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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. XIV. An Account of a Spanish ship visiting Otaheite; the present
State of the Island; with some Observations on the Diseases and custom
of the Inhabitants, and some Mistakes concerning the ...

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C H A P. XIV.

An Account of a Spanish Ship visiting Otaheite; the present State of the Islands; with some Observations on the Diseases and Customs of the Inhabitants, and some Mistakes concerning the Women corrected.

I SHALL now give some farther account of these islands; for, although I have been pretty minute in relating the daily transactions, some things, which are rather interesting, have been omitted.

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Soon after our arrival at Otaheite, we were informed that a ship, about the size of the Resolution, had been in at Owhaiurua harbour near the S. E. end of the island, where she remained about three weeks; and had been gone about three months before we arrived. We were told that four of the natives were gone away in her, whose names were Debedebea—Paoodou—Tanadooee—and Opahiah. At this time, we conjectured this was a French ship; but, on our arrival at the Cape of Good Hope, we learnt she was a Spaniard, which had been sent out from America. The Otaheiteans complained of a disease communicated to them by the people in this ship, which they said affected the head, throat, and stomach, and at length killed them. They seemed to dread it much, and were continually inquiring if we had it. This ship they distinguished by the name of *Pabai no Pep-pe* (ship of Peppe), and called the disease *Apa no Pep-pe*, just as they call the venereal disease *Apa no Pretane* (English disease).



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disease), though they, to a man, say it was brought to the isle by M. de Bougainville; but I have already observed that they thought M. Bougainville came from *Pretane*, as well as every other ship which has touched at the isle.

Were it not for this assertion of the natives, and none of Captain Wallis's people being affected with the venereal disease, either while they were at Otaheite, or after they left it, I should have concluded that, long before these islanders were visited by Europeans, this, or some disease which is near a kin to it, had existed amongst them. For I have heard them speak of people dying of a disorder which we interpreted to be the pox, before that period. But be this as it will, it is now far less common amongst them, than it was in the year 1769, when I first visited these isles. They say they can cure it; and so it fully appears. For, notwithstanding most of my people made pretty free with the women, very few of them were afterwards affected with the disorder, and those who were, had it in so slight a manner, that it was easily removed. But amongst the natives, whenever it turns to a pox, they tell us it is incurable. Some of our people pretend to have seen some of them who had this last disorder in a high degree; but the Surgeon, who made it his business to inquire, could never satisfy himself in this point. These people are, and were before Europeans visited them, very subject to scrophulous diseases; so that a seaman might easily mistake one disorder for another.

The island of Otaheite which, in the years 1767 and 1768, as it were, swarmed with hogs and fowls, was now so ill supplied with these animals, that hardly any thing could induce the owners to part with them. The few they had, at this time, among them, seemed to be at the disposal of the
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kings. For while we lay at Oaiti-piha Bay, in the kingdom of Tiarrabou, or lesser Peninsula, every hog or fowl we saw, we were told, belonged to Waheatooa; and all we saw in the kingdom of Opoureonu, or the greater Peninsula, belonged to Otoo. During the seventeen days we were at this island, we got but twenty-four hogs; the half of which came from the two kings themselves; and, I believe, the other half were sold us by their permission or order. We were, however, abundantly supplied with all the fruits the island produces; except bread-fruit, which was not in season either at this or the other isles. Cocoa-nuts and plantains were what we got the most of; the latter, together with a few yams and other roots, were to us a succedaneum for bread. At Otaheite we got great plenty of apples, and a fruit like a nectarine, called by them *Abeeya*. This fruit was common to all the isles; but apples we got only at Otaheite, and found them of infinite use to the scorbutic people. Of all the seeds that have been brought to these islands by Europeans, none have succeeded but pumpkins; and these they do not like; which is not to be wondered at.

