

1548 COOK'S THIRD AND LAST VOYAGE

Resolution and Discovery prepare for their Departure from Ulitea.

ON Tuesday, the 2nd of September, we re-embarked, in order to return to Matavai, revolving in our minds the extraordinary scene at the morai, as related in the preceding chapter, and to which we had been eye-witnesses. In the way, we paid a visit to Towha, who had continued in the little island, where we met him the day before. Some conversation passed between him and Otoo; and the latter entreated Captain Cook, once more, to join them as an ally in their war against Eimeo. By his positive refusal he entirely lost the good opinion of his chief. Before we took our leave, Otoo took an occasion to speak of the solemnity, at which we had been present. Among other interrogatories, he asked particularly, If it answered our expectations? What opinion we entertained of its efficacy? And, whether such religious acts and ceremonies were frequent in our own country? We had been silent during the celebration of the horrid ceremony; but, at the close of the extraordinary scene, freely expressed our sentiments on the subject to Otoo, and his attendants; consequently, Captain Cook did not conceal his detestation of it, in this conversation with Towha. Exclusive of the barbarity of the bloody custom, he urged the unreasonableness of it, alledging, that such a sacrifice, instead of making the Eatooa propitious to their nation, would excite his vengeance; and that, from this very circumstance, he concluded, their intended expedition against Maheine would be unsuccessful. This was proceeding to great lengths upon conjecture; but there was little danger of being mistaken; for, respecting this war, three parties were formed in the island, one violent in its favour, another indifferent about it, and a third the avowed supporters of Maheine, and his cause. Under these circumstances,