Master Mariner
Master
Capt. James Cook

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D. C. and L. M. M.
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All three Pacific voyages of Capt. James Cook have been remembered as great, even epic, journeys. Over a period of some ten years his explorations enlarged the known world far more greatly and more suddenly than in the thousand years before. He mapped New Zealand, crossed the Great Barrier Reef to chart the long eastern shoreline of Australia, discovered Hawaii, and examined the northwest coast of America, thus completing the outline map of the Pacific for the first time. No navigator before Cook had made voyages of such length or brought back so much accurate knowledge of such an immense extent of the earth.

Cook's achievements as seaman, navigator, surveyor, hydrographer and leader of men have attracted considerable notice from historians over the two hundred years since his death, but there is an important aspect to his voyages that has been neglected. The discovery of new lands meant the discovery of new peoples. Not only did Cook map the islands and coastline of the Pacific but also he, his officers and men, through their journals and sketches, recorded and commented upon the cultures they encountered. In addition to witnessing strange ceremonies, they noted these peoples' possessions, beliefs and ways of governing themselves, recorded their daily activities, learned a few words of their languages, and sketched their homes and countryside. These meticulous journals often provide our first account of the peoples of the Pacific, their behaviour and their thinking.

This study, as well as tracing Cook's nautical career, examines his encounters with native peoples by taking a detailed look at his Third Voyage. During this voyage Cook revisited peoples he was familiar with from his previous voyages and was able to bring to his observations the knowledge and insight gained by his earlier experiences. His journal, as well as those of his officers William Anderson, James King, David Samwell and Charles Clerke, are full of descriptions, impressions and evaluations of the Races of Man. The themes of the Noble Savage and the Depraved Savage, current in the Age of Enlightenment, emerge in the entries and in the judgements they make. They appear too in the sketches of native life and customs drawn by John Webber, whose work as official artist made this the most profusely illustrated of all Cook's voyages. The complete set of engravings from those sketches is reproduced here.

Both officers and artist were conscious of the need to keep their observations accurate and scientific, yet their journals and sketches unwittingly reveal the complex set of values and attitudes which coloured their view of the peoples they met. In the record of the Third Voyage we see just as much of the customs and habits of thought of the English as we do of the traditions of the Polynesians, Maoris, Tasmanians, Nootkans, Eskimos and Kamchadals.
Part I: Prelude
In September 1785, the last coat of arms granted for personal service to the British sovereign was posthumously awarded by King George III to Capt. James Cook of the Royal Navy, who had been killed in Hawaii six years earlier. Its heraldic description reads:

Azure between two polar stars Or, a sphere on the plane of the meridian, showing the Pacific Ocean, his track thereon marked by red lines. And for crest, on a wreath of the colours, is an arm imbowed, in the uniform of a captain of the Royal Navy. In the hand is a Jack on a staff proper. The arm is encircled by a wreath of palm and laurel.

The coat of arms carries two mottoes in Latin: the first, between the flag (the Jack) and the captain’s arm, describes the range of Cook’s achievement with *Circa Orbem* — Around the globe; the second, *Nil intentatum reliquit* — He left nothing unattempted — describes Cook himself.

Cook’s professional education and the advancement of his career did not follow conventional lines. He wrote in 1775, “I have been allmost constantly at sea from my youth, and have dragged myself (with the assistance of a few good friends) through all the Stations, from a Prentice boy to a Commander.” The greatness of his achievement is the more so because of his humble beginnings. He was born on 27 October 1728, in the Yorkshire village of Marton. The second son of a Scottish day-labourer and his English wife, he learned to read and write at the village school of Great Ayton before following his father as a labourer and then apprenticing as a grocer’s assistant in the coastal village of Staithes.

In 1746, at the comparatively late age of eighteen, Cook signed as an apprentice seaman on a Whitby collier carrying coal between Newcastle and London. The coal trade along the dangerous, unlighted, unbuoyed English coastline was an exacting nursery for eighteenth-century seamen, for the ships were in constant peril of being forced on land by tides, winds and storms. Here, for nine years, Cook learned the practice and theory of seamanship, developing as second nature the ability to memorize a coast and its hazards. His training among the shoaling sands, tricky currents, ill-lit headlands and tidal ports of the North Sea coast would prove invaluable in years to come, for it developed his sense of danger so acutely that, on his Pacific voyages, his men would swear that he could smell unseen land before anyone else suspected its nearness.

Living conditions were appalling in the cargo-coasters of that time. Fighting gales, eating bad food, enduring bitter cold, living in cramped and bug-ridden quarters, Cook acquired the disregard for hardships that characterized his later career. Off-watch he applied himself to his books, sweating over the mathematics of navigation in the dim light of the crew’s quarters. Between voyages he diligently continued his studies at the home of his employer, John...
Walker of Whitby, with whom he had lodgings.

Cook’s ability and competence were recognized and rewarded. By 1752 he was Mate of the collier *Friendship*. Three years later he was offered his own command and the chance of a share in a boat of his own. But just when his future in coastal shipping seemed settled and secure, Cook resigned. In 1755, at the age of twenty-seven, he signed as an ordinary seaman in the Royal Navy, then preparing to clash with France in the Seven Years War. Cook’s voluntary recruitment was a most unusual step in an age when the lower deck was usually filled by the press-gang, and his motive has never been clearly understood. Some biographers have suggested ambition, others patriotism; recent research has even indicated that Cook might have enlisted to avoid a charge of smuggling. He gave no other explanation himself than that he had made up his mind “to try his fortune that way.”

There were good opportunities in the eighteenth-century Navy for a practical seaman who knew his business. Cook quickly won the respect of his fellow crew members and recognition from his commanding officers. Within a month of his first posting to the 60-gun HMS *Eagle* on a blockade of the French coast, he was promoted to Master’s Mate and had experienced his first action in the capture of a French East-Indiaman. Over the next two years he rose to Bo’sun and then to Master.

The Master in the eighteenth-century Royal Navy was a warrant officer with particular responsibility for navigation, surveying and the day-to-day running of the ship. Although he was not a commissioned officer, he was allowed to live and eat on board with officers of the rank of Lieutenant and above.

The manner of Cook’s promotion to Master provides an early indication of the high regard in which his qualities were held. During the summer of 1757 the Captain of the *Eagle*, Sir Hugh Palliser, received a letter from the Member of Parliament for Scarborough urging the young Bo’sun’s promotion to a commission, on the recommendation of his old employer, John Walker. The regulations which were in force at that time, however, required candidates for lieutenancies to have served on one of His Majesty’s ships for at least six years. Palliser replied, therefore, that Cook “had been too short a time in the service for a commission,” but added “that a Master’s warrant might be given him, by which he would be raised to a station that he was well qualified to discharge with ability and credit.” His new responsibilities brought Cook in close contact with Captain Palliser. The two men developed a rapid respect for each other’s ability. Palliser, who was later to be Governor of Newfoundland and a Lord of the Admiralty, had great influence on Cook’s career, both as a firm friend and a powerful patron.

In 1757, at the age of twenty-nine, Cook was transferred as Master to the 64-gun *Pembroke* under Capt. John Simcoe, father of the future Lieutenant-Governor of Upper Canada, John Graves Simcoe. Captain Simcoe had an important influence on
Capt. James Cook, R.N. F.R.S.
Portrait in oils, 1776, by John Webber
His Majesty's Sloop-of-War, Resolution
Watercolour by Lt. Henry Roberts, R.N.
Poedooa, daughter of Oree, Chief of Ulietea (Raiatea, Society Islands)
Portrait in oils by John Webber
Capt. James Cook, R.N. F.R.S.
Portrait in oils, 1776, by Sir Nathaniel Dance

Capt. James Cook’s Coat-of-Arms
Bestowed posthumously by King George III in Sept. 1785
Cook’s life, encouraging and helping him in the study of astronomy and mathematics, and sharing his growing interest in the techniques of surveying.

During 1758 the *Pembroke* took part in the siege of the great French fortress of Louisbourg, which commanded the approach to the St. Lawrence River. Here, Cook came in contact with the noted military engineer, later to be Surveyor-General of Québec, Samuel Holland, under whose influence he began his vital training in hydrographic survey. Holland afterwards recalled in a letter to Lieutenant-Governor Simcoe that Cook had told him in 1776, when talking over the great surveying and mapping achievements of his first two voyages which produced the first outline map of the Pacific Ocean, that “the several improvements and instructions he had received on board the *Pembroke* had been the sole foundation of the services he had been enabled to perform.”

As General Wolfe’s fleet of troopships, with their convoying battleships, made their way slowly up the treacherous reaches of the St. Lawrence River towards Québec, capital of French Canada, great demands were made on Cook’s developing skill as a surveyor. The great obstacle was the river proper from the Saguenay to Québec, a 120-mile maze of shoals and rocky reefs from which all buoys and navigational marking aids had been removed by the French. Cook and the Masters of other ships were given the dangerous but essential task of checking captured enemy charts and marking a safe channel for the British fleet. The tedious and exacting work went on for months and because soundings had to be taken within artillery range of the city’s massive fortifications, there was a constant danger of death or capture. Much, therefore, had to be done—with added difficulty—at night.

Cook was in his element. Distinguishing himself by the painstaking accuracy of his charting, he became much consulted; Wolfe himself sought his advice. Finally, on 26 June 1759, the British fleet under Admiral Saunders—22 warships and 119 merchantmen—negotiated the Traverse, the notorious passage from the north shore of the St. Lawrence at Cap Tourmente to the south shore between Ile Madame and the eastern tip of Ile d’Orléans. The troops were landed on the Ile d’Orléans the following day.

After the siege of Québec, Cook transferred as Master to the *Northumberland*, flagship of Admiral Lord Colville, who had succeeded Admiral Sir Charles Saunders as the commander-in-chief. In the summer of 1760 and 1761 the *Northumberland* operated in the St. Lawrence River and Gulf. On Colville’s personal orders Cook carried out a complete survey of the St. Lawrence from Montréal to the Atlantic so that new charts could be made. His work was so thorough that many of his charts remained in use for more than a century. On 19 January 1761 Colville awarded Cook fifty pounds “in consideration of his indefatigable industry in making himself master of the pilotage of the river St. Lawrence.” Again, on 30 December 1762, when forwarding Cook’s surveys to the Admiralty, Colville informed their Lordships
that from my experience of Mr. Cook’s genius and capacity I think him well qualified for the work he had performed and of greater undertakings of the same kind.”

During the summer of 1762 the Northumberland operated on the south and east coasts of Newfoundland, taking part in the recapture of St. Johns from the French in September. In October 1762 she returned to England, where the ship’s company, including Cook, were paid off. His skill and competence as a surveyor soon brought him back to the Maritimes, where from 1763 to 1767 he was engaged in a detailed charting of the Newfoundland coast—a task of vital importance to the British fishing fleet, as was well recognized by Governor Graves of Newfoundland, whose admiration Cook had quickly gained.

In 1764 Cook’s old captain, Sir Hugh Palliser, became Governor of Newfoundland. On his recommendation, Cook at last received his first command, HMS Grenville, a ten-year-old, 70-ton schooner built in Massachusetts. Although still without a commission, Cook, as Surveyor of Newfoundland, was paid ten shillings a day, the same allowance given to the commander of a squadron.

Under Palliser’s orders Cook extended his surveys still farther, adding Labrador to the area of Nova Scotia and Newfoundland in which he had worked. No previous hydrographic survey in these waters equalled Cook’s work. His charts of some two thousand miles of practically unknown shore, deeply indented and notorious for bad weather, where observations were often interrupted by summer fog and storms, were the first that could be trusted by seamen. Published in the North American Pilot in 1775, they became a standard navigational reference for over a century.

Cook’s obvious talent for survey work brought him to the close attention of the Admiralty. His name also came before the scientific world. His report of an eclipse of the sun off the Newfoundland coast in 1766, and the calculation of the correct longitude from his very accurate observations, were published by the Royal Philosophical Society.

Cook at the age of forty, though still without a commission, had established a reputation for many kinds of ability. He was now to be singled out by the
Admiralty for "greater undertakings" which would test him to the utmost. When he returned to North America eleven years later he had become the greatest explorer and navigator of the age.
Chapter Two: First Voyage

In 1768 Cook, quite unknown outside a small circle of professional men, was promoted to Lieutenant and given charge of an expedition to the South Seas. His selection for the command was undoubtedly due to the influence of his patron and friend Sir Hugh Palliser, now on the Navy Board, who had long recognized Cook's high character and technical competence.

It required a sailor of exceptional talents to master the challenge of the Pacific in the eighteenth century. Its size and grandeur still challenge comprehension. Stretching ten thousand miles from China to the Americas and nine thousand miles between polar seas, it has large areas that are subject to almost perpetual calms, some to unceasing single-direction winds, others to typhoons and hurricanes.

This stupendous ocean, first seen by Europeans in 1513, was still largely unexplored in the middle of the eighteenth century. There was just a squiggle on the map to represent Abel Tasman's observation of western New Zealand in 1642; a blob to show Tasman's discovery of Tasmania; the simplest sketch outlines of Spanish and Dutch sightings of New Guinea and the north, south and west coasts of Australia.

Previous exploration, apart from its haphazard nature, had often been hampered by winds which severely limited the courses ships could steer, and by the persistent difficulty of accurately determining longitude: the distance east or west from a fixed point, which for English sailors was the Royal Observatory at Greenwich. Moreover, disease—often fatal—amongst seamen was made inevitable by poor victualling and ignorance of nutrition. As a result, large gaps had been left in outlining even those Pacific coasts that were known. Of the relatively few discovered islands, many had been lost again soon after being found. In particular, no one knew whether there was a navigable passage linking the northern Pacific with the Atlantic—the fabled Strait of Anian or Northwest Passage; no one had ever with certainty seen the east coast of Australia, and it was not clear whether there was a strait between Australia and New Guinea. Above all, no one knew whether the southern hemisphere contained ocean or a great land mass.

