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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. VIII.

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C H A P. VIII.

Arrival at Bolabola.—Interview with Opoony.—Reasons for purchasing Monsieur de Bougainville's Anchor.—Departure from the Society Islands.—Particulars about Bolabola.—History of the Conquest of Otaba and Ulietea.—High Reputation of the Bolabola Men.—Animals left there, and at Ulietea.—Plentiful Supply of Provisions, and Manner of salting Pork on board.—Various Reflections relative to Otaheite, and the Society Islands.—Astronomical and nautical Observations made there.

AS soon as we had got clear of the harbour, we took our leave of Ulietea, and steered for Bolabola. The chief if not sole object I had in view, by visiting that island, was, to procure from its monarch, Opoony, one of the anchors which Monsieur de Bougainville had lost at Otaheite. This having afterward been taken up by the natives there, had, as they informed me, been sent by them as a present to that Chief. My desire to get possession of it did not arise from our being in want of anchors. But having expended all the hatchets, and other iron tools, which we had brought from England, in purchasing refreshments, we were now reduced to the necessity of creating a fresh assortment of trading articles, by fabricating them out of the spare iron

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we had on board; and, in such conversions, and in the occasional uses of the ships, great part of that had been already expended. I thought that Mr. de Bougainville's anchor would supply our want of this useful material; and I made no doubt that I should be able to tempt Opoony to part with it.

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Oreo, and six or eight men more from Ulietea, took a passage with us to Bolabola. Indeed, most of the natives in general, except the Chief himself, would have gladly taken a passage with us to England. At sunset, being the length of the South point of Bolabola, we shortened sail, and spent the night making short boards. At day-break, on the 8th, we made sail for the harbour, which is on the West side of the island. The wind was scant, so that we had to ply up, and it was nine o'clock before we got near enough to send away a boat to sound the entrance. For I had thoughts of running the ships in, and anchoring for a day or two.

When the boat returned, the Master, who was in her, reported, that though, at the entrance of the harbour the bottom was rocky, there was good ground within, and the depth of water twenty-seven and twenty-five fathoms; and that there was room to turn the ships in, the channel being one third of a mile broad. In consequence of this report, we attempted to work the ships in. But the tide, as well as the wind, being against us, after making two or three trips, I found that it could not be done, till the tide should turn in our favour. Upon this, I gave up the design of carrying the ships into the harbour; and having ordered the boats to be got ready, I embarked in one of them, accompanied by Oreo and his companions; and was rowed in for the island.

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We landed where the natives directed us; and, soon after, I was introduced to Opoony, in the midst of a great concourse of people. Having no time to lose, as soon as the necessary formality of compliments was over, I asked the Chief to give me the anchor, and produced the present I had prepared for him, consisting of a linen night-gown, a shirt, some gauze handkerchiefs, a looking-glass, some beads, and other toys; and six axes. At the sight of these last, there was a general outcry. I could only guess the cause, by Opoony's absolutely refusing to receive my present till I should get the anchor. He ordered three men to go and deliver it to me; and, as I understood, I was to send, by them, what I thought proper in return. With these messengers, we set out in our boats for an island, lying at the North side of the entrance into the harbour, where the anchor had been deposited. I found it to be neither so large, nor so perfect, as I expected. It had originally weighed seven hundred pounds, according to the mark that was upon it; but the ring, with part of the shank, and the two palms, were now wanting. I was no longer at a loss to guess the reason of Opoony's refusing my present. He, doubtless, thought that it so much exceeded the value of the anchor in its present state, that I should be displeas'd when I saw it. Be this as it may, I took the anchor as I found it, and sent him every article of the present that I at first intended. Having thus completed my negociation, I returned on board; and having hoisted in the boats, made sail from the island to the North.

While the boats were hoisting in, some of the natives came off, in three or four canoes, to see the ships, as they said. They brought with them a few cocoa-nuts, and one pig, which was the only one we got at the island. I make



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no doubt, however, that, if we had stayed till the next day, we should have been plentifully supplied with provisions; and, I think, the natives would feel themselves disappointed, when they found that we were gone. But, as we had already a very good stock both of hogs and of fruit on board, and very little of any thing left to purchase more, I could have no inducement to defer, any longer, the prosecution of our voyage.

