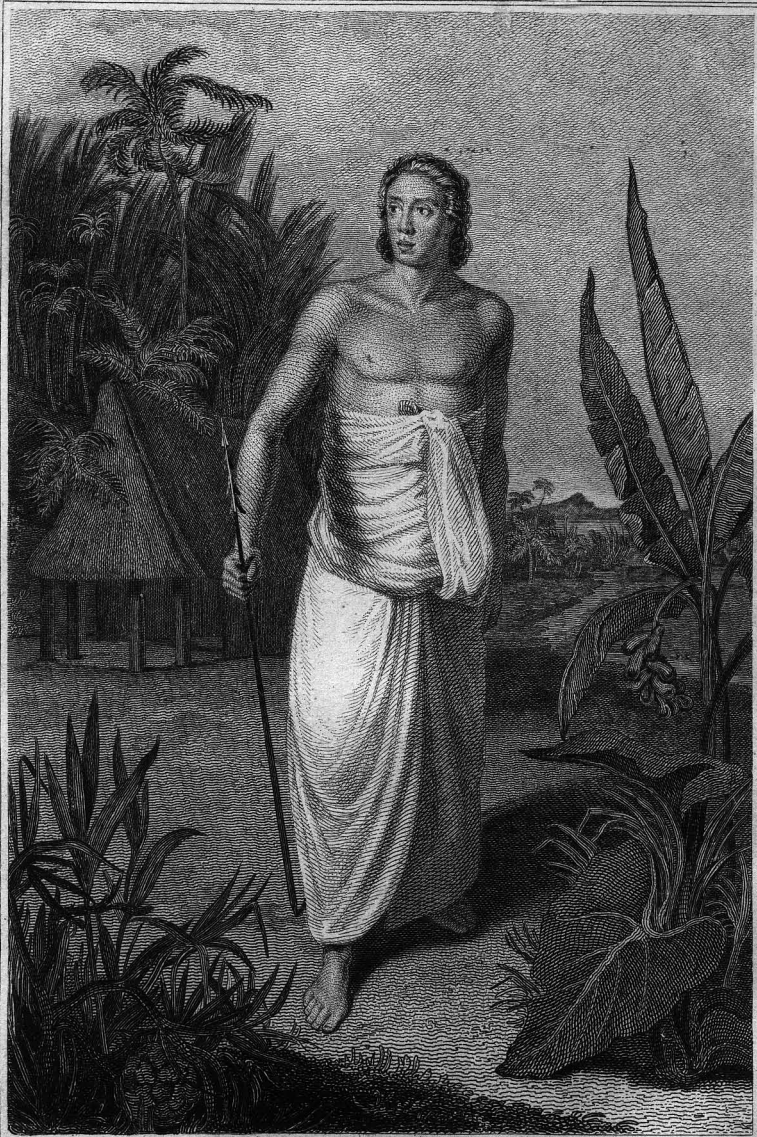


ACCOUNT
OF THE
TONGA ISLANDS.

T. DAVISON, LOMBARD-STREET, WHITEFRIARS, LONDON.



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MR. MARINER in the COSTUME of the TONGA ISLANDS.

AN ACCOUNT
OF
THE NATIVES
OF THE
TONGA ISLANDS,
IN THE SOUTH PACIFIC OCEAN.

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WITH
AN ORIGINAL GRAMMAR AND VOCABULARY
OF
THEIR LANGUAGE.
COMPILED AND ARRANGED FROM THE EXTENSIVE COMMUNICATIONS OF
MR. WILLIAM MARINER,
SEVERAL YEARS RESIDENT IN THOSE ISLANDS.

BY JOHN MARTIN, M. D.

"The savages of America inspire less interest . . . since celebrated navigators have made known to us the inhabitants of the islands of the South Sea . . . The state of half-civilization in which those islanders are found gives a peculiar charm to the description of their manners . . . Such pictures, no doubt, have more attraction than those which portray the solemn gravity of the inhabitant of the banks of the Missouri or the Marañon."

Preface to Humboldt's Personal Narrative.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

SECOND EDITION, WITH ADDITIONS.

LONDON:
JOHN MURRAY, ALBEMARLE-STREET.

1818.

