

Landesbibliothek Oldenburg

Digitalisierung von Drucken

A Voyage Towards The South Pole, And Round The World

Performed In His Majesty's Ships the Resolution and Adventure, In the
Years 1772, 1773, 1774, and 1775 ; In Two Volumes

**Cook, James
Furneaux, ...**

London, 1777

Chap. VII. Sequel of the Passage from Zealand to Easter Island, and
Tranfactions there, with an Account of an Expedition to discover the
Inland Part of the Country, and a Description of some of the ...

urn:nbn:de:gbv:45:1-2218

1774.
March.
Tuesday 8.

great numbers of birds, such as men of war, tropic, and egg-birds, nodies, sheer-waters, &c. and once we passed several pieces of sponge, and a small dried leaf not unlike a bay one. Soon after, we saw a sea snake, in every respect like those we had before seen at the Tropical Islands. We also saw plenty of fish, but were such bad fishers that we caught only four albacores, which were very acceptable, to me especially, who was just recovering from my late illness.

C H A P. VII.

Sequel of the Passage from New Zealand to Easter Island, and Transactions there, with an Account of an Expedition to discover the Inland Part of the Country, and a Description of some of the surprising gigantic Statues found in the Island.

Friday 11.

AT eight o'clock in the morning on the 11th, land was seen, from the mast-head, bearing West; and at noon from the deck, extending from W. $\frac{1}{4}$ N. to W. by S., about twelve leagues distant. I made no doubt that this was Davis's Land, or Easter Island; as its appearance from this situation, corresponded very well with Wafer's account; and we expected to have seen the low sandy isle that Davis fell in with, which would have been a confirmation; but in this we were disappointed. At seven o'clock in the evening, the island bore from N. 62° West to North 87° West, about five leagues distant; in which situation we sounded without finding ground with a line of an hundred and forty fathoms. Here we spent the night, having alternately light airs and calms,



77

U
24



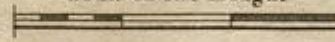
EASTER ISLAND.

Latitude $27^{\circ} 05' 30'' S^{\circ}$

Longitude $109^{\circ} 46' 20'' W^t$ of Greenwich.

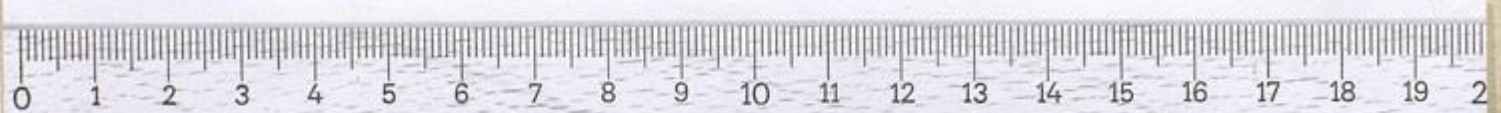


Scale of one League



WWhitchurch sculp^r 1776.
Published Feb^r 1777 by W^m Strahan, at New Street, Shoe Lane, & The Castle in the Strand, London.

N^o IX



276

1776
Ma
Tuesda

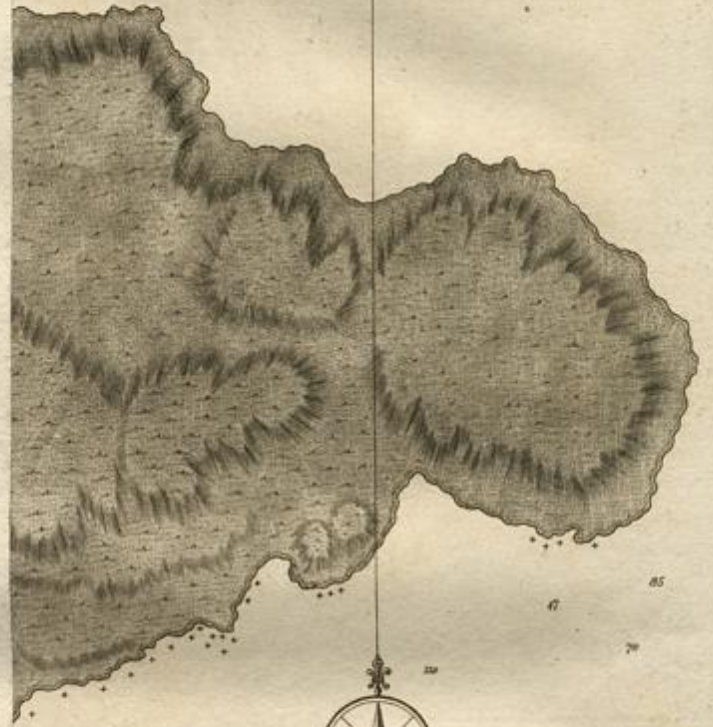
Friday



R ISLAND.

