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THE NAVIGATORS' ISLANDS.



CHART
of the
NAVIGATORS ISLANDS
laid down on Mercators Projection
In April 1824.

THE NAVIGATORS' ISLANDS.

ON leaving Tahaiti, I proposed to pass a few days on the Radack Islands, which I had formerly discovered; and, on my way thither, determined to visit the Navigators' Islands. These are probably the same seen by Roggewin in 1721, which he called Baumann's Islands; but Bougainville has appropriated the discovery, as made by him in 1766, and given them the name they now bear, on account of the superior sailing vessels built there, and the remarkable skill the inhabitants display in their management. Neither Roggewin nor Bougainville have given their situation accurately, nor have these original errors been perfectly corrected by the unfortunate La Pérouse, or the

Englishman Edwards, who alone are known to have since touched on these islands; the former visited only the more northern islands; and the latter communicated no particulars of his voyage to the public. I therefore considered it worth the trouble to complete the survey, by examining those which lay to the south of La Pérouse's track.

I at first steered past the Society Islands, lying to leeward from Tahaiti, in order to rectify their longitude; and afterwards carefully endeavoured to avoid the course taken, to my knowledge, by any former navigator.

On the 25th of March we saw, to the north, the island of Guagein, and to the north-west that of Ulietea. When the western point of the latter lay due north from us, I found its longitude, according to our chronometers, $151^{\circ}26'30''$, which is nearly the same as on the maps.

The island of Maurura, on the contrary, is very inaccurately laid down; we found the longitude of the middle of this island, as we sailed past its southern coast, to be $152^{\circ}10'40''$. In the evening we had already cleared the Society Islands, and were pursuing a westward course.

On the following morning we perceived a cluster of low coral islands, connected by reefs, which, as usual, enclosed an inland sea. The country was covered with thick dwarf shrubs; and, in the whole group, we saw but one cocoa-tree rising solitarily above the bushes. A multitude of sea-birds, the only inhabitants of these islands, surrounded the vessel as we drew nearer. The group stretches about three miles from North to South, and is about two miles and a half broad. Guided by observations which, from the clearness of the atmosphere, I had been enabled to make correctly immediately before they came in sight, I estimated their latitude as $15^{\circ} 48' 7''$ South; their longitude as $154^{\circ} 30'$. We were the first discoverers of these Islands, and gave them the name of our meritorious navigator, Bellingshausen.

The night was stormy: morning indeed brought cheerful weather, but no cheerful feelings to our minds, for we had lost another member of our little wandering fraternity; he died, notwithstanding all the efforts of our skilful physician, of a dysentery, occasioned by the continual heat and the frequently damp air.

This same year the Tahaitians suffered much from a similar disease, and died in great numbers from the want of medical assistance. The Missionaries, who only desire to govern their minds, have never yet troubled themselves to establish any institution for the health of the body.

During this and the few succeeding days, the appearance of great flocks of sea-birds frequently convinced us that we must be in the neighbourhood of unknown islands; but as from the mast-head they can only be discerned at a proximity of fifteen or sixteen miles, we did not happen to fall in with them.

On the second of April, however, we passed a little uninhabited island, something higher than the coral islands usually are. Its latitude is $14^{\circ} 32' 39''$ South, and its longitude $168^{\circ} 6'$. I then considered it a new discovery, and gave it the name of my First Lieutenant, Kordinkoff; but, on my return, I learned that it had been previously discovered by Captain Freycinet, on his voyage from the Sandwich Islands to New Holland, in the year 1819; the narrative of which had not appear-

ed when I left Europe. The situation of this island, as he has given it, corresponds exactly with my own observation.

This same night, by favour of the clear moonshine, we saw the most easterly of the Navigators' Islands, Opoun, rising from the sea like a high round mountain. Westward from it, and close to each other, lie the little islands Leoneh * and Fanfueh.* Near these is Maouna, with another little island at its north-east point. Forty-five miles further lies Ojalava, and ten miles and a half from it Pola, the largest, highest, and most westward of the group: connected with them are several other small islands, which I shall hereafter have occasion to mention.

As the chart which accompanies this volume accurately describes the geographical situation of all these islands, it is only necessary here to remark, that it was drawn up from the most diligent astronomical observations.

