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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. IX. A Description of the Country and its Inhabitants; their Manners,
Customs, and Arts.

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C H A P. IX.

A Description of the Country and its Inhabitants; their Manners, Customs, and Arts.

1774.
September.

I SHALL conclude our transactions at this place, with some account of the country and its inhabitants. They are a strong, robust, active, well-made people, courteous and friendly, and not in the least addicted to pilfering, which is more than can be said of any other nation in this sea. They are nearly of the same colour as the natives of Tanna, but have better features, more agreeable countenances, and are a much stouter race; a few being seen who measured six feet four inches. I observed some who had thick lips, flat noses, and full cheeks, and, in some degree, the features and look of a negro. Two things contributed to the forming of such an idea; first, their ruff mop heads; and secondly, their besmearing their faces with black pigment. Their hair and beards are, in general, black. The former is very much frizzled; so that, at first sight, it appears like that of a negro. It is, nevertheless, very different; though both coarser and stronger than ours.—Some, who wear it long, tie it up on the crown of the head; others suffer only a large lock to grow on each side, which they tie up in clubs; many others, as well as all the women, wear it cropped short. These rough heads, most probably, want frequent scratching; for which purpose they have a most excellent instrument. This is a kind of comb made of sticks of hard wood, from seven to nine or ten inches long, and about the thickness of
knit-

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Drawn from Nature by W. Hodges

Engrav'd by Aliamet
N.º XXXIX.

MAN OF NEW CALEDONIA.

Published Feb. 1.º 1777 by W.º Strahan in New Street Shoe Lane & Tho.º Cadell in the Strand London.



knitting needles. A number of these, seldom exceeding twenty, but generally fewer, are fastened together at one end, parallel to, and near 1-10th of an inch from each other. The other ends, which are a little pointed, will spread out or open like the sticks of a fan, by which means they can beat up the quarters of an hundred lice at a time. These combs or scratchers, for I believe they serve both purposes, they always wear in their hair, on one side their head. The people of Tanna have an instrument of this kind, for the same use; but theirs is forked, I think, never exceeding three or four prongs; and sometimes only a small pointed stick. Their beards, which are of the same crisp nature as their hair, are, for the most part, worn short. Swelled and ulcerated legs and feet are common among the men; as also a swelling of the scrotum. I know not whether this is occasioned by disease, or by the mode of applying the wrapper, before-mentioned, and which they use as at Tanna and Mallicollo. This is their only covering, and is made generally of the bark of a tree, but sometimes of leaves. The small pieces of cloth, paper, &c. which they got from us, were commonly applied to this use. We saw coarse garments amongst them, made of a sort of matting, but they seemed never to wear them, except when out in their canoes and unemployed. Some had a kind of concave, cylindrical, stiff black cap, which appeared to be a great ornament among them, and, we thought, was only worn by men of note, or warriors. A large sheet of strong paper, when they got one from us, was generally applied to this use.

1774.
September.

The women's dress is a short petticoat, made of the filaments of the plantain tree, laid over a cord, to which they are fastened, and tied round the waist. The petticoat

