

Banks Journal

28 November 1769

28. Foul wind continued and this morn the ship was 2 leagues at least to leward of yesterday. The Continent rose in gentle hills but did not appear so fertile when near it as it did at a distance; several large heppas were in sight one the largest we have seen, to appearance far inland.

29 November 1769

29. Wind as foul as ever and the ship moved more to leward, so we res[o]lvd to bear away for a bay which we had Passd. We did so and by 10 came to an anchor in a most spatious and well shelterd harbour or rather collection of harbours almost innumerable formd by Islands.

Canoes crowded upon us from all quarters so that we soon had 37 large and small about us; the people in them traded very fairly for what they had and shewd much fear of us, especialy if they saw any thing like a gun which they were well acquainted with. They became however soon a little more bold and while we were at dinner one of them went to the Buoy which they attempted to tow away: a musquet was fird over them without effect [and?] small shot at them but they were too far off for that to take effect. A ball was then fird at them which was thought to strike one of them as they immediately threw out the Buoy which by this time they had got into their Canoe; a round shot was then fird over them which struck the water and then went ashore; 2 or 3 canoes landed immediately and the men ran about on the beach as if in search of it. After this we calld to them and in a little time they all returnd to the ship.

By this time she was properly moor'd and the Boats out, so we set out for the shore. At our parting from the ship not a canoe stirrd which we Judgd a good sign, but no sooner had we set a foot on the shore about _ of a mile from the ship but every Canoe put off in a moment and pulld towards us. We were in a sandy cove behind the two heads of which the most of them landed, one or 2 only in sight; out of these they came running with every man his arms, others appeard on the tops of the hills and numbers from behind each head of the Cove so that we were in a moment surrounded by (the gentlemen in the ship say) 5 or 600 men tho we I beleive never saw more than 200 of them. We now every man expected to be attackd but did not chuse to begin hostilities so the Captn and myself marchd up to meet them. They crowd a good deal but did not offer to meddle with us, tho every man had his arms almost lifted up to strike. We brought them towards the party and made a line signing to them that they were not to pass it: they did not at first but by this time a party from the other side had come up and mixd with our people. They now began to sing their war song but committed no hostility till 3 steppd to each of our boats and attempted to draw them ashore. It was now time to fire, we whose Guns were loaded with small shot did so which drove them back. One man attempted to Rally them; he who was not 20 yards from us came down towards us waving his *Patoo patoo* and calling to his companions; Dr Solander whose gun was not dischargd fird at him on which he too ran. They now got upon rising ground about us from whence we dislogd them by firing musquet balls, none of which took effect farther than frightening them. In this way we were about _

of an hour, resolving to maintain our ground, when the ship had brought her broadside to bear and fired at the Indians who were on the tops of the hills. The balls went quite over them notwithstanding which they went off and at last left us our cove quite to ourselves, so that the musquets were laid down upon the ground and all hands employed in gathering Cellery which was here very plentiful. An Old Indian now appeared who had been on board in the morn with two more, they came immediately to us and proved to be his wife and brother. He said that another brother of his was struck with the small shot and asked whether he would dye: we told him no and gave him a musquet ball with some small shot telling him that it was the latter with which he was struck, but that if they again attacked us we would shoot them with the former which would infallibly kill them. After this we went into the boats and rowed to another Cove in the same Island near which was a high hill from whence we might have a good view of the bay. We climbed up it and from thence saw that the bay we were in was indeed a most surprising place: it was full of an innumerable quantity of Islands forming as many harbours, which must be as smooth as mill pools as they Landlock one another numberless times. Every where round us we could see large Indian towns, houses and cultivations: we had certainly seen no place near so populous as this one was very near us, from whence several Indians came to us taking however great pains to shew us that they were unarmed. They accompanied us down to the boat. Night coming on we went onboard carrying much Celery, the only plant of any use even to us, for of all the places I have landed in this was the only one which did not produce one new vegetable.

30 November 1769

30. Several canoes came off to the ship very Early but sold little or nothing, indeed no merchandice that we can shew them seems to take with them. Our Island cloth which used to be so much esteemed has now intirely lost its value: they have for some days told us that they have of it ashore and shewed us small peices in their Ears which they said was of their own manufacture, this at once accounts for their having been once so fond of it and now setting so little value upon it. Towards noon however they sold a little dryd fish for paper chiefly or very white Island Cloth. Among other things they told us that the man who was shot at with small shot on the [2]7th was dead, 3 shot they said struck his Eye and I suppose found there an easy passage to his brain.

In the Even we went ashore upon the Continent: the people received us very civilly and as tame as we could wish. One general observation I here set down, that they Always after one nights consideration have acknowledged our superiority but hardly before: I have often seen a man whose next neighbour was wounded or killed by our shot not give himself the trouble to enquire how or by what means he was hurt, so that at the time of their attacks they I believe work themselves up into a kind of artificial Courage which does not allow them time to think much.

1 December 1769

1. Several Canoes were on board by Day break and sold some things chiefly for Indian Cloth and quart bottles. The day misty and stewy: the boats were on shore on the Island which we searched on the 29th with so little success that we did not think it worth while to go ashore.

It is now a long time since I have mentioned their custom of Eating human flesh, as I was loth a long time to believe that any human beings could have among them so brutal a custom. I am now

however convincd and shall here give a short account of what we have heard from the Indians concerning it. At *Taoneroa* the first place we landed in on the Continent the boys who we had on board mentiond it of their own accords, asking whether the meat they eat was not human flesh, as they had no Idea of any animal but a man so large till they saw our sheep: they however seemd ashamd of the custom, saying that the tribe to which they belongd did not use it but that another very near did. Since that we have never faild wherever we went ashore and often when we convers'd with canoes to ask the question; we have without one exception been answerd in the affirmative, and several times as at Tolaga and today the people have put themselves into a heat by defending the Custom, which Tubia who had never before heard of such a thing takes every Occasion to speak ill of, exhorting them often to leave it off. They however as universaly agree that they eat none but the bodies of those of their enemies who are killd in war, all others are buried.