All these islands are extremely fertile, and

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very thickly peopled. Ojalava surpasses any that I have seen, even Tahaiti itself, in luxuriant beauty. The landscape of Pola is majestic; the whole island is one large, high, round mountain, which strikingly resembles the Mauna-roa upon the island of Owahy: it is not quite so lofty indeed as the latter, but its altitude is about the same as that of the Peak of Teneriffe.

All the islands of the South Sea are more or less formed of coral reefs, which make secure harbours; the Navigators' Islands only are not indebted to these active little animals for this advantage. We sailed round all their coasts, and could find but one open bay, which runs far inland in the island of Maouna, opposite the small island already noticed off its north-east point.

The inhabitants of these islands are still far less civilized than were the Tahaitians when first discovered by Wallis. Those of Maouna especially are perhaps the most ferocious people to be met with in the South Sea. It was they who murdered Captain de Langle, the commander of the second ship under La Pérouse,

the naturalist Laman, and fourteen persons from the crews of both ships, on their venturing ashore; although they had loaded the natives with presents.

These savages attacked them with showers of stones; and the muskets of the Europeans after the first discharge, which unfortunately did but little execution, could not be reloaded speedily enough for their protection. Triumphant in their inhuman victory, they mangled and plundered the remains of their unfortunate victims.

We sailed to the scene of this dreadful occurrence, since called Massacre Bay. The appearance of the country was inviting; the shores were bordered with cocoa-trees, and the freshest vegetation enlivened the interior, but nothing betrayed that the island was inhabited; no smoke arose, and no canoe was to be seen; this was the more remarkable, as on La Pérouse's arrival, his ship, as soon as perceived by the natives, was surrounded by several hundred canoes laden with provisions. A small canoe, carrying only three men, at length rowed towards us; we laid to, and by signs gave permission to the savages to come on board; this

they could not resolve upon ; but one of them climbed the ship's side high enough to see over the deck, and handed to us a few cocoa-nuts, all the provisions they had brought ; a piece of iron, which we gave him in return, he pressed to his forehead in sign of thankfulness, and then bowed his head. He examined the deck a long time with prying and suspicious glances, without speaking a word ; then suddenly commenced a long pathetic harangue, growing more and more animated as he proceeded, and pointing with passionate gestures, alternately to the ship and the land. His eloquence was quite thrown away on us ; but the silence with which we listened, might probably lead him to suppose that we attached some importance to it. His confidence gradually increased, and he would perhaps have spoken longer, had not his attention been arrested by the approach of several canoes.

We were soon surrounded by the descendants of the barbarian murderers ; perhaps some of the actors in the atrocious deed might even themselves be amongst the crowd which now assembled around us. This wild troop appear-

ed timid at first, but our orator having encouraged them, they became so impudent and daring, that they seemed disposed to storm the ship. I ranged my sailors fully armed round the deck, to keep off such disagreeable visitors, but with strict orders to avoid hurting them. It was, however, only the bayonets and lances which prevented the multitude from climbing into the ship; and some of the most daring, by patiently enduring heavy and repeated blows, even succeeded in reaching the deck; they grasped with both hands any object they could cling to, so pertinaciously, that it required the united efforts of several of our strongest sailors to throw them overboard. Except a few cocoa-nuts, they brought us no kind of provisions, but by pantomimic gestures invited us to land; endeavouring to signify that we should be richly provided on shore with every thing we wanted. The savages had probably destined for us the fate of De Langle and his companions; they appeared unarmed, but had artfully concealed clubs and short lances in their canoes.

A very few of them, whom we permitted to

remain on deck, behaved as impudently as if they had been masters of the ship; they snatched from my hands some little presents I was about to distribute among them, exhibiting them to their companions in the canoes below. This excited amongst the latter a terrific rage, and, with noise and gestures resembling madness, they endeavoured to frighten us into compliance with their desire to come on board. Only one among them received the presents we made him, with any appearance of modesty or thankfulness; the others seemed to consider them as a tribute due to them. This more decorous personage bowed towards me in almost an European fashion, pressed the articles given him several times to his forehead, and then, turning to me, rubbed the point of his nose pretty roughly against mine. This young savage was probably a person of rank, who had received a particularly good education; he was of a cheerful temper, examined every thing very closely, and made many remarks to those in the canoes, which were apparently considered extremely witty, for he was always answered by bursts of laughter. The rest of his country-

men who remained on board, became very troublesome; like the beasts of the deserts, scarcely more wild than themselves, they tried to seize by main force whatever we would not willingly give them. One of them was so tempted by the accidental display of a sailor's bare arm, that he could not help expressing his horrible appetite for human flesh;—he snapt at it with his teeth, giving us to understand by unequivocal signs, that such food would be very palatable to him. This proof that we were in communication with cannibals, needed not the picture presently conjured up by our imagination, of the detestable meal which the unfortunate Frenchmen had doubtlessly afforded to their murderers, to complete our disgust and aversion, and to accelerate the expulsion of the remaining savages from our vessel.