Many eighteenth-century geographers held to a very old belief that in the southern half of the world there lay a vast continent, the size of Europe and Asia combined, that was expected to bring great riches and power to the nation which discovered it. To classical geographers, the idea of a southern continent had seemed necessary to balance the weight of the land masses of the northern hemisphere. It was called "Terra Australis Incognita"—"The Unknown Land of the South" — and was thought to cover the whole of the southern surface of the earth. In the latter part of the Middle Ages a version of Marco Polo's travels in the thirteenth century, distorted by recopying and additions, claimed that a voyage south from Java would reveal "a golden province to which come few foreigners because of the inhumanity of the people." From the sixteenth century onwards,
rumours and reports from voyages in the Pacific seemed to suggest that the great southern land was much more than a traveller's fantasy.

After the Seven Years War, continuing political and economic rivalry between the great sea powers—Britain, France and Spain—encouraged the sending of expeditions to discover this supposed continent of riches. Such were the secret instructions given by Britain to Commodore Byron on his world voyage from 1764 to 1766 and to Capt. Samuel Wallis on his circumnavigation from 1766 to 1768. In June 1767 Wallis, rediscovering Tahiti after its first sighting (some one hundred fifty years earlier) by the Portuguese navigator Pedro de Quiros, heightened hopes by his report that to the south he had seen mountains rising from the sea. "We supposed," he wrote, that "we saw the long wished for Southern Continent, which has never before been seen by Europeans." It was an illusion, perhaps a line of dark clouds against the setting sun, but the search now seemed more worthwhile than ever.

The scientific enthusiasm of the time provided a convenient excuse for the Admiralty to organize a secret voyage of exploration. In 1769 the path of the planet Venus would bring it between the sun and earth, an event that would not recur for another century and which was of great importance for astronomy. Observation of the transit from different parts of the northern and southern hemispheres, it was hoped, would enable scientists to calculate the distance of earth from the sun and thus provide a means of measuring the size of the solar system. Preparations were made by eight different nations for 150 observers to view the transit in places as far apart as northern Norway, Siberia, Hudson's Bay, California and Peking—a very early example of international scientific co-operation. The discovery by Wallis of Tahiti offered the chance to observe the transit from the South Pacific, and the Admiralty, seizing the opportunity, agreed to provide a ship for the purpose.

Despite Cook's minor rank, his skill as an astronomer and surveyor made him an ideal choice for the Admiralty's intentions. As well as being appointed official observer of the transit, he was given secret
orders. After supervising operations on Tahiti he was to head south for some fifteen hundred miles, where, his instructions informed him, “there is reason to believe a continent, or land of great extent may be found.” On finding this land he was to examine it in detail, establish “friendship and alliance” with the inhabitants, and “with their consent,” possess the country in the name of the King. If no continent were to be found he was to turn west and investigate New Zealand, which many thought might be the northern tip of a greater land mass. He was then to return to England by whichever route he thought best.

The origins of the vessel that Cook chose for the voyage were as humble as his own, but it was selected with much thought. It was the plain but sturdy kind of Whitby collier in which he had first gone to sea. On 21 March 1768 the Navy Board recommended to the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty to “make choice of a cat-built vessel,” as the broad, flat-bottomed vessels were described, for the voyage to the Pacific, “which in their kind are roomly and will afford the advantage of stowing and carrying a large quantity of provisions so necessary on such voyages.” Of three such vessels then in the Thames, the officers at Deptford yard reported most favourably on the Whitby-built collier the *Earl of Pembroke*, 308 tons, 106 feet long overall and about a third as wide, less than four years old, and with a running speed of seven to eight knots.

This homely vessel, with its broad, square stern and wide, bluff bow, was renamed the *Endeavour*. She was ideally suited for her task. She could operate at extreme range for long periods because she was roomy enough to carry adequate provisions and yet small enough to be taken ashore for repairs. Despite her large capacity, she was shallow and able to manœuvre in tidal waters—a valuable advantage in exploring unknown coasts.

The *Endeavour* was bought out of the coal trade by the Admiralty for £2,800, a sum that was almost tripled in fitting her out for the voyage to the Pacific. This was no ordinary provisioning. The *Endeavour* was transformed into a floating laboratory, for as well as a voyage of exploration the expedition was to be the first major voyage of scientific discovery. Crowded on board with the officers and crew of eighty-six was a party of scientists and illustrators led by the wealthy young naturalist and patron of science Joseph Banks, future president of the Royal Society and founder of Kew Gardens. Banks had chosen to sail with Cook partly in place of making the fashionable “grand tour” of European capitals that completed the education of young gentlemen; the other part of his motive was to further scientific knowledge. At the age of twenty-five, therefore, he was making a tour of the world, having persuaded the Admiralty to allow him to join the voyage to Tahiti.

At his own expense Banks brought with him naturalists and artists to record the flora, fauna and sea-life, the peoples they met and their ways of living.
The party included Dr. Daniel Solander, naturalist at the British Museum; Alexander Buchan, landscape and figure artist; Sydney Parkinson, botanical draughtsman; and Herman Sporing, naturalist. Between them, they gathered a wealth of new information about the peoples and lands of the South Pacific. They found animals, plants and minerals never before seen by Europeans, and brought back to England specimens, pictures and descriptions—including thirteen hundred new flowers—which immediately advanced scientific knowledge. Measurements were made of the earth's magnetism and gravity, the sea's temperature and salinity, the sea's tides and currents, the winds and the weather, the temperature and the pressure of the atmosphere. These able and gifted men must also have exerted an important influence on Cook, extending his interests, sharpening his intellect and deepening his sympathies for the native people whom he met on the voyage.

Cook's first Pacific adventure lasted three years. While the scientists catalogued their specimens and wrote about them, his talents as a seaman, navigator and hydrographer made their own spectacular contribution to men's knowledge of the shape of the world. After leaving Tahiti, Cook systematically explored both the east and west sides of the South Pacific, gradually narrowing the area where a new continent might lie. He charted some two thousand miles of New Zealand coastline, giving shape to a shadow which Tasman had only hinted at and proving conclusively that it consisted of two separate islands and therefore could not be part of a larger land mass. He was the first to navigate the Great Barrier Reef, although not without running afoul of its jagged coral, which grounded the *Endeavour* and made a gaping hole in her hull. He was the first to survey and chart the long east coast of Australia, the only great stretch of land still left unexplored in the temperate world. His voyage gave both Australia and New Zealand to the Crown. Moreover, his charts meant that these new lands could be readily found again.
While all Europe thrilled to his discoveries, Cook was modest about his achievement. He wrote to the Admiralty on his return, “I flatter myself that the discoveries we have made, tho’ not great, will apologize for the length of the voyage.” He could blend modesty, however, with a practical realization of the importance of what he had accomplished. As he wrote to his old employer and friend, John Walker of Whitby, comparing his contribution with the scientific catalogue brought back by Banks, “I however have made no very great Discoveries, yet I have explor’d more of the Great South Sea than all that have gone before me so much that little remains now to be done to have a thorough knowledge of that part of the Globe.” He was already anticipating another voyage to obtain that “thorough knowledge.”
Although Cook's first voyage did much to dispel belief in the myth of the southern continent, some geographers were unconvinced. In 1772 therefore, Cook, now Commander, set out to settle the question once and for all by searching not merely the South Pacific but all the oceans of the southern world.

The *Endeavour* was not available for this voyage, since, after her return to England in 1771, she had been sent to the Falkland Islands as a storeship. As Cook's experience on the Great Barrier Reef had shown him the risks of exploring with only one ship, two replacements were bought: the *Resolution* and the *Adventure*, both, like the *Endeavour*, east coast colliers. The *Adventure*, 368 tons, sailed under Capt. Tobias Furneaux, with five officers and seventy-five men. Cook sailed in the *Resolution*, 462 tons, nearly 111 feet long and about 35\(\frac{1}{2}\) feet maximum width, with the collier's wide round-cheeked bow and roomy hull providing unusual space for stores, men and livestock. As a collier, she had carried a crew of perhaps twenty. She now had to accommodate over one hundred men and officers.

As with the *Endeavour*, her flat bottom and shallow draft enabled Cook to put in close to shore to chart coasts and to land easily. He also knew she would not overbalance if she went aground on a submerged rock, reef or sandbank. She was stable and sailed easily. By the standards of the day her appearance was far from elegant, but Cook saw her qualities. He wrote of her that she "was the properest ship for the service she is intended for of any I ever saw." She proved to be "one of the great, one of the superb ships of history." Cook historian J. C. Beaglehole has said of her that "of all the ships of the past, could she by magic be recreated and made immortal one would gaze on her with something like reverence."

This time Banks did not accompany the expedition. The *Resolution* could not be safely adapted to his grandiose plans for housing his large entourage in the comfort that he expected. Unable to contemplate the discomforts of a long voyage, which Cook and his officers took for granted, he withdrew in pique. In his place the Admiralty appointed two German naturalists, John Reinhold Forster and his son George. William Wales and William Bayly accompanied the expedition as astronomers. William Hodges was official artist.

Between them, these men provided illustrations and data to complement Cook's own meticulous account of what has been called the greatest single voyage in the history of the world. Enduring, according to the Forsters, "a series of hardships never before experienced by mortal man," Cook took his ships where no European vessel had gone before and kept them at sea for longer than had been thought possible. For one period Cook was at sea 122 days consecutively, for another 117 days, sailing once for ten thousand miles over strange seas without sighting land. No one before had ever explored the far southern waters of the Indian Ocean, or the Pacific, or the Atlantic. Cook was the first to cross the Antarctic circle, and indeed came very close
to discovering the Antarctic continent itself.

Cook proved beyond further doubt that a great fertile southern continent was an illusion, by sailing repeatedly over a great part of the area it was supposed to cover. In addition, he made two tremendous circuits of the southern Pacific. The first sweep took him from New Zealand to Pitcairn Island, to Tahiti, to the Friendly (Tongan) Islands and back to New Zealand. The second of these sweeps was the greatest exploratory voyage of its kind ever undertaken in the Pacific, extending thousands of miles from deep in the Antarctic almost to the equator and from New Zealand to east of Easter Island. In all, the three-year voyage covered some sixty thousand miles, two and a half times the circumference of the earth. It was a tremendous triumph for Cook, who was now acclaimed as one “who had done for geography and seamanship more in his voyages than any man since Columbus.”

Cook’s success, his ability to range over vast areas of ocean, to accurately chart new lands, to know
where he had been and how to get back there, opened up new vistas for exploration that had been considered impossible. He owed some of his competence in navigation to recent advances in that science. In the 1760s it became possible to determine astronomically a ship's position at sea to within about half a degree of longitude, by the use of Hadley's reflecting quadrant or sextant, a pocket watch, and accurate astronomical tables such as those published by Nevil Maskelyne in the *Nautical Almanac*. The method, known as lunar distances, had for instance made it possible for Captain Wallis to chart the position of Tahiti accurately and for Cook to find it again.

Before a practical method of measuring longitude at sea was devised, a navigator made his landfall by "running down his latitude," which meant sailing east or west along the parallel of latitude of his destination until he sighted it. Longitude was measured by the precarious method of dead-reckoning: keeping a record of direction and speed and making allowance for current. With so much opportunity for miscalculation, islands were often missed and ships wrecked on shores that were not expected to be so close.

Now, for the first time, navigators could be equipped and trained to sail straight towards their intended landfall and to chart coastlines to within an accuracy of thirty nautical miles. Cook's First Voyage and the accuracy of his mapping demonstrated both the efficiency of this method and his mastery of it.

The disadvantage of the lunar distance method was its complexity. Whereas latitude, or north-south position, could be measured by quick reference to the sun at midday, calculation of longitude from the moon took much longer. A simpler method was necessary. In 1713 Isaac Newton had pointed out to a government committee that it should be possible to calculate longitude from a reliable clock giving
the time at the Greenwich meridian, which when compared with local time, established by observation of the sun, would enable mariners to determine their east-west position. There was, however, no clock that would keep accurate time and be unaffected by storms at sea or by large changes of temperature.

It was over forty years before such an instrument was invented, by a self-taught Yorkshire clockmaker, John Harrison. It was a masterpiece of engineering and precision, with complex devices to compensate for temperature changes. In 1761, when the 72-pound clock was tested on a voyage to Jamaica, it lost just five seconds over the three-month journey, corresponding to a distance of under one mile. As Harrison proudly remarked: "There is neither any other mechanical or Mathematical thing in the world that is more beautiful or more curious in texture than this my watch."

On his second voyage Cook carried a copy of Harrison's fourth timepiece—a fraction of the size of his first—and, by careful comparison with his own astronomical calculations, established its accuracy in determining longitude to within about three miles. The problem of finding longitude at sea by a chronometer had finally been solved thanks to Harrison and to Larcum Kendall, who made Cook's replica (called K1) in 1769. Harrison's design eventually won for him in 1773 the greater part of the prize of twenty thousand pounds offered by Queen Anne in 1714 in "An Act for Providing a Public Reward for such Person or Persons as shall Discover the Longitude at Sea."

Cook mentions the watch in his journal many times. He described it as "our trusty guide the watch," writing that "... it would not be doing justice to Mr. Harrison and Mr. Kendall, if I did not own that we
have received very great assistance from this useful and valuable time-piece." It enabled him to become the first commander of a ship in history to know almost precisely where he was for most of his time at sea.

The new possibilities for oceangoing vessels afforded by the chronometer would have been greatly lessened but for Cook's successful experiments in preserving the health of his men during their long spells at sea. One of his most remarkable achievements was the elimination of many of the sicknesses and diseases which commonly plagued ocean voyages. Above all he made great strides towards protecting his men from the scourge of the eighteenth-century seaman—scurvy. This ugly affliction, caused by lack of vitamin C, results in debility, depression, loss of teeth, haemorrhaging and death.

The mid-eighteenth century was a period when the Admiralty was being bombarded with suggested cures for scurvy, ranging from powders and pills to seawater and blood-letting. Cook's voyages presented an opportunity to experiment with some of the dietary and medical suggestions of the time. He was well supplied with a wide range of supposed antiscorbutics, including malt, sauerkraut (preserved cabbage), dehydrated soup and the sweetened, boiled juice of lemons and oranges.