is



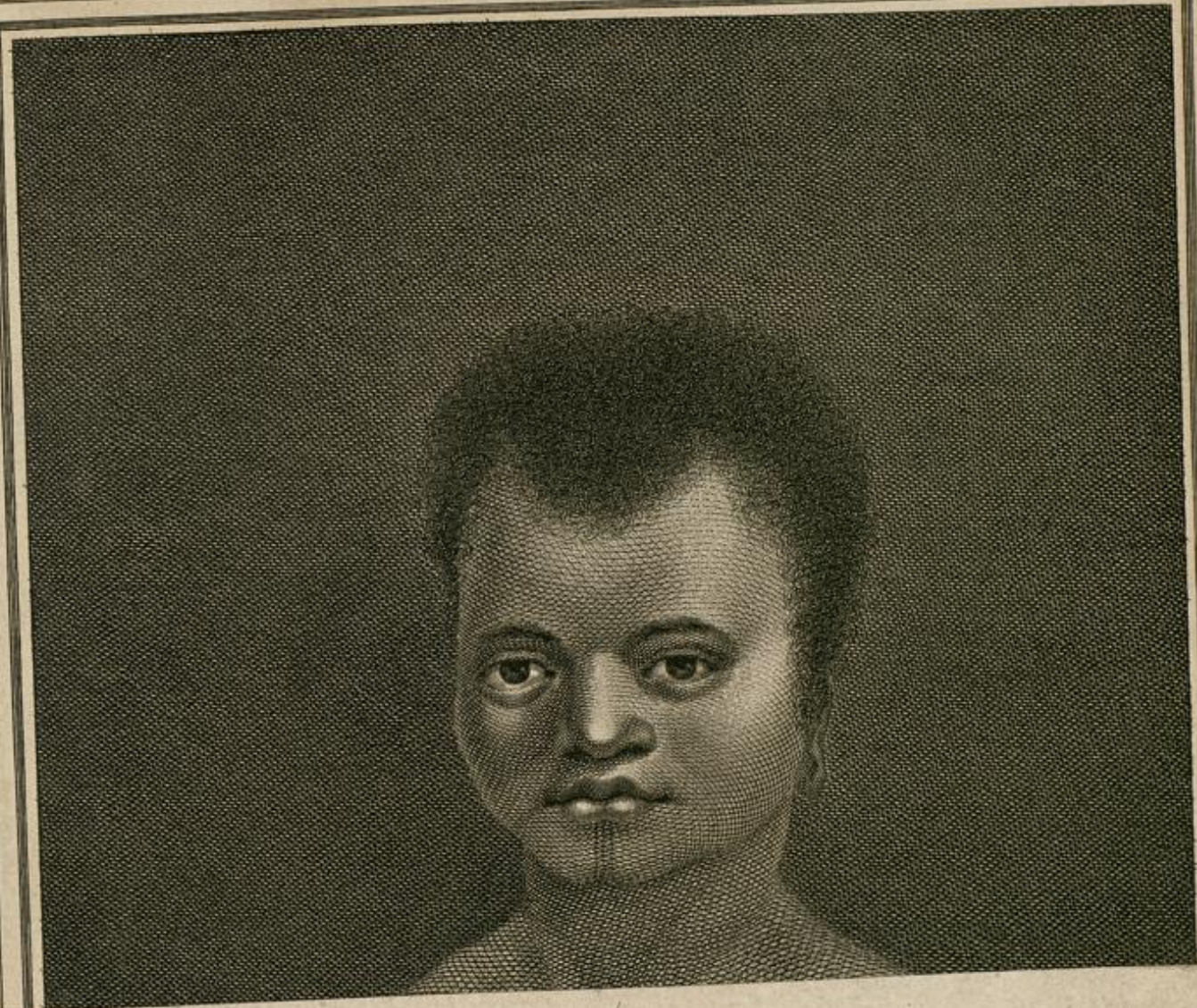
1774.
September.

