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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. V.

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C H A P. V.

*The Inlet called Prince William's Sound.—Its Extent.—
Persons of the Inhabitants described.—Their Dress.—
Incision of the Under-lip.—Various other Ornaments.—
Their Boats.—Weapons, fishing, and hunting Instru-
ments.—Utenfils.—Tools.—Uses Iron is applied to.—
Food.—Language, and a Specimen of it.—Animals.—
Birds.—Fish.—Iron and Beads, whence received.*

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TO the inlet, which we had now left, I gave the name of *Prince William's Sound*. To judge of this Sound from what we saw of it, it occupies, at least, a degree and a half of latitude, and two of longitude, exclusive of the arms or branches, the extent of which is not known. The direction which they seemed to take, as also the situation and magnitude of the several islands in and about it, will be best seen in the sketch, which is delineated with as much accuracy as the short time and other circumstances would allow.

The natives, who came to make us several visits while we were in the Sound, were generally not above the common height; though many of them were under it. They were square, or strong chested; and the most disproportioned part of their body seemed to be their heads, which were very large; with thick, short necks; and large, broad or spreading faces; which, upon the whole, were flat. Their eyes, though not small, scarcely bore a proportion to the
size

size of their faces; and their noses had full, round points, hooked, or turned up at the tip. Their teeth were broad, white, equal in size, and evenly set. Their hair was black, thick, straight and strong; and their beards, in general, thin, or wanting; but the hairs about the lips of those who have them, were stiff or bristly, and frequently of a brown colour. And several of the elderly men had even large and thick, but straight beards.

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Though, in general, they agree in the make of their persons, and largeness of their heads, there is a considerable variety in their features; but very few can be said to be of the handsome sort, though their countenance commonly indicates a considerable share of vivacity, good-nature, and frankness. And yet some of them had an air of fullness and reserve. Some of the women have agreeable faces; and many are easily distinguishable from the men by their features, which are more delicate; but this should be understood chiefly of the youngest sort, or middle-aged. The complexion of some of the women, and of the children, is white; but without any mixture of red. And some of the men, who were seen naked, had rather a brownish or swarthy cast, which could scarcely be the effect of any stain; for they do not paint their bodies.

Their common dress (for men, women, and children are clothed alike), is a kind of close frock, or rather robe; reaching generally to the ankles, though sometimes only to the knees. At the upper part is a hole just sufficient to admit the head, with sleeves that reach to the wrist. These frocks are made of the skins of different animals; the most common of which are those of the sea-otter, grey fox, racoon, and pine martin; with many of seal skins; and, in general, they
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are worn with the hairy side outward. Some also have these frocks made of the skins of fowls, with only the down remaining on them, which they glue on other substances. And we saw one or two woollen garments like those of Nootka. At the seams, where the different skins are sewed together, they are commonly ornamented with tassels or fringes of narrow thongs, cut out of the same skins. A few have a kind of cape, or collar; and some a hood; but the other is the most common form, and seems to be their whole dress in good weather. When it rains, they put over this another frock, ingeniously made from the intestines of whales, or some other large animal, prepared so skilfully, as almost to resemble our gold-beaters leaf. It is made to draw tight round the neck; its sleeves reach as low as the wrist, round which they are tied with a string; and its skirts, when they are in their canoes, are drawn over the rim of the hole in which they sit; so that no water can enter. At the same time, it keeps the men entirely dry upward. For no water can penetrate through it, any more than through a bladder. It must be kept continually moist or wet; otherwise it is apt to crack or break. This, as well as the common frock made of the skins, bears a great resemblance to the dress of the Greenlanders, as described by Crantz*.

In general, they do not cover their legs, or feet; but a few have a kind of skin stockings, which reach half-way

* Crantz's History of Greenland, Vol. i. p. 136—138. The reader will find in Crantz many very striking instances, in which the Greenlanders, and Americans of Prince William's Sound, resemble each other, besides those mentioned in this Chapter by Captain Cook. The dress of the people of Prince William's Sound, as described by Captain Cook, also agrees with that of the inhabitants of Schumagin's Islands, discovered by Beering in 1741. Muller's words are, "Leur habillement étoit de boyaux de baleines pour le haut du corps, et de peaux de chiens-marins pour le bas." *Découvertes des Russes*, p. 274.

up the thigh; and scarcely any of them are without mittens for the hands, made of the skins of bears paws. Those who wear any thing on their heads, resembled, in this respect, our friends at Nootka; having high truncated conic caps, made of straw, and sometimes of wood, resembling a seal's head well painted.

