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A Voyage To The Pacific Ocean

Undertaken, By The Command Of His Majesty, For Making Discoveries in the Northern Hemisphere. To Determine The Position and Extent of the West Side of North America; its Distance from Asia; and the Practicability of a Northern Passage to Europe. Performed Under The Direction Of Captians Cook, ...

Cook, James

London, 1784

Chap. IV.

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C H A P. IV.

The Day of sailing fixed.—Peace made with Eimeo.—Debates about it, and Otoo's Conduct blamed.—A Solemnity at the Merai on the Occasion, described by Mr. King.—Observations upon it.—Instance of Otoo's Art.—Omai's War Canoe, and Remarks upon his Behaviour.—Otoo's Present, and Message to the King of Great Britain.—Reflections on our Manner of Traffic, and on the good Treatment we met with at Otabeite.—Account of the Expedition of the Spaniards.—Their Fictions to depreciate the English.—Wishes expressed that no Settlement may be made.—Omai's Jealousy of another Traveller.

EARLY in the morning of the 22d, Otoo and his father came on board, to know when I proposed sailing. For, having been informed, that there was a good harbour at Eimeo, I had told them, that I should visit that island on my way to Huaheine; and they were desirous of taking a passage with me, and of their fleet sailing, at the time, to reinforce Towha. As I was ready to take my departure, I left it to them to name the day; and the Wednesday following was fixed upon; when I was to take on board Otoo, his father, mother, and, in short, the whole family. These points being settled, I proposed setting out immediately for Oparre, where all the fleet, fitted out for the expedition, was to assemble this day, and to be reviewed.

I had

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I had but just time to get into my boat, when news was brought, that Towha had concluded a treaty with Maheine, and had returned with his fleet to Attahooroo. This unexpected event made all further proceedings, in the military way, quite unnecessary; and the war canoes, instead of rendezvousing at Oparre, were ordered home to their respective districts. This alteration, however, did not hinder me from following Otoo to Oparre, accompanied by Mr. King and Omai. Soon after our arrival, and while dinner was preparing, a messenger arrived from Eimeo, and related the conditions of the peace; or rather of the truce, it being only for a limited time. The terms were disadvantageous to Otaheite; and much blame was thrown upon Otoo, whose delay, in sending reinforcements, had obliged Towha to submit to a disgraceful accommodation. It was even currently reported, that Towha, resenting his not being supported, had declared, that, as soon as I should leave the island, he would join his forces to those of Tiaraboo, and attack Otoo at Matavai, or Oparre. This called upon me to declare, in the most public manner, that I was determined to espouse the interest of my friend, against any such combination; and that whoever presumed to attack him, should feel the weight of my heavy displeasure, when I returned again to their island. My declaration, probably, had the desired effect; and, if Towha had any such hostile intention at first, we soon heard no more of the report. Whappai, Otoo's father, highly disapproved of the peace, and blamed Towha very much for concluding it. This sensible old man wisely judged, that my going down with them to Eimeo must have been of singular service to their cause, though I should take no other part whatever in the quarrel. And it was upon this that he built all his arguments, and maintained, that

Otoo

Otoo had acted properly by waiting for me; though this had prevented his giving assistance to Towha so soon as he expected.

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Our debates at Oparre, on this subject, were hardly ended, before a messenger arrived from Towha, desiring Otoo's attendance, the next day, at the *morai* in Attahooroo, to give thanks to the Gods for the peace he had concluded; at least, such was Omai's account to me, of the object of this solemnity. I was asked to go; but being much out of order, was obliged to decline it. Desirous, however, of knowing what ceremonies might be observed on so memorable an occasion, I sent Mr. King, and Omai, and returned on board my ship, attended by Otoo's mother, his three sisters, and eight more women. At first, I thought that this numerous train of females came into my boat with no other view than to get a passage to Matavai. But when we arrived at the ship, they told me, they intended passing the night on board, for the express purpose of undertaking the cure of the disorder I complained of; which was a pain of the rheumatic kind, extending from the hip to the foot. I accepted the friendly offer, had a bed spread for them upon the cabin floor, and submitted myself to their directions. I was desired to lay myself down amongst them. Then, as many of them as could get round me, began to squeeze me with both hands, from head to foot, but more particularly on the parts where the pain was lodged, till they made my bones crack, and my flesh became a perfect mummy. In short, after undergoing this discipline about a quarter of an hour, I was glad to get away from them. However, the operation gave me immediate relief, which encouraged me to submit to another rubbing-down before I went to bed; and it was so effectual, that I found myself pretty easy all the night



