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### **A Voyage To The Pacific Ocean**

Undertaken, By The Command Of His Majesty, For Making Discoveries in the Northern Hemisphere. To Determine The Position and Extent of the West Side of North America; its Distance from Asia; and the Practicability of a Northern Passage to Europe. Performed Under The Direction Of Captians Cook, ...

**King, James**

**Cook, James**

**London, 1784**

Chap. IV. Fruitless attempts to penetrate through the Ice to the North West. - Dangerous Situation of the Discovery. - Seahorses killed. - Fresh Obstructions from the Ice. - Report of Damages ...

**urn:nbn:de:gbv:45:1-2282**

## C H A P. IV.

*Fruitless Attempts to penetrate through the Ice to the North West.—Dangerous Situation of the Discovery.—Sea-horses killed.—Fresh Obstructions from the Ice.—Report of Damages received by the Discovery.—Captain Clerke's Determination to proceed to the Southward.—Joy of the Ship's Crews on that Occasion.—Pass Serdze Kamen.—Return through Beering's Straits.—Inquiry into the Extent of the North East Coast of Asia.—Reasons for rejecting Muller's Map of the Promontory of the Tschutski.—Reasons for believing the Coast does not reach a higher Latitude than  $70^{\circ}$  North.—General Observations on the Impracticability of a North East, or North West Passage from the Atlantic into the Pacific Ocean.—Comparative View of the Progress made in the Years 1778 and 1779.—Remarks on the Sea, and Sea-coasts, North of Beering's Straits.—History of the Voyage resumed.—Pass the Island of St. Laurence.—The Island of Mednoi.—Death of Captain Clerke.—Short Account of his Services.*

CAPTAIN CLERKE having determined, for the reasons assigned at the conclusion of the last Chapter, to give up all farther attempts on the coast of America, and to make his last efforts, in search of a passage on the coast of the opposite

1779-  
July.



1779.  
July.  
Wednes. 21.

posite continent, we continued, during the afternoon of the 21<sup>st</sup> of July, to steer to the West North West, through much loose ice. At ten at night, discovering the main body of it through the fog, right ahead, and almost close to us, and being unwilling to take a Southerly course, so long as we could possibly avoid it, we hauled our wind, which was Easterly, and stood to the Northward; but, in an hour after, the weather clearing up, and finding ourselves surrounded by a compact field of ice, on every side, except to the South South West, we tacked, and stood on in that direction, in order to get clear of it.

Thursday 22. At noon of the 22<sup>d</sup>, our latitude, by observation, was  $69^{\circ} 30'$ , and longitude  $187^{\circ} 30'$ . In the afternoon, we again came up with the ice, which extended to the North West and South West, and obliged us to continue our course to the Southward, in order to weather it.

It may be remarked, that since the 8<sup>th</sup> of this month, we had twice traversed this sea, in lines nearly parallel with the run we had just now made; that in the first of those traverses, we were not able to penetrate so far North, by eight or ten leagues, as in the second; and that in the last we had again found an united body of ice, generally about five leagues to the Southward of its position in the preceding run. As this proves that the large, compact fields of ice, which we saw were moveable, or diminishing; at the same time, it does not leave any well-founded expectation of advancing much farther in the most favourable seasons.

At seven in the evening, the weather being hazy, and no ice in sight, we bore away to the Westward; but, at half past eight, the fog dispersing, we found ourselves in the  
midst



midst of loose ice, and close in with the main body; we therefore stood upon a wind, which was still Easterly, and kept beating to windward during the night, in hopes of weathering the loose pieces, which the freshness of the wind kept driving down upon us in such quantities, that we were in manifest danger of being blocked up by them.

1779.  
July.

In the morning of the 23d, the clear water, in which we continued to stand to and fro, did not exceed a mile and a half, and was every instant lessening. At length, after using our utmost endeavours to clear the loose ice, we were driven to the necessity of forcing a passage to the Southward, which, at half past seven, we accomplished, but not without subjecting the ship to some very severe shocks. The Discovery was less successful. For, at eleven, when they had nigh got clear out, she became so entangled by several large pieces, that her way was stopped, and immediately dropping bodily to leeward, she fell, broadside foremost, on the edge of a considerable body of ice; and having, at the same time, an open sea to windward, the surf caused her to strike violently upon it. This mass at length either so far broke, or moved, as to set them at liberty to make another trial to escape; but, unfortunately, before the ship gathered way enough to be under command, she again fell to leeward on another fragment; and the swell making it unsafe to lie to windward, and finding no chance of getting clear, they pushed into a small opening, furled their sails, and made fast with ice-hooks.

Friday 23.

