

## Thomas Lowe's Journal from London to the Hawai'ian Islands and the Northwest Coast in the Barques *Vancouver* and *Cowlitz*, 1841–1842

James R. Gibson

### Introduction

Logistics loomed large in the vastness of the territory of the Hudson's Bay Company (hereafter HBC) in British North America, especially those on the more isolated western side of the Continental Divide. Those operations were sustained by two supply lines: (1) the spring and fall 'York Factory express' from York Factory on Hudson Bay (after a voyage across the stormy North Atlantic and through icy Hudson Strait) in river craft (mainly canoes) via the river network of the northern Great Plains and the northern Cordillera to Fort Vancouver on the lowermost Columbia River (the HBC's Columbia Department headquarters and depot) and back;<sup>1</sup> and (2) the so-called 'London ship' from Gravesend on the lower Thames, southward across the Atlantic Ocean, around Cape Horn, and northward across the Pacific Ocean to the Hawai'ian Islands and then the Northwest Coast and the Columbia River and back.

The small boats and pack horses of the York Factory express were incapable of carrying heavy and bulky goods, so only dispatches and mail and sometimes personnel were delivered to Fort Vancouver and back, and it was the 'London ship' that brought the requisite goods for both fur trading (fabrics, especially blankets; rum; firearms with gunpowder and ammunition; tobacco) and provisions (rice and molasses, which supplemented the 'country produce' of fish and game), as well as some personnel, too, and returned to England with the 'fur returns' (primarily the 'skins' of land fur bearers, especially beaver for the making of felt hats) and occasionally personnel as well. Furthermore, the quantity of both goods and provisions brought by the 'London ship' increased considerably after 1838, when the HBC and the Russian-American Company (hereafter RAC) signed what the former called the 'Russian contract,' whereby for a term of ten years the HBC agreed to annually supply the RAC at Sitka with manufactures and provisions (including 8,400 bushels of wheat and 31 tons of wheat flour, salted beef, and butter; some of it from Fort Vancouver's own farm), plus 5,000 land otter pelts. The RAC in turn agreed to lease the so-called *lisière*, a ten-mile-wide coastal strip of the Alaska panhandle, to the HBC for a yearly rent of 2,000 land otters — all of which was designed to rid the 'trade' of the American 'coasters' that had been supplying the RAC with goods and victuals but were now withdrawing in favour of rosier ventures like North Pacific whaling.<sup>2</sup> Accordingly, the HBC needed more 'London ship' cargo.

Logs were kept of the round trips of the 'London ship', but they were sparse, chiefly noting winds, currents, shallows, latitude and longitude, and such, which were useful to other navigators, particularly to those plying the same route, but not to anybody else. There was, however, an exception — the nine-month journal of the ship *Vancouver* (which left England in the late summer of 1841 in company with the *Cowlitz*), kept by 17-year-old Thomas Lowe (who was actually 16 years of age upon departure but became a year older early in the voyage). Thomas (1824–1912) was the well-educated youngest of six sons of Dr John Lowe

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<sup>1</sup> For an account of this route see Anderson, *The York Factory Express*; also see Gibson, *The Lifeline of the Oregon Country*.

<sup>2</sup> For details of this arrangement, see Gibson, 'Opposition on the Coast', pp. 75-80.

of Perthshire, Scotland, and he was hired by the HBC as an apprentice clerk on the usual five-year company contract. Presumably the father saw this venture as his son's introduction to the wider world as well as to adulthood and a career. Indeed, Thomas's entries often sound as if they are progress reports from a dutiful son to a mindful father. At any rate, they give a very candid account of his manifold experiences on his maiden voyage.

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### The Journal<sup>3</sup>

#### Journal of a Voyage from London to Sandwich Islands and Fort Tako (North west Coast of America) In the Barques Vancouver & Cowlitz 1841 & 2 1841

7 September. Tuesday. This forenoon I joined the *Vancouver*<sup>4</sup> at Gravesend<sup>5</sup> but, in consequence of some unavoidable detention, we were obliged to remain stationary all night. The *Vancouver* is a Barque [bark]<sup>6</sup> of 336 Tons Register, belonging to the Honourable Hudson's Bay Company. It was built in 1838, and returned about 3 months ago from its first voyage to the Columbia under the command of Captain Duncan.<sup>7</sup> In all there are 29 individuals on board. Mr. Alexander Simpson<sup>8</sup> and I are the only Cabin<sup>9</sup> Passengers and have separate berths, but there are [an]other 5 in the Half Deck<sup>10</sup>. Mr. Simpson has been 13 years in the Company's Service, and is now going to transact their business at the Sandwich Islands. The Half Deck Passengers are as follows: A Millwright from Aberdeen, sent out to erect a Flour Mill at Puget Sound; The Dairy man at Fort Vancouver, and his newly married wife, both Natives of the Orkney's;<sup>11</sup> The Steward's<sup>12</sup> wife; and a Sandwich Islander [Hawai'ian] in the Service of Mr. Simpson. I slept on board.

8 September. Wednesday. Still anchored, but expect to sail tomorrow. The ship has been thronged all day with leave-taking friends and individuals retailing Sundries to the Crew, who have today been paid two months wages in advance. I remained on board all day,

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<sup>3</sup> BC Archives, PR-1701, A/B/20.5/V27LA. There is a copy in the Hudson's Bay Company Archive of the Manitoba Archives, E.25/1. In both repositories the handwritten journal is accompanied by a typed version entitled JOURNAL of a VOYAGE FROM LONDON to SANDWICH ISLANDS AND FORT TAKO, N.W. COAST OF AMERICA in the BARQUES 'VANCOUVER' AND 'COWLITZ' 1841-1842, THOMAS LOWE, wherein the punctuation of the original has been greatly improved. It is unknown who typed this version or when, but probably not until the 1870s, when typewriters began to come into general use (it is quite likely that Lowe himself was the typist sometime during his fifty years of retirement in Scotland after 1872; if not, then probably an archivist). Here I have transcribed the handwritten original, including nearly all of its unnecessary capitalizations but not its peculiar punctuation, which I have frequently changed for the purposes of comprehension and readability.

<sup>4</sup> The *Vancouver* was built of oak or teak by Green, Wigram, & Green at Blackwall, 103 feet in length, 25½ feet in width, and 11 feet in depth. Generally it took the supplies of the Hudson's Bay Company to Fort Vancouver and returned with its fur returns. The vessel was wrecked at the mouth of the Columbia River in 1848 en route to Fort Vancouver. See Watson, *Lives Lived*, 3: 1,133-34.

<sup>5</sup> Gravesend was then the first port up the River Thames, about 20 miles east of London.

<sup>6</sup> A barque (Br.), or bark (Am.), was 'a sailing vessel with three masts, square-rigged on the fore and main [masts] and fore-and-aft rigged on the mizzen [aftermost]' (Kemp, *Ships and the Sea*, pp. 61-2, 552).

<sup>7</sup> Alexander Duncan (18??-18??), a Scot, joined the HBC in 1824 as a seaman and rose steadily in rank to captain in 1834 before retiring in 1848 to the eastern United States. See Watson, *Lives Lived*, 1: 349.

<sup>8</sup> Alexander Simpson (18??-18??), a distant relative of Sir George Simpson, joined the HBC in 1827 as an apprentice clerk and rose in rank to chief trader in 1841 but resigned two years later and returned to Scotland. See Watson, *Lives Lived*, 3: 868.

<sup>9</sup> The cabin was 'a room or space in a ship partitioned off by bulkheads (vertical partitions dividing the hull into separate sections) to provide a private apartment for officers, passengers, and crew members for sleeping and/or eating' (Kemp, *Ships and the Sea*, pp. 125, 117).

<sup>10</sup> The half-deck was 'the apartment or structure on the upper deck of a merchant vessel in which the apprentices were berthed' (Kemp, *Ships and the Sea*, p. 369).

<sup>11</sup> This archipelago off the northern tip of Scotland was a major recruiting ground for the HBC.

<sup>12</sup> A steward on a ship catered to the wants of the passengers, especially their food and drink.

with the exception of an hour or so, which I spent ashore at Gravesend, where I provided myself with several things which I had neglected to get in London.

9 September. Thursday. At 2 o'clock in the afternoon the Despatches arrived, when the Anchor was immediately weighed, and, having dropped down the Thames with the Tide (assisted by a gentle breeze from the N.W.) for about 14 miles, we came to [halted] for the night.

10 September. Friday. Got under weigh against [by] 5 A.M.; in 2 hours afterwards we passed the Nore<sup>13</sup> and Sheerness, and, after proceeding slowly all day, moored for the night in North Foreland Bay, waiting the return of the Tide and daylight.

11 September. Saturday. The wind proving favorable, at 6 o'clock in the morning we set all necessary sail and arrived opposite Deal at noon. Here the Pilot left us, having navigated the Vessel from Garvesend [*sic*]. He was loaded with letters from almost every person on board, this being perhaps the last opportunity we may have for a long time of writing to our friends at Home, unless we have the good fortune to fall in with some homeward-bound Vessel. Driven onwards by a breeze from the North West, we entered the English Channel and left astern of us in quick succession the chalky Cliffs of Dover, Dungeness, and Beachy Head, cleaving the water at the rate of 8 knots an hour. Tonight the Crew were divided into Watches.<sup>14</sup>

12 September. Sunday. At 7 this morning found ourselves abreast of the Isle of Wight, the wind having kept both strong and favorable all night. On Sunday the Crew do nothing but what is absolutely necessary and generally spend the day in reading, mending their Clothes, spinning yarns, or otherwise amusing themselves. With them it is literally a day of rest, for, if the weather at all permits it, they are generally seen lying on the Forecastle<sup>15</sup>, basking in the sun or very likely napping. We are going rapidly through the water.

13 September. Monday. The sea being rather in a roughish mood this morning, I didn't trouble the Breakfast table with my presence, as I felt myself in no state to relish any sort of food. I need scarcely say that I was Sea Sick, as likewise were all the other Passengers. All yesterday I felt myself squeamish and uncomfortable, although not absolutely sick, but for about two hours this morning I was in a miserable state; during the day, however, it wore off, and I hope this may be the last time I shall be plagued with it, as I didn't find it at all agreeable. Passed Plymouth at 2 in the afternoon. Wind easterly, and we keep our course.

14 September. Tuesday. The Sea is still rather rough this morning, the wind having veered considerably to the South during the night, and consequently proves not so favourable. However, we are making 6 knots an hour and keeping our course. My Sickness has not returned today, although the Sea is even rougher than it was yesterday, and I congratulate myself that I have escaped so easily. The two women *of course* are obliged to keep their beds, but I believe very few would have stood [held] out so well as they have done. In the course of the day we passed Lizard Point,<sup>16</sup> which is the last of old England any of us will probably see for many years to come. At 8 P.M. a squall came on, attended with rain, causing the Vessel to pitch uncomfortably.

15 September. Wednesday. Wind almost contrary, and weather rainy and squally; during the night we were obliged to tack,<sup>17</sup> and the consequent change in the position of the

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<sup>13</sup> The Nore was a sandbar in the middle of the Thames estuary, about 3 miles north of the town of Sheerness.

<sup>14</sup> A watch was 'the division of the 24 hours of a seaman's day into periods of duty of 4 hours,' but the evening watch from 4 pm to 8 pm. was divided into two two-hour watches (Kemp, *Ships and the Sea*, p. 926).

<sup>15</sup> The forecastle (pronounced fo'c'sle) was the deckhouse on the forward upper deck where the seamen were quartered (Kemp, *Ships and the Sea*, p. 320).

<sup>16</sup> Lizard Point, or Head, at 50°S, at the tip of the peninsula of Cornwall, is the southernmost point of England.

<sup>17</sup> I.e., to change a ship's course by turning its head to the wind and then across it.

Vessel, when laying over on her other side, causes a great deal of confusion, as our boxes, etc. had not been properly secured.

16 September. Thursday. Strong breezes and cloudy weather, wind unfavourable, and we are only making 4 knots an hour. Vessels are now becoming less numerous; three days ago we saw at least 50, today we have only seen 3. Our stock of fresh vegetables is also drawing to a close, and today we have been obliged to break in upon our Sea stores.

17 September. Friday. The sea has been very rough during the night, and the violent rocking and pitching of the vessel not at all congenial to repose. There are 4 dozen fowls, 4 sheep, and 8 or 10 hogs on Board for the use of the Cabin, so that we will have a pretty fair supply of fresh provisions during the Voyage. A number of the fowls have died today, and the rest as yet are in a very sickly state. We have got 6 Rams of the Merino breed to carry to Fort Vancouver. At noon the wind suddenly changed from N.E. to North, but, as the breeze is very moderate and our vessel not in the very best Sea trim, we don't make much progress. An accident occur[r]ed to the Helmsman today, which, although fortunately slight, might have been attended with serious consequences; he was standing holding the wheel, certainly very carelessly, when a heavy sea suddenly dashed against the rudder, turned the wheel, and pitched him right over it; he was but slightly hurt, [yet] I expect it will teach him in future to pay more attention to his duty.

18 September. Saturday. Constantly tacking and running an exceedingly zigzag course. Walking backwards and forwards on the Deck constitutes as yet my only exercise, and I generally spend the remainder of the day in reading and writing.

19 September. Sunday. Wind driving us N.W. instead of W.S.W., which ought to be our course. Large numbers of Porpoises are following the Ship and offering an excellent mark for the Harpoon. If they continue as plentiful tomorrow, I dare say we may strike some of them, as harpoons or \_\_\_\_\_ are not yet sought out.<sup>18</sup> In general they are about 6 feet in length and swim rapidly. Saw a rainbow at 6 P.M. which far surpassed in brilliancy and beauty any I ever witnessed on shore and continued for a greater length of time.

20 September. Monday. A disagreeable rain came on this morning at 7 o'clock and continued without intermission till the middle of the day. The Crew have been busily employed removing lumber, etc. on Deck in order to balance the vessel more equally. This alteration has caused considerable improvement in her sailing.

21 September. Tuesday. A favorable wind having sprung up during the night, we are now scudding<sup>19</sup> before it at the rate of 7 knots an hour. Everything would go on pleasantly were it not for the almost constant showers of rain which we experience. They don't continue long, and are very seldom heavy, but occur so frequently that the Decks are kept constantly wet, which obliges me, much against my will, to keep below unless I want to get myself wet, which is very disagreeable at Sea, where there is no means of getting oneself dried, the only remedy being [a] change of Clothes, which is not always desirable. The weather is becoming perceptibly warmer as we near the Equator. We have departed comparatively little from our true course since leaving Gravesend and are steering pretty far West. At present we are in N. Latitude 45° and in W. Longitude 19°. Wind from N.W.

22 September. Wednesday. Wind still favourable; within the last 24 hours we have run 170 Miles in our proper course. If this wind would only continue, we would cross the "Line" in a fortnight, altho' we are yet 2,500 Miles distant from it.

23 September. Thursday. Wind favorable; made the same progress as yesterday.

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<sup>18</sup> The meaning of this sentence is unclear, even though the typed version of the manuscript has 'grains' instead of a blank.

<sup>19</sup> To scud is 'to run before a gale with reduced canvas' (Kemp, *Ships and the Sea*, p. 763).

24 September. Friday. Saw a large ship sailing in the same direction as ourselves and about 15 Miles ahead, probably bound either for India or Australia. At present we are running to the westward of the Azores, or Western Islands, having made 190 Miles due South since yesterday at noon. I always thought we would have touched somewhere or other before coming to the Sandwich Islands, at Rio [de] Janeiro or Valparaíso perhaps; but it seems that we are to steer *directly* for the Islands, touching *nowhere*.

