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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. VI. Departure from Tanna; with some Account of its Inhabitants,
their Manners and Arts.

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C H A P. VI.

Departure from Tanna; with some Account of its Inhabitants, their Manners and Arts.

DURING the night the wind had veered round to S. E. As this was favourable for getting out of the harbour, at four o'clock in the morning of the 20th, we began to un-moor, and at eight, having weighed our last anchor, put to sea. As soon as we were clear of the land, I brought to, waiting for the launch which was left behind to take up a kedge anchor and hawser we had out, to cast by. About day-break a noise was heard in the woods, nearly abreast of us, on the east side of the harbour, not unlike finging of psalms. I was told that the like had been heard at the same time every morning, but it never came to my knowledge till now, when it was too late to learn the occasion of it. Some were of opinion, that at the east point of the harbour (where we observed, in coming in, some houses, boats, &c.) was something sacred to religion, because some of our people had attempted to go to this point, and were prevented by the natives. I thought, and do still think, it was only owing to a desire they shewed, on every occasion, of fixing bounds to our excursions. So far as we had once been, we might go again; but not farther, with their consent. But by encroaching a little every time, our country expeditions were insensibly extended without giving the least umbrage. Besides, these morning ceremonies, whether religious or not, were not performed down at

1774.
August.
Saturday 20.

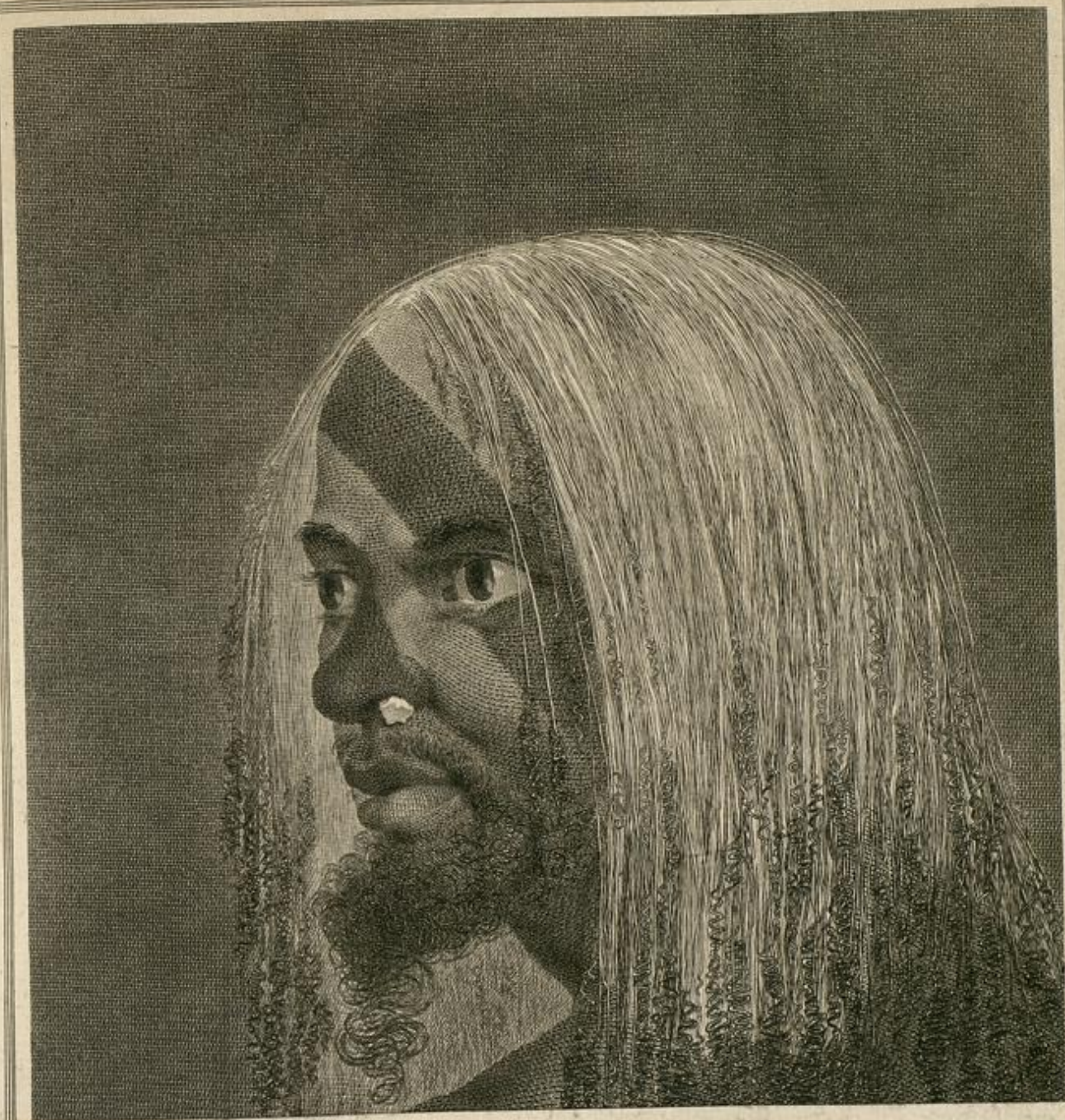


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pafs, to and from that ifle and the east point of the harbour, were fifhing canoes. Thefe canoes were of unequal fizes; fome thirty feet long, two broad, and three deep; and they are compofed of feveral pieces of wood clumsily fewed together with bandages. The joints are covered on the outside by a thin batten champhered off at the edges, over which the bandages pafs. They are navigated either by paddles or fails. The fail is latteen, extended to a yard and boom, and hoifted to a fhort maff. Some of the large canoes have two fails, and all of them outriggers.

