Travel and Exploration

The history of travel writing dates back to the Bible, Caesar, the Vikings and the Crusaders, and its many themes include war, trade, science and recreation. Explorers from Columbus to Cook charted lands not previously visited by Western travellers, and were followed by merchants, missionaries, and colonists, who wrote accounts of their experiences. The development of steam power in the nineteenth century provided opportunities for increasing numbers of ‘ordinary’ people to travel further, more economically, and more safely, and resulted in great enthusiasm for travel writing among the reading public. Works included in this series range from first-hand descriptions of previously unrecorded places, to literary accounts of the strange habits of foreigners, to examples of the burgeoning numbers of guidebooks produced to satisfy the needs of a new kind of traveller - the tourist.

The Life of Captain James Cook

The dissenting minister Andrew Kippis (1725–95) was a Member of the Society of Antiquaries and of the Royal Society. With this work of 1788, he was the first biographer of Captain James Cook (1728–79), although several of Cook’s colleagues, including Johann Reinhold Forster in 1778 and David Samwell in 1786, had previously published memoirs of their service with him. Believing that ‘his public transactions ... are the grand objects to which the attention of his biographer must be directed,’ Kippis draws on the official Admiralty accounts of Cook’s voyages and focuses on his professional life. The book was criticised at the time for failing to convey Cook’s personality and motivation, stressing his achievements without putting them in context. However, it remained the only biography for forty years, and shaped public perception of Cook as a brilliant navigator and commander, a fearless explorer and an exemplary British hero.
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The Life of Captain James Cook

Andrew Kippis
THE

LIFE

OF

CAPTAIN JAMES COOK.

Totque Maris vastaque exsaurita Pericula Terrae.

Virg.

BY

ANDREW KIPPIES, D. D. F. R. S. AND S. A.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR G. NICOL, BOOKSELLER TO HIS MAJESTY, IN PALL-MALL;
AND G. G. J. AND J. ROBINSON, PATER-NOSTER ROW.

M.DCC.LXXXVIII.
TO THE

KING.

SIR,

I ESTEEM myself highly honoured in being permitted to dedicate and present the Life of Captain James Cook to Your Majesty. It was owing to Your Majesty’s Royal patronage and bounty, that this illustrious Navigator was enabled to execute those vast undertakings, and to make those extraordinary discoveries, which have contributed so much to the reputation of the British empire, and have reflected such peculiar glory on Your Majesty’s reign. Without Your Majesty’s munificence and encouragement, the world would have remained destitute of that immense light which has been thrown on geography, navigation,
and the most important sciences. To Your Majesty, therefore, a Narrative of the Life and Actions of Captain Cook is with particular propriety addressed.

It is impossible, on this occasion, to avoid extending my thoughts to the other noble instances in which Your Majesty’s liberal protection of science and literature has been displayed. Your Majesty began Your reign in a career so glorious to princes: and wonderful has been the increase of knowledge and taste in this country. The improvements in philosophical science, and particularly in astronomy; the exertions of experimental and chemical enquiry, the advancement of natural history, the progress and perfection of the polite arts, and the valuable compositions that have been produced in every department of learning, have corresponded with Your Majesty’s gracious wishes and encouragement, and have
DEDICATION.

have rendered the name of Britain famous in every quarter of the globe. If there be any persons who, in these respects, would depreciate the present times, in comparison with those which have preceded them, it may safely be asserted that such persons have not duly attended to the history of literature. The course of my studies has enabled me to speak with some confidence on the subject; and to say, that Your Majesty’s reign is eminently distinguished by one of the greatest glories that can belong to a monarch.

Knowledge and virtue constitute the chief happiness of a nation: and it is devoutly to be wished that the virtue of this country were equal to its knowledge. If it be not so, this does not arise from the want of an illustrious example in the person of Your Majesty, and that of Your Royal Confort. The pattern which is set by the King and Queen
DEDICATION.

Queen of Great Britain, of those qualities which are the truest ornaments and felicities of life, affords a strong incitement to the imitation of the same excellencies; and cannot fail of contributing to the more extensive prevalence of that moral conduct on which the welfare of society so greatly depends.

That Your Majesty may possess every felicity in Your Royal Person and Family, and enjoy a long and prosperous reign, over an enlightened, a free, and a happy people, is the sincere and ardent prayer of,

S I R,

YOUR MAJESTY’S MOST FAITHFUL,

AND MOST OBEIDENT,

SUBJECT AND SERVANT,

ANDREW KIPPIES.

Crown Street, Westminster,
June 13, 1788.
P R E F A C E.

