A SECOND LETTER
FROM
OBEREĀ, QUEEN of OTAHEITE,
TO
JOSEPH BANKS, Esq;
Translated from the ORIGINAL,
Brought over by his Excellency OTAIPAIROO, Envoy Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary from the QUEEN of OTAHEITE,
To the Court of GREAT BRITAIN,
Lately arrived in his Majesty's Ship the ADVENTURE, Capt. FURNEAUX.
With some curious and entertaining Anecdôtes of this celebrated Foreigner before and since his Arrival in England;
Together with explanatory Notes from the Queen's former Letter, and from Dr. Hawkesworth's Voyages.

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INTRODUCTION.

The unexpected arrival of his excellency Otaipairoo, from so voluptuous a Court as that of Otaheite, has greatly contributed to revive the spirits of every member of the fashionable societies in the neighbourhood of St. James's. Almack's, Boodle's, Scavoir Vivre, &c. are all in raptures, and particularly that distinguished under the appellation of the English AROUAL, in Pall Mall.

As his excellency's chief employment will be at Court, the proximity of these celebrated seminaries to St. James's cannot fail of being frequently the scene of his leisure hours; but more especially the latter, which has sheltered itself almost under the wings of royal protection. This situation cannot fail of giving the noble foreigner the most extraordinary opinion of English gallantry, and may possibly convince him, that here, as well as in the court of his Royal Mistress, every sacrifice made at the shrine of the Cyprian goddess is highly agreeable to our most virtuous sovereign.

As every circumstance relating to this celebrated foreigner is eagerly sought for, and engages the attention of philosophers and the curious, the Editor takes the liberty of inserting the following particulars as authentic.

The ranks of distinction in Otaheite are divided into three classes—nobility, gentry, and mobility. His excellency is of the first class. In his person he is rather taller than the middle size, tolerably well made, and so docile in his memory, that he scarcely needs be told the names and uses of things twice.

Lord Sandwich's was the first house he went to after his arrival; and being shewn into the drawing-room, where there were two or three persons, he scarcely ever regarded them, being so taken up with admiring the furniture, &c.

When

* This Society takes its name from one in the Island of Otaheite, where persons of both sexes indulge themselves in freedoms not consistent with decency to mention here, but may be met with in Dr. Hawkesworth's Voyages.
When he first saw Dr. Solander (whom he knew in his own country) he ran up to him in the most cordial manner, and embraced him so closely as to lift him off the ground. Being civilly reproved by the Doctor, and informed, that a shake of the hand, and the words, How do you do? was the usual salutation in this country, he immediately repeated several times the last phrase tolerably correct.

He makes his dinner principally on soups, and eats promiscuously of every vegetable at table; he is rather fond of drinking, and seems to give the preference to Madeira.

From the restlessness of his temper, he seems to want exercise, which, we hear, he shortly will be indulged with in some of the private parks, after the manner of his own country.

When he went on shore with captain Fourneau, at the cape of good Hope, he seemed exceedingly pleased with a Dutch lady who was only once in his company. It was with some reluctance that he parted from her, and when returning on board he ran back a considerable distance to salute her.

He has not as yet been admitted to a private interview with any of our fair country-women, nor will not till after he is recovered from inoculation: nor did he seem to take any extraordinary notice of the ladies at court when he was introduced to the King; probably the outre of their dress disgusted him, as it really does every admirer of simple nature. However, it is an absolute fact, that a lady on the first line of nobility has conceived a particular penchant for this spirited adventurer, and has requested that, as soon as Dr. Solander shall pronounce him entirely recovered, he will spend a few weeks at her grace's villa.
An EPISTLE, &c.

LOW full, and steady blow the Southern gale
Which wafts to her Opano* all the tale
Of Oberea's Love:—A Love as true
As any Maid in any clime e'er knew.

Haply tho' now some fairer She you press, (a)
You know not any more expert to bless.

Say, gentle wand'rer, wheresoe'er you go,
Does love like mine in female bosom glow?

