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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, ...

Cook, James

London, 1784

Chap. XIII.

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C H A P. XIII.

Observations made at the Sandwich Islands, on the Longitude, Variation of the Compass, and Tides.—Prosecution of the Voyage.—Remarks on the Mildness of the Weather, as far as the Latitude 44° North.—Paucity of Sea Birds, in the Northern Hemisphere.—Small Sea Animals described.—Arrival on the Coast of America.—Appearance of the Country.—Unfavourable Winds, and boisterous Weather.—Remarks on Martin de Agui- lar's River, and Juan de Fuca's pretended Strait.—An Inlet discovered, where the Ships anchor.—Behaviour of the Natives.

AFTER the Discovery had joined us, we stood away to the Northward, close hauled, with a gentle gale from the East; and nothing occurring, in this situation, worthy of a place in my narrative, the reader will permit me to insert here the nautical observations which I had opportunities of making, relative to the islands we had left; and which we had been fortunate enough to add to the geography of this part of the Pacific Ocean.

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February.
Monday 2.

The longitude of the Sandwich Islands, was determined by seventy-two sets of lunar observations; some of which were made while we were at anchor, in the road of Wymoa; others, before we arrived, and after we left it, and reduced to it, by the watch, or time-keeper. By the mean



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mean result of these observations, the longitude of the road is — — 200° 13' 0" East.

Time-keeper { Greenwich rate, 202° 0' 0"
Ulietea rate 200° 21' 0"

The latitude of the road, by the mean of } 21° 56' 15" North.
two meridian observations of the sun }

The observations for the variation of the compass, did not agree very well among themselves. It is true, they were not all made exactly in the same spot. The different situations, however, could make very little difference. But the whole will be best seen by casting an eye on the following table.

Time.	Latitude.	Longitude.	Compass.	East Variation.	Mean Variation.
January 18th. A. M.	21° 12'	200° 41'	Gregory's	10° 10' 10"	9° 51' 38"
			Knight's	9° 20' 5"	
			Martin's	10° 4' 40"	
19th. P. M.	21° 51'	200° 20'	Knight's	10° 2' 10"	10° 37' 20"
			Gregory's	11° 12' 30"	
28th. A. M.	21° 22'	199° 56'	Gregory's	9° 1' 20"	9° 26' 57"
			Knight's	9° 1' 25"	
			Martin's	10° 18' 5"	
28th. P. M.	21° 36'	199° 50'	Gregory's	11° 21' 15"	11° 12' 50"
			Knight's	10° 40' 0"	
			Martin's	11° 37' 50"	
Means of the above	21° 29'	200° 12'			10° 17' 11"
On January 18th.	21° 12'	200° 41'	the North end of the needle dipped	42° 1' 7".	

The tides, at the Sandwich Islands, are so inconsiderable, that, with the great surf which broke against the shore, it was hardly possible to tell, at any time, whether we had high or low water, or whether it ebb'd or flow'd. On the South side of Atooi, we generally found a current setting to the

the Westward, or North Westward. But when we were at anchor off Oneehcow, the current set nearly North West and South East, six hours one way, and six the other, and so strong as to make the ships tend, though the wind blew fresh. This was certainly a regular tide; and, as far as I could judge, the flood came from the North West.

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I now return to the progress of our voyage. On the 7th, Saturday 7- being in the latitude of 29° North, and in the longitude of 200° East, the wind veered to South East. This enabled us to steer North East and East; which course we continued till the 12th, when the wind had veered round by the South and West, to North East and East North East. I then tacked, and stood to the Northward, our latitude being 30° North, and our longitude $206^{\circ} 15'$ East. Thursday 12- Notwithstanding our advanced latitude, and its being the winter season, we had only begun, for a few days past, to feel a sensation of cold in the mornings and evenings. This is a sign of the equal and lasting influence of the sun's heat, at all seasons, to 30° on each side the line. The disproportion is known to become very great after that. This must be attributed, almost entirely, to the direction of the rays of the sun, independent of the bare distance, which is, by no means, equal to the effect.

On the 19th, being now in the latitude of 37° North, and Thursday 19- in the longitude of 206° East, the wind veered to South East; and I was enabled again to steer to the East, inclining to the North. We had, on the 25th, reached the latitude of $42^{\circ} 30'$, and the longitude of 219° ; and then we began to meet with the rock-weed, mentioned by the writer of Lord Anson's voyage, under the name of sea-leek, which the Manilla ships generally fall in with. Now and then, a piece of wood also appeared. But, if we had not known, that the continent
of

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of North America was not far distant, we might, from the few signs of the vicinity of land hitherto met with, have concluded, that there was none within some thousand leagues of us. We had hardly seen a bird, or any other oceanic animal, since we left Sandwich Islands.