The inhabitants of many of the South Sea islands are still cannibals, and most of them, even where this abominable propensity does not prevail, are of so artful and treacherous a character, that none should venture among them without the greatest precaution. Their friendliness arises from fear, and soon vanishes when

they think themselves the strongest, and are not exposed to vengeance. I would not even advise placing too much confidence in the inhabitants of Radack, who are certainly among the best of these islanders. It is only when ideas of right and wrong are steadily fixed, that man becomes really rational; before this, he is like other animals, the mere slave of his instincts.

The inhabitants of Maouna are probably the worst of these tribes; those we saw were at least five feet and a half in height, slender, their limbs of a moderate size, and strikingly muscular; I should have thought their faces handsome, had they not been disfigured by an expression of wildness and cruelty; their colour is dark brown; some let their long, straight, black hair hang down unornamented over neck, face, and shoulders; others wore it bound up, or frizzed and crisped by burning, and entangled like a cap round the head: these caps are coloured yellow, and make a striking contrast with the heads which remain black. Some, again, coloured their hair red, and curled it over their shoulders like a full-bottomed wig. A great deal of time must be required for this

mode of dressing, a proof that vanity may exist even among cannibals. The glass beads they obtained from us they immediately hung over their neck and ears, but had previously no ornaments on either. Most of them were quite naked; only a few had aprons made of the leaves of some kind of palm unknown to us, which from their various colours and red points resemble feathers. Since the time of *La Pérouse*, the fashion in tattooing appears to have very much altered: he found the inhabitants of the South Sea Islands so tattooed over the whole body, as to have the appearance of being clothed;—now most of them are not tattooed at all; and those few who are, not with various drawings as formerly, but merely stained blue from the hip to the knee, as though they had on short breeches.

In the canoes we saw a few women who were all very ugly: these disagreeable creatures gave us to understand that we should by no means find them cruel—a complaisance which did not render them the less disgusting. *La Pérouse* here describes some attractive females: these were as brown as the men, and as little dressed; their hair was cut short

off, with the exception of two bunches stained red, which hung over their faces.

Scarcely one of these savages was without some remarkable scar: one of them attracted our attention by a deep cut across the belly. We contrived to ask him how he got this cicatrice; and he pointed to his lance, from which it may be inferred that they are not unaccustomed to war, either with their neighbours or each other, and that they are possessed of skilful surgeons. No one of this people seemed to exercise any authority over the others. Either no chief accompanied the party who came to us, or the term does not signify much power or distinction.

The few fruits which they brought with them were exchanged for pieces of iron, old barrel-hoops, and glass beads; on the latter especially they set great value, and even brought forward some of their concealed arms, and offered them in exchange for this costly decoration. Meanwhile the crowd of canoes round the ship grew more and more numerous, and in the same proportion the boldness of the savages increased. Many of them rose up in their canoes, and made

long speeches to, or at us, accompanied by angry and menacing gestures, which drew shouts of laughter from their companions. At length the screaming and threatening with clubs and doubled fists became general. They began to make formal preparations for an attack, and we again had recourse to bayonets and lances to keep them at a distance. I confess that, at this moment, I had need of some self-command to overcome my inclination to revenge on the ferocious rabble the fate of La Pérouse's companions.

Our guns and muskets were all ready loaded. A sign from me would have spread dismay and death around us; and had we stayed longer among this brutal race, we must inevitably have made them feel the power of our cannon.

We therefore spread our sails, and the ship running swiftly before the wind, many of the canoes which had fastened themselves about her were suddenly upset. Those who fell into the water took their ducking very coolly, righted their canoes again, and threatened revenge on us with the most violent gestures. Several of them clung like cats to the sides of the ship, with nails which might have rivalled those of a

Chinese Mandarin; and we had recourse to long poles as the only means of freeing ourselves from such undesirable appendages.

