

*The Pacific Journal of
Adam Ewing*

Thursday, 7th November -

Beyond the Indian hamlet, upon a forlorn strand, I happened on a trail of recent footprints. Through rotting kelp, sea coconuts & bamboo, the tracks led me to their maker, a white man, his trowsers & Pea-jacket rolled up, sporting a kempt beard & an outsized Beaver, shovelling & sifting the cindery sand with a tea-spoon so intently that he noticed me only after I had hailed him from ten yards away. Thus it was, I made the acquaintance of Dr Henry Goose, surgeon to the London nobility. His nationality was no surprise. If there be any eyrie so desolate, or isle so remote that one may there resort unchallenged by an Englishman, 'tis not down on any map I ever saw.

Had the doctor misplaced anything on that dismal shore? Could I render assistance? Dr Goose shook his head, knotted loose his 'kerchief & displayed its contents with clear pride. 'Teeth, sir, are the enamelled grails of the quest in hand. In days gone by this Arcadian strand was a cannibals' banqueting hall, yes, where the strong engorged themselves on the weak. The teeth, they spat out, as you or I would expel cherry stones. But these base molars, sir, shall be transmuted to gold & how? An artisan of Piccadilly who fashions denture-sets for the nobility pays handsomely for human gnashers. Do you know the price a quarter pound will earn, sir?'

I confessed I did not.

'Nor shall I enlighten you, sir, for 'tis a professional secret!' He tapped his nose. 'Mr Ewing, are you acquainted with Marchioness Grace of Mayfair? No? The better for you, for she is a corpse in petticoats. Five years have passed since this harridan besmirched my name, yes, with imputations that resulted in my

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being blackballed from Society.’ Dr Goose looked out to sea. ‘My peregrinations began in that dark hour.’

I expressed sympathy with the doctor’s plight.

‘I thank you, sir, I thank you, but these ivories,’ he shook his kerchief, ‘are my angels of redemption. Permit me to elucidate. The Marchioness wears dental-fixtures fashioned by the aforementioned doctor. Next yuletide, just as that scented She-Donkey is addressing her Ambassadors’ Ball, I, Henry Goose, yes, *I* shall arise & declare to one & all that our hostess masticates with cannibals’ gnashers! Sir Hubert will challenge me, predictably, “Furnish your evidence,” that boor shall roar, “or grant me satisfaction!” I shall declare, “Evidence, Sir Hubert? Why, I gathered your mother’s teeth *myself* from the spittoon of the South Pacific! Here, sir, *here* are some of their fellows!” & fling these very teeth into her tortoise-shell soup tureen & that, sir, that will grant me *my* satisfaction! The twittering wits will scald the icy Marchioness in their news-sheets & by next season she shall be fortunate to receive an invitation to a Poor-house Ball!’

In haste, I bade Henry Goose a good day. I fancy he is a Bedlamite.

Friday, 8th November -

In the rude shipyard beneath my window, work progresses on the jibboom, under Mr Sykes’s directorship. Mr Walker, Ocean Bay’s sole taverner, is also its principal timber-merchant & he brags of his years as a master shipbuilder in Liverpool. (I am now versed enough in Antipodese etiquette to let such unlikely truths lie.) Mr Sykes told me an entire week is needed to render *Prophetess* ‘Bristol fashion’. Seven days holed up in the *Musket* seems a grim sentence, yet I recall the fangs of the banshee tempest & the mariners lost o’erboard & my present misfortune feels less acute.

I met Dr Goose on the stairs this morning & we took breakfast

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together. He has lodged at the *Musket* since middle October after voyaging hither on a Brazilian merchantman, *Namorados*, from Feejee, where he practised his arts in a mission. Now the doctor awaits a long-overdue Australian sealer, the *Nellie*, to convey him to Sydney. From the colony he will seek a position aboard a passenger ship for his native London.

My judgement of Dr Goose was unjust & premature. One must be cynical as Diomedes to prosper in my profession, but cynicism can blind one to subtler virtues. The doctor has his eccentricities & recounts them gladly for a dram of Portuguese *pisco* (never to excess) but I vouchsafe he is the only other gentleman on this latitude east of Sydney & west of Valparaiso. I may even compose for him a letter of introduction for the Partridges in Sydney, for Dr Goose & dear Fred are of the same cloth.

Poor weather precluding my morning outing, we yarned by the peat fire & the hours sped by like minutes. I spoke at length of Tilda & Jackson & also my fears of 'gold-fever' in San Francisco. Our conversation then voyaged from my home-town to my recent notarial duties in New South Wales, thence to Gibbons, Malthus & Godwin via Leeches & Locomotives. Attentive conversation is an emollient I lack sorely aboard *Prophetess* & the doctor is a veritable polymath. Moreover, he possesses a handsome army of scrimshandered chessmen whom we shall keep busy until either the *Prophetess*'s departure or the *Nellie*'s arrival.

Saturday, 9th November —

Sunrise bright as a silver dollar. Our schooner still looks a woeful picture out in the bay. An Indian war-canoe is being careened on the shore. Henry & I struck out for 'Banqueter's Beach' in holy-day mood, blithely saluting the maid who labours for Mr Walker. The sullen miss was hanging laundry on a shrub & ignored us. She has a tinge of black blood & I fancy her mother is not far removed from the jungle breed.

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Passing below the Indian hamlet, a ‘humming’ aroused our curiosity & we resolved to locate its source. The settlement is circumvallated by a stake-fence, so decayed that one may gain ingress at a dozen places. A hairless bitch raised her head, but she was toothless & dying & did not bark. An outer ring of *ponga* huts (fashioned from branches, earthen walls & matted ceilings) grovelled in the leas of ‘grandee’ dwellings, wooden structures with carved lintel-pieces & rudimentary porches. In the hub of this village, a public flogging was under way. Henry & I were the only two Whites present, but three castes of spectating Indians were demarked. The chieftain occupied his throne, in a feathered cloak, while the tattooed gentry & their womenfolk & children stood in attendance, numbering some thirty in total. The slaves, duskier & sootier than their nut-brown masters & less than half their number, squatted in the mud. Such inbred, bovine torpor! Pockmarked & pustular with *haki-haki*, these wretches watched the punishment, making no response but that bizarre, bee-like ‘hum’. Empathy or condemnation, we knew not what the noise signified. The whip-master was a Goliath whose physique would daunt any frontier prize-fighter. Lizards mighty & small were tattooed over every inch of the savage’s musculature: – his pelt would fetch a fine price, though I should not be the man assigned to relieve him of it for all the pearls of O-hawaii! The piteous prisoner, hoarfrosted with many harsh years, was bound naked to an A-frame. His body shuddered with each excoriating lash, his back was a vellum of bloody runes but his insensible face bespoke the serenity of a martyr already in the care of the Lord.

I confess, I swooned under each fall of the lash. Then a peculiar thing occurred. The beaten savage raised his slumped head, found *my* eye & shone me a look of uncanny, amicable knowing! As if a theatrical performer saw a long-lost friend in the Royal Box and, undetected by the audience, communicated his recognition. A tattooed ‘blackfella’ approached us & flicked his nephrite dagger to indicate that we were unwelcome. I enquired after the nature of the prisoner’s crime. Henry put his arm around

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me. 'Come, Adam, a wise man does not step betwixt the beast & his meat.'

Sunday, 10th November —

Mr Boerhaave sat amidst his cabal of trusted ruffians like Lord Anaconda & his garter-snakes. Their Sabbath 'celebrations' downstairs had begun ere I had risen. I went in search of shaving water & found the tavern swilling with Tars awaiting their turn with those poor Indian girls whom Walker has ensnared in an impromptu *bordello*. (Rafael was not in the debauchers' number.)

I do not break my Sabbath fast in a whorehouse. Henry's sense of repulsion equalled to my own, so we forfeited breakfast (the maid was doubtless being pressed into alternative service) & set out for the chapel to worship with our fasts unbroken.

We had not gone two hundred yards when, to my consternation, I remembered this journal, lying on the table in my room at the *Musket*, visible to any drunken sailor who might break in. Fearful for its safety (& my own, were Mr Boerhaave to get his hands on it), I retraced my steps to conceal it more artfully. Broad smirks greeted my return & I assumed I was 'the devil being spoken of', but I learned the true reason when I opened my door: — to wit, Mr Boerhaave's ursine buttocks astraddle his Blackamoor Goldilocks in *my bed in flagrante delicto!* Did that devil Dutchman apologise? Far from it! He judged *himself* the injured party & roared, 'Get ye hence, Mr Quillcock! or by God's B—d, I shall snap your tricky Yankee nib in two!'