TO
THE RIGHT HONOURABLE
SIR JOSEPH BANKS, BART. G. C. B.
PRESIDENT OF THE ROYAL SOCIETY,
&c. &c. &c.
THE FOLLOWING ACCOUNT
OF THE
NATIVES OF THE TONGA ISLANDS,
IN WHICH IT IS ATTEMPTED PARTICULARLY TO SET FORTH
THEIR MANNERS, CUSTOMS, RELIGION,
AND LANGUAGE,
FROM THE ORAL DESCRIPTIONS OF AN ENGLISHMAN
LONG RESIDENT THERE,
IS MOST WILLINGLY INSCRIBED
AS A SMALL, YET APPROPRIATE TRIBUTE
OF RESPECT,
BY
HIS VERY OBEDIENT AND
DEVOTED HUMBLE SERVANT,
JOHN MARTIN.

PREFACE

TO THE

SECOND EDITION.

THE flattering reception with which the present work has already been honoured by a liberal public, and the appearance of a French translation of it at Paris, in November last, are convincing proofs of the interest, at least, which the subject has excited. Whilst preparing this second edition, it has been my good fortune to meet with an additional weight of testimony in favour of the facts related ; and not to detain the reader with unnecessary matter, I shall at once lay open the source of this new proof of the strict fidelity of Mr. Mariner's representations. Jeremiah Higgins,

a young man belonging to the crew of the *Port au Prince**, made his escape from the *Tonga Islands* about thirteen months before *Mr. Mariner*, that is to say, after a residence there of two years and eleven months. Being very young, he was one of the first who acquired a tolerable knowledge of the language; he practised their dances, and learned their songs;—and although he had not the advantage of those better opportunities which fell in *Mr. Mariner's* way, and consequently is not so intimately acquainted, in certain points of view, with the political sentiments, and moral notions and habits especially of the higher classes of the natives, which the superior education of the latter, as well as his relative condition among the *Tonga chiefs*, rendered him more apt to acquire;—still, the information obtained from *Higgins* must undoubtedly be considered valuable, if only regarded as generally corroborative, and in a few instances

* He served on board this vessel in the capacity of what is technically termed a landsman, and was then about fifteen or sixteen years of age.

somewhat corrective of Mr. Mariner's statements.

For three or four years (until December last) Jeremiah resided with his father, an old inhabitant of the town of Aylesbury, a man well known, and much respected; and in the employ of many farmers in the county as a hay-binder. Some time after the publication of the first edition of the present work, a copy was sent to Jeremiah, with a request, that he would particularly remark and make a memorandum of whatever he conceived not to be correctly stated. In the month of November last, Mr. Higgins, the father, happening to be in town upon some business, called to inform me, that his son had been exceedingly pleased with the perusal of the work, particularly as it served to corroborate many things which he had previously related to his friends and neighbours, and to which he had reason to think they did not always give the credit that was due; inso-much that he began to be heartily tired of answering their numerous inquiries. Among those to whom he had given the

most information prior to the publication of the work was Mr. T. Woodman, a very respectable and intelligent farmer, residing at Stone, near Aylesbury. As this gentleman had also read the book, I wrote to him to request the favour of his sentiments, with regard to the two unconnected sources of information, which had fallen in his way. From the answer which he obligingly sent me, dated Stone, 4th December, 1817, I beg leave to extract the following paragraph, as bearing immediately upon the subject.

“ I most certainly have many times, before your publication appeared in the world, asked Jeremiah Higgins many questions respecting the inhabitants of the Tonga islands; but as he is a young man of a reserved disposition, the communications he made were always desultory, unconnected, and confined. Yet I cannot have the least doubt, or the least hesitation in saying, that in the accounts he gave, he spoke of the very same people, and of the very same incidents, which are related by Mr. Mariner, in the work you have recently publish-

“ ed. He spoke to me of the capture of
“ the vessel he sailed in : of the siege and
“ reduction of the Tonga great fortress : of
“ the effects of the great guns : of the pa-
“ nic and consternation thence produced :
“ of their religious and political convoca-
“ tions, &c. &c., which are events so
“ exactly detailed and portrayed in the
“ work you have given, that I find not the
“ least difference between the one and the
“ other, save that the accounts given by
“ Mr. Mariner are more amplified, and
“ better arranged in bearing reference to
“ the religious and political proceedings
“ relating to their society.”