The harbour of Bolabola, called Oteavanooa, situated on the West side of the island, is one of the most capacious that I ever met with; and though we did not enter it, it was a satisfaction to me, that I had an opportunity of employing my people to ascertain its being a very proper place for the reception of ships*.

The high double-peaked mountain, which is in the middle of the island, appeared to be barren on the East side; but, on the West side, has trees or bushes on its most craggy parts. The lower grounds, all round, toward the sea, are covered with cocoa-palms and bread-fruit trees, like the other islands of this ocean; and the many little islots that surround it on the inside of the reef, add both to the amount of its vegetable productions, and to the number of its inhabitants.

But, still, when we consider its very small extent, being not more than eight leagues in compass, it is rather remarkable, that its people should have attempted, or have been able to achieve the conquest of Ulietea and Otaha, the former of which islands is, of itself, at least double its size. In each of my three voyages, we had heard much of the

* See a chart of the island of Bolabola, in *Hawkefworth's Collection*, Vol. ii. p. 249. Though we have no particular drawing of the harbour, its situation is there distinctly represented,



war that produced this great revolution. The result of our inquiries, as to the circumstances attending it, may amuse the reader; and I give it as a specimen of the history of our friends, in this part of the world, as related to us* by themselves.

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Ulietea and Otaha, which adjoins it, lived long in friendship, or, as the natives express it, were considered as two brothers, inseparable by any interested views. They also admitted the island of Huaheine as their friend, though not so intimate. Otaha, however, like a traitor, leagued with Bolabola, and they resolved jointly to attack Ulietea; whose people called in their friends of Huaheine, to assist them against these two powers. The men of Bolabola were encouraged by a priestess, or rather prophetess, who foretold, that they should be successful; and, as a proof of the certainty of her prediction, she desired, that a man might be sent to the sea, at a particular place, where, from a great depth, a stone would ascend. He went, accordingly, in a canoe to the place mentioned; and was going to dive to see where this stone lay, when, behold, it started up to the surface spontaneously into his hand! The people were astonished at the sight; the stone was deposited as sacred in the house of the *Eatooa*; and is still preserved at Bolabola, as a proof of this woman's influence with the divinity. Their spirits being thus elevated with the hopes of victory, the canoes of Bolabola set out to engage those of Ulietea and Huaheine, which being strongly fastened together with ropes, the encounter lasted long, and would probably, notwithstanding the prediction and the miracle, have ended in the overthrow of the Bolabola fleet, if that of Otaha had not, in the critical mo-

* For this, as for many other particulars about these people, we are indebted to Mr. Anderson.



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ment, arrived. This turned the fortune of the day, and their enemies were defeated with great slaughter. The men of Bolabola, prosecuting their victory, invaded Huaheine two days after, which they knew must be weakly defended, as most of its warriors were absent. Accordingly, they made themselves masters of that island. But many of its fugitives having got to Otaheite, there told their lamentable story; which so grieved those of their countrymen, and of Ulietea, whom they met with in that island, that they obtained some assistance from them. They were equipped with only ten fighting canoes; but, though their force was so inconsiderable, they conducted the expedition with so much prudence, that they landed at Huaheine at night, when dark, and falling upon the Bolabola men by surprize, killed many of them, forcing the rest to fly. So that, by this means, they got possession of their island again, which now remains independent, under the government of its own Chiefs. Immediately after the defeat of the united fleets of Ulietea and Huaheine, a proposal was made to the Bolabola men by their allies of Otaha, to be admitted to an equal share of the conquests. The refusal of this broke the alliance; and in the course of the war, Otaha itself, as well as Ulietea, was conquered; and both now remain subject to Bolabola; the Chiefs who govern them, being only deputies of Opoony, the sovereign of that island. In the reduction of the two islands, five battles were fought, at different places, in which great numbers were slain on both sides.

