

1936 COOK'S THIRD AND LAST VOYAGE

to the boats, the men with wands attending, and pronouncing sentences as before. We returned on board full of the idea of what we had seen, and perfectly satisfied with the honest dispositions of our new friends. Of the singularity and novelty of the various ceremonies performed upon this occasion, we can only form conjectures; but they were, in our opinion, highly expressive of respect, on the part of the inhabitants; and, as far as related to Captain Cook, they approached to adoration. Indeed the commodore now seemed to be considered by them as their E-a-thu-ah-nu-eh; for from this time an Indian Chief, by the king's order, was placed at the head of his pinnace, at whose command the natives, in their canoes, as he passed them, were all silent, and would prostrate themselves till he was out of sight; and this they would do when the captain was alone; but the chief had orders from the king, that whenever the captain came ashore in his pinnace, to attend him, and conduct him to his house, which the sailors now called Cook's Altar.

On Monday, the 18th, Mr. King went on shore, attended with a guard of eight marines, having received orders to erect the observatory in a proper situation; by which means the waterers, and other working parties, on shore, might be superintended and protected. When we had found a convenient spot for this purpose, almost in the centre of the village, Pareea offered to exercise his power in our behalf, and proposed that some houses should be taken, that our observations might not be obstructed. This friendly offer, however, was declined, and we made choice of a potatoe field adjoining to the morai, which was readily granted, and to prevent the intrusion of the natives, the place was consecrated by the priests, who placed their wands round the wall which enclosed it. This interdiction the natives call taboo, a term frequently repeated