

The Voyages of Captain Cook: A Bicentennial Exhibit (Part II)

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In 1770 Alexander Dalrymple flamboyantly dedicated the first volume of his *Historical Collection of the Several Voyages and Discoveries in the South Pacific Ocean* "To the man who, emulous of Magellan and the heroes of former times, . . . shall . . . succeed in establishing an intercourse with a Southern Continent." The legend of a great Southern continent had persisted through the centuries, and Cook's first voyage, completed in 1771, did not wholly dispel the ancient legend.¹ In a postscript to his journal of the first voyage, Cook suggested the best course to pursue in making further discoveries in the South Sea. His plan was adopted by the Admiralty, and within three months of his return, orders had been given for the purchase and fitting out of two new ships for a second voyage of exploration. The *Resolution*, a sloop of 462 tons and a complement of 112 men, was to be commanded by James Cook, and a consort ship, the *Adventure*, of 340 tons with some 80 men was placed under the command of Tobias Furneaux, who had sailed with Wallis in the *Dolphin*.² The *Resolution* was given a new upper deck and a roundhouse, to make room for Joseph Banks and his dozen scientists, artists, horn players, and assistants; but with these alterations the ship became so top heavy that it was found necessary to restore the *Resolution* to her original condition. At this thwarting of his wishes, Banks withdrew in anger, chartered a ship of his own, and took his retinue on a trip to Iceland instead.

¹ "The story of the origin and persistence of the belief in that continent, of the controversies which grew out of that belief, of the centuries of exploration in search of the elusive shores of the Terra Australis, is one of the most curiously interesting in the record of human thought and action." See Lawrence C. Wroth, "The Early Cartography of the Pacific," *The Papers of the Bibliographical Society of America*, XXXVIII, no. 2 (Second Quarter, 1944), esp. pp. 163-179.

² For details of his career see Rupert Furneaux, *Tobias Furneaux, Circumnavigator* (London, 1960).

As a replacement for Daniel Solander and James Lind, the scientists whom Banks had secured to accompany Cook's second expedition, the Admiralty chose John Reinhold Forster, an erudite but quarrelsome German scholar. Forster, adept at languages, had translated numerous travel books into English, among them Kalm's *Travels into North America* (1770-71), Osbeck's *A Voyage to China and the East Indies* (1771), and Bougainville's *A Voyage Round the World* (1772).³ He had also published a monograph on mineralogy, a catalog of British insects, and catalogs of North American plants and animals. For the Royal Society he had prepared descriptions of bird and fish specimens from the Hudson's Bay area, and his articles on natural history had appeared in the Society's *Philosophical Transactions*. It was Forster's expectation that he would write an account of this present voyage.

J. R. Forster's 17-year-old son George accompanied his father on the *Resolution*. George had shown considerable talent in drawing, and during the voyage he was to make many workmanlike sketches of plants, fishes, birds, and insects. This voyage with Cook proved to be a stimulating time for George. He later returned to Germany, married Teresa Heyne, daughter of contemporary Europe's leading classical scholar, Christian Heyne of Göttingen, taught at several universities, and served as librarian to the Elector of Mainz. A trip down the Rhine and to England in 1790 with Alexander von Humboldt gave rise to his most highly-regarded book, *Ansichten vom Niederrhein (Views from the Lower Rhine)*. His annual reviews of English literature, his essays on geography, natural history and politics, his translations, his letters, and his many-sided contacts with the world of his time have led to his characterization as "one of the most fascinating figures in the field of Anglo-German literary relations in the eighteenth century."⁴ At the end, his radical political views entangled him in the French Revolution, he was reviled by his father and his friends, deserted by his wife, and at the height of the Terror he died in Paris at the age of thirty nine. He can be seen briefly, stumbling over a cannonball, in Thomas Carlyle's *The French Revolution*.⁵

³ A facsimile reprint of J. R. Forster's translation of Bougainville's *Voyage* was published in 1967 by the Gregg Press of Ridgewood, New Jersey.

⁴ W. D. Robson-Scott, "Georg Forster and the Gothic Revival," *The Modern Language Review*, LI, no. 1 (January 1956), p. 42.

⁵ For a brief but sound survey of George Forster's career, see the article by Robert L. Kahn in Stanley Kunitz and Vineta Colby, eds., *European Authors, 1000-1900* (New York, 1967), pp. 290-291. At present the best discussion in English of Forster's later career is Leslie Bodi, "Georg Forster: The 'Pacific Expert' of Eighteenth-century Germany," *Historical Studies, Australia and New Zealand*, VIII, no. 32 (May 1959), pp. 345-363. For an entrance into the voluminous German literature, see Kurt Kersten, *Der Weltumsegler: Johann Georg Adam Forster*,