The scarcity of hogs at Otaheite may be owing to two causes; first, the number which have been consumed, and carried off by the shipping which have touched here of late years; and secondly, to the frequent wars between the two kingdoms. We know of two since the year 1767; at present a peace subsists between them; though they do not seem to entertain much friendship for each other. I never could learn the cause of the late war, nor who got the better in the conflict. In the battle, which put an end to the dispute, many were killed on both sides. On the part of Opoureonu, fell Toutaha, and several other chiefs, who

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were mentioned to me by name. Toutaha lies interred in the family *Marai* at Oparree; and his mother, and several other women who were of his household, are now taken care of by Otoo the reigning prince—a man, who, at first, did not appear to us to much advantage. I know but little of Waheatooa of Tiarrabou. This prince, who is not above twenty years of age, appeared with all the gravity of a man of fifty. His subjects do not uncover before him, or pay him any outward obeisance as is done to Otoo; nevertheless, they seem to shew him full as much respect, and he appeared in rather more state. He was attended by a few middle-aged, or elderly men, who seemed to be his counsellors. This is what appeared to me to be the then state of Otaheite. The other islands, that is, Huaheine, Ulietea, and Otaha, were in a more flourishing state than they were when I was there before. Since that time, they had enjoyed the blessing of peace; the people seemed to be as happy as any under heaven; and well they may, for they possess not only the necessaries, but many of the luxuries of life in the greatest profusion; and my young man told me that hogs, fowls, and fruits are in equal plenty at Bola-bola, a thing which Tupia would never allow. To clear up this seeming contradiction, I must observe, that the one was prejudiced against, and the other in favour of, this isle.

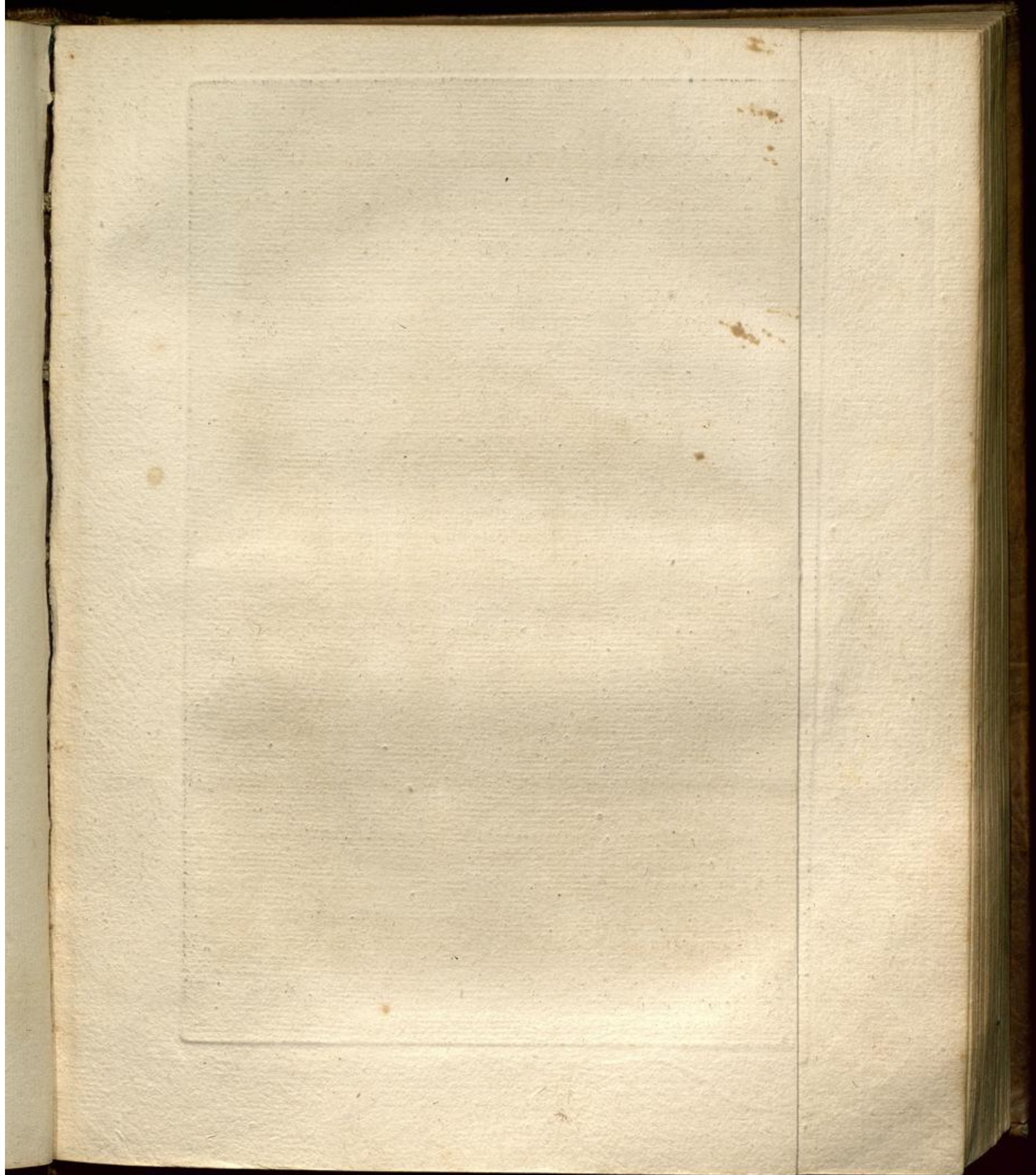
The produce of the islands, the manners and customs of the natives, &c. having been treated at large in the narrative of my former voyage, it will be unnecessary to take notice of these subjects in this, unless where I can add new matter, or clear up any mistakes which may have been committed.