In this dangerous situation we saw them at noon, about three miles from us, bearing North West, a fresh gale from the South East driving more ice to the North West, and increasing the body that lay between us. Our latitude, by



1779.  
July.

account, was  $69^{\circ} 8'$ , the longitude  $187^{\circ}$ , and the depth of water twenty-eight fathoms. To add to the gloomy apprehensions which began to force themselves on us, at half past four in the afternoon, the weather becoming thick and hazy, we lost sight of the Discovery; but, that we might be in a situation to afford her every assistance in our power, we kept standing on close by the edge of the ice. At six, the wind happily coming round to the North, gave us some hopes, that the ice might drift away and release her; and in that case, as it was uncertain in what condition she might come out, we kept firing a gun every half hour, in order to prevent a separation. Our apprehensions for her safety did not cease till nine, when we heard her guns in answer to ours; and soon after, being hailed by her, were informed, that upon the change of wind, the ice began to separate; and that, setting all their sails, they forced a passage through it. We learned farther, that whilst they were encompassed by it, they found the ship drift, with the main body, to the North East, at the rate of half a mile an hour. We were sorry to find, that the Discovery had rubbed off a great deal of the sheathing from the bows, and was become very leaky, from the strokes she had received when she fell upon the edge of the ice.

Saturday 24.

On the 24th, we had fresh breezes from South West, with hazy weather, and kept running to the South East till eleven in the forenoon, when a large body of loose ice, extending from North North East, round by the East, to South South East, and to which (though the weather was tolerably clear) we could see no end, again obstructed our course. We therefore kept working to windward, and at noon, our latitude, by observation, was  $68^{\circ} 53'$ , longitude  $188^{\circ}$ ; the variation of the compass  $22^{\circ} 30'$  East. At four in the afternoon, it became



came calm, and we hoisted out the boats in pursuit of the sea-horses, which were in prodigious herds on every side of us. We killed ten of them, which were as many as we could make use of for eating, or for converting into lamp oil. We kept on with the wind, from the South West, along the edge of the ice, which extended in a direction almost due East and West, till four in the morning of the 25th, Sunday 25. when observing a clear sea beyond it, to the South East, we made sail that way, with a view of forcing through it. By six, we had cleared it, and continued the remainder of the day running to the South East, without any ice in sight. At noon, our latitude, by observation, was  $68^{\circ} 38'$ , longitude  $189^{\circ} 9'$ , and the depth of water thirty fathoms. At midnight, we tacked, and stood to the Westward, with a fresh gale from the South; and at ten in the forenoon of the 26th, Monday 26. the ice again shewed itself, extending from North West to South. It appeared loose, and drifting, by the force of the wind, to the Northward. At noon, our latitude, by observation, was  $68^{\circ}$  North, longitude  $188^{\circ} 10'$  East; and we had soundings with twenty-eight fathoms. For the remaining part of the day, and till noon of the 27th, we kept standing backward and forward, in order to clear ourselves of different bodies of ice. At noon, we were in latitude, by observation,  $67^{\circ} 47'$ , longitude  $188^{\circ}$ . At two in the afternoon, we saw the continent to the South by East; and at four, having run, since noon, with a South South East wind to the South West, we were surrounded by loose masses of ice, with the firm body of it in sight, stretching in a North by West, and a South by East direction, as far as the eye could reach; beyond which we saw the coast of Asia, bearing South, and South by East.

1779.  
July.

Sunday 25.

Monday 26.

Tuesday 27.



1779.  
July.

As it was now necessary to come to some determination with respect to the course we were next to steer, Captain Clerke sent a boat, with the carpenters, on board the Discovery, to inquire into the particulars of the damage she had sustained. They returned, in the evening, with the report of Captain Gore, and of the carpenters of both ships, that the damages they had received were of a kind that would require three weeks to repair; and that it would be necessary, for that purpose, to go into some port.

Thus, finding a farther advance to the Northward, as well as a nearer approach to either continent, obstructed by a sea blocked up with ice, we judged it both injurious to the service, by endangering the safety of the ships, as well as fruitless, with respect to the design of our voyage, to make any farther attempts toward a passage. This, therefore, added to the representations of Captain Gore, determined Captain Clerke not to lose more time in what he concluded to be an unattainable object, but to sail for Awatka Bay, to repair our damages there; and, before the winter should set in, and render all other efforts toward discovery impracticable, to explore the coast of Japan.

I will not endeavour to conceal the joy that brightened the countenance of every individual, as soon as Captain Clerke's resolutions were made known. We were all heartily sick of a navigation full of danger, and in which the utmost perseverance had not been repaid with the smallest probability of success. We therefore turned our faces toward home, after an absence of three years, with a delight and satisfaction, which, notwithstanding the tedious voyage we had still to make, and the immense distance we had to run, were as freely entertained, and perhaps as fully



fully enjoyed, as if we had been already in sight of the Land's-end.

1779.  
July.

On the 28th, we kept working to windward with a fresh breeze from the South East, having the coast of Asia still in sight. At four in the morning, the Cape, which on the authority of Muller, we have called Serdze Kamen, bore South South West, distant six or seven leagues. We saw, in different places, upon the tops of the hills, which rise inland on both sides of the Cape, protuberances of a considerable height, which had the appearance of huge rocks, or pillars of stone.

Wednes. 28.

On the 29th, the wind still continuing contrary, we made but slow progress to the Southward. At midnight we had thick, foggy weather, accompanied with a breeze from the North North West, with which we directed our course to the South South East, through the straits, and had no land in sight till seven in the evening of the 30th; when the fog clearing away, we saw Cape Prince of Wales bearing South by East, distant about six leagues; and the island St. Diomedé South West by West. We now altered our course to the West, and at eight made the East Cape, which, at midnight, bore West by North, distant four leagues. In the night we steered to the South South West, with a fresh West North Westerly breeze; and, at four in the morning of the 31st, the East Cape bore North North East, and the North East part of the bay of St. Laurence (where we anchored the last year) West by South, its distance being four leagues. As we could not have worked up to windward without a greater waste of time, than the object appeared to deserve, we ran across the bay, regretting much, as we passed along, the loss of this opportunity of paying a second visit to the Tschutski. At

Thursday 29.