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night after. My female physicians repeated their prescription the next morning, before they went ashore, and again, in the evening, when they returned on board; after which, I found the pains entirely removed; and the cure being perfected, they took their leave of me the following morning. This they call *romee*; an operation which, in my opinion, far exceeds the flesh-brush, or any thing of the kind that we make use of externally. It is universally practised amongst these islanders; being sometimes performed by the men, but more generally by the women. If, at any time, one appears languid and tired, and sits down by any of them, they immediately begin to practise the *romee* upon his legs; and I have always found it to have an exceedingly good effect*.

Wednes. 24.

Thursday 25.

In the morning of the 25th, Otoo, Mr. King, and Omai, returned from Attahooroo; and Mr. King gave me the following account of what he had seen:

“ Soon after you left me, a second messenger came from Towha to Otoo, with a plantain-tree. It was sunset when we embarked in a canoe and left Oparre. About nine o'clock we landed at Tettaha, at that extremity which joins to Attahooroo. Before we landed, the people called to us from the shore; probably, to tell us that Towha was there. The meeting of Otoo and this Chief, I expected, would afford some incident worthy of observation. Otoo, and his attendants, went and seated themselves on the beach, close to the canoe in which Towha was. He was then asleep; but his servants having awakened him, and mentioning Otoo's name, immediately a plantain-tree and a dog, were laid at

* See Captain Wallis's account of the same operation performed on himself, and his first Lieutenant, in *Hawkesworth's Collection*, Vol. i. p. 463.

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Otoo's



Otoo's feet; and many of Towha's people came and talked with him, as I conceived, about their expedition to Eimeo. After I had, for some time, remained seated close to Otoo, Towha neither stirring from his canoe, nor holding any conversation with us, I went to him. He asked me if *Toote* was angry with him. I answered, No: that he was his *tai*; and that he had ordered me to go to Attahooroo to tell him so. Omai now had a long conversation with this Chief; but I could gather no information of any kind from him. On my returning to Otoo, he seemed desirous, that I should go to eat, and then to sleep. Accordingly, Omai and I left him. On questioning Omai, he said, the reason of Towha's not stirring from his canoe, was his being lame; but that, presently, Otoo and he would converse together in private. This seemed true; for in a little time, those we left with Otoo came to us; and, about ten minutes after, Otoo himself arrived, and we all went to sleep in his canoe.

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The next morning, the *ava* was in great plenty. One man drank so much that he lost his senses. I should have supposed him to be in a fit, from the convulsions that agitated him. Two men held him, and kept plucking off his hair by the roots. I left this spectacle to see another that was more affecting. This was the meeting of Towha and his wife, and a young girl, whom I understood to be his daughter. After the ceremony of cutting their heads, and discharging a tolerable quantity of blood and tears, they washed, embraced the Chief, and seemed unconcerned. But the young girl's sufferings were not yet come to an end. Terridiri* arrived; and she went, with great composure, to repeat the same ceremonies to him, which she had just performed on meeting her father. Towha had brought a

* Terridiri is Oberea's son. See an account of the royal family of Otaheite, in *Hawkeſworth's Collection*, Vol. ii. p. 154.



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large war canoe from Eimeo. I enquired if he had killed the people belonging to her; and was told, that there was no man in her when she was captured.

We left Teitaha, about ten or eleven o'clock, and landed, close to the *morai* of Attahooroo, a little after noon. There lay three canoes, hauled upon the beach, opposite the *morai*, with three hogs exposed in each: their sheds, or awnings, had something under them which I could not discern. We expected the solemnity to be performed the same afternoon; but as neither Towha nor Potatou had joined us, nothing was done.

A Chief from Eimeo came with a small pig, and a plantain-tree, and placed them at Otoo's feet. They talked some time together; and the Eimeo Chief often repeating the words, *Warry, warry*, "false," I supposed that Otoo was relating to him what he had heard, and that the other denied it.