$27^{\circ} 05' 30'' S^{\circ}$

$16^{\circ} 20' W^{\circ}$ of Greenwich.



of one League

Whitechurch sculp. 1776.
at Shoe Lane, & The Castle in the Strand London.

N^o IX



calms, till ten o'clock the next morning, when a breeze sprung up at W. S. W. With this we stretched in for the land; and by the help of our glass, discovered people, and some of those colossian statues or idols mentioned by the authors of Roggewin's Voyage*. At four o'clock in the P. M. we were half a league S. S. E. and N. N. W. of the N. E. point of the island; and, on sounding, found thirty-five fathoms, a dark sandy bottom. I now tacked and endeavoured to get into what appeared to be a bay, on the West side of the point or S. E. side of the island; but before this could be accomplished, night came upon us, and we stood on and off, under the land, till the next morning; having soundings from seventy-five to an hundred and ten fathoms, the same bottom as before.

1774.
March.
Saturday 12.

On the 13th, about eight o'clock in the morning, the wind, which had been variable most part of the night, fixed at S. E., and blew in squalls, accompanied with rain; but it was not long before the weather became fair. As the wind now blew right on the S. E. shore, which does not afford that shelter I at first thought, I resolved to look for anchorage on the West and N. W. sides of the island. With this view I bore up round the South point; off which lie two small islets; the one, nearest the point, high and peaked, and the other low and flattish. After getting round the point, and coming before a sandy beach, we found soundings thirty and forty fathoms, sandy ground, and about one mile from the shore. Here a canoe conducted by two men, came off to us. They brought with them a bunch of plantains, which they sent into the ship by a rope, and then they returned ashore. This gave us a good opinion of the islanders, and inspired us with

Sunday 13.

* See Dalrymple's Collection of Voyages, vol. 2.

hopes.



1774.
March.
Sunday 13.

hopes of getting some refreshments, which we were in great want of.

I continued to range along the coast, till we opened the northern point of the isle, without seeing a better anchoring-place than the one we had passed. We, therefore, tacked, and plied back to it; and, in the mean time, sent away the master, in a boat to sound the coast. He returned about five o'clock in the evening; and, soon after, we came to an anchor in thirty-six fathoms water, before the sandy beach above mentioned. As the master drew near the shore with the boat, one of the natives swam off to her, and insisted on coming aboard the ship, where he remained two nights and a day. The first thing he did after coming aboard, was to measure the length of the ship, by fathoming her from the taffarel to the stern; and, as he counted the fathoms, we observed that he called the numbers by the same names that they do at Otaheite; nevertheless his language was, in a manner, wholly unintelligible to all of us.

Monday 14.

Having anchored too near the edge of the bank, a fresh breeze from the land, about three o'clock the next morning, drove us off it; on which the anchor was heaved up, and sail made to regain the bank again. While the ship was plying in, I went ashore, accompanied by some of the gentlemen, to see what the island was likely to afford us. We landed at the sandy beach, where some hundreds of the natives were assembled, and who were so impatient to see us, that many of them swam off to meet the boats. Not one of them had so much as a stick or weapon of any sort in their hands. After distributing a few trinkets amongst them, we made signs for something to eat; on which they brought down a few potatoes, plantains, and sugar-canes,
and



and exchanged them for nails, looking-glasses, and pieces of cloth.

1774.
March.
Monday 14.

We presently discovered that they were as expert thieves, and as tricking in their exchanges, as any people we had yet met with. It was with some difficulty we could keep the hats on our heads; but hardly possible to keep any thing in our pockets, not even what themselves had sold us; for they would watch every opportunity to snatch it from us, so that we sometimes bought the same thing two or three times over, and after all did not get it.

Before I sailed from England, I was informed that a Spanish ship had visited this isle in 1769. Some signs of it were seen among the people now about us; one man had a pretty good broad brimmed European hat on; another had a grego jacket; and another a red silk handkerchief. They also seemed to know the use of a musquet, and to stand in much awe of it; but this they probably learnt from Roggewin, who, if we are to believe the authors of that voyage, left them sufficient tokens.