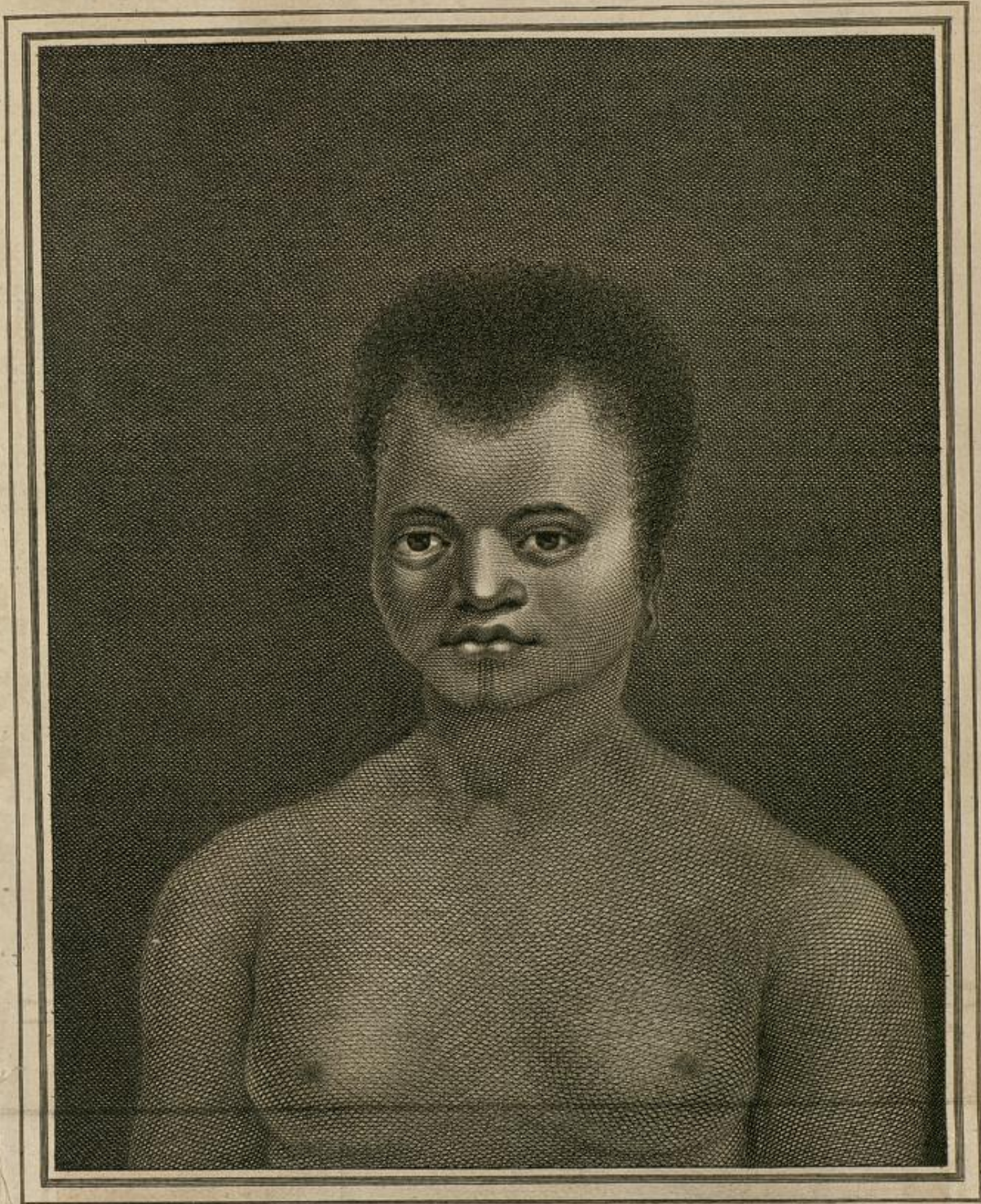
is made at least six or eight inches thick, but not one inch longer than necessary for the use designed. The outer filaments are dyed black; and, as an additional ornament, the most of them have a few pearl oyster-shells fixed on the right side. The general ornaments of both sexes, are earrings of tortoise-shell, necklaces or amulets, made both of shells and stones, and bracelets, made of large shells, which they wear above the elbow. They have punctures, or marks on the skin, on several parts of the body; but none, I think, are black, as at the eastern islands. I know not if they have any other design than ornament; and the people of Tanna are marked much in the same manner.

Were I to judge of the origin of this nation, I should take them to be a race between the people of Tanna and of the Friendly Isles; or between those of Tanna and the New Zealanders; or all three; their language, in some respects, being a mixture of them all. In their disposition they are like the natives of the Friendly Isles; but in affability and honesty they excel them.

Notwithstanding their pacific inclination, they must sometimes have wars, as they are well provided with offensive weapons; such as clubs, spears, darts, and slings for throwing stones. The clubs are about two feet and an half long, and variously formed; some like a scythe, others like a pick-axe; some have a head like an Hawk, and others have round heads; but all are neatly made. Many of their darts and spears are no less neat, and ornamented with carvings. The slings are as simple as possible; but they take some pains to form the stones that they use, into a proper shape; which is something like an egg, supposing both
ends







Drawn from Nature by W.Hodges.

Engraved by J.Hall
N^o.XLVIII.

WOMAN OF NEW CALEDONIA .

Published Feb^r. 1st. 1777 by W^m. Strahan in New Street Shoe Lane & Tho^s. Cadogan in the Strand London.



