising man."

Which he was. . . .

So ends my tale of Timor. Here come the Flying Dutchmen—Captain Eduard Dunlop and his trio of ozone-hoppers—to take me in the schooner of the clouds from Koepang to Batavia.

All aboard.

CHAPTER X
FLYING LOW TO BATAVIA

As we finished our Koepang breakfast, an ageless sun vanished
the mists of earth, there was a roar of engines—and we're up and
off, over the blue water between Sumba and Flores Islands, above
a sea adorned with spice isles, coral isles, and isles of Romance.

The plane is flying low as we skim above Flores, a flowery
named isle. We have come on to the 3000-mile volcanic chain,
which constitutes the Netherlands Indies. Every island has vol-
cano cones, some active, some on the retired list; and in the
craters of the blown-out bluffs, water collects to form mountain
lakes—a scene of unforgettable beauty from the air.

High above Flores, Mount Ineri towers, its summit wreathed
in the quietness of clouds, that hover and drift in peace; and
then, whiz, a few minutes later we are peering down on the tri-
coloured crater lakes of Geli Mutu—three mountain basins side
by side, each containing water of a different colour, dyed by the
soil. One lake is rich red, another is green, and the third is
blue. These dream lakes in technicolour are the abode of spirits
People who die old haunt the blue lake; those who die young
live forever in the green crater. In the wine-red crater dwell the
souls of sorcerers and hoodoo men.

That's what the Flores folk believe anyway. . . .

Soon we reach the western end of Flores, and, passing above
a narrow strait, see below us the twin isles of Rinjani and Komodo.
These are only small islands—and just as well, because the
people of Komodo are incommoded by a monster named Veranus
komodoensis; in other words, the giant goanna.

This monitor lizard, better know as the Komodo Dragon,
may be seen dragging himself around Komodo with his power-
ful pentadactyle paws. He reaches a length of fifteen feet—even
longer if you've been drinking too much toddy. But our plane
flew too high and too fast for me to see any dragons in their
native habitat. I had to wait till I got to the Zoo at Surabaya,
before I was accommodated. . . .

Craters, craters, craters, as onwards we fly over the isle of
Soembawa, and lose count of the cones. This isle is famous for
To the ISLES of SPICE

with Frank Clune

A Vagabond Voyage by Air from Botany Bay to Darwin, Bathurst Island, Timor, Java, Borneo, Celebes and French Indo-China.

ANGUS AND ROBERTSON
SYDNEY : LONDON

Queen Wilhelmina—Beloved ruler of the Netherlands.