

NARRATIVE
OF THE
VOYAGE OF H.M.S. HERALD

DURING THE YEARS 1845-51,

UNDER THE COMMAND OF

CAPTAIN HENRY KELLETT, R.N., C.B.;

BEING

A Circumnavigation of the Globe,

AND THREE CRUISES TO THE ARCTIC REGIONS IN SEARCH
OF SIR JOHN FRANKLIN.

BY

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CHAPTER VII.

Cape Flattery rocks—Tatoche Island—Indians—Entrance into the Straits of Juan de Fuca—Historical notice—Port Victoria—Harbour of Esquimalt—Fort of Victoria—Port Discovery—Townshend—New Dungeness—Quadra's and Vancouver's Island—Race Islands—Neagh Bay—Departure for the South.

CAPE FLATTERY rocks are three in number, the northernmost of which is a white barren mass, the others are wooded. The Cape was named by Cook in 1778, from its presenting at a distance the entrance of a safe port, which, on a near approach, proved to be deceptive; it is three or four leagues to the southward of Cape Classet, a steep and abrupt promontory, beyond which the coast rises considerably in hills covered with wood. Off Cape Classet lies Tatoche Island, which, having no trees, forms a great contrast to the mainland. The shores are lined with rocks in curious shape, with edges as sharp as if in a newly-cut quarry. The island is divided into two parts, and covered with houses. We went outside Duncan Rock*, though there is a deep water passage be-

* Duncan Rock, so named by Vancouver, from the officer who discovered it, must not be omitted in describing our entrance into the

tween it and the island, but nothing would be gained by trying it; and if baffled as we were shortly afterwards with light winds and calms, a ship is a great deal better outside all*.

From a cove, which nearly divides the island into two parts, and seems to have been formed by art with some view of protecting them from the winter storms, a great many Indians came off to us in their canoes. They boarded us without the least fear, and we had some difficulty in preventing more from coming than would have been agreeable. Their dress consisted of a blanket thrown loosely round the body,—so loosely indeed, that on many occasions it certainly did not answer the purposes intended. They managed their canoes with great skill, seemed good-humoured and friendly, holding up fish, skins, etc., to trade with.

We ran into the straits with a fresh westerly breeze, and were surrounded by numberless canoes, the natives vociferating in their extraordinary drawling tones, expressions of surprise, delight, or annoyance, as they were allowed to come to or were kept away from the ship.

Straits of Juan de Fuca. It is only just clear of the water's edge, and the surf beats heavily on it with any wind; from the north-west extreme of Classet Island it bears north 21° , east (true), $\frac{1}{4}$ mile distant. There is a ledge to the northward, which must be avoided. Between Duncan Rock and Tatoche Island, as well as between the latter and the main, there is a clear passage. The latter is less than half a mile broad, and there are rocks a cable-length south-east of the island; the former is broader, and has deep water; but it is better, unless with a leading wind, and plenty of it, to give both a wide berth, and go to the northward.

* Captain Kellett discovered a rock, which dries at low water, bearing from Duncan Rock north 45° , east (true), two miles distant.

The breeze failed us as we got two or three miles within the strait; but just as we were drifting out again with a strong tide, a light air enabled us to stem it, and get into Neagh Bay, four miles inside Tatoche Island. Letting go the anchor, and the continued action of the chain rattling through the hawse, excited the attention of the natives in a high degree; their hallooing almost overcame the noise. The country around our anchorage was rather pretty. But an uninhabited, uncultivated country is always wanting in one grand attribute of the picturesque—the industry of man. The country, though far from being uninhabited, was certainly destitute in this respect. Houses, cleared land, and symptoms of attention and labour, wonderfully improve a landscape.