At the western promontory of the island we again lay to, and purchased two pigs from some canoes which soon came up. The savages here in no other respect differed from those of Massacre Bay, than by conducting themselves in a rather more peaceable manner, probably from fear, as their number was small.

In the evening the island of Olajava appeared in sight; and about seven miles from a little island lying in its neighbourhood, several canoes, carrying two or three men each, rowed towards us, deterred neither by the distance nor the increasing darkness. Our visitors proved to be merry fishermen, for their carefully constructed little canoes adorned with inlaid muscle-shells, were amply provided with large angling hooks made of mother-of-pearl, attached to long fine lines, and various kinds of implements for fishing, and contained an abundance of fine live fish of the mackerel kind.

An expression of openness and confidence sat on the countenances of this people. Our

purchases were carried on with much gaiety and laughter on both sides. They gave us their fish, waited quietly for what we gave them in return, and were perfectly satisfied with their barter.

Their attention was strongly attracted to the ship. They examined her closely from the hold to the mast-head, and made many animated remarks to each other on what they saw. If they observed any manœuvres with the sails or tackle, they pointed with their fingers towards the spot, and appeared to watch with the most eager curiosity the effect produced.

It was evident that this people, sailors by birth, took a lively interest in whatever related to navigation. Their modest behaviour contrasted so strikingly with the impudent importunity of the inhabitants of Maouna, that we should have been inclined to consider them of a different race, but for their exact resemblance in every other particular, even in the dressing of their hair, though this was even more elaborately performed — an attention to appearance which is curious enough, when compared with the dirty, uncombed locks of European fishermen; but

among the South Sea Islanders fishing is no miserable drudgery of the lowest classes, but the pride and pleasure of the most distinguished, as hunting is with us. Tameamea, the mighty King of the Sandwich Islands, was a very clever fisherman, and as great an enthusiast in the sport as any of our European princes in the stag chase. As soon as the increasing darkness veiled the land from our sight, our visitors departed, and we could hear their regular measured song long after they were lost from view.

The little island they inhabit not being marked on any map, it is probably a new discovery. By what name the natives called it I could not learn; and therefore, to distinguish it from three other small islands lying to the north, mentioned by La Pérouse, I gave it the name of Fisher's Island. It rises almost perpendicularly from the sea to a considerable height, and is overgrown with thick wood.

On the following day we sailed with a brisk wind to the island of Olajava, for the purpose of surveying the coast. A number of canoes put off from the land, but could not overtake the ship; and I would not lie to, on account of the hinderance it occasioned to our work. In the

afternoon we found ourselves near the little island lying off the north-west point of Olajava, called by La Pérouse the Flat Island. A hill situated in its centre has, in fact, a flat surface, which La Pérouse, at a distance of thirty miles, mistook for the whole island, because the low land which surrounds it was not within the compass of his horizon.

For the same reason he could not observe that the eastern part of this island is connected with the western coast of Olajava by two reefs forming a basin, in the middle of which is a small rock. If these be indeed coral reefs, which they certainly resemble, they are the only ones I have remarked in the Navigators' Islands.

The Flat Island, which, for the reason above mentioned, occupies a much larger space on our map than on that of La Pérouse, is entirely overgrown with wood, and has a very pleasant appearance. At a little distance from this, to the north-west, another little island, which does not appear to have been observed by that Voyager, rises perpendicularly from the sea. Its sloping back is crested with a row of cocoa-trees so regularly arranged, that it is difficult to conceive them planted by the unassisted hand

of Nature; viewed laterally from a short distance, they present the form of a cock's-comb, on which account I gave the island this name, to distinguish it from the rest. On its western side a high conical rock is covered from top to bottom with a variety of plants, evincing the prolific powers of Nature in these regions, where vegetation is thus luxuriantly fastened on the most unfavourable soils.

North-west of this rock lies a third small island, exceeding both the others in elevation: its sides fall precipitously to the sea, and the upper surface describes a horizontal line thickly clothed with beautiful trees. As its circumference is only three miles and a half, it can hardly be the same that La Pérouse has called Calinasseh. Probably he did not observe this island at all, but took the high round mountain on the low north-east point of Pola for a separate island, to which he gave the name of Calinasseh. The promontory of Pola deceived us also at a little distance, but a closer examination convinced us of our error, and I transferred the name of Calinasseh to the above-mentioned small island.