25 September. Saturday. The first thing that generally awakens me in the morning is the crowing of some half-dozen Cocks which we have on board; it reminds me forcibly of home but appears a strange sound on shipboard, and totally at variance with everything around. The Sea is here of a very light, transparent blue colour, entirely different from what we have hitherto seen. The weather is now getting exceedingly warm, and the Sailors are to be seen here and there making light trousers, etc. for themselves of duck<sup>20</sup>, which they buy expressly for the purpose. There is scarcely a man on board who does not make his own Clothes; of course, to a landsman's eye they wouldn't look either very shipshape or becoming, being cut in a manner peculiarly Seamanlike, but Jack [Tar] is always much prouder of his own Manufacture & Cut than with any he can get on shore. This is a beautiful day, scarcely a breath of wind to ruffle the smooth surface of the Ocean, but, for my part at least, a good steady breeze to waft us on our Voyage would be ten times more acceptable than all this beautiful weather, for at present we are all but becalmed and under the burning rays of a Tropical Sun.

26 September. Sunday. A light breeze has now sprung up but not so favourable as we could have desired, bearing us South East instead of S. West. We expect soon to be under the influence of the Trade Winds, which in all probability will carry us right through the Tropics. Made 60 miles today.

27 September. Monday. The Mate (Mr. Sangster<sup>21</sup>) caught half a dozen Bonitos<sup>22</sup> this morning, weighing at an average 50 lbs. each, but very dry eating; large Shoals of them have been following the ship since daybreak. Rained most part of the day, obliging me to keep below.

28 September. Tuesday. Running very much to the Eastward. At 5 o'clock in the afternoon came in sight of Palma, the Westernmost of the Canary Islands; sailed close by it and saw the Peak of Teneriffe at a distance of about 70 Miles. Made very little way for the last three days, and not altogether in the right direction either.

29 September. Wednesday. Proceeding but slowly, still in sight of Palma; excessively warm, the Thermometer rarely falling below 83° of Fahren[h]eit in the shade during the day, but it is generally cool enough in the nighttime. Saw a Thrasher [shark] of about 25 feet long under our Stern; they are great enemies of the Whale, with which they are generally seen fighting.

30 September. Thursday. Made about 100 Miles since yesterday, steering South West. I generally remain on Deck from 6 to 12 o'clock at night, as that is the only time I can enjoy myself, being compelled to remain below during the day on account of the excessive heat. The Moon in this Latitude is always bright; tonight one might read (and I took advantage of it) not only without difficulty but with perfect *ease*.

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<sup>20</sup> A strong, untwilled linen or cotton fabric, similar to canvas but finer and lighter.

<sup>21</sup> James Sangster (18??-1858), another Scot, joined the HBC in 1827 as a ship's boy on the standard five-year contract and ably worked his way up to captain but became an alcoholic and retired in 1851 to Victoria, where he committed suicide in 1858. See Watson, *Lives Lived*, 3: 850-51.

<sup>22</sup> Various striped tuna, especially *Sarda sarda*.

1 October. Friday. Spread an awning over the Deck to shelter us from the powerful rays of the Sun. Everything gets sadly rusted with the Sea Air; my Keys and every Iron or Steel thing I possess are as rusty as well can be, and, worse than [of] all, I fear I may get rusty myself for want of exercise. Making at an average of about 5½ knots an hour. A heavy rain came on at 6 P.M. I sleep at present with nothing over me but a single Sheet and find even that too much.

2 October. Saturday. Since yesterday we have run 120 Miles S. West. It is hereabouts the Trade Winds are generally met with, but we are not yet under their influence. Running 6 knots an hour and in North Latitude 23° & West Longitude 20°.

3 October. Sunday. Skimming along with a fair wind and smooth sea at the rate of 7 knots an hour; at one time we were going 9½, having now caught, or more properly, been caught, by the North East Trade Winds. Saw a number of Flying Fish today; in general they are about the size of a common herring, perhaps larger, but are unable to fly above a Cable's length<sup>23</sup> without dipping their wings (or fins) in the water. A number of Dolphins & Bonitos may generally be seen in pursuit, ready to seize them whenever they touch the water, and they have likewise numerous enemies of the Feathered tribe as ready to dart upon them in the air, so that between fish and fowl they are sometimes put to sad straits.

4 October. Monday. A beautiful day but rather squally towards sundown; running 8 knots and in Latitude 20° North.

5 October. Tuesday. Came in sight of St. Antonia [Santo Antão], the largest and most Westerly of the Cape de Verde Islands; sailed close by it. It is mountainous and bare, the highest point being about 7,400 feet above the level of the surrounding Ocean. We passed on the West side, which seemed craggy and uninhabited, except by Wild Goats.

6 October. Wednesday. Came in sight of Brava & Fuego [Fogo], [the] other two of the Cape de Verdes, situated about 100 Miles South from St. Antonia. Saw a large ship, homeward-bound, put into Fuego, very probably for fruit and fresh provisions. Made 136 miles today.

7 October. Thursday. Saw two vessels (both English and homeward-bound) but they were too far advanced before we discovered them, else we would likely have spoken them. All the watch and idlers on deck were busily employed making some alteration of the Cargo, and no person was on the lookout; this would have been an excellent opportunity of sending home letters, and in fact I had some ready. Wind blowing from the African Coast.

8 October. Friday. Making 7 knots an hour. A sharp lookout was kept all day to discover more vessels (as we are now in their tract<sup>24</sup>) but none hove in sight. Owing to the excessive heat of the Weather, I wrapt myself in my Pea Jacket<sup>25</sup> and slept in the Pinnacle,<sup>26</sup> where I contrived to pass the night more comfortable than I could have done below. However, it is not always a safe place to do this, as sometimes a tremendous dew falls at night (besides the injurious [blinding] effects of the Moonbeams in these Latitudes).

9 October. Saturday. This is now the fourth Saturday since leaving the Downs,<sup>27</sup> and we have hitherto had a comparatively pleasant voyage. From 7 [P.M.] to 11 P.M. the lightning flashed incessantly, and I never before saw it more vivid; it is occasioned, of course, by the

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<sup>23</sup> A cable's length is 100 fathoms (600 feet or 183 metres).

<sup>24</sup> An archaic Scottish form of 'track'.

<sup>25</sup> A short, usually navy blue, double-breasted overcoat of coarse woollen cloth.

<sup>26</sup> A ship's boat that was rowed first with 8 and later 16 oars with a mast (see Kemp, *Ships and the Sea*, p. 649).

<sup>27</sup> The channel between the eastern coast of Kent and the Goodwin Sands; a roadstead for mooring ships and assembling fleets.

intense heat during the day, and we have had it more or less ever since entering the Tropics. The Sun sets about 6 [P.M.], and the nights are generally clear and cool.

10 October. Sunday. The wind has failed us and we are dodging about, sometimes with a light breeze and at others becalmed. Most part of the day we have been in sight of [an]other three vessels (all British, two Scottish [*sic*]) and, although we were within two miles of each other, scarcely one was with the same breeze as another at the same time. We were all outward-bound and ought all to have stood nearly the same way, but so very inconstant are the winds here that while the *Vancouver* was running with a favourable breeze, another within half a mile of us was striving against a head wind. At 7 P.M. a large black cloud burst right over us and discharged its Cargo, a complete torrent of rain, upon us, accompanied with vivid flashes of lightning. Made 103 Miles today.

11 October. Monday. At daybreak we discovered a large American Ship, seen far ahead of us yesterday, now within Musket range of our larboard [port] bow, and running with the same wind as we were; kept within sight all day. It had long threatened and at 7 P.M. we were visited by a violent Thunder Storm, which continued for most part of the night. Made but very little progress today, never exceeding above 3 knots. I heartily wish we were across the "Line" into the S.E. Trade Winds and clear of this Equatorial weather.

12 October. Tuesday. The breeze freshened a little this morning but as the day advanced it gradually subsided, and we lay becalmed until sunset, when a light air sprung up, carrying us two knots an hour, which was certainly better than being stationary *altogether*, but still far from satisfying us. Saw immense numbers of Porpoises and Bottle-nosed Whales [dolphins] snorting and blowing around the ship, and droves of Bonitos pursuing the unfortunate Flying Fish, which are so numerous hereabouts. Running a southerly course.

13 October. Wednesday. Saw a Scotch Brig to Windward of us this morning, bound for the Brazils; kept in sight of her all day. Wind almost contrary and driving us very far East; very squally after Sunset. At present night and day are equal, the sun setting at 6 and rising at 6. Made 45 Miles today.

14 October. Thursday. Saw the same Brig again this morning which we saw yesterday, but now considerably ahead of us. Put the Ship about, and now steering S.W. As the Cargo is not so very well arranged as it ought to have been (the heaviest goods being uppermost), the Vessel is very Crank<sup>28</sup> and renders it somewhat difficult to keep our legs. Made 27 Miles of Latitude.

15 October. Friday. Wind blowing fresh from the S.E. and we are making 6 knots. Large numbers of Peterls [*sic*: petrels] (or Mother Cary's Chickens, as they are generally called) are following the Ship today and have been ever since we got clear of the English Channel. Sailors have a strange superstition concerning these birds and dislike their appearance, as they have a notion that they are the harbingers of foul or squally weather, and they positively affirm that if any of them are either killed or molested, we will infallibly meet with some awful calamity.

16 October. Saturday. A sharp shower of rain fell this morning at 8 o'clock. Making at an average about 5 knots an hour with strong breezes from the South East, and Cloudy.

17 October. Sunday. Immense flights of Flying Fish were seen today & great numbers of Tropical birds in pursuit of them. At noon we were within 45 miles of the Equator and at 8 o'clock in the evening crossed it in Long. 22°, 20' [W.]. Immediately thereafter the Sulphur which had been placed previously along the sides of the Vessel was then set fire to, from

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<sup>28</sup> A crank ship is one which, because of its construction or stowage of cargo or ballast, causes it to lean too far to one side and risk capsizing (see Kemp, *Ships and the Sea*, p. 212).

Stem to Stern, and from the midst of the flames we heard the [g]ruff voice of Neptune<sup>29</sup> hailing us, demanding who we were, from whence we came, wither bound, and if there were any youngsters on board who had never before been within the Circuit of his dominions. After the Captain had satisfactorily replied to the Old Gentleman's inquiries on these points, assuring him (through a speaking trumpet) that he had 10 of the said youngsters with him (although some of them were pretty *old men* but unfortunately for themselves *landsmen*), he informed us that he and his Spouse would pay us a visit tomorrow morning at 10 o'clock. He (or at least his representative) then departed in his fiery Chariot (a bucket filled with Tar and Oakum and several other Combustibles), leaving us enveloped in complete darkness. The effect of the whole was indeed beautiful, heightened by the extreme darkness of the night and the reflection of the red and lurid flames upon the surface of the water. *Of course*, we who were destined to undergo the operation of shaving on the morrow look forward to his visit with the most entire satisfaction!

18 October. Monday. At 10 o'clock this morning Neptune, true to his promise, boarded us, and the devoted 10 (among whom I stood 9th upon the List) were taken and secured in the Forecastle and there left to our own meditations, no doubt pleasing. Some of the party affected to laugh at the thing as a good joke, but there was an expression upon every countenance — not to be mistaken — which explicitly told that they scarcely expected it would prove so. When all was ready, the oldest man was called up first and blindfolded; this was all we were allowed to witness, as the Hatch was again immediately closed over us. One by one they were called, and we only heard the distant noise, the boisterous mirth of the Operators co-mingling with the screaming and yelling of the unfortunate victims, but were not allowed to participate in the sport. At length my turn came, which I eagerly waited for (and wanted to be taken among the first), for, although it was by no means to be envied, still, everyone who went up swelled the number of tormentors, and, of course, the longer I was detained the worse would be my treatment, but, as it went by seniority, I had patiently to await my turn. After being divested of everything but my shirt & trousers, I was led barefooted and blindfolded through a long file of men, each of whom as I passed him dashed his share [of douse] with all his might in my face or any part of my body where he thought I would feel it the most. Having arrived at the scene of operations, I was placed upon the top of a short ladder near the Gangway, and immediately afterwards I felt my face and neck plentifully smeared with a composition of Tar, Grease, and sundry other offensive Simples [ingredients]. I was asked several questions in order to induce me to open my mouth and thus allow the insertion of some of the composition, but, rightly guessing their intention, I had the sagacity not to answer. After being *duly* but not *gently* scraped with a piece of bent iron hoop, I was tossed into a Sail filled 3 or 4 feet deep with water, and there rolled about by a fellow in the representation of a Bear ready to receive me. After passing through this man[']s hands I was allowed to scramble out of the Sail the best way I could and received the Kiss of Congratulation from Amply, Neptune[']s wife. She had that morning, however, in honor of the occasion, eat[en] heartily at Breakfast, and it was no difficult matter to perceive that Onions had formed the principal ingredient; as may be supposed, therefore, her breath was none of the sweetest. I was then led back to my old quarters more dead than alive. All this time I was blindfolded, but as soon as I got the handkerchief removed from my eyes and had recovered my breath a little, I divested my face of the Tar & Grease which had been but partially scraped off, and, dressing myself as quickly as possible, I was just in time to see much the same process undergone by the one last on the list, a gentleman[']s son rather

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<sup>29</sup> In classical mythology the god of water and of the sea.



younger than myself, come to serve his apprenticeship as an Officer in the Service of the Company. However, I forebore adding to his misery by giving him that share of torment which, according to everybody's statement, I had a right to, as from what I felt myself I knew very well what his state must have been. He bore it all unshrinkably and with the greatest good humour and, altho' I thought sometimes that the tremendous force with which the unfeeling Sailors dashed the water in his breast must nearly have deprived him of breath, yet he bore the whole without uttering a single complaint, knowing I suppose (as I very well knew myself) that remonstrance in such circumstances was not only useless but added to their unnatural and brutal amusement. On this occasion no distinction is made, on this day one must undergo the same as another, and it has always been the case. I was told that some of those who were inclined to prove refractory met with no very gentle treatment. Thus then ended our shaving on our first crossing the Line, and we are now considered as the *licensed* and *adopted* children of Neptune and can never afterwards be liable to the same operation. I am glad it is all over, as we have been constantly bantered and jeered about it for the last fortnight. This statement is not in the slightest degree overdrawn, and I have stated the facts exactly as they occurred. It is a custom which is fast getting into disuse, and deservedly so, for I believe serious accidents sometime occur, but the Crew always look upon it as one of the greatest privileges they have, and it will never be with their consent that it will be done away with. By the bye, in all this I have made no mention of the Women, but, although modesty forbade their undergoing the custom usually practised on the men, still I am sorry to say that it did not screen them from a thorough drenching, and I must say that I think both Men & Officers behaved on this occasion in a manner of which I certainly never could approve, yet they took it all in good part, but their husbands were displeased. At noon we were in South Latitude 1° 15' and Longitude 23° 36' [W.], having made a run of 116 miles Southing<sup>30</sup> since yesterday at noon.

19 October. Tuesday. We have been fortunate enough to fall in with the N.E. Trade Winds and now expect to carry them for at least 20° [of latitude]. On the last Voyage this Vessel was only 31 days between Cape Horn and the Equator, but I doubt much if we [will] be able to accomplish it in the same time outward-bound, as she is now in much worse trim. This is decidedly the best day we have had since we left England, and altho' it ought to be warmer where we are now than anywhere else, we have got so strong a breeze that it entirely intercepts the powerful rays of the Sun and leaves us quite cool and comfortable. If becalmed, the heat would be insufferable. Made 120 Miles of Latitude, the wind still blowing fresh from the S.E.

20 October. Wednesday. Had rather a smart squall this morning at 4 o'clock and were obliged to reduce Sail in double-quick time or in all probability we would have been on our beam ends.<sup>31</sup> Running nearly 7½ knots all day.

21 October. Thursday. Wind same as yesterday; distance sailed, 198 miles, being decidedly the best run we have made as yet, averaging rather more than 8½ knots the whole time. We lost sight of the North Polar Star on crossing the Equator and it will not be visible again until we reach the Equator on the *other* side of America.

22 October. Friday. Weather beautifully clear & cool, and the Sea smooth; carrying studding Sails low & aloft. Saw a brig to windward of us this afternoon, bound for Brazil, and when it is understood that this may be, and is *very likely* to be, the last vessel of any

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<sup>30</sup> A tendency to progress southward.