At firft we thought the people of this ifland, as well as thofe of Erromango, were a race between the natives of the Friendly Iflands and thofe of Mallicollo; but a little acquaintance with them convinced us that they had little or no affinity to either, except it be in their hair, which is much like what the people of the latter ifland have. The general colours of it are black and brown, growing to a tolerable length, and very crisp and curly. They feperate it into fmall locks, which they woold or cue round with the rind of a flender plant, down to about an inch of the ends; and, as the hair grows, the woolding is continued. Each of thefe cues or locks is fomewhat thicker than common whip-cord; and they look like a parcel of fmall ftrings hanging down from the crown of their heads. Their beards, which are ftrong and bufhy, are generally fhort. The women do not wear their hair fo, but cropped; nor do the boys, till they approach manhood. Some few men, women, and children, were feen, who had hair like ours; but it was obvious that thefe were of another nation; and, I think, we underftood they came from Erronan. It is to this ifland they afcribe one of the two languages which they fpeak, and which is nearly, if not exactly,







Drawn from Nature by W.Hodges.

Engrav'd by J.Basire
N^o.XXVI

MAN OF THE ISLAND OF TANNA.

Published Feb^r 1777 by W^m Strahan in New Street Shoe Lane & Tho^s Cadell in the Strand London.



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actly, the same as that spoken at the Friendly Islands. It is therefore more than probable that Erronan was peopled from that nation, and that, by long intercourse with Tanna and the other neighbouring islands, each hath learnt the other's language, which they use indiscriminately.

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The other language which the people of Tanna speak, and, as we understood, those of Erromango and Annatom, is properly their own. It is different from any we had before met with, and bears no affinity to that of Mallicollo; so that, it should seem, the people of these islands are a distinct nation of themselves. Mallicollo, Apee, &c. were names entirely unknown to them; they even knew nothing of Sandwich Island, which is much the nearer. I took no small pains to know how far their geographical knowledge extended; and did not find that it exceeded the limits of their horizon.