Cook's voyages showed that scurvy was no longer to be feared if simple and effective precautions were strictly enforced. He was convinced that scurvy resulted from dirty conditions and bad diet. The ships, therefore, had to be kept scrubbed, ventilated and fumigated. The men had to wear clean, warm cloth-
ing. And every day, Cook forced down their throats unsalted soup, sauerkraut and fruit juice. More important still was his emphasis on fresh food and water. Whenever the ships touched on a suitable shore, the water was replenished and crewmen were sent foraging for fruit, vegetables, berries and green

"A chart of the Southern Hemisphere" depicting Cook’s and earlier explorers’ tracks in the Southern Seas. Engraving by William Whitchurch from *A Voyage towards the South Pole...* by James Cook, vol. 1, 1777.

Joseph Banks (1743-1820). Engraving by J. R. Smith, 1773, after a portrait by Benjamin West.
plants. They gathered wild celery, scurvy grass and wild cabbage, all of which, Cook reported, “were found to eat very well either in Soups or Sallids.” They also brewed spruce beer.

The customary diet of seamen in the eighteenth century consisted of salt meat, worm-eaten oatmeal and rancid butter washed down with a gallon of beer per man—the daily allowance—or half a pint of rum or brandy in its place. Yet at first Cook’s seamen rejected their captain’s dietary innovations. They had an instinctive suspicion, as Cook wrote, of any food “out of the common way altho’ it be ever so much for their good.” They had to be cajoled, sometimes tricked and even bullied into accepting the new food. Although he had always been sparing in his use of the lash, Cook nevertheless had men flogged for refusing the prescribed meals. He preferred to use guile, however. From his own experience on the lower deck he well understood “the temper and disposision of seamen.” On the *Endeavour* he overcame the crew’s resistance to sauerkraut by letting them know that it was being served exclusively to the officers, knowing that when sailors “see their Superiors set a value upon it, it becomes the finest stuff in the world.” The strategy worked. Within a week the sauerkraut was so popular that it had to be rationed.

A result of Cook’s meticulous attention to the welfare of his men was that on his second voyage to the Pacific and after remaining at sea for longer than anyone else in history, though there were outbreaks of scurvy only one man was lost through sickness. On his return Cook set down his methods in a paper to the Royal Society, of which he was elected a Fellow on 29 February 1776. It was a high honour in itself to be numbered among the leading scientists and scholars of the kingdom. The paper took the form of a letter to Sir John Pringle, President of the Royal Society and himself, as Surgeon-General of the Army, an authority on scurvy.

This contribution to the health of seamen earned Cook the Copley Gold Medal, the Society’s award recognizing the summit of intellectual achievement. The occasion was the only time the medal has been granted for advances in the study of nutrition. It was his proudest triumph. “It is with real satisfaction,” he wrote at the end of his journal of the Second Voyage, “and without claiming any merit but of attention to my duty, that I can conclude this account with an observation which facts enable me to make, that our having discovered the possibility of preserving health amongst a numerous ship’s company for such a length of time in such varieties of climate and amidst such continued hardship and fatigue will make this voyage remarkable in the opinion of every benevolent person when the dispute about a southern continent shall have ceased to engage the attention and divide the judgement of philosophers.”
Chapter Four: Planning the Third Voyage

Upon Cook's return from the Second Voyage he was appointed to a lucrative and undemanding position at Greenwich Hospital, a residence for disabled and retired Navy men. It seemed only fitting, after the rigours of the past six years, that he should be allowed to comfortably retire. The map of the Pacific, however, was not yet complete, and there was already talk of organizing another major voyage to explore its northern waters. Cook was the obvious choice as leader, but the Admiralty was reluctant to burden him further. As his first biographer recounts, "The benefits he had already conferred on science and navigation and the labours and dangers he had gone through were so many and so great that it was not deemed reasonable to ask him to engage in fresh perils." Cook solved their dilemma by volunteering. At a dinner given by the First Lord of the Admiralty to discuss the proposed expedition, Cook, it was reported, "was so fired with the contemplation and representation of the object that he started up and declared he himself would undertake the direction of the enterprise."

Cook was intrigued by the prospect of being the first to uncover one of the few remaining ocean mysteries—the geography of the region where the Pacific meets the Arctic. Here, it was hoped, he would discover the long-sought navigable waterway between the Pacific and the Atlantic oceans, the legendary Strait of Anian or Northwest Passage. For three centuries, since the discovery of America, European navigators had searched in vain for the location of this short route to the riches of the Orient.

The legend of the Strait of Anian was based on a misunderstanding by cartographers and geographers of Marco Polo's reference to Ania or Arian, thought to be a province in northeastern Asia. The waterway which was supposed to lead to it was called the Strait of Anian. On maps and in sailors' stories it appeared as an ice-free passage, easy to sail, stretching from the Atlantic to the Pacific, with its possible entrance at any considerable opening from the Gulf of California to Hudson's Bay. Many lives and fortunes had been spent in pursuit of this mystery.

Englishmen, in particular, had sought this passage
Brobdingnag—the country where Lemuel Gulliver found himself after a storm; sited in the approximate area of the province of British Columbia.

between the oceans, as an alternative to the southern routes to the Orient (through the Strait of Magellan and around the Capes) which had for centuries been controlled by England's rivals, Spain and Portugal. Elizabeth I's seamen and their successors, including such great explorers as Henry Hudson, John Davis, Martin Frobisher and William Baffin, had carried out the search from the hostile North Atlantic. In the process, through fog, shipwreck, storm and ice, they had discovered much of the northern and eastern coasts of Canada.

Yet still in Cook's day, English knowledge of the North Pacific coast of America remained vague and uncertain. No English ship had been there since Francis Drake had claimed New Albion for the Crown in 1579. Accordingly there was room for a great deal of conjecture and imagination; it was roughly in the area of present-day Oregon and British Columbia that Jonathan Swift placed the fantasy land of Brobdingnag in Gulliver's Travels.

Exploration of the Pacific coast of North America by Russian and Spanish navigators did little to dispel the idea that a waterway passed through or around the continent to the Atlantic. Reports of the discovery by Vitus Bering in 1728 of the strait later named after him, and of other Russian voyages along the coast of Alaska, renewed hopes that a passage did exist.

Rumours of Spanish discoveries also increased speculation. An inland passage allegedly travelled in 1592 by Juan de Fuca, a Greek pilot in the service of
Spain, appeared on eighteenth-century maps between 47° and 48° north latitude, close to the strait which bears his name today. Another route, with its entrance at 53° north (close to Skidegate Inlet between the major islands of the Queen Charlottes) was said to have been sighted in 1640 by a Bartholomew de Fonte. The two passages, whose discovery, it was suspected, Spain had tried to keep secret, sometimes appeared together on maps. They were shown running side by side, de Fuca's depicted as a long narrow channel of open sea and de Fonte's as a chain of rivers and lakes emptying into Baffin Bay. Such stories were believed to be true by many eighteenth-century geographers. Nonexistent inter-oceanic passages and other geographical fantasies, such as an inland sea covering much of today's British Columbia, were common features on eighteenth-century maps of the North Pacific.

The question of a northern passage had taken on renewed importance for England by the time of Cook's return from his second expedition. The East was becoming increasingly important to the future of the British Empire. India was becoming a springboard for the expansion of commerce through southeast Asia to China and the Pacific. In particular, the trade in Chinese tea was progressing rapidly. It was now essential, therefore, for Britain to establish the shortest possible route to the Far East, and a government reward of twenty thousand pounds awaited the first British ship to discover the passage. Both Commodore Byron and Captain Wallis had been sent on the search, but both had failed to reach even the northwest coast of America. Now, a man who was the undoubted master of the Pacific had appeared. The Admiralty was confident that if the fabled Strait of Anian existed, Cook would find it.

Cook's voyage in search of the Northwest Passage was to be part of a double-pronged attack. While his expedition was undertaking its search from the North Pacific, another probe, under the command of Richard Pickersgill, who sailed with Cook on his second voyage, was to be made once more from the Atlantic, through Baffin Bay. The objective of both expeditions was to reach the Arctic Ocean, where it was hoped they would meet. As eighteenth-century geographers were convinced that the ocean could not freeze, ice was not thought to be an obstacle to navigation in the Arctic. For this reason, neither expedition was equipped for work in the ice.

Cook's instructions for the search clearly indicated that this voyage would be the longest and toughest expedition he had yet undertaken. He was to take two small sailing-ships from the English Channel down the length of the Atlantic to the Cape of Good Hope. From here, he was to make for sub-Antarctic waters in search of island bases for future British voyages. Then for ten thousand miles he was to battle the winds as he crossed the bottom of the world to Tasmania and New Zealand. Next he was to sail to the Society Islands and Tahiti, and then, in the summer months, having taken on provisions and completed repairs, he was to explore the unknown waters of
the North Pacific in search of the Northwest Passage and if possible to return through it to England.

There was no doubt as to Cook's choice of ship for this voyage across the whole breadth and almost the entire length of the Pacific. He would sail again in the Resolution, which, just two months after Cook's return, was already refitting for this second "voyage to remote parts." She was to be accompanied by another Whitby collier, the 298-ton Discovery, the smallest of all Cook's ships, under the thirty-three year-old Charles Clerke, who had been Second Lieutenant on the Resolution on the previous voyage.

Many officers from that voyage, in fact, had chosen to sail with Cook again. Some had been with him from the beginning. Clerke, indeed, had sailed as Master's Mate in the Endeavour, earning promotion during the voyage to Third Lieutenant. A farmer's son from Essex, keen for excitement, he was always cheerful, talkative and amusing, with an "open, generous Disposition." Clerke was a close friend of both Cook and Sir Joseph Banks. He had already crammed a wealth of experience into his nineteen years at sea. After entering the Navy in 1755 at the age of fourteen, he had seen action in the West Indies, where he miraculously survived being blown from the mizzen-top into the sea. Before beginning his service with Cook, he had sailed around the world on the Dolphin as midshipman under Byron.

The Master's Mate on that voyage, John Gore, who had also sailed with Wallis as well as Byron, was now First Lieutenant on the Resolution and at forty-six the oldest officer in the company next to Cook. Gore, from Virginia, was one of the half-dozen Americans who sailed on the Third Voyage. He had joined the Navy in the same year as Cook and had sailed with him on the Endeavour, rising during the voyage from Third to Second Lieutenant. This was his fourth voyage around the world.

James King, aged twenty-six, Second Lieutenant on the Resolution, was sailing with Cook for the first time. The son of a Lancashire clergyman, he had entered the Navy at the age of twelve, earning pro-
motion to Lieutenant in 1771. Like Cook, he had served under Palliser on the Newfoundland station. He had then studied science in Paris and at Oxford, where he so impressed the Professor of Astronomy that the professor recommended him for Cook's Third Voyage. His experience as a seaman, combined with his ability as an astronomer, made him of great service to Cook. As an officer and colleague he was well liked. One of the midshipmen wrote of him, "In short, as one of the best, he is one of the politest, genteelest and best-loved men in the world."

In contrast to King was the Resolution's rough spoken Master, William Bligh, also sailing with Cook for the first time and destined to become as famous as his captain. He had entered the Navy as an ordinary seaman and now, at the age of twenty-one, as Master responsible only to the captain, he had an excellent opportunity to make a name for himself. Cook made a good deal of use of his Master and evidently had confidence in Bligh's ability at reconaissance, charting, surveying, sounding, and reporting. His surveying work was so valuable that he received one eighth of the profits of the official account of the voyage. However, he was also vain and opinionated, with a hasty and violent temper that did not endear him to his colleagues or subordinates.

Perhaps the most openly disliked member of the company, however, was John Williamson, Third Lieutenant on the Resolution. He appears, from different accounts of the voyage, as a quick-tempered, self-righteous character with harsh opinions concerning the treatment of native people. He was to clash several times with Cook on this matter during the voyage. One of the midshipmen wrote of him,
Portrait in oils, 1780, by John Webber.

"Williamson is a wretch, feared and hated by his inferiors, detested by his equals and despised by his superiors, a very devil, to whom none of our midshipmen have spoke for above a year: with whom I would not wish to be in favour, nor would receive an obligation from, was he Lord High Admiral of Great Britain." Able-seaman William Griffin called him "a very bad man and a great Tyrant." No other officer on any of Cook's voyages was so damned.

On the Discovery, Clerke's First Lieutenant was James Burney, aged twenty-one, a promising seaman who had sailed on the Resolution before, first as a seaman and then as midshipman and Second Lieutenant. He had returned from America to join Cook once more. His sister, the famous novelist Fanny Burney, wrote of his eagerness to join the voyage that "there is nothing Jem so earnestly desires as to be of the party: and my father (a friend of Lord Sandwich) has made great interest at the Admiralty to procure him that pleasure." A valuable officer, he was later to become an admiral.

Among the eleven midshipmen on the voyage, three were destined to achieve distinction. James Trevenen, a sixteen-year-old Cornish boy from the Royal Naval Academy at Portsmouth, had been recommended to Cook by Captain Wallis, and his appointment to the Resolution was his first seagoing experience. During the voyage he was to prove himself clever, generous, warmhearted and hardworking. He was killed at the age of thirty when fighting for the Russians against Sweden. Edward Riou, eighteen, on the Discovery, was also to die in battle. He was killed at Copenhagen in 1801 serving under Nelson, who wrote of him, "In poor, dear Riou the country
has sustained an irreperable loss.” He was the only one of Cook’s men to be honoured by a monument in St. Paul’s Cathedral. His fellow midshipman, George Vancouver, had sailed with Cook before on the Second Voyage as a thirteen-year-old able-seaman. In 1792 he began his own great voyage to the Pacific North-west during which he made an accurate survey of the coast northwards from 30°, examined the Strait of Juan de Fuca and the Gulf of Georgia and circumnavigated Vancouver Island. His journal of that voyage with its constant references to Cook emphasizes the importance for these young men of a training
under Cook and the admiration they had for him.

Affection and respect for Cook is evident as well in the journals and notes kept during the Third Voyage by members of the crew. Many of them had sailed with him before, including half a dozen who had been on both of his previous voyages. These veterans were: Robert Anderson, quartermaster on the *Endeavour* and now on his second voyage in the *Resolution* as gunner; William Harvey, Master’s Mate and former midshipman; William Collett, who from able-seaman had now become Master-At-Arms and Cook’s personal servant; John Ramsay, forty-four, back as an able-seaman after a spell as cook on the *Resolution*; William Peckover, gunner on the *Discovery*, who was later to serve with Bligh on the *Bounty* and be set adrift with him during the famous mutiny. Then there was Samuel Gibson, now a Sergeant, who as a marine on the First Voyage had been flogged by Cook for deserting the ship and taking to the hills with a Tahitian girl. He could speak native languages better than any man on board except the surgeon.