Do other Queens with me in fondness vie
Life in each look, and rapture in each eye:

Do other Sov'reigns, all their State apart,
Clasp the dear Trav'ler to the bounding heart:

N O T E S.

* The people of Otabeite, unable to pronounce Mr. Banks's name, called him Opano.

(a) Though now some European maid you woo,
Of waist more taper, and of whiter hue;
Yet oft with me you deign'd the night to pafs,
Beneath yon bread-tree, on the bending gras.

Oberea's Letter to Banks, 1773.
All forms despising, do they bare their charms,
And rush impetuous to the Sailor’s arms?
Ah no!—’twas left for me alone to shew
How much too far a woman’s love could go;
How very fond, (beyond the virtuous rules
Of prudence taught in European schools,)  
How much beyond the licence of your court
A genuine Southern genius dares disport.

Reflect, Opano, on each tender scene,
Each fond endearment on th’emamell’d green,
Each warm caref beneath th’extended groves,
While conscious bread-trees nodded o’er our loves. (aa)
Can’t thou forget enamour’d how we lay,
While o’er the wave our wigwam sought its way:—(b)
When gain’d the shore, and gain’d my spacious court,
How there in public, we renew’d our sport;
How while we printed many a fervent kiss,
My Courtiers envied our superior bliss?*

NOTES.

(aa) See note (a) on the preceding page.

(b) Oft in the rocking boat we fondly lay,
Nor fear’d the drizly wind, or briny spray.

Oberea’s letter to Banks, 1773.

* That it was a common practice for feasts of love to be publicly exhibited among the people of Otaheite, appears from Hawkesworth’s luscious description, in prose, of a circumstance which is as lusciously described in verse, by the translator of Oberea’s former letter.

Here Tirahoera-dica dar’d to prove,
The impetuous transports of Toupanab’s love.
Scarce twelve short years the wanton maid had seen.
The youth was fix foot high, or more I ween.
Experienced Matrons the young pair survey’d
And urg’d to feats of love the self-taught maid;
With skill superior she perform’d her part,
And potent nature scorn’d the tricks of art.
But pass'd the day, and pass'd each sportive hour,
When you could own, and I could feel my power.
No more I wander to the well-known glade,
No more I seek the woods impervious shade.
Nor herbs, nor plants, nor minerals charm my eyes,
Nor the sea-monster can I deem a prize.
Since thou, for whose dear sake these things were dear,
Since thou, my fond Opans, art not here.

Where hast thou been, thou dear deluder, where,
Since Oberea sought, and own'd thy care;
Say on what shore has my dear sailor sped,
What happy Queen has lur'd him to her bed?
In what blest clime, beneath what fav'ring trees,
Whence shone the sun, and which way blew the breeze?

Did sports like ours thy gentle cares delude,
As kind the Women, and the dogs as good;
The hog, the cocoa, did they suit thy taste,
And did the bread-fruit furnish the repast?

When late I wrote thee from these peaceful shores,
Where love its bounty in abundance pours,
Where joys extatic in profusion run,
And the true bliss descends from fire to son;
I told a simple tale, devoid of art,
And, while I own'd my passion, bared my heart.

No answer yet, and forty moons pass'd o'er!
Alas! my letter never reach'd thy shore---
The white wave wash'd it in the stormy main,
And Oberea tells her tale again.

Then
Then listen, dear Opano, while I say
How ev'ry joy is past with thee away;
And spare, in pity spare, the female breast,
Her woes developed, and her love confessed.

Full well I recollect the fatal night,
When first thy vessel catch'd my wandering sight,
When the broad sail the mighty wigwam bore
In form terrific, to our peaceful shore.

In anxious tears my council drown'd their eyes,
Nor e'en Tupia's wisdom could advise:
Yet then, ev'n then, my dear Opano knows,
In warm benevolence we lost our woes;
The hog, the fruit, the woman we transmit,
To nature trusting in default of wit.*

NOTES.