These people are of the middle size, rather slender than otherwise; many are little, but few tall or stout; the most of them have good features, and agreeable countenances; are, like all the tropical race, active and nimble; and seem to excel in the use of arms, but not to be fond of labour. They never would put a hand to assist in any work we were carrying on, which the people of the other islands used to delight in. But what I judge most from, is their making the females do the most laborious work, as if they were pack-horses. I have seen a woman carrying a large bundle on her back, or a child on her back and a bundle under her arm, and a fellow strutting before her with nothing but a club or spear, or some such thing. We have frequently observed little troops of women pass, to and fro, along the beach, laden with fruit and roots, escorted by a party of men under arms; though, now and then, we have seen a man carry a

burden.

*



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burden at the same time, but not often. I know not on what account this was done, nor that an armed troop was necessary. At first, we thought they were moving out of the neighbourhood with their effects; but we afterwards saw them both carry out, and bring in, every day.

I cannot say the women are beauties; but I think them handsome enough for the men, and too handsome for the use that is made of them. Both sexes are of a very dark colour, but not black; nor have they the least characteristic of the negro about them. They make themselves blacker than they really are, by painting their faces with a pigment of the colour of black lead. They also use another sort which is red, and a third sort brown, or a colour between red and black. All these, but especially the first, they lay on, with a liberal hand, not only on the face, but on the neck, shoulders, and breast. The men wear nothing but a belt, and the wrapping leaf as at Mallicollo*. The women have a kind of petticoat made of the filaments of the plantain tree, flags, or some such thing, which reaches below the knee. Both sexes wear ornaments, such as bracelets, earrings, necklaces, and amulets. The bracelets are chiefly worn by the men; some made of sea-shells, and others of those of the cocoa-nut. The men also wear amulets; and those of most value being made of a greenish stone, the green stone of New Zealand is valued by them for this purpose. Necklaces are chiefly used by the women, and made mostly of shells. Ear-rings are common to both sexes, and those valued most are made of tortoise-shell. Some of our people having got some at the Friendly Islands, brought it to a good market here, where it was of more value than any thing we

* See page 34.

had







Drawn from Nature by W.Hodges.

Engrav'd by J.Baillie
N^o. XLV.

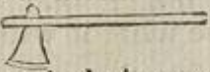
WOMAN OF THE ISLAND OF TANNA

Published Feb 1st 1777 by W. Strahan in New Street Shoe Lane, and Tho^s Cadell in the Strand London.



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had besides; from which I conclude that these people catch but few turtle, though I saw one in the harbour, just as we were getting under sail. I observed that, towards the latter end of our stay, they began to ask for hatchets, and large nails; so that it is likely they had found that iron is more serviceable than stone, bone, or shells, of which all their tools I have seen are made. Their stone hatchets, at least all those I saw, are not in the shape of adzes, as at the other islands, but more like an ax, in this form . In the helve, which is pretty thick, is made a hole into which the stone is fixed.

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These people, besides the cultivation of ground, have few other arts worth mentioning. They know how to make a coarse kind of matting, and a coarse cloth of the bark of a tree, which is used chiefly for belts. The workmanship of their canoes, I have before observed, is very rude; and their arms, with which they take the most pains in point of neatness, come far short of some others we had seen. Their weapons are clubs, spears or darts, bows and arrows, and stones. The clubs are of three or four kinds, and from three to five feet long. They seem to place most dependence on the darts, which are pointed with three bearded edges. In throwing them they make use of a becket, that is a piece of stiff plaited cord about six inches long, with an eye in one end and a knot at the other. The eye is fixed on the fore-finger of the right hand, and the other end is hitched round the dart, where it is nearly on an equipoise. They hold the dart between the thumb and remaining fingers, which serve only to give it direction, the velocity being communicated by the becket and fore-finger. The former flies off