Friday 30.

Saturday 31.

noon.





1779.  
July.

noon our latitude, by observation, was  $65^{\circ} 6'$ , and longitude  $189^{\circ}$ . The South point of the Bay of St. Laurence bore North by West one quarter West, and was distant seven or eight leagues. In the afternoon the variation was found to be  $22^{\circ} 50'$  East.

Having now passed Beering's Straits, and taken our final leave of the North East coast of Asia, it may not be improper, on this occasion, to state the grounds on which we have ventured to adopt two general conclusions respecting its extent, in opposition to the opinions of Mr. Muller. The first, that the promontory named East Cape is actually the Easternmost point of that quarter of the globe; or, in other words, that no part of the continent extends in longitude beyond  $190^{\circ} 22'$  East: the second, that the latitude of the North Easternmost extremity falls to the Southward of  $70^{\circ}$  North. With respect to the former, if such land exist, it must necessarily be to the North of latitude  $69^{\circ}$ , where the discoveries made in the present voyage terminate; and, therefore, the probable direction of the coast, beyond this point, is the question I shall endeavour, in the first place, to investigate.

As the Russian is the only nation that has hitherto navigated these seas, all our information respecting the situation of the coast to the Northward of Cape North, must necessarily be derived from the charts and journals of the persons who have been employed, at various times, in ascertaining the limits of that empire; and these are, for the most part, so imperfect, so confused, and contradictory, that it is not easy to form any distinct idea of their pretended, much less to collect the amount of their real discoveries. It is on this account, that the extent and form of the peninsula, inhabited by the Tschutski, still remains a point, on  
which



which the Russian geographers are much divided. Mr. Muller, in his map, published in the year 1754, supposes this country to extend toward the North East, to the  $75^{\circ}$  of latitude, and in longitude  $190^{\circ}$  East of Greenwich, and to terminate in a round Cape, which he calls Tschukotskoi Nofs. To the Southward of this Cape he conceives the coast to form a bay to the Westward, bounded in latitude  $67^{\circ} 18'$ , by Serdze Kamen, the Northernmost point seen by Beering in his expedition in the year 1728. The map, published by the academy of St. Petersburg, in the year 1776, gives the whole peninsula intirely a new form, placing its North Easternmost extremity in the latitude  $73^{\circ}$ , longitude  $178^{\circ} 30'$ . The Easternmost point in latitude  $65^{\circ} 30'$ , longitude  $189^{\circ} 30'$ . All the other maps we saw, both printed and in manuscript, vary between these two, apparently more according to the fancy of the compiler, than on any grounds of more accurate information. The only point in which there is a general coincidence, without any considerable variation, is in the position of the East Cape in latitude  $66^{\circ}$ . The form of the coast, both to the South and North of this Cape, in the map of the academy, is exceedingly erroneous, and may be totally disregarded. In that of Mr. Muller, the coast to the Northward bears a considerable resemblance to our survey, as far as the latter extends, except that it does not trend sufficiently to the Westward; receding only about  $5^{\circ}$  of longitude, between the latitude of  $66^{\circ}$  and  $69^{\circ}$ ; whereas, in reality, it recedes near ten. Between the latitude of  $69^{\circ}$  and  $74^{\circ}$ , he makes the coast bend round to the North and North East, and to form a considerable promontory. On what authority, now remains to be examined.

Mr. Coxe, whose accurate researches into this subject; give his opinion great weight, is persuaded that the extremity of  
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1779.  
July.



1779.  
July.

the *Nofs* in question, was never passed but by Deshneff and his party, who sailed from the river Kovyma in the year 1648, and are supposed to have got round it into the Anadyr. As the account of this expedition, the substance of which the Reader will find in Mr. Coxe's Account of Russian Discoveries, contains no geographical delineation of the coast along which they sailed, its position must be conjectured from incidental circumstances; and from these it appears very manifest, that the Tschukotskoi Nofs of Deshneff is no other than the promontory called, by Captain Cook, the East Cape. Speaking of the *Nofs*, he says, "One might sail from the isthmus to the river Anadyr, with a fair wind, in three days and three nights." This exactly coincides with the situation of the East Cape, which is about one hundred and twenty leagues from the mouth of the Anadyr; and as there is no other isthmus to the Northward between that and the latitude of 69°, it is obvious, that, by this description, he must intend either the Cape in question, or some other to the Southward of it. In another place he says, "Over against the isthmus there are two islands in the sea, upon which were seen people of the Tschutski nation, through whose lips were run pieces of the teeth of the sea-horse." This again perfectly agrees with the two islands situated to the South East of the East Cape. We saw indeed no inhabitants on them; but it is not at all improbable, that a party of the Americans, from the opposite continent, whom this description accurately suits, might, at that time, have been accidentally there; and whom it was natural enough for him to mistake for a tribe of the Tschutski\*.