Joseph Banks had expected to take four artists along with him on Cook's second voyage: John Zoffany, a portrait painter; John Clevely, a marine painter; and John and James Miller, natural-history draftsmen. After Banks abandoned his plan to accompany the voyage, the Admiralty settled upon William Hodges as the official artist. Hodges was a 28-year-old landscape painter who had studied under Richard Wilson. He had previously painted scenery for a theatre in Derby and had exhibited views at the Society of Artists exhibitions. During the second voyage he worked industriously with oils, chalks, crayons, washes, and pen (Cook admiringly called him "indefatigable"), and many of his oil paintings are today still in the possession of the Admiralty. After his return from his voyage with Cook, Hodges spent six years in India, where he enjoyed the friendship and patronage of Warren Hastings.⁶ Although Sir Joshua Reynolds considered him "a very intelligent and ingenious artist," Hodges' rendering of atmosphere and light noticeably affected his technique, and one of his early critics complained that his paintings appear "as if the colours were laid on the canvas with a skewer."⁷ His handling of sylvan scenes can be examined in the two illustrations he prepared for Boydell's famous Shakespeare Gallery: a view of Portia's garden in *The Merchant of Venice* (V,i) and the Forest of Arden in *As You Like It* (II,i).

In addition to a natural scientist and an official artist, both appointed by the Admiralty, Cook had with him on the *Resolution* an official astronomer, William Wales, appointed by the Board of Longitude. Determining the position of a ship at sea was still a difficult problem in the mid-eighteenth century. On his first voyage, Cook had relied upon the method of "lunar distances" to find his longitude. This required him to observe the distance of the Moon from the Sun or from certain fixed stars and then to compare this observed distance with the distances which had previously been tabulated at the Royal Observatory in Greenwich. (Tables were available in the new *Nautical Almanac and Astronomical Ephemeris*, which had first been prepared for the year 1767 by Nevil Maskelyne, Astronomer Royal.) From such calculations he could determine the difference between Green-

1754-1794 (Bern, 1957). In recent years George Forster has become the subject of two or three novels published in East Germany.

⁶ Details of his later career are brought together by William Foster, "William Hodges, R.A., in India," *Bengal: Past and Present* [Journal of the Calcutta Historical Society], XXX (July-December 1925), pp. 1-8. From Hodges' sojourn in India came a portfolio of forty-five color plates, *Select Views in India* (1786-88), and a book entitled *Travels in India* (1793).

⁷ The technique of Hodges' work during Cook's second voyage is discussed in detail by Bernard Smith, *European Vision and the South Pacific, 1768-1850: A Study in the History of Art and Ideas* (Oxford, 1960), esp. pp. 39-58.

wich time and local time and thereby ascertain his longitude. To achieve tolerable accuracy, corrections for refraction, parallax and other distortions had to be made, and it could require up to four hours to complete the necessary mathematical computations. Cook was sufficiently skillful that he was often able to find his longitude to within one degree or better by this lunar method. But the Board of Longitude was seeking a simpler method, and on his second voyage Cook carried with him two experimental timepieces. Since knowledge of a standard time is a crucial factor in determining longitude, it may seem surprising that marine chronometers had not yet come into use. The difficulty was to construct a timepiece which would be unaffected by extremes of temperature and capable of keeping accurate time in a rolling and pitching ship.⁸ The two timepieces in the *Resolution* were put in the care of William Wales. During the voyage the watch constructed by John Arnold (it was one of his early models) performed erratically and finally stopped; the model built by Larcum Kendall to the specifications of John Harrison worked to Cook's satisfaction and demonstrated that longitude at sea could be found accurately by means of a chronometer. Until the 1920s, when the broadcasting of radio time signals became possible, ocean-going vessels relied upon chronometers keeping Greenwich mean time to determine the ship's longitude.

SECOND VOYAGE, 1772-1775

The *Resolution* and the *Adventure* sailed from Plymouth on July 13, 1772, and headed for Capetown, South Africa, which was to be their point of departure into the cold and uncharted southern waters. The usual stop at Madeira to take on wine and onions, which Cook valued as an antiscorbutic, was followed by a less usual stop for water at Santiago in the Cape Verde Islands. Sailing south for seventy-seven days, the ships had pleasant weather, and on the 29th of October they sighted the Cape of Good Hope. From the deck of the *Resolution*, anchored in Table Bay, Hodges painted a large view of Capetown "of astonishing vigor and originality" which Cook immediately arranged to send back to England.⁹

During the next three weeks, while the ships were being recaulked,

⁸ The construction of an accurate marine timekeeper has been called "one of the most intricate and difficult mechanical problems which Man has ever been called upon to solve." Rupert T. Gould, "John Harrison and His Timekeepers," *The Mariner's Mirror* (April 1935), p. 121.

