

North Australia 25th July 62

My dear Brother,

This day by the blessing of Providence we have planted Britain's flag on the shores of the Indian ocean – the spot we struck on the coast is to be named "Elizabeth Bay" after Miss Chambers who made the flag – We saw the sea about midday on the 24th & not finding there a suitable place for a flagstaff – camped near it & found one this morning – you will find the place on a good map at the bottom of the Gulf of Van dieman a little to the eastward of cape Hotham. We would have liked to have planted it nearer the mouth of the river but found it difficult to round & cross a very large green swamp Lat Longitude [spaces left blank]. The Adelaide is large & navigable for 60 miles with a rise & fall of the tide as far as that of 4½ feet & very deep – full of fish of different kinds also plenty of alligators [sic]. The country of the best alluvial soil almost within 100 yds. Of the sea & the vegetation luxuriant in the extreme – About some half dozen different species of Palm trees, some of them beautiful beyond description. The timber is small but straight & clean – in many places very thick. The bamboo also is very plentiful 40 & 50 feet high. There is no bar at the mouth of the River, which is ½ a mile wide & fit for large ships to enter. We made the Roper on [blank] of June crossed it on the [blank] followed up the western branches to its source – crossed the dividing range & in 5 miles from its last water struck what proved to be one of heads of the Adelaide which we followed down to the main stream. We had a very anxious & tedious journey from Newcastle Water to the eastern branches of the Roper which is also a very fine river flowing into the west side of the Gulf of Carpentaria through a magnificent country.

Although I have dated this from the Adelaide we are not really at the present time on the river, but on a swamp supposed to be connected with it. After erecting the flag we returned to our last night's camp – so that we actually [sic] on our homeward journey some 2 miles or so. Homeward bound & hope to be in Adelaide once more by Christmas. Our journey has been a most interesting one – the scenery is very fine & so many new trees & flowers meet the eye altho' the season is not favorable for many of them, that we have been delighted. Water & grass are most abundant indeed too much so –birds & water fowl in thousands but difficult to get—I must break off here as my watch is called & must finish this elsewhere [sic]—perhaps at Mt. Margaret. Adieu for the present.