These

\* From the circumstance, related in the last Volume, that gave name to Sledge Island, it appears, that the inhabitants of the adjacent continents visit occasionally the small



These two circumstances are of so striking and unequivocal a nature, that they appear to me conclusive on the point of the Tschukotskoi Nofs, notwithstanding there are others of a more doubtful kind, which we have from the same authority, and which now remain to be considered. "To go," says Deshneff in another account, "from the Kovyma, to the Anadyr, a great promontory must be doubled, which stretches very far into the sea;" and afterward, "this promontory stretches between North and North East." It was probably from the expressions contained in these passages, that Mr. Muller was induced to give the country of the Tschutski the form we find in his map; but had he been acquainted with the situation of the East Cape, as ascertained by Captain Cook, and the remarkable coincidence between it and their promontory or isthmus (for it must be observed, that Deshneff appears to be all along speaking of the same thing), in the circumstances already mentioned, I am confident, he would not have thought those expressions, merely by themselves, of sufficient weight to warrant him in extending the North Eastern extremity of Asia, either so far to the North or to the Eastward. For, after

1779.  
July.

small islands lying between them, probably for the conveniency of fishing, or in pursuit of furs.

It appears also from Popoff's deposition, which I shall have occasion to speak of more particularly hereafter, that the general resemblance between the people, who are seen in these islands, and the Tschutski, was sufficient to lead Deshneff into the error of imagining them to be the same. "Opposite to the Nofs," he says, "is an island of moderate size, without trees, whose inhabitants resemble, in their exterior, the Tschutski, although they are quite another nation; not numerous indeed, yet speaking their own particular language." Again, "One may go in a baidare from the Nofs to the island in half a day: beyond is a great continent, which can be discovered from the island in serene weather. When the weather is good, one may go from the island to the continent in a day. The inhabitants of the continent are similar to the Tschutski, excepting that they speak another language."

VOL. III.

M m

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1779.  
July.

all, these expressions are not irreconcilable with the opinion we have adopted, if we suppose Deshneff to have taken these bearings from the small bight which lies to the Westward of the Cape.

The deposition of the Cossac Popoff, taken at the Anadirskoi *ostrog*, in the year 1711, seems to have been the next authority on which Mr. Muller has proceeded; and beside these two, I am not acquainted with any other. This Cossac, together with several others, was sent by land to demand tribute from the independent Tschutski tribes, who lived about the Nofs. The first circumstance, in the account of this journey, that can lead to the situation of Tschukotskoi Nofs, is its distance from Anadirsk; and this is stated to be ten weeks journey, with loaded rein-deer; on which account it is added, their day's journey was but very small. It is impossible to conclude much from so vague an account; but, as the distance between the East Cape and the *ostrog* is upward of two hundred leagues in a straight line, and therefore may be supposed to allow twelve or fifteen miles a day; its situation cannot be reckoned incompatible with Popoff's calculation. The next circumstance mentioned in this deposition is, that their route lay by the foot of a rock called Matkol, situated at the bottom of a great gulf. This gulf Muller supposes to be the bay he had laid down between latitude  $66^{\circ}$  and  $72^{\circ}$ ; and accordingly places the rock Matkol in the center of it; but it appears equally probable, even if we had not so many reasons to doubt the existence of that bay, that it might be some part of the gulf of Anadir, which they would undoubtedly touch upon in their road from the *ostrog* to the East Cape.

But what seems to put this matter beyond all dispute, and to prove that the Cape visited by Popoff cannot be to the



Northward of  $69^{\circ}$  latitude, is that part of his deposition, which I have already quoted, relative to the island lying off the Nofs, from whence the opposite continent might be seen. For as the two continents, in latitude  $69^{\circ}$ , have diverged so far as to be more than three hundred miles distant, it is highly improbable, that the Asiatic coast should again trend in such a manner to the Eastward, as to come nearly within sight of the Coast of America.

1779.  
July.

If these arguments should be deemed conclusive against the existence of the peninsula of the Tschutski, as laid down by Muller, it will follow, that the East Cape is the Tschukotskoi Nofs of the \* more early Russian navigators; and, consequently, that the undescribed coast, from the latitude of  $69^{\circ}$  to the mouth of the river Kovyma, must uniformly trend more or less to the Westward. As an additional proof of this, it may be remarked, that the Tschukotskoi Nofs is always represented as dividing the sea of Kovyma from that of Anadir, which could not be the case, if any considerable cape had projected to the North East in the higher latitudes. Thus, in the depositions taken at Anadirsk, it is related, "that opposite the Nofs, on both sides, as well  
" in the sea of Kovyma, as in that of Anadir, an island is said  
" to be seen at a great distance, which the Tschutski call a  
" large country; and say, that people dwell there who have  
" large teeth put in their mouths, that project through their  
" cheeks." Then follows a description of these people and their country, exactly corresponding with our accounts of the opposite continent.

\* I mention the more early Russian navigators, because Beering, whom we have also followed, and after him all the late Russian geographers, have given this name to the South East Cape of the peninsula of the Tschutski, which was formerly called the Anadirskoi Nofs.