Some thirteen others had been with Cook on the epic Second Voyage. In the *Resolution*, these were: Henry Roberts, Master’s Mate, who was to serve as principal assistant hydrographer to Cook. He drew the charts for engraving in the printed edition of the voyage, published in 1784; the American Bo’sun, William Ewin; the quick-tempered Irishman Patrick Whelan, former quartermaster in the *Resolution* and now serving as able-seaman; John Cave, able-seaman from Durham, who was to desert at Macao on the voyage home; William Watman, able-seaman, aged forty-four, who had followed Cook out of a comfortable retirement at Greenwich Hospital. He was, wrote King, “an old man” who “had been 21 years a Marine . . . belov’d by his fellows for his good and benevolent
disposition”; Richard Hergest, able-seaman, a twenty-two-year-old Londoner; Alexander Dewar, the ship’s Scottish clerk. In the Discovery, the veterans were: William Lanyon, Master’s Mate, from Cornwall; Richard Collett, twenty-three, able-seaman on the Second Voyage and now Master-at-Arms; the carpenter Peter Reynolds; the cook Robert Goulding, formerly carpenter’s mate; and Edward Barrett, twenty, from London, formerly cook’s mate.

There were some interesting newcomers as well. John Ledyard, an adventurous American aged twenty-five, had sailed in 1773 to Europe, where he had tried, unsuccessfully, to enlist in a British regiment at Gibraltar. He had now, somehow, become Corporal of Marines on the Resolution. After the voyage he refused to serve against his countrymen during the American War of Independence and deserted in 1782 while serving on the North American station. In 1784 he returned to London and set out to walk across Siberia, down to Nootka Sound and then to Virginia. He actually reached Irkutsk before he was arrested in February 1788 and returned to the Polish border. He died at Cairo on an expedition looking for the source of the Niger.

Another American, Nathaniel Portlock, sailing on the Discovery as Master’s Mate, and George Dixon, the armourer, were both later to receive their own commands in an expedition to develop the Pacific Northwest fur trade during which, in 1787, Dixon discovered the Queen Charlotte Islands. An ordinary seaman in the Discovery, Joseph Billings, later became a captain in the Russian Navy and explored the extreme northeastern parts of Asia and the Bering Sea. Another adventurer was Heinrich Zimmerman, seaman on the Discovery, a twenty-five-year-old German belt maker who had begun to wander in 1770
and had worked at various trades in Geneva, Lyons, Paris and London. He wrote of himself that "the natural courage of a native of the Palatinate" determined him "to adopt a seafaring life" and volunteer into the Resolution. Another volunteer was George Gilbert, eighteen, sailing as an able-seaman in place of his father, Joseph Gilbert, former Master of the Resolution. Then there was Benjamin Lyon, a former watchmaker from London, whose old skills were put to use during the voyage in an attempt to repair the Resolution's chronometer. A surprising talent was revealed by James Clevely, the Resolution's carpenter, who made detailed drawings of scenes on the voyage from which, on his return home, his brother John worked up a series of paintings.

Others who attract attention were the newly commissioned Irish Lieutenant of Marines, Molesworth Philips, twenty-one, who twice challenged Williamson to a duel. Bligh described him as "a person who never was of any real service the whole voyage, or did anything but eat and sleep." He had little training himself and no ability to train his men, but there was little for him or his marines to do except guard duty.

The surgeons too had little call on their services during the voyage, thanks to Cook's close supervision of the health of his men. They showed talent in other directions, however. William Anderson, surgeon on the Resolution, had been the ship's Surgeon's Mate on the Second Voyage. Described by King as "by far the most accurate and inquisitive person on board," he was an enthusiastic self-taught naturalist, interested in all branches of natural history and in native languages as well. His ability to interpret new words and his ethnological observations were of great assistance to Cook. He went to great pains to draw up vocabularies for the different peoples visited on the voyage; the one on Tahitian speech was later printed.
Sadly, he was to suffer increasingly throughout the voyage from tuberculosis.

Anderson's First Mate was David Samwell, a parson's son from Wales, whose interests were more romantic than scientific. He had a definite eye for the ladies, writing two weeks before the *Resolution* sailed, "For my part I live as happy as I cou'd wish only that one's cut off from the Society of the Dear Girls." His colleague on the *Discovery*, William Ellis, "a genteel young fellow" who had been educated at Cambridge and St. Bartholomew's Hospital, proved to be a talented water-colourist.

As with previous voyages, an official illustrator was commissioned by the Admiralty, so that in Cook's words, "we might go out with every help that could serve to make the result of our voyage entertaining to the generality of our readers as well as instructive to the sailor and scholar." The artist John Webber, the son of a Swiss sculptor and educated in art at Berne and Paris, was to make this the most profusely illustrated of all the voyages. Another official appointment was William Bayly, astronomer, who had sailed in the *Adventure* on the Second Voyage. He was later to become headmaster of the Royal Academy at Portsmouth. With him on the *Discovery* was David Nelson from Kew Gardens, sent by Banks to collect plants and seeds. Clerke described him in a letter to Banks as "one of the quietest fellows in nature." He was also to sail in the *Bounty* in 1787 to supervise the gathering of breadfruit in Tahiti, and, like Peckover, was set adrift with Bligh. He died of
Death of Capt. James Cook at Kealakekua Bay, Hawaii on the morning of 14 February, 1779.
Engraving: figures by Francesco Bartolozzi, landscape by W. Byrne after an oil painting by John Webber.

fever and exposure in Timor, 20 June 1789.
And then there was Omai, a Society Islander, brought to England at his own request by Captain Furneaux in the Adventure. Sir Joseph Banks had dressed him as a fashionable English gentleman and introduced him to English society. During his two years in London, he had attended the opera, been the guest of nobility and gentry, and dined in company with Samuel Johnson. He had taken the fancy of Fanny Burney when he visited her brother James, the
Discovery's new First Lieutenant who could talk to him in his native language. He had also learned a certain amount of English during his visit, enough to upset court decorum by greeting King George III with a cheery “How do King Tosh.” Cook was now to take him home again with many presents, including port wine, gunpowder, muskets and bullets, a suit of armour, a hand-organ, toy soldiers and a globe of the world. He could look forward to impressing his people with his gifts and stories of life in England.

For Omai’s shipmates, the voyage promised disparate things: for the officers and midshipmen, honour and promotion; for the crew, hardship and discomfort. Yet even on the lower deck there were many who had joined just to sail with Cook. The voyage had the appeal of adventure, giving each of them a sense of their special importance. As Samwell was to write, “It is an article of faith with every one of us that there never was such a collection of fine lads take us all in all got together as there was in the Resolution and Discovery.”
Part II: The Third Pacific Voyage
By early summer 1776, preparations for the Third Voyage were almost complete. King George III granted Cook an hour’s audience to wish him Godspeed, and the expedition was given a grand official farewell. Cook noted in his journal for June 8:

The Earl of Sandwich, Sir Hugh Palliser and Others of the Board of Admiralty paid us the last mark of the extraordinary attention they had all along paid to this equipment by coming on board to see that everything was completed to their desire and to the satisfaction of all who were to embark on the voyage. They and several other Noblemen and Gentlemen honoured me with their company at dinner and were saluted with 17 guns and three cheers at their coming on board and also on going a shore.

In July both ships were ready at Plymouth, seeming small and insignificant amidst the great fleet of warships, troop-carriers and supply vessels bound for the war in the American colonies. The Declaration of Independence was signed on 4 July, just eight days before the Resolution sailed.

Although Britain and the United States were to be at war during the entire voyage, Cook’s expedition was considered to be so important for the advancement of knowledge that his ships were exempted from capture or attack. Benjamin Franklin, American Minister to the court of France, realized that American privateers might seize and hold the two vessels as hostages on their voyage home and wrote the following letter requesting free passage for Cook:

To all Captains and Commanders of armed Ships acting by Commission from the Congress of the United States of America now in War with Great Britain.—

Gentlemen,

A Ship having been fitted out from England before the commencement of this War to make Discoveries of new Countries in unknown Seas, under the conduct of that most celebrated Navigator Capt. Cook; an undertaking truly laudable in itself, as the Increase of Geographical Knowledge facilitates the Communication between distant Nations, in the exchange of useful Products and Manufactures and the extension of Arts, whereby the common enjoyments of human life are multiplied and augmented, and Science of other kinds increased to the benefit of mankind in general. This is therefore most earnestly to recommend to everyone of you that in Case the said Ship, which is now expected to be soon in the European seas on her return, should happen to fall into your Hands, you would not consider her as an enemy, nor suffer any Plunder to be made of the effects contained in her, nor obstruct her immediate return to England by detaining her or sending her into any other part of Europe or to America, but that you would treat the said Captain Cook and his people with all civility and
kindness, affording them as common friends to mankind all the Assistance in your power which they may happen to stand in need of. In so doing you will not only gratify the generosity of your own dispositions, but there is no doubt of your obtaining the approbation of the Congress and your other American Owners.

I have the honor to be,

Gentlemen,
Your most obedient
humble Servant

B. Franklin

Given at Passy, Minister Plenipotentiary
Near Paris, this from the Congress of the
10 Day of March United States to the Court
1779 of France

The Resolution had already been at sea for two weeks before Captain Clerke was able to follow in the Discovery. The unfortunate Clerke had been imprisoned for debt after agreeing to act as guarantor for the payment of the debts of his brother, a captain in the Royal Navy who had sailed to the East Indies. Burney had brought the ship down to Plymouth while Clerke struggled to obtain his release. He finally joined the Discovery on 1 August through the intercession of Banks, to whom the “castaway but ever-lasting, grateful obliged” Clerke wrote an exuberant note of thanks: “Huzza, my boys heave away—away we go—adieu my best friend; I won’t pretend to tell you how much I am your grateful and devoted C. Clerke.” Lamentably he was never to be free from the effects of his days in the King’s Bench Prison, for there he contracted tuberculosis, which was gradually to weaken him throughout the voyage. For the present, however, it was a jubilant new Captain Clerke who set out to rendezvous with Cook at Cape Town.

Meanwhile, the journey south had revealed serious defects in the Resolution. As Cook was to learn throughout the voyage, the Royal dockyards, then notoriously inefficient and corrupt, had skimped on fitting her out. In the high winds and heavy seas of the Atlantic she now began to leak badly. All the quarters were wet and some of the stores were spoiled. The mizzenmast was found to be so seriously cracked that it could not bear sail.

However, there were some light moments. On 1 September the Resolution crossed the equator, and Cook, who had lost no time in drilling the crew in his methods for ensuring good health and hygiene, condoned the usual revels and antics associated with crossing the line. The surgeon, Anderson, was emphatic in his disapproval, writing in his journal of the “old ridiculous ceremony of ducking those who had not crossed the Equator before. This is one of those absurd customs... which every sensible person... ought to suppress instead of encouraging.”

The Resolution anchored at Cape Town on 18 October 1776 and the Discovery arrived there three weeks later after a rough passage during which a marine had been lost overboard. This was Cook's
fourth visit to the colony and he was entertained with his officers by the Governor. He even had his portrait painted by Webber, who had already completed a full-length study of him before they left London. Anderson passed his time by exploring the countryside for plants and insects. He was greatly impressed by the ability of the Dutch settlers to "raise such plenty in a spot where I believe no other European nation would have attempted to settle." Meanwhile, the ships were overhauled as thoroughly as possible and enough provisions for two years were taken on board. The Harrison chronometer was checked for accuracy and found to be performing excellently. The crew dined on fresh mutton, greens and soft bread and enjoyed the last comforts of civilization before returning, as Clerke wrote, "to the old trade of exploring." One of the crew, William Hunt, armourer, was returned to England for passing bad coinage.

At the Cape, additions were made to the considerable number of livestock brought from England. The *Resolution*, which carried all of the animals because the *Discovery* had no room, was turned into a floating farmyard and now housed four horses, three bulls, four cows, two calves, fifteen goats, thirty sheep, a peacock and innumerable pigs, hens, turkeys, rabbits, geese and ducks. Omai gave up his cabin to the horses, "with raptures," as Cook wrote to Banks and Sandwich, commenting as well that "nothing is wanting but a few females of our own species to make the Resolution a compleat ark." The animals were to be distributed among the Pacific islands as a gift from "Farmer" George III. Many died, but the pigs survived, multiplying to such an extent that their descendants, known as "Captain Cookers," still roam New Zealand.

Both ships left the Cape on 30 November 1776, already a month behind schedule. They sailed south into the high winds and huge seas of the Roaring Forties, bound for desolate Kerguelen Island in the South Indian Ocean via the Prince Edward Islands, discovered by the French explorer Marc-Joseph Marion du Fresne as recently as 1772. Before they reached Kerguelen, the fog was so thick that the ships had to fire their guns intermittently to keep in touch. The care of the livestock gave great trouble, and after a week, sheep and goats began to die.

On his way out on the Second Voyage, Cook had learned at the Cape that Yves de Kerguelen had reported sighting land in latitude 48° south and in the longitude of Mauritius (he was some twenty degrees of longitude in error). Cook had searched for it on his first Antarctic sweep and missed it by about ten degrees. He now ran down the latitude of Kerguelen Island until he sighted it on 24 December 1776, in latitude 48½° south, longitude 68° 40' east. The following day they anchored in Christmas Harbour. Cook wrote:

I immediatly despatched Mr. Bligh the Master in a boat to Sound the Harbour, who on his return reported it to be safe and commodious...
and great plenty of fresh Water Seals, Penguins and other birds on the shore but not a stick of wood.

The island was so bare of vegetation that Cook called it "The Island of Desolation." On its barren hills grew neither wood nor shrubs, and fewer than twenty kinds of plants were found, although Anderson discovered another weapon against scurvy in a new kind of cabbage; this he named "Pringlea antiscorbutica" after Sir John Pringle, then President of the Royal Society. The sandy shores, however, abounded with penguins, fur seals, ducks and sea birds (Plate 1). The penguins were docile and easily clubbed; their flesh provided fresh meat and their oil was used for lamps. Later, thanks to the accuracy with which Cook charted his position, the seals would be exterminated by sealers.