* In the Queen's former letter, which she supposes to have been lost, she expresses herself in the following manner:

To the vast main a rock projecting lies,
Where tempests howl, and roaring billows rise.
There first at eve thy opening fails I spy'd,
And eager glow'd to cleave the briny tide.
My faithful senate sat in wise debate,
And weigh'd the dubious interests of the state:
Though some, with brandish'd lance, for war declare,
With all the frantic signs of wild despair;
Yet I, more soft, to gentle peace inclin'd,
And soothe'd the terrors of Tupia's mind.
Send them, I cry'd, twice twelve delicious dogs,
And give them cocoas, women, bread, and hogs.

† Tupia was the person who engaged to come to England with Mr. Banks, but unhappily died on the voyage. He was prime minister, and a great favourite with the Queen, whose permitting him thus to leave his native country, must be considered as a high proof of her love for her Opano.
The morn succeeding to that gloomy night
First gave the bold Opano to my flight;
My eyes, my heart the gallant youth approve,
And all my fear was soon transform'd to love. (c)
Such glowing passion ran through all my frame,
That soon I felt, and honest own'd my flame.

Soul of my soul, attend me while I stray
To where yon bread-tree hangs across the way,
To where the rock projecting to the main,
Nods o'er the wave, yet shades th'adjacent plain,
To where the nymphs of Oberea's court (d)
In love's light dance with many a swain disport.

N O T E S.

(c) T'was morn, the gallant vessel steers to land;
On the moist beach the marshall'd sailors stand,
Then first the pangs of conscious love I knew,
My eyes, my longing soul was fixt on you.
To gain thy love I practis'd every art,
And gave my kingdom as I gave my heart.

(d) In the soft dance if e'er I chanc'd to move,
How throb'd thy bosom with impatient love!
Now slow I sail'd, and stole my easy way
With sweet, reluctant, amorous delay;
Then in brisk circles glanc'd around, and beat
The measur'd cadence with my quivering feet.
My eyes resulgent beam'd with wanton fire,
And all my limbs were brac'd with fierce desire.
Not Hella's self, with all her curious pas,
Her rigadoons, and motley entre-cbas
With such luxuriant grace displays her thigh;
Or Temeredès* with such ease as I.

* The people of Otaheite were famous for the wantonnefs of their dances, amongst which the most lascivious was called the Temeredès.—It was not at first clear to the translator of Oberea's letter who she meant by Hella; but it was at length conjectured to be no other than the celebrated Mademoiselle Heinel, of whose skill in dancing it is probable Monsieur Bougainville, who touched at Otaheite, gave the Queen a very exaggerated account.
To every place of pleasure or repose,
Where the warm sigh with mutual ardor rose.
Along the beach, too, fondly let us stray,
Stretch in the boat, and brave the briny spray:
Ascend the mountain's height, the woods pervade,
And whisper tales of love in ev'ry glade.

Believe me, dear Opano, since the day
When the curt south-wind wafted thee away,
My anxious hours in silent grief I spend,
And mourn the lover lost, and mourn the friend.
With love's soft passion now no more I warm,
No more Obádee has the power to charm.

Still o'er my face my straggling locks I wear,
My breech still doom'd the base tataow to bear.

No more I move amid the sprightly dance, (dd)
To catch a lover by design or chance;
No more my eyes with fires empassion'd beam,
But drop for thee the never-ceasing stream.
My lips, (e) those lips on which so oft you hung,
 Emit the wailing accents of my tongue.

NOTES.

(dd) See note (d) on the preceding page.

(e) Oft on thy lips, those lips of love, I hung,
To hear thee greet me in my native tongue;
Meeset-Atira, sweetly you exprest,
Your eyes all eloquent explain'd the rest.
Say, fondest youth, canst thou forget the night,
When starting from your sleep in wild affright;
Rife
* In the language of Otaheite is "come here to kiss me."
Oft will sad dreams to my returning sigh
Present the baleful horrors of that night---
When starting wild---Oppano's breeches loft,
With my own petticoat I paid their cost.