1779.  
July.

The last question that arises is, to what degree of Northern latitude this coast extends, before it trends more directly to the Westward. If the situation of the mouth of the Kovyma, both with respect to its latitude and longitude, were accurately determined, it would perhaps not be very difficult to form a probable conjecture upon this point. Captain Cook was always strongly of opinion, that the Northern coast of Asia, from the Indigirka eastward, has hitherto been generally laid down more than two degrees to the Northward of its true position; and he has, therefore, on the authority of a map that was in his possession, and on the information he received at Oonalashka, placed the mouth of the river Kovyma, in his chart of the North West coast of America, and the North East coast of Asia, in the latitude of  $68^{\circ}$ . Should he be right in this conjecture, it is probable, for the reasons that have been already stated, that the Asiatic coast does not any where exceed  $70^{\circ}$  before it trends to the Westward; and consequently, that we were within  $1^{\circ}$  of its North Eastern extremity. For, if the continent be supposed to stretch any where to the Northward of Shelat-skoi Nofs, it is scarcely possible, that so extraordinary a circumstance should not have been mentioned by the Russian navigators; and we have already shewn, that they make mention of no remarkable promontory between the Kovyma and the Anadir, except the East Cape. Another circumstance, related by Deshneff, may, perhaps, be thought a further confirmation of this opinion, namely, that he met with no impediment from ice in navigating round the North East extremity of Asia; though he adds, that this sea is not always so free from it; as indeed is manifest from the failure of his first expedition, and, since that, from the un-

successful



successful attempts of Shalauoff, and the obstacles we met with, in two different years, in our present voyage.

1779.  
July.

The continent, left undetermined in our chart, between Cape North, and the mouth of the Kovyma, is, in longitudinal extent, one hundred and twenty-five leagues. One third, or about forty leagues, of this distance, from the the Kovyma Eastward, was explored in the year 1723, by a *Sinbojarfkoï* of Jakutz, whose name was Fedor Amosoff; by whom Mr. Muller was informed, that its direction was to the Eastward. It is said to have been since accurately surveyed by Shalauoff, whose chart makes it trend to the North East by East, as far as the Shelatskoi Nofs, which he places about forty-three leagues to the Eastward of the Kovyma. The space between this Nofs and Cape North, about eighty-two leagues, is therefore the only part of the Russian empire that now remains unascertained.

But if the river Kovyma be erroneously situated with respect to its longitude, as well as in its latitude, a supposition for which probable grounds are not wanting, the extent of the unexplored coast will become proportionably diminished. The reasons which incline me to believe, that the mouth of this river is placed in the Russian charts much too far to the Westward, are as follow: First, because the accounts that are given of the navigation of the Frozen Sea from that river, round the North East point of Asia, to the gulf of Anadir, do not accord with the supposed distance between those places. Secondly, because the distance over land, from the Kovyma to the Anadir, is represented by the early Russian travellers as a journey easily performed, and of no very extraordinary length. Thirdly, because the coast from the Shelatskoi Nofs of Shalauoff\* seems to trend directly South.

\* See Chart in Coxe's Account of Russian Discoveries.

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1779.  
July.

East to the East Cape. If this be so, it will follow, that, as we were probably not more than  $1^{\circ}$  to the Southward of Shelatskoi Nofs, only sixty miles of the Asiatic coast remain unascertained.

Had Captain Cook lived to this period of our voyage, and experienced, in a second attempt, the impracticability of a North East or North West passage from the Pacific to the Atlantic Ocean, he would doubtless have laid before the Public, in one connected view, an account of the obstacles which defeated this, the primary object of our expedition, together with his observations on a subject of such magnitude, and which had engaged the attention, and divided the opinions of philosophers and navigators, for upward of two hundred years. I am very sensible how unequal I am to the task of supplying this deficiency; but that the expectations of the reader may not be wholly disappointed, I must beg his candid acceptance of the following observations, as well as of those I have already ventured to offer him, relative to the extent of the North East coast of Asia.

The evidence that has been so fully and judiciously stated in the introduction, amounts to the highest degree of probability, that a North West passage, from the Atlantic into the Pacific Ocean, cannot exist to the Southward of  $65^{\circ}$  of latitude. If then there exists a passage, it must be either through Baffin's Bay, or round by the North of Greenland, in the Western hemisphere; or else through the Frozen Ocean, to the Northward of Siberia, in the Eastern; and on whichever side it lies, the navigator must necessarily pass through Beering's Straits. The impracticability of penetrating into the Atlantic on either side, through this strait, is therefore all that remains to be submitted to the consideration of the Public.

As



As far as our experience went, it appears, that the sea to the North of Beering's strait, is clearer of ice in August than in July, and perhaps in a part of September it may be still more free. But after the equinox, the days shorten so fast, that no farther thaw can be expected; and we cannot rationally allow so great an effect to the warm weather in the first half of September, as to imagine it capable of dispersing the ice from the most Northern parts of the American coast. But admitting this to be possible, it must at least be granted, that it would be madness to attempt to run from the Icy Cape to the known parts of Baffin's Bay (a distance of four hundred and twenty leagues), in so short a time as that passage can be supposed to continue open.