March.
Sunday 1.

On the 1st of March, our latitude being now $44^{\circ} 49'$ North, and our longitude 228° East, we had one calm day. This was succeeded by a wind from the North, with which I stood to the East close hauled, in order to make the land. According to the charts, it ought not to have been far from us. It was remarkable, that we should still carry with us such moderate and mild weather, so far to the Northward, and so near the coast of an extensive continent, at this time of the year. The present season either must be uncommon for its mildness, or we can assign no reason, why Sir Francis Drake should have met with such severe cold, about this latitude, in the month of June*. Viscaino, indeed, who was near the same place, in the depth of winter, says little of the cold, and speaks of a ridge of snowy mountains, somewhere on the coast, as a thing rather remarkable†. Our seeing so few birds, in comparison of what we met with in the same latitudes, to the South of the line, is another singular circumstance, which must either proceed from a scarcity of the different sorts, or from a deficiency of places to rest upon. From hence we may conclude, that beyond 40° in the Southern hemisphere, the species are much more numerous, and the isles where they inhabit also more plenti-

* See the account of Sir Francis's voyage, in Campbell's edition of Harris, Vol. i. p. 18. and other Collections.

† See Torquemada's Narrative of Viscaino's Expedition, in 1602 and 1603, in the second volume of Vanegas's History of California, English translation, from p. 229. to p. 308.

fully



fully scattered about, than any where between the coast of California and Japan, in or near that latitude.

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Monday 2.

During a calm, on the morning of the 2d, some parts of the sea seemed covered with a kind of slime; and some small sea animals were swimming about. The most conspicuous of which, were of the gelatinous, or *medusa* kind, almost globular; and another sort smaller, that had a white, or shining appearance, and were very numerous. Some of these last were taken up, and put into a glass cup, with some salt water, in which they appeared like small scales, or bits of silver, when at rest, in a prone situation. When they began to swim about, which they did, with equal ease, upon their back, sides, or belly, they emitted the brightest colours of the most precious gems, according to their position with respect to the light. Sometimes they appeared quite pellucid, at other times assuming various tints of blue, from a pale sapphirine, to a deep violet colour; which were frequently mixed with a ruby, or opaline redness; and glowed with a strength sufficient to illuminate the vessel and water. These colours appeared most vivid, when the glass was held to a strong light; and mostly vanished, on the subsiding of the animals to the bottom, when they had a brownish cast. But, with candle light, the colour was, chiefly, a beautiful, pale green, tinged with a burnished gloss; and, in the dark, it had a faint appearance of glowing fire. They proved to be a new species of *oniscus*, and, from their properties, were, by Mr. Anderson (to whom we owe this account of them), called *oniscus fulgens*; being, probably, an animal which has a share in producing some sorts of that lucid appearance, often observed near ships at sea, in the night. On the same day, two large birds settled on the water, near the ship. One of these was the *procellaria*



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maxima (the *quebrantabueffos*), and the other, which was little more than half the size, seemed to be of the *albatross* kind. The upper part of the wings, and tip of the tail, were black, with the rest white; the bill yellowish; upon the whole, not unlike the sea-gull, though larger.

Friday 6. On the 6th, at noon, being in the latitude of $44^{\circ} 10'$ North, and the longitude of $234^{\frac{1}{2}}^{\circ}$ East, we saw two seals, and several whales; and at day-break, the next morning, the long-looked for coast of New Albion* was seen, extending from North East to South East, distant ten or twelve leagues. At noon, our latitude was $44^{\circ} 33'$ North, and our longitude $235^{\circ} 20'$ East; and the land extended from North East half North, to South East by South, about eight leagues distant. In this situation, we had seventy-three fathoms water, over a muddy bottom, and about a league farther off found ninety fathoms. The land appeared to be of a moderate height, diversified with hills and vallies, and, almost every where, covered with wood. There was, however, no very striking object on any part of it, except one hill, whose elevated summit was flat. This bore East from us, at noon. At the Northern extreme, the land formed a point, which I called *Cape Foulweather*, from the very bad weather that we, soon after, met with. I judge it to lie in the latitude of $44^{\circ} 55'$ North, and in the longitude of $235^{\circ} 54'$ East.