Such was the account we received. I have more than once remarked, how very imperfectly these people recollect the exact dates of past events. And with regard to this war, though it happened not many years ago, we could only guess

gues at the time of its commencement and its conclusion, from collateral circumstances, furnished by our own observation, as the natives could not satisfy our inquiries with any precision. The final conquest of Ulietea, which closed the war, we know, had been made before I was there in the Endeavour, in 1769; but we may infer, that peace had not been very long restored, as we could then see marks of recent hostilities* having been committed upon that island. Some additional light may be thrown upon this inquiry, by attending to the age of Teerectareea, the present Chief of Huaheine. His looks shewed, that he was not above ten or twelve years old; and we were informed, that his father had been killed in one of the battles. As to the time when the war began, we had no better rule for judging, than this, that the young people of about twenty years of age, of whom we made inquiries, could scarcely remember the first battles; and I have already mentioned, that Omai's countrymen, whom we found at Wateoo, knew nothing of this war; so that its commencement was subsequent to their voyage.

Ever since the conquest of Ulietea and Otaha, the Bolabola men have been considered, by their neighbours, as invincible; and such is the extent of their fame, that even at Otaheite, which is almost out of their reach, if they are not dreaded, they are, at least, respected for their valour. It is said, that they never fly in battle, and that they always beat an equal number of the other islanders. But, besides these advantages, their neighbours seem to ascribe a great deal to the superiority of their god, who, they believed, detained us at Ulietea by contrary winds, as being unwilling that we should visit an island under his special protection.

* These are taken notice of in *Hawkesworth's Collection*, Vol. ii. p. 256, &c.

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How high the Bolabola men are now in estimation at Otaheite, may be inferred from Monsieur de Bougainville's anchor having been conveyed to them. To the same cause we must ascribe the intention of transporting to their island the Spanish bull. And they had already got possession of a third European curiosity, the male of another animal, brought to Otaheite by the Spaniards. We had been much puzzled, by the imperfect description of the natives, to guess what this could be. But Captain Clerke's deserters, when brought back from Bolabola, told me, that the animal had been there shewn to them, and that it was a ram. It seldom happens, but that some good arises out of evil; and if our two men had not deserted, I should not have known this. In consequence of their information, at the same time that I landed to meet Opoony, I carried ashore a ewe, which we had brought from the Cape of Good Hope; and I hope that, by this present, I have laid the foundation for a breed of sheep at Bolabola. I also left at Ulietea, under the care of Oreo, an English boar and sow, and two goats. So that, not only Otaheite, but all the neighbouring islands, will, in a few years, have their race of hogs considerably improved; and, probably, be stocked with all the valuable animals which have been transported hither by their European visitors.

When once this comes to pass, no part of the world will equal these islands, in variety and abundance of refreshments for navigators. Indeed, even in their present state, I know no place that excels them. After repeated trials, in the course of several voyages, we find, when they are not disturbed by intestine broils, but live in amity with one another, which has been the case for some years past, that their productions are in the greatest plenty; and, particularly,

particularly, the most valuable of all the articles, their hogs.

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If we had had a larger assortment of goods, and a sufficient quantity of salt on board, I make no doubt that we might have salted as much pork as would have served both ships near twelve months. But our visiting the Friendly Islands, and our long stay at Otaheite and the neighbourhood, quite exhausted our trading commodities; particularly our axes, with which alone hogs, in general, were to be purchased. And we had hardly salt enough to cure fifteen puncheons of meat. Of these, five were added to our stock of provisions, at the Friendly Islands, and the other ten at Otaheite. Captain Clerke also salted a proportionable quantity for his ship.