On 30 December 1776, after six days of exploring Kerguelen's rocky coastline for a good harbour for future British voyages, Cook set sail across the bottom of the world towards Tasmania and New Zealand. On the way, the Resolution lost her topmast in a squall and another had to be fitted while the ship rolled violently as she ran before the gale.

At Tasmania, which they reached on 26 January 1777, they found wood for heating and cooking and the grass which they urgently needed for the cattle. Five marines who had saved their liquor ration got drunk on shore duty during the few days' stay and were severely punished. Edgar noted that they "made themselves so beastly Drunk, that they were put motionless in the Boat and when brought on board oblig'd to be hoisted into the Ship."

Abel Tasman had discovered Van Dieman's Land as early as 1642, without encountering any of the inhabitants. The next European to visit the island was Marc-Joseph Marion de Fresne who, in 1772, did meet some Tasmanians but was driven from the island when a misunderstanding arose, after which he was prevented from landing again. After cruising the coast for six days, Marion departed for New Zealand, and Van Dieman's Land was not visited again until Capt. Tobias Furneaux's equally brief stay in 1773. Furneaux saw many fires in the woods but met none of the natives.

Cook expected only a brief stay, like his predecessors. The morning after anchoring he sent some men ashore along with a marine guard to collect supplies. The marines were along as a precautionary measure, for Cook had also observed smoke issuing from the woods and, not knowing anything about the inhabitants, was unwilling to take risks. However, none of the Tasmanians made an appearance. By evening the provisions had been brought on board and Cook prepared to sail the following day. A windless morning foiled this plan, but the day brought some interesting experiences.

Omai was demonstrating his superior skills at fishing and the woodcutters were collecting more spars for the ships when a marine, who was cooking some food a little distance from his fellows, was suddenly confronted by a small group of men. According to
PLATE 1

A View of Christmas Harbour, in Kerguelen's Land [Kerguelen Island].
Samwell, "The man [was] struck with Terror & Astonishment at this unexpected Appearance [and] ran towards the Boat crying out 'here they are here they are!'" The others, instantly on their guard, advanced in a group towards the strangers who had materialized from the woods. For many of the crew, these were the first flesh-and-blood "Indians" they had ever met, and undoubtedly they were fearful, for apart from their superstitions they were aware of their proximity to the cannibals of New Zealand.

It must have been a sheepish contingent of Englishmen who found themselves advancing towards ten naked, unarmed Tasmanians who were approaching them "without the least mark of fear and with the greatest confidence imaginable." Within moments the tension relaxed and each scrutinized the other. "Upon the whole these Indians have little of that fierce or wild appearance common to many people in their situation," observed Anderson, "but on the contrary seem mild and cheerful without reserve or jealousy of strangers." When, the following day, their visitors included some equally naked women and children who displayed the same gentle dispositions, the general consensus was that here was a people who "have few, or no wants, & seemed perfectly Happy, if one might judge from their behaviour, for they frequently would burst out, into the most immoderate fits of Laughter & when one Laughed every one followed his Example Emedately."

On the other hand, the English noted with surprise that the Tasmanians showed far less curiosity about their visitors than was to be expected from a people who had never before seen Europeans. The instinctive reaction of astonishment and terror displayed by the marine was precisely the type of response that the eighteenth-century discoverer was used to eliciting from native peoples. The Polynesians, the "model primitives," were inquisitive about everything new and would blithely steal anything in sight. But the Tasmanians, like the Patagonians of Terra del Fuego whom Cook met on his First Voyage, were not easy to understand. Did they exemplify the Natural Man that eighteenth-century writers admired — unaffected and uninterested in material possessions? They certainly had little, not even ornaments, just stone tools; and they went naked. Or was their lack of curiosity or desire to possess English trinkets a sign of dullness of mind? The eighteenth-century English mind vacillated between admiration for the Noble Savage whose virtue was in being ingenuous, and disregarment for the slothful savage for displaying no ingenuity. Clerke decided that the Tasmanians were harmless, cheerful, simple people, but Anderson saw their primitiveness as a lack of progress and pronounced them deficient in "personal activity," indifferent, inattentive and even less inventive than the "half animated inhabitants of Terra del Fuego." Cook observed both their cheerfulness and indifference, but refrained from drawing conclusions.

The recording of such differing perspectives of the same experiences makes the journals of Cook's Third Voyage a prism-mirror for eighteenth-century atti-
tudes towards the “uncivilized nations.” In their journals Cook, King, Anderson, Clerke and Samwell all react in their own way, from the analytic approach of Anderson to the empiric deductions of Cook. Each was stimulated by different things at different times. When viewed together, the journals display a spectrum of beliefs, attitudes and facts that reflect European cultural values just as much as they present a picture of the new cultures they are writing about.

Webber’s engravings also reveal his individual perspective, as well as the conventions of eighteenth-century views of man and theories of art. Plate 3, “A Woman of Van Dieman’s Land,” is as complex and provocative a statement as that of any of the journalists. It may be viewed by an ethnographer as a visual record of a prototypical Tasmanian woman, for it depicts her features, the style of her haircut and how she carries her baby, but the portrait also projects an attitude which is Webber’s, although it reflects some of the words of the journalists. Webber has constructed the entire picture around the woman’s gesture of holding the hand of her peacefully sleeping baby. The significance of this pose is embedded in the eighteenth-century European view of the savage state where the natives were characterized by Jean-Jacques Rousseau and his followers as “Noble Savages” living in a southern Arcady and modelled after the early Greeks; others, especially Thomas Hobbs, saw them as “Ignoble, Depraved Savages” whose life was mean, nasty, short and brutish. Depraved Savages were believed to be destitute of any human feeling. They killed and ate their enemies and demonstrated no affection for their kinsmen, especially their children. But the Tasmanian women that the English met were observed “to carry their babies in a manner that show’d some degree of tenderness.” This observation set the affective tone of Webber’s portrait: he elevates the woman to the stature of a Noble Savage.

In keeping with neoclassical conventions, Webber maintains the unity of mood and expression by not inserting any contradictory details. In this portrait he has not permitted human imperfections to intrude upon an epic concept. His neoclassical vision has not been corrupted by, nor has he conveyed any of, the critical attitudes of some of his companions.

The profuse recording of opinions, observations and drawings was based on only a few hours of contact with the Tasmanians. This style of reportage, though typical of the “grand tour,” became, in the hands of some competent observers, the beginnings of anthropology. All the journalists made extensive notes on native manufactures, especially weapons. Anderson collected comprehensive word lists everywhere he went, and Cook detailed the natives’ political organizations. As geographers and hydrographers these men were unquestionably the most skillful map-makers of their century. As explorers they also made valiant attempts to map the ideas—religious, moral, political, economic—of the peoples they met. If their cultural explorations were not as skillful and as complete as their mapping of coastlines, nevertheless the journals from Cook’s three voyages constitute
primary source material for the study of the peoples of the Pacific. In the case of the Tasmanians, they are one of the few surviving early records of an extinct civilization. Tasmania became a penal colony in 1803, and in 1876 the last aboriginal Tasmanian died.

Cook left Tasmania on 30 January 1777 for New Zealand, where he intended to complete the stocking of the ships’ wood and water in preparation for the voyage to Tahiti. There was a second reason for this destination: a grim one. During the course of his exploration of Antarctica on his Second Voyage, Cook had stopped at New Zealand’s Queen Charlotte Sound and at nearby Dusky Sound four times. At one point, Cook and his sister ship, the Adventure, had been separated and Captain Furneaux had put into Dusky Sound. There, at Grass Cove, a small party of sailors from Furneaux’s ship fell victim to Maori cannibals. Furneaux did not investigate the massacre and so, as the ships were never reunited, Cook only learned of the event in Cape Town, en route home. “I shall make no reflections on this Melancholy Affair,” he had written in his journal at that time, “untill I hear more about it. I must however observe in favour of the New Zealanders that I have allways found them of a Brave, Noble, Open and benevolent disposition, but they are a people that will never put up with an insult if they have an opportunity to resent it.” Cook was sailing to Queen Charlotte Sound and the Maori

PLATE 2
A Man of Van Diemen’s Land [Tasmania].
people, whom he had come to know very well, to find out what had happened.

The ships put into Queen Charlotte Sound on 11 February 1777, and Cook soon discerned apprehension among the few Maoris who ventured out to the ships. Their long acquaintance with Cook was barely acknowledged as they waited to see what action he would take. They fully expected Cook to exact utu (retribution) in accordance with their concept of justice: an eye for an eye.

Cook assured them that his intentions were friendly, and discreetly postponed his enquiries for five days. He then journeyed to nearby Grass Cove in Dusky Sound, where the gruesome incident involving Furneaux's men had taken place. With Omai's help, he discovered what had happened:

I met with my old friend Pedro who was almost continually with me the last time I was in this Sound... [He] told us that while [Furneaux's] people were at victuals with several of the natives about them some of the latter stole or snatched from them some bread, & fish for which they were beat this being resented a quarrel ensued, in which two of the natives were shot dead, by the only two Muskets that were fired, for before they had time to discharge a third or load those that were fired they were all seized and knocked up the head. They pointed to the place of the Sun when this happened, and according to it it must have been late in the afternoon: they also
An Opossum of Van Diemen's Land [Tasmania]
shewed us the spot where the boats crew sat at Victuals, and the place where the boat laid which was about two hundred yards from them with Captain Furneaux’s black servant in her.

Cook had already decided against punitive measures, even though when this became evident one man named Kahura fearlessly boasted of his participation in the massacre. Cook’s reticence led to some criticism from his own crew, who were vexed by the insolence of a self-confessed murderer wandering freely aboard ship. Even Omai importuned Cook to act:

Why do you not kill him. You tell me if a man kills another in England he is hanged for it. This man has killed ten and yet you will not kill him. tho a great many of his countrymen desire it and it would be very good.

Cook remained firm in his decision not to play judge and executioner. He even came to admire Kahura’s pluck. But he did note that “if ever they made a Second attempt of that kind, they might rest assured of feeling the weight of my resentment.”

Only one of Webber’s New Zealand drawings was engraved for publication with the journals. It is a rather nondescript view of an island fortress that the officers visited one afternoon during their two-week stay (Plate 5). Many portraits and views from New Zealand had been published with the accounts of the first two voyages, which may explain why there was only one published for the Third Voyage. It is equally plausible that Webber was discouraged from making many drawings by the now unhappy associations which New Zealand called to mind.

The stay in New Zealand was of necessity a brief one. Uppermost in Cook’s thoughts were the orders from the Admiralty that instructed him to arrive in 65° north latitude by June. Already it was the end of February and he was several weeks behind schedule. He must reach Tahiti without delay, then set course for the coast of North America. However, an insufficient knowledge of the shifting trade winds between New Zealand and Tahiti foiled his plan, for although he had made this passage before, it had been in a different season. This time the winds failed him utterly. Languid, tedious days—more than thirty of them—found the cattle nearing starvation and the crew growing increasingly disgruntled.

At the end of March they sighted land. Cook had happened upon a new group of islands which were later to be named after him. The most southerly of these “Cook Islands,” Mangaia, afforded them no safe anchorage, so they could not get grass for the cattle or fresh food for the crew. The islanders thronged the shore and some swam out or came in canoes. However, only one man, named Mourua,
PLATE 5

The Inside of a Hippah [fortress], in New Zealand.
was bold enough to board, and Webber drew him wearing, as an ear ornament, a knife which Cook had presented to him (Plate 6). They had little more success at the small island of Atiu, or at Manuae, which they reached on 6 April. It was here Cook made his decision:

Being thus disappointed at all these islands, and the summer in the northern Hemisphere already too far advanced for me to think of doing anything there this year, it was therefore absolutely necessary to pursue such methods as were most likely to preserve the Cattle... and save the ships stores... I therefore determined to bear away for the Friendly Islands where I was sure of being supplied with everything I wanted.

It was a much happier group of men who set out for the Friendly or Tongan Islands. They had before them the prospect of several months of languid days, but this time in the company of the women of Polynesia. A brief stop at uninhabited Palmerston Island whetted their appetites for the fuller pleasures of the Friendly Islands, for here there were coconuts to be gathered, fish to be caught in abundance, and all kinds of birds. "Men of War and Tropic Birds, Boobies, Noddies and Egg Birds,.... stood to be stroak'd about the Bows of the Trees, a certain and indisputable proof of their perfect Ignorance of every
thing resembling a Human Form," wrote Clerke. Unfortunately, they were to lose their innocence—and their lives—to the voracious appetites of English seamen.
Chapter Six: Tonga or the Friendly Islands

Nomuka, the first stop in the Friendly Islands, was a South Sea paradise. David Samwell, the Surgeon's Mate, was caught in its spell and wrote that Nomuka "may be said to realize the poetical descriptions of the Elysian fields in ancient writers, it is certainly as beautiful a spot as Imagination can paint." Here were beautiful ponds and lagoons where the sailors could hunt or just walk along paths shaded from a sultry sun by bowering branches. The country was everywhere "exceedingly well cultivated & [had] the appearance of a beautiful Garden," wrote Samwell. Nature gave abundantly, and man was enabled to live "in the State most agreeable to his Nature undisturbed by those Passions, those Vultures of the Mind, that are found to distract & torment him in artificial Society."

Cook sent the emaciated cattle and the observatory tents ashore accompanied by a guard of marines because during his previous visit in 1774, when the Nomukans had laid eyes on Europeans for the first time, not only had they accosted his men and relieved them of their muskets and tools but also an old lady had severely admonished Cook for demanding the return of the stolen goods. This same woman had offered Cook her daughter as a concubine, and his refusal also earned him a tongue-lashing. "What sort of man are you thus to refuse the embraces of so fine a young Woman," she admonished. The young woman's beauty he could withstand, Cook had confessed, "but the abuse of the old Woman I could not and therefore hastened into the Boat."

On arrival at Nomuka this time, Captain Cook was greeted with generous gifts from the chiefs (eiki) of the island. Immediately a marketplace was set up where coconuts, pigs, breadfruit, yams and plantains were traded for glass beads, cloth and items made of iron (Plate 7). People from nearby islands arrived in canoes laden with food for trade, and aboard ship a sumptuous feast soon obliterated the memory of the many lean weeks without fresh food.