Sunday 8. We had variable light airs and calms, till eight o'clock in the evening, when a breeze sprung up at South West. With it, I stood to the North West, under an easy sail, waiting for day-light to range along the coast. But at four, next morning, the wind shifted to North West, and blew in squalls, with rain. Our course was North East, till near ten o'clock,

* This part of the West side of North America, was so named by Sir Francis Drake.

when,



when, finding that I could make no progress on this tack, and seeing nothing like a harbour, I tacked, and stood off South West. At this time, Cape Foulweather bore North East by North, about eight leagues distant. Toward noon, the wind veered more to the Westward, and the weather became fair and clear; so that we were enabled to make lunar observations. Having reduced all those that we had made since the 19th of last month to the present ones, by the time-keeper, amounting, in the whole, to seventy-two sets; their mean result determined the longitude to be $235^{\circ} 15' 26''$ East, which was $14' 11''$ less than what the time-keeper gave. This longitude is made use of for settling that of the coast; and I have not a doubt of its being within a very few miles of the truth.

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Our difficulties now began to increase. In the evening, the wind came to the North West, blowing in squalls with hail and fleet; and the weather being thick and hazy, I stood out to sea till near noon the next day, when I tacked and stood in again for the land, which made its appearance at two in the afternoon, bearing East North East. The wind and weather continued the same; but, in the evening, the former veered more to the West, and the latter grew worse; which made it necessary to tack and stand off till four the next morning, when I ventured to stand in again.

Monday 9.

At four in the afternoon, we saw the land, which, at six, extended from North East half East, to South East by South, about eight leagues distant. In this situation, we tacked and founded; but a line of a hundred and sixty fathoms did not reach the ground. I stood off till midnight, then stood in again; and, at half past six, we were within three leagues of the land, which extended from North by East, half East,

Tuesday 10.

Wednes. 11.



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to South, half East; each extreme about seven leagues distant. Seeing no signs of a harbour, and the weather being still unsettled, I tacked and stretched off South West, having then fifty-five fathoms water over a muddy bottom.

That part of the land, which we were so near when we tacked, is of a moderate height, though, in some places, it rises higher within. It was diversified with a great many rising grounds and small hills; many of which were entirely covered with tall, straight trees; and others, which were lower, and grew in spots like coppices; but the interspaces, and sides of many of the rising grounds, were clear. The whole, though it might make an agreeable summer prospect, had now an uncomfortable appearance; as the bare grounds toward the coast were all covered with snow, which seemed to be of a considerable depth between the little hills and rising grounds; and, in several places toward the sea, might easily have been mistaken, at a distance, for white cliffs. The snow on the rising grounds was thinner spread; and farther inland, there was no appearance of any; from whence we might, perhaps, conclude, that what we saw toward the sea, had fallen during the night; which was colder than any we had experienced since our arrival on the coast; and we had sometimes a kind of sleet. The coast seemed every where almost straight, without any opening or inlet; and it appeared to terminate in a kind of white sandy beach; though some on board thought that appearance was owing to the snow. Each extreme of the land that was now before us, seemed to shoot out into a point. The Northern one was the same which we had first seen on the 7th; and, on that account, I called it *Cape Perpetua*. It lies in the latitude of $44^{\circ} 6'$ North, and in the longitude of $235^{\circ} 52'$ East. The Southern extreme before us, I named
Cape

Cape Gregory *. Its latitude is $43^{\circ} 30'$, and its longitude $235^{\circ} 57'$ East. It is a remarkable point; the land of it rising almost directly from the sea, to a tolerable height, while that on each side of it is low.

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I continued standing off till one in the afternoon. Then I tacked, and stood in, hoping to have the wind off from the land in the night. But in this I was mistaken; for at five o'clock it began to veer to the West and South West; which obliged me, once more, to stand out to sea. At this time, Cape Perpetua bore North East by North; and the farthest land we could see to the South of Cape Gregory, bore South by East, perhaps ten or twelve leagues distant. If I am right in this estimation, its latitude will be $43^{\circ} 10'$, and its longitude $235^{\circ} 55'$ East, which is nearly the situation of Cape Blanco, discovered or seen by Martin d'Aguilar, on the 19th of January, 1603. It is worth observing, that, in the very latitude where we now were, geographers have been pleased to place a large entrance or strait, the discovery of which they take upon them to ascribe to the same navigator; whereas nothing more is mentioned in the account of his voyage, than his having seen, in this situation, a large river, which he would have entered, but was prevented by the currents †.