Though other lovers strive my heart to gain,
I scorn their offers, and despise their pain;
Pink'd tho' their bums, (f) it serves to raise my phlegm,
And, in disdain, I turn my bum to them.

The dainty baby, (g) which to thee I owe,
Is all my solace in the hour of woe;
With her alone I take my ev'ning walk,
And sigh, and wish the puppet could but talk:

Ah

NOTES.
Riſe Oberea, riſe my Queen, you said,
Some thief † has stol'n my breeches from my head.
My choicest garment straight I flar'd with you,
And fondly cloath'd you with my own Perou. §

† Dr. Hawkeſworth tells us that Mr. Banks, being on a visit with the Queen, was happy
in being placed by her in the Canoe. Waking about eleven at night, he discovered that his
cloaths were stolen; on which he awaked Oberea, who endeavoured in vain to find them;
and the next day the loss was supplied by some of the cloaths of the country.

§ Perou signifies a petticoat.

(f ) Graceful she mov'd and with majestic ease,
Pull'd up her petticoats above her knees;
Then thrice turn'd round with measured steps and flow,
Proud the curv'd arches of her bum to shew. *

(g ) A curious ‡ image did Opano give,
Whose eye-balls glitten'd, and which seem'd to live,
With this I talk'd beneath the plantain shade,
As tho' it heard, and answer'd what I said;
In am'rous dalliance place it on my knee,
And lavish all the raptures done to thee.

* The people of Otaheite lavish their ornaments on the breech:---this in both sexes, is
covered with a deep black, above which arches are drawn one over another. These arches
are their pride, and are shewn with great ostentation. Hawkeſworth's Voyages.

‡ I received her (Oberea) with such marks of distinction as I thought would gratify her
most, and was not sparing of my presents, among which this august personage seemed parti-
Ah! if she could, I'd tell her all my flame,
Teach her to prattle my Opano's name;
Tell her of all his love—-that love now lost,
My hopes inspir'd, and how those hopes were crost.

But vain the wish, and vain my ev'ry care,
Which thou, Opano, art not born to share;—
Deep in the woods I tell my lonely tale,
While sighs, responsive, echo through the vale:
But what avails the story or the sigh,
To one so loft, so more than lost, as I?

While thou for arts, and deeds of manhood fam'd,
Which to admire, need only to be nam'd,
Through Britain's clime, with Britain's belles canst stray,
And pass with beauty each returning day,
Thy Oberea, doom'd to endless woe,
Must every grief of love neglected know.

Well I remember tales that thou haft told,
Of dames, in nature's spight, who, never old,
Gay at three score, have press'd the bashful youth,
And, dead to honour, dar'd to talk of truth:
Of others, who the marks of time defy,
Paint the pale cheek, and roll the lifeless eye,
Frisk thro' the midnight maze with tottering step,
At seventy-five the would-be Demi-rep.

Not such as these can Oberea dread,
Nor fear their sharing her Opano's bed;
But ah! the young, the blooming, and the gay,
Will work, to hearts like thine, an easy way:
These, in the dance, will make thy heart their own,
And gain a prize that should be mine alone.

But vain the wish, and vain th'impassion'd sigh,
Corporeal pleasures are but born to die;
What tho', with thee, beneath the bread-tree's shade,
In ev'ry form of wanton love I've laid;
What tho', at court, amidst my frolic ring,
Myself the vainest, and the fondest thing,
Each circling hour in raptures past away,
And night repeated but the sports of day;
What tho', entranced upon the rolling wave,
Mutual we talk'd of joys, and mutual gave;
The transport's fled, and nought is left behind,
Save the cold comforts of a restless mind.

Ah! when I first beheld thy charming face,
With youthful vigour warm'd, and manly grace,
When first thy form my hapless vision caught,
And play'd, resifless, on my passive thought;
If then the dear temptation I had spurn'd,
Nor for the bliss I could not keep, had burn'd;
My mind not now would on a phantom hang,
Nor each fond wish would nurse the present pang.