But not everything changed hands by the orderly means of the marketplace. As Williamson tells us, "The natives soon gave us a specimen of their happy genius in the art of pilfering." The Tongans made away with whatever took their fancy, which was just about everything from turkeys to clothing to Captain Clerke's cats. Cook and Clerke were hard pressed to invent equally ingenious methods of punishment and dissuasion. Clerke finally discovered that flogging the culprit, shaving one half of his head and unceremoniously depositing him overboard was as good a deterrent as any, but still the thefts persisted.

The diarists, though, acquitted the Friendly Islanders of any taint of vice which their thieving implied, and transformed the thievery into a positive virtue, for the English thought that the Tongans were unlike their suspiciously "Hungry Acquaintances," the New Zealanders, or the harmless, unsophisticated Tasmanians, and were, to use Anderson's words, "in every respect almost as perfectly civiliz'd as it is possible for mankind to be. They seem to have been long at their ultimatum...." Consequently, any moral
PLATE 7

A View at Anamooka [Nomuka, Tonga].


qualms the English might have had were to be suppressed to fit this considered opinion. Thievery came to be seen as an index of the Tongans' lively curiosity rather than as the mark of the indolence and avarice of a savage mind.

The diarists' high opinion of the Tongans flowed from the unfailing cordiality and hospitality of their hosts, who not only provided a fine cuisine but also entertained them day and night with sports and musical performances, which everyone agreed "would have met with universal applause on a European Theatre." All around them they observed strong, active people who were always mild and friendly; who seemed entirely free from all the "base passions" such as greed, envy and lust, and who were exceptionally graceful and well proportioned. In fact, there were "hundreds of truly European faces & many genuine Roman noses amongst them." In their persons and their houses they were decent and clean, and everywhere there was evidence of an industrious people. They were cultivators, not hunters, and they concentrated on the civilized arts of poetry, dance and music with an aesthetic intensity that matched the intelligent skills which they used to bring the natural world under their control. Their qualities "do honour to the human mind," acclaimed King, "[and] prove abundantly that these people are far remov'd from a savage state."

Only one caviller opposed these eulogies and this, surprisingly, was Samwell, the parson's son whose love of the "nubile nymphs" so belied his heritage. All of the diarists witnessed some "Scenes of Barbarity," but most glossed over them for reasons which will shortly become clear; Samwell, the exception, recorded that the innocent common people were entirely at the mercy of powerful chiefs who often showed a wanton disregard for their subjects' property and persons. Samwell did not doubt that the common people were virtuous and deserved the praise his fellow officers lavished on them, but "barbarous" was his word for any society which exalted a man "to such an unnatural Pitch of greatness" that laws ceased to govern his behaviour towards his subjects.

Cook was not blind to the impunity with which some chiefs wielded power, but he tended to look away and to focus instead on trying to understand the Tongan system of government. On all three voyages, Cook carried with him the Earl of Morton's *Hints offered to the consideration of Captain Cooke . . . on what to make note of when encountering new nations. Religion, morals, order, government, distinctions of power, police and tokens for commerce were prominent subjects for inquiry. Cook's interest in order and government was as much personal as it was professional, and his curiosity to understand the distribution of power in Tonga emerged as a keen preoccupation. "It was my interest as well as inclination to pay my Court to . . . great men," Cook declared, and in Tonga he was not disappointed in finding more than one pretender to the title of "King of all the Friendly Isles." And since he perceived the
Friendly Islands to be fundamentally a "peaceful nation," free both from wars between the islands and petty personal disputes between families, Cook took it upon himself to spend the leisurely weeks in Tonga gathering as much information about Tongan society as he could. In fact both Cook and Anderson, with Omai's assistance as translator, produced an anthropological and scientific account of Tongan society that was equal in scope and perceptivity to the close observations of Tahiti that Joseph Banks made on Cook's First Voyage.

The first person to introduce himself as "King of all the Friendly Isles" was a man named Finau, who arrived when the ships were anchored at Nomuka. According to Burney:

Finow, a tall handsome man, appeared to be about 25 years of age; had much fire and vivacity with a degree of wildness in his countenance that well tallied with our idea of an Indian Warrior. Add to this he was one of the most active men I have ever seen.

Cook and Finau entertained one another with gifts and feasts that befitted their high positions. Within two weeks, however, the island's food supply was exhausted, and Finau invited Cook to come to Ha'apai, a group of islands to the northeast.

Finau guided the Resolution and the Discovery around the treacherous coral reefs which form a submerged linkage between the islands of the Ha'apai group. They anchored off the lovely island of Lifuka and were "immediately surrounded by a multitude of Canoes." Finau took full charge, escorted Cook before a crowd gathered on shore and delivered a harangue about which Cook remarked:

The purport of this speach as I learnt from Omai, was that all the people both young and old were to look upon me as a friend who was come to remain with them a few days, and that they were not to steal or molest me in any thing, that they were to bring hogs, fowls, fruit & c. to the ships where they would receive in exchange such and such things.

Here, indeed, was a man of consequence. People listened to him in respectful silence, and Omai was convinced of his regal status. Finau's reassurances and open, friendly manner also convinced Cook of the appropriateness of the name "The Friendly Isles" which he had conferred on the islands on his last voyage. The Ha'apaiaians were indeed friendly, and the days at Lifuka were given over to the pleasures of music, sport and dancing.

Finau's hospitalities began the very next day. Early in the morning he again conducted Cook before a large crowd gathered in an open space.

I had not sit long before near a hundred people came laden with Yams, Bread fruit, Plantain
Cocoanuts and Sugar Cane which were laid in two heaps or piles on our left. . . . Soon came a number of others from the right, laden with the same kind of articles which were laid in two piles on our right; to these were tied two pigs and six fowls, and to those on the left six pigs and two turtle. . . . As soon as every thing was laid in order and to shew to the most advantage, those who had brought in the things joined the Multitude who formed a large circle around the whole.

The crowd began to cheer and sing as wrestling, stick combat and boxing contestants entered the ring (Plate 8). The English admired the Tongan physique and were impressed with the wrestlers (Plate 9) for their “prodigious exertion of strength” and their musculature “of such a size as would serve for an artist to draw from a living Hercules,” which is precisely what Webber did. But the most amazing feature of the sports was the ordered and civilized manner in which they were conducted. The contests were entered into with such good humour that the victor did not crow nor the vanquished suffer shame.

The Ha’apaians showed such skill and agility in martial arts that some of Cook’s men decided to enter the contests, but they were hopelessly defeated by the Tongans at wrestling, and in the boxing matches not one escaped being knocked down.

The seamen not only took a thorough drubbing but also were shocked when into the circle formed by hundreds of cheering and laughing Tongans stepped “a couple of lusty wenches who without the least ceremony fell to boxing, and with as much art as the men.” But English protests fell on deaf Tongan ears, so one gentlemen, “perhaps smitten got up and interfered which produced Loud Shouts of Applause as well as much mirth among the Spectators.”

When the sports were over, Finau formally presented Cook with one of the piles of food brought during the early morning procession. The other pile he gave to Omai. This spectacular gift filled four boats and “far exceeded any present I had ever before received from an Indian Prince.” Cook could not hope to make a sufficient return and, indeed, when he attempted to do so, Finau only plied him with further gifts. His prestige, both in the eyes of Cook and the Ha’apaians, was much enhanced by these displays so graciously received by the English guests.

Two days later, on 20 May, the entire day was taken up with grand entertainments. Cook, at Finau’s request, put the marines through their paces. Carrying a British flag on a long staff, they marched before an assembled crowd of more than two thousand. Finau was particularly keen to see what muskets were capable of and seemed satisfied at their effectiveness when a canoe was pierced clear through. The Tongans then proceeded to perform their now famous paddle dance, the precision and beauty of which left the marines looking like gawky schoolboys. The dance was accompanied by music and singing in perfect harmony. Cook tells us that the performance “so far
PLATE 8

The Reception of Captain Cook in Hapae [Tonga].
exceeded anything we had done to amuse them that they seemed to pique themselves in the superiority they had over us.”

The English determined to assert the superiority of their civilization by staging a display of fireworks, for which an enormous crowd had assembled by evening. Samwell wrote:

They were all waiting with eager Expectation when about 8 o’Clock the first Piece, a Water Rocket, was played off; it is not possible to convey by words an adequate Idea of the Astonishment & Surprize they expressed at seeing fire burn in the Sea, & now & then even diving under water, then rising & shining with redoubled Lustre & at last going off with a sudden & unexpected Explosion... when the Baloons went off with a horrid Explosion close to their Ears it was hard to say whether their Terror or Surprize was greater... their applause and admiration were expressed by a continual Roar during the whole Exhibition... In short every thing appeared to them like Enchantment.

English magic had its intended effect.

The evening concluded with a po me’e or evening of dancing. Tongan dancing utterly enchanted the English. The journalists wrote long complicated descriptions of it, and Webber tried to capture its aesthetic and sensual charm (Plates 10, 11). But behind this particular po me’e lay a treacherous conspiracy.
Over the previous few days, the high chiefs of Ha'apai had been hatching a plan to surprise Cook and his men, kill them and take the ships' booty. Finau joined the conspiracy and decreed that the best time would be during the morning when Cook's men were preoccupied with the entertainments. Some of the lesser chiefs, however, felt that the cover of night would be essential. Finau was inflamed by this questioning of his authority and cancelled the plan. His vanity saved Cook his life, although Cook never knew it. The story was recorded by William Mariner, an Englishman whose life was spared after a successful ambush of his ship, *Port au Prince*, in this same harbour of Lifuka in 1806.

But at the *po me'e* that night the plotting and quarrelling were artfully concealed. The evening was illumined by burning palm leaves and scented with fragrant oils burning like candles on coconut leaves. "The greatest number of beautiful girls that we had yet seen" thronged the beach, wrote Samwell. Bamboo sticks pounded a slow, rhythmic beat and soft voices lifted in a plaintive melody.

Wearing only a soft tapa-cloth skirt, the women danced first, their long, delicate fingers providing much of the expressive movement of the dance (Plate 11). The men danced after them, displaying more vigorous, though still agile and graceful, movements (Plate 10). Singing and recitation accompanied both performances. and Anderson expressed much regret in not being able to describe the language "which would doubtless afford much information as to the genius and customs of these people." There was no doubt in his mind that the dance was designed to elevate the nobler sentiments. Again, he stressed the cultivated virtues of these Noble Savages.

A week of lazy, balmy days on Lifuka was suddenly enlivened with the arrival at the *Resolution* of a very formidable character. Like Finau, he claimed to be "King of all the Friendly Isles." We had reason to doubt this," said Cook, "but [the people] stood to it and now for the first time told us that Feenough [Finau] was not the King." Omai was alone in insisting that Finau was the greater of the two chiefs.

By his behaviour and the respect accorded him by the people, Cook gradually deduced that this man, who was called Fatafehi Paulaho, was indeed the higher ranking chief. This judgement was confirmed when Finau, conspicuously absent upon the arrival of Paulaho, made deep obeisance before this chief and avoided eating in his presence. Finau was observing tabu-respect, the customary submissiveness of a man of lower rank. Paulaho was, in fact, the Tu'i Tonga, the highest ranking man in all of Tonga. He was said to be descended from the great creator god, Tangaloa, who fished the Tongan Islands from the sea and fathered the first Tu'i Tonga.

Omai was crushed. For three weeks he had cultivated Finau's friendship with gifts from his precious cache brought from England, in the end only to lose face. As it turned out, Finau was nevertheless a man of some consequence, being of the Tu'i Kanokupolu, the chiefly lineage which exercised secular power
PLATE 10

A Night Dance by Men, in Hapae [Tonga].
PLATE II

A Night Dance by Women, in Hapaee [Tonga].
whereas the Tu'i Tonga's lineage possessed religious power. Cook referred to Finau as Paulaho's "generallissimo."

In contrast to Finau's leanness and dynamism, Paulaho was the "most corporeal plump fellow we had met with." (Webber's engraving of Paulaho, Plate 12, shows none of his mass.) The journalists preferred Finau's noble, manly physique to the shapeless bulk of the "Lord of All," whom they portrayed as hedonistic and indolent; but Paulaho nonplussed them by asking some very shrewd questions. According to King,

he now ask'd our business there, where we came from, & where we were going, questions which had never been put to us before; to satisfy him a map was produced & explained to him, & by his explaining it again to his followers, he shew'd that he was capable of receiving & comprehending subjects which we considered above their faculties in their present state.

Paulaho now took full command of the English visitors. He invited Cook to accompany him to the great island of Tongatapu, the seat of his power.

On 10 June 1777 the Resolution and the Discovery anchored in Nuku'alofa Harbour, Tongatapu. Here began a peaceful, month-long holiday made luxurious by the gracious attentions of King Paulaho and his kinsmen. Aristocratic ceremony marked the daily encounters between the English officers and the
Tongan royal family. Captain Cook was “quite charmed with the decorum that was observed,” confessing that “I had no where seen the like, no not even amongst more civilized nations.” However, some ceremonies, such as that of the Kava Ring, were not to his liking (Plate 13). It was not so much that Cook did not enjoy kava, for the brew created a pleasant languor, but the manner of preparing it quite quenched whatever thirst he had. Because the hard, gnarly kava root had to be softened, the King’s attendants first chewed it before immersing it in water to squeeze out the juice. Cook managed to drink an occasional ceremonial cup, but not with as much relish as Paulaho drank the wine and brandy Cook gave him when he dined aboard the Resolution.

Evenings on Tongatapu were devoted to singing and dancing. Once Cook visited the sacred royal burial ground (Plate 14), but he usually occupied his days with walking into the countryside and watching the people, noting what they cultivated, what they manufactured, and the methods they used. His observations were detailed and interesting.

Perhaps Cook’s most valuable contribution to what later anthropologists might call “Tongan ethnography” was his account of the Inasi Ceremony (Plate 15). “Inasi” means “share,” and this particular Inasi witnessed by Cook seems to have been in honour of King Paulaho’s son, who was to be given a “share” of his father’s authority.