I snatched my diary & clattered downstairs to a *riotocracy* of merriment & ridicule from the white savages there gathered. I remonstrated to Walker that I was paying for a private room & I expected it to remain private even during my absence, but that scoundrel merely offered a one-third discount on 'A quarter-hour's gallop on the comeliest filly in my stable!' Disgusted, I retorted that I was a husband & a father! & that I should rather

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die than abase my dignity & decency with any of his poxed whores! Walker swore to 'decorate my eyes' if I called his own dear daughters 'whores' again. One toothless garter-snake jeered that if possessing a wife & a child was a single virtue, 'Why, Mr Ewing, I be ten times more virtuous than you be!' & an unseen hand emptied a tankard of sheog over my person. I withdrew ere the liquid was swapped for a more obdurate missile.

The chapel bell was summoning the godfearing of Ocean Bay & I hurried thitherwards where Henry waited, trying to forget the recent foulnesses witnessed at my lodgings. The chapel creaked like an old tub & its congregation numbered little more than the digits of two hands, but no traveller ever quenched his thirst at a desert oasis more thankfully than Henry & I gave worship this morning. The Lutheran founder has lain at rest in his chapel's cemetery these ten winters past & no ordained successor has yet ventured to claim captaincy of the altar. Its denomination, therefore, is a 'rattle-bag' of Christian creeds. Biblical passages were read by that half of the congregation who know their letters & we joined in a hymn or two nominated by rota. The 'steward' of this demotic flock, one Mr D'Arnoq, stood beneath the modest cruciform & besought Henry & I to participate in likewise manner. Mindful of my own salvation from last week's tempest, I nominated Luke ch. 8, *And they came to him, & awoke him, saying, Master, master, we perish. Then he arose, & rebuked the wind & the raging of the water: & they ceased, & there was a calm.*

Henry recited Psalm the Eighth, in a voice as sonorous as any schooled dramatist, *Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of thy hands; thou has put all things under his feet: all sheep & oxen, yea, & the beasts of the field; The fowl of the air, & the fish of the sea, & whatsoever passeth through the paths of the seas.*

No organist played a *Magnificat* but the wind in the flue-chimney, no choir sang a *Nunc Dimittis* but the wuthering gulls, yet I fancy the Creator was not displeazed. We resembled more

the Early Christians of Rome than any later Church encrusted with arcana & gemstones. Communal prayer followed. Parishioners prayed *ad lib* for the eradication of potato blight, mercy on a dead infant's soul, blessing upon a new fishing boat, &c. Henry gave thanks for the hospitality shown us visitors by the Christians of Chatham Isle. I echoed these sentiments & sent a prayer for Tilda, Jackson & my father-in-law during my extended absence.

After the service, the doctor & I were approached most cordially by an elder 'mainmast' of that chapel, one Mr Evans, who introduced Henry & I to his good wife (both circumvented the handicap of deafness by answering only those questions they *believed* had been asked & accepting only those answers they *believed* had been uttered – a stratagem embraced by many an American advocate) & their twin sons, Keegan & Dyfedd. Mr Evans made it known that every week he had the custom of inviting Mr D'Arnoq, our Preacher, to dine at their nearby home, for the latter dwells in Port Hutt, a promontory some miles distant. Would we, too, join their Sabbath Meal? Having already informed Henry of that Gomorrah back at the *Musket* & hearing cries of 'Mutiny!' from our stomachs, we accepted the Evanses' kindness with gratitude.

Our hosts' farm-stead, seated half a mile from Ocean Bay up a winding, blustery valley, proved to be a frugal building, but proof against those hell-bent storms that break the bones of so many hapless vessels upon nearby reefs. The parlour was inhabited by a monstrous hog's head (afflicted with droop-jaw & lazy-eye), killed by the twins on their sixteenth birthday, & a somnambulant Grand-father clock (at odds with my own pocket-watch by a margin of hours. Indeed, one valued import from New Zealand is the accurate time). An Indian farmhand peered through the window-pane at his master's visitors. No more tatterdemalion a *renegado* I ever beheld, but Mr Evans swore the quadron, 'Barnabas', was 'the fleetest sheep-dog who ever ran upon two legs'. Keegan & Dyfedd are honest woolly fellows, versed principally in the ways of sheep (the family own

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two hundred head), for neither has gone to ‘Town’ (the islanders thus appellate New Zealand) nor undergone any schooling save Scripture lessons from their father, by dint of which they have learnt to read & write tolerably well.

Mrs Evans said grace & I enjoyed my most pleasant repast (untainted by salt, maggots & oaths) since my farewell dinner with Consul Bax & the Partridges at the Beaumont. Mr D’Arnoq told us tales of ships he has supplied during his ten-year on Chatham Isle, while Henry amused us with stories of patients, both illustrious & humble, he has benefacted in London & Polynesia. For my part I described the many hardships overcome by this American notary in order to locate the Australian beneficiary of a will executed in California. We washed down our mutton-stew & apple-dumpling with small ale brewed by Mr Evans for trading with whalers. Keegan & Dyfedd left to attend to their livestock & Mrs Evans retired to her kitchen duties. Henry asked if missionaries were now active on the Chathams at which Mr Evans & Mr D’Arnoq exchanged looks, & the former informed us, ‘Nay, the Maori don’t take kindly to us *Pakeha* spoiling their Moriori with too much civilization.’

I questioned if such an ill as ‘too *much* civilization’ existed or no? Mr D’Arnoq told me, ‘If there is no God west of the Horn, why there’s none of your constitution’s *All men created equal*, neither, Mr Ewing.’ The nomenclatures ‘Maori’ & ‘Pakeha’ I knew from the *Prophetess*’s sojourn at the Bay of Islands, but I begged to know who or what ‘Moriori’ might signify. My query unlocked a Pandora’s Box of history, detailing the decline & fall of the aboriginals of Chatham. We lit our pipes. Mr D’Arnoq’s narrative was unbroken three hours later when he had to depart for Port Hutt ere nightfall obscured the dykey way. His spoken history, for my money, holds company with the pen of a Defoe or Melville & I shall record it in these pages, after, Morpheus willing, a sound sleep.

Monday, 17th November —

Dawn sticky & sunless. The bay has a slimy appearance, but the weather is mild enough to allow repairs to continue on *Prophetess*, I thank Neptune. A new mizzen-top is being hoisted into position as I write.

A short time past, while Henry & I breakfasted, Mr Evans arrived hugging-mugging, importuning my doctor friend to attend to a reclusive neighbour, one Widow Bryden, who was thrown from her horse on a stony bog. Mrs Evans was in attendance and fears that the widow lies in peril of her life. Henry fetched his doctor's case & left without delay. (I offered to come, but Mr Evans begged my forbearance, as the patient had extracted a promise that none but a doctor should see her incapacitated.) Walker, overhearing these transactions, told me no member of the male sex had crossed the widow's threshold these twenty years & decided that 'The frigid old sow must be on her last trotters if she's letting Dr Quack frisk her.'

The origins of the Moriori of 'Rēkohu' (the native moniker for the Chathams) remain a mystery to this day. Mr Evans evinces the belief they are descended from Jews expelled from Spain, citing their hooked noses & sneering lips. Mr D'Arnoq's preferred theorem, that the Moriori were once Maori whose canoes were wrecked upon these remotest of isles, is founded on similarities of tongue & mythology, & thereby possesses a higher *carat* of logic. What is certain is that, after centuries or millennia of living in isolation, the Moriori lived as primitive a life as their woebegone cousins of Van Diemen's Land. Arts of boat-building (beyond crude woven rafts used to cross the channels betwixt islands) & navigation fell into disuse. That the terraqueous globe held other lands, trod by other feet, the Moriori dreamt not. Indeed, their language lacks a word for 'Race' & 'Moriori' means, simply, 'People'. Husbandry was not practised, for no mammals walked these isles until passing whalers wilfully

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marooned pigs here to propagate a parlour. In their virgin state, the Moriori were foragers, picking up *paua* shellfish, diving for crayfish, plundering bird-eggs, spearing seals, gathering kelp & digging for grubs & roots.

Thus far, the Moriori were but a local variant of most flaxen-skirted, feather-cloaked heathens of those dwindling ‘blind-spots’ of the ocean still unschooled by the White Man. Old Rēkohu’s claim to singularity, however, lay in its unique pacific creed. Since time immemorial, the Moriori’s priestly caste dictated that whosoever spilt a man’s blood killed his own *mana* – his honour, his worth, his standing & his soul. No Moriori would shelter, feed, converse or even *see* the *persona non grata*. If the ostracised murderer survived his first winter, the desperation of solitude usually drove him to a blow-hole on Cape Young where he took his life.