The wind, as I have observed, had veered to South West in the evening; but it was very unsettled, and blew in squalls with snow showers. In one of these, at midnight, it shifted at once to West North West, and soon increased to a very hard gale, with heavy squalls, attended with sleet or snow. There was no choice now; and we were obliged

* In our calendar, the 7th of March is distinguished by the name of Perpetua M, and the 12th by that of Gregory B.

† See the History of California. Eng. transf. Vol. ii. p. 292.



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Friday 13.

to stretch to the Southward, in order to get clear of the coast. This was done under courses, and two close-reefed topfails; being rather more sail than the ships could safely bear; but it was necessary to carry it to avoid the more pressing danger of being forced on shore. This gale continued till eight o'clock in the morning of the 13th; when it abated, and I stood in again for the land. We had been forced a considerable way backward; for at the time of our tacking, we were in the latitude of $42^{\circ} 45'$, and in the longitude of $233^{\circ} 30'$.

Saturday 21.

The wind continued at West, and North West; storms, moderate weather, and calms, succeeding each other by turns, till the morning of the 21st; when, after a few hours calm, a breeze sprung up at South West. This bringing with it fair weather, I steered North Easterly, in order to fall in with the land, beyond that part of it where we had already so unprofitably been tossed about for the last fortnight. In the evening, the wind veered to the Westward;

Sunday 22.

and, at eight o'clock, the next morning, we saw the land, extending from North East to East, nine leagues distant. At this time we were in the latitude of $47^{\circ} 5'$ North, and in the longitude of $235^{\circ} 10'$ East.

I continued to stand to the North with a fine breeze at West, and West North West, till near seven o'clock in the evening, when I tacked to wait for day-light. At this time, we were in forty-eight fathoms water, and about four leagues from the land, which extended from North to South East half East, and a small round hill, which had the appearance of being an island, bore North three quarters East, distant six or seven leagues, as I guessed; it appears to be of a tolerable height, and was but just to be seen from the



deck. Between this island or rock, and the Northern extreme of the land, there appeared to be a small opening, which flattered us with the hopes of finding an harbour. These hopes lessened as we drew nearer; and, at last, we had some reason to think, that the opening was closed by low land. On this account I called the point of land to the North of it *Cape Flattery*. It lies in the latitude of $48^{\circ} 15'$ North, and in the longitude of $235^{\circ} 3'$ East. There is a round hill of a moderate height over it; and all the land upon this part of the coast is of a moderate and pretty equal height, well covered with wood, and had a very pleasant and fertile appearance. It is in this very latitude where we now were, that geographers have placed the pretended strait of Juan de Fuca. But we saw nothing like it; nor is there the least probability that ever any such thing existed*.

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I stood off to the Southward till midnight, when I tacked, and steered to the North West, with a gentle breeze at South West, intending to stand in for the land as soon as day-light should appear. But, by that time, we were reduced to two courses and close-reefed top-sails, having a very hard gale, with rain, right on shore; so that, instead of running in for the land, I was glad to get an offing, or to keep that which we had already got. The South West wind was, however, but of short continuance; for, in the evening, it veered again to the West. Thus had we perpetually strong West and North West winds to encounter. Sometimes, in an evening, the wind would become moderate, and veer to the Southward; but this was always a sure prelude to a

Monday 23.

* See Michael Locke's apocryphal account of Juan de Fuca, and his pretended strait, in Purchas, Vol. iii. p. 849—852. and many later Collections.

storm,



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storm, which blew the hardest at South South East, and was attended with rain and fleet. It seldom lasted above four or six hours, before it was succeeded by another gale from the North West, which, generally, brought with it fair weather. It was, by the means of these Southerly blasts, that we were enabled to get to the North West at all.

Sunday 29.

At length, at nine o'clock in the morning of the 29th, as we were standing to the North East, we again saw the land, which, at noon, extended from North West by West, to East South East, the nearest part about six leagues distant. Our latitude was now $49^{\circ} 29'$ North, and our longitude $232^{\circ} 29'$ East. The appearance of the country differed much from that of the parts which we had before seen; being full of high mountains, whose summits were covered with snow. But the valleys between them, and the grounds on the sea coast, high as well as low, were covered to a considerable breadth with high, straight trees, that formed a beautiful prospect, as of one vast forest. The South East extreme of the land formed a low point, off which are many breakers, occasioned by funken rocks. On this account it was called *Point Breakers*. It lies in the latitude of $49^{\circ} 15'$ North, and in the longitude of $233^{\circ} 20'$ East; and the other extreme, in about the latitude of 50° , and the longitude of 232° . I named this last *Woody Point*. It projects pretty much out to the South West, and is high land. Between these two points, the shore forms a large bay, which I called *Hope Bay*; hoping, from the appearance of the land, to find in it a good harbour. The event proved, that we were not mistaken.