The process was the same that had been adopted by me in my last voyage; and it may be worth while to describe it again. The hogs were killed in the evening; as soon as they were cleaned, they were cut up, the bone taken out, and the meat salted when it was hot. It was then laid in such a position as to permit the juices to drain from it, till the next morning, when it was again salted, packed into a cask, and covered with pickle. Here it remained for four or five days, or a week; after which it was taken out and examined, piece by piece, and if there was any found to be in the least tainted, as sometimes happened, it was separated from the rest, which was repacked into another cask, headed up, and filled with good pickle. In about eight or ten days time, it underwent a second examination; but this seemed unnecessary, as the whole was generally found to be perfectly cured. A mixture of bay and of white salt, answers the best; but either of them will do alone. Great care should be taken, that none of the large blood-vessels remain in the meat; nor must too great a quantity be packed together



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ther at the first salting, lest the pieces in the middle should heat, and, by that means, prevent the salt from penetrating them. This once happened to us, when we killed a larger quantity than usual. Rainy, sultry weather, is unfavourable for salting meat in tropical climates.

Perhaps, the frequent visits Europeans have lately made to these islanders, may be one great inducement to their keeping up a large stock of hogs, as they have had experience enough to know, that, whenever we come, they may be sure of getting from us what they esteem a valuable consideration for them. At Otaheite, they expect the return of the Spaniards every day; and they will look for the English, two or three years hence, not only there, but at the other islands. It is to no purpose to tell them, that you will not return. They think you must; though not one of them knows, or will give himself the trouble to inquire, the reason of your coming.

I own, I cannot avoid expressing it as my real opinion, that it would have been far better for these poor people, never to have known our superiority in the accommodations and arts that make life comfortable, than, after once knowing it, to be again left and abandoned to their original incapacity of improvement. Indeed, they cannot be restored to that happy mediocrity in which they lived before we discovered them, if the intercourse between us should be discontinued. It seems to me, that it has become, in a manner, incumbent on the Europeans to visit them once in three or four years, in order to supply them with those conveniences which we have introduced among them, and have given them a predilection for. The want of such occasional supplies will, probably, be felt very heavily by them, when it may be too late to go back to their old less perfect contrivances,



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trivances, which they now despise, and have discontinued, since the introduction of ours. For, by the time that the iron tools, of which they are now possessed, are worn out, they will have almost lost the knowledge of their own. A stone hatchet is, at present, as rare a thing amongst them, as an iron one was eight years ago; and a chissel of bone, or stone, is not to be seen. Spike-nails have supplied the place of these last; and they are weak enough to fancy, that they have got an inexhaustible store of them; for these were not now at all sought after. Sometimes, however, nails, much smaller than a spike, would still be taken in exchange for fruit. Knives happened, at present, to be in great esteem at Ulictea; and axes and hatchets remained unrivalled by any other of our commodities, at all the islands. With respect to articles of mere ornament, these people are as changeable as any of the polished nations of Europe; so that what pleases their fancy, while a fashion is in vogue, may be rejected, when another whim has supplanted it. But our iron tools, are so strikingly useful, that they will, we may confidently pronounce, continue to prize them highly; and be completely miserable, if, neither possessing the materials, nor trained up to the art of fabricating them, they should cease to receive supplies of what may now be considered as having become necessary to their comfortable existence.

Otaheite, though not comprehended in the number of what we have called the Society Islands, being inhabited by the same race of men, agreeing in the same leading features of character and manners, it was fortunate, that we happened to discover this principal island before the others; as the friendly and hospitable reception we there met with, of course, led us to make it the principal place of resort, in

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our successive visits to this part of the Pacific Ocean. By the frequency of this intercourse, we have had better opportunities of knowing something about it and its inhabitants, than about the other similar, but less considerable, islands in its vicinity. Of these, however, we have seen enough to satisfy us, that all that we observed and have related of Otaheite, may, with trifling variations, be applied to them.

Too much seems to have been already known, and published in our former relations, about some of the modes of life, that made Otaheite so agreeable an abode to many on board our ships; and if I could now add any finishing strokes to a picture, the outlines of which have been already drawn with sufficient accuracy, I should still have hesitated to make this journal the place for exhibiting a view of licentious manners, which could only serve to disgust those for whose information I write. There are, however, many parts of the domestic, political, and religious institutions of these people, which, after all our visits to them, are but imperfectly understood. The foregoing narrative of the incidents that happened during our stay, will, probably, be thought to throw some additional light; and, for farther satisfaction, I refer to Mr. Anderson's remarks.