When the Flat Island lay about three miles to our right, the wind again died away. This opportunity was not lost by the natives of Olajava, who had all the while followed us in their canoes. They exerted themselves to the utmost, and their well worked little vessels swiftly skimmed the smooth surface of the sea to the accompaniment of measured cadences, till they at last reached the ship.

A horde of canoes now put off towards us from the Flat Island, and we were soon surrounded by immense numbers of them, locked so closely together, that they seemed to form a bridge of boats, serving for a market well stocked with fruits and pigs, and swarming with human beings as thick as ants on an ant-hill: they were all in high spirits, and with many jests extolled the goods they brought, making much more noise than all the traffic of the London Exchange. Even on our own deck we could only make ourselves heard by screaming in each other's ears.

Our bartering trade proceeded, however, to our mutual satisfaction. Those who were too far off to reach us endeavoured by all sorts of

gesticulation, and leaping into the air, to attract our notice. Many of the canoes were in this manner upset,—an accident of little consequence to such expert swimmers, and which only excited the merriment of their companions.

Accident gave us specimens of their extraordinary skill in diving. We threw some pieces of barrel-hoops into the sea, when numbers of the islanders instantly precipitated themselves to the bottom, and snatched up the booty, for the possession of which we could plainly distinguish them wrestling with each other under the water. They willingly obeyed our orders not to come on deck, and fastened their goods to a rope, by which they were drawn on board, waiting with confidence for what we should give them, and appearing content with it. Some few had brought arms with them, but for trading, not warlike purposes; and although so vastly superior to us in numbers, they behaved with great modesty. We saw no scars upon them, like those of their neighbours of Maouna—a favourable sign, though they certainly seemed to belong to the same race. It

would be interesting to know the cause of this striking difference.

In less than an hour we had obtained upwards of sixty large pigs, and a superfluity of fowls, vegetables, and fruits of various kinds, covering our whole deck, all of which cost us only some pieces of old iron, some strings of glass beads, and about a dozen nails. The blue beads seemed to be in highest estimation. A great fat pig was thought sufficiently paid for by two strings of them; and when they became scarce with us, the savages were glad to give two pigs for one such necklace.

Some of the fruits and roots they brought were unknown to us; and their great size proved the strength of the soil. The bananas were of seven or eight species, of which I had hitherto seen but three in the most fruitful countries. Some of them were extremely large, and of a most excellent flavour. One of the fruits resembled an egg in size and figure; its colour was a bright crimson; and on the following day when we celebrated the Easter festival after the Russian fashion, they supplied to us the place of the Easter eggs.

I must yet mention two more articles of our marketing—namely, tame pigeons and parrots. The former are widely different from those of Europe both in shape and in the splendour of their plumage; their claws are also differently formed. The parrots are not larger than a sparrow, of a lively green and red, with red tails more than four times the length of their whole bodies. All these birds, of which great numbers were brought to us, were so tame, that they would sit quietly on the hand of their master, and receive their food from his mouth; the inclination for taming them, and the method of treatment, is favourable evidence of the mildness which characterises this people.

How many other unknown plants and animals may exist among these islands, where Nature is so profuse! and how much is it to be regretted that no secure anchorage can be found, which would enable an European expedition to effect a landing with proper precautions. Some idea may be formed of the dense population of the Flat Island, from the fact that, small as is its extent, above sixty canoes, each containing seven or eight men, came to us

from it in less than an hour; and had we stayed longer, the canoes must have amounted to some hundreds, as the whole sea between us and the island was rapidly covering with increasing numbers.

Our market became still more animated when, the ship's provision being completed, I gave permission to the sailors to trade each for himself; as hitherto, to avoid confusion, the bargains had all been made by one person. Now some wanted one thing, some another from the canoes; and buttons, old bits of cloth, and pieces of glass, were offered in exchange. The noise became louder and louder; and the sailors laid in such a stock of their own, that for weeks afterwards their breakfast-table was always provided with a roasted pig stuffed with bananas, and their palates gratified with abundance of delicious fruits. They unanimously declared that they had never seen so rich a country.

Our trade was interrupted by the appearance of a great canoe surrounded with lesser ones, which, advancing towards us, drew the attention of all the natives. They called out

Eige-ea Eige, and hastened to give place to the new-comers. The canoe, rowed by ten men, large and elegantly embellished with muscle shells, soon approached us. The heads of the rowers and of the steersman were decorated with green boughs, probably in token of peace.