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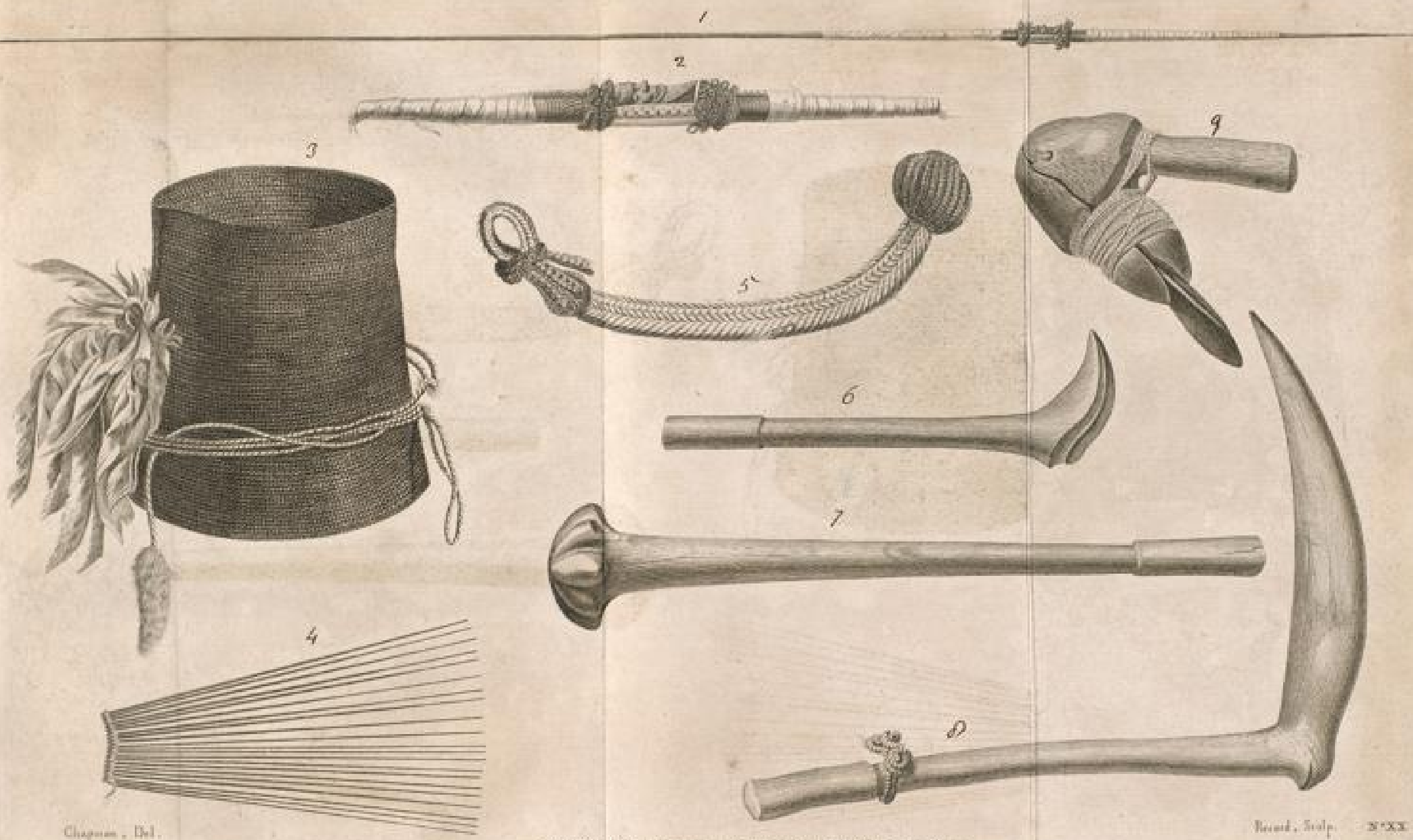




Chapman, Del.

Record, Sculp. N°XX.

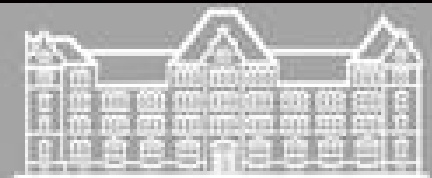




Chapman, Del.

Added by Mr. Perry to the Museum in the Strand Street Lane & the Gold in the Strand London.

Reard, Sculp. N°XX



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ends to be like the small one. They use a becket, in the same manner as at Tanna, in throwing the dart, which, I believe, is much used in striking fish, &c. In this they seem very dexterous; nor, indeed, do I know, that they have any other method of catching large fish; for I neither saw hooks nor lines among them.

1774.
Septeniber.

It is needless to mention their working tools, as they are made of the same materials, and nearly in the same manner, as at the other islands. Their axes, indeed, are a little different; some, at least; which may be owing to fancy as much as custom.