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The men commonly wear the hair cropt round the neck and forehead; but the women allow it to grow long; and most of them tie a small lock of it on the crown; or a few club it behind, after our manner. Both sexes have the ears perforated with several holes, about the outer and lower part of the edge, in which they hang little bunches of beads, made of the same tubulose shelly substance used for this purpose by those of Nootka. The *septum* of the nose is also perforated; through which they frequently thrust the quill-feathers of small birds, or little bending ornaments, made of the above shelly substance, strung on a stiff string or cord, three or four inches long, which give them a truly grotesque appearance. But the most uncommon and unsightly ornamental fashion, adopted by some of both sexes, is their having the under-lip slit, or cut, quite through, in the direction of the mouth, a little below the swelling part. This incision, which is made even in the sucking children, is often above two inches long; and either by its natural retraction, when the wound is fresh, or by the repetition of some artificial management, assumes the true shape of lips, and becomes so large as to admit the tongue through. This happened to be the case, when the first person having this incision was seen by one of the seamen, who called out, that the man had two mouths; and, indeed, it does not look unlike it. In this artificial mouth they stick a flat, narrow ornament, made chiefly out of a solid shell or bone, cut into



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little narrow pieces, like small teeth, almost down to the base or thickest part, which has a small projecting bit at each end that supports it when put into the divided lip; the cut part then appearing outward. Others have the lower lip only perforated into separate holes; and then the ornament consists of as many distinct shelly studs, whose points are pushed through these holes, and their heads appear within the lip, as another row of teeth immediately under their own.

These are their native ornaments. But we found many beads of European manufacture among them, chiefly of a pale blue colour, which they hang in their ears; about their caps; or join to their lip-ornaments, which have a small hole drilled in each point to which they are fastened, and others to them, till they hang sometimes as low as the point of the chin. But, in this last case, they cannot remove them so easily; for, as to their own lip-ornaments, they can take them out with their tongue, or suck within, at pleasure. They also wear bracelets of the shelly beads, or others of a cylindrical shape, made of a substance like amber; with such also as are used in their ears and noses. And so fond are they, in general, of ornament, that they stick two of our iron nails projecting from it like prongs; and another endeavouring to put a large brass button into it.

The men frequently paint their faces of a bright red, and of a black colour, and sometimes of a blue, or leaden colour; but not in any regular figure; and the women, in some measure, endeavoured to imitate them, by puncturing or staining the chin with black, that comes to a point in each cheek; a practice very similar to which is in fashion
amongst

amongst the females of Greenland, as we learn from Crantz*. Their bodies are not painted, which may be owing to the scarcity of proper materials; for all the colours which they brought to sell in bladders, were in very small quantities. Upon the whole, I have no where seen savages who take more pains than these people do, to ornament, or rather to disfigure their persons.

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Their boats or canoes are of two sorts; the one being large and open, and the other small and covered. I mentioned already, that in one of the large boats were twenty women, and one man, besides children. I attentively examined and compared the construction of this, with Crantz's description of what he calls the great, or women's boat in Greenland, and found that they were built in the same manner, parts like parts, with no other difference than in the form of the head and stern; particularly of the first, which bears some resemblance to the head of a whale. The framing is of slender pieces of wood, over which the skins of seals, or of other larger sea-animals, are stretched, to compose the outside. It appeared also, that the small canoes of these people are made nearly of the same form, and of the same materials with those used by the Greenlanders † and Esquimaux; at least the difference is not material. Some of these, as I have before observed, carry two men. They are broader in proportion to their length than those of the Esquimaux; and the head or fore-part curves somewhat like the head of a violin.

The weapons, and instruments for fishing and hunting, are the very same that are made use of by the Esquimaux and Greenlanders; and it is unnecessary to be particular in my

* Vol. i. p. 128.

† See Crantz, Vol. i. p. 150



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account of them, as they are all very accurately described by Crantz*. I did not see a single one with these people that he has not mentioned; nor has he mentioned one that they have not. For defensive armour they have a kind of jacket, or coat of mail, made of thin laths, bound together with sinews, which makes it quite flexible, though so close as not to admit an arrow or dart. It only covers the trunk of the body, and may not be improperly compared to a woman's stays.