In the fore part of the vessel, on a platform covered with matting, sat an elderly man cross-legged in the Asiatic fashion, holding a green silk European parasol, which we conjectured must have belonged to one of the unfortunate companions of *La Pérouse*, and have been obtained by this chief from *Maouna*. His clothing consisted of a very finely plaited grass-mat, hanging like a mantle from his shoulders, and a girdle round his waist. His head was enveloped in a piece of white stuff, in the manner of a turban. He spoke a few words, accompanied by a motion of the hand, to his countrymen or subjects, who immediately made way for his canoe to come alongside; and on our invitation he came on board attended by three persons.

He was not tattooed, was about six feet high, thin, but vigorous and muscular. His

features were not handsome but agreeable; his countenance was intelligent and reflective; his behaviour modest and decorous.

On entering the ship, he inquired for the *Eigeh*, and I was pointed out to him; he approached me, bowed his head a little, spoke a few words which I did not understand, and then took hold of my elbows with both hands, raised them up several times, and repeated the English words "Very good." After this welcome, which I returned in an European manner, he gave me to understand that he was *Eigeh* of the Flat Island, and commanded his attendants to lay at my feet the presents he had brought for me, consisting of three fine fat pigs, which he called *boaka*, and some fruits. I presented him in return with a large hatchet, two strings of blue beads, and a coloured silk handkerchief, which I bound for him myself over his turban. The *Eigeh* appeared excessively happy in the possession of these treasures, and tried to express his thankfulness by various gesticulations, and the repetition of the words "Very good." He also seemed to hold the blue beads in great estimation, and could not feel convinced that all those

riches actually belonged to him. He inquired in pantomime if he might really keep both necklaces; and on my assuring him that he might, the old man forgot his dignity, and jumped about like a boy with the beads in his hand, calling out, "Very good! very good!" A fat treasurer shared the joy of his lord, and punctiliously imitated its expression, though not without some difficulty. When this tumult of pleasure had a little subsided, the latter produced a small basket very prettily plaited, and provided with a lid, and placed in it the costly acquisitions of the *Eigeh*; who himself took from it a Spanish dollar, and endeavoured to make me comprehend the question, whether this would purchase more blue beads.

To judge if he had any idea of the value of money, I offered him a single bead for his dollar; he immediately closed with the bargain, and, fearing that I might repent of mine, snatched up the bead and thrust the money into my hand. I returned it to him; but, to his delight and astonishment, left him in possession of the bead. I now tried to learn from him how he came by this coin.

He soon comprehended my meaning, pointed to the south, named Tongatabu, one of the Friendly Islands, which are some days' voyage from his own, and gave us to understand that he had sailed thither in his own vessel, and had there met with a ship from whose *Eigeh* he had obtained the dollar as well as the parasol. The boldness and skill these islanders display in the management of their fragile canoes, guiding them on long voyages merely by the sun and stars, in a region where the trade-wind is seldom constant, is most surprising.

I also made some little presents to the suite of the *Eigeh*, and the good people were lost in amazement at their costliness, till their attention was withdrawn from them to the ship itself. Their inquisitive eyes wandered in all directions, and their astonishment and admiration was loudly expressed. The *Eigeh* contemplated the objects before him with more tranquillity, and asked but few questions, having already seen a ship, which his companions probably had not.

He remarked, however, with wonder the num-

ber of our guns and muskets, which he called *Puas*; counted them several times over, and clasped his hands above his head to express his surprise. He intimated to us that he knew the effect they produced, by pointing to a gun, trying to imitate the sound of the report, and then closing his eyes and hanging his head. He explained this to his companions, who were so terrified by what he told them, that they would not again venture near the guns.

Meanwhile our traffic was renewed, though rather confusedly, from the impatience of the islanders to dispose of their property; the *Eigeh* grew angry at this, and pressed me much to fire my *puas* on the boisterous mob. Was he then really acquainted with their destructive power, and so indifferent about human life? Or, was he aware of the possibility of firing with blank cartridges? This remained uncertain.

A telescope which I held in my hand attracted the observation of the chief, who took it for a gun. I directed him to look through it; but the sudden vision of the distant prospect brought so close to his eye that he could even distinguish the people on the strand, so terrified

him, that nothing could induce him to touch the magic instrument again.

