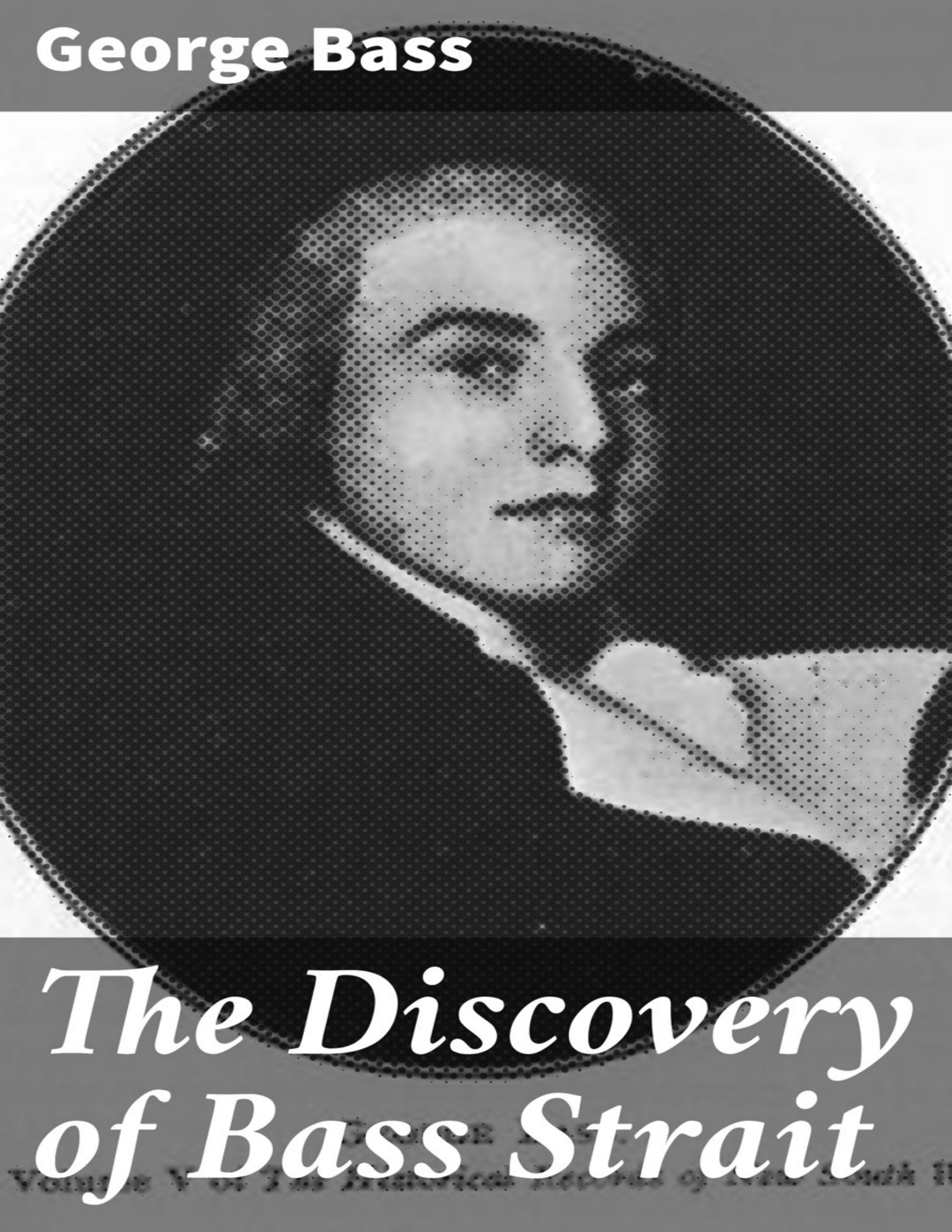


**George Bass**



*The Discovery  
of Bass Strait*

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# **The Discovery of Bass Strait**



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## ***A. Biographical Note.***

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George Bass, surgeon of H.M.S. Reliance, was permitted by Hunter to take six seamen and six weeks' provisions in a whaleboat, to explore the coast south of Sydney. He was absent twelve weeks, and before his return demonstrated the existence of a strait between Tasmania and Australia. At the time he undertook this journey he was thirty-four years of age, and was described by his father-in-law in a letter to the British Government, written, it is supposed, in 1813, as "Six foot high, dark complexion, wears spectacles, a very penetrating countenance." In February, 1803, he sailed from Port Jackson in the brig Venus, for South America, to procure salt meat and live cattle for the settlement. He informed his brother-in-law, Captain Waterhouse, of H.M.S. Reliance, in a letter, written a few hours before he sailed on the voyage from which he was destined never to return, that he proposed to call in at Dusky Bay, New Zealand, where the wreck of the Endeavour lay; then proceed for sealskins to the islands lying farther south, and finally, to make the coast of Chili in search of provisions, &c., for New South Wales. With this last object in view, he informed Waterhouse that he had been provided by Governor King with a "very diplomatic-looking certificate". Amongst a number of papers in the possession of Mr. Pownall, solicitor, of Russell Square, London, is the following statement:—

"London, May 10th, 1811.

"In or about the year 1803, a brig named the Harrington, Captain William Campbell, master, arrived at Port Jackson