⁹ Now in the possession of the National Maritime Museum, this painting hung for over a century and a half in the house of the First Lord of the Admiralty. It is reproduced, together with a modern photograph of the same view, in Geoffrey Callender, "'Cape Town' by William Hodges, R.A.," *The Burlington Magazine*, LXXIX (September 1941), p. 95.

the Forsters, father and son, made excursions around the town and up to Table Mountain. The elder Forster collected some fine specimens of insects, and he sent back to the Royal Society several red bishop-birds, four curlew sandpipers, and a black korhaan bird. Francis Masson, a botanist who had taken passage out on the *Resolution* to collect South Africa plants and bulbs for the Royal Gardens at Kew, left the ship's company at Capetown; and possibly to help fill this void in their scientific companionship the Forsters persuaded Cook to let them hire, as an assistant naturalist, a young Swedish botanist named Anders Sparrman. Although at this time he was only 24 years old, Sparrman had already made a voyage to China as surgeon in a Swedish East Indiaman. He was now in Capetown studying the flora. Another change in personnel, necessitated by an illness in Furneaux's ship, was the transfer of James Burney from the *Resolution* to the *Adventure*. This was a promotion for Burney, and it greatly pleased his young sister, the novelist Fanny Burney, to learn that Cook had made him a lieutenant.¹⁰

On 22 November the two ships sailed southward and began a search for the promontory ("Cape Circumcision") which a Frenchman, Bouvet, had reported seeing on New Year's Day in 1739. Bouvet's view had been obscured by fogs, but he believed that he had sighted a part of the Great Southern Continent. Fogs began to envelop Cook's ships too. The temperature dropped rapidly, early in December snow began falling, and the casks of drinking water on deck started to freeze. Icebergs soon appeared, sixty feet high, white or crystal clear, beautiful sometimes as they reflected the blue and green of the sea or the gold of the sun, but forming a treacherous gauntlet through which the ships had to make their way. It was just such a scene that William Wales's future pupil Samuel Taylor Coleridge was to describe in the enchanted lines of *The Ancient Mariner*:

And now there came both mist and snow,
And it grew wondrous cold;
And ice mast high came floating by,
As green as emerald.¹¹

Unable to find land where Bouvet claimed to have seen it, Cook con-

¹⁰ See G. E. Manwaring, *My Friend the Admiral: The Life, Letters, and Journals of Rear-Admiral James Burney, F.R.S., The Companion of Captain Cook and Friend of Charles Lamb* (London, 1931), p. 20.

¹¹ It has been asserted that "no other voyage in the whole realm of travel literature affords so many parallels with the voyage of the *Ancient Mariner* as does Cook's second voyage." Bernard Smith, "Coleridge's *Ancient Mariner* and Cook's Second Voyage," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, XIX (January-June 1956), p. 150.

cluded that what the Frenchman had seen was an iceberg. He did not know that Bouvet's reported longitude was seven degrees in error and that his predecessor had in fact seen a small oval island, one of the most remote spots of land on the globe.

On Christmas Day the sailors caroused and held boxing matches on the windswept deck. The scientists fought the tedium of monotonous days by examining and describing the oceanic birds, whale birds, albatrosses, blue and silver-grey petrels, making the first comprehensive record of the birds of the sub-Antarctic. Out alone in the jolly boat one calm day, hunting birds and testing the temperature of the sea at various depths, Wales and the elder Forster found themselves lost in the fog for an unnerving time, beyond sight and sound of the ships. Finally the ringing of a dinner bell on the *Adventure* guided them back to safety. After crossing the Antarctic Circle southwest of Enderby Land on January 17, 1773, the first ships in history to sail so far south, the *Resolution* and the *Adventure* were parted by fog. Furneaux and Cook fired cannons every half hour but could hear no answer, and after two days they proceeded on separate courses. Foreseeing such a contingency, Cook had stipulated that the two ships should rendezvous at Queen Charlotte's Sound in New Zealand.

The *Adventure* landed first in Tasmania. James Burney drew a chart of the southeast coast, showing the track of the ship, and a chart of Adventure Bay. Both ships, in mid-February, had seen the Southern Lights and made the first recorded observations of these auroras of the southern hemisphere. In late March the *Resolution* reached the southwestern tip of New Zealand and entered Dusky Bay after being out of sight of land for 122 days. In this primeval spot "which must surely have been dozing from the day of its creation until now" Cook found a plentiful supply of fish and ducks, and he remained here six weeks. Hodges made paintings of a waterfall and of a family of natives, George Forster drew sketches of fish and birds, Wales set up an observatory, and Cook carefully surveyed and mapped Dusky Bay, with its maze of islands and inlets.

Early in May, his crew refreshed, Cook sailed up to Queen Charlotte's Sound. Off Cape Stephens the ship's company observed four waterspouts twisting eerily between sea and sky. Hodges rapidly sketched the scene and later portrayed this incident in an oil painting. The *Adventure*, rigged down for winter, had been waiting at the rendezvous since early April. Cook gave orders that scurvy-grass and wild celery, which grew abundantly in the area, should be added to the diet of Furneaux's ailing crew, and on June 7th the ships again put to sea. Still searching for the legendary continent, they ran eastward,

halfway to the coast of Chile, before looping northward toward Tahiti. The refreshments of that tropical island were urgently needed to counteract symptoms of scurvy among the crew of the *Adventure*; and so, without taking time to run down its true location, Cook passed through the area where Carteret had seen Pitcairn Island in 1767. Not until the mutineers from the *Bounty* landed there in 1790 was Pitcairn Island explored.