The Inasi was considered so sacred that it was hedged with tabus. Only high ranking men and women could participate, and Cook was only allowed to watch it from behind a bamboo curtain. Not a man to be commanded, Cook kept stealing away to get a better view. People stopped him, pressing him to return to his appointed spot, which he did at first, not being sure of the consequences of breaking tabu. At the moment when Paulaho and his son were to eat together, to share food and symbolically share the father’s power, all were instructed to sit with their backs turned and eyes downcast “as demure as Maids.” “Neither this commandment nor the remembrance of Lot’s wife discouraged me from facing about,” Cook confessed, but it was to no avail, for too many people stood in his way.

As the ceremonies resumed, Cook was determined to see them in full. He wrote:

I resolved to peep no longer from behind the Curtin but to make one of the number in the Ceremony if possible; with this View I stole out of the Plantation and walked towards the Morai; I was several times applied to go back by people who were passing to and fro, but I paid no regard to them and they suffered me to pass on. When I got to the Morai, I found a number of men seated on one side... When I got into the midst of the first Company I was desired to sit down which I accordingly did... I was several times desired to go away, and at last when they found that I would not stir, they, after some seeming consultation, desired I would bare my
PLATE 13

Poulaho [Paulaho], King of the Friendly Islands, Drinking Kava.
PLATE 14

A Flatooka, or Morai [sacred burial ground], in Tongataboo [Tongatapu].
shoulders as they were, with this I complied, after which they were no longer uneasy at my presence.

Naked to the waist and hair streaming, Captain Cook participated in the Inasi. However, in doing so he violated proprieties set down by his own civilization. His fellow officers were appalled; as Williamson commented:

We who were on ye outside were not a little surprised at seeing Capt'n Cook in ye procession of the Chiefs, wt his hair hanging loose & his body naked down to ye waist, or with his hair tyed; I do not pretend to dispute the propriety of Capt'n Cook's conduct, but I cannot help thinking he rather let himself down.

The long ceremony finally drew to a close and Cook made preparations to leave Tongatapu. He was tempted to stay longer to observe a funeral ceremony, but it was to last five days and the tides and winds were favourable and beckoning him to continue his planned journey to Tahiti. His inquiries into Tongan affairs of state had been remarkably thorough. Although his genealogical investigation uncovered some of the complex relations between people who held power, he was unable to fathom the subtler Tongan distinctions between political and religious ranking which accounted both for Finau's authority to take Paulaho's life if he should prove despotic and for the fact that Paulaho's sister, the Tamaha, and her children all ranked higher than Paulaho himself. Cook's conclusion on the entire matter was that Paulaho was a benevolent, wise ruler and that the friendly and basically happy disposition of his people proved that his government was not despotic.

Cook made Paulaho a present of horses, cows and goats in the expectation that this sensible man would care for them and their progeny. On 10 July 1777 the ships at last set sail for Tahiti.

But one last stop was to be made among the Friendly Islands, this one at Eua where Cook believed he could collect fresh water. Just as Samwell fell in love with Nomuka, Edgar was caught in the spell of Eua:

This little Island may be stiled the Montpelier of the Friendly Isles—the Land is higher than any of the others, and affords some of the most Romantick & beautiful Valleys in the World.

Even Cook was charmed by its pastoral beauty. He climbed the island's highest hill to look over "medows . . . adorned with rufts of trees and here and there plantations." The view inspired an unusually proprietary thought, and he wrote, "I could not help flattering myself with the idea that some future Navigator may from the very same station behold these Medows stocked with Cattle, the English have planted on this island."
PLATE 15

The Natche [Inasi], a Ceremony in Honour of the King's Son, in Tongataboo [Tongatapu].
John Webber must have been similarly entranced. His portrait of “A Woman of Eaoo” (Plate 16) displays a romantic vision equal to the eighteenth-century Italian neoclassical masters’. The woman’s gentle beauty stands as a symbol of their peaceful sojourn in the Friendly Islands.

PLATE 16

A Woman of Eaoo [Eua].
By the time of Captain Cook's Third Voyage, Tahiti had already captured the romantic imagination of Europe. Or perhaps it is more accurate to say that the eighteenth-century European imagination had captured Tahiti in its romanticizing. The French explorer Louis de Bougainville, writing of Tahiti in 1768, said that in Tahiti “one would think himself in the Elysian fields.” The place was so idyllic, confided Bougainville, that “I thought I was transported into the Garden of Eden . . . We found companies of men and women sitting under the shade of their fruit trees [and] everywhere we found hospitality, ease, innocent joy, and every appearance of happiness amongst them.” Joseph Banks, travelling with Cook on his First Voyage, wrote in 1773 that the men and women of Tahiti were so exquisitely formed that they “defy the imitation of the chisel of a Phidias . . .,” while their country “was the truest picture of an Arcadia of which we were going to be kings that the imagination can form” (author's italics). Such romantic language is an example of metaphorical thinking, a type of imaginative reasoning which J.C. Beaglehole has described as “preposterous sublimity” or “nonsense on stilts.” In these quotes from Bougainville and Banks, the Christian vision of Paradise before the Fall has been fused with an eighteenth-century cultural classicism that harkened back to the ancient Greeks for a model of the simple, pure life. This romantic attitude was a reaction to the Industrial Revolution in England, a longing to return to the simple, virtuous country life. Although it did not go unchallenged, this idyll of life on a South Sea island amongst Noble Savages was a compelling eighteenth-century fantasy with religious overtones. Its themes were beauty, uncorrupted human nature and childlike innocence.

Though not a man given to idealizing the Noble Savage, Captain Cook was, nevertheless, a man of his time. Echoing the panegyrics of Bougainville and Banks, Cook had written in his First Voyage journal that “in the article of food these people may almost be said to be exempt from the curse of our fore fathers; scarcely can it be said that they earn their bread with the sweat of their brow, benevolent nature has not only supply'd them with necessarys but with abundance of superfluities.” When he was leaving the Society Islands in 1775 during his Second Voyage, Cook expressed deep regret that he would never again see these beautiful islands or meet his many Tahitian friends. He had become attached to a young Tahitian named Odiddy and wanted to take him back to England, but in 1775 there was no prospect of his making a third voyage, so with no hope of returning Odiddy to his native land, he had decided against the idea. To Cook, Odiddy was “a youth of good parts, and like most of his countrymen, of a Docile, Gentle and humane disposition.”

The Third Voyage journal accounts of Tahiti disappoint the expectant reader who has enjoyed Banks's *Endeavour* journal and Forster's Second Voyage Observations. The journalists present mere adumbrations of this fabled land, all giving the same reason
for not providing extensive comments. To quote King: “I shall not pretend to give any particular description of what is in this Island, as it has been so often visit’d all that has already been done & by those who have had leisure to attend to these things.” So there is not much critical comment during this Tahitian interlude and, with a few noteworthy exceptions, the journalists wrote about it as though it were a well known land.

Cook’s visit to Tahiti in 1777 had the specific purpose of repatriating Omai. That he should be performing this task at King George III’s behest was ironic indeed, for Cook’s opinion of Omai was in sharp contrast to his affection for Odiddy. Omai “is . . . a downright blackguard,” Cook wrote in 1775. But upper-class English society did not agree, and Omai had been taken in hand by Joseph Banks, pampered and lionized. After he left London, a pantomime was written about him that brought audiences flocking to see it, and a Royal Command performance had been given.

Cook’s opinion of Omai was modified, but not significantly altered, by this fame. Omai sometimes amused Cook, though more often he proved annoying. He adopted haughty airs, was foolish with his wealth, had no political astuteness, and exhibited the flamboyance of a peacock. In his journal, Cook constantly monitored Omai’s behaviour, but a touch of Cook’s dry humour often lightened his most exasperated moments with Omai, as in the following scene:

Omai and I prepared to pay [the] young cheif a formal Vesit. On this occasion, Omai, assisted by some of his friends, dressed himself not in English dress, nor in Otaheiti, nor in Tongatabu nor in the dress of any country upon earth, but in a strange medly of all he was possess’d of.

Omai received a great deal of attention in the journals. In contrast to the journalists’ lack of interest in writing about Tahitian society, there developed an interest in individual characters. Omai shared the spotlight with an “Unseen Presence” at Vaotepeha Bay, a beautiful Raiatean “princess” named Poetua and a very well defined personality at Matavai Bay, a chief called Tu.

An atmosphere of holiday anticipation spread through the Resolution and the Discovery during the early morning of 12 August 1777 as they came in sight of “Otaheiti.” Samwell remarked:

Omai sat all day on the forecastle viewing his Native Shores with Tears in his Eyes. Our two New Zealand Friends were not backward in testifying their Joy at seeing the Promised Land of which they had heard so much from Omai & others in the Ship.

Cook made his first stop at Vaitepeha Bay, intending to obtain basic supplies there before settling in at Matavai Bay, his preferred anchorage. There was a great stir of excitement on that first day when the
Tahitians discovered that the English had red feathers to trade. Red feathers from the blue-crowned lory (*Vina australis*) were prestige possessions, being even more highly prized than iron. They were essential to all religious rites (Plate 17) and were associated symbolically with the high chiefs and the gods. The red-plumed lory was not native to Tahiti, and the English had wisely stocked up on the feathers in Tonga, where they were not so highly valued. (Even the Tongans had to get the feathers from Fiji.) Cook observed on that first day that “not more feathers than might be got from a Tom tit would purchase a hog of 40 or 50 pound weight.” However, as red feathers glutted the market, prices plummeted and by the end of the day, their value had decreased to a fifth.

Within hours of their arrival at Vaitepeha Bay, Tahiti, Cook learned that a number of important changes had occurred there. The young high chief he had met in 1775 had died and his ten-year-old brother was now the most powerful chief. But what most captured his attention was a report that two Spanish ships from Lima, Peru, had come to Vaitepeha since his last visit and that four Spanish missionaries had lived there for approximately fifteen months before returning to Lima. From the Tahitians, Cook gathered that the Spanish had accomplished two things: they had convinced the Tahitians of their superiority over the English, and they had gained not only their friendship but also their veneration. The missionary house, complete with iron nails, furnishings and discarded clothing, stood unmolested like a reliquary. The missionaries had maligned the English in a manner “absolutely unbecoming the dignity of any nation,” wrote Anderson. Clerke, overflowing with sarcasm, denounced them for “their deportment [which] was quite in the Spanish Style, brim full of pomp and State.” Clerke imagined a puffed-up “Signior” responding to a Tahitian’s mention of England: “‘Oh! I recollect the place you mean; there was a damn’d little, dirty, piratical State call’d England, but . . . our omnipotent King . . . destroy’d the Country, & ras’d the rascally breed from off the Face of the Earth. . . .”

The status of the English was, however, quite easily restored with gifts of tufts of red feathers to important chiefs (the Spanish did not have feathers) and by a display of fireworks, another exclusively English feat. To emphasize their position further, Cook performed a small act of desecration. In front of the missionary house stood a cross which the Spanish had engraved with their king’s name and the date, 1774. To this Cook added his own inscription: “Georgius tertius Rex Anni 1767, 69, 73, 74 & 77.”

Heavy rain during the first few days at Vaitepeha did not stop Omai from squandering his wealth on rapacious relatives, but it prevented Cook from going to investigate a Roman Catholic chapel which some of his men reported having seen from a distance. When he did go, Cook discovered that it was a *fata tupapou*, a “ghosthouse” in which was kept the embalmed body of the young chief who had died while the Spanish missionaries had been at Vaitepeha (Plate
18). Describing the *fata tupapau*, Cook said it was “uncommonly neat...covered and hung round with different Coloured cloth and Mats so as to have a pretty effect; there was one piece of scarlet broad Cloth of 4 or 5 Yards in length which had been given them by the Spaniards. This cloth and a few Tassels of feathers which our gentlemen took for silk, made them believe it was a Chappel, for whatever else was wanting their imagination supplied.”

With a pressing invitation from King Tu to visit him in Matavai Bay, Cook took the ships to his old anchorage there, arriving on 24 August 1777. Cook had known Tu from earlier voyages and had not been impressed by him, but Tu’s “Talents as a King” seemed to improve over the years and, after the Second Voyage, Cook was moved to judge him as “a Man of good parts, [who] had indeed some judicious, sensible men about him who I believe have a great share in the Government.”

Although Cook called him “King” Tu, he was only one of three high chiefs in the Matavai Bay area in Tahiti. He was, in fact, a rather timorous character, given to importuning the English for military assistance against his enemies of the neighbouring island of Eimeo, or Moorea as it is called today. Ironically, because of the strategic position of Matavai Bay as the best anchorage in Tahiti for European trade vessels, Tu, with his astute solicitousness, gained a monopoly over the trade market. This gave him the power to defeat all his enemies and to declare himself King of Tahiti. This he accomplished in 1790, just thirteen years after Cook’s last visit. Calling himself Pomare I, Tu consolidated his reign in 1801 by negotiating a pork trade with Australia, plump Tahitian hogs being exchanged for sturdy English muskets.

Within forty-eight hours of Cook’s arrival at Matavai, his old friends had come with gifts. Omai, for a change, was “dress’d in his very best suit of clothes and conducted himself with a great deal of respect and Modesty” when Cook introduced him to King Tu “and the whole royal family.” Cook had prepared a fine gift for Tu: “I gave him a Suit of fine linnen a gold laced hat, some tools and what was of more value than all the others, a large piece of red feathers and one of the Friendly islands bonnets” (Plate 12).

Odiddy, Cook’s “Constant Companion” on the Second Voyage, also came, but Cook does no more than mention the fact of his visit in his journal. A puzzling response, until Samwell gives a clue:

Oididee the young fellow who had accompanied Capt’n Cook last Voyage in his Expedition to the s° w and New Zealand, came to see us immediately on our arrival here & was much pleased with meeting with Capt’n Cook & some of his old Shipmates again. We had been told by those who had been in the Resolution last Voyage that he was a fine sensible young fellow, much superior to Omai in every respect, which made it some disappointment to us to find him one of the most stupid Fellows on the Island, with a clumsy awkward Person and a remarkable heavy
look; ... he frequently came on board to see us along with his Wife & was almost constantly drunk with Kava.

Here was a man whose qualities were known all over Europe because of the widely read translations of Cook's journals of the Second Voyage. Bayly also characterized Odiddy as “the most silly fellow” and King “the most stupid foolish Youth I ever say.” Cook's silence was perhaps the most severe judgement.