<sup>31</sup> 'A ship is 'on her beam ends' when she has heeled over to such an extent that her deck beams are nearly vertical and there is no righting moment left to bring her back to the normal upright position' (Kemp, *Ships and the Sea*, p. 69). In a more general sense it means being on one's last legs.

description we may see for a long time to come, the strong interest we took in this Brig is easily accounted for; and now I expect our chance of having any opportunity of sending Letters by a Homeward-bound vessel is very much diminished, if not totally out of the question. Distance 167 Miles.

23 October. Saturday. Today we were exactly under the Sun; the wind was light and the Sky nearly clear of clouds. We felt the heat greater than it has been for some days, but not nearly so [much] as it was about the Cape de Verde Islands.

24 October. Sunday. The Wind having fallen light, we were exposed to a strong heat and unable to make more than 3½ knots an hour. Saw a Nautilus [*sic*]<sup>32</sup> today — a small fish about 3 or 4 Inches long, of an oval shape, and carrying a Sail on its back which it has the power of hoisting & lowering at pleasure. If the Sea proved too rough, or the wind too strong for it, it instantly furls it; however, the one that we saw today had its sail set and was scudding along before a stiff breeze.

25 October. Monday. An accident occurred today, leaving an impression on my mind which (if I may judge from its present effect) will neither be speedily nor easily erased. One of the men was this afternoon descending the Starboard side of the vessel to scrape the outside when he lost hold of the rope by which he had suspended himself and was most unfortunately precipitated into the water. The Sea was comparatively smooth and we were only running 3 knots an hour at the time, and one of the boats was lowered and manned as speedily as possible, but scarcely had it touched the water when we saw the unfortunate man sink for the last time to rise no more. He had sunk several times before but always rose to the surface again; he had already lost his strength, however, and, being unable to swim, went down just when the boat was ready to make for him. He was too far off before he was noticed to enable us to throw anything to him with which to sustain himself until the Boat reached him; they got his cap and pulled<sup>33</sup> several times round the place where he was last seen but after a fruitless search we were obliged reluctantly to get under weigh again, having lost one of the most peaceable and active hands the ship contained. He had not reached his twentieth year and I believe he was a native of America, altho' entered on the ship[']s books as belonging to Liverpool. Three minutes had not elapsed from his emersion to his final disappearance, and had he been able to swim in the very least he would undoubtedly have been saved. It was a sight to which I never saw anything before or similar and one which I certainly never would wish to see recur. His loss has made a sensible and, I trust, a salutary impression upon the Crew; one so young and so active launched so suddenly into eternity.

26 October. Tuesday. The poor fellow[']s effects were this day exposed for Sale and disposed of at a very high price. He had certainly no great stock of Clothes, or anything else; his whole effects did not fetch more than £3. Wind right aft but not strong. Running S.W. at 5 knots.

[27 October. Wednesday]<sup>34</sup>

28 October. Thursday. During the night the wind headed us<sup>35</sup>, and we were obliged to run to the S.E.. In the forenoon we perceived a vessel above the horizon, and as we were very anxious to send letters home (it seemed to be homeward-bound) whenever we were within

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<sup>32</sup> A pearly nautilus, a small octopus, in this case (with a sail) a female.

<sup>33</sup> I.e., rowed with an oar in a boat, which, for uncertain reasons, are not rowed, but pulled (Kemp, *Ships and the Sea*, p. 674).

<sup>34</sup> For unknown reasons this day's entry is not given; perhaps Lowe was still too upset by the previous day's tragedy to write.

<sup>35</sup> 'A sailing vessel is headed by the wind when it swings round towards the vessel's bows so that the original course can no longer be held' (Kemp, *Ships and the Sea*, p. 381).

reasonable distance, we hoisted the British Ensign at the Peak,<sup>36</sup> backed<sup>37</sup> the Sails, and waited its approach. It rolled prodigiously and made very little progress, as it appeared to be deep laden. Showed the Tri-coloured flag of France, red, white & blue, and lazily hoisted a topmast studding Sail as a sign it would speak to us. It proved to be a Brig, and when we were within speaking distance, Captain Duncan seized a Trumpet and sent the hoarse Hail “Ship ahoy” ringing over the water; then he inquired who they were, where they came from, and wither bound. We could not make out the answer as they were uttered in a foreign accent, but a Boat was manned in which the Captain & Mr. Simpson shoved off, taking along with them letters for England (to which I contributed). When they boarded her they found that she belonged to Bayonne, had been at Monte Video for Hides & Tallow, and was now bound for Havannah [Havana]. This being the case, of course our letters were not sent. This is the first vessel we have boarded. Strong breezes from S.W. and squally.

29 October. Friday. Wind still strong from the South West but the weather cool and agreeable. Saw a Brig far to leeward. A Tropical Sunset is certainly one of the most beautiful and sublime sights I ever witnessed, especially when the Sky happened to be so clear and everything around so still, as is the case this evening. Put about ship at 10 P.M. and we are now steering W. by S.

30 October. Saturday. Full Moon at 5 A.M. Saw a number of Sharks today; Mr. Simpson blazed away at one for a long time but without much apparent effect. He got five bullets lodged in his body; the four first st[r]uck in his back, which, however, he did not much seem to mind, but the last one pierced his brain and caused him to turn around in double-quick time, staining the surface of the surrounding water with his blood. We caught two others with the hook, baited with a large piece of raw pork. They were between 6 & 7 feet long and rather under the average size. The Shark is generally preceded by a swarm of Pilot Fish who guide it to its prey. We found a number of Sucking Fish sticking about their fins and other parts of their body. On opening the Stomach of the largest there was found in it the bill of some large bird, probably that of an Albatross which had apparently been there for a considerable length of time and which, it was evident, it had been unable to digest, as there was not the least morsel of flesh adhering to it, and the gastric juice, of which there was a large quantity, was gradually lessening the bone. We were becalmed all day but a gentle breeze sprung up at 11 at night. This day has been nearly lost to us.

31 October. Sunday. The wind subsided during the night but freshened again this morning and gradually waxed into a good stiff breeze, carrying us nearly 7 knots all day. However, we have now much need to make up, as out of the last three days we have scarcely been able to accomplish more than the fourth part of a good day[']s run. The wind, moreover, is now favorable and we are enabled to keep our course. I find the weather rather too *warm* during the day to be altogether agreeable, but at night it is absolutely *cold*.

1 November. Monday. This is a very cloudy, rainy, squally, and raw sort of day. The wind is favorable, however, and right aft, carrying us at the rate of 7 knots an hour the whole day. We had a very narrow escape about an hour ago from a collision with another vessel. About 9½ [9:30 pm] as we were sitting reading in the Cabin, just before retiring for the night, we were startled by hearing the Officer of the Watch bawl out in his loudest tone to the Helmsman, “Ship ahead, starboard the helm, quick, quick.” We were all instantly on Deck, and the helm was just shifted in time to prevent us striking her. The *Vancouver* was running

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<sup>36</sup> The peak is ‘the upper, after corner of the four-sided fore-and-aft sail extended by a gaff [spar]’ (Kemp, *Ships and the Sea*, p. 636).

<sup>37</sup> ‘To back a square sail is to brace the yards so that the wind presses on the forward side of the sail to take the way [the force of the wind] off the ship’ (Kemp, *Ships and the Sea*, pp. 51, 929).

before the wind at the time and would have struck her right amidships; the night was pitch dark, and the helms of both vessels were just shifted in time to prevent a collision, which appeared almost inevitable. Had it not been for the frequent and vivid flashes of Lightning and the light in her binnacle<sup>38</sup> (around which we saw the Officers congregated) we would inevitably have come in contact. It was a large English Brig bound from Monte Video to Falmouth and would have been an excellent opportunity for getting letters conveyed to England had it occurred in the daytime. Captain Duncan desired the Captain of the Brig to report the *Vancouver* when he reached home, but, as speaking through the trumpet — especially when under very sudden excitement — is very indistinct, he could not make out the name. We were quickly far separate, as it was blowing fresh and much lightning. It was thought that had we struck, one or both vessels would have gone down, but it most likely would have got the worst, as ours was supposed to be rather the larger vessel, and while she was close hauled<sup>39</sup> and proceeding very slowly, perhaps 3 knots an hour, we were running before the wind at the rate of nearly 8. This hair-breadth escape will be a subject to talk about for a good while, as latterly we have had but little to converse upon.

2 November. Tuesday. The wind headed us this morning at 5 o'clock, and this has been such another day as the last — the same disagreeable, unsettled weather with sudden gusts of wind and rain. Running S.E. until 6 P.M., when we tacked and stood W. by North. In Latitude 26° North & Long. 38° West.

3 November. Wednesday. Wind generally from S.W. (although light and variable) and still contrary. Weather moderately good, certainly not at all bad for this Latitude and Season of the year. Made very little progress since yesterday.

4 November. Thursday. It is now two months since we left Gravesend and so far we have made but a very indifferent passage. Until within the last fortnight we kept pace with her last outward-bound voyage, but since then we have fallen 6 days behind, having had some miserable work in that short period, and I think today may be safely added to the number of days lost. The wind still continues adverse and the weather is very unsettled.

5 November. Friday. The same as ever — a heavy Sea and making little or no headway. The Sails are set but are of no service, only flap-flap-flapping against the Masts & Yards. We have taken a whole week to accomplish what we ought to have got through in half a day, and most abominable pitching and tossing we have had, too, meeting an uncommonly heavy swell from the South. I certainly have no dislike to a Sea Life but really, weather like this would make the greatest lover of the Sea sick of it. It is a great deal worse than a heavy gale because that produces more or less excitement, and there is much need for some stimulus and constant change to make the monotony of a Sea Life at all palatable. One soon gets accustomed to gales, etc., etc. but when we are becalmed, as we at present are, with no wind to steady the ship, she rolls and pitches most uncomfortably, as there has been for some days past a very heavy swell; it is scarcely possible to keep one's legs, besides being the whole day exposed to the vertical rays of a Tropical Sun. I heartily wish we were out of it.

6 November. Saturday. I have been studying Navigation for some time past and took my first observation with the Quadrant (a spare one which Captain Duncan was Kind enough to offer me) and, if nothing more, it will at all events be an excellent amusement and a *Variorum*<sup>40</sup> in its way. It will occupy about half or three-quarters of an hour every forenoon to take the Sun's Altitude and work the Latitude and Longitude by Chronometer. I mean to

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<sup>38</sup> The wooden housing of the ship's compass.

<sup>39</sup> Close-hauled was 'a condition of sailing when a vessel trims her sails so that she proceeds as close to the wind as possible with all her sails full' (Kemp, *Ships and the Sea*, p. 173).

<sup>40</sup> I.e., a diversion.

continue and to take observations every day. We have two Chronometers on board, and it is another duty of mine to compare their rates every morning and mark the times below, while the Captain takes his observations on Deck for finding the Longitude. Until 4 o'clock this afternoon it was a "dead calm." This state of things is well described by the Poet when he says:

Down dropt the Breeze – the Sails dropt down,  
'Twas sad as sad could be,  
And we did speak, only to break  
The silence of the Sea.

All in a hot and Copper sky  
The bloody Sun at Noon  
Right-up above the Mast did stand  
No bigger than the Moon.

etc. etc. etc.<sup>41</sup>

A favourable breeze sprung up in the evening, however, & I am happy in being able to state that we are now scudding along very contentedly at the rate of 6 or 7 knots an hour. This is pleasant after being so long pestered with Calms and headwinds, to neither of which do I bear any partiality.

7 November. Sunday. Until 6 in the evening the breeze continued strong from the N.N.E., but [then] it suddenly chopped<sup>42</sup> round to N.W. and partially failed. However, it has carried us 150 Miles good [well?] and been a sort of break in the long series of reverses which we have recently experienced. Observed a Sail to the Westward of us at Sundown but [it] was too distant and getting too dark to enable us to make out what course she was steering.

8 November. Monday. The wind has again changed into a regular Sou'Wester and Keeps strong ahead. We have been obliged to furl all the lesser sails and reef<sup>43</sup> the Topsails. There is a tremendous sea running, and our decks have been several times washed fore and aft. As night fell the wind increased almost to a gale and the sea rose proportionally.

9 November. Tuesday. It [the wind] still continues "dead on end"<sup>44</sup> and strong as ever. There is no possibility of walking the deck in this weather, with so heavy a sea running, and when we do go on deck are obliged to hold on by the masts and rigging, besides standing a pretty fair chance of having ourselves thoroughly drenched, as the water is breaking so constantly over us. Shot a few Cape Pigeons<sup>45</sup> today which are flying about the ship in considerable numbers.

10 November. Wednesday. Wind and Sea still the same. In the afternoon a full rigged ship, a Whaler, ran athwart our bows<sup>46</sup> on the opposite tack, but showed no colours. Put about ship in the evening, and steered W.S.W.. It is getting very chilly & cold at night, but with hard walking and as much exercise as I can obtain I generally contrive to go to bed with warm feet.

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<sup>41</sup> From Part II of Samuel Taylor Coleridge, 'The Rime of the Ancient Mariner' (1834 text).

<sup>42</sup> Old English for 'changed direction.'

<sup>43</sup> To reef sails is to shorten (reduce) them by lessening the area exposed to the wind (Kemp, *Ships and the Sea*, p. 696).

<sup>44</sup> Ceaselessly.

<sup>45</sup> Black-and-white petrels (*Daption capense*).

<sup>46</sup> I.e., across the line of a ship's course (Kemp, *Ships and the Sea*, p. 44).

11 November. Thursday. Hooked 3 young Albatrosses today, measuring about 6 feet across the wings; a short time afterwards a large blue Shark came astern but seemed not to be very hungry as he made no attempt at the pork on the hook, but followed the ship for some distance until he was struck on the back with a boarding pike<sup>47</sup>, on which he made off but soon returned again; however, the Captain made a line fast to the pike, drove it into his head, piercing its brain, but as there was no barb on it the Shark contrived to twist it out and made off, but must soon have died of its wounds. We have been becalmed most part of the day, but a light air sprung up at Sunset.

12 November. Friday. Before break of day the light air had increased to a strong and favorable *breeze*, carrying us 7 knots an hour, which it continued to do all day, but, owing to a strong adverse current, we did not make above half the distance we otherwise would have done. This has been a much milder day than we have had for some time.

13 November. Saturday. A heavy rain fell early this morning and continued incessantly till the afternoon, when the wind began to blow harder and harder till it increased to a perfect hurrican[e]. We were unable to take observations, owing to the cloudy state of the weather. The Sea has risen tremendously, making everything pitch about in an outrageous manner; a heavy sea nearly carried away one of the boats and broke the fastening.

14 November. Sunday. During the night it [the gale] increased and I got no sleep, having just enough to do to remain in bed; once or twice I was nearly pitched out. The wind shifted several points<sup>48</sup> in the course of the gale, causing the white-crested foaming billows to run one against another in fearful heaps and, breaking as they met, in every direction exhibiting one vast ocean of white foam in confused agitation, giving rise to short, broken & cross seas, extremely liable to spring the Masts. This has undoubtedly been by far the roughest day we have had yet, and we have been struck by several heavy seas.

15 November. Monday. The wind still continues contrary and the Sea has fallen but very little. Made 100 Miles today, being now in Lat. 39° 48' South and Long. 46° West; immense numbers of Cape Pigeons, Cape Hens,<sup>49</sup> Stormy Petrels,<sup>50</sup> Albatrosses, and other birds now surround the ship and continue to increase as we near the Horn.

16 November. Tuesday. Last night the wind blew harder than it has done yet and every sail had to be furled, except the Main & Fore Topsails, which were close-reefed. It rained heavy in the morning and continued squally all day. This has been a very cold day, and what we regard far more — the wind — still continues “dead on end,” and there is no sign of any change. We are within 12 degrees of the Falkland Islands, and this is expected to be the worst part of the Voyage, as the prevailing winds are from the S. West and must accordingly be contrary to us.