In mid-August the peaks of Tahiti rose invitingly against a brilliant sky, but quirks of wind and tide nearly wrecked both ships on the surrounding reefs before a safe anchorage was made. The strain was beginning to affect Cook's health. Two weeks at Tahiti, however, with its fresh fruits and delightful climate, greatly restored the ships' companies, and at Huahine, a neighboring island where the ships stopped for a few September days, fowls and hogs were obtained in abundant supply. Apparently envious of his black silk waistcoat, two natives at Huahine attacked and disrobed Anders Sparrman, who had incautiously wandered off alone searching for botanical specimens. "The worthy Sparrman," a later writer surmised, "stalked forth from the bush wearing only his spectacles." It was here that Captain Furneaux took aboard Omai, one of the natives, who subsequently sailed with the *Adventure* to England. Omai was to become, for a season, a lion of fashionable London society.¹²

Trending southwestward on a course back to New Zealand, Cook discovered Hervey Island (Manuae), an atoll in the group now known as the Cook Islands, and he surveyed the islands of Eua and Tongatapu. Bright red feathers obtained here from the islanders proved valuable as an article of trade elsewhere. Among the curiosities that Sparrman collected were a tortoise-shell trolling hook with a shank of whale-bone and a necklace made of translucent-blue parrot bones.¹³

As the *Resolution* and the *Adventure* neared Cook Straits between the North and South islands of New Zealand, a violent storm began buffeting the two ships, and the gales continued for over a week. On 3 November the *Resolution* came safely to rest at her old anchorage in Queen Charlotte's Sound and waited for the *Adventure* to appear. Cabbages, carrots, onions, and parsley were growing exuberantly in a garden that Furneaux had laid out five months earlier, wild celery

¹² See Thomas Blake Clark, *Omai, First Polynesian Ambassador to England* (San Francisco, 1940), The Abbé Baston published a fictitious autobiography of Omai in four volumes, *Narrations d'Omai* (Rouen, 1790), which has sometimes been mistaken for a true account.

¹³ These and other artifacts are still preserved at Stockholm in the Ethnographical Museum of Sweden. See J. Söderstrom, *A. Sparrman's Ethnographical Collection from James Cook's 2nd Expedition (1772-1775)* (Stockholm, 1939).

and scurvy grass were gathered, and fish were obtained from the natives. (George Forster observed that these natives often wore necklaces of human teeth.) The *Adventure* had not appeared by November 25th; and after coasting round several of the coves firing cannon, Cook gave up hope of meeting with his consort ship, and the *Resolution* sailed off alone to explore the Antarctic waters between New Zealand and Cape Horn.

The *Adventure*, meanwhile, had been blown toward the North island of New Zealand, where she anchored in Tolaga Bay to repair damaged rigging and take on supplies of wood and water. Contrary winds kept her from reaching Queen Charlotte's Sound until the 30th of November, when she discovered that the *Resolution* had departed a few days earlier. By mid-December the *Adventure* too was ready to leave, and one of Furneaux's final preparations was to send out a cutter with ten men to gather a supply of wild greens. When this party failed to return, Furneaux ordered Lieutenant Burney and several marines to take the launch and go in search of them. Near Grass Cove, Burney found some baskets of fresh meat lying on the beach, then some shoes belonging to their men, and then a severed hand. Farther up, natives were clustered around a fire. Dispersing these cannibals with musket shots, Burney found "such a shocking scene of carnage and barbarity as can never be mentioned or thought of but with horror; for the heads, hearts, and lungs of several of our people were seen lying on the beach, and, at a little distance, the dogs gnawing their intrails." On the 23rd or 24th of December, Furneaux managed to get clear of Cook Straits. He sailed past Cape Horn, made another unsuccessful search for Bouvet's Island, and on the 17th of March, 1774, the *Adventure* anchored again at Capetown. Here Furneaux left a letter for Cook telling of the massacre of his boat's crew, and his ship returned to England after an absence of exactly two years.

Two weeks before the *Adventure* sailed from New Zealand, the *Resolution*, steering southeastward, had already seen her first ice. This was apparently a summer of unusually heavy ice in Antarctic waters. Ice coated the sails and festooned the rigging, stiffened the ropes into wires, and made the ship difficult to handle. Snow and sleet and fog drizzled down, though the sun hung above the horizon even at midnight. On December 20th the *Resolution* crossed the Antarctic Circle for a second time and was soon surrounded by massive icebergs. To George Forster's eyes "the whole scene looked like the wrecks of a shattered world, or as the poets describe some regions of hell." Cook hauled to the north for a time, sailed eastward, and again pushed toward the south. Icebergs crowded the ship, one of them

towering 200 feet tall, its top looking “not unlike the cupola of St. Paul’s church.” Occasional whales were seen, while petrels and albatrosses wheeled around the ship. For a third time, on January 26th, 1774, Cook crossed the Antarctic Circle and continued southward for three days, when progress in that direction was halted by an immense field of ice which stretched to the south “looking like a ridge of mountains, rising one above another till they were lost in the clouds.” It was Cook’s opinion that this ice “extended quite to the pole, or perhaps joined to some land, to which it had been affixed from the earliest time.”