The next day (Wednesday) Towha, and Potatou, with about eight large canoes, arrived, and landed near the *morai*. Many plantain-trees were brought, on the part of different Chiefs, to Otoo. Towha did not stir from his canoe. The ceremony began by the principal priest bringing out the *maro*, wrapped up; and a bundle, shaped like a large sugar-loaf. These were placed at the head of what I understood to be a grave. Then three priests came, and sat down opposite, that is, at the other end of the grave; bringing with them a plantain-tree, the branch of some other tree, and the sheath of the flower of the cocoa-nut tree.

The priests, with these things in their hands, separately repeated sentences; and, at intervals, two, and sometimes all three sung a melancholy ditty, little attended to by the people. This praying and singing continued for an hour. Then, after a short prayer, the principal priest uncovered



the *maro*; and Otoo rose up, and wrapped it about him, holding, at the same time, in his hand, a cap or bonnet, composed of the red feathers of the tail of the tropic bird, mixed with other feathers of a dark colour. He stood in the middle space, facing the three priests, who continued their prayers for about ten minutes; when a man, starting from the crowd, said something which ended with the word *heiva!* and the crowd echoed back to him, three times, *Earee!* This, as I had been told before, was the principal part of the solemnity.

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The company now moved to the opposite side of the great pile of stones, where is, what they call, the king's *morai*; which is not unlike a large grave. Here the same ceremony was performed over again, and ended in three cheers. The *maro* was now wrapped up, and increased in its splendor by the addition of a small piece of red feathers, which one of the priests gave Otoo when he had it on, and which he stuck into it.

From this place, the people went to a large hut, close by the *morai*, where they seated themselves in much greater order than is usual among them. A man of Tiaraboo, then made an oration, which lasted about ten minutes. He was followed by an Attahooroo man; afterward Potatou spoke with much greater fluency and grace than any of them; for, in general, they spoke in short, broken sentences, with a motion of the hand that was rather awkward. Tooteo, Otoo's orator, spoke next; and, after him, a man from Eimeo. Two or three more speeches were made; but not much attended to. Omai told me, that the speeches declared, that they should not fight, but all be friends. As many of the speakers expressed themselves with warmth, possibly there were some



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recriminations and protestations of their good intentions. In the midst of their speaking, a man of Attahooroo got up, with a sling fastened to his waist, and a large stone placed upon his shoulder. After parading near a quarter of an hour, in the open space, repeating something in a singing tone, he threw the stone down. This stone, and a plantain tree that lay at Otoo's feet, were, after the speeches ended, carried to the *morai*; and one of the priests, and Otoo with him, said something upon the occasion.

On our return to Oparre, the sea breeze having set in, we were obliged to land; and had a pleasant walk through almost the whole extent of Tettaha to Oparre. A tree, with two bundles of dried leaves suspended upon it, marked the boundary of the two districts. The man who had performed the ceremony of the stone and sling came with us. With him, Otoo's father had a long conversation. He seemed very angry. I understood, he was enraged at the part Towha had taken in the Eimeo business."

From what I can judge of this solemnity, as thus described by Mr. King, it had not been wholly a thanksgiving, as Omai told us; but rather a confirmation of the treaty; or, perhaps, both. The grave, which Mr. King speaks of, seems to be the very spot where the celebration of the rites began, when the human sacrifice, at which I was present, was offered, and before which the victim was laid, after being removed from the sea side. It is at this part of the *morai*, also, that they first invest their kings with the *maro*. Omai, who had been present when Otoo was made king, described to me the whole ceremony, when we were here; and I find it to be almost the same, as this that Mr. King has now described, though we understood it to be upon a very different occasion. The plantain tree, so often mentioned, is always
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the first thing introduced, not only in all their religious ceremonies, but in all their debates, whether of a public or private nature. It is also used on other occasions; perhaps many more than we know of. While Towha was at Eimeo, one or more messengers came from him to Otoo every day. The messenger always came with a young plantain tree in his hand, which he laid down at Otoo's feet, before he spoke a word; then seated himself before him, and related what he was charged with. I have seen two men in such high dispute that I expected they would proceed to blows; yet, on one laying a plantain tree before the other, they have both become cool, and carried on the argument without farther animosity. In short, it is, upon all occasions, the olive-branch of these people.