As we drew nearer the coast, we perceived the appearance of two inlets; one in the North West, and the other in

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the North East corner of the bay. As I could not fetch the former, I bore up for the latter; and passed some breakers, or sunken rocks, that lay a league or more from the shore. We had nineteen and twenty fathoms water half a league without them; but as soon as we had passed them, the depth increased to thirty, forty, and fifty fathoms, with a sandy bottom; and farther in we found no ground with the greatest length of line. Notwithstanding appearances, we were not yet sure that there were any inlets; but, as we were in a deep bay, I had resolved to anchor, with a view to endeavour to get some water, of which, by this time, we were in great want. At length, as we advanced, the existence of the inlet was no longer doubtful. At five o'clock we reached the West point of it, where we were becalmed for some time. While in this situation, I ordered all the boats to be hoisted out to tow the ships in. But this was hardly done, before a fresh breeze sprung up again at North West, with which we were enabled to stretch up into an arm of the inlet, that was observed by us to run in to the North East. There we were again becalmed, and obliged to anchor in eighty-five fathoms water, and so near the shore as to reach it with a hawser. The wind failed the Discovery before she got within the arm, where she anchored, and found only seventy fathoms.

We no sooner drew near the inlet than we found the coast to be inhabited; and at the place where we were first becalmed, three canoes came off to the ship. In one of these were two men, in another six, and in the third ten. Having come pretty near us, a person in one of the two last stood up, and made a long harangue, inviting us to land, as we guessed, by his gestures. At the same time, he

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kept strewing handfuls of feathers toward us*; and some of his companions threw handfuls of a red dust or powder in the same manner. The person who played the orator, wore the skin of some animal, and held, in each hand, something which rattled as he kept shaking it. After tiring himself with his repeated exhortations, of which we did not understand a word, he was quiet; and then others took it, by turns, to say something, though they acted their part neither so long, nor with so much vehemence as the other. We observed that two or three had their hair quite strewed over with small white feathers; and others had large ones stuck into different parts of the head. After the tumultuous noise had ceased, they lay at a little distance from the ship, and conversed with each other in a very easy manner; nor did they seem to shew the least surprize or distrust. Some of them, now and then, got up, and said something after the manner of their first harangues; and one sung a very agreeable air, with a degree of softness and melody which we could not have expected; the word *baela*, being often repeated as the burden of the song. The breeze which soon after sprung up, bringing us nearer to the shore, the canoes began to come off in greater numbers; and we had, at one time, thirty-two of them near the ship, carrying from three to seven or eight persons each, both men and women. Several of these stood up in their canoes haranguing, and making gestures after the manner of our first visiters. One canoe was remarkable for a singular head, which had a bird's eye and bill, of an enormous size, painted on it; and a person who was in it, who seemed to be a Chief, was no

* The natives of this coast, twelve degrees farther South, also brought feathers as presents to Sir Francis Drake on his arrival. See an account of his voyage in *Campbell's edit. of Harris*, Vol. i. p. 18.

less



less remarkable for his uncommon appearance; having many feathers hanging from his head, and being painted in an extraordinary manner*. He held in his hand a carved bird of wood, as large as a pigeon, with which he rattled as the person first-mentioned had done; and was no less vociferous in his harangue, which was attended with some expressive gestures.

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Though our visitors behaved very peaceably, and could not be suspected of any hostile intention, we could not prevail upon any of them to come on board. They shewed great readiness, however, to part with any thing they had, and took from us whatever we offered them in exchange; but were more desirous of iron, than of any other of our articles of commerce; appearing to be perfectly acquainted with the use of that metal. Many of the canoes followed us to our anchoring-place; and a group of about ten or a dozen of them remained along-side the Resolution most part of the night.

These circumstances gave us a reasonable ground of hope, that we should find this a comfortable station to supply all our wants, and to make us forget the hardships and delays experienced during a constant succession of adverse winds, and boisterous weather, almost ever since our arrival upon the coast of America.

* Viscaino met with natives on the coast of California, while he was in the harbour of San Diego, who were painted or besmeared with black and white, and had their heads loaded with feathers. *History of California*, Vol. ii. p. 272.