Amidst our various subordinate employments, while at these islands, the great objects of our duty were always attended to. No opportunity was lost of making astronomical and nautical observations; from which the following table was drawn up:

Place.	Latitude. South.	Longitude. East.	Variation of the Compass.	Dip of the Needle.
Matavai Point, Otaheite	17° 29½'	210° 22' 28"	5° 34' East	29° 12'
Owharre Harbour, Huaheine	16° 42½'	208° 52' 24"	5° 13½' East	28° 28'
Ohamaneno Harbour, Ulietea	16° 45½'	208° 25' 22"	6° 19' East	29° 5'

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The longitude of the three several places is deduced from the mean of 145 sets of observations made on shore; some at one place, and some at another; and carried on to each of the stations, by the time keeper. As the situation of these places was very accurately settled, during my former voyages, the above observations were now made chiefly with a view of determining how far a number of lunar observations might be depended upon, and how near they would agree with those made upon the same spot in 1769, which fixed Matavai Point to be in $210^{\circ} 27' 30''$. The difference, it appears, is only of $5' 2''$; and, perhaps, no other method could have produced a more perfect agreement. Without pretending to say which of the two computations is the nearest the truth, the longitude of $210^{\circ} 22' 28''$, or, which is the same thing, $208^{\circ} 25' 22''$, will be the longitude we shall reckon from with the time-keeper, allowing it to be losing, on mean time, $1'' 69$ each day, as found by the mean of all the observations made at these islands, for that purpose.

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On our arrival at Otaheite, the error of the time-keeper in longitude was,

by $\left\{ \begin{array}{l} \text{Greenwich rate, } 1^{\circ} 18' 58'' \\ \text{Tongataboo rate } 0^{\circ} 16' 40'' \end{array} \right.$

Some observations were also made on the tide; particularly at Otaheite and Ulietea; with a view of ascertaining its greatest rise at the first place. When we were there, in my second voyage, Mr. Wales thought he had discovered, that it rose higher than I had observed it to do, when I first visited Otaheite in 1769. But the observations we now made, proved that it did not; that is, that it never rose higher than twelve or fourteen inches at most. And it was observed to be high-water nearly at noon, as well at the quadratures, as at the full, and change of the moon.

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To verify this, the following observations were made at Ulietea :

Day of the Month.	Water at a stand, from	to	Mean Time of High Water.	Perpendicular rise. Inches.
November 6.	11 ^h 15 ^m	12 ^h 20 ^m	11 ^h 48 ^m	5, 5
7.	11 40	1 00	12 20	5, 2
8.	11 35	12 50	12 12	5, 0
9.	11 40	1 16	12 28	5, 5
10.	11 25	1 10	12 18	6, 5
11.	12 00	1 40	12 20	5, 0
12.	11 00	1 05	12 02	5, 7
13.	9 30	11 40	10 35	8, 0
14.	11 10	12 50	12 00	8, 0
15.	9 20	11 30	10 25	9, 2
16.	10 00	12 00	11 00	9, 0
17.	10 45	12 15	11 30	8, 5
18.	10 25	12 10	11 18	9, 0
19.	11 00	1 00	12 00	8, 0
20.	11 30	2 00	12 45	7, 0
21.	11 00	1 00	12 00	8, 0
22.	11 30	1 07	12 18	8, 0
23.	12 00	1 30	12 45	6, 5
24.	11 30	1 40	12 35	5, 5
25.	11 40	1 50	12 45	4, 7
26.	11 00	1 30	12 15	5, 2

Having now finished all that occurs to me, with regard to these islands, which make so conspicuous a figure in the list of our discoveries, the Reader will permit me to suspend the prosecution of my Journal, while he peruses the following Chapter, for which I am indebted to Mr. Anderson.

C H A P.