17 November. Wednesday. Early this morning we had a smart and sudden squall of wind, accompanied by heavy falls of rain & sleet. We were obliged to tack this forenoon, as we have been running too far to the Eastward for the last two or three days and are steering a Westerly course. By this change my berth is now not on the Weather but on the Leeward side of the vessel. Two tremendous Seas broke over us shortly after tacking, and, the Half Deck Hatch being at the time unfortunately open, my berth was instantly flooded. We were at dinner in the Cabin when struck the second time but immediately rushed on deck, supposing that some of the crew must have been washed overboard, but we received no material damage, except

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<sup>47</sup> A long pole with a sharp point and a hook on one end, used by sailors to assist or repel anyone or anything trying to board a ship.

<sup>48</sup> On points of sailing, see Kemp, *Ships and the Sea*, pp. 655–66.

<sup>49</sup> Either white-chinned petrels or large brown southern skuas, both so called by sailors.

<sup>50</sup> Small sooty-black petrels with white wingtips and tailtips.

that a part of the Bulwarks<sup>51</sup> on the weather side was knocked in. When we left the Cabin the whole of the dishes, plates etc., etc. were swept off the table, and I believe the most of them broken. It wouldn't do if this were to happen every day. Bitterly cold, as there is nothing to break in the slightest degree the sweeping range of the strong Sou'west winds, and, passing as they do over such immense fields of ice, it is not to be wondered at if we feel them cold after having so recently come from the burning climate of the Tropics.

18 November. Thursday. The wind has rather moderated, but we have had frequent and heavy squalls and a tremendous swell from the South West. For about 2 hours in the afternoon we were enabled to run rather nearer our true course than we have been lately able to do, but the wind soon shifted into its old quarter again and blew hard as ever. In the late gales a new set of sails have been bent,<sup>52</sup> as the old ones would have been torn to Smothereens [*sic*] in some of the late heavy squalls.

19 November. Friday. Much milder than it has been lately; shot a number of Albatrosses, and caught a number with fish hooks. We have run 128 Miles since yesterday in a West by North direction but anticipate a tedious voyage.

20 November. Saturday. The wind continued adverse the whole night and it failed us altogether about 6 in the morning. We remained thus becalmed half the day, and it was not until late in the afternoon that a breeze arose, at first very light but gradually increasing; at 6 o'clock in the evening it was strong enough to send us through the water at the rate of 7 knots an hour. Unfurled the Top-gallant Sails and set the royal Staysails, jibs, and the Starboard studding Sails, none of which, with the exception of the Jib, have been set for the last week, as we have had such dirty weather. It is now a pleasure to walk the deck, the ship running swiftly through the water and everything dry and comfortable — such a contrast to the mess we were in only two or three days ago.

21 November. Sunday. Since last night the wind has gradually veered to the Westward, but we are still able to keep our proper course at 6 or 7 knots an hour. The Sea being in rather a troubled state, the Spray is again whigging<sup>53</sup> over the decks. Towards evening the wind became foul,<sup>54</sup> driving us to the South East. Made 160 Miles; a heavy dew fell at night.

22 November. Monday. The wind continued the same as yesterday, not favourable but upon the whole passable; however, it is a great consolation that the Sea is smooth and the day warm & dry. The water is very muddy here, and we expect soon to be in Soundings<sup>55</sup>; hitherto it has been of a light transparent blue colour, but it has turned into a dirty sandy hue. We are about 250 Miles off the mouth of the Colorado [Colorado] River.<sup>56</sup>

23 November. Tuesday. The wind continued favorable, or at least nearly so, until 6 o'clock in the evening, when it changed to the South. Put about ship at 9 P.M. and stood West by South. The Water has now regained its former colour, as we have passed the current of the Colorado, which carries its water pure and uncontaminated such an immense distance into the Atlantic Ocean.

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<sup>51</sup> The bulwarks are 'the planking or woodwork ... along the sides of a ship above her upper deck to prevent seas washing over' the sides and 'also persons on board inadvertently falling or being washed overboard in rough weather' (Kemp, *Ships and the Sea*, p. 118).

<sup>52</sup> I.e., fastened to its yard or stay.

<sup>53</sup> I.e., moving steadily (Scots dialect).

<sup>54</sup> A foul wind 'is one which, being too much ahead, prevents a sailing ship from laying her desired course' (Kemp, *Ships and the Sea*, p. 322).

<sup>55</sup> 'A ship in such a depth of water that the bottom can be reached with a deep sea lead is said to be in soundings' (Kemp, *Ships and the Sea*, p. 817).

<sup>56</sup> The Rio Colorado flows southwestward across central Argentina from the Andes to the South Atlantic.

24 November. Wednesday. Steady breeze and clear weather; a heavy dew fell at night and rendered it chilly. Making 7½ knots an hour most of the day. We expect to be at the Falkland Islands abt. the end of this week, if the present breeze continues; it could not be more favourable, although we could bear it a good deal stronger without any inconvenience.

25 November. Thursday. The breeze freshened today and blew from N. N. West; this tested the *Vancouver's* speed, for the Wind was neither too weak nor too strong but just as much as we could carry sail to without reducing. We were very well pleased when told every time the Log<sup>57</sup> was hove that we were getting 10½ or 11 knots an hour out of her. Weather clear and warm. After Sunset the wind blew stronger and the Sea rose and several times swept the deck fore and aft; took in the Royals, furled the top gallant sails, and reefed the main and fore topsails.

26 November. Friday. The wind continued strong and favourable all night but fell off in the morning; however, it soon freshened and carried us along beautifully all day. Large quantities of rockweed<sup>58</sup> are every now and then drifting past us — a strong indication that land is not far distant.

27 November. Saturday. Came in sight of the Falkland Islands at noon. There are two large islands in the Group, Soledad<sup>59</sup> & Great Falkland Island, divided by a broad navigable channel. We passed the easternmost side of Soledad. These Islands are in the possession of the British but I believe the Buenos Ayrean [Aires] Republic lay claim to them. Great Britain, however, pays no attention to their claim, and when we left England I saw by the Newspapers that a Lieutenant [Donald] Moodie had been appointed Governor. There are few, if any, of the original inhabitants [there], and they are now peopled principally by Americans & English[men]. There are a few good coves & harbours, which are a great resort of Sealers & Whalers; vessels rounding the Horn likewise sometimes put in here for water or bullocks, of which latter there are about 40,000 head now running wild, originally introduced by the Spaniards. But how they contrive to spin out their existence there, I cannot make out, as all that we saw was only bare and desolate-looking rocks with not the least sign of vegetation; however, in the interior there must be good pasturage, as the cattle thrive and have multiplied fast. These Islands can never be a place of much importance, as the Soil is so poor, and the want of fuel is one of the principal objections to their settlement; there is scarcely a tree to be seen on the Islands, and the soil is too poor to bear them. The Climate is also one of the worst in any part of the Atlantic, being continually exposed to the Sou'West Gales, which sometimes blow here with terrific violence. To us this has been the worst day we have had for some time, and the weather very unsettled — baffling winds from half the points of the Compass and frequent heavy showers of hail.

28 November. Sunday. Still in sight of the Islands. Saw several Penguins today; they are the most curious and uncouth-looking birds I ever set my eyes upon but most expert divers and well-adapted for the water. They have two short wings which assist them in swimming, but they very seldom use them for flying, as they are too short for that purpose. Their legs are placed very far astern — very good in wading but most awkward in walking, causing them to stand almost upright. In size they are rather larger than a common duck, with beautiful plumage; and it is said they are very voracious, sometimes eating three or four large herrings at once. They go ashore to hatch and lay their single egg on the bare ground, scraping a little in the ground. When the sailors hooted, they uttered a cry like a Jack Ass,

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<sup>57</sup> The log was any of several variants of a 'device for measuring the speed of a vessel through the water or the distance she has sailed in a given time' (Kemp, *Ships and the Sea*, p. 492).

<sup>58</sup> Rockweed is any of various seaweeds growing on tidally washed rocks.

<sup>59</sup> Meaning 'solitude' in Spanish.



from which they have acquired the by no means euphonious<sup>60</sup> denomination of “Jack Ass Penguins.” Sea rough.

29 November. Monday. Wind foul with a heavy Sea. We are under the necessity of running far to the South and find it desperately cold. The most of the birds have left us and returned to the Islands, as this is the pairing<sup>61</sup> Season. During the day we were enabled to lay rather nearer our Course.

30 November. Tuesday. This is St. Andrews day and my 17th birthday. As the most of us are Scotch, we had a *regale*<sup>62</sup> in honor of the day. Mr. Simpson tells me that every Scotchman in the [Hudson’s Bay] Company’s Service keeps St. Andrews day as a holiday and generally have a *blow out*.<sup>63</sup> As the wind has been contrary, we have tacked several times, and upon the whole made a good day[’]s run. The weather is every day getting colder and, of course, we feel it uncomfortable, as there is no fire allowed in the Cabin on account of the large quantity of Gunpowder (105 Barrels) we have on board.

1 December. Wednesday. A foul wind from S.S.W. which must necessarily be cold, coming as it does so directly from the immense fields of ice in the Antarctic [*sic*] Ocean, and we have all day been kept constantly tacking. In the forenoon Staten Island<sup>64</sup> was *supposed* to be seen on the lee bow, but it was eventually proved that that supposition must have been false. We have got far enough to the Southward, and our object now is to get as far to the Westward as we can, and that speedily.

2 December. Thursday. This has been a miserable day’s work, as we were about as far advanced at the commencement as at the end of the day; all the fore & afternoon we were becalmed, and what little wind there was towards evening proved contrary. Saw great numbers of Penguins in the Water. In the evening there fell a drizzling rain, which rather moderated the weather.

3 December. Friday. We had a stiff breeze through the night from S.E. and continued running 9 knots an hour for some time. In the morning came in sight of Staten Island, passed the Straits of Le Maire, and coasted Terra del Fuego<sup>65</sup> all day. However, we have not reached the dreaded Horn, but have had regular Cape weather lately — constant squalls and showers of sleet and snow, a rough Sea, and fickle winds. As we passed the bleak & bare Coast we saw its rugged mountains covered here and there with snow, although I am told this is the height of Summer. Broke off from our course again in the Evening.

4 December. Saturday. Had a coarse<sup>66</sup> and squally night. At daybreak discovered a large vessel at a good distance on our lee quarter. At 10 A.M. she hoisted the British Ensign and by Telegraphic Signals wished us “to bear down,<sup>67</sup> or heave to [halt], until she made up to us”; we accordingly up[ped] helm and stood for her, as we were on the weather side, and she soon afterwards came alongside, when the Sails of both Vessels were backed, and they hailed us. It seems that they had not made the land at all, and asked when we had seen it, in what Longitude we made it, & the Longitude we were now in. It was the double-backed, 46-Gun Frigate *Dublin*, bound for Valparaíso with Rear Admiral [Richard] Thomas on board, who is to have the command on the Pacific Station. They sailed from Liverpool later than we had

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<sup>60</sup> I.e., pleasant-sounding.

<sup>61</sup> I.e., mating.

<sup>62</sup> A feast.

<sup>63</sup> An all-out party.

<sup>64</sup> An Argentinian island, Isla de los Estados, off the eastern tip of Tierra del Fuego.

<sup>65</sup> An archipelago off the southern tip of South America comprising all islands south of the Strait of Magellan and separated from the Antarctic archipelago by the Drake Passage. Its western half belongs to Chile and its eastern half to Argentina.

<sup>66</sup> I.e., rough or severe.

<sup>67</sup> To bear down is ‘to approach another ship from to windward’ (Kemp, *Ships and the Sea*, p. 70).

from London and consequently had later news. After two or three general remarks and the usual salutation, we took leave. As it was a fast sailer, it soon shot ahead, and at dusk was about 24 Miles in advance of us. The following piece is applicable.

“The Meeting of Ships”  
When o’er the silent seas alone,  
For days and nights we’ve cheerless gone  
Oh, they who’ve felt it know how sweet  
Some sunny morn, a ail to meet.

“Ship ahoy” our jovial cry,  
Sparkling at once is every eye  
While answering back, the sounds we hear  
“Ship ahoy, what cheer? What cheer?”

The sails are backed, we nearer come,  
Kind words are said of friends and home;  
And soon too soon we part with pain,  
To sail o’er silent seas again.<sup>68</sup>

————— ” —————

It is not an everyday occurrence to speak a frigate, and it is the first one I ever saw at Sea. Of course, these vessels are made with a view to fast sailing, but it is a very discouraging thing to see any vessel go ahead of us, even although a Frigate. We have generally as yet outstripped the Vessels we have seen, and for a Merchant ship [she] sail[s] very well. Came in sight of Cape Horn at noon and doubled it at 9 o’clock at night, just when it was getting dark. We sailed close to it with a Fair Wind and comparatively smooth sea but could not discover the least signs of vegetation, and the crags partially covered with snow. It was certainly as dreary and uncomfortable-looking a place as I have ever yet seen or would ever wish to see. It is rather an unusual thing to get so easily round it outward-bound, but we are no more than round it and have yet plenty of spare time for the cold & boisterous weather which is usually met with and in all probability will not escape without a *hiding*.

5 December. Sunday. When I stated yesterday that we did not suppose we should be able to weather Cape Horn without a drubbing, little did I suppose or hope that the supposition was so soon to be converted into reality; in fact, it would have been uncommon had we done so. During the night we had a stiff Sou’Wester, which was of course against us. It increased during the day to a severe gale, and we had to close-reef topsails and furl every other stitch of canvas. All hands were summoned on deck. Been losing ground since yesterday, and we are now on the Atlantic side of the Horn again, although we were once round it.

6 December. Monday. A very rough night and the wind still strong ahead, obliging us as usual to tack incessantly. On one tack we went so close inshore that we got a very good sight of the land, and such an inhospitable-looking country I scarcely conceived there could be. Captain Cook on touching there in his first voyage round the world says that: “Here it was we first saw human nature in its lowest form. The Natives appeared to be the most destitute and forlorn as well as the most stupid of the children of men. Their lives are spent in

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<sup>68</sup> Thomas Moore, ‘The Meeting of Ships: A Ballad for Three Voices,’ 1827.

wandering about the dreary waters that surround them, and their dwellings are no better than wretched hovels of sticks and grass, which not only admit the wind but the snow and the rain. They are almost naked and so devoid are they of every convenience that is furnished by the rudest art that they have not so much as an implement to dress their food. Nevertheless, they seemed to have no wish for acquiring more than they possessed nor did anything that was offered them by the English appear acceptable but beads as an ornamental superfluity of life.”<sup>69</sup>

7 December. Tuesday. Passed the Islands of Diego Ramirez [Isla Ramirez] in the nighttime, or at least early this morning, and stood due S. all day at 6 knots. Hazy weather and squally. Passed a school of Whales in the evening, some of which were close alongside; I happened to be in the Mizzen rigging when a very large one rose within 3 or 4 yards of the ship. They are what are called *Finbacks*,<sup>70</sup> from the uncommon size of the Fin on the back.

8 December. Wednesday. The night was rough and the day has been no better. In the afternoon it blew a tremendous gale from the South West with a heavy Sea, which nearly laid the *Vancouver* on her beam ends more than once. Here the Sun rises at present at 3 in the morning and sets at 9 at night, the intermediate 6 hours being a twilight so bright that there is little difference between it and day. Caught an Albatross and made a good day[']s run to the North West.

9 December. Thursday. Running to the Northward but making very little progress and will continue to do so as long as we are kept tacking and fighting against this abominable wind.