The Straits of Juan de Fuca appear to have been first visited in the latter part of the sixteenth century. A Cephalonian pilot or shipmaster, Apostolos Valerian, who, in compliance with the custom of that age, took, on entering the service of Spain, a new name, that of Juan de Fuca, sailed under the auspices of the Viceroy of Mexico from Acapulco in the year 1592, to discover the long-talked-of passage connecting the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans, a passage still searched for. There is little doubt from his latitude that he entered these straits; but his rambling account and the habit of making supposition a groundwork for fact—a habit, by the way, the world is not even yet quite clear of—have caused him to be treated as an impostor. Judging from the want of knowledge existing in those days, we can imagine the excitement and hope caused on entering this noble inlet, nearly a hundred miles long, averaging ten or fifteen in breadth, diverging north

and south into deep and apparently endless channels. Being continually in sight of land, Juan de Fuca probably overrated his distance, and finding his way once more into the open sea to the northward of what is now called Quadra's and Vancouver's Island, he doubtless imagined that he had solved the problem, and returned to solicit in vain the reward for his discovery,—a discovery which, even as he himself related it, must in those times have appeared probable, from the belief then universally prevailing, that America on the north as on the south was terminated by a promontory. It was this belief which encouraged those persevering and arduous attempts in search of a north-west passage. Had the actual formation of these regions been understood, the early voyagers, daring as they were, might have been deterred from so vast an undertaking. In this case, as in others, weakness proves strength. Animated by hope and energy, man goes on, seeking perhaps a chimera, but discovering realities which surpass what he imagined.

After Juan de Fuca's voyage, the coast appears to have been neglected for nearly 200 years. Cook's geographical discoveries, with exaggerated reports of the value of the furs procured by the crews of the *Resolution* and *Discovery*, again directed to it the attention of the commercial world. Several voyages from Bombay and Bengal preceded that of Meares, who in 1786 wintered in Prince William's Sound, where, in the *Nootka*, a small vessel of 200 tons, unprepared for such inclement service, he and his crew endured all the miseries that cold, sickness, and insufficient food and shelter can be supposed to produce ; and out of a crew of forty

Europeans and ten Lascars he buried twenty-three during this wretched winter. In 1788 he made a second more successful voyage, and partially explored the Straits of Juan de Fuca. He communicated with the inhabitants, and gave much information about their savage and filthy habits, and the valuable skins they had to dispose of. It is from Meares that we have the name of the island at the entrance of the strait; Tatoonche was the chief of it and the country to the southward. His description of the natives is unfavourable, and of Tatoonche in particular he says, "he was the most surly and forbidding character we had yet seen." Portlock and Dixon, Colnett and Duncan also gained considerable knowledge of these coasts, although, generally speaking, it was of the more northern parts*. No accurate information however begins previous to Vancouver, who, in 1792, -3, and -4, examined the whole with scientific accuracy. His work is still referred to for its agreeable truthfulness, and must ever be valued as an excellent chronicle of the savage tribes of the country, as well as a faithful guide to the traveller and navigator.

On the 24th of June we stood up the straits with a light westerly breeze. At eight o'clock we observed a steam-vessel, the Cormorant, which had been ordered to take us in tow, and lugged us up about sixty or seventy miles, until we had passed Port Victoria. Our knowledge of the place not extending beyond Vancouver's infor-

* The Spaniards also, during the viceroyalty of Bucarelli, A.D. 1775, sent an expedition to examine the coast from Cape Mendocino; but they advanced no further than 57° north, and their discoveries are neither accurate nor satisfactory.

mation, we did not know where to look for the Hudson's Bay Company's settlement. An English merchant-ship showed her colours when we were near the port, and the marks for the buoy rock were also seen; but the latter were taken for native signal-posts, and little attended to. Numbers of canoes loaded with fish were met with, and we were soon feasting on as fine salmon as could be found in Billingsgate. After a seventy days' passage it was most acceptable to the ship's company,—indeed to us all, if we may judge by the way the huge dishes of fried salmon disappeared.

The Cormorant towed us at the rate of seven knots an hour, but the wind was aft, the water was smooth, and we had all plain sail set. In the afternoon it grew