Their houses, or at least most of them, are circular; something like a bee-hive, and full as close and warm. The entrance is by a small door, or long square hole, just big enough to admit a man bent double. The side-walls are about four feet and an half high; but the roof is lofty, and peaked to a point at the top; above which is a post, or stick of wood, which is generally ornamented either with carving or shells, or both. The framing is of small spars, reeds, &c. and both sides and roof are thick and close covered with thatch, made of coarse long grass. In the inside of the house are set up posts, to which cross spars are fastened, and platforms made, for the conveniency of laying any thing on. Some houses have two floors, one above the other. The floor is laid with dry grass, and, here and there, mats are spread, for the principal people to sleep or sit on. In most of them we found two fire-places, and commonly a fire burning; and, as there was no vent for the smoke but by the door, the whole house was both smoky and hot, infomuch that we, who were not used to such an atmosphere, could hardly endure it a moment.

VOL. II.

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This



1774
September.

This may be the reason why we found these people so chilly when in the open air, and without exercise. We frequently saw them make little fires any where, and huddle round them, with no other view than to warm themselves. Smoke within doors may be a necessary evil, as it prevents the Musquitoes from coming in, which are pretty numerous here. In some respects their habitations are neat; for, besides the ornaments at top, I saw some with carved door-posts. Upon the whole, their houses are better calculated for a cold than a hot climate; and as there are no partitions in them, they can have little privacy.

They have no great variety of household utensils; the earthen jars before mentioned being the only article worth notice. Each family has, at least, one of them, in which they bake their roots, and perhaps their fish, &c. The fire, by which they cook their victuals, is on the outside of each house, in the open air. There are three or five pointed stones fixed in the ground; their pointed ends being about six inches above the surface, in this form,

Those of three stones, are only for one jar, those of five stones, for two. The jars do not stand on their bottoms, but lie inclined on their sides. The use of these stones is, obviously, to keep the jars from resting on the fire, in order that it may burn the better.



They subsist chiefly on roots and fish, and the bark of a tree, which I am told grows also in the West Indies. This they roast, and are almost continually chewing. It has a sweetish, insipid taste; and was liked by some of our people. Water is their only liquor; at least, I never saw any other made use of.

Plan-



Plantains and sugar-canes are, by no means, in plenty. Bread-fruit is very scarce, and the cocoa-nut trees are small and but thinly planted; and neither one nor the other seems to yield much fruit.

1774.
September.

To judge merely by the numbers of the natives we saw every day, one might think the island very populous; but, I believe, that, at this time, the inhabitants were collected from all parts on our account. Mr. Pickersgill observed, that down the coast, to the west, there were but few people; and we knew they came daily from the other side of the land, over the mountains, to visit us. But although the inhabitants, upon the whole, may not be numerous, the island is not thinly peopled on the sea-coast, and in the plains and valleys that are capable of cultivation. It seems to be a country unable to support many inhabitants. Nature has been less bountiful to it, than to any other tropical island we know in this sea. The greatest part of its surface, or at least what we saw of it, consists of barren rocky mountains; and the grass, &c. growing on them, is useless to people who have no cattle.

The sterility of the country will apologize for the natives not contributing to the wants of the navigator. The sea may, perhaps, in some measure, compensate for the deficiency of the land; for a coast surrounded by reefs and shoals, as this is, cannot fail of being stored with fish.

I have before observed, that the country bears great resemblance to New South Wales, or New Holland, and that some of its natural productions are the same. In particular, we found here, the tree which is covered with a soft white ragged bark, easily peeled off, and is, as I have been told, the same

R 2

that



1774.
September.

that, in the East Indies, is used for caulking of ships. The wood is very hard, the leaves are long and narrow, of a pale dead green, and a fine aromatic; so that it may properly be said to belong to that continent. Nevertheless, here are several plants, &c. common to the eastern and northern islands, and even a species of the passion flower, which, I am told, has never before been known to grow wild any where but in America. Our botanists did not complain for want of employment at this place; every day bringing something new in botany or other branches of natural history. Land birds, indeed, are not numerous, but several are new. One of these is a kind of crow; at least so we called it, though it is not half so big, and its feathers are tinged with blue. They also have some very beautiful turtle-doves, and other small birds, such as I never saw before.