10 December. Friday. On tacking this morning we could only fetch [attain] North. As we are now getting anxious to let our friends hear of us, I am generally on the lookout at the mast head once or twice every day to try and discover some vessel homeward-bound, but to my infinite regret no Sail ever dims the distant horizon and I am obliged to descend, but generally with far less alacrity than I went up. As we are obliged to lay as close as possible to the wind, the vessel heels [leans] over very much, and the strong head sea striking her on the weather bow causes her to toss about in a furious manner. Whenever I attempt to walk the deck, as I am often obliged to do to prevent myself from getting benumbed, I am sure to have a fall every 3 or 4 minutes; however, I contrive to stot [stagger] about in some way or other, and the falls and bruises I get are a great assistance in heating me. I am speaking merely of myself, but everyone else is in the same predicament; the Captain was knocked down behind the Companion ladder<sup>71</sup> by a heavy sea that struck amidships and was so much stunned that he has lost entirely the use of his left ear, and some of the others are little better. Mr. Simpson lost hold of one of the pins<sup>72</sup> to which he was clinging and was sent reeling from one side of the deck to the other. However, he received no serious injury.

11 December. Saturday. The breeze in the forenoon was moderate, altho' rather inclined to be squally, but in the beginning of the evening the sky to windward put on a wild-like appearance and we apprehended and but with too much reason that we were to have a rough night.<sup>73</sup> Scarcely had we got the smaller scales [*sic*: sails] in and double-reefed the

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<sup>69</sup> In fact, these words are not Cook's, although the impressions are basically the same. Perhaps the quotation is from an account by another member of Cook's first expedition.

<sup>70</sup> A large baleen whale, *Balaenoptera physalus*, with a prominent dorsal fin; it is also known as the common rorqual.

<sup>71</sup> The companion ladder led from the quarterdeck down to the upper deck on each side of a ship that had a raised quarterdeck (Kemp, *Ships and the Sea*, p. 189).

<sup>72</sup> Presumably a belaying pin, a fixed wooden or metal pin around which rigging or plain rope is belayed (secured) (Kemp, *Ships and the Sea*, p. 74).

<sup>73</sup> The meaning of this sentence is unclear because of the wording; the intent of the phrase 'and but with too much reason' is presumably 'with good reason.'

topsails when a gale arose from the W.S.W. which beat everything I have yet seen, making the *Vancouver*[']s sides crack in rather a threatening manner. The Sea made a clean sweep off [*sic*] the deck fore & aft, but we sustained no damage; everything was snug. My bed is only 2½ feet broad and one would think there could not be much spare room to roll about in it but in spite of myself I was fairly turned over, time after time, until I contrived to roll myself up like a hedgehog and in this position had to pass the night; of course, sleep was never to be thought of.

12 December. Sunday. It blows as strong as ever and the Sea has now attained a tremendous height, but the wind has rather altered its direction and is more favorable to us. We have been enabled to run our course N.N.W. free<sup>74</sup> at 6 or 7 knots, but pitching and rolling as usual. The ship has a bare and uncomfortable-looking appearance when she can only sail under reefed topsails. In the late gale, although she cracked & groaned in rather a doubtful manner, upon the whole she behaved admirably. Made a tolerable day[']s run, but I will long remember our rounding the Horn.

13 December. Monday. It blew strong throughout the night, but towards morning the wind fell and the Sea soon followed its example. "After a Storm came a Calm."<sup>75</sup> All day the wind came in slight puffs from various directions, changing every now and then and seemingly doubtful where to settle, but after long consideration — supposing, I dare say, that we had had our share of bad winds — it was so kind towards evening as to blow at first gently, however, from the East, and so directly was it in our favor that we were enabled to carry studding sails to it to windward; at last it came in fresh & steady and settled right aft[erwards]. The Sea has now nearly regained its placidity and we are sailing as smooth as if we had been in the Tropics. The necessary duty of walking the deck for exercise has also become a pleasant recreation instead of a burdensome task, as was frequently the case. A fire has been kindled in the Cabin today to expel the dampness which has settled there more than to warm us, for if this breeze continues for any length of time we will soon be out of reach of the cold and biting winds of Cape Horn. It is positively a shame to go to bed in a night like this, mild and clear as day; such a change has the Easterly wind effected and so totally different from the strong and chilling gales coming from the ice in the Frozen Regions<sup>76</sup>.

14 December. Tuesday. All night we continued to press every stitch of canvas upon her that could in the slightest degree be of any use to her and thus accelerated her speed to 7 knots an hour, and the Sea all the time delightfully smooth. About 6 o'clock in the morning we passed a large dead Sperm Whale with swarms of Albatrosses and other birds feasting on the Carcase [*sic*]; it had probably been struck by some South Seamen [whalers], but, escaping at the time, had afterwards died of its wounds. It seemed recently killed, and it would have been worthwhile to have got a few Tons of oil out of it but a fair wind is a fair wind and what we have lately had precious little of, and the Captain thought it best to take advantage of it as long as it was in his power. In much about the same situation, Lat. 54° S. and Long. 90° West, they fell in with another dead one on the homeward-bound voyage, but, as they passed closer to it than to the present one they noticed four harpoons stuck in different parts of its body. One of the crew struck a porpoise this morning but, as it was of immense size and strength, it twisted the harpoon round & round like a top and escaped with its back lacerated in a frightful manner. The breeze continued good until noon, when it died away, having, however, during the last 15 hours carried us a distance of 120 miles in the right direction. We continued

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<sup>74</sup> 'A ship is said to be . . . running free when the wind is blowing from astern' (Kemp, *Ships and the Sea*, p. 326).

<sup>75</sup> A quote from Matthew Henry, a nonconformist English/Welsh clergyman (1662-1714).

<sup>76</sup> I.e., Antarctica.

almost becalmed the whole day but late at night a breeze sprung up from W.S.W., but not so favorable as the last one. We are now fairly in the broad Pacific and I hope out of reach of the Gales which keep Cape Horn and the adjacent Ocean in such constant agitation.

15 December. Wednesday. The weather is moderate today and not so cold as formerly. There is, however, a disagreeable Scotch Mist, which keeps the deck wet and renders it dangerously slippery.<sup>77</sup> The wind is light, and it is perhaps as well that it is so, as it blows full in our teeth, and the swell from the South West has not yet subsided. Today, as may be expected, we have made but little progress.

16 December. Thursday. The breeze has all day been steady and fresh from W.S.W. and carried us 6 or 7 knots an hour. Squalls of wind and rain occasionally, from which there is scarcely a possibility of being altogether free in the situation where we now are. If this breeze continues for any length of time, it will soon bring us into warmer weather, and unless we make a quick run from here to the Sandwich Islands we will upon the whole have had a long and tedious voyage.

17 December. Friday. Wind and weather still the same, the former brisk & nearly favorable and the latter comparatively mild. We continued to carry the breeze until midnight, when it subsided.

18 December. Saturday. In the afternoon Mr. Simpson shot a large Albatross near the ship, the ball piercing the back and one of his wings; although wounded, it was making off and had got about a quarter of a mile distant when he sent his servant (a Sandwich Islander, all of whom are noted swimmers) to fetch it. We were becalmed at the time and had been so all day. When he reached it, with its beak it lacerated his hands and arms in various parts [places], and it was with great difficulty he succeeded in getting his handkerchief about its neck. When this was accomplished, he took the enormous bird in tow and in a short time had it alongside. We found that it measured 11 ft. from tip to tip of the wings, with a body in proportion. It must have been a tremendous tow for the poor Islander, who seemed quite exhausted and trembled much, as he had no doubt found the water a great deal colder than what he had before been accustomed to. A light breeze sprung up at 6 P.M. and, gradually freshening, sent us through the water at the rate of 6 or 7 knots an hour; set Studding Sails aloft<sup>78</sup> and aloft and continued to carry them all night.

19 December. Sunday. The breeze kept favorable all day, but gradually veered to the Westward and fell lighter towards night, when we had a smart shower of rain. The weather today has been mild and beautiful and the Sea as smooth as a Mill Pond.

20 December. Monday. Wind still in our favor but there is less of it and genuine Pacific Weather. Made 150 Miles. Endeavouring to get as far as possible to the Westward, as the prevailing winds blow from that quarter and we can generally make sure of getting to the Northward.

21 December. Tuesday. The wind has chopped round to W.N.W. and we are running due North on a taut bowline.<sup>79</sup> Upon the whole the wind has been moderate, with frequent lulls and as frequent revivals. The sky looks rather overcast.

22 December. Wednesday. Still the same; nothing to break in the slightest degree the beautiful appearance of the Weather, of which there appears every chance of a continuance.

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<sup>77</sup> A colloquial form of 'slippery.'

<sup>78</sup> 'The opposite to aloft, meaning on or near the deck of a ship' (Kemp, *Ships and the Sea*, p. 17).

<sup>79</sup> A square-rigged ship is on a taut bowline 'when she is being sailed as close to the wind as possible' (Kemp, *Ships and the Sea*, p. 102).

23 December. Thursday. The wind is right in our teeth & obstinately keeps blowing there. We are running N.N.E. and the wind is N.W., so that we are close-hauled & sailing within 6 points of the wind. Weather still beautiful and not too warm.

24 December. Friday. Caught 5 large Albatrosses this morning, when it was nearly calm, by towing a line behind the Ship and a fish Hook affixed, baited with pork. As they all seemed excessively hungry, they were soon caught, and the crew said they came very opportunely for their Christmas dinner, which they always endeavour to have of some kind of fresh meat — and this will prevent them killing the pig, whose life was in imminent danger but which has thus unexpectedly been saved for the New Years Regale. The birds are all of an immense size, none of them measuring less than 9 or 10 feet across the wings, with bodies proportionally large. Made poor progress in the sailing line today.

25 December. Saturday. This is Christmas day, and on this day the men are always exempt from work. Many a vague supposition was advanced as to what our friends at home would be engaged in at present, but, as nothing definite could be positively agreed upon, it was almost certain that while we were sitting under an awning to protect us from the heat they would probably be muffed up to protect themselves from the Cold. When “absent friends” was proposed, I am sure it met with a quick response in every breast, in mine at all events. “Wives & Sweethearts”, which is pledged every Saturday night, is too commonplace and by far too often repeated every time to meet with the attention it undoubtedly deserves. By this Voyage I have eluded a Winter, and, altho’ I certainly got my fingers nipped on rounding the Horn, yet it was only for a week or two & the middle of Summer. In all probability I will get my fingers nipped after leaving the Sandwich Islands — not till then, however. There is nothing tests a person[’]s health more than this sudden transition from heat to cold and again from cold to heat. The weather has all day been beautiful. Towards night it fell calm.

26 December. Sunday. Had a 7 knot-breeze right aft all day but not steady, lulling frequently. The night was beautifully clear and starry, and I read by the light of the Moon from an Astronomical Book the names and position of all the principal stars and compared their position in the heavens with that set down in the Book. When we passed the Equator, of course, we left the North Polar Star & Great Bear Constellation behind and came in sight of the Southern Cross. This constellation bears a marked resemblance to “the Cross”, and the Stars composing it are very conspicuous. I remained on Deck till Midnight, when a heavy rain fell; the wind at the same time relaxed and we thought it would change, as it looked so very black & threatening ahead, but it soon regained its former strength.

27 December. Monday. The crew have been employed all day in getting up an old suit of sails and taking down the stout new ones we had set on rounding the Cape, for a ship, contrary to the general custom, puts on its worst coat for the fine and reserves its good one for the foul and bad weather. Considerable excitement was caused this evening by what was taken for a ship appearing above the horizon; it turned out, however, to be nothing more than a cloud, but as the Sun had just set and the resemblance striking, it was easily mistaken for a Sail, which are now become so scarce that the sight of one would be something to talk about for a long time. The wind has kept steady and favorable all day but very gentle.

28 December. Tuesday. Nothing of importance occurred; all going on in the usual quiet, but by no means lazy, manner. I never feel at a loss what to do, having always something or other on hand. I find Navigation a good exercise, and take observations & work the reckoning every day. All the Sheep and most of the pigs for the use of the Cabin are finished, so that we are living on what are called Salt Provisions, although by towing beef or

pork behind the ship for a day or two it is rendered almost fresh, and I like it better. At dinner we have always Preserved or Pea Soup and the ship is plentifully stocked with potatoes, of which the crew are put on no allowance but told to take as many as they can eat and no waste. The Steward likewise bakes loaves every day and plum puddings twice a week. In cold weather the crew and whoever wished it breakfasted on porridge (which they called Burgon [burgoo]) and Molasses, so that there is little danger of Scurvy breaking out amongst us. Wind variable & weather warm.

29 December. Wednesday. We continued all day either entirely becalmed or facing light contrary winds. As I was leaning over the taffrail<sup>80</sup> in the evening, looking for blubber<sup>81</sup> (immense numbers of which, of all different hues & shapes, were surrounding the ship) I saw an enormous Shark endeavouring to swallow some pieces of meat in a strong rope net towing behind the ship. I immediately gave the alarm and shortly afterwards the Captain wounded him in the fin with a boarding pike, on which he made off and we saw no more of him. The ugly rascal had nearly cheated us of our next day's dinner.

30 December. Thursday. The wind is contrary and light. Have every reason to expect a long passage. Sun very, very powerful.

31 December. Friday. This is Hogmanay.<sup>82</sup> Everything going on as usual. The wind is still a "teether."<sup>83</sup>

#### 1842

1 January. Saturday. This is New Year's Day and a Holiday to the Crew. By the English this day is not much kept, but, as this can scarcely be called an English ship, the Officers and all the Passengers being Scotch (although the crew are composed principally of Englishmen and Foreigners), we hold it as a holiday. The men take very little time to enjoy themselves, as they generally find enough to do in mending their old clothes or making new ones for themselves. Made no progress today.

2 January. Sunday. Only flaws<sup>84</sup> of wind, sometimes breezing up a little and lulling again at short intervals, and it continued thus most part of the day. At sunset a light but steady breeze arose from the South, carrying us 4 knots an hour. This calm weather, especially when there is any swell, does more injury to the sails than a heavy gale of wind would do — at every heave of the sea she rolls and pitches, as there is no wind to steady her, making the sails beat at every heave against the Masts, Yards and Crosstrees.<sup>85</sup> This soon makes them *laugh*,<sup>86</sup> especially the old set we have got up at present. Saw numbers of what are called Portug[ue]se men-o'-war floating on the Surface of the water; they are a sort of light transparent blubber, with a round high back, something of the shape of a Turtle. Saw also several schools of Skipjacks.<sup>87</sup> In the evening Mr. Sangster (the [First] Mate) and I were sitting upon the taffrail conversing about something or other [when] we saw a fiery Meteor shoot right across the Heavens; it stopped and seemed to break into numberless fragments. It was very bright and appeared much larger than any falling [shooting] star I ever saw before. What rendered it more extraordinary was that it was quite light at the time this happened, the Sun having scarcely sunk below the horizon and long before any of the other stars made their appearance.

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<sup>80</sup> The taffrail was 'the after rail at the stern of a ship' (Kemp, *Ships and the Sea*, p. 854).

<sup>81</sup> Blubber are large sea nettles (medusas).

<sup>82</sup> Scottish New Year's Eve.

<sup>83</sup> A 'teether' is a wind coming directly at someone.

<sup>84</sup> A 'flaw' is a sudden burst of wind of short duration.

<sup>85</sup> Crosstrees are horizontal wooden crosspieces for spreading canvas (Kemp, *Ships and the Sea*, p. 214).

<sup>86</sup> I.e., makes them sound like laughter.

<sup>87</sup> Skipjacks are small, striped Pacific tuna.

It startled everyone on deck, and all said that they had never seen one so luminous before; it exactly resembled a rocket and was a sublime & imposing sight.

3 January. Monday. Nothing particular occurred today. The wind still light and unsettled. Saw one or two birds in the morning. The[y] deserted us entirely after we rounded the Horn, but I believe they are not so numerous in the Pacific as in the Atlantic Ocean. Made about 50 Miles today in a N.N.W. course.