Near the place where we landed, were some of those statues before mentioned, which I shall describe in another place. The country appeared barren and without wood; there were, nevertheless, several plantations of potatoes, plantains and sugar-canes; we also saw some fowls, and found a well of brackish water. As these were articles we were in want of, and as the natives seemed not unwilling to part with them, I resolved to stay a day or two. With this view, I repaired on board, and brought the ship to an anchor in thirty-two fathoms water; the bottom a fine dark sand. Our station was about a mile from the nearest shore, the South point of a small bay, in the bottom of which is the sandy



1774.
March.
Monday 14.

fandy beach before mentioned, being E. S. E., distant one mile and an half. The two rocky islots lying off the South point of the island, were just shut behind a point to the North of them; they bore South $\frac{3}{4}$ West, four miles distant; and the other extreme of the island bore N. 25° E., distant about six miles. But the best mark for this anchoring-place is the beach; because it is the only one on this side the island. In the afternoon, we got on board a few casks of water, and opened a trade with the natives for such things as they had to dispose of. Some of the gentlemen also made an excursion into the country to see what it produced; and returned again in the evening, with the loss only of a hat, which one of the natives snatched off the head of one of the party.

Tuesday 15.

Early next morning, I sent Lieutenants Pickersgill and Edgcumbe with a party of men, accompanied by several of the gentlemen, to examine the country. As I was not sufficiently recovered from my late illness to make one of the party, I was obliged to content myself with remaining at the landing-place among the natives. We had, at one time, a pretty brisk trade with them for potatoes, which we observed they dug up out of an adjoining plantation; but this traffic, which was very advantageous to us, was soon put a stop to, by the owner (as we supposed) of the plantation coming down, and driving all the people out of it. By this we concluded, that he had been robbed of his property, and that they were not less scrupulous of stealing from one another, than from us, on whom they practised every little fraud they could think on, and generally with success; for we no sooner detected them in one, than they found out another. About seven o'clock in the evening, the party I had sent into the country returned, after having been over the greatest part of the island.

They



They left the beach about nine o'clock in the morning, and took a path which led across to the S. E. side of the island, followed by a great crowd of the natives, who pressed much upon them. But they had not proceeded far, before a middle-aged man, punctured from head to foot, and his face painted with a sort of white pigment, appeared with a spear in his hand, and walked along-side of them, making signs to his countrymen to keep at a distance, and not to molest our people. When he had pretty well effected this, he hoisted a piece of white cloth on his spear, placed himself in the front, and led the way, with his ensign of peace, as they understood it to be. For the greatest part of the distance across, the ground had but a barren appearance, being a dry hard clay, and every where covered with stones; but notwithstanding this, there were several large tracks planted with potatoes; and some plantain walks, but they saw no fruit on any of the trees. Towards the highest part of the South end of the island, the soil, which was a fine red earth, seemed much better; bore a longer grass; and was not covered with stones as in the other parts; but here they saw neither house nor plantation.

On the East side, near the sea, they met with three platforms of stone-work, or rather the ruins of them. On each had stood four of those large statues, but they were all fallen down from two of them, and also one from the third; all except one were broken by the fall, or in some measure defaced. Mr. Wales measured this one, and found it to be fifteen feet in length, and six feet broad over the shoulders. Each statue had on its head a large cylindric stone of a red colour, wrought perfectly round. The one they measured, which was not by far the largest, was fifty-two inches high, and sixty-six in diameter. In some the upper corner of the

1774.
March.
Tuesday 15.



1774.
March.
Tuesday 15.

cylinder was taken off in a sort of concave quarter-round; but in others the cylinder was entire.

From this place they followed the direction of the coast to the N. E., the man with the flag still leading the way. For about three miles they found the country very barren, and in some places stript of the soil to the bare rock, which seemed to be a poor sort of iron ore. Beyond this, they came to the most fertile part of the island they saw, it being interspersed with plantations of potatoes, sugar-canes, and plantain trees, and these not so much encumbered with stones as those which they had seen before; but they could find no water except what the natives twice or thrice brought them, which, though brackish and stinking, was rendered acceptable, by the extremity of their thirst. They also passed some huts, the owners of which met them with roasted potatoes and sugar-canes, and placing themselves ahead of the foremost of the party, (for they marched in a line in order to have the benefit of the path) gave one to each man as he passed by. They observed the same method in distributing the water which they brought; and were particularly careful that the foremost did not drink too much, lest none should be left for the hindmost. But at the very time these were relieving the thirsty and hungry, there were not wanting others, who endeavoured to steal from them the very things which had been given them. At last, to prevent worse consequences, they were obliged to fire a load of small shot at one who was so audacious as to snatch from one of the men the bag which contained every thing they carried with them. The shot hit him on the back; on which he dropped the bag, ran a little way, and then fell; but he afterwards got up and walked, and what became of him they knew not, nor whether he was much wounded. As



this affair occasioned some delay, and drew the natives together, they presently saw the man who had hitherto led the way, and one or two more, coming running towards them; but instead of stopping when they came up, they continued to run round them, repeating, in a kind manner, a few words, until our people set forwards again. Then their old guide hoisted his flag, leading the way as before, and none ever attempted to steal from them the whole day afterwards.