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The war with Eimeo, and the solemn rites which were the consequence of it, being thus finally closed, all our friends paid us a visit on the 26th; and, as they knew that we were upon the point of sailing, brought with them more hogs than we could take off their hands. For, having no salt left, to preserve any, we wanted no more than for present use.

Friday 26th

The next day, I accompanied Otoo to Oparre; and, before I left it, I looked at the cattle and poultry, which I had consigned to my friend's care, at that place. Every thing was in a promising way; and properly attended unto. Two of the geese, and two of the ducks were sitting; but the pea and turkey hens had not begun to lay. I got from Otoo four goats; two of which I intended to leave at Ulietea, where none had as yet been introduced; and the other two, I proposed to reserve for the use of any other islands I might meet with, in my passage to the North.

Saturday 27th

A circum-



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A circumstance which I shall now mention of Otoo, will shew, that these people are capable of much address and art, to gain their purposes. Amongst other things, which, at different times, I had given to this Chief, was a spying-glass. After having it in his possession two or three days, tired of its novelty, and probably finding it of no use to him, he carried it privately to Captain Clerke, and told him, that, as he had been his very good friend, he had got a present for him, which he knew would be agreeable. "But, says Otoo, you must not let *Toote* know it, because he wants it, and I would not let him have it." He then put the glass into Captain Clerke's hands; at the same time, assuring him, that he came honestly by it. Captain Clerke, at first, declined accepting it; but Otoo insisted upon it, and left it with him. Some days after, he put Captain Clerke in mind of the glass; who, though he did not want it, was yet desirous of obliging Otoo; and thinking, that a few axes would be of more use at this island, produced four to give him in return. Otoo no sooner saw this, than he said, "*Toote* offered me five for it." "Well, says Captain Clerke, if that be the case, your friendship for me shall not make you a loser, and you shall have six axes." These he accepted; but desired again, that I might not be told what he had done.

Our friend Omai got one good thing, at this island, for the many good things he gave away. This was a very fine double sailing canoe, completely equipped, and fit for the sea. Some time before, I had made up for him, a suit of English colours; but he thought these too valuable to be used at this time; and patched up a parcel of colours, such as flags and pendants, to the number of ten or a dozen, which he spread on different parts of his vessel, all at the same

same time; and drew together as many people to look at her, as a man of war would, dressed, in a European port. These streamers of Omai were a mixture of English, French, Spanish, and Dutch, which were all the European colours that he had seen. When I was last at this island, I gave to Otoo an English jack and pendant, and to Towha a pendant; which I now found they had preserved with the greatest care.

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Omai had also provided himself with a good stock of cloth and cocoa-nut oil, which are not only in greater plenty, but much better, at Otaheite, than at any of the Society Islands; infomuch, that they are articles of trade. Omai would not have behaved so inconsistently, and so much unlike himself, as he did, in many instances, but for his sister and brother-in-law, who, together with a few more of their acquaintance, engrossed him entirely to themselves, with no other view than to strip him of every thing he had got. And they would, undoubtedly, have succeeded in their scheme, if I had not put a stop to it in time, by taking the most useful articles of his property into my possession. But even this would not have saved Omai from ruin, if I had suffered these relations of his to have gone with, or to have followed us to, his intended place of settlement, Huaheine. This they had intended; but I disappointed their farther views of plunder, by forbidding them to shew themselves in that island, while I remained in the neighbourhood; and they knew me too well not to comply.

On the 28th, Otoo came on board, and informed me, that he had got a canoe, which he desired I would take with me, and carry home, as a present from him to the *Earee rabié no Pretane*; it being the only thing, he said, that he could send

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send worth his Majesty's acceptance. I was not a little pleased with Otoo, for this mark of his gratitude. It was a thought entirely his own, not one of us having given him the least hint about it; and it shewed, that he fully understood to whom he was indebted for the most valuable presents that he had received. At first, I thought, that this canoe had been a model of one of their vessels of war; but I soon found, that it was a small *ivahab*, about sixteen feet long. It was double, and seemed to have been built for the purpose; and was decorated with all those pieces of carved work, which they usually fix upon their canoes. As it was too large for me to take on board, I could only thank him for his good intention; but it would have pleased him much better, if his present could have been accepted.