4 January. Tuesday. When we were at dinner today the Officer on deck gave the unusual cry of "Sail ho." It is unusual in almost any part of the Pacific to speak vessels,<sup>88</sup> but more especially on that part of it where we now are, as we thought ourselves altogether out of the tract of homeward-bound ships and even of Whalers. It was first seen from the maintop[mast] about 15 Miles distant, and, as the wind was very light, we were a long time in coming closer. When she noticed us, the helm was shifted and she bore down on us, having the advantage of the wind. We braced sharp up to meet her. On coming closer we saw that she sat light in the Water, had her fore royal mast and main royal yard down, and [had] every appearance of having recently come out of bad weather. When at dusk we had got within two miles of each other, she showed the "Stars & Stripes" of the United States. The British Ensign was instantly hoisted at our Peak, and, having got the letters and some Newspapers ready, Captain Duncan, Mr. Simpson, and 4 hands put off in the boat to her. The Captain as well as everyone on board was anxious to get letters sent home, else he never would have taken so long a pull. It was the ship *Lausanne* of New York, bound from Lima to Valparaíso, there to take in a cargo of copper ore for Swansea in Wales. After having been about an hour on board, our party left her, and we each stood on our respective courses. She was about 500 tons burden and had lately been at the Columbia & Sandwich Islands. I sent a letter to my Father by her. The Captain of the *Lausanne* told us that the Bolivians & Peruvians had been at war while he was on the Coast, that the Bolivians had been victorious, and that the President of Peru together with 8,000 men had been slain. He also informed us that the American Government was to send 150 Soldiers and 300 Settlers to the Columbia and that very likely they are already on their way. This being the case, and only the Breadth of the [Columbia] River between, he *guessed* the British and Yankees would prove rather quarellsome [*sic*] neighbours. He said that the Trade Winds had failed him only about 24 hours before we met, and that in all probability we should soon fall in with them. At night the wind freshened.

5 January. Wednesday. We have had a strong and favorable breeze of wind all day but it does not blow in the direction of the "Trades." Strong heat during the day, but a slight shower of rain fell in the evening, which cooled it a good deal. Made a good day[']s run.

6 January. Thursday. No change in either weather, wind, or Sea from yesterday. Saw a Tropic Bird today, entirely white, except two long red feathers sticking out from its tail like a Marline spike.<sup>89</sup> I think that as regards plumage, it was the most beautiful bird ever I saw, its feathers being pure white, soft, and glassy like Silk. It is about the size of a pigeon and nearly the same shape. Towards Sundown the wind freshened, and a beautiful starry night followed.

7 January. Friday. The wind is a little stronger and more favorable today; in other respects all is as yesterday. We are steering N.W. and will perhaps make Easter Island, from which we are only about 500 Miles distant.

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<sup>88</sup> Unusual probably mostly because the Pacific is more than twice the size of the Atlantic Ocean, and perhaps partly because it had less shipping at this time. The same conditions may also explain why Lowe thought that there were fewer birds in the Pacific than in the Atlantic.

<sup>89</sup> Presumably a red-tailed tropic bird. A marline spike is 'a steel spike pointed at one end and used for lifting the strands of a rope to make room for another to be tucked in when splicing' (Kemp, *Ships and the Sea*, p. 528).



8 January. Saturday. Wind blowing hard from the N.W. with frequent squalls. In one of these she [the *Vancouver*] was tearing thro' the water at a rate I never saw her equal, the Sea being moderately smooth at the time. Most of the squalls were accompanied with heavy showers of rain, and at night we saw a bright flash of Lightning [*sic*] issue from one of the clouds which is the only one that has been seen on this side of the Cape. Made 74 Miles.

9 January. Sunday. The wind has turned a "Teether" and keeps steadily blowing from the N.W. We expected to fall in with the S.E. Trade Winds here (Lat. 28° South and Long. 100° W.) but there is no appearance of them yet. Weather warm.

10 January. Monday. The same as yesterday. Crew employed in tarring the Stays and rigging and making our vessel look rather cleaner and more ship shape. Caught some Skipjacks; they very much resemble Mackerel.

11 January. Tuesday. There was an eclipse of the Sun today but it was invisible to us. Mr. Simpson shot two Tropic birds this forenoon, numbers of which surround the ship. We lowered the boat and picked them up but had a long pull before we got back, as the ship was making a little progress at the time. I went in the Boat and it is the first time I got a view of the *Vancouver* in the open Ocean, where it was the only object above the water as far as the eye could see, and it certainly presented a favorable appearance and looked remarkably well. We skinned the Birds but found them not worth stuffing, as they had been so much riddled by shot.

12 January. Wednesday. Light variable winds and cloudy weather. Made only 6 Miles in the right direction, as we were obliged to be constantly tacking and beating a N.W. course. It is now impossible for us to make a quick or even an average passage, and we have every reason to expect a long one. The voyage from the Downs to the Sandwich Islands is generally 4½ or 5 months.

13 January. Thursday. No wind and consequently no progress made. Cleared only about 30 Miles in the last 3 days. Weather warm and close but it is fortunately cloudy, and this is what shelters us.

14 January. Friday. Still the same, and it is becoming rather a blue lookout [outlook] for the Captain. Made only 6 Miles.

15 January. Saturday. We had a gentle breeze all night but it slackened as the Sun rose and we were becalmed until 8 o'clock at night. It was squally and rainy for some time, and then we got a regular stiff and favorable breeze from the N.E.; it gradually veered around until we had it abaft the beam,<sup>90</sup> where it continued steady and strong. This is just the best and fairest wind we could have, far more favorable than it been right aft, as it thus enables every sail to draw. Going 9 knots an hour.

16 January. Sunday. It continued thus all day with frequent squalls and never abated in the least all day long, so that we may safely say that we have now fallen in with the S.E. Trade Winds; but this is in Latitude 25° South, whereas we expected to be under their influence in 30°. Made a beautiful day[']s run and are now in the Tropics.

17 January. Monday. Trades steady all day. Painting the ship and taking advantage of this fine weather to improve her appearance and make her ready for Port. Now that we have got the Trade Winds we expect to make a quick passage to the Islands.

18 January. Tuesday. The same beautiful, steady wind, smooth Sea, and delightful weather, which we expect to enjoy all the way to the Sandwich Islands. Were right under the Sun today. Splendid day's run.

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<sup>90</sup> Aft the beam is 'any bearing or direction between the beam of a ship and her stern' (Kemp, *Ships and the Sea*, p. 1).

19 January. Wednesday. "Steady she goes, all's well."<sup>91</sup>

20 January. Thursday. The wind still keeps steady, but all day we have had steady showers of rain. Stopped up the lee scuppers<sup>92</sup> and filled two or three casks with rain water, besides what was caught on the awnings and cover of the Long Boat.<sup>93</sup> This will be a prize for clothes washing, and I see the women already getting their tubs, etc. to commence without delay.

21 January. Friday. Been raining hard all day and the breeze is neither so strong nor steady as lately. Large schools of Flying Fish seen, but they are scarcely half the size of those we saw in the Atlantic. Steering N .W. by W.

22 January. Saturday. Taking advantage of this beautiful weather and easy sailing to get everything in order. The crew are busy scraping and painting the Anchors and Stocks,<sup>94</sup> tarring the rigging, varnishing the Yards, and getting new Ratlines<sup>95</sup> bent [knotted].

23 January. Sunday. All goes on pleasantly and cheerfully; everyone elated with the hope of speedily reaching our Port.

24 January. Monday. With the wind on the larboard quarter and the Sea smooth, we now generally make from 160 to 180 Miles a day. But this is nearly as tiresome and certainly as monotonous as Calm, for, as the wind Keeps so steady, there is scarcely ever a sail to be shifted or a pull on a Brace required; yet as we fly through the water it is cheerful and enlivening to hear it whiz behind us. Change is the great attraction of a Sailor[']s life; if it was not for the constant diversity of scene, wind, and weather, they would find it very irksome (at least I think I can answer for the Passengers). I never felt tired rounding the Horn, as we were then kept in a constant state of excitement (I may say of confusion) but for all that I was glad enough when we got clear of it.

25 January. Tuesday. Wind fair & fresh. Weather agreeably warm and sailing pleasant.

26 January. Wednesday. Fresh breezes and clear mild weather. Proceeding famously.<sup>96</sup>

27 January. Thursday. Crew painting the Guns. Breeze still steady.

28 January. Friday. Warm but windy; everything and [every]body as usual.

29 January. Saturday. Early this morning saw an immense school of whales and blackfish<sup>97</sup> close to us, and when the mist cleared away saw a ship under bare poles<sup>98</sup> to windward. On looking more attentively we soon ascertained it to be a whaler from the invariable custom of these vessels having a lookout stationed at each masthead. On seeing us, she made sail and stood for us, but, as she showed no colors and did not appear to be very anxious to speak, we never shortened sail. It was an American whaler, which are numerous hereabouts. At 8 o'clock in the evening passed the Equator in Long. 130° W. and expect to be at the Sandwich Islands in 15 days if the N.E. Trade Winds prove as strong as the South Easters have done. We have been enabled to cross the line without being becalmed or even

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<sup>91</sup> The refrain in a poem by William Walwyn (1600-1681), a leading English pamphleteer.

<sup>92</sup> Scuppers are the 'draining holes cut through the bulwarks of a ship on the waterways to allow any water on deck to drain away down the ship's sides' (Kemp, *Ships and the Sea*, p. 763).

<sup>93</sup> The longboat is 'the largest boat carried on board a full-rigged ship.' It had a full bow and high sides as well as a mast and sails, and was used mainly for lightering and lifesaving (Kemp, *Ships and the Sea*, p. 496).

<sup>94</sup> A stock is 'the horizontal crosspiece of an . . . anchor, set at right-angles to the arms of the anchor so that when hitting the bottom [seabed] it will turn the anchor to bring the arms vertical, thus enabling the flukes of the anchor to bite into the ground' (Kemp, *Ships and the Sea*, p. 836).

<sup>95</sup> A ratline is 'one of a series of [tarred] rope steps up the shrouds of a mast' (Kemp, *Ships and the Sea*, p. 693).

<sup>96</sup> I.e., very well.

<sup>97</sup> Small-toothed whales of the genus *Globicephala*, occurring in large schools (pods).

<sup>98</sup> Bare poles is 'the condition of a ship when, in a severe storm, all her canvas has had to be taken in because of the fierceness of the wind' (Kemp, *Ships and the Sea*, p. 59).

having the least diminution in the wind. In the Atlantic this w[ould] be a rare occurrence indeed.

30 January. Sunday. Wind Keeps strong and favorable and during the last week has carried us a distance of 1,260 miles, being, at an average, 180 miles a day. The last two days we have exceeded the distance the log gave her by 60 miles, and it is ascertained that there is a current setting to the Westward of about 2 miles an hour which has been in our favor so far.

31 January. Monday. Made a good day[']s run but in the afternoon the wind changed to the other quarter. We have now lost the benefit of the current. Painting the Masts & Yards.

1 February. Tuesday. Light variable winds with foggy weather and heavy showers of rain. Saw a number of Tropic birds and Boobies,<sup>99</sup> and from that and various other signs supposed land not to be far distant. Ours has been an unusual tract and is not supposed to have been sailed over. Kept a bright lookout.

2 February. Wednesday. A foggy and uncomfortable day with light Westerly winds and incessant rain. The night was uncommonly dark, and much Lightning.

3 February. Thursday. Two Brown Sharks seen astern this morning. Raining the whole day and blowing in puffs from every point of the Compass. Got no meridian observation and the Log gives her but little way. Lightened [*sic*] freely at night.

4 February. Friday. During the day made little or no progress and it was not until 9 P.M. that we were carried 4 or 5 knots an hour by a light but steady breeze from the N. East. North East winds are prevalent here, and now that we have been so fortunate as to fall in with them expect to be more or less under their benign influence to the Islands, which we will probably reach in 10 days. Made 80 Miles.

5 February. Saturday. Weather fair and warm and wind steady, though light. Caught some bonitos and saw immense schools of Flying Fish. Crew busily employed painting.

6 February. Sunday. Steady breeze and clear warm weather. Saw the Pointers<sup>100</sup> and North Polar Star quite distinctly, and we are in Latitude 10° N. and Longitude 140° W. Saw a good number of Porpoises tonight, and we could distinctly trace their every motion from the long luminous wake they left behind them. About midnight the breeze freshened.

7 February. Monday. Strong steady breeze and cloudy weather. Going briskly through the water with the wind one point abaft the beam. Made 157 Miles today.

8 February. Tuesday. It is generally said that the last week of a voyage is always the longest and it has certainly been verified in our case. Having nothing to look forward to, we thought nothing of 2 or 3 weeks, the time gliding silently past, and there was nothing to mark its flight; but now the tables are turned, all is bustle and plans for our enjoyment while on Shore. It is exactly 5 months yesterday since I joined the *Vancouver* at Gravesend. After being so long tossed about and cooped up on Shipboard, it will be a great relaxation to get freedom on shore. So far, with few and trivial exceptions, everyone has been blessed with good health and none more so than myself. Through the Mercy of God we have been safely borne over many a thousand Miles to within a short distance of our first landing place. We have made a run of 208 Miles within the last 24 hours and will probably make the same tomorrow. I may remark that this is the best day[']s work we have had yet.

9 February. Wednesday. Made 207 Miles today, and all as usual.

10 February. Thursday. The same as yesterday in regard to distance. The weather is inclined to be squally.

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<sup>99</sup> Any of various tropical sea birds of the genus *Sula*, related to gannets. The boobie 'prefers to rest out of water at night, often perching on the yards of ships,' and 'the name is derived from the ease with which it allows itself to be caught after it has settled' (Kemp, *Ships and the Sea*, p. 95).

<sup>100</sup> The Pointers are two stars in the Big Dipper in line with Polaris.

11 February. Friday. The wind has scarcely been so strong today, as we have only made 198 Miles. Kept a sharp lookout.

12 February. Saturday. Saw the N.E. point of the Island of Owhyhee [Hawai'i] about 6 o'clock in the morning about 50 Miles distant. Shortly afterwards Mowee [Maui] hove in sight, and we coasted these about a distance of 8 Miles off. In the course of the day we passed Ranai [Lanai] and in the evening saw the Island of Morotoi [Molokai]. On Mowee we saw several fires burning. Continued running until 10 o'clock at night, when every sail was furled except the topsails and Mizon [*sic*], as the weather looked gloomy and we expected to be at the Island of Woahoo [Oahu] before daylight. It blew strong all night, and when we came in sight of Diamond Hill [Head] and only 6 miles distant from the town of Honolulu we "hove too [*sic*]" and continued so till daylight.

13 February. Sunday. Rounded the Cape at 4 A.M., fired two 12 pounders as a private signal to the [Hudson's Bay] Company's Agent here, and hoisted the colors. All hands (crew and Passengers) were on deck from 4 in the morning. About 6 o'clock we saw the Pilot boat shove off, man[n]ed by half a dozen Kanakas (so the common Islanders are called), the Pilot, an old weather-beaten Tar, steering. He soon brought us to the anchorage ground, but it may be two or three days before we get into the harbour, as the Island is surrounded by Coral reefs and the channel, between long lines of breakers, very intricate navigation. There were three American vessels lying in the Harbour and one of the Company's Vessels, the *Cowlitz*<sup>101</sup>, commaned by Captain Brotchie,<sup>102</sup> which had only arrived two days ago from California, bringing Sir George Simpson<sup>103</sup> (the Governor), Dr. McLoughlin<sup>104</sup> (in command of Fort Vancouver), and 4 or 5 other "Gentlemen"<sup>105</sup> in the Service. The *Columbia*,<sup>106</sup> (another of the Company's ships) had only sailed on Friday last for England with its mainmast and topmast seriously damaged; the *Cowlitz* and *Columbia* had been lying within a short distance of one another in Baker[']s Bay at the mouth of the Columbia River when they were both at the same instant struck by Lightning. The *Columbia* had got a strip of 10 feet long knocked out of her mainmast, her topmast splintered, and the Mate knocked down. The *Cowlitz* got her mainmast slightly injured & both the Mates who were standing at the Capstand<sup>107</sup> were stunned, but none of them dangerously. About breakfast time Captain Brotchie and Mr.