1779.  
July.

Upon the Asiatic side, there appears still less probability of success, both from what came to our own knowledge, with respect to the state of the sea to the Southward of Cape North, and also from what we learn from the experience of the \* Lieutenants under Beering's direction, and the journal of Shalauoff, in regard to that on the North of Siberia.

The voyage of Deshneff, if its truth be admitted, proves undoubtedly the possibility of passing round the North East point of Asia; but when the reader reflects, that near a century and a half has elapsed since the time of that navigator, during which, in an age of great curiosity and enterprize, no man has yet been able to follow him, he will not entertain very sanguine expectations of the public advantages that can be derived from it. But let us even suppose, that in some singularly favourable season a ship has found a clear passage round the coast of Siberia, and is safely arrived at the mouth of the Lena, still there remains the Cape of Tai-

\* See Gmelin, pages 369. 374.

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1779:  
July.

mura, stretching to the 78° of latitude, which the good fortune of no single voyager has hitherto doubled.

It is, however, contended, that there are strong reasons for believing, that the sea is more free from ice, the nearer we approach to the pole; and that all the ice we saw in the lower latitudes, was formed in the great rivers of Siberia and America, the breaking up of which had filled the intermediate sea. But even if that supposition be true, it is equally so, that there can be no access to those open seas, unless this great mass of ice is so far dissolved in the summer, as to admit of a ship's getting through it. If this be the fact, we have taken a wrong time of the year for attempting to find this passage, which should have been explored in April and May, before the rivers were broken up. But how many reasons may be given against such a supposition. Our experience at Saint Peter and Saint Paul enabled us to judge what might be expected farther North; and upon that ground, we had reason to doubt, whether the continents might not in winter be even joined by the ice; and this agreed with the stories we heard in Kamtschatka, that on the Siberian coast, they go out from the shore in winter, upon the ice, to greater distances than the breadth of the sea is, in some parts, from one continent to the other.

In the depositions referred to above, the following remarkable circumstance is related. Speaking of the land seen from the Tschukotskoi Nofs, it is said, "that in summer time they sail in one day to the land in baidares, a sort of vessel constructed of whale-bone, and covered with seal-skins; and in winter time, going swift with rein deer, the journey may likewise be made in a day." A sufficient proof,



proof, that the two countries were usually joined together by the ice.

1779.  
July.

The account given by Mr. Muller, of one of the expeditions undertaken to discover a supposed island in the Frozen Sea, is still more remarkable. “ In the year 1714, a new expedition was prepared from Jakutzk, for the same place, under the command of Alexei Markoff, who was to sail from the mouth of the Jana; and if the *Schitiki* were not fit for sea voyages, he was to construct, at a proper place, vessels fit for prosecuting the discoveries without danger.

“ On his arrival at Ust-janskoe Simovie, the port at which he was to embark, he sent an account, dated February 2, 1715, to the Chancery of Jakutzk, mentioning, that it was impossible to navigate the sea, as it was continually frozen, both in summer and winter; and that, consequently, the intended expedition, was no otherwise to be carried on, but with sledges drawn by dogs. In this manner, he accordingly set out, with nine persons, on the 10th of March the same year, and returned on the 3d of April, to Ust-janskoe Simovie. The account of his journey is as follows: that he went seven days, as fast as his dogs could draw him (which, in good ways and weather, is eighty or a hundred wersts in a day) directly toward the North, upon the ice, without discovering any island: that it had not been possible for him to proceed any farther, the ice rising there in the sea like mountains: that he had climbed to the top of some of them, whence he was able to see to a great distance round about him, but could discern no appearance of



1779.  
July.

“land: and that, at last, wanting food for his dogs, many  
“of them died, which obliged him to return.”

Besides these arguments, which proceed upon an admission of the hypothesis, that the ice in those seas comes from the rivers, there are others which give great room to suspect the truth of the hypothesis itself. Captain Cook, whose opinion respecting the formation of ice had formerly coincided with that of the theorists we are now controverting, found abundant reason, in the present voyage, for changing his sentiments. We found the coast of each continent to be low, the soundings gradually decreasing toward them, and a striking resemblance between the two; which, together with the description Mr. Hearne gives of the coppermine river, afford reason to conjecture, that whatever rivers may empty themselves into the Frozen Sea, from the American continent, are of the same nature with those on the Asiatic side; which are represented to be so shallow at the entrance, as to admit only small vessels; whereas the ice we have seen, rises above the level of the sea to a height equal to the depth of those rivers; so that its entire height must be at least ten times greater.

The curious reader will also, in this place, be led naturally to reflect on another circumstance, which appears very incompatible with the opinion of those who imagine land to be necessary for the formation of ice; I mean the different state of the sea about Spitzbergen, and to the North of Bering's Straits. It is incumbent on them to explain how it comes to pass, that in the former quarter, and in the vicinity of much known land, the navigator annually penetrates to near 80° North latitude; whereas, on the other side, his utmost



most efforts have not been able to carry him beyond  $71^{\circ}$ ; where, moreover, the continents diverge nearly East and West, and where there is no land yet known to exist near the pole. For the farther satisfaction of the reader on this point, I shall beg leave to refer him to *Observations made, during a voyage round the world*, by Dr. Forster, where he will find the question of the formation of ice, fully and satisfactorily discussed, and the probability of open polar seas disproved by a variety of powerful arguments.