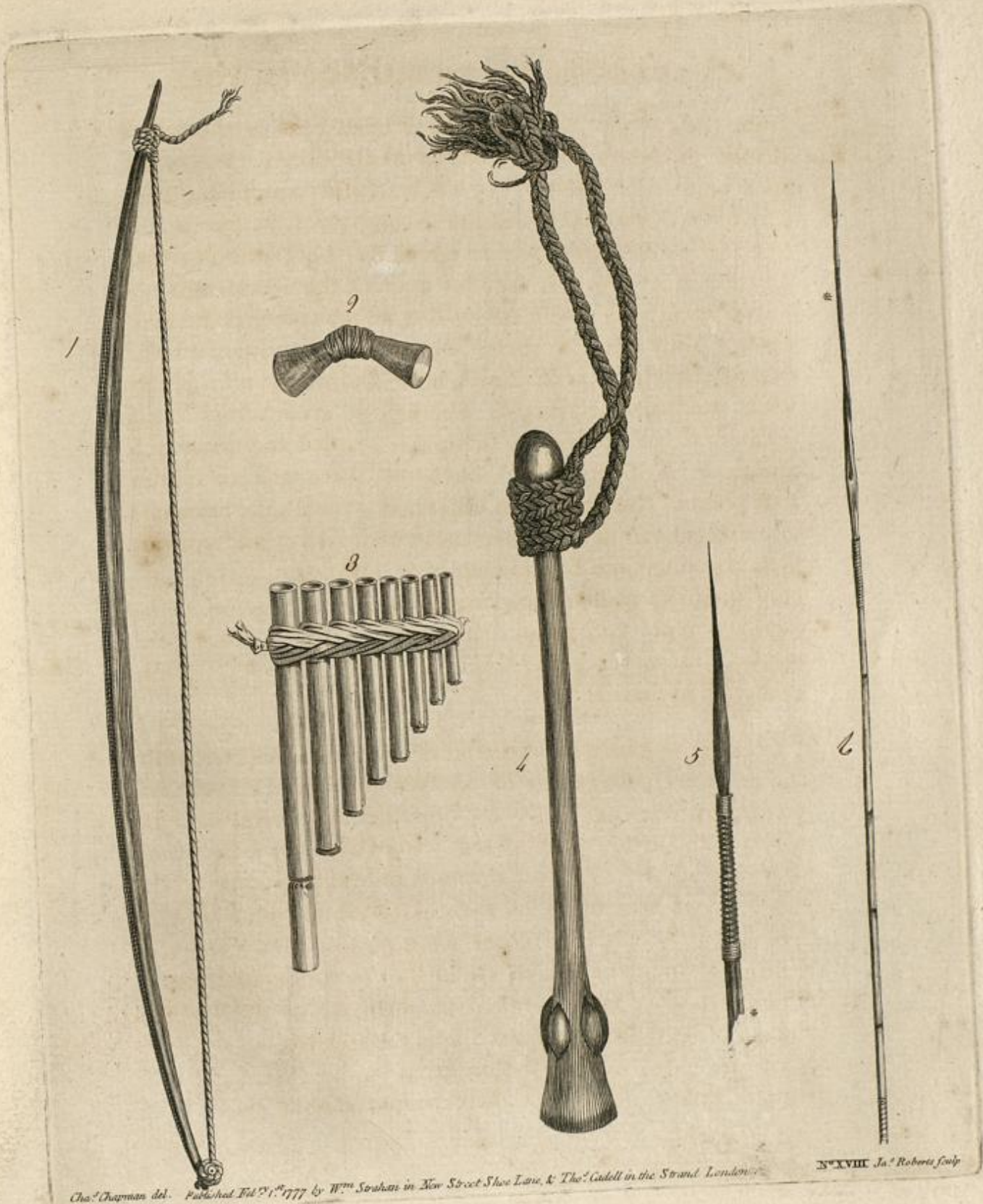


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August.

from the dart the instant its velocity becomes greater than that of the hand, but it remains on the finger ready to be used again. With darts they kill both birds and fish, and are sure of hitting a mark, within the compass of the crown of a hat, at the distance of eight or ten yards; but, at double that distance, it is chance if they hit a mark the size of a man's body, though they will throw the weapon sixty or seventy yards. They always throw with all their might, let the distance be what it will. Darts, bows and arrows are to them what musquets are to us. The arrows are made of reeds pointed with hard wood: some are bearded and some not, and those for shooting birds have two, three, and sometimes four points. The stones they use are, in general, the branches of coral rocks from eight to fourteen inches long, and from an inch to an inch-and-half in diameter. I know not if they employ them as missile weapons; almost every one of them carries a club, and besides that, either darts, or a bow and arrows, but never both: those who had stones kept them generally in their belts.