1774.
March.
Tuesday 15.

As they passed along, they observed on a hill a number of people collected together, some of whom had spears in their hands; but, on being called to by their countryman, they dispersed; except a few, amongst whom was one seemingly of some note. He was a stout well-made man, with a fine open countenance, his face was painted, his body punctured, and he wore a better *Ha bou*, or cloth, than the rest. He saluted them as he came up, by stretching out his arms, with both hands clinched, lifting them over his head, opening them wide, and then letting them fall gradually down to his sides. To this man, whom they understood to be the chief of the island, their other friend gave his white flag; and he gave it to another, who carried it before them the remainder of the day.

Towards the eastern end of the island, they met with a well whose water was perfectly fresh, being considerably above the level of the sea; but it was dirty, owing to the filthiness or cleanliness (call it which you will) of the natives, who never go to drink without washing themselves all over as soon as they have done; and if ever so many of them are together, the first leaps right into the middle of the hole,

O o 2

drinks,



1774.
 March.
 Tuesday 15.

drinks, and washes himself without the least ceremony; after which another takes his place and does the same.

They observed that this side of the island was full of those gigantic statues so often mentioned; some placed in groupes on platforms of masonry; others single, fixed only in the earth, and that not deep; and these latter are, in general, much larger than the others. Having measured one, which had fallen down, they found it very near twenty-seven feet long, and upwards of eight feet over the breast or shoulders; and yet this appeared considerably short of the size of one they saw standing: its shade, a little past two o'clock, being sufficient to shelter all the party, consisting of near thirty persons, from the rays of the sun. Here they stopped to dine; after which they repaired to a hill, from whence they saw all the East and North shores of the isle, on which they could not see either bay or creek fit even for a boat to land in; nor the least signs of fresh water. What the natives brought them here was real salt water; but they observed that some of them drank pretty plentifully of it, so far will necessity and custom get the better of nature! On this account they were obliged to return to the last-mentioned well; where, after having quenched their thirst, they directed their route across the island towards the ship, as it was now four o'clock.

In a small hollow, on the highest part of the island, they met with several such cylinders as are placed on the heads of the statues. Some of these appeared larger than any they had seen before; but it was now too late to stop to measure any of them. Mr. Wales, from whom I had this information, is of opinion that there had been a quarry here, whence these



these stones had formerly been dug; and that it would have been no difficult matter to roll them down the hill after they were formed. I think this a very reasonable conjecture; and have no doubt that it has been so.

1774.
March.
Tuesday 15.

On the declivity of the mountain towards the West, they met with another well; but the water was a very strong mineral, had a thick green scum on the top, and stunk intolerably. Necessity, however, obliged some to drink of it; but it soon made them so sick, that they threw it up the same way it went down.

In all this excursion, as well as the one made the preceding day, only two or three shrubs were seen. The leaf and seed of one (called by the natives *Torromedo*) were not much unlike those of the common vetch; but the pod was more like that of a tamarind in its size and shape. The seeds have a disagreeable bitter taste; and the natives, when they saw our people chew them, made signs to spit them out; from whence it was concluded that they think them poisonous. The wood is of a redish colour, and pretty hard and heavy; but very crooked, small, and short, not exceeding six or seven feet in height. At the S. W. corner of the island, they found another small shrub, whose wood was white and brittle, and in some measure, as also its leaf, resembling the ash. They also saw in several places the Otaheitean cloth plant; but it was poor and weak, and not above two and a half feet high at most.

They saw not an animal of any sort, and but very few birds; nor indeed any thing which can induce ships that are not in the utmost distress, to touch at this island.

This



1774.
March.
Tuesday 15.

This account of the excursion I had from Mr. Pickerfgill and Mr. Wales, men on whose veracity I could depend; and, therefore, I determined to leave the island the next morning, since nothing was to be obtained that could make it worth my while to stay longer; for the water which we had sent on board, was not much better than if it had been taken up out of the sea.

Wednesf. 16.

We had a calm till ten o'clock in the morning of the 16th, when a breeze sprung up at West, accompanied with heavy showers of rain, which lasted about an hour. The weather then clearing up, we got under sail, stood to sea, and kept plying to and fro, while an officer was sent on shore with two boats, to purchase such refreshments as the natives might have brought down; for I judged this would be the case, as they knew nothing of our sailing. The event proved that I was not mistaken; for the boats made two trips before night; when we hoisted them in, and made sail to the N. W., with a light breeze at N. N. E.

C H A P.