2 December 1769

2. Boats went ashore on the Island again. I do not know what tempted Dr Solander and myself to go there where we almost knew nothing was to be got but wet skins, which we had very sufficiently for it rained all the time we were ashore as hard as I ever saw it.

3 December 1769

3. Many Canoes were on board in the morn, one very large which carried 82 people. After breakfast Dr Solander and myself went ashore on the Continent; we found few plants and saw but few people but they were most perfectly civil; we went by their invitation to their little town which was situated in the bottom of a cove without the least defence. One of the old men here shewd us the instruments with which they stain their bodies which was exactly like those usd at Otahite. We saw also here the man who was shot at on the 29th in attempting to steal the Buoy; the ball had gone through the fleshy part of his arm and grazd his breast; the wound was open to the air without the smallest application upon it yet it had as good an appearance and seemd to give him as little pain as if he had had the best dressings to it. We gave him a musquet ball and with a little talking to he seemd very fully sensible of the escape he had had.

In the Even we went ashore on another Island where were many more people than we had seen in the morn, who livd in the same peacable stile and had very large plantations of sweet potatoes, yamms &c. all about their village. They receivd us much as our freinds in the morning had done and like them shewd much satisfaction at the little presents of necklaces &c. which were given to them.

4 December 1769

4. Our Old man came on board and brought with him his brother who had been shot with small shot on the 29th; it had slanted along his thigh which I suppose had not less than 100 shotts in it. This wound was likewise without any application and seemd to give him little or no pain but was crusted over with a hard crust, natures plaister, equal maybe when she chuses to apply it to any that art has contrivd.

After breakfast we went ashore at a large Indian fort or heppah; a great number of people immediatly crowd about us and sold almost a boat load of fish in a very short time. They then went and shewd us their plantations which were very large of Yamms, Cocos, and sweet potatoes;

and after having a little laugh at our seine, which was a common kings seine, shewd us one of theirs which was 5 fathom deep and its length we could only guess, as it was not stretchd out, but it could not from its bulk be less than 4 or 500 fathom. Fishing seems to be the cheif business of this part of the country; about all their towns are abundance of netts laid upon small heaps like hay cocks and thatchd over and almost every house you go into has netts in it making.

After this they shewd us a great rarity 6 plants of what they calld *Aouta* from whence they made cloth like the Otahite cloth; the plant provd exactly the same, as the name is the same, as is usd in the Islands, *Morus papyrifera* Linn., the same plant as is usd by the Chinese to make paper. Whether the Climate does not well agree with it I do not know, but they seemd to value it very much and that it was very scarce among them I am inclin'd to beleive, as we have not yet seen among them peices large enough for any use but sticking into the holes of their Ears.

In the afternoon we went to a very distant part of the bay, the people here were very few. All but one old man ran away from us; he accompanied us where ever we went and seemd much pleas'd with the little presents we made him. Near where we landed was a little fort built upon a small rock, surrounded by the sea at high water and accessible only by a ladder. We expressd a desire to go there; he said there was his wife but if we would promise to practice no indecencies towards her he would accompany us; this we most readily did and he was as good as his word. The ascent was so difficult that tho there were stepps and a pole we found it dangerous enough. When we came up there were in it 3 women who on our first coming cried, but presents soon put them into better humour. There were in all only 3 houses, but the situation as I have before describd was so steep that the inhabitants of them might easily defend themselves against almost any force that could be brought against them.

5 December 1769

5. A small spirt of fair wind before day break made us heave up the anchor in a great hurry, but before we were well underway it was as foul as ever so we were obligd to atempt turning out. Many canoes came from all parts of the bay which is by far the most populous place we have been in. In the middle of the day we were becalmd and caught many fish with hooks. About 10 at night as we were going through the outer heads on a sudden we wer[e] becalmd so that the ship would neither wear nor stay: in a moment an eddy tide took hold of us and hustled us so fast towards the land that before the Officers resolvd what was best to be done the ship was within a Cables length of the breakers, we had 13 fathom water but the ground so foul that they dar'd not drop an anchor. The eddy now took another turn and set her along shore opening another bay but we were too near the rocks to trust to that: the pinnace was orderd to be hoisted out in an instant to take the ship in tow, Every man in her was I beleive sensible of the Danger we were in so no one spard to do his best to get her out fast. The event however shewd how liable such situations must be to Confusion: they lowerd down too soon and she stuck upon a gun: from this she must be thrust by main force, in doing which they had almost ove[r]set her which would have tumbled out her oars: no man thought of running in the gun: at last that was done and she was afloat, her crew was soon in her and she went to her duty. A faint breeze of wind now sprung up off the land and with that and towing she to our great Joy got head way again, at a time when she was so near the shore that Tupia who was not sensible of our danger was conversing with the Indians ashore, who made themselves very distinctly heard notwithstanding the roaring of the breakers.

We were all happy in our breeze and fine clear moonlight; myself went down to bed and sat upon my cott undressing myself when I felt the ship strike upon a rock, before I could get upon my legs she struck again. I ran upon deck but before I could get there the danger was over; fortunately the rock was to wind ward of us so she went off without the least damage and we got into the proper channel, where the officers who had examind the bay declard there to be no hidden dangers - much to our satisfaction as the almost certainty of being eat as soon as you come ashore adds not a little to the terrors of shipwreck.

6 December 1769

6. In the morn we were clear of all our dangers and at sea to our no small satisfaction notwithstanding the wind was as foul as possible.

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