Consider this, Mr D’Arnoq urged us. Two thousand savages (Mr Evans’s best guess) enshrine *Thou Shalt Not Kill* in word & *in deed* & frame an oral ‘Magna Carta’ to create a harmony unknown elsewhere for the sixty centuries since Adam tasted the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge. War was as alien a concept to the Moriori as the telescope is to the Pygmy. *Peace*, not a hiatus betwixt wars but millennia of imperishable peace, rules these far-flung islands. Who can deny Old Rēkohu lay closer to More’s Utopia than our States of Progress governed by war-hungry princelings in Versailles & Vienna, Washington & Westminster? ‘Here,’ declaimed Mr D’Arnoq, ‘and here only, were those elusive phantasms, the noble savages, framed in flesh & blood!’ (Henry, as we later made our way back to the *Musket* confessed, ‘I could never describe a race of savages too backward to throw a spear straight as “noble”.’)

Glass & peace alike betray proof of fragility under repeated blows. The first blow to the Moriori was the Union Jack, planted in Skirmish Bay’s sod in the name of King George by Lieutenant Broughton of HMS *Chatham* just fifty years ago. Three years later, Broughton’s discovery was in Sydney & London chart agents & a scattering of free settlers (whose number included

Mr Evans's father), wrecked mariners & 'convicts at odds with the New South Wales Colonial Office over the terms of their incarceration' were cultivating pumpkins, onions, maize & carrots. These they sold to needy sealers, the second blow to the Moriori's independence, who disappointed the Natives' hopes of prosperity by turning the surf pink with seals' blood. (Mr D'Arnoq illustrated the profits by this arithmetic – a single pelt fetched 15 shillings in Canton & those pioneer sealers gathered over two thousand pelts *per boat!*) Within a few years the seals were found only on the outer rocks & the 'sealers' too turned to farming potatoes, sheep & pig-rearing on such a scale that the Chathams are now dubbed 'The Garden of the Pacific'. These *parvenu* farmers clear the land by bush-fires that smoulder beneath the peat for many seasons, surfacing in dry spells to sow renewed calamity.

The third blow to the Moriori was the whalers, now calling at Ocean Bay, Waitangi, Owenga & Te Whakaru in sizeable numbers for careening, refitting & refreshing. Whalers' cats & rats bred like the Plagues of Egypt & ate the burrow-nesting birds whose eggs the Moriori so valued for sustenance. Fourth, those motley maladies which cull the darker races when'er White civilization draws near, sapped the aboriginal census still further.

All these misfortunes the Moriori might have endured, however, were it not for reports arriving in New Zealand depicting the Chathams as a veritable Canaan of eel-stuffed lagoons, shellfish-carpeted coves & inhabitants who understand neither combat nor weapons. To the ears of the Ngati Tama & Ngati Mutunga, two clans of the Taranaki Te Ati Awa Maori (Maori genealogy is, Mr D'Arnoq assures us, every twig as intricate as those genealogical trees so revered by the European gentry, indeed, any boy of that unlettered race can recall his grandfather's grandfather's name & 'rank' in a trice), these rumours promised compensation for the tracts of their ancestral estates lost during the recent 'Musket Wars'. Spies were sent to test the Moriori's mettle by violating *tapu* & despoiling holy sites. These

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provocations the Moriori faced as Our Lord importuned, by ‘turning the other cheek’, & the transgressors returned to New Zealand confirming the Moriori’s apparent pusillanimity. The tattooed Maori *conquistadores* found their single-barked armada in Captain Harewood of the brig *Rodney* who, in the dying months of 1835, agreed to transport nine hundred Maori & seven war-canoes in two voyages, in guerno for seed potatoes, firearms, pigs, a great supply of scraped flax & a cannon. (Mr D’Arnoq encountered Harewood five years ago, penurious in a Bay of Islands tavern. He at first denied being the *Rodney*’s Harewood, then swore he had been coerced into conveying the blacks, but was unclear how this coercion had been worked upon him.)

The *Rodney* embarked from Port Nicholas in November, but its heathen cargo of five hundred men, women & children, packed tight in the hold for the six-day voyage, bilged in ordure & seasickness & lacking the barest sufficiency of water, anchored at Whangatete Inlet in such an enfeebled state that, *had they but the will*, even the Moriori might have slain their Martial brethren. The Goodly Samaritans chose instead to share the diminished abundance of Rēkohu in preference to destroying their *mana* by blood-letting, & nursed the sick & dying Maori back to health. ‘Maori had come to Rēkohu before,’ Mr D’Arnoq explained, ‘yet gone away again, so the Moriori assumed the colonists would likewise leave them in peace.’

The Moriori’s generosity was rewarded when Cpt. Harewood returned from New Zealand with another four hundred Maori. Now the strangers proceeded to lay claim to Chatham by *takahi*, a Maori ritual transliterated as ‘Walking the Land to Possess the Land’. Old Rēkohu was thus partitioned & the Moriori informed they were now Maori vassals. In early December, when some dozen Aboriginals protested, they were casually slain with tomahawks. The Maori proved themselves apt pupils of the English in ‘the dark arts of colonization’.

Chatham Isle encloses a vast eastern saltmarsh lagoon, Te Whanga, very nearly an inland sea but fecundated by the ocean at high tide through the lagoon’s ‘lips’ at Te Awapatiki. Fourteen

years ago, the Moriori men held on that sacred ground a parliament. Three days it lasted, its object to settle this question: Would the spillage of Maori blood also destroy one's *mana*? Younger men argued the creed of Peace did not encompass foreign cannibals of whom their ancestors knew nothing. The Moriori must kill or be killed. Elders urged appeasement, for as long as the Moriori preserved their *mana* with their land, their gods & ancestors would deliver the race from harm. 'Embrace your enemy,' the elders urged, 'to prevent him striking you.' ('Embrace your enemy,' Henry quipped, 'to feel his dagger tickle your kidneys.')

The elders won the day, but it mattered little. 'When lacking numerical superiority,' Mr D'Arnoq told us, 'the Maori seize an advantage by striking first & hardest, as many hapless British & French can testify from their graves.' The Ngati Tama & Ngati Mutunga had held councils of their own. The Moriori menfolk returned from their parliament to ambushes & a night of infamy beyond nightmare, of butchery, of villages torched, of rapine, of men & women, impaled in rows on beaches, of children hiding in holes, scented & dismembered by hunting dogs. Some chiefs kept an eye to the morrow & slew only enough to instil terrified obedience in the remainder. Other chiefs were not so restrained. On Waitangi Beach fifty Moriori were beheaded, filleted, wrapped in flax-leaves, then baked in a giant earth oven with yams & sweet-potatoes. Not half those Moriori who had seen Old Rēkohu's last sunset were alive to see the Maori sun rise. ('Less than an hundred pure-blooded Moriori now remain,' mourned Mr D'Arnoq. 'On *paper* the British Crown freed these from the yoke of slavery years ago, but the Maori do not care for paper. We are one week's sail from the Governor's House & Her Majesty maintains no garrison on Chatham.')

I asked, why had not the Whites stayed the hands of the Maori during the massacre?

Mr Evans was no longer sleeping & not half so deaf as I had fancied. 'Have you ever seen Maori warriors in a blood-frenzy, Mr Ewing?'

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I said I had not.

‘But you have seen sharks in a blood-frenzy, have you not?’

I replied that I had.

‘Near enough. Imagine a bleeding calf is thrashing in shark-infested shallows. What to do – stay out of the water or try to stay the jaws of the sharks? Such was our choice. Oh, we helped the few that came to our door – our shepherd Barnabas was one – but if we stepped out in that night we’d not be seen again. Remember, we Whites numbered below fifty in Chatham at that time. Nine hundred Maoris, altogether. Maoris bide by Pakeha, Mr Ewing, but they despise us. Never forget it.’

What moral to draw? Peace, though beloved of our Lord, is a cardinal virtue only if your neighbours share your conscience.

Night

The name of Mr D’Arnoq is not well-loved in the *Musket*. ‘A White Black, a mixed-blood mongrel of a man,’ Walker told me. ‘Nobody knows *what* he is.’ Suggs, a one-armed shepherd who lives under the bar, swore our acquaintance is a Bonapartist general hiding here under assumed colours. Another swore he was a Polack.

Nor is the word ‘Moriore’ much loved. A drunken Maori mulatto told me that the entire history of the aboriginals had been dreamt up by the ‘mad old Lutheran’, & Mr D’Arnoq preaches his Moriore gospel only to legitimise his own swindling land-claims against the Maori, the true owners of Chatham, who have been coming to & fro in their canoes since time immemorial! James Coffee, a hog-farmer, said the Maori had performed the White Man a service by exterminating another race of brutes to make space for us, adding that Russians train Kossacks to ‘soften Siberian hides’ in a similar way.