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<sup>101</sup> The *Cowlitz* was built for the HBC by Green, Wigrams, & Green of Blackwall in 1840 with the same dimensions as the *Vancouver*, and it made four round-trip voyages between England and Hawai'i and the Northwest Coast before being sold in London in 1851. See Watson, *Lives Lived*, 3: 1,107-08.

<sup>102</sup> William Brotchie (1799-1859), a Scot, joined the HBC in 1824 and sailed on his first 'London ship' voyage in the *William & Ann* that year (as a seaman and a cook) and made six and a half more such voyages (becoming a captain in 1835) before resigning in 1851 and settling in Victoria, where he started a logging business. See Watson, *Lives Lived*, 1: 228-29.

<sup>103</sup> George Simpson (1786 or 1787-1860) was a Scot, born out of wedlock, who joined the HBC about 1820 and was appointed governor of its Northern Department (the drainage basin of Hudson Bay) in 1821 (when it absorbed the rival North West Company [hereafter NWC]) and in 1826 of all of its North American territories (including the Columbia Department, comprising the drainage basins of the Columbia and Fraser Rivers and headquartered at Fort Vancouver). He travelled widely, inspecting and commanding imperiously and even ruthlessly with a view to more profit, mainly for the company's directors in London and the officers at its trading posts in North America. He was knighted in 1841 for his Arctic discoveries and died a wealthy man. Simpson fathered at least eleven children from at least seven women, only one of whom was his wife, a cousin. See Watson *Lives Lived*, 3: 870.

<sup>104</sup> John McLoughlin (1784-1857), born in Lower Canada (Quebec) to Irish-Scottish parents, joined the NWC in 1803 as an apprentice clerk and physician, and following its takeover by the HBC in 1821 he was promoted to chief factor of the Columbia Department at its newfound (1824) depot of Fort Vancouver on the right bank of the Columbia River near its junction with the Willamette River, replacing Fort George at the Columbia's mouth. He resigned in 1846 and retired in the Willamette Valley. See Watson, *Lives Lived*, 2: 673.

<sup>105</sup> 'Gentlemen' were HBC officers – governors, chief factors, chief traders, and clerks – who were ranked above the ordinary (but not unskilled) labourers in the company's 'service'.

<sup>106</sup> The 308-ton, 103 feet-long, 25½ feet-wide, and 11 inches-deep barque *Columbia*, built by Green, Wigram & Green of Blackwall, was the third 'London ship' of that name. It made the return supply run six times between 1836 and 1849 before being sold in 1850 (Watson, *Lives Lived*, 3: 1,105-06).

<sup>107</sup> The capstan was a cylindrical winch on the main deck used for the heavy lifting of anchors and cables.

Wood<sup>108</sup> came on board. Mr. Wood is a Clerk in the Service and a son of Dr. Wood of Edinburgh; he has been two years in the Country and came over to the Islands to fill the place that Mr. Simpson left vacant by his trip to England. They staid [for] breakfast, got their letters, told us the news from the Columbia & Woahoo etc., etc., and went ashore about an hour afterwards, accompanied by the Captain and Mr. Simpson, taking the Letter Bag and Despatches with them. We had several visitors during the day but no Natives, over whom the Missionaries have gained so much influence that scarcely one of them is now seen doing anything at variance with strict religious discipline. I went ashore in the evening but staid only a short time. I went on board the *Cowlitz*, however, and found it of almost the same size and build — and fitted up in the same manner — as the *Vancouver*. Brought off some fresh beef, bananas, cabbages, and Water Melons; the water melons were about 14 inches in diameter.

14 February. Monday. We expected to get in today but the wind and everything else was against us. The Pilot came on board but did nothing. His name is Adams,<sup>109</sup> and it was no difficult matter to know that he was a Scotchman. He was appointed Pilot by Commodore Byron<sup>110</sup> about the year 1823 and is as strong and cheerful an old man as I have seen. He has got a large amount of property, is a chief, and universally known and esteemed. He was amongst the first of the Settlers at the Islands and says that since the white men came amongst them they [the natives] have degenerated and decreased about 40 pCent [in number] and learned most of the vices of the White man but few of his virtues. It is not to be wondered at if the Town of Honolulu is increasing (at least not decreasing) in population, as it is the chief, if not the only, seat of commerce in the Islands and the Natives keep flocking into it from all quarters. He told me his whole history since he first came to sea. He was a native of Carnoustie<sup>111</sup> and seemed much surprized at some of the changes in and around Dundee, where he had been at school when a boy. I will no doubt get better acquainted during the remainder of our stay here. The first thing we saw in the morning was a whole host of canoes making for the ship and others going out to fish for Mullet,<sup>112</sup> with which the indented coasts of these Islands abound. Some of these canoes were only capable of containing one man, others 2 or 3, and so on. They are merely logs hollowed out, and very light, long, and narrow, but neatly and laboriously made. The single canoes are from 8 to 12 feet long, from 1 to 2 broad, and pretty deep, with a peaked bow and stern. The man has to sit on his knees and paddle, sometimes on one side, then on the other. Their canoes are different from those of most savages and have two long wooden stretchers connected by a tranverse bar, which is always to windward & very buoyant but impede[s] their progress. It renders it impossible to upset the canoe, however, and if it is blowing very hard a man goes and sits at the end of them.<sup>113</sup> They were almost in a state of nudity, wearing nothing but a piece of Cloth tied round their middle. They are generally a handsome race of men, tall and muscular, and the women have a great propensity to corpulence. They are mild and hospitable. The last King[,] Kamehamehah [II], got two of his front teeth knocked out in battle, and whether it is a

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<sup>108</sup> William Wood (18??-18??), another Scot, served the HBC as an apprentice clerk and clerk from 1838 to 1841, when he resigned while in Hawaii (see Watson, *Lives Lived*, 3: 989).

<sup>109</sup> Alexander Adams (Alika Napunako Adams) (1780-1871) was a Scottish sailor who rose to the rank of captain in the Royal Navy. He arrived in Hawai'i around 1810 aboard an American coaster, the *Albatross*. In 1823 he succeeded Naihekuiki as Honolulu's pilot, serving until his retirement in 1853.

<sup>110</sup> Admiral George Byron (1789-1868), who in 1824-5 in the *HMS Blonde* accompanied to Hawai'i the bodies of King Kaméhaméha II (Liholiho) and his queen, who had died of measles in England during a state visit.

<sup>111</sup> Carnoustie is a small seaport on the North Sea about 12 miles north of the large manufacturing and university city and port of Dundee.

<sup>112</sup> Mullet are red or grey variants of the family *Mullidae* with thick bodies and large, blunt-nosed heads.

<sup>113</sup> At this point in the manuscript there is a small drawing of an outrigger in black ink.

custom established by law, or merely arising out of respect for his memory, I am unable to ascertain, but all the old people, and most of the younger, have these two teeth extracted, and it gives them all an odd sort of appearance, besides causing them to lisp. A Boat's crew from an American Whaler in harbour, another from the *Cowlitz*, & an immense number of Kanakas came on board to assist in getting us in, but the Pilot would not attempt it; about 50 Natives had also swum out and remained breast deep on the reefs to tow her in, which they will perhaps do tomorrow. The Bananas are a most delicious fruit and taste not unlike ripe pears; Cocoa Nuts I have ate before. I went ashore in the evening and was introduced to Sir Geo. Simpson & Dr. McLaughlin. Sir George is a middle-aged man and appeared kind and condescending — Ditto the Doctor. I remained there about a quarter of an hour and went aboard again with Captain Duncan. Throughout the night we had some very hard gusts of wind which strained our cable prodigiously. We are anchored in about 12 fathoms water and have 50 fathoms [of] chain out.

15 February. Tuesday. The ship was unable to get in today yet. This day was mild and dry but not too warm. I went ashore in the Boat with the Captain, the two women, Logie<sup>114</sup> and the Millwright. After visiting all forenoon, Captain Duncan & I dined at the Mess with Sir George, Dr. MacLoughlin and several other gentlemen in the Service. After dinner I took a walk with Robert Birnie to see the large Native Church, which is now almost completed. This is to be an immense building, capable of containing between 3 & 4,000 Natives, and built with coral at an enormous expense. Every person — man, woman, and child — has to bear a proportionate share of the outlay, and the workmen are those who, unable to pay in money or goods, give so much of their time & labour as an equivalent. Mr. Armstrong<sup>115</sup>, and American Missionary, is to officiate. There is a Chapel for the accom[m]odation of the White Residents of Honolulu who, with their families, amount to about 300. Strangers are also furnished with seats. R. Birnie is the eldest son of the gentleman in charge of Fort George & about my own age. He is, like me, an apprentice Clerk and has come over with Sir George Simpson from the Company's Establishment at San Francisco in California, where he was stationed for 5 months. I like him very much, and, as neither of us have anything to do, we have proposed to spend our time together at Woahoo. I went on board again at night, much pleased with my day[']s peregrinations.

16 February. Wednesday. I remained on board all day. Still anchored in the outer roads, the wind blowing strong from E.N.E. with rainy and squally weather. In the evening I went ashore in the Boat for the Captain but remained only a short time. It was dark when we put off, and the ship, having hoisted a light for us, we steered for it, but, mistaking the Channel, got amongst the Breakers. The Boat[']s head was fortunately [*sic*] to[wards] them, or we would in all probability have been swamped; as it was, it made it nearly stand on end and from the sudden fright the men foolishly stopped pulling, which made it a great deal worse. The second one came rushing on and drenched us, as did also the third and last; however, once clear of them we soon reached the ship in safety.

17 February. Thursday. At 6 A.M. the Pilot came off and got the ship under weigh; when we had passed the outer buoy about 50 or 60 Kanakas got hold of the Hawser<sup>116</sup> and towed her into the outer Harbour, where at 8 A.M. we cast Anchor in 6 fathoms water. Got the long boat and Spars out and landed a boatload of Water Casks. I went on shore and

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<sup>114</sup> Unidentified; perhaps one Lohaiu, a Hawai'ian who joined the HBC in Oahu in 1840 and died at Fort Vancouver in 1842 (see Watson, *Lives Lived*, 2: 601).

<sup>115</sup> Richard Armstrong (1805-60) was an American Presbyterian missionary who arrived in Hawai'i in 1832.

<sup>116</sup> A hawser is 'a heavy rope or small cable with a circumference of 5 inches or more' (Kemp, *Ships and the Sea*, p. 380).

strolled about Honolulu all forenoon. Dined aboard the *Cowlitz*. Went on board the *Vancouver* at night.

18 February. Friday. Robert Birnie and I got horses and rode down to a village about 5 Miles from the Town, then 7 miles up an extensive valley and elsewhere; we were 6 hours on horseback and rode about 30 miles. Horses are now very numerous on the Islands, having been originally introduced from California, and are a small but active breed and very sure-footed. They are allowed to run and graze where they please, the owner[']s mark [brand] being stamped on them; and provided the Saddle & Bridle be restored, it is of small importance whether or not the Horse is brot. back. We had a race with two Native women, who are excellent riders but don't ride *sideways* [sidesaddle]; they nearly outstripped us. Strong breezes & casual rain.

19 February. Saturday. I employed the Kanaka<sup>117</sup> whom we brought here in the *Vancouver* to wash for me and got my clothes aboard clean enough; a dollar a dozen is the universal charge, and instead of Starch, arrowroot is used. In general the clothes are not washed by the hands but beaten between two flat stones; however, I persuaded my man to adopt the English fashion, for, altho' the Natives by their own method make the clothes clean, yet by constant beating they wear [out] a shirt in a very short time. This is the coldest time of the year in the Islands but is nevertheless as warm as summer in Scotland. There is, however, little change in the climate here and it is generally much about the same temperature all the year round. It would be too warm to live comfortably were it not for the strong N.E. Trade Winds, which always blow strong and moderate the heat of the Sun. I staid on board most part of the day.

20 February. Sunday. Showery all morning. Since we arrived here we have got tremendous quantities of flies & mosquitoes [*sic*] on board; all our English breed were killed by the cold doubling Cape Horn. We all went ashore to the Church today and heard an American Missionary preach; the Service was impressive under any circumstances, but more especially to us, who have been without any collective form of Worship for the last 5 months. It was a Methodist Chapel and, I am sorry to say, very poorly attended, altho' it is the only one in the place where the English language is used. Returned in the afternoon.

21 February. Monday. I remained on board all day, as a number of Gentlemen came off to Dinner.

22 February. Tuesday. The American Whaler left the harbour today, homeward-bound. Filled all our empty tanks and Water Casks from a small stream ashore. It tastes rather brackish and not so good as Thames water, of which we have got enough to serve us for 6 weeks and which purifies itself in a very short time, the sediment falling to the bottom. A number of the crew have got "glorious"<sup>118</sup> on shore & are incapable of duty. I bathed last night astern of the ship and found the water mild and bouyant. This has been a beautiful day and fortunately not been troubled with rain. Remained on board.

23 February. Wednesday. Yesterday the Fort twice fired a Salute of 26 Guns to commemorate the birth of General Washington and, of course, the Americans resident in Honolulu bore the Expense. The Fort mounts about 60 Guns and [is] garrisoned entirely by Natives! A small schooner from the Island of Mowee brought information of the demise of the King's eldest son; the prince was only 3 months old, and born at Woahoo. The premier of the Sandwich Islands is invariably a woman and the whole Government of the Islands is vested in her and the assembly of chiefs, the King seldom interfering in political matters. I

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<sup>117</sup> Presumably Lohaiu.

<sup>118</sup> I.e., intoxicated.

went ashore in the evening and had a long stroll amongst the hills, which are principally of Volcano origin and present a wild and comfortless appearance; the valleys between, however, are beautiful and the soil arable. Some of the Hills are clothed to the very summit with ever-verdant trees and shrubs. The day was too warm.

24 February. Thursday. The *Cowlitz* came alongside in the morning, and they [the crew] immediately commenced to discharge into her the Cargo brought by the *Vancouver* from England for the Russian settlement at Sitka in the Aleutian Islands.<sup>119</sup> This business will not likely be completed before Monday or Tuesday next. I remained on board all day checking the Cargo as it was transferred, and this is to be my occupation until all is finished. The Governor of Woahoo was on board today and brought his wife along with him; they breakfasted with us before proceeding to business. He speaks English very well and possesses great influence in the Government of the Islands but has a very eccentric manner. The day has been squally and rainy throughout.

25 February. Friday. Busy discharging Cargo and I, of course, remain on board. I hate strolling about the Sandy Streets but mean one of these days to have a wander in the adjacent valleys, where it is always cool & agreeable, as there the Trade Winds blow fresh. Went ashore for a short time in the evening to conduct John McLeod,<sup>120</sup> an apprentice — whom I before mentioned at the operations on crossing the Line — to the House of Mr. Pelly<sup>121</sup> (the Company's Agent here), where he is to remain until he recovers. He has been seized with dysentery from eating too much fruit, change of water, or some other reason.

26 February. Saturday. The Sun is powerful and the wind light and variable. The Natives (men, women & children) have been swimming round and diving under the ship all day and seem quite in their element. We threw some small coins overboard, and, although in 6 fathoms muddy water, they instantly picked them up but generally laid hold of them before they reached the bottom. It is generally admitted that the Sandwich Islanders are the best swimmers, taken as a whole, of any in the world. Twenty or thirty miles at a stretch they easily accomplish, and scarcely are their children able to walk before the mothers accustom them to it. A vessel was lately cast away upon the reefs and the Kanakas from the shore were said to have been about 24 hours in the water, without rest, saving the crew and Cargo. There are no Sharks within the reefs and one may swim with perfect safety.