As none of these people lived in the bay where we anchored, or where any of us landed, we saw none of their habitations; and I had not time to look after them. Of their domestic utensils, they brought in their boats some round and oval shallow dishes of wood; and others of a cylindrical shape much deeper. The sides were made of one piece, bent round, like our chip-boxes, though thick, neatly fastened with thongs, and the bottoms fixed in with small wooden pegs. Others were smaller, and of a more elegant shape, somewhat resembling a large oval butter-boat, without a handle, but more shallow, made from a piece of wood, or horny substance. These last were sometimes neatly carved. They had many little square bags, made of the same gut with their outer frocks, neatly ornamented with very minute red feathers interwoven with it, in which were contained some very fine sinews, and bundles of small cord, made from them, most ingeniously plaited. They also brought many chequered baskets, so closely wrought as to hold water; some wooden models of their canoes; a good many little images, four or five inches long, either of wood, or stuffed; which were covered with

* Vol. i. p. 146. He has also given a representation of them on a plate there inserted.

a bit

a bit of fur, and ornamented with pieces of small quill feathers, in imitation of their shelly beads, with hair fixed on their heads. Whether these might be mere toys for children, or held in veneration, as representing their deceased friends, and applied to some superstitious purpose, we could not determine. But they have many instruments made of two or three hoops, or concentric pieces of wood, with a cross-bar fixed in the middle, to hold them by. To these are fixed a great number of dried barnacle-shells, with threads, which serve as a rattle, and make a loud noise, when they shake them. This contrivance seems to be a substitute for the rattling-bird at Nootka; and perhaps both of them are employed on the same occasions*.

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With what tools they make their wooden utensils, frames of boats, and other things, is uncertain; as the only one seen amongst them was a kind of stone adze, made almost after the manner of those of Otaheite, and the other islands of the South Sea. They have a great many iron knives; some of which are straight; others a little curved; and some very small ones, fixed in pretty long handles, with the blades bent upward, like some of our shoemakers instruments. But they have still knives of another sort, which are sometimes near two feet long, shaped almost like a dagger, with a ridge in the middle. These they wear in sheaths of skins, hung by a thong round the neck, under their robe; and they are, probably, only used as weapons; the other knives being apparently applied to other purposes. Every thing they have, however, is as well and ingeniously made, as if they were furnished with the most complete tool-chest; and their sewing, plaiting of sinews, and small

* The rattling-ball found by Steller, who attended Beering in 1741, at no great distance from this Sound, seems to be for a similar use. See Muller, p. 256.



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work on their little bags, may be put in competition with the most delicate manufactures found in any part of the known world. In short, considering the otherwise uncivilized or rude state in which these people are, their Northern situation, amidst a country perpetually covered with snow, and the wretched materials they have to work with, it appears, that their invention and dexterity, in all manual works, is at least equal to that of any other nation.

The food which we saw them eat, was dried fish, and the flesh of some animal, either broiled or roasted. Some of the latter that was bought, seemed to be bear's flesh, but with a fishy taste. They also eat the larger sort of fern-root, mentioned at Nootka, either baked, or dressed in some other way; and some of our people saw them eat freely of a substance which they supposed to be the inner part of the pine bark. Their drink is most probably water; for in their boats they brought snow in the wooden vessels, which they swallowed by mouthfuls. Perhaps it could be carried with less trouble, in these open vessels, than water itself. Their method of eating seems decent and cleanly; for they always took care to separate any dirt that might adhere to their victuals. And though they sometimes did eat the raw fat of some sea animal, they cut it carefully into mouthfuls, with their small knives. The same might be said of their persons, which, to appearance, were always clean and decent, without grease or dirt; and the wooden vessels, in which their victuals are probably put, were kept in excellent order; as well as their boats, which were neat, and free from lumber.

Their language seems difficult to be understood at first; not from any indistinctness or confusion in their words and sounds, but from the various significations they have. For they

they appeared to use the very same word, frequently, on very different occasions; though doubtless this might, if our intercourse had been of longer duration, have been found to be a mistake on our side. The only words I could obtain, and for them I am indebted to Mr. Anderson*, were those that follow; the first of which was also used at Nootka, in the same sense; though we could not trace an affinity between the two dialects in any other instance.

