



EDITOR'S NOTE

When, at thirteen years of age, James Cook, the son of a Yorkshire agricultural labourer, was apprenticed to a haberdasher of Staithes, it was doubtless considered that he was "made for life." But no account had been taken of the sea whose hoarse murmurings were doubtless heard in the little village shop. Presently its call became persistent to the boy; the counter became an irksome barrier between him and his desire to respond to its enchantment. A quarrel with his master afforded welcome opportunity to quit the trade, and soon he sailed from Whitby bound apprentice to the sea.

At twenty-seven came a longing for something more than coasting and Baltic voyages, and he volunteered as able seaman for the Navy. In four years he was promoted master, and after assisting at the capture of Quebec he proved his scientific capabilities by surveying and charting the estuary of the St. Lawrence and the shores of Newfoundland. In 1768, with a lieutenancy and the command of the "Endeavour," he took out a scientific party to Tahiti to record the transit of Venus. From that time the Pacific and the South Seas were his special domain, and the story of his voyages and discoveries therein are recorded in this volume.

On June 25, 1776, Captain Cook sailed away from the Nore on his last tragic voyage. On St. Valentine's Day, 1779, he was clubbed to death on the shore of Hawaii. A century afterwards (1874) a monument was raised to mark the spot where this intrepid sailor fell.