I, who had ambition not only to go farther than any one had been before, but as far as it was possible for man to go, was not sorry at meeting with this interruption; as it, in some measure, relieved us; at least, shortened the dangers and hardships inseparable from the navigation of the southern polar regions. Since therefore we could not proceed one inch farther to the South, no other reason need be assigned for my tacking, and standing back to the North; being at this time in the latitude of 71° 10’ South, longitude 106° 54’ West.

At this position Cook was in the Amundsen Sea off the Walgreen Coast of Antarctica, perhaps 150 miles from Thurston Island. No ship was to push further south in this particular longitude until February of 1960, when two icebreakers from the United States Navy bulldozed their way past Thurston Island.

Morale was high, his crew was in good health, provisions appeared to be adequate, and so Cook resolved to winter once again in the tropics and then make a deep exploration of the South Atlantic Ocean during the following austral summer. On sailing north and finding no land along the 38th parallel, where Dalrymple placed the eastern coast of “Juan Fernández Land,” Cook turned to the northwest in order to pinpoint the location of Easter Island. Tropical birds were seen on the first of March, and as the weather became warmer symptoms of scurvy began to appear. Cook himself fell dangerously ill with a stomach ailment. The ship’s surgeon tried opiates and enemas and plasters and hot baths to quiet Cook’s fits of violent hiccoughing. No other fresh meat being available, J. R. Forster sacrificed his pet Tahitian dog, which furnished the captain with a hot broth he was able to keep down, and his strength began to return.

On March 13th, having been out of sight of land for over a hundred days, the *Resolution* dropped anchor at Easter Island. Here William Hodges painted a striking view of several gigantic grey and red statues rising skyward against dark green storm clouds. Anders Sparman observed that the cylindrical red headpieces of these giants were “so

accurately proportioned that they might have been turned with lathes." Sparrman looked about in vain for the source of the yellowish grey sandstone which composed the statues. Had he found his way across the island to a volcanic crater named Rano Raraku, he might have come upon dozens of these tight-lipped, long-eared giants lying among the rocks from which they were hewn.¹⁴ The island itself, lacking trees and scattered over with stones, seemed uninviting to the voyagers, and food and water were scarce.

Passing through the southern Marquesas, the *Resolution* spent four days at the island of Tahu Ata, in the identical bay where Mendaña, the Spanish discoverer of the islands, had anchored in 1595. No European had visited the Marquesas since that time, and their location on the charts had been uncertain.¹⁵

Several atolls were sighted and named as the *Resolution* made for Tahiti, and on April 22nd, after an absence of nearly eight months, Cook reached his former base at Point Venus. His first object in touching again at Tahiti was to give William Wales an opportunity to check the experimental timepieces against a known longitude. Opportunity was also taken to repair the ship's rigging and ironwork and to air and sort the stale bread. The botanists made two overnight excursions toward the summit of a nearby mountain, a position from which they could see the neighboring island of Huahine and look down upon the valleys far below. "In the roadstead we saw the *Resolution*, a dot in the blue immensity, and it astonished us to think that we had voyaged so far on board that little vessel." George Forster made a special study of the edible plants of the island, a subject he later used as the basis of his doctoral dissertation. He also found time to make sketches of a dozen or so Tahitian birds. Among his drawings of parrots, pigeons, warblers, and swallows is a sketch of the now-extinct white-winged sandpiper and a painting of the bristle-thighed curlew, a bird whose summer nesting place near the Yukon River in Alaska was not discovered until 1948.¹⁶

¹⁴ See Thor Heyerdahl, *Aku-Aku, The Secret of Easter Island* (Chicago, 1958), pp. 85ff.

¹⁵ Cook did not touch at the island of Hiva-Oa, where Paul Gauguin now lies buried, although he sailed along its coast, nor did he see Nuku-Hiva in the northern Marquesas, where Herman Melville jumped ship in 1842.

¹⁶ See Arthur A. Allen, "The Curlew's Secret," *The National Geographic Magazine*, XCIV, no. 6 (December 1948), pp. 751-770. George Forster's painting of the bristle-thighed curlew is reproduced in *The Illustrated London News* (June 26, 1948), p. 724. An annotated catalog of bird drawings by George Forster will be found in Averil Lysaght, "Some Eighteenth Century Bird Paintings in the Library of Sir Joseph Banks," *British Museum [Natural History] Bulletin, Historical Series*, I, no. 6 (April 1959), pp. 280-310.