I protested, to *civilize* the black races by conversion should be our mission, not their extirpation, for God’s hand had crafted them, too. All hands in the tavern fired broadsides at me for my

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‘sentimental Yankee clap-trap!’ ‘The best of ’em is not too good to die like a pig!’ one shouted. ‘The only gospel the Blacks *savvy* is the gospel of the d—d whip!’ Still another: ‘We Britishers abolished slavery in our empire – no American can say as much!’

Henry’s stance was ambivalent, to say the least. ‘After years of working with missionaries, I am tempted to conclude that their endeavours merely prolong a dying race’s agonies for ten or twenty years. The merciful ploughman shoots a trusty horse grown too old for service. As philanthropists, might it not be our duty to likewise ameliorate the savages’ sufferings by *hastening* their extinction? Think on your Red Indians, Adam, think on the treaties you Americans abrogate & renege on, time & time & time again. More humane, surely, & more honest, just to knock the savages on the head & get it over with?’

As many truths as men. Occasionally, I glimpse a truer Truth, hiding in imperfect simulacrum of itself, but as I approach, it bestirs itself & moves deeper into the thorny swamp of dissent.

Tuesday, 12th November –

Our noble Cpt. Molyneux today graced the *Musket* to haggle over the price of five barrels of salt-horse with my landlord (the matter was settled by a rowdy game of *trentuno* won by the captain). Much to my surprise, ere he returned to inspect the progress in the ship-yard, Cpt. Molyneux requested some confidential words with Henry in my companion’s room. The consultation continues as I write. My friend has been warned of the captain’s despotism, but still, I do not like it.

Later –

Cpt. Molyneux, it transpires, suffers from a medical complaint which, if untreated, may impair those divers skills demanded of his station. The captain has therefore proposed to Henry that

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my friend voyage with us to Honolulu (victualling & private berth *gratis*), assuming the responsibilities both of Ship's Doctor & personal physician to Cpt. Molyneux until our arrival. My friend explained he had intended to return to London, but Cpt. Molyneux was most insistent. Henry promised to think the matter over & come to a decision by Friday morning, the day now set for *Prophetess's* departure.

Henry did not name the captain's illness, nor did I ask, though one needs not be an Aesculapian to glean Cpt. Molyneux is a slave to gout. My friend's discretion does him much credit. Whatever eccentricities Henry Goose may exhibit as a collector of curios, I believe Dr Goose is an exemplary healer & it is my zealous, if self-serving, hope that Henry returns a favourable answer to the captain's proposal.

Wednesday, 13th November -

I come to my journal as a Catholick to a confessor. My bruises insist these extraordinary past five hours were not a sickbed vision conjured by my Ailment, but real events. I shall describe what befell me this day, steering as close to the facts as is possible.

This morning, Henry paid Widow Bryden's hut another call to adjust her splint & re-apply poultice. Rather than submit to idleness, I resolved to scale a high hill to the north of Ocean Bay, known as Conical Tor, whose lofty elevation promises the best aspect of Chatham Isle's 'back-country'. (Henry, a man of maturer years, has too much sense to tramp unsurveyed islands peopled by cannibals.) The tired creek who waters Ocean Bay guided me upstream through marshy pastures, stump-pocked slopes, into virgin forest so rotted, knotted & tangled, I was obliged to clamber aloft like an orang-utan! A volley of hail-stones began abruptly, filled the woods with a frenzied percussion & ended on the sudden. I spied a 'Robin Black-Breast' whose plumage was tarry as night & whose tameness bordered

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on contempt. An unseen *tui* took to song, but my inflamed fancy awarded it powers of human speech: – ‘Eye for an eye!’ it called ahead, flitting through its labyrinth of buds, twigs & thorns. ‘Eye for an eye!’ After a gruelling climb, I conquered the summit grievously torn & scratched at I know not What o’Clock, for I neglected to wind my pocket-watch last night. The opaque mists that haunt these isles (the aboriginal name ‘Rēkohu’, Mr D’Arnoq informs us, signifies ‘Sun of Mists’) had descended as I ascended, so my cherished panorama was naught but tree-tops disappearing into drizzle. A miserly reward for my exertions, indeed.

The ‘summit’ of Conical Tor was a crater, a stone’s throw in diameter, encircling a crag-walled depression whose floor lay unseen far beneath the funereal foliage of a gross or more *kopi* trees. I should not have cared to investigate its depths without the aid of ropes & a pick-axe. I was circumambulating the crater’s lip, seeking a clearer trail back to Ocean Bay, when a startling *hoo-roosh!* sent me diving to the ground: – the mind abhors a vacancy & is wont to people it with phantoms, thus I glimpsed first a tusked hog charging, then a Maori warrior, spear held aloft, his face inscribed with the ancestral hatred of his race.

’Twas but a mollyhawk, wings ‘flapping’ the air like a wind-jammer. I watched her disappear back into the diaphanous fog. I was a full yard shy of the crater’s lip but, to my horror, the turf beneath me disintegrated like suet-crust – I stood not on solid ground but an overhang! I plunged to my midriff, grasping some grasses in desperation, but these broke in my fingers & down I plummeted, a mannikin tossed into a well! I recall spinning in space, yelling & twigs clawing my eyes, cartwheeling & my jacket snagging, tearing loose; loose earth; the anticipation of pain; an urgent, formless prayer for help; a bush slowing, but not halting my descent & a hopeless attempt to regain balance – sliding – lastly *terra firma* careering upwards to meet me. The impact knocked my senses out of me.

Amid nebulous quilts & summery pillows I lay, in a bedroom in San Francisco similar to my own. A dwarfish servant said,

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‘You’re a *very* silly boy, Adam.’ Tilda & Jackson entered, but when I voiced my jubilation not English but the guttural barkings of an Indian race burst from my mouth! My wife & son were shamed by me & mounted a carriage. I gave chase, striving to rectify this misunderstanding, but the carriage dwindled into the fleeing distance until I awoke in bosky twilight & a silence, booming & eternal. My bruises, cuts, muscles & extremities groaned like a court-room of malcontent litigants.

A mattress of moss & mulch, lain down in that murky hollow since the second day of Creation, had preserved my life. Angels preserved my limbs, for if even a single arm or leg had been broken I should be lying there still, unable to extricate myself, awaiting death from the elements or the claws of beasts. Upon regaining my feet & seeing how far I had slid & fallen (the height of a foremast) with no worse damage to my person, I thanked our Lord for my deliverance, for indeed, *Thou calledst in trouble, & I delivered thee; I answered thee in the secret place of thunder.*

My eyes adjusted to the gloom & revealed a sight at once indelible, fearsome & sublime. First one, then ten, then hundreds of faces emerged from the perpetual dim, adzed by idolaters into bark, as if Sylvan-spirits were frozen immobile by a cruel enchanter. No adjectives may properly delineate that basilisk tribe! Only the inanimate may be so alive. I traced my thumbs along their awful visages. I do not doubt, I was the first White in that mausoleum since its pre-historic inception. The youngest dendroglyph is, I suppose, ten years old, but the elders, grown distended as the trees matured, were incised by heathens whose very ghosts are long defunct. Such antiquity surely bespoke the hand of Mr D’Arnoq’s Moriori.

Time passed in that bewitched place & I sought to effect my escape, encouraged by the knowledge that the artists of the ‘tree-sculptures’ must earn regular egress from that same pit. One wall looked less sheer than the others & fibrous creepers offered a ‘rigging’ of sorts. I was readying myself for the climb when a puzzling ‘hum’ came to my attention. ‘Who goes there?’

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I called (a rash act for an unarmed White trespasser in a heathen shrine). ‘Shew yourself!’ The silence swallowed my words & their echo & mocked me. My Ailment stirred in my spleen. The ‘hum’ I traced to a mass of flies orbiting a protuberance impaled on a broken-off branch. I poked the lump with a pine stick & nearly retched, for ’twas a piece of stinking offal. I turned to flee but duty obliged me to dispel a black suspicion that a human heart hung on that tree. I concealed my nose & mouth in my ’kerchief &, with my stick, touched a severed ventricle. The organ pulsed as if alive! & my scalding Ailment shot up my spine! As in a dream (but it was not!) a pellucid salamander emerged from its carrion dwelling & darted along the stick to my hand! I flung the stick away & saw not where that salamander disappeared. My blood was enriched by fright & I hastened to effect my escape. Easier written than done, for had I slipped & plunged anew from those vertiginous walls my luck may not have softened my fall a second time, but foot-holes had been hewn into the rock & by God’s grace I gained the crater’s lip with no mishap.