27 February. Sunday. Went ashore to church and afterwards dined with Mr. Wood. The Sabbath is far more rigorously observed by the Sandwich Islanders than by the English. They are not allowed to a single thing that is not absolutely necessary without incurring a heavy fine, or, if unable to pay, they are immediately put in the Fort, which is the only jail here. The American missionaries think it better to adopt rigorous measures at first, for, although at present they have to comply thro' fear of punishment, they may ultimately thro' principle obey themselves. The influence of the Missionaries over the King & Chiefs is so great that they are in fact the Rulers of the Islands. Heavy rain at night and Wind Southerly.

28 February. Monday. The *Cowlitz* parted from us on Saturday night but joined again this morning to complete the transfer of the Cargo. The Boatswain, having refused duty, was

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<sup>119</sup> Here Lowe's geography is faulty, as Sitka, of course, is located on Baranof Island in the Alexander Archipelago, not in the Aleutian chain.

<sup>120</sup> John McLeod (18??-18??), probably a Scotsman, was hired by the HBC in London in 1841 on a five-year contract as an apprentice clerk and left for the Northwest Coast on the *Vancouver* with Lowe but returned in the *Columbia* in 1845 and resigned (see Watson, *Lives Lived*, 2: 670).

<sup>121</sup> George Pelly (1791-1866), an Englishman, was hired by the HBC in 1833 to assist the company's trading agent in Hawai'i, Richard Charleton, whom he replaced when Charleton put himself in a position of conflict of interest. But in 1850 Pelly himself was dismissed for embezzlement after he had made restitution (see Watson, *Lives Lived*, 2: 765-66).



tonight taken to the Fort and put in Irons. He had behaved shamefully on shore but was too proud to make any apology, and having in a rash moment, when under the influence of liquor, refused duty he never afterwards would retract what he had said. Transferred 50 Barrels of Gunpowder to the *Cowlitz*.

1 March. Tuesday. The flies and mosquitoes [*sic*] are becoming troublesome to most of us but I have as yet escaped. Had this not fortunately been winter they would have been a great nuisance, and the few that have already appeared have rendered themselves very annoying. There was a large party invited to the British Consul's tonight, at which I was present; spent the evening cheerfully and parted about 10.

2 March. Wednesday. A heavy rain fell this morning and continued all day without intermission. On clearing up in the evening it was cool and refreshing; the Streets of Honolulu, however, as they are sandy and full of deep cuts [ruts], are rendered almost impassable.

3 March. Thursday. It has again been raining heavy today, and the wind has set in from the South. I have been occupied all day writing ashore, and I believe this is to be my employment during the remainder of our stay here.

4 March. Friday. Three ships came into harbour today, two of them Americans and the other a South Sea Whaler belonging to a Merchant in Honolulu. The wind being light, they all got in without difficulty.

5 March. Saturday. Close and sultry, not a breath of wind to intercept the Solar rays. The mosquitoes [*sic*] have now become truly annoying to me, having stung me all over my body. The Captain, when on shore tonight, got bit in the leg by a Centipede but the sting will not prove dangerous; Scorpions, Centipedes, and other Reptiles<sup>122</sup> have been introduced here by the ships from China and India and are now very numerous.

6 March. Sunday. Close and sultry, there being no Trade Winds.

7 March. Monday. Employed busily all day ashore at the pen and at present it is the best employment I could have, as I find it too warm out of doors to walk about with any comfort. The people of Honolulu use large Umbrellas<sup>123</sup> to protect them from the Sun.

8 March. Tuesday. We have finished unloading today, and the *Cowlitz* has parted company. The *Vancouver* is now to commence to receive cargo from the Shore, and will likely sail at the end of this or the beginning of next week. Heat strong.

9 March. Wednesday. Calm and Sultry weather and the heat in unsheltered situations unbearable.

10 March. Thursday. All as usual. I am employed writing on shore.

11 March. Friday. Today they have finished taking in Cargo and must now begin to make the ship ready for Sea and lay in a stock of fresh provisions and water, which is to be set about.

12 March. Saturday. When ashore today I was very much surprized when Sir George Simpson, handing me an open note addressed to Captain Brotchie, desired me to give it to him but in the first place to read it myself. On reading it I found that Captain Brotchie was requested to receive me and my luggage immediately on board the *Cowlitz*, as I was to take passage in her, but where he did not at the time think proper to tell me. I never had the least notion of this change and always took it for granted that I was bound for the Columbia in the *Vancouver* and had made all my preparations for that purpose. It is the invariable practice in the Country to tell one of some change or to prepare for some journey only a few hours

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<sup>122</sup> Presumably Lowe is referring to lizards, not snakes, which are lacking on the islands.

<sup>123</sup> Presumably parasols.

before he is obliged to start. The *Cowlitz* is to sail for the Russian Settlement at Sitka and thence to some of the Company's Forts or Stations on the North West Coast, but at which of these Forts I am to be stationed is, as yet, merely conjectural. Sir George is to proceed in her to Sitka and from thence via Okhotsk across Siberia. In the evening I got everything I possessed removed on board the *Cowlitz* and slept there.

14 March.<sup>124</sup> Monday. Orders came from the Governor for the *Cowlitz* to get all ready for Sea by tomorrow afternoon, and all is now bustle and confusion on board. The *Vancouver* sailed this forenoon with a favorable breeze and met with no detention from the intricacy of the Harbour. She fired a salute of 7 Guns, which the *Cowlitz* and Fort returned, as did likewise an American brig in harbour, in honour of Dr. McLoughlin, whom she carries to Columbia River. I took farewell of all on board of her with whom I have been on terms of intimacy for the last 6 months. God send her a speedy and happy voyage.

15 March. Tuesday. It is impossible for us to sail today, as there still remains so much undone. I find the *Cowlitz* just as comfortable as the *Vancouver* and have no doubt that I will take as well with Captain Brothie, who is likewise a Scotchman, as I did with Captain Duncan. Rainy.

16 March. Wednesday. It blew a complete gale all day, which prevented us from getting out of Harbour; the Pilot would not take the vessel out in such weather. The dust in the Streets is flying furiously and renders it very unpleasant walking. In the afternoon the gale moderated a little but still blew too hard to venture out.

17 March. Thursday. This morning all was in readiness for Sea, & after taking leave of everyone with whom we had formed [an] acquaintance while at Honolulu we loosed the hawzer with which she was secured to the wharf and stood out. An American Vessel fired a Salute of 7 Guns in honor of Sir George Simpson, the Fort fired another salute, and we returned both. The wind being fortunately fair, we got easily out of the harbour, and when outside the reefs backed the Sails to let the Pilot and a number of Gentlemen — who had come thus far to see us off — have an opportunity of leaving the Vessel. They gave us three cheers, which, of course, we returned.

#### Fort Tako N.W. Coast of America

[1 June. Thursday.] After this date<sup>125</sup> I am unable to proceed with the Journal, as in the hurry of debarkation at this place by some mischance the Notes which I kept of the subsequent voyage, and on which I mainly depended, were left behind. It was only yesterday when, bringing up the Log, that I discovered this, as during all the time I was with Sir George Simpson he kept me so busily employed that I found it impossible to enter every morning the events of the preceding day, as I had been accustomed to do on the outward voyage in the *Vancouver*. However, as the circumstances of the voyage are still fresh in my memory, I will be enabled to state them as they occurred. To continue:

[18–20 March. Sunday.] After leaving Woahoo, we steered for the Island of Mowee, where the King resides, and whom Sir George was anxious to see. We took on board 2 cabin & 3 Half Deck Passengers for the Town of Lahaina, which is the only place for shipping<sup>126</sup> in the Islands. After a trip of 3 days, during which we met with foul winds and strong currents, we anchored at Mowee on the 20th March. Here we found 10 American Whalers at Anchor.

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<sup>124</sup> There is no journal entry for Sunday, 13 March, perhaps because Lowe was preoccupied with accommodating himself to his new quarters.

<sup>125</sup> I.e., 17 March 1842.

<sup>126</sup> I.e., exportation, as all exports had to be approved by the king.

Lahaina is a great resort for them when cruising about the Islands, as they thus escape the exorbitant harbour dues exacted at Honolulu, get cheaper and perhaps better provisions, are at all times ready for Sea, and run no risk of being detained, as we were, both in getting in and coming out of the intricate and dangerous harbour of Honolulu. Sir George and the passengers went on shore and did not return that night; I stayed, at least slept, on board there and all the time we were at Mowee. As it was Sunday, we had no Visitors.

[21 March. Monday.] Next day I was employed writing home and sent a packet of letters by a Schooner to sail in a day or two for California. They were to be forwarded via Mexico and would probably reach their destination before the Note I sent by the *Lausanne* off Valparaíso. During the time we remained at Lahaina I was ashore several times seeing the Native dances, which were repeated almost every night during our stay. The King & Chiefs were frequent visitors on board and were twice at Dinner. I was at the King's House one night and shook hands with the Queen, who was unwell at the time we were there. The King, Kamehamehah III, is about 30 years of age, short but stout for his years. He seemed much darker than the generality of the Islanders and had more the look of a Negro; he was kind, however, and a great lover of conviviality. Mowee is much the same in appearance as Woahoo — about the same size and nearly the same population.

[22-25 March. Friday.] We remained here 5 days, and in the afternoon of the 25th made sail and stood for Sitka. There was as much, if not more, saluting here than at Honolulu, and the King was very liberal in presents of curiosities, etc. Sir George, Dr. Rowand,<sup>127</sup> his medical attendant, and myself were the only passengers. After we left Mowee every hour added to the severity of the cold, and, as I kept a regular account of the relative temperatures of the air and water twice a day, we had certainly no great satisfaction in seeing how gradually the Thermometer fell — rarely, indeed, did it stand for two days at one point but continued to fall lower and lower. At first setting out we felt it most for having been so long under a burning sun; we were quite unprepared for encountering the biting & freezing blasts of the North. The whole voyage was one of continual turmoil and agitation; twice were we obliged to “lay to”,<sup>128</sup> & it was an uncommon occurrence if the Royals or even Topgallant sails were set. I felt the *Cowlitz*, however, from the arrangement of her Cargo a far livelier vessel than the *Vancouver* in a heavy sea; she was more buoyant & rose better to the waves. Sir George, from a weakness in his eyes, never read himself when he could get another to read for him, so my time was during the whole voyage occupied with reading and writing alternately. Mr. Hopkins,<sup>129</sup> his secretary, had left at the Islands, and of course all this devolved upon me and I think it is not to be wondered at if I had to discontinue my Journal. By reading in the Sun and over exertion of my eyes, I was prohibited for a whole week from looking at paper of any description, and I think this was to me the most miserable part of the voyage because, as I was debarred from reading, I had nothing for it but to trudge about the deck amidst sleet and snow or lie in my bed all day, to which I never could reconcile myself. However, I soon got better and resumed my former functions, at which I was kept busy during the remainder of the passage. Nothing occurred worth mentioning on this voyage —

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<sup>127</sup> John Rowand (c.1787-1854) was the son of a Quebec surgeon who joined the NWC in 1803 and became a chief trader when it merged with the HBC in 1821. Both he and his son Alexander, a physician, accompanied Governor Simpson on his trip around the world in 1841-2 (see Watson, *Lives Lived*, 2: 839-40).

<sup>128</sup> To ‘lay to’, or ‘heave to’, is ‘to lay a ship on the wind with her helm alee and her sails shortened and so trimmed’ as to ‘make no headway’ (Kemp, *Ships and the Sea*, p. 381).

<sup>129</sup> Edward Hopkins (1820-93) was an English parliamentary reporter who was hired by the HBC in 1841 as Governor Simpson's personal secretary and assistant, a position he held until the governor's death (see Watson, *Lives Lived*, 2: 465-66).

we saw no land, spoke no vessel, and nothing occurred to note the time as it quickly flew past.

[15 April. Friday.] On the 15th of April we made the land, but, as the afternoon was too boisterous to get in, we fired two guns and lay off the mouth of the Sound in which Sitka is situated. The mountains were covered with snow near the tops and to the water[']s edge were covered with woods; the Sound is studded with Islets, every one of which is covered with trees as close to one another as they can possibly stand. There are three entrances to this Settlement, and the wind being favorable, we entered one of them. Just as we were casting anchor we saw the Russian steamer<sup>130</sup> come into the Harbour. It had heard our Guns last night and had come out in quest of us, but the wind being fair for entering one of the channels — although rather an unusual one — we had got in before her and without her assistance. This was on the Saturday morning, which is the Russian Sunday, and, of course, the cargo was allowed to remain untouched all that day. Early next morning, however, Sir George & Dr. Rowand took up their habitation at a house prepared for them on shore by Governor Etholine.<sup>131</sup> I was removed there shortly afterwards and was kept busy at the Russian American Fur Company[']s<sup>132</sup> Stores, checking and seeing as every pack was opened that it contained the requisite number of furs. This occupied me about two days, during which time I dined at the Russian Mess on shore. All the Officers are in the pay and service of the Government. It is a large Settlement & well built. There are about 600 Russians, partly in the Service of Government and partly of the Russian American Fur Company. All their goods from England are brought out in the Hudson's Bay Company[']s ships, and Fort Vancouver supplies them with grain, butter, etc. There is an Iron Foundry, a Theatre, large stores & shops, and numerous tradesmen; in fact, everything is conducted on a very extensive scale. There was one large and a small Steamer, besides 6 or 7 Sailing vessels, lying in Harbour, and I believe there are about 14 vessels in the employ of the company. After remaining 5 days we got under weigh for Fort Tako [Taku]<sup>133</sup>, a distance of 180 miles, towed by the largest Steamboat, & after a trip through innumerable straits, sounds, & passages of 35 hours in which we met with no interruption arrived at Tako on the afternoon of Saturday, the 23rd of April.

[23 April. Saturday.] The entrance to this place is easy and the anchorage for shipping good, being completely hemmed in by high mountains rising on every side & wooded to the water's edge. This is the first place where I have set my foot on the mainland of America & the Fort seems very comfortable quarters, situated in Lat. 58° North & Long. 133° 48' West. When we arrived here the weather was indeed beautiful, and Sir George Simpson — in case he should not have so good an opportunity again — was determined to proceed to Fort Stikine<sup>134</sup> as long as the fine weather lasted. He kept the people of the Fort working the whole night and was ready to start by noon on Sunday after a stay of only 20 hours. I got my luggage hastily bundled on Shore and had only time to take a hasty adieu of the Officers & others on board with whom I had become acquainted before the Steamer had her in tow. God speed them. Stikine is another of the Coy's Forts about 170 miles south from this and much

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<sup>130</sup> Probably the paddlewheeler *Nikolai I* rather than the smaller *Mur*.

<sup>131</sup> Arvid Adolf Etholén (Adolf Karlovich Etolin) (1798-1876), a Swedo-Finnish naval officer, served as governor of Russian America in 1840-45.

<sup>132</sup> The Russian-American Company, headquartered in St Petersburg by a Board of Directors under the Ministry of Finance, was a chartered monopoly founded in 1799 to manage and exploit Russia's sole overseas colony.

<sup>133</sup> Fort Taku (also called Fort Durham and later Fort Highfield, and much later yet Fort Wrangell) was founded in 1840 about 30 miles south of the Taku River on the northern tip of Wrangel Island.

<sup>134</sup> Fort Stikine was simply the HBC's new name for the site of the Russian redoubt of St Dionisius near the mouth of the Stikine River that it had occupied in 1840.

about the same size. Each is garrisoned by 20 men and mounts 8 cannon, besides musketoons<sup>135</sup> and other arms.

The voyage is ended and I will consequently conclude the Journal. Any subsequent information must be conveyed in Letters and I mean to write by every eligible opportunity. Farewell.<sup>136</sup>

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<sup>135</sup> A musketoon was a short musket with a large bore.

<sup>136</sup> In an appended ‘Abstract’ Lowe writes that it took him 8 months and 21 days to travel from his home in Scotland to Fort Taku. He spent a year at Taku, then left to assist in the founding of Fort Victoria en route to his posting at Fort Vancouver, which he reached in mid-June of 1843, where he served until 1850 (when he married and went into private business). His experiences at the fort constitute the finale of his ten-year journal.