A spectacular fleet of native war canoes, preparing to sail against the island of Moorea, had not yet departed when the *Resolution* left Tahiti on May 14th. Running for a second time through the Tonga archipelago, north of Tongatapu, the ship stopped briefly at Nomuka and then continued northwestward toward an area where two earlier explorers had reported land. In 1606 the Spanish visionary Quiros had believed that his "Austrialia del Espiritu Santo" was a part of the fabled southern continent; and in 1768, sailing in the same vicinity, the French explorer Bougainville had passed through a cluster of islands which are shown on his chart as the "Great Cyclades." After weathering a gale which split several sails, Cook in mid-July sighted Bougainville's Aurora Island (now known as Maewo) and thereupon spent six weeks surveying the long chain of islands which he renamed the New Hebrides.

His first anchorage was at Malekula Island, where the chestnut-brown natives, wearing nose-sticks and hog-tusk bracelets, were obviously a different race from the Polynesians. If to European eyes they seemed less attractive than the Tahitians or the beautiful Marquesans, they were quick and intelligent. George Forster remarked their facility in imitating sounds; they could easily pronounce most European words, he said, even the Russian "shch."¹⁷ Only one small pig and a few coconuts could be obtained as provisions, and so Cook remained at Malekula but thirty-six hours, long enough to make a chart of the harbor. At Eromanga, nearly 200 miles to the southeast, Cook landed in Polenia Bay and went ashore toward a throng of armed natives with a green branch of peace in his hand. Apparently he was mistaken for a ghost. When the crowd tried to haul his boat up the beach, he was forced to retreat amid salvos of arrows, stones, and darts. His pique at this turn of events is apparent on modern maps of Eromanga, where the headland south of his anchorage is still known as Traitor's Head.

His lengthiest stay in the New Hebrides was at the island of Tana. Again the natives were threatening, but the noise of cannon fire from the ship cleared a beach which Cook roped off for his waterers and woodcutters. Day by day the natives became less menacing and gradually the botanists were able to extend their excursions beyond the beach and into the magnificent forests, where orchids and yellow crotons flowered among the banyan trees. A few miles from the anchorage an active volcano rumbled intermittently and spewed up clouds

¹⁷ For a vividly factual account of the inhabitants of this "least-known" island in the New Hebrides, see T. H. Harrison, "Living with the People of Malekula," *The Geographical Journal*, LXXXVIII, no. 2 (August 1936), pp. 97-127.

of eye-stinging ashes. Though Cook and his companions remained on the island less than three weeks, their observations have ethnographic value as records of the first contact between Europeans and the Melanesian inhabitants of Tana.

From Tana, Cook sailed north along the western side of the long chain of islands, past Efate and into the Bougainville Straits, which form a passage between Malekula and a large island to the north. He completed his survey of the archipelago by circling around this island, where he identified the deep bay at the north as Quiros' Bay of St. Philip and St. James. On Cook's chart Quiros' continent was resolved into Espiritu Santo, the northernmost island of the New Hebrides.

Four days after leaving the New Hebrides, Cook discovered New Caledonia. His reason for assigning this name to the island is uncertain. Possibly the blue and misty purple of its rugged mountains reminded someone on the *Resolution* of the highlands of Scotland. The ship anchored near a small sandy island from which Cook and Wales and Lieutenant Clerke observed an eclipse of the sun and determined the longitude. Fresh water was available but provisions were scarce. The natives, Cook wrote, "had little else but good nature to spare us." From the hills Cook and an excursion party saw the western coast of the island and observed a system of canals by which the natives irrigated their taro plantations.

Unable to get through the reefs at the north of New Caledonia, Cook sailed nearly 250 miles to the southeastern coast. He found dangerous reefs surrounding nearly the entire island. At the southern end and on adjacent small islands, strange clusters of towering pillars were sighted. Cook and his officers believed these to be trees of an unusual kind, but the elder Forster declared them to be pillars of basalt and averred that he could see their joints very distinctly through his spyglass. At considerable risk Cook maneuvered through the reefs to one of the islands and determined that the pillars were indeed a kind of spruce pine, now known as pencil pines or Cook pines, which grow 100 feet tall or higher. Against the sky, says one observer, they look like giant asphodels.

The approach of the austral summer and the difficulty of carrying on a coastal survey among dangerous reefs impelled Cook to leave New Caledonia at the end of September. Ten days later, some 400 miles from New Zealand, he discovered an uninhabited island where flax, cabbage palms, and tall pine trees were growing luxuriantly. This was Norfolk Island, which in the mid-nineteenth century was to become notorious as a penal colony for twice-condemned convicts.¹⁸ Incon-

¹⁸ The island figures in Marcus Clarke's *For the Term of His Natural Life*

gruous it may seem, but in the 1880s, for a chapel built on this remote island, Burne-Jones designed stained-glass windows which were executed by William Morris.