Back in the dismal cloud, I craved the presence of men of my own hue, yes, even the rude sailors in the *Musket*, & began my descent on the nonce in what I hoped was a southerly direction. My initial resolve to report all I had seen (surely, Mr Walker, the *de facto* if not *de jure* Consul should be informed of the robbery of a human heart?) weakened as I approached Ocean Bay. I am still undecided what to report & to whom. The heart was most likely a hog’s, or sheep’s, surely. The prospect of Walker & his ilk felling the trees & selling the dendroglyphs to collectors offends my conscience. A sentimentalist I may be, but I do not wish to be the agent of the Moriori’s final violation.*

* My father never spoke to me of the dendroglyphs & I learnt of them only in the manner described in the Introduction. Now that the Moriori of Chatham Island are a race over extinction’s brink, I hold them to be beyond betrayal. – J.E.

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Evening —

The Southern Cross was bright in the sky ere Henry returned to the *Musket*, having been detained by more islanders seeking to consult ‘Widow Bryden’s Healer Man’ on their rheums, yaws & dropsy. ‘If potatoes were dollars,’ rued my friend, ‘I should be richer than Nebuchadnezzar!’ He was concerned by my (much edited) misadventure on Conical Tor & insisted on examining my injuries. Earlier I had prevailed upon the Indian maid to fill my bath & emerged much recruited. Henry donated a pot of balm for my inflammations & refused to take a cent for it. Fearing this may be my last chance to consult with a gifted physician (Henry intends to refuse Cpt. Molyneux’s proposal), I unburdened my fears *vis-à-vis* my Ailment. He listened soberly & asked about the frequency & duration of my spells. Henry regretted he lacked the time & apparatus for a compleat diagnosis, but recommended, upon my return to San Francisco, I find a specialist in tropical parasites as a matter of urgency. (I could not bring myself to tell him there are none.)

I slumber not.

Thursday, 14th November —

We make sail with the morning tide. I am once more aboard the *Prophetess*, but I cannot pretend it is good to be back. My coffin now stores three great coils of hawser which I must scale to attain my bunk, for not one inch of floor is visible. Mr D’Arnoq sold half a dozen barrels of sundry provisions to the quartermaster & a bolt of sailcloth (much to Walker’s disgust). He came aboard to supervise their delivery & collect payment himself & bid me God-speed. In my coffin we were squeezed like two men in a pot-hole so we repaired to the deck for it is a pleasant evening. After discussing divers matters we shook

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hands & he climbed down to his waiting ketch, ably crewed by two young manservants of mongrel race.

Mr Roderick has little sympathy with my petition to have the offending hawser removed elsewhere, for he is obliged to quit his private cabin (for the reason stated below) & move to the fo'c'sle with the common sailors, whose number has swollen with five Castilians 'poached' from the Spaniard at anchor in the Bay. Their captain was the portrait of a Fury, yet short of declaring war on the *Prophetess* – a battle sure to bloody his nose, for he pilots the leakiest tub – he can do little but thank his stars Cpt. Molyneux required no more deserters. The very words 'California Bound' are dusted in gold & beckon all men thitherwards like moths to a lantern. These five replace the two deserters at the Bay of Islands & the hands lost in the tempest, but we are still several men short of a full crew. Finbar tells me the men grumble over the new arrangements for, with Mr Roderick lodged in their fo'c'sle, they cannot yarn freely over a bottle.

Fate has dealt me a fine compensation. After paying Walker's usurous bill (nor did I tip that scoundrel a cent), I was packing my jackwood trunk when Henry entered greeting me thus: – 'Good morning, Ship-mate!' God has answered my prayers! Henry has accepted the post of Ship's Doctor & I am no longer friendless in this floating farmyard. So ornery a mule is the common sailor that, instead of gratitude that a doctor shall be on hand to splint their breakages & treat their infections, one o'erhears them moaning, 'What are we, to carry a Ship's Doctor who can't walk a bowsprit? A Royal Barge?'

I must confess to a touch of pique that Cpt. Molyneux afforded a fare-paying gentleman such as myself only my lamentable berth, when a more commodious cabin lay at his disposal all along. Of far greater consequence, however, is Henry's promise to turn his formidable talents to a diagnosis of my Ailment as soon as we are at sea. My relief is indescribable.

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Friday, 15th November —

We got under weigh at daybreak, notwithstanding Friday is a Jonah amongst sailors. (Cpt. Molyneux growls, ‘Superstitions, Saints’ Days & other blasted fripperies are fine sport for Popish fish-wives but *I* am in the business of turning a profit!’) Henry & I did not venture on deck, for all hands were busy with rigging & a southerly blows very fresh with a heavy sea; the ship was troublesome last night & is not less so today. We passed half the day arranging Henry’s apothecary. Besides the appurtenances of the modern physician, my friend owns several learned volumes, in English, Latin & German. A case holds ‘spectra’ of powders in stoppered bottles labelled in Greek. These he compounds to make various pills & unguents. We peered through the steerage-hatch towards noon & the Chathams were ink-stains on the leaden horizon, but the rolling & pitching are unsafe for those whose sea-legs have vacationed the week ashore.

Afternoon —

Torgny the Swede knocked on my coffin door. Surprized & intrigued by his furtive manner, I bade him enter. He seated himself upon a ‘pyramid’ of hawser & whispered that he bore a proposal from a ring of ship-mates. ‘Tell us where the best veins are, the secret ones you locals are keeping for yourselves. Me ’n’ my fellows’ll do the pack-work. You’ll just sit pretty & we’ll cut you in a tenth share.’

I required a moment to understand that Torgny was referring to the Californian mining-fields. So, a widespread desertion is in the offing once the *Prophetess* reaches her destination &, I own, my sympathies are with the seamen! Saying so, I swore to Torgny that I possessed no knowledge of the gold deposits, for I have been absent this twelvemonth, but I would *gratis* compose a map illustrating the rumoured ‘Eldorados’ & gladly. Torgny

was agreeable. Tearing a leaf from this journal, I was sketching a *schema* of Sausalito, Benecia, Stanislaus, Sacramento, &c., when a malevolent voice spoke out. 'Quite the oracle, no, Mr Quillcock?'

We had not heard Boerhaave descend the companionway & nudge open my door! Torgny cried in dismay, declaring his guilt in a trice. 'What, pray,' continued the first mate, 'what business have you with our passenger, Pustule of Stockholm?' Torgny was struck dumb, but I would not be cowed & told the bully I was describing the 'sights' of my town, the better for Torgny to enjoy his shore-leave.

Boerhaave raised his eyebrows. 'You allot shore-leave now, do you? New news to my old ears. That paper, Mr Ewing, if you please.' I did not please. My gift to the seaman was not the Dutchman's to commandeer. 'Oh, begging your pardon, Mr Ewing. Torgny, take receipt of your *gift*.' I had no choice but to hand it to the prostrate Swede. Mr Boerhaave uttered, 'Torgny, give me *your* gift instanter or, by the hinges of hell, you shall regret the day you crawled from your mother's [my quill curls at recording his profanity].' The mortified Swede complied.

'Most educational,' remarked Boerhaave, eyeing my cartography. 'The captain will be delighted to learn of the pains you are taking to better our scabby Jacks, Mr Ewing. Torgny, you're on mast-head watch for twenty-four hours. Forty-eight if you're seen taking refreshment. Drink you own p— if you get a thirst.'

Torgny fled but the first mate was not finished with me. 'Sharks ply these waters, Mr Quillcock. Trail ships for tasty jetsam, they do. Once I saw one eat a passenger. He, like you, was neglectful of his safety, & fell o'erboard. We heard his screams. Great Whites *toy* with their dinner, gnawing 'em slow, a leg here, a nibble there & that miserable b— was alive longer than you'd credit. Think on it.' He shut my coffin door. Boerhaave, like all bullies & tyrants, takes pride in that very hatefulness which makes him notorious.

Saturday, 16th November –

My Fates have inflicted upon me the greatest unpleasance of my voyage to date! A shade of Old Rēkohu has thrust *me*, whose only desiderata are quietude & discretion, into a pillory of suspicion & gossip! Yet I am guilty on *no counts* save Christian trustingness & relentless ill fortune! One month to the day has passed since we put out from New South Wales when I wrote this sunny sentence, ‘I anticipate an uneventful & tedious voyage.’ How that entry mocks me! I shall never forget the last eighteen hours, but since I cannot sleep nor think (& Henry is now abed) my only escape from insomnia now is to curse my Luck on these sympathetic pages.

Last night I retired to my coffin ‘dog-tired’. After my prayers I blew out my lantern & lulled by the ship’s myriad voices I sank into the shallows of sleep when a husky voice, *inside my coffin!*, awakened me wide-eyed & affright! ‘Mr Ewing,’ beseeched this urgent whisper, ‘Do not fear – Mr Ewing – no harm, no shout, please, sir.’