We were detained here some days longer than I expected, by light breezes from the West, and calms by turns; so that we could not get out of the bay. During this time, the ships were crowded with our friends, and surrounded by a multitude of canoes; for not one would leave the place, till we were gone. At length, at three o'clock in the afternoon of the 29th, the wind came at East, and we weighed anchor.

Monday 29.

As soon as the ships were under sail, at the request of Otoo, and to gratify the curiosity of his people, I fired seven guns, loaded with shot; after which, all our friends, except him, and two or three more, left us with such marks of affection and grief, as sufficiently shewed how much they regretted our departure. Otoo being desirous of seeing the ship sail, I made a stretch out to sea, and then in again; when he also bid us farewell, and went ashore in his canoe.

The frequent visits we had lately paid to this island, seem to have created a full persuasion, that the intercourse will not be discontinued. It was strictly enjoined to me by Otoo,



to request, in his name, the *Earee rabie no Pretane*, to send him, by the next ships, red feathers, and the birds that produce them; axes; half a dozen muskets, with powder and shot; and, by no means, to forget horses.

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I have occasionally mentioned my receiving considerable presents from Otoo, and the rest of the family, without specifying what returns I made. It is customary for these people, when they make a present, to let us know what they expect in return; and we find it necessary to gratify them; so that, what we get by way of present, comes dearer than what we get by barter. But as we were sometimes pressed by occasional scarcity, we could have recourse to our friends for a present, or supply, when we could not get our wants relieved by any other method; and, therefore, upon the whole, this way of traffic was full as advantageous to us as to the natives. For the most part, I paid for each separate article as I received it, except in my intercourse with Otoo. His presents, generally, came so fast upon me, that no account was kept between us. Whatever he asked for, that I could spare, he had whenever he asked for it; and I always found him moderate in his demands.

If I could have prevailed upon Omai to fix himself at Otaheite, I should not have left it so soon as I did. For there was not a probability of our being better or cheaper supplied with refreshments at any other place, than we continued to be here, even at the time of our leaving it. Besides, such a cordial friendship and confidence subsisted between us and the inhabitants, as could hardly be expected any where else; and, it was a little extraordinary, that this friendly intercourse had never once been suspended, by any untoward accident; nor had there been a theft committed



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that deserves to be mentioned. Not that I believe their morals, in this respect, to be much mended; but am rather of opinion, that their regularity of conduct was owing to the fear, the Chiefs were under, of interrupting a traffic which they might consider as the means of securing to themselves a more considerable share of our commodities, than could have been got by plunder or pilfering. Indeed, this point I settled at the first interview with their Chiefs, after my arrival. For, observing the great plenty that was in the island, and the eagerness of the natives to possess our various articles of trade, I resolved to make the most of these two favourable circumstances, and explained myself, in the most decisive terms, that I would not suffer them to rob us, as they had done upon many former occasions. In this, Omai was of great use, as I instructed him to point out to them the good consequences of their honest conduct; and the fatal mischiefs they must expect to suffer by deviating from it.

It is not always in the power of the Chiefs to prevent robberies; they are frequently robbed themselves; and complain of it as a great evil. Otoo left the most valuable things he had from me, in my possession, till the day before we sailed; and the reason he gave for it was, that they were no where so safe. Since the bringing in of new riches, the inducements to pilfering must have increased. The Chiefs, sensible of this, are now extremely desirous of chests. They seemed to set much value upon a few that the Spaniards had left amongst them; and they were continually asking us for some. I had one made for Otoo, the dimensions of which, according to his own directions, were eight feet in length, five in breadth, and about three in depth. Locks and bolts were not a sufficient security; but it must be large
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enough



enough for two people to sleep upon, by way of guarding it in the night.

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It will appear a little extraordinary, that we, who had a smattering of their language, and Omai, besides, for an interpreter, could never get any clear account of the time when the Spaniards arrived, how long they stayed, and when they departed. The more we inquired into this matter, the more we were convinced of the inability of most of these people to remember, or note the time, when past events happened; especially if it exceeded ten or twenty months. It, however, appeared, by the date of the inscription upon the cross, and by the information we received from the most intelligent of the natives, that two ships arrived at Oheitepeha in 1774, soon after I left Matavai, which was in May, the same year. They brought with them the house and live stock, before mentioned. Some said, that, after landing these things, and some men, they sailed in quest of me, and returned in about ten days. But I have some doubt of the truth of this, as they were never seen, either at Huaheine, or at Ulietea. The live stock they left here, consisted of one bull, some goats, hogs, and dogs, and the male of some other animal; which we afterward found to be a ram, and, at this time, was at Bolabola, whither the bull was also to have been transported.