That no source of information or of satisfactory proof might be left untried, I engaged Jeremiah Higgins to come up to town, and now it was, for the first time, that he and Mr. Mariner met, since their separation at the Tonga islands. He remained with me till the latter end of December, and I had abundant reason to be satisfied with the accordance between his several statements, extracted from him by various questions, and those which I had

formerly received from Mr. Mariner. When they spoke the Tonga language together, I noticed the similarity of their pronunciation and accent: when Higgins sang and exhibited some Tonga dances in presence of several of my friends, whilst Mr. Mariner also sang and beat time according to the native method *, we were struck with the accuracy of the description of these amusements in the “voyages of Captain Cook.” But to be brief, however satisfied I have hitherto been with Mr. Mariner’s details, I issue this second

* To give greater effect to the scene, Mr. Mariner was dressed as represented in the frontispiece, and Higgins’s only apparel was a sort of circular apron, made of loose strips of matting very thickly set, and at the top plaited so as to form a band round the lower waist, (the pelvis) from which the strips hung down nearly to the knees: this was to represent the apron of the leaves of the *chi* tree, used by the natives on such occasions. He had also a wreath of artificial flowers round the head, and another round the neck. He is beautifully tattowed from the hips nearly to the knees, agreeably to the custom of the Tonga people. Upon them it appears of a black colour, but upon a white man it causes the skin to resemble soft blue satin. The neatness, and I might almost say, the mathematical precision with which the pattern is executed, far surpasses the expectation of all who see it for the first time.

edition with a twofold confidence, for now I can assure the candid reader that, endeavouring to divest my mind of all prejudices, I have carefully and assiduously questioned Jeremiah Higgins, at various times, with regard to the events at the Tonga islands while he was there, and the manners and customs of the people, and have always found his answers (though for obvious reasons somewhat more confined) yet so consonant and agreeable, as far as they went, with Mr. Mariner's accounts, that I feel quite certain of the truth of the great outlines of the matter contained in the following sheets, and the highest degree of confidence in all the details. Such is the additional testimony which the present work has obtained, and I flatter myself that I have used all the means within my reach to render it, if possible, worthy of the honour which public approbation has already bestowed upon it.

A complete account of all the different tribes inhabiting the islands of the Pacific Ocean would no doubt form a most interesting portion of human history, and

supply, in a great measure, the history of the earlier ages of mankind, so much obscured as they are by romance and fabulous traditions. The infancy of human society in our times probably differs not much, except in local circumstances, from that which existed four thousand years ago :—by a scrupulous and attentive examination of the *present*, therefore, we may be able to form some tolerable judgment of the *past*. And this is not, I apprehend, a matter of idle curiosity or of useless knowledge, as some have the presumption to cry out ;—for all that regards man, whether it be good or evil, is highly interesting to man ;—the good, that we may either adopt or improve ;—the evil, that we may either avoid or remedy :—and as the history of the human individual cannot be perfectly understood, without examining him in his infancy,—so a true knowledge of the species in a state of society is not to be thoroughly and easily acquired, without a suitable investigation into the incipient stages of the social compact ; for there it is that the passions of man are

more openly and strongly developed,—his imaginations and prejudices less concealed by artificial coverings,—and his actions, generally speaking, under much less restraint. Moreover, as the education of children ought, in one point of view, to be chiefly founded upon a knowledge of their notions and habits, so ought all attempts at civilization (which is only another kind of education) to be built upon our acquaintance with the customs and modes of thinking of the people on whom we wish to superinduce new trains of habits and sentiments,—so that we may educate or lead them out of bad into better,—out of imperfection towards perfection. It is in morals much the same as in physics; if we wish to alter the qualities of a substance, we must first examine what those qualities are, that we may see in what way they are best capable of being changed. It is true, by hard labour with the hammer, we may bend a piece of cold iron; but observation and experience teach us, that at a high temperature this metal becomes so soft, that we can fashion it as we please.

With regard to the Society islands, where missionaries have so long established themselves, we have not yet an intimate, and what may be called a domestic history of the people: this, I think, is much to be regretted: if it be not already too late, it will perhaps be so in a few years, when their native customs and notions will become so mingled with what is European, that little profitable knowledge will be derivable from them. In New Zealand, a novel and interesting scene lies open; the church missionary society have there set on foot their benevolent purposes. They begin by educating the children, and teaching their parents the mechanic arts;—but it is to be hoped that the civilized New Zealander, hereafter to be born, will have within his reach the authentic records of what his ancestors once were, that he may know the extent of his obligations to those of his fellow men who were the means of leading his forefathers out of the darkness of superstition, and out of the house of bondage.

In referring to the “ Narrative of a Voy-