I jumped involuntarily & knocked my head against the bulk-head. By the twin glimmers of amber-light through my ill-fitted door & star-light through my port-hole, I saw a serpentine length of hawser uncoil itself & a black form heave itself free like the dead at the Last Trump! A powerful hand seemed to sail through the blackness & sealed my lips ere I could cry out! My assailant hissed, ‘Missa Ewing, no harm, you safe, I friend of Mr D’Arnoq – you know he Christian – please, quiet!’

Reason, at last, rallied against my fear. A man, not a spirit, was hiding in my room. If he wished to slit my throat for my hat, shoes & legal-box, I would already be dead. If my gaoler was a stowaway, why, he, not I, was in peril for his life. From his uncut language, his faint silhouette & his smell, I intuited the stowaway was an Indian, alone on a boat of fifty White Men. Very well. I nodded, slowly, to indicate I would not cry out.

The cautious hand released my lips. ‘My name is Autua,’ he

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said. 'You know I, you seen I, aye – you pity I.' I asked what he was talking about. 'Maori whip I – you seen.' My memory overcame the bizarreness of my situation & I recalled the Moriori being flogged by the 'Lizard King'. This heartened him. 'You good man – Mr D'Arnoq tell you good man – he hid I in your cabin yesterday night – I escape – you help, Mr Ewing.' Now a groan escaped my lips! & his hand clasped my mouth anew. 'If you no help – I in trouble dead.'

All too true, I thought, & *moreover you'll drag me down with you, unless I convince Cpt. Molyneux of my innocence!* (I burned with resentment at D'Arnoq's act, & burn still. Let *him* save his 'good causes' & leave innocent bystanders be!) I told the stowaway he was already 'in trouble dead'. The *Prophetess* was a mercantile vessel, not an 'underground rail-road' for rescued slaves.

'I able seaman!' insisted the black. 'I earn passage!' Well & good, I told him (dubious of his claim to be a sailor of pedigree), & urged him to surrender himself to the captain's mercies forthwith. 'No! They no listen I! *Swim Away Home, Nigger*, they say, & throw I in drink! You law-man aye? You go, you talk, I stay, I hide! Please. Cap'n hear you, Missa Ewing. Please.'

In vain I sought to convince him, no intercessor at Cpt. Molyneux's court was less favoured than the Yankee Adam Ewing. The Moriori's adventure was his own & I desired no part in it. His hand found mine & to my consternation closed my fingers around the hilt of a dagger. Resolute & bleak was his demand. 'Then kill I.' With a terrible calmness & certitude he pressed its tip against his throat. I told the Indian he was mad. 'I not mad, you no help I, you kill I, just same. It's true, you know it.' (I implored him to restrain himself & speak soft.) 'So kill I. Say to others I attack you, so you kill I. I ain't be fish-food, Mr Ewing. Die here is better.'

Cursing my conscience singly, my fortune doubly & Mr D'Arnoq trebly, I bade him sheath his knife & for Heaven's sake conceal himself lest one of the crew hear and come knocking. I promised to approach the captain at breakfast, for to interrupt

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his slumbers would only ensure the doom of the enterprise. This satisfied the stowaway & he thanked me. He slid back inside the coils of rope leaving me to the near-impossible task of constructing a case for an Aboriginal stowaway, aboard an English schooner, without attaining his discoverer & cabin-mate with a charge of conspiracy. The savage's breathing told me he was sleeping. I was tempted to make a dash for the door & howl for help, but in the eyes of God my word was my bond, even to an Indian.

The cacophony of timbers creaking, of masts swaying, of ropes flexing, of canvas clapping, of feet on decks, of goats bleating, of rats scuttling, of the pumps beating, of the bell dividing the watches, of mêlés & laughter from the fo'c'sle, of orders, of windlass shanties & of Tethys' eternal realm; all lulled me as I calculated how best I could convince Cpt. Molyneux of my innocence in Mr D'Arnoq's plot (now I must be more vigilant than ever that this diary should not be read by unfriendly eyes) when a falsetto yell, beginning far-off but speeding nearer at a crossbolt's velocity, was silenced by the deck, mere inches above where I lay.

Such a terrible finality! Prone I lay, shocked & rigid, forgetting to breathe. Shouts far & near rose, feet gathered & an alarum of 'Raise Doctor Goose!' cried forth.

'Sorry b— fall from rigging, dead now.' The Indian whispered as I made haste to investigate the disturbance. 'You can nothing, Missa Ewing.' I ordered him to stay hidden & hurried out. I fancy the stowaway sensed how tempted I was to use the accident to betray him.

The crew stood around a man lying prone at the base of the mid-mast. By the lurching lantern-light I recognized one of the Castilians. (I own that my first emotion was relief, that not Rafael but another had fallen to his death.) I overheard the Icelander say the dead man had won his compatriots' arrack ration at cards & drunk it all before his watch. Henry arrived in his night-shirt with his doctor's bag. He knelt by the mangled form & felt for a pulse, but shook his head. 'This fellow has

no need of a doctor.’ Mr Roderick retrieved the Castilian’s boots & clothes for auction & Mankin fetched some third-rate sackcloth for the cadaver. (Mr Boerhaave will deduct the sackcloth from the auction’s profits.) The Jacks returned to their fo’c’sle or their stations in silence, every man made sombre by this reminder of the fragility of life. Henry, Mr Roderick & I stayed to watch the Castilians perform their Catholic death-rites over their countryman before knotting up the sack & committing his body to the deep with tears & dolorous *adios!* ‘Passionate Latinos,’ observed Henry, bidding me a second good-night. I yearned to share the secret of the Indian with my friend, but held my tongue lest my complicity infect him.

Returning from the melancholy scene, I saw a lantern gleam in the galley. Finbar sleeps there ‘to ward off pilferers’, but he too was roused by the night’s excitement. I recalled that the stow-away may not have eaten for a day & a half, fearfully, for what bestial depravity might a savage not be driven to by an empty stomach? My act might have stood against me on the morrow, but I told the cook a mighty hunger was robbing me of sleep & (at double the usual expence ‘on account o’ the unseason’ble hour’) I procured a platter of sauerkraut, sausage & buns hard as cannonballs.

Back in the confines of my cabin the savage thanked me for the kindness & ate that humble fare as if it were a Presidential Banquet. I did not confess my true motives, *viz.*, the fuller his stomach, the less like he was to consume me, but instead asked him why, during his flogging, he had smiled at me. ‘Pain is strong, aye – but friends’ eyes, more strong.’ I told him that he knows next to nothing about me & I know nothing about him. He jabbed at his eyes & jabbed at mine, as if that single gesture were ample explanation.

The wind rose higher as the middle watch wore on, making the timbers moan & whipping up the seas & sluicing over the decks. Sea-water was soon dripping into my coffin, trickling down the walls & blotting my blanket. ‘You might have chosen

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a drier hidey-hole than mine,' I whispered, to test the stowaway's wakefulness. 'Safe better 'n dry, Missa Ewing,' he murmured, alert as I. Why, I asked, was he beaten so savagely in the Indian hamlet? A silence stretched itself out. 'I seen too much o' the world, I ain't good slave.' To ward off seasickness during those dreary hours, I teased out the stowaway's history. (I cannot, moreover, deny my curiosity.) His pidgin delivered his tale brokenly so its substance only shall I endeavour to set down here.

White men's ships bore vicissitudes to Old Rēkohu, as Mr D'Arnoq narrated, but also marvels. During my stowaway's boyhood, Autua yearned to learn more of these pale peoples from places whose existence, in his grandfather's time, was the realm of myths. Autua claims his father had been amongst the natives Cpt. Broughton's landing party encountered in Skirmish Bay, & spent his infancy hearing the yarn told & retold: – of the 'Great Albatross', paddling through the morning mists; its vividly-plumaged, strangely-jointed servants who canoed ashore, facing backwards; of the Albatross-servants' gibberish (a bird language?); of their smoke-breathing; of their heinous violation of that *tapu* forbidding strangers to touch canoes (doing so curses the vessel & renders it as unseaworthy as if an axe had been taken to it); of the pursuant altercation; of those 'shouting-staffs' whose magical wrath could kill a man across the beach; & of the bright skirt of ocean-blue, cloud-white & blood-red that the servants hoisted aloft a pole before rowing back to the Great Albatross. (This flag was removed & presented to a chieftain who wore it proudly until the scrofula took him.)