But can complainings mitigate my woe?
Will lines like these forbid my tears to flow?
Alas! in vain I write, in vain I sigh,
My life is torture---for thou art not nigh.

Now dear Opano, listen to my tale,---
If not the lover, let the wife prevail.---
Not long thy ship had plow'd the watry deep,
And left thy widow'd Queen to pray and weep,
E'er fits convuls'd, and sick'ning qualms arose,
The sure forboders of a mother's woes;
Soon as nine moons had gone their nightly round,
The pang of nature stretch'd me on the ground;
And while the throb through all my body ran,
I call'd, but call'd in vain, my absent man;
No lover heard me, and no husband came,
To hold, with lenient hand, my trembling frame.
Fierce were my pains, but soon those pains were fled;
Two young Opano's grace the royal bed:
Vig'rous the boys, and ah! so like the fire,
They prove how warm, how pure was my desire—
How much, e'en while Obádee (b) clasp'd my charms,
I wish'd and thought me in Opano's arms;—
Full proof, I ween, that on that fatal night,
Tho' stray'd the body, yet the heart was right.
The children grow in stature and in grace,
While all the father blooms in either face;
E'en now, methinks, while dandling on my knee,
In words half-form'd they strive to talk of thee;
And, when they weep, I almost hear them say
Why, cruel, went our Father far away;

**Notes.**

(b) Alas! what streams of scalding tears I shed,
When you surpriz'd Obádee in my bed;
From my chaff'd temples straight my locks I twitch,
And with my prickly shell tatavu my breech.
Why, curious, he, new herbs and roots to gain,
Thus left us far amidst the Southern main;
Why shap'd his course before the fresh'ning wind,
And leave the pledges of his love behind;
What had my mother, hapless fair one, done
That love paternal should not share each son?
But vain the wish and vain our ev'ry care,
That dear Opano is not here to share.
When late some others of thy northern race
Through our deep seas the devious voyage trace;
The vessel from afar my love espied,
And hop'd its dear Opano it decried:
Much yet I fear'd, thank heav'n my fears were vain,
The vessel bore th'ungenerous Son of Pain*
The dreaded European, he who came,
And rais'd a wanton fire and left a flame.
But though my Sailor did not blest my sight,
Nor did that son of darkness spread his night:
Thy friends, thy neighbours, view'd our peaceful shore,
And left us, wretched, but to weep the more.

NOTES.

* Obersa seems here, on the approach of the late Voyagers, to have dreaded a re-visit
from the French, who had left an infectious disease behind them, and of whom she thus
speaks in her former letter.

Curst be the envious gales that wafted o'er
Those floating wigwams to our peaceful shore:
With specious gifts a crew insidious came,
And left us bitter pledges of their flame;
'Till then was nature free, and love sincere;
Nor gen'rous passion quench'd by trivial fear:
No pining maiden knew the venom'd kis,
But all was genuine extasy and blifs.
But why these fruitless wailings—far away
Nor hears nor heeds Opano what I say.
Yet could I wish, for love is partial still,
My sov'reign pleasure might become thy will;
That love all pow'ful, might inform thy breast;
But thought must paint, and rapture guess the rest.
Say, sweet Opano, (and I close my song*)
Why keeps thy tardy love away so long?
Ah! didst thou know how warm my wishes rise
To feast on all thy charms, my longing eyes,
From northern climes with pleasure wouldst thou haste
To share with me each exquisite repast,
Which love alone for lovers can prepare,
And in my bosom drown thy every care;
Swift to my arms with manly vigour spring,
While I enraptur'd hail my conqu'ror and my king.

* The language of Otabeite is so inexpressibly beautiful and melodious, that Oberea's letter may, with great propriety, be deemed a love song. - The Author has only to wish he had been able, in this translation, to have done justice to the peculiar tenderness of its sentiments, and the unusual harmony of its periods.