After a third period of recuperation at Queen Charlotte's Sound in New Zealand, where the ship was recaulked, the rigging overhauled, and supplies of fish and fresh water laid in, the *Resolution* made a rapid run of forty-two days to the southern tip of South America. Sighting Cape Deseado at the western outlet of the Straits of Magellan, Cook began charting the broken coastline of Tierra del Fuego. A few days before Christmas he anchored in a sheltered bay where an abundance of wild geese, shell fish, and terns' eggs together with the remaining Madeira wine ("the only one of our provisions that had improved during the long voyage") provided a satisfactory Christmas dinner. The botanists gathered a variety of plants, including the aromatic Winter's bark, and William Hodges painted an impressive view of Christmas Sound which was later engraved for Cook's official account. George Forster took exception to Hodges' representation in this painting of a hawk "which, from its supernatural size, seems to resemble the rukh, celebrated in the Arabian Tales."

On December 28th the *Resolution* rounded the black cliffs of Cape Horn in good weather and spent the first days of January, 1775, at Staten Island, where hundreds of seals and penguins were seen. Sailing into the South Atlantic Ocean, Cook searched fruitlessly for the "Gulf of San Sebastian" which Dalrymple's charts alleged to be a part of the fabled southern continent. He then bore up to the northeast, looking for land which had been sighted through the fogs in 1675 by Antonio de la Roche. On January 14th he saw what at first appeared to be an immense iceberg; it proved to be a rocky and mountainous land almost wholly covered with snow. Through storms of snow and sleet Cook began charting the northern coast, and on the 17th he and the botanists landed in a small boat. Tussock grass and wild burnet grew sparsely on the coast, and in the bays ice was seen breaking from the glacier walls. Seals swarmed on the shores and flocks of penguins three feet tall resembled those described by Bougainville, with "belly of a dazzling white and a kind of palatine or necklace of bright yellow." Thinking that at last he might have reached the southern continent, Cook continued his survey, only to find that he was circling round an island. It is known today as the island of South Georgia.

Moving southeastward through thick fogs, the *Resolution* pushed

(1874), a novel which strongly indicted the British convict-transportation system. There is a recent popularized account of the curious history of this island: Frank Clune, *The Norfolk Island Story* (Sydney, 1967).

toward the 60th parallel. Numerous whales were seen. Once again land was sighted, snow-covered peaks with intervening pack ice which made it impossible for Cook to determine whether these peaks formed one connected land or several distinct islands. On his map he laid down several capes and a few islands and, perhaps with a touch of weariness after so long a voyage, decided that this snow-burdened land was so forbidding that it did not warrant the risk of further exploration. "The risk one runs in exploring a coast in these unknown and icy seas is so very great," Cook wrote, "that I can be bold to say that no man will ever venture farther than I have done and that the lands which may lie to the south will never be explored."

Cook underestimated the equipment and perseverance of his successors.¹⁹ Some forty years later Bellingshausen determined that the peaks Cook had seen were indeed islands (the South Sandwich Islands), in the nineteenth century Wilkes and Ross roughly surveyed Antarctica, and in the twentieth century the continent was to be explored by Scott, Shackleton, Amundsen, and Byrd. Cook's own report of whales and seals in the South Atlantic rapidly led to commercial exploitation of the area, and by the 1820s more than a million fur seals had been taken in South Georgia. Cook's demonstration was that the southern continent does not extend above the 60th parallel. Although he did not set foot on the polar continent itself, the history of Antarctica begins with his circumnavigation on this second voyage.

Cook's official account of the voyage, illustrated with more than sixty engravings based on views and portraits drawn by William Hodges, was published in 1777.²⁰ By that time Cook had long since departed on his third voyage, and the volumes were seen through the press by Canon John Douglas, the man who had earlier vindicated John Milton from charges of plagiarism and with Samuel Johnson had exposed the fraudulence of the Cock-lane ghost. The two handsome volumes of the original edition are classic and have not been completely superseded even by the masterful modern edition of J. C. Beaglehole.²¹ Beaglehole's minutely-annotated edition is based upon

¹⁹ No fewer than 640 antarctic expeditions are known to have taken place between Cook's second voyage and the beginning of the International Geophysical Year in July, 1957. See Brian Roberts, "Chronological List of Antarctic Expeditions," *The Polar Record*, IX, no. 59 (May 1958), pp. 97-134 and no. 60 (September 1958), pp. 191-239.

²⁰ James Cook, *A Voyage towards the South Pole, and Round the World. Performed in His Majesty's Ships the Resolution and Adventure, in the Years 1772, 1773, 1774, and 1775. . . . In which is included Captain Furneaux's Narrative of his Proceedings in the Adventure during the Separation of the Ships. . . .* 2 vols. (London, 1777).

²¹ J. C. Beaglehole, ed., *The Journals of Captain James Cook on His Voyages*

Cook's two holograph journals in the British Museum supplemented by three early manuscript copies. His edition also prints, with some excisions, the journal of William Wales from an incomplete manuscript in the Mitchell Library, Sydney, together with extracts from the manuscript logs kept by several of the ships' officers.