I cannot conclude this account of their arms without adding an entire passage out of Mr. Wales's journal. As this gentleman was continually on shore amongst them, he had a better opportunity of seeing what they could perform, than any of us. The passage is as follows: "I must confess I have been often led to think the feats which Homer represents his heroes as performing with their spears, a little too much of the marvellous to be admitted into an heroic poem; I mean when confined within the straits of Aristotle. Nay, even so great an advocate for him as Mr. Pope, acknowledges them to be *surprising*. But since I have seen what these people can do with their
" wooden





Cha.^s Chapman del. Published Ed^d 1^o 1777 by W^m Strahan in New Street Shoe Lane, & Tho^s Cadell in the Strand London.

N^o XXVIII Ja.^s Roberts sculp





“ wooden spears, and them badly pointed, and not of a
 “ very hard nature, I have not the least exception to any one
 “ passage in that great poet on this account. But, if I see
 “ fewer exceptions, I can find infinitely more beauties in
 “ him; as he has, I think, scarce an action, circumstance,
 “ or description of any kind whatever, relating to a spear,
 “ which I have not seen and recognised among these people;
 “ as their whirling motion, and whistling noise, as they fly;
 “ their quivering motion, as they stick in the ground when
 “ they fall; their meditating their aim, when they are go-
 “ ing to throw; and their shaking them in their hand as
 “ they go along, &c. &c.”

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I know no more of their cookery, than that it consists of roasting and baking; for they have no vessel in which water can be boiled. Nor do I know that they have any other liquor but water and the juice of the cocoa-nut.

We are utter strangers to their religion; and but little acquainted with their government. They seem to have chiefs among them; at least some were pointed out to us by that title; but, as I before observed, they appeared to have very little authority over the rest of the people. Old Geogy was the only one the people were ever seen to take the least notice of; but whether this was owing to high rank or old age, I cannot say. On several occasions I have seen the old men respected and obeyed. Our friend Paowang was so; and yet I never heard him called chief, and have many reasons to believe that he had not a right to any more authority than many of his neighbours, and few, if any, were bound to obey him, or any other person in our neighbourhood; for if there had been such a one, we certainly should, by some means, have known it. I named the harbour Port Resolu-



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tion, after the ship, she being the first which ever entered it. It is situated on the North side of the most eastern point of the island, and about E. N. E. from the volcano; in the latitude of $19^{\circ} 32' 25'' \frac{1}{2}$ South, and in the longitude of $169^{\circ} 44' 35''$ East. It is no more than a little creek running in S. by W. $\frac{1}{2}$ W. three quarters of a mile, and is about half that in breadth. A shoal of sand and rocks, lying on the East side, makes it still narrower. The depth of water in the harbour is from six to three fathoms, and the bottom is sand and mud. No place can be more convenient for taking in wood and water; for both are close to the shore. The water stunk a little after it had been a few days on board, but it afterwards turned sweet; and, even when it was at the worst, the tin machine would, in a few hours, recover a whole cask. This is an excellent contrivance for sweetening water at sea, and is well known in the navy.

Mr. Wales, from whom I had the latitude and longitude, found the variation of the needle to be $7^{\circ} 14' 12''$ East, and the dip of its South end $45^{\circ} 2 \frac{1}{2}'$. He also observed the time of high water, on the full and change days, to be about $5^h 45^m$; and the tide to rise and fall three feet.

CHAP.