1779.  
July.

I shall conclude these remarks with a short comparative view of the progress we made to the Northward, at the two different seasons we were engaged in that pursuit, together with a few general observations relative to the sea, and the coast of the two continents, which lie to the North of Bering's Straits.

It may be observed, that in the year 1778, we did not meet with the ice, till we advanced to the latitude of  $70^{\circ}$ , on August 17th; and that then we found it in compact bodies, extending as far as the eye could reach, and of which a part or the whole was moveable, since, by its drifting down upon us, we narrowly escaped being hemmed in between it and the land. After experiencing both how fruitless and dangerous it would be to attempt to penetrate farther North, between the ice and the land, we stood over toward the Asiatic side, between the latitude  $69^{\circ}$  and  $70^{\circ}$ , frequently encountering, in this tract, large and extensive fields of ice; and though, by reason of the fogs, and thickness of the weather, we were not able absolutely and entirely to trace a connected line of it across, yet we were sure to meet with it before we reached the latitude of  $70^{\circ}$ , whenever we attempted to stand to the Northward. On the 26th of Au-



1779.  
July.

gust, in latitude  $69\frac{1}{4}^{\circ}$ , and longitude  $184^{\circ}$ , we were obstructed by it in such quantities, as made it impossible for us to pass either to the North or West, and obliged us to run along the edge of it to the South South West, till we saw land, which we afterward found to be the coast of Asia. With the season thus far advanced, the weather setting in with snow and sleet, and other signs of approaching winter, we abandoned our enterprize for that time.

In this second attempt, we could do little more than confirm the observations we had made in the first; for we were never able to approach the continent of Asia higher than the latitude of  $67^{\circ}$ , nor that of America in any parts, excepting a few leagues between the latitude of  $68^{\circ}$  and  $68^{\circ} 20'$ , that were not seen the last year. We were now obstructed by ice  $3^{\circ}$  lower, and our endeavours to push farther to the Northward, were principally confined to the mid-space between the two coasts. We penetrated near  $3^{\circ}$  farther on the American side than on the Asiatic, meeting with the ice both years sooner, and in greater quantities, on the latter coast. As we advanced North, we still found the ice more compact and solid; yet as, in our different traverses from side to side, we passed over spaces which had before been covered with it, we conjectured, that most of what we saw was moveable. Its height, on a medium, we took to be from eight to ten feet, and that of the highest to have been sixteen or eighteen. We again tried the currents twice, and found them unequal, but never to exceed one mile an hour. By comparing the reckoning with the observations, we also found the current to set different ways, yet more from the South West than any other quarter; but whatever their direction might be, their effect was so trifling, that no conclusions, respecting



specting the existence of any passage to the Northward, could be drawn from them. We found the month of July to be infinitely colder than that of August. The thermometer in July was once at  $28^{\circ}$ , and very commonly at  $30^{\circ}$ ; whereas the last year, in August, it was very rare to have it so low as the freezing point. In both seasons, we had some high winds, all of which came from the South West. We were subject to fogs, whenever the wind was moderate, from whatever quarter, but they attended Southerly winds more constantly than contrary ones.

The straits, between the two continents, at their nearest approach, in latitude  $66^{\circ}$ , were ascertained to be thirteen leagues, beyond which they diverge to North East by East and West North West; and in latitude  $69^{\circ}$ , they become  $14^{\circ}$  of longitude, or about one hundred leagues, asunder. A great similarity is observable in the appearance of the two countries, to the Northward of the straits. Both are destitute of wood. The shores are low, with mountains rising to a great height farther up the country. The depth of water, in the mid-way between them, was twenty-nine and thirty fathoms, decreasing gradually as we approached either continent, with the difference of being somewhat shoaler on the American than on the Asiatic coast, at the same distance from land. The bottom, in the middle, was a soft slimy mud; and on drawing near to either shore, a brown sand, intermixed with small fragments of bones, and a few shells. We observed but little tide or current; what there was, came from the Westward.

But it is now time to resume the narrative of our voyage, which was broken off on the 31st of July, on which day at noon we had advanced eighteen leagues to the Southward of the East Cape.

1779.  
July.





1779.  
August.  
Sunday 1.

We had light airs from the South West, till noon of the 1st of August, at which time our latitude, by observation, was  $64^{\circ} 23'$ , longitude  $189^{\circ} 15'$ , the coast of Asia extended from North West by West to West half South, distant about twelve leagues; and the land to the Eastward of Saint Laurence bore South half West. On the 2d, the weather becoming clear, we saw the same land at noon, bearing from West South West half West to South East, making in a number of high hummocks, which had the appearance of separate islands; the latitude, by observation, was  $64^{\circ} 3'$ , longitude  $189^{\circ} 28'$ , and depth of water seventeen fathoms. We did not approach this land sufficiently near to determine, whether it was one island, or composed of a cluster together. Its Westernmost part we passed July 3d, in the evening, and then supposed to be the island of Saint Laurence; the Easternmost we ran close by in September last year, and this we named Clerke's Island, and found it to consist of a number of high cliffs, joined together by very low land. Though we mistook, the last year, those cliffs for separate islands, till we approached very near the shore, I should still conjecture, that the island Saint Laurence was distinct from Clerke's Island, since there appeared a considerable space between them, where we could not perceive the smallest rising of ground. In the afternoon, we also saw what bore the appearance of a small island, to the North East of the land, which was seen at noon, and which, from the haziness of the weather, we had only sight of once. We estimated its distance to be nineteen leagues from the island of Saint Laurence, in a North East by East half East direction. On the 3d, we had light variable winds, and directed our course round the North West point of the island of Saint Laurence. On the 4th, at noon, our latitude, by

Monday 2.