As I had some reason to believe, that amongst their religious customs, human sacrifices were sometimes considered

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Drawn from Nature by W. Hodges.

A TOUPAPOW WITH A CORPSE ON IT
Attended by the Chief Mourner in his Habit of Ceremony.
Published Feb. 7. 1777. by W. Sturges in New Street Shoe Lane, & Tho. Cadell, in the Strand, London.

Engraved by W. Woodcut
N^o. XLIV.





Drawn from Nature by W. Hodges.

Engraved by W. Woollett
N^o. XLIV.

as necessary, I went one day to a *Marai* in Matavai, in company with Captain Furneaux; having with us, as I had upon all other occasions, one of my men who spoke their language tolerably well, and several of the natives, one of whom appeared to be an intelligent, sensible man. In the *Marai* was a *Tupapow*, on which lay a corpse and some viands; so that every thing promised success to my inquiries. I began with asking questions relating to the several objects before me, if the plantains, &c. were for the *Eatua*? If they sacrificed to the *Eatua*, hogs, dogs, fowls, &c. to all of which he answered in the affirmative. I then asked, If they sacrificed men to the *Eatua*? he answered, *Taata eno*; that is, bad men they did, first *Tiparraby*, or beating them till they were dead. I then asked him, If good men were put to death in this manner? his answer was, No, only *Taata eno*. I asked him, If any *Earees* were? he said, they had hogs to give to the *Eatua*, and again repeated *Taata eno*. I next asked him, If *Towtoros*, that is, servants or slaves, who had no hogs, dogs, or fowls, but yet were good men, if they were sacrificed to the *Eatua*? his answer was, No, only bad men. I asked him several more questions, and all his answers seemed to tend to this one point, that men for certain crimes were condemned to be sacrificed to the gods, provided they had not wherewithal to redeem themselves. This, I think, implies, that, on some occasions, human sacrifices are considered as necessary; particularly when they take such men as have, by the laws of the country, forfeited their lives, and have nothing to redeem them; and such will generally be found among the lower class of people.