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Akashou,	<i>What's the name of that?</i>
Namuk,	<i>An ornament for the ear.</i>
Lukluk,	<i>A brown shaggy skin, perhaps a bear's.</i>
Aa,	<i>Yes.</i>
Natooneshuk,	<i>The skin of a sea-otter.</i>
Keeta,	<i>Give me something.</i>
Naema,	<i>Give me something in exchange, or barter.</i>
Ooonaka,	<i>{ Of, or belonging to me.—Will you barter for this that belongs to me?</i>
Manaka,	
Ahleu,	<i>A spear.</i>
Weena, or Veena,	<i>Stranger—calling to one.</i>
Keelashuk,	<i>Guts of which they make jackets.</i>
Tawuk,	<i>Keep it.</i>
Amilhtoo,	<i>{ A piece of white bear's skin, or perhaps the hair that covered it.</i>
Whaehai,	<i>Shall I keep it? do you give it me?</i>
Yaut,	<i>I'll go; or shall I go?</i>
Chilke,	<i>One.</i>
Taiha,	<i>Two.</i>
Tokke,	<i>Three.</i>

* We are also indebted to him for many remarks in this chapter, interwoven with those of Captain Cook, as throwing considerable light on many parts of his journal.



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(Tinke)	
Chukelo*,	<i>Four?</i>
Kocheene,	<i>Five?</i>
Takulai,	<i>Six?</i>
Keichilho,	<i>Seven?</i>
Klu, or Klieu,	<i>Eight?</i>

As to the animals of this part of the continent, the same must be understood as of those at Nootka; that is, that the knowledge we have of them is entirely taken from the skins which the natives brought to sell. These were chiefly of seals; a few foxes; the whitish cat, or *lynx*; common and pine martins; small ermines; bears; racoons; and sea-otters. Of these, the most common were the martin, racoon, and sea-otter skins, which composed the ordinary dress of the natives; but the skins of the first, which in general were of a much lighter brown than those at Nootka, were far superior to them in fineness; whereas the last, which, as well as the martins, were far more plentiful than at Nootka, seemed greatly inferior in the fineness and thickness of their fur, though they greatly exceeded them in size; and were almost all of the glossy black sort, which is doubtless the colour most esteemed in those skins. Bear and seal skins were also pretty common; and the last were in general white, very beautifully spotted with black; or sometimes simply white; and many of the bears here were of a brown, or footy colour.

Besides these animals, which were all seen at Nootka, there are some others in this place which we did not find there; such as, the white bear; of whose skins the natives

* With regard to these numerals, Mr. Anderson observes, that the words corresponding to ours, are not certain after passing *three*; and therefore he marks those, about whose position he is doubtful, with a point of interrogation.

brought

brought several pieces, and some entire skins of cubs; from which their size could not be determined. We also found the wolverene, or quickhatch, which had very bright colours; a larger sort of ermine than the common one, which is the same as at Nootka, varied with a brown colour, and with scarcely any black on its tail. The natives also brought the skin of the head of some very large animal; but it could not be positively determined what it was; though, from the colour and shagginess of the hair, and its unlikeness to any land animal, we judged it might probably be that of the large male ursine seal, or sea-bear. But one of the most beautiful skins, and which seems peculiar to this place, as we never saw it before, is that of a small animal about ten inches long, of a brown or rusty colour on the back, with a great number of obscure whitish specks; and the sides of a blueish ash colour, also with a few of these specks. The tail is not above a third of the length of its body, and is covered with hair of a whitish colour at the edges. It is no doubt the same with those called spotted field mice, by Mr. Stæhlin*, in his short account of the New Northern Archipelago. But whether they be really of the mouse kind, or a squirrel, we could not tell, for want of perfect skins; though Mr. Anderson was inclined to think that it is the same animal described under the name of the *Cajan* marmot, by Mr. Pennant. The number of skins we found here, points out the great plenty of these several animals just mentioned; but it is remarkable, that we neither saw the skins of the moose nor of the common deer.

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Of the birds mentioned at Nootka, we found here only the white-headed eagle; the shag; the *alcyon*, or great king-

* In his Account of Kodjak, p. 32 and 34.