Autua had an uncle, Koche, who shipped aboard a Boston sealer, *circa* 1825. (The stowaway is unsure of his exact age.) Moriori were prized crew amongst such vessels, for in lieu of martial prowess, Rēkohu's manhood 'won their spurs' by seal-hunting & swimming feats. (To claim his bride, as a further example, a young man had to dive to the sea-bed & surface with a cray-fish in each hand & a third in his mouth.) Newly-

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discovered Polynesians, it should be added, make easy prey for unscrupulous captains. Autua's uncle Koche returned after five years, garbed in *pakeha* clothes with rings in his ears, a modest pouch of dollars & *réals*, possessed of strange customs ('smoke-breathing' amongst them), dischordant oaths & tales of cities & sights too outlandish for the Moriori tongue to delineate.

Autua swore to ship on the next vessel leaving Ocean Bay & see these exotic places for himself. His uncle persuaded a second mate on a French whaler to ship the ten-year-old (?) Autua as an apprentice. In the Moriori's subsequent career at sea he saw the ice-ranges of Antarctica, whales turned to islets of gore, then barrels of sperm-oil; in the becalmed ashy Encantadas he hunted giant tortoises; in Sydney, he saw grand buildings, parks, horse-drawn carriages & ladies in bonnets & the miracles of civilization; he shipped opium from Calcutta to Canton; survived dysentery in Batavia; lost half of an ear in a skirmish with Mexicans afore the altar at Santa Cruz; survived shipwreck at the Horn & saw Rio de Janeiro, though did not step ashore; & everywhere he observed that casual brutality lighter races show the darker.

Autua returned in the summer of 1835, a worldly-wise young man of about twenty. He planned to take a local bride & build a house & cultivate some acres but, as Mr D'Arnoq relates, by the winter solstice of that year every Moriori who had not perished was a slave of the Maori. The returnee's years amongst crews of all nations did not elevate Autua in the invaders' estimation. (I observed how ill-timed was the prodigal's homecoming. 'No, Missa Ewing, Rēkohu *called* me home, so I *see* her death so I *know*,' he tapped his head, 'the truth.')

Autua's master was the lizard-tattooed Maori, Kupaka, who told his horrified, broken slaves that he had come to cleanse them of their false idols ('Have your gods saved you?' taunted Kupaka); their polluted language ('My whip will teach you pure Maori!'); their tainted blood ('Inbreeding has diluted your original *mana!*'). Henceforth Moriori unions were proscribed & all

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issue fathered by Maori men on Moriori women were declared Maori. The earliest transgressors were executed in gruesome ways & the survivors lived in that state of lethargy engendered by relentless subjugation. Autua cleared land, planted wheat & tended hogs for Kupaka until he won enough trust to effect his escape. ('Secret places on Rēkohu, Missa Ewing, combes, pitfalls, caves deep in Motoporoporo Forest, so dense no dogs scent you there.' I fancy I fell into one such secret place.)

A year later he was recaptured, but Moriori slaves were now too scarce to be indiscriminately slaughtered. The lower Maori were obliged to labour alongside the serfs, much to their disgust. ('We forsook our ancestors' land in Aotearoa for this miserable rock?' they complained.) Autua escaped again & during his second spell of freedom he was granted secret asylum by Mr D'Arnoq for some months, at no little risk to the latter. During this sojourn Autua was baptised & turned to the Lord.

Kupaka's men caught up with the fugitive after a year & sixmonth, but this time the mercurial chieftain evinced a respect for Autua's spirit. After a retributive lashing, Kupaka appointed his slave as fisherman for his own table. Thus employed, the Moriori let another year go by until, one afternoon, he found a rare *moeeka* fish flapping in his net. He told Kupaka's wife this king of fish could be eaten only by a king of men & showed her how to prepare it for her husband. ('Bad bad poison this *moeeka* fish, Missa Ewing, one bite, aye, you sleep, you never wake no mo'.') During that night's feasting, Autua snuck from the encampment, stole his master's canoe & rowed across the current-prone, choppy, moonless sea to deserted Pitt Island, two leagues to the south of Chatham Isle (known as 'Rangiauria' in Moriori & revered as mankind's birthplace).

Luck favoured the stowaway, for he arrived safe at dawn as a squall blew up & no canoes made the crossing after him. Autua subsisted in his Polynesian Eden on wild celery, watercress, eggs, berries, an occasional young boar (he risked fires only under cover of darkness or mist) & the knowledge that Kupaka, at least, had met a condign punishment. Was his solitude not

unbearable? ‘Nights, ancestors visited. Days, I yarned tales of Maui to birds, & birds yarned sea-tales to I.’

The fugitive lived thus for many a season until last September when a winter gale wrecked the whaler *Eliza* from Nantucket on Pitt Island Reef. All hands drowned, but our Mr Walker, zealous in his pursuit of easy guineas, crossed the straits seeking salvage. When he found signs of habitation & saw Kupaka’s old canoe (each is storiated with unique carvings) he knew he had found treasure of interest to his Maori neighbours. Two days later a large hunting party rowed to Pitt Island from the mainland. Autua sat on the beach & watched them arrive, surprised only to see his old enemy, Kupaka, grizzled but very much alive & shouting war-chants.

My uninvited cabin-mate concluded his tale. ‘That b—’s greedy dog stole *moeeka* from kitchen & died, not the Maori. Aye, Kupaka flogged me, but he’s old & far from home & his *mana* is hollow & starved. Maori thrive on wars & revenge & feudin’, but peace kills ’em off. Many go back to Zealand. Kupaka cannot, his land is no mo’. Then last week, Missa Ewing, I see you & I know, you save I, I know it.’

The morning watch smote four bells & my port-hole betrayed a rainy dawn. I had slept a little, but my prayers that the dawn would dissolve the Moriori were unheeded. I bid him to play-act *he had only just revealed himself* & make no mention of our night’s conversation. He signalled comprehension, but I feared the worst: an Indian’s wit was no match for a Boerhaave.

Along the gangway I stepped (*Prophetess* was bucking like a young bronco) to the officers’ mess, knocked & entered. Mr Roderick & Mr Boerhaave were listening to Cpt. Molyneux. I cleared my throat & bade all good morning, at which our amicable captain swore, ‘You can better my morning, by b—ing off, instanter!’

Coolly, I asked *when* the captain might find time to hear news of an Indian stowaway who had just emerged from the coils of hawser taking up ‘my so-called cabin’. During the ensuing silence

Cpt. Molyneux's pale, horny-toad complexion turned roast beef pink. Ere his blast was launched, I added the stowaway claimed to be an able-seaman & begged to work his passage.

Mr Boerhaave forestalled his captain with the predicted accusations & exclaimed, 'On Dutch merchantmen those who abet stowaways share their fate!' I reminded the Hollander we sailed under an English flag & put it to him why, if *I* had hid the stowaway under the coils of hawser, had I asked & asked *again* since Thursday night for the unwonted hawser to be removed, thereby begging for my putative 'conspiracy' to be uncovered? Hitting that bull's-eye fired my mettle & I assured Cpt. Molyneux that the baptized stowaway had resorted to this extreme measure lest his Maori master, who had vowed to eat his slave's warm liver (I sprinkled a little 'seasoning' on my version of events), directed his ungodly wrath towards his rescuer.

Mr Boerhaave swore, 'So this d—d blackamoor wants us to be *grateful* to him?' No, I replied, the Moriori asks for a chance to prove his value to *Prophetess*. Mr Boerhaave spat out, 'A stowaway is a stowaway even if he sh—s silver nuggets! What's his name?' I did not know, I replied, for I had not conducted an interview with the man but come to the captain expeditiously.

Cpt. Molyneux spoke at last. 'Able seaman *first* class, you say?' His wrath had cooled at the prospect of earning a valuable pair of hands he would not have to pay. 'An Indian? Where did he salt his burns?' I repeated, two minutes was insufficient to learn his history, but my instinct considered the Indian an honest fellow.

The captain wiped his beard. 'Mr Roderick, accompany our passenger & his instinct & fetch their pet savage afoot the mizzen.' He tossed a key to his first mate. 'Mr Boerhaave, my fowling-piece, if you please.'

The second mate & I did as bid. 'A risky business,' Mr Roderick warned me. 'The only statute book on *Prophetess* is the Old Man's Whim.' Another statute book named 'Conscience' is observed *lex loci* wherever God sees, I responded. Autua was awaiting his trial in the cotton trowzers I purchased in Port Jackson (he had climbed

aboard from Mr D'Arnoq's boat in naught but his savage's loin-cloth & a shark-tooth necklace). His back was exposed. His lacerations, I hoped, would pay testimony to his resilience & bestir sympathy in the observers' breasts.

Rats behind the arras spread tidings of the sport & most hands were gathered on deck. (My ally, Henry, was still abed, unaware of my jeopardy.) Cpt. Molyneux sized the Moriori up as if inspecting a mule & addressed him thus: 'Mr Ewing, who knows *nothing* about how you boarded my vessel, says you regard yourself a seaman.'