For reasons which have yet to be satisfactorily elucidated, J. R. Forster after his return was forbidden by Lord Sandwich to write any "connected narrative" of the voyage.²² His son George thereupon set about writing a detailed account which reached publication a few weeks before Cook's official volumes.²³ Despite the rapidity of its composition, it is a surprisingly good book. It has its purple passages and its petulance, and Samuel Johnson was exaggerating no more than usual when he remarked that "there is a great affectation of fine writing in it," but it deserves to be better known. In Germany it was influential, Gottfried Bürger, for example, drawing from it parts of his poem *Neuseeländisches Schlachtlied*.²⁴ In England it was attacked by the usually calm William Wales.²⁵ There is need for a modern edition of George Forster's *A Voyage Round the World* which would draw annotations from Wales, provide a generous selection from George's many unpublished drawings, and shed light on the relationship of the book to J. R. Forster's still-unpublished journals.²⁶ Happily a German edition of George Forster's collected works, currently in progress, has reprinted the original English text of the book as well as the German translation.²⁷ In this edition, George's account of the voyage is

of Discovery, Vol. 2: The Voyage of the Resolution and Adventure, 1772-1775 (Cambridge, 1959).

²² In an open letter published as a pamphlet, George Forster traced his father's difficulties to Martha Ray, mistress of Lord Sandwich, who was allegedly angered at J. R. Forster's refusal to give to her a collection of live birds he had intended as a gift for the Queen. See George Forster, *A Letter to the Right Honourable The Earl of Sandwich, First Lord Commissioner of the Board of Admiralty*. . . . (London, 1778). This pamphlet has been called "one of the most forcibly virulent attacks on a prominent politician known to English literature."

²³ George Forster, *A Voyage Round the World in His Britannic Majesty's Sloop, Resolution, commanded by Capt. James Cook, during the Years 1772, 3, 4, and 5*. 2 vols. (London, 1777).

²⁴ J. A. Asher, "Georg Forster and Goethe," *AUMLA, Journal of the Australasian Universities Language and Literature Association*, No. 7 (November 1957), pp. 16-17.

²⁵ William Wales, *Remarks on Mr. Forster's Account of Captain Cook's last Voyage round the World, In the Years 1772, 1773, 1774, and 1775* (London, 1778). George Forster replied to this attack in his pamphlet *Reply to Mr. Wales's Remarks* (London, 1778).

²⁶ According to Robert L. Kahn, J. R. Forster's six-volume manuscript journal is MSS Germ. quart. 222-227 of the Deutsche Staatsbibliothek, Berlin, currently Staatsbibliothek der Stiftung Preussischer Kulturbesitz, West Berlin.

²⁷ *Georg Forsters Werke: Sämtliche Schriften, Tagebücher, Briefe, Bd. 1: A Voyage Round the World*, bearb. von Robert L. Kahn (Berlin, 1968).

characterized as “one of the greatest travelogues written in any tongue or age.”

The third principal narrative account of the voyage, in addition to the volumes by Cook and by Forster, is that of Anders Sparrman, the assistant naturalist. His account was originally published in Swedish in two parts, the first of which appeared in 1802 and the second not until 1818.²⁸ A partial translation into French became available in 1939.²⁹ There was no English translation of these volumes until 1944, when the Golden Cockerel Press issued a beautifully-produced limited edition of 350 copies.³⁰ This is a worthy supplement to the earlier accounts by Sparrman’s colleagues. Its brevity and sprightliness recommend it as perhaps the easiest introduction to the full story of Captain Cook’s second voyage—possibly the greatest voyage between the time of Magellan and the flight of Apollo Eleven.

(to be concluded)

²⁸ An earlier volume by Sparrman appeared in Sweden in 1783 and was translated into English in 1785 under the title *A Voyage to the Cape of Good Hope*. . . . It deals principally with South Africa and is not to be confused with his later related volumes.

²⁹ [Anders Sparrman] *Un Compagnon Suédois du Capitaine James Cook au Cours de Son Deuxième Voyage*, tr. Bjarne Kroepelien (Oslo, 1939).

³⁰ Anders Sparrman, *A Voyage Round the World with Captain James Cook in H.M.S. Resolution* (London, 1944). A trade edition was published in London by Robert Hale in 1953.



Frontispiece (above) and title page (opposite) of the first English edition of Anders Sparrman's *A Voyage Round the World with Captain James Cook*, 1944. The original edition was published in Swedish, in two parts, in 1802 and 1818.

A VOYAGE ROUND THE WORLD

WITH CAPTAIN JAMES COOK

IN H.M.S. RESOLUTION

BY ANDERS SPARRMAN

INTRODUCTION & NOTES BY

OWEN RUTTER

WOOD-ENGRAVINGS BY

PETER BARKER - MILL



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