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fisher, which had very fine bright colours; and the humming-bird, which came frequently and flew about the ship, while at anchor; though it can scarcely live here in the winter, which must be very severe. The water fowl were geese; a small sort of duck, almost like that mentioned at Kerguelen's Land; another sort which none of us knew; and some of the black scapies, with red bills, which we found at Van Diemen's Land, and New Zealand. Some of the people who went on shore, killed a grouse, a snipe, and some plover. But though, upon the whole, the water fowl were pretty numerous, especially the ducks and geese, which frequent the shores, they were so shy, that it was scarcely possible to get within shot; so that we obtained a very small supply of them as refreshment. The duck mentioned above, is as large as the common wild-duck, of a deep black colour, with a short pointed tail, and red feet. The bill is white, tinged with red toward the point, and has a large black spot, almost square, near its base, on each side, where it is also enlarged or distended. And on the forehead is a large triangular white spot; with one still larger on the back part of the neck. The female has much duller colours, and none of the ornaments of the bill, except the two black spots, which are obscure.

There is likewise a species of diver here, which seems peculiar to the place. It is about the size of a partridge; has a short, black, compressed bill; with the head and upper part of the neck of a brown black; the rest of a deep brown, obscurely waved with black, except the under-part, which is entirely of a blackish cast, very minutely varied with white; the other (perhaps the female) is blacker above, and whiter below. A small land bird, of the finch kind, about the size of a yellow-hammer, was also found; but

but was suspected to be one of those which change their colour, with the season, and with their migrations. At this time, it was of a dusky brown colour, with a reddish tail; and the supposed male had a large yellow spot on the crown of the head, with some varied black on the upper part of the neck; but the last was on the breast of the female.

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The only fish we got, were some torfk and halibut, which were chiefly brought by the natives to sell; and we caught a few sculpins about the ship; with some purplish star-fish, that had seventeen or eighteen rays. The rocks were observed to be almost destitute of shell fish; and the only other animal of this tribe seen, was a red crab, covered with spines of a very large size.

The metals we saw were copper and iron; both which, particularly the latter, were in such plenty, as to constitute the points of most of the arrows and lances. The ores, with which they painted themselves, were a red, brittle, unctuous ochre, or iron-ore, not much unlike cinnabar in colour; a bright blue pigment, which we did not procure; and black lead. Each of these seems to be very scarce, as they brought very small quantities of the first and last, and seemed to keep them with great care.

Few vegetables of any kind were seen; and the trees which chiefly grew here, were the Canadian and spruce pine, and some of them tolerably large.

The beads and iron found amongst these people, left no room to doubt, that they must have received them from some civilized nation. We were pretty certain, from circumstances already mentioned, that we were the first Europeans with whom they had ever communicated directly;



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and it remains only to be decided, from what quarter they had got our manufactures, by intermediate conveyance. And there cannot be the least doubt of their having received these articles, through the intervention of the more inland tribes, from Hudson's Bay, or the settlements on the Canadian lakes; unless it can be supposed (which however is less likely) that the Russian traders, from Kamtschatka, have already extended their traffic thus far; or at least that the natives of their most Easterly Fox Islands communicate along the coast, with those of Prince William's Sound*.

As to the copper, these people seem to procure it themselves, or at most it passes through few hands to them; for they used to express its being in a sufficient quantity amongst them, when they offered any to barter, by pointing to their weapons; as if to say, that having so much of this metal of their own, they wanted no more.

It is, however, remarkable, if the inhabitants of this Sound be supplied with European articles, by way of the intermediate traffic to the East coast, that they should, in return, never have given to the more inland Indians any of

* There is a circumstance mentioned by Muller, in his account of Beering's voyage to the coast of America in 1741, which seems to decide this question. His people found iron at the Schumagin Islands, as may be fairly presumed from the following quotation. "Un seul homme avoit un couteau pendu à sa ceinture, qui parut fort singulier à nos gens par sa figure. Il étoit long de huit pouces, et fort épais, & large à l'endroit où devoit être la pointe. On ne peut savoir quel étoit l'usage de cet outil." *Découvertes des Russes*, p. 274.

If there was iron amongst the natives on this part of the American coast, prior to the discovery of it by the Russians, and before there was any traffic with them carried on from Kamtschatka, what reason can there be to make the least doubt of the people of Prince William's Sound, as well as those of Schumagin's Islands, having got this metal from the only probable source, the European settlements on the North East coast of this continent?

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their sea-otter skins; which would certainly have been seen, some time or other, about Hudson's Bay. But, as far as I know, that is not the case; and the only method of accounting for this, must be by taking into consideration the very great distance; which, though it might not prevent European goods coming so far, as being so uncommon, might prevent the skins, which are a common article, from passing through more than two or three different tribes, who might use them for their own clothing; and send others, which they esteemed less valuable, as being of their own animals, Eastward, till they reach the traders from Europe.

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