The hogs are of a large kind; have already greatly improved the breed originally found by us upon the island; and, at the time of our late arrival, were very numerous. Goats are, also, in tolerable plenty, there being hardly a Chief of any note who has not got some. As to the dogs that the Spaniards put ashore, which are of two or three sorts, I think they would have done the island a great deal more service, if they had hanged them all, instead of leav-



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ing them upon it. It was to one of them, that my young ram fell a victim.

When these ships left the island, four Spaniards remained behind. Two were priests, one a servant, and the fourth made himself very popular among the natives, who distinguish him by the name of Mateema. He seems to have been a person who had studied their language; or, at least, to have spoken it so as to be understood; and to have taken uncommon pains to impress the minds of the islanders with the most exalted ideas of the greatness of the Spanish nation, and to make them think meanly of the English. He even went so far as to assure them, that we no longer existed as an independent nation; that *Pretane* was only a small island, which they, the Spaniards, had entirely destroyed; and, for me, that they had met with me at sea, and, with a few shot, had sent my ship, and every soul in her, to the bottom; so that my visiting Otaheite, at this time, was, of course, very unexpected. All this, and many other improbable falsehoods, did this Spaniard make these people believe. If Spain had no other views, in this expedition, but to depreciate the English, they had better have kept their ships at home; for my returning again to Otaheite, was considered as a complete confutation of all that Mateema had said.

With what design the priests stayed, we can only guess. If it was to convert the natives to the catholic faith, they have not succeeded in any one instance. But it does not appear, that they ever attempted it; for, if the natives are to be believed, they never conversed with them, either on this, or on any other subject. The priests resided constantly in the house at Oheitepeha; but Mateema roved about, visiting most parts of the island. At length, after he and his com-



panions had staid ten months, two ships came to Ohcritepeha, took them on board, and sailed again in five days. This hasty departure shews, that, whatever design the Spaniards might have had upon this island, they had now laid it aside. And yet, as I was informed by Otoo, and many others, before they went away, they would have the natives believe, that they still meant to return, and to bring with them houses, all kinds of animals, and men and women who were to settle, live, and die, on the island. Otoo, when he told me this, added, that if the Spaniards should return, he would not let them come to Matavai Fort, which, he said, was ours. It was easy to see, that the idea pleased him; little thinking, that the completion of it would, at once, deprive him of his kingdom, and the people of their liberties. This shews with what facility a settlement might be made at Otaheite; which, grateful as I am for repeated good offices, I hope will never happen. Our occasional visits may, in some respects, have benefited its inhabitants; but a permanent establishment amongst them, conducted as most European establishments amongst Indian nations have unfortunately been, would, I fear, give them just cause to lament, that our ships had ever found them out. Indeed, it is very unlikely, that any measure of this kind should ever be seriously thought of, as it can neither serve the purposes of public ambition, nor of private avarice; and, without such inducements, I may pronounce, that it will never be undertaken.

I have already mentioned the visit that I had from one of the two natives of this island, who had been carried by the Spaniards to Lima. I never saw him afterward; which I rather wondered at, as I had received him with uncommon civility. I believe, however, that Omai had kept him at a distance

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distance from me, by some rough usage; jealous, that there should be another traveller upon the island, who might vie with himself. Our touching at Teneriffe was a fortunate circumstance for Omai; as he prided himself in having visited a place belonging to Spain, as well as this man. I did not meet with the other, who had returned from Lima; but Captain Clerke, who had seen him, spoke of him as a low fellow, and as a little out of his senses. His own countrymen, I found, agreed in the same account of him. In short, these two adventurers seemed to be held in no esteem. They had not, indeed, been so fortunate as to return home with such valuable acquisitions of property, as we had bestowed upon Omai; and with the advantages he reaped from his voyage to England, it must be his own fault, if he should sink into the same state of insignificance.

C H A P.