The man of whom I made these inquiries, as well as some others, took some pains to explain the whole of this custom to us; but we were not masters enough of their language

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to understand them. I have since learnt from Omai, that they offer human sacrifices to the Supreme Being. According to his account, what men shall be so sacrificed, depends on the caprice of the high priest, who, when they are assembled on any solemn occasion, retires alone into the house of God, and stays there some time. When he comes out, he informs them, that he has seen and conversed with their great God (the high priest alone having that privilege), and that he has asked for a human sacrifice, and tells them that he has desired such a person, naming a man present, whom most probably the priest has an antipathy against. He is immediately killed, and so falls a victim to the priest's resentment, who, no doubt, (if necessary) has address enough to persuade the people that he was a bad man. If I except their funeral ceremonies, all the knowledge that has been obtained of their religion, has been from information; and as their language is but imperfectly understood, even by those who pretend to the greatest knowledge of it, very little on this head is yet known with certainty.

The liquor which they make from the plant called *Avaava*, is expressed from the root, and not from the leaves, as mentioned in the narrative of my former voyage. The manner of preparing this liquor is as simple as it is disgusting to an European. It is thus: several people take some of the root and chew it till it is soft and pulpy; then they spit it out into a platter or other vessel, every one into the same; when a sufficient quantity is chewed, more or less water is put to it, according as it is to be strong or weak; the juice, thus diluted, is strained through some fibrous stuff like fine shavings; after which it is fit for drinking, and this is always done immediately. It has a pepperish taste, drinks flat,

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and rather insipid. But though it is intoxicating, I saw only one instance where it had that effect; as they generally drink it with great moderation, and but little at a time. Sometimes they chew this root in their mouths, as Europeans do tobacco, and swallow their spittle; and sometimes I have seen them eat it wholly.

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At Ulitea they cultivate great quantities of this plant. At Otaheite but very little. I believe there are but few islands in this sea, that do not produce more or less of it; and the natives apply it to the same use, as appears by Le Mair's account of Horn island, wherein he speaks of the natives making a liquor from a plant in the same manner as above mentioned.

Great injustice has been done the women of Otaheite, and the Society Isles, by those who have represented them, without exception, as ready to grant the last favour to any man who will come up to their price. But this is by no means the case; the favours of married women, and also the unmarried of the better sort, are as difficult to be obtained here, as in any other country whatever. Neither can the charge be understood indiscriminately of the unmarried of the lower class, for many of these admit of no such familiarities. That there are prostitutes here, as well as in other countries, is very true, perhaps more in proportion, and such were those who came on board the ships to our people, and frequented the post we had on shore. By seeing these mix indiscriminately with those of a different turn, even of the first rank, one is, at first, inclined to think that they are all disposed the same way, and that the only difference is in the price. But the truth is, the woman who becomes a prostitute, does not seem, in their opinion, to have committed a

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crime of so deep a dye as to exclude her from the esteem and society of the community in general. On the whole, a stranger who visits England might, with equal justice, draw the characters of the women there, from those which he might meet with on board the ships in one of the naval ports, or in the purlieus of Covent-Garden and Drury-Lane. I must, however, allow that they are all completely versed in the art of coquetry, and that very few of them fix any bounds to their conversation. It is, therefore, no wonder that they have obtained the character of libertines.

To what hath been said of the geography of these isles, in the narrative of my former voyage, I shall now only add, that we found the latitude of Oaiti-piha bay, in Otaheite, to be $17^{\circ} 46' 28''$ South, and the longitude $0^{\circ} 21' 25\frac{1}{2}''$ East from Point Venus; or $149^{\circ} 13' 24''$ West from Greenwich. The difference both of latitude and longitude, between Point Venus and Oaiti-piha, is greater than I supposed it to be, when I made the circuit of the island in 1769, by two miles, and $4\frac{3}{4}$ miles respectively. It is, therefore, highly probable, that the whole island is of a greater extent, than I, at that time, estimated it to be. The astronomers set up their observatory, and made their observations, on Point Venus, the latitude of which they found to be $17^{\circ} 29' 13''$ South. This differs but two seconds from that which Mr. Green and I found; and its longitude, viz. $149^{\circ} 34' 49\frac{1}{2}''$ West, for any thing that is yet known to the contrary, is as exact.

Mr. Kendal's watch was found to be gaining on mean time $8'' 863$ per day, which is only $0'' 142$ less than at Queen Charlotte's Sound, consequently its error in longitude was trifling.

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