He took much pains to persuade me to visit him on shore, embraced me repeatedly, and gave me to understand that we might cast anchor by his island, and that we should there have as many pigs as we pleased. At length he took my arm, and leading me to the railing, whence we could see the throngs of islanders busied with their barter, pointed to the women among them, whom he called *waraki*, shook his head, and said "No very good." Then he pointed to the island, and said in a kind tone, "Very good *waraki*." I very easily withstood this last temptation, strong as the *Eigeh* seemed to think it; but I would willingly have seen the beautiful country, had it been possible to make a landing under the protection of our guns, for which however the wind was not favourable: a longer stay might besides have rendered our situation critical. We had a perfect calm, and were driven by a strong current towards the land; I therefore took advantage of the first puff of wind to make as much sail as I could, amidst the loud lamentations of the islanders,

who expressed their regret in a mournful parting song.

The *Eigeh*, perceiving that his invitations would not be accepted, took a friendly leave of us : he seized me again by my elbows, hung his head, repeated several times the word "*Marua*," and departed. The canoes did not follow him, but remained near us, as our vessel could make but little way on account of the slackness of the wind.

The traffic was now over, and the attention of our companions therefore free to observe all our proceedings in the ship. Some of them thought to amuse us by making leaps into the air, and then begged for a reward. We did not disappoint them, and the tricks were reiterated, till a sudden gust of wind changed their merriment into consternation. The canoes immediately ahead of the ship could not leave its passage clear in time to prevent our running down great numbers of them. In a moment our majestic vessel had distanced the multitude of its diminutive attendants, leaving extreme confusion behind it. The islanders' skill in navigation, however, enabled them speedily to

recover from the shock, and the wind falling again, they succeeded in overtaking us. In the effort to accomplish this, they left all those to their fate who were still swimming about in search of their lost oars, and took no notice whatever of their cries for assistance. We pointed their attention to their forsaken companions, but the volatile creatures only laughed, and not a single canoe would return to take them in. At length, towards nightfall, they left us with the cry of "*Marua! Marua!*"

Among these islanders we observed the disease of elephantism, from which the Tahaitians suffer so much; otherwise they appeared healthy. If, as the Tahaitian captain said, they are subject to the Friendly Islanders, and must pay a yearly tribute to Tongatabu, the island Maouna, which Nature herself has made a strong fortress, and whose inhabitants are such fierce warriors, is probably excepted.

The following day we surveyed the magnificent island of Pola. Its lofty mountain was enveloped in thick white clouds, which seemed to roll down its sides, while the majestic summit rose into a cloudless region above them.

The most luxuriant vegetation covers even its highest points. From a considerable elevation down the sea-shore, the island presents a charming amphitheatre of villages and plantations, and confirmed us in the opinion, that the Navigators' Islands are the most beautiful in the Southern Ocean, and consequently in the whole world.

The shore was thronged with people, some of whom pushed their canoes into the sea to approach us, and others stood quietly watching us as we sailed past. The recurrence of a calm enabled the islanders to reach us, and our traffic with them was carried on in the same manner as with the natives of the Flat Island.

To avoid repetition, I shall only remark, that they seemed more shy than our yesterday's friends; that one of them offered us a red paint for sale; and that another cheated us. The former daubed his face with some of the colour to show us its use. Since none of them were painted with it, it is probably only used in war, or on grand occasions. The cheat remained, when the darkness had driven the other islanders homewards, bargaining with us for the price

of a hog: a sack was lowered to him with the required payment, and when drawn up was found to contain a dog. The rascal had made off, but we sent a bullet after him, which seemed to produce no small dismay.

On the following day, the 7th of April, having completed our observations, we took our course with a fresh trade-wind and full sails towards the north-west, in a direction where, according to the opinion of hydrographers, islands must lie.

With respect to our geographical observations on the Navigators' Islands, I must make one remark—that all the longitudes found by us differ from those of *La Pérouse* by from 20 to 23', and the points observed lying so many miles more easterly than he considered them. His observations were grounded on the distance of the moon, which always gives a false longitude unless there is an opportunity of seeing the moon at equal distances, right and left, from the sun. Our longitudes were fixed by good chronometers, which having been regulated at Cape Venus, could not in so short a time have made any important error.