Tuesday 3.

Wednes. 4.

account,



account, was  $64^{\circ} 8'$ , longitude  $188^{\circ}$ ; the Island St. Laurence bearing South one quarter East, distant seven leagues. In the afternoon, a fresh breeze springing up from the East, we steered to the South South West, and soon lost sight of St. Laurence. On the 7th, at noon, the latitude, by observation, was  $59^{\circ} 38'$ , longitude  $183^{\circ}$ . In the afternoon, it fell calm, and we got a great number of cod in seventy-eight fathoms of water. The variation was found to be  $19^{\circ}$  East. From this time, to the 17th, we were making the best of our way to the South, without any occurrence worth remarking, except that the wind coming from the Western quarter, forced us farther to the Eastward than we wished, as it was our intention to make Beering's island.

1779.  
August.

Saturday 7.

On the 17th, at half past four in the morning, we saw land to the North West, which we could not approach, the wind blowing from that quarter. At noon, the latitude, by observation, was  $53^{\circ} 49'$ , longitude  $168^{\circ} 5'$ , and variation  $10^{\circ}$  East. The land in sight bore North by West, twelve or fourteen leagues distant. This land we take to be the island Mednoi, laid down, in the Russian charts, to the South East of Beering's Island. It is high land, and appeared clear of snow. We place it in the latitude  $54^{\circ} 28'$ , longitude  $167^{\circ} 52'$ . We got no soundings with one hundred and fifty fathoms of line.

Tuesday 17.

Captain Clerke was now no longer able to get out of his bed; he therefore desired, that the officers would receive their orders from me, and directed that we should proceed, with all speed, to Awatska Bay. The wind continuing West-erly, we stood on to the South, till early on the morning of



1779.  
August.  
Thursday 19. the 19th, when, after a few hours rain, it blew from the Eastward, and freshened to a strong gale. We accordingly made the most of it whilst it lasted, by standing to the Westward, under all the sail we could carry. On the 20th, the wind shifting to the South West, our course was to the West North West. At noon, the latitude, by observation, was 53° 7', longitude 162° 49'. On the 21st, at half past five in the morning, we saw a very high peaked mountain on the coast of Kamtschatka, called Cheepoonkoi Mountain, from its lying behind the Nofs, bearing North West by North, twenty-five or thirty leagues distant. At noon, the coast extended from North by East to West, with a very great haziness upon it, and distant about twelve leagues. We had light airs the remaining part of this and the following day, and got no soundings with one hundred and forty fathoms of line.

Sunday 22. On the 22d of August, 1779, at nine o'clock in the morning, departed this life Captain Charles Clerke, in the thirty-eighth year of his age. He died of a consumption, which had evidently commenced before he left England, and of which he had lingered during the whole voyage. His very gradual decay had long made him a melancholy object to his friends; yet the equanimity with which he bore it, the constant flow of good spirits, which continued to the last hour, and a cheerful resignation to his fate, afforded them some consolation. It was impossible not to feel a more than common degree of compassion for a person, whose life had been a continued scene of those difficulties and hardships, to which a seaman's occupation is subject, and under which he at last sunk. He was brought up to the Navy from his earliest



earliest youth, and had been in several actions during the war which began in 1756, particularly in that between the *Bellona* and *Courageux*, where being stationed in the mizentop, he was carried overboard with the mast, but was taken up without having received any hurt. He was Midshipman in the *Dolphin*, commanded by Commodore Byron, on her first Voyage round the world, and afterward served on the American station. In 1768, he made his second voyage round the world, in the *Endeavour*, as Master's Mate, and by the promotion, which took place during the expedition, he returned a Lieutenant. His third voyage round the world was in the *Resolution*, of which he was appointed the Second Lieutenant: and soon after his return, in 1775, he was promoted to the rank of Master and Commander. When the present expedition was ordered to be fitted out, he was appointed to the *Discovery*, to accompany Captain Cook; and, by the death of the latter, succeeded, as has been already mentioned, to the chief command.

1779.  
August.

It would be doing his memory extreme injustice not to say, that during the short time the expedition was under his direction, he was most zealous and anxious for its success. His health, about the time the principal command devolved upon him, began to decline very rapidly, and was every way unequal to encounter the rigours of a high Northern climate. But the vigour and activity of his mind had, in no shape, suffered by the decay of his body: and though he knew, that by delaying his return to a warmer climate, he was giving up the only chance that remained for his recovery, yet, careful and jealous to the last degree, that a regard



1779.  
August.

to his own situation should never bias his judgment to the prejudice of the service, he persevered in the search of a passage, till it was the opinion of every officer in both ships, that it was impracticable, and that any farther attempts would not only be fruitless, but dangerous.

C H A P.