A L T H O U G H I have often appeared before the Public as a writer, I never did it with so much diffidence and anxiety as on the present occasion. This arises from the peculiar nature of the work in which I have now engaged. A Narrative of the Life of Captain Cook must principally consist of the voyages and discoveries he made, and the difficulties and dangers to which he was exposed. The private incidents concerning him, though collected with the utmost diligence, can never compare, either in number or importance, with his public transactions. His public transactions are the things that mark the man, that display his mind and his character; and, therefore, they are the grand objects to which the attention of his biographer must be directed. However, the right conduct of this business is a point of no small difficulty and embarrassment. The question will frequently arise, How far the detail b
P R E F A C E.

should be extended? There is a danger, on the one hand, of being carried to an undue length, and of enlarging, more than is needful, on facts which may be thought already sufficiently known; and, on the other hand, of giving such a jejune account, and such a slight enumeration, of important events, as shall disappoint the wishes and expectations of the reader. Of the two extremes, the last seems to be that which should most be avoided; for, unless what Captain Cook performed, and what he encountered, be related somewhat at large, his Life would be imperfectly represented to the world. The proper medium appears to be, to bring forward the things in which he was personally concerned, and to pass lightly over other matters. Even here it is scarcely possible, nor would it be desirable, to avoid the introduction of some of the most striking circumstances which relate to the new countries and inhabitants that were visited by our great Navigator; since these constitute a part of the knowledge and benefit derived from his undertakings. Whether I have been so happy as to preserve the due medium, I presume not to determine. I have been anxious to do it, without always being able fully to satisfy my own mind
P R E F A C E.

mind that I have succeeded; on which account I shall not be surprized if different opinions should be formed on the subject. In that case, all that I can offer in my own defence will be, that I have acted to the best of my judgment. At any rate, I flatter myself with the hope of having presented to the Public, a work not wholly uninteresting or unentertaining. Those who are best acquainted with Captain Cook's expeditions, may be pleased with reviewing them in a more compendious form, and with having his actions placed in a closer point of view, in consequence of their being divested of the minute nautical and other details, which were essentially necessary in the voyages at large. As to those persons, if there be any, who have hitherto obtained but an imperfect knowledge of what was done and discovered by this illustrious man, they will not be offended with the length of the following narrative.

In various respects, new information will be found in the present performance; and other things, which were less perfectly known before, are set in a clearer and fuller light. This, I trust, will appear in the first, third, fifth, and seventh chapters. It may be observed, likewise, that the fresh matter now
now communicated is of the most authentic kind, and derived from the most respectable sources. My obligations of this nature are, indeed, very great, and call for my warmest gratitude. The dates and facts relative to Captain Cook’s different promotions are taken from the books of the Admiralty, by the direction of the noble Lord who is at the head of that Board, and the favour of Mr. Stephens. I embrace with pleasure this opportunity of mentioning, that, in the course of my life, I have experienced, in several instances, Lord Howe’s condescending and favourable attention. To Mr. Stephens I am indebted for other communications besides those which concern the times of Captain Cook’s preferments, and for his general readiness in forwarding the design of the present work. The Earl of Sandwich, the great patron of our Navigator, and the principal mover in his mighty undertakings, has honoured me with some important information concerning him, especially with regard to the circumstances which preceded his last voyage. To Sir Hugh Palliser’s zeal for the memory of his friend I stand particularly obliged. From a large communication with which he was so good as to favour me, I have derived very material intelligence, as will appear in the course of the narrative, and
P R E F A C E.

and especially in the first chapter. In the same chapter are some facts which I received from Admiral Graves, through the hands of the Reverend Dr. Douglas, now Bishop of Carlisle, whose admirable Introduction to the Voyage to the Pacific Ocean must be of the most essential service to every writer of the Life of Captain Cook. The Captain's amiable and worthy Widow, who is held in just esteem by all his friends, has given me an account of several domestic circumstances. I should be deficient in gratitude, were I here to omit the name of Mr. Samwell: for, though what is inserted from him in this work has already been laid before the public, it should be remembered, that, through the interposition of our common friend, the Reverend Mr. Gregory, it was originally written for my use, and freely confided to my disposal; and that it was at my particular instance and request that it was separately printed. My obligations to other Gentlemen will be mentioned in their proper places.

But my acknowledgments are, above all, due to Sir Joseph Banks, President of the Royal Society, for the interest he has taken in the present publication. It was in consequence of his advice, that it was given to the world in the form which it now bears; and his assistance has been invariable through every part of the
the undertaking. To him the inspection of the whole has been submitted; and to him it is owing, that the work is, in many respects, far more complete than it would otherwise have been. The exertions of zeal and friendship, I have been so happy as to experience from him in writing the Life of Captain Cook, have corresponded with that ardour which Sir Joseph Banks is always ready to display in promoting whatever he judges to be subservient to the cause of science and literature.
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