All our endeavours to get the name of the whole island, proved ineffectual. Probably, it is too large for them to know by one name. Whenever we made this inquiry, they always gave us the name of some district or place, which we pointed to; and, as before observed, I got the names of several, with the name of the king or chief of each. Hence I conclude, that the country is divided into several districts, each governed by a chief; but we know nothing of the extent of his power. Balade was the name of the district we were at, and Tea Booma the chief. He lived on the other side of the ridge of hills; so that we had but little of his company, and therefore could not see much of his power. *Tea* seems a title prefixed to the names of all, or most, of their chiefs or great men. My friend honoured me by calling me *Tea Cook*.

They



They deposit their dead in the ground. I saw none of their burying-places; but several of the gentlemen did. In one, they were informed, lay the remains of a chief, who was slain in battle; and his grave, which bore some resemblance to a large mole-hill, was decorated with spears, darts, paddles, &c. all stuck upright in the ground round about it.

1774.
September.

The canoes, which these people use, are somewhat like those of the Friendly Isles; but the most heavy, clumsy vessels I ever saw. They are what I call double canoes, made out of two large trees, hollowed out, having a raised gunnel, about two inches high, and closed at each end with a kind of bulk head of the same height; so that the whole is like a long square trough, about three feet shorter than the body of the canoe; that is, a foot and an half at each end. Two canoes, thus fitted, are secured to each other, about three feet asunder, by means of cross spars, which project about a foot over each side. Over these spars is laid a deck, or very heavy platform, made of plank and small round spars, on which they have a fire hearth, and generally a fire burning; and they carry a pot or jar to dress their victuals in. The space between the two canoes is laid with plank, and the rest with spars. On one side of the deck, and close to the edge, is fixed a row of knees, pretty near to each other, the use of which is to keep the mast, yards, &c. from rolling over-board. They are navigated by one or two latteen sails, extended to a small latteen yard, the end of which fixes in a notch or hole in the deck. The foot of the sail is extended to a small boom. The sail is composed of pieces of matting, the ropes are made of the coarse filaments of the plantain tree, twisted into cords of the thickness of a finger; and three or four more such cords, marled together, serve them



1774.
September.

them for shrouds, &c. I thought they sailed very well; but they are not at all calculated for rowing or paddling. Their method of proceeding, when they cannot sail, is by sculling; and for this purpose there are holes in the boarded deck, or platform. Through these they put the sculls, which are of such a length, that, when the blade is in the water, the loom or handle is four or five feet above the deck. The man who works it stands behind, and with both his hands sculls the vessel forward. This method of proceeding is very slow; and for this reason, the canoes are but ill calculated for fishing, especially for striking of turtle, which, I think, can hardly ever be done in them. Their fishing implements, such as I have seen, are turtle nets, made, I believe, of the filaments of the plantain tree twisted; and small hand nets, with very minute meshes made of fine twine and fish gigs. Their general method of fishing, I guess, is to lie on the reefs in shoal water, and to strike the fish that may come in their way. They may, however, have other methods, which we had no opportunity to see, as no boat went out while we were here; all their time and attention being taken up with us. Their canoes are about thirty feet long, and the deck or platform about twenty-four in length and ten in breadth. We had not, at this time, seen any timber in the country so large as that of which their canoes were made. It was observed, that the holes, made in the several parts, in order to sew them together, were burnt through; but with what instrument we never learnt. Most probably it was of stone; which may be the reason why they were so fond of large spikes, seeing at once they would answer this purpose. I was convinced they were not wholly designed for edge tools; because every one shewed a desire for the iron belaying pins which were fixed in the quarter-deck rail, and seemed



seemed to value them far more than a spike-nail, although it might be twice as big. These pins which are round, perhaps have the very shape of the tool they wanted to make of the nails. I did not find that a hatchet was quite so valuable as a large spike. Small nails were of little or no value; and beads, looking-glasses, &c. they did not admire.

1774.
September.

The women of this country, and likewise those of Tanna, are, so far as I could judge, far more chaste than those of the more eastern islands. I never heard that one of our people obtained the least favour from any one of them. I have been told, that the ladies here would frequently divert themselves, by going a little aside with our gentlemen, as if they meant to be kind to them, and then would run away laughing at them. Whether this was chastity or coquetry, I shall not pretend to determine; nor is it material, since the consequences were the same.

CHAP.