In the ensuing few days, Tu's character also came under close scrutiny. King felt “the Conduct of the King & all his family was ... very disgusting from their meanness in begging red feathers all around the Ship.” Bayly was sure that a man he almost nabbed sneaking about in the observatory tent was Tu, because the would-be thief had hold of the small box Bayly kept his red feathers in and had shown only to Tu. Samwell reported that Tu, fearing reprisal from Captain Cook for a theft committed by one of his followers, “hid himself among the Bushes & would not be seen by him [Cook], till ... Cook ... went to him and told him he had nothing to fear.” Cook noted that Tu stationed some of his men near the ships, where each morning they collected tribute from the women as they left their generous paramours.

Cook was drawn into Tu's politics almost immediately. A long-standing feud with the neighbouring island of Moorea suddenly flared up again shortly after the English arrived, and Tu's people wanted war. Tu himself vacillated, and Cook refused to assist, but the general feeling ran high in favour of retaliation. The necessary preparations were begun. The most important of these was the offering of a human sacrifice to the war god, Oro. Tu's powerful general, Towha, produced a suitable victim, an accused man from the lowest class of people.

Here was Cook's chance to witness and provide an authentic account of “this extraordinary and barbarous custom,” for, as Anderson tells us, “the circumstances of these people sometimes offering human sacrifices is mentioned by M¹ Bougainville from the Authority of the native he carried from the Island, but as these are cases often not credited unless the relater has ocular proof this was thought a proper opportunity to confirm it.” And there was nothing more calculated to horrify (but at the same time titillate) the civilized mind than the stories of New World human sacrifices that had circulated since the sixteenth century. Cook's account of the sacrifice was as detailed and meticulous as his description of the Inasi ceremony at Tongatapu, and Webber’s drawing (Plate 17) became one of the classics of the age. Although it depicts a terrible act, “Webber's Savages” stand beside Cook tall, virile and possessing all the attributes of noble, natural man. The landscape setting diminishes the horror of the battered corpse lying tied to a pole in the centre of the engraving. A row of grinning skulls, which could have lent a macabre feeling, instead merges into the background, muted behind a shaft of light that rests dramatically on Cook's face. In fact, the whole movement of the
PLATE 17

A Human Sacrifice, in a Morai, in Otaheite [Tahiti].
engraving is towards Cook.

The two-day ceremony of the human sacrifice took place on 1 and 2 September 1777 at King Tu's marae, a sacred area reserved as both a burial ground and a place for such ceremonies. Cook, Anderson and Webber silently watched the long rituals. It was a "horrid practise . . . detrimental to that right of self-preservation which everyone must be suppos'd to possess at his birth," wrote Anderson, though "the Custom would perhaps be less reprehensible upon the whole did it serve to impress any awe for the Divinity or reverence for religion upon the multitude." Anderson concluded that such sacrifices persisted because of the "grossest ignorance and superstition."

And when Tu's general, the old warrior Towha, asked Cook how he liked the ceremony, Cook did not mince words:

As soon as [the ceremony] was over we made no scruple in giving our sentiments very freely upon it and, of course, condemned it. I told the Chief that this Sacrifice was so far from pleasing the Eatua [god] as they intended that he would be angry with them for it and that they would not succeed. Omai was our spokesman and entered into our arguments with so much Spirit that he put the Chief out of all manner of patience, especially when he was told that if he a Chief in England had put a Man to death as he had done this, he would be hanged for it; on this he balled out "Maena maeno" (Vile vile) and would not hear another word; so that we left him with as great a contempt of our customs as we could possibly have of theirs.

The English argued the merits of impartial justice, forgetting for the moment that even in England at that time it was rarely granted to the common man. To the Tahitian, justice was always partial, and it was inconceivable that a chief would ever be condemned to death. But considering that such a ceremony should have been unthinkable in this Garden of Eden, it is remarkable how little outrage it generated. Samwell, who found fault with the Tongan paradise, made no entries in his journal from 29 August to 20 September 1777. He resumed his commentary with the statement, "Since the beginning of this month no remarkable Transactions have occurred. . . ." His earnest attentions were devoted to "the Girls."

The war party did not leave immediately after the sacrifice, for Tu still was not for war. Ten days later another human was sacrificed, though this time Cook was not present at the ceremony. Finally, on 17 September, the war fleet, led by Tu's general, Towha, set out for Moorea. Although Towha repeatedly requested reinforcements, Tu sent none. Within five days, with neither side gaining a clear victory, Towha had to negotiate an unsatisfactory peace treaty.

Towha returned in a rage. "The old Admiral was irritated to a Degree of Madness, he Abused [Tu] Every where," reported one of the Discovery's crew.
The alliance between Towha, a passionate man of action, and Tu, an ambitious man of political cunning, broke down five years later and destroyed one of Cook’s plans. Captain Bligh learned of the event in 1788 and recorded it in the log of the *Bounty*:

[Tu] said that...the Imeo [Moorea] People joined with Tettowah, (the noted old Admiral called by Captain Cook Towah) and made a descent at Oparre [near Matavai Bay] that after some resistance by which many men were killed, he and all his People fled to the Mountains. The People of Imeo and those...under Tettowah now being masters of all their property, destroyed everything they could get hold of, among which were the Cattle, Sheep, Ducks, Geese, Turkeys and Peacocks left by Captain Cook in 1777. The Cows had eight Calves, The Ewes had ten Young ones... Thus all our fond hopes, that the trouble Captain Cook had taken to introduce so many valuable things among them, would by me have been found to be productive of every good, are entirely blasted.

While Tu and Towha quarrelled, Cook’s company amused themselves in much the same way as they had in Tonga. The days were leisurely and relations between the sexes were easy. They made excursions into the countryside, gorged themselves on Tahitian food, and were entertained day and night.

One evening Odiddy provided Cook with a rich feast of pork, fish and Cook’s favourite pudding, *poe*, which he tells us was made from ground-up fruit, nuts, and taro mixed with coconut milk.

We had but just dined when Otoo [Tu] came and asked me if my belly was full and on my answering in the affirmative, said “than come along with me.” I accordingly went with him to his Fathers where they were dressing two girls in a prodigious quantity of fine cloth in a manner rather curious... This cloth, together with a quantity of food, was presented to Cook as a gift from Tu’s father. Drawing a well composed portrait that included this grotesque costume (Plate 19) must have presented Webber with a difficult aesthetic problem. He (or perhaps Bartolozzi, the engraver) solved it by posing the woman’s arms in such a way as to draw attention to her face with its self-conscious, almost demure expression: an antipodean Gioconda.

Another evening was given over to an *arioi* dance-drama performed by Tu’s sisters (Plates 20, 21). The *arioi* were a religious sect whose social function included both impromptu and formal ceremonial entertaining. They were skilled actors, pantomimists and dancers. For Cook, who thought that “the Mysteries of most Religions are very dark and not easily understud even by those who profess them,” the *arioi* were utterly baffling. He was shocked by the “licentious” nature of some of their performances, and the
PLATE 18

The Body of Tee, a Chief, as Preserved after Death in Otaheiti [Tahiti].
nobler sentiments of art were nowhere present as the arioi dancers deliberately attempted “to raise in the spectators the most libidinous desires.” All of the journalists agreed that Tongan dancing was superior.

Cook characterized the sojourn on the island of Tahiti as one of uninterrupted cordiality. In contrast to Tonga, there was little theft, thanks to Tu. Even Omai prospered, in spite of his swindling relatives, and took possession of a fine Tahitian sailing canoe, complete with a crew and decorated with streamers, in which he planned to make a grand entrance at Huahine. Tu presented Cook with a beautifully carved canoe, a gift for the arii rahī no Pretane, or the Great Chief of Britain. Cook had to refuse the canoe because of its size, but he was touched by the gesture.

As he had never visited Moorea, Cook decided to stop there briefly to see for himself the scene of the abortive skirmish between Tu’s people and Mahine, the high chief of that island. The visit had an unpleasant conclusion.

The harbour of Paopao proved to be one of the best in the whole of the South Pacific, and the setting was a monumental one of stupendous volcanic peaks. Beneath them lay the ruins of the recent war; “the trees were stripped of their fruit and all the houses were either pull’d or burnt down,” observed Cook.

Cook was irritated from the start. The ships were infested with rats (Captain Clerke’s cats had never been returned by the Tongans) and efforts to entice the rats to leave the ships via a bridge rigged up between ship and shore were largely unsuccessful.

A few days later trouble erupted. One of the goats intended for settlement on another island was stolen while it was grazing on shore, and Cook demanded its return. The next day another was taken. Later that night the first goat was returned, but the second one was not. The following day Cook threatened Chief Mahine and also sent out a search party, without success. Frustrated, he wrote: “I was now very sorry I had proceeded so far, and I could not retreat with any tolerable credet, and without giving encouragement to the people of other islands we had yet to visit to rob us with impunity.”

He set out with a party of thirty-five men to recover the goat, but no one would admit to knowing its whereabouts. Cook then took an extreme and unprecedented action: he ordered his men to burn the Moorean’s houses and to wreck their large war canoes. The next morning, the goat still not having been returned, he sent the carpenters to wreck several large canoes lying in the harbour, and to bring the planks on board to take to Hauhine for Omai’s house. He did the same in the next harbour. At sunset, the goat was returned, and the following day the ships left for Huahine.

Gilbert summed up the general feeling about this display of destructive force which has puzzled historians to this day. “I can’t well account,” said Gilbert, “for Capt. Cook’s proceedings on this occasion; as they were so very different from his conduct in like cases in his former voyages.”
At Huahine, Omai came into his own. His arrival in the “Royal George Canoe” was eclipsed only by the appearance of the Resolution and the Discovery. The usual display of exuberant and light-fingered curiosity was diminished somewhat by the Tahitian passengers’ exaggerated reports of Cook’s rampage on Moorea.

Omai began acting responsibly, and earned Cook’s commendation:

We got ready to pay a formal visit to the young chief. Omai dress’d himself very properly on the occasion and prepared a very handsome present for the chief and another for his Eatua [god], indeed after he got clear of the gang that surrounded him at Otaheiti [Tahiti] he behaved with much prudence as to gain respect.

The chiefs of Huahine designated a piece of land for Omai, and the ships' carpenters built for him a neat house, 24 feet by 18 feet by 10 feet high, “built of boards and with as few nails as possible, that there might be no inducement to pull it down” (Plate 22).

While this house was being constructed, Cook turned his mind to some irritating problems. The stock of bread was full of vermin and the ship was infested with cockroaches; as with the rats, all remedies were proving ineffective. In the midst of these worries a different species of pest made his way into Bayly’s observatory and carried off a sextant. Cook described the man as a “hardened Scoundrel”
PLATE 20

A Dance in Otaheite [Tahiti].
and, upon apprehending him, "punished him with greater severity than I had ever done before." Indeed he did, for Cook had his ears cut off.

This incident, following hard on the uncharacteristic violence on Moorea, raises questions. Was Cook becoming hard, losing his humaneness? Was his impatience a sign of extreme fatigue? Was it because he had been at sea almost continually for ten years and was now forty-nine years old? Historians have pondered these events, especially in the light of the circumstances surrounding Cook's death in Hawaii a year and a half later.

Omai was settled in his new house, and to help him and his two New Zealand companions, Cook gave him a horse and mare, a pregnant goat, an English boar and two sows, a full set of English armour, and a garden planted with a grapevine, a shaddock tree, pineapples and melons. Cook had now fulfilled his obligation to Omai as set forth in the Instructions from the Admiralty.

Only farewells remained. The description is Williamson's:

Omai took his leave of us with a manly sorrow, until he came to Capt'n Cook, when w'th all ye eloquence of sincerity he express'd his gratitude & burst into tears. The Capt'n who was extremely attentive to Omai ye whole time of his being on board, and ye pains he had take to settle him to his satisfaction in his native country, was much affected at this parting.
The Tahitian holiday was almost over, but there were still friends to be visited before Cook headed for the chilly northern seas. Some of his sailors became convinced that their destiny lay in sunny Tahiti and not in the frozen north. In Raiatea, where Cook stopped to visit his old friend Chief Oreo, and Captain Clerke delighted in once again meeting the chief's son, son-in-law and beautiful daughter, Poetua, the desertions began.

The first deserter, a marine named John Harrison, Cook personally tracked down. As Samwell tells it, the hapless youth was found "lying down between two Women with his Hair stuck full of Flowers & his Dress the same as that of the Indians." His punishment was two dozen lashes. A few days later two others made their escape and headed for Borabora in a stolen canoe. One of the men was the son of a prominent naval officer, and Cook felt some pressure to retrieve him, though this promised to be a difficult task. His plan was to take Poetua, her husband and her brother hostage and thereby convince Poetua's father, Oreo, that to gain his children's release he would have to put pressure on his own people to turn in the deserters. The abduction worked, though for several hours the Discovery was surrounded by "a most numerous Congregation of Women...cutting their Heads with Sharks Teeth and lamenting the Fate of the Prisoners, in so melancholy a howl, as rendered the Ship...a most wretched Habitation." Clerke treated his captive friends with the utmost courtesy, and Poetua consented to Webber's request to let him paint her portrait.

Meanwhile, Oreo was furious and decided to retaliate by kidnapping Cook while he was taking his daily bath on shore. Receiving word of this plot from a Huahinean woman travelling on board the Resolution, Cook avoided capture, whereupon a foiled Oreo himself went to bring back the two deserters. The end of this affair "gave me more trouble and vexation than the Men were worth," Cook wrote, "which I would not have taken but...to save the Son of a brother officer from being lost to the World." Was Captain Cook softening a little with the attractions of these romantic islands? Would he really have permitted his sailors to desert under different circumstances?

The rest of the crew might well have speculated too, but Cook's capacity to bend the chief to his will must have dissuaded them from further attempts at jumping ship. On 9 December 1777, after a brief stop at Borabora, the Society Islands were left behind. Gilbert expressed the prevailing mood:

We left these Islands with the greatest regret, immaginable; as supposing all the pleasures of the voyage to be now at an end: Having nothing to expect in future but excess of cold, Hunger, and every kind of hardship, and distress, attending a Sea life in general, and these voyages in particular, the Idea of which render'd us quite dejected.
PLATE 22

A View of Huaheine [Huahine, Omai's home].