Autua replied with courage & dignity. 'Aye, Cap'n, sir, two years on whaler *Mississippi* of Le Havre under Cpt. Maspero, & four years on *Cornucopia* of Philadelphia under Cpt. Caton, three years on an Indiaman—'

Cpt. Molyneux interrupted & indicated Autua's trowzers. 'Did you pilfer this garment from below?' Autua was sensible that I, too, was on trial. 'That Christian gent'man gave, sir.' The crew followed the stowaway's finger to myself, & Mr Boerhaave thrust at the chink in my armour. 'He did? *When* was this gift awarded?' (I recalled my father-in-law's aphorism, 'To fool a judge, feign fascination, but to bamboozle the whole court, feign boredom,' & I pretended to extract a speck from my eye.) Autua answered with primed percipience. 'Ten minutes past, sir, I, no clothes, that gent'man say, naked no good, dress this.'

'If you are a seaman,' our captain jerked his thumb aloft, 'let's see you lower this mid-mast's royal.' At this, the stowaway grew hesitant & confused & I felt the lunatic's wager I had placed on this Indian's word swing against me, but Autua had merely spotted a trap. 'Sir, this mast ain't mid-mast, this mast the mizzen, aye?' Impassive Cpt. Molyneux nodded. 'Then kindly lower the *mizzen* royal.'

Autua fairly ran up the mast & I began to hope all was not lost. The newly-risen sun shone low over the water & caused us to squint. 'Ready & aim my piece,' the captain instructed Mr Boerhaave, once the stowaway was past the spanker gaff, 'fire on my command!'

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Now I protested with the utmost vigour, the Indian had received holy sacrament, but Cpt. Molyneux ordered me to shut up or swim back to the Chathams. No American captain would cut a man down, not even a nigger, so odiously! Autua reached the topmost yard & walked it with simian dexterity despite the rough seas. Watching the sail unfurl, one of the 'saltiest' aboard, a dour Icelander & a sober, obliging & hardworking fellow, spoke his admiration for all to hear. 'The darkie's salt as I am, aye, he's got fish-hooks for toes!' Such was my gratitude, I could have kissed his boots. Soon Autua had the sail down – a difficult operation even for a team of four men. Cpt. Molyneux grunted approval & ordered Mr Boerhaave to replace his gun, 'But d— me if I pay a stowaway a single cent. He'll work his passage to O-hawaii. If he's no shirker he may sign articles there in the regular fashion. Mr Roderick, he can share the dead Spaniard's bunk.'

I have worn away a nib in narrating the day's excitements. It is grown too dark to see.

Wednesday, 20th November –

Strong easterly breeze, very salty & oppressive. Henry has conducted his examination & has grave news, yet not the gravest. My Ailment is a parasite, *Gusano Coco Cervello*. This Worm is endemic throughout both Melanesia & Polynesia, but has been known to science only these last ten years. It breeds in the stinking canals of Batavia, doubtless the port of my own infection. Ingested, it voyages through the host's blood-vessels to the brain's *cerebellum anterior*. (Hence my migraines & dizziness.) Ensnared in the brain, it enters a gestation phase. 'You are a realist, Adam,' Henry told me, 'so your pills shall be unsugared. Once the Parasite's larvae hatch, the victim's brain becomes a maggoty cauliflower. Putrescent gases cause the ear-drums & eye-balls to protrude until they pop, releasing a cloud of *Gusano Coco* spores.'

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Thus reads my death-sentence, but now comes my stay of execution & appeal. An admixture of urussium alkali & orinoco manganese will calcify my Parasite & laphrydictic myrrh will disintegrate it. Henry's 'apothecary' holds these compounds, but a precise dosage is paramount. Less than half a drachm leaves *Gusano Coco* unpurged, but more kills the patient with the cure. My doctor warns me that as the Parasite dies, its poison-sacs split & secrete their cargo, so I shall feel worse before my recovery is compleat.

Henry enjoined me not to breathe a word about my condition, for hyenas like Boerhaave prey on the vulnerable, & ignorant sailors can show hostility to maladies they know not. ('I once heard of a sailor who showed the touch of leprosy a week out of Macao on the long haul back to Lisbon,' recalled Henry, 'and the whole company prodded the wretch overboard without a hearing.') During my convalescence, Henry shall inform the 'scuttlebutt' that Mr Ewing has a low fever caused by the clime & nurse me himself. Henry bridled when I mentioned his fee. 'Fee? You are no valetudinarian viscount with bank-notes padding his pillows! Providence steered you to my ministrations, for I doubt five men in this blue Pacific can cure you! So a fie on "Fee"! All I ask, dear Adam, is that you are an obedient patient! Kindly take my powders & withdraw to your cabin. I shall look in after the last dog.'

My doctor is an uncut diamond of the first water. Even as I write these words, I am tearful with gratitude.

Saturday, 30th November -

Henry's powders are indeed a wondrous medicament. I inhale the precious grains into my nostrils from an ivory spoon & on the instant an incandescent joy burns my being. My senses grow alert, yet my limbs grow Lethan. My Parasite still writhes at night, like a new babe's finger, igniting spasms of pain & dreams obscene & monstrous visit me. 'A sure sign,' Henry consoles

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me, 'your Worm has reacted to our vermicide & seeks shelter in the recesses of your cerebral canals whence visions spring. In vain *Gusano Coco* hides, dear Adam, in vain. We shall winkle 'im out!'

Monday, 2nd December -

By day, my coffin is hot as an oven & my sweat dampens these pages. The tropic sun fattens & fills the noon sky. The men work semi-naked with sun-blackened torsos & straw hats. The planking oozes scorching tar that sticks to one's soles. Rain squalls blow up from nowhere & vanish with the same rapidity & the deck hisses itself dry in a minute. Portuguese man-o'-wars pulsate in the quicksilver sea, flying fish bewitch the beholder & ochre shadows of hammerheads circle the *Prophetess*. Earlier, I stepped on a squid that had propelled itself over the bulwarks! (Its eyes & beak reminded me of my father-in-law.) The water we took on at Chatham Isle is now brackish &, without a dash of brandy in it, my stomach rebels. When not playing chess in Henry's cabin or the mess-room, I rest in my coffin until Homer lulls me into dreams a-billow with sails of Athenians.

Autua knocked on my coffin door yesterday to thank me for saving his neck. He said he was in my debt (true enough) until the day he saves *my* life (may it never dawn!). I asked how he was finding his new duties. 'Better'n slaving for Kupaka, Missa Ewing.' Anyhow, growing sensible of my fear someone would witness our congress & report to Cpt. Molyneux, the Moriori returned to the fo'c'sle & has not since sought me out. As Henry warns me, 'It's one thing to throw a blackie a bone, but quite another to take him on for life! Friendships between races, Ewing, can never surpass the affection between a loyal gun-dog & its master.'

Nightly, my doctor & I enjoy a stroll on the deck before retiring. It is pleasant merely to breathe the cooler air. One loses one's eye in lanes of sea-phosphorence & the Mississippi of stars

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streaming across the heavens. Last night, the men were gathered on the foredeck laying up grass into sinnet for ropes by lantern-light & the prohibition on 'supernumeraries' on the foredeck seemed not to apply. (Since the 'Autua Incident' that contempt directed at 'Mr Quillcock' is in recess, as is the epithet.) Bentnail sang ten verses on the world's brothels foul enough to put the most wanton satyr to flight. Henry volunteered an eleventh verse (about Mary O'Hairy of Inverary) that turned the air yet bluer. Rafael was next coerced to take his turn. He sat on the 'widow-maker' & sang these lines in a voice unschooled yet honest & true:—

*Oh, Shenandoah, I long to see you,
Hurrah, you rolling river.
Oh, Shenandoah, I'll not deceive you,
We're bound way 'cross the wide Missouri.
Oh, Shenandoah, I love your daughter,
I love the place across the water.
The ship sails free, the wind is blowing,
The braces taut, the sheets a-flowing.
Missouri, she's a mighty river,
We'll brace her up till her topsails shiver.
Oh, Shenandoah, I'll leave you never,
Till the day I die, I'll love you ever.*

Silence from rude mariners is a grander accolade than any erudite eulogy. Why should Rafael, an Australian-born lad, have an American song by heart? 'I din't know 'twas a Yankee 'un,' he replied awkwardly. 'My mam taught it me before she died. It's the only thing of hers I got still. It stuck in me.' He turned to his work, an awkward curtness in his manner. Henry & I sensed anew the hostility that workers emanate at the bystanding idler & so we left the toilers to their industry.

Reading my entry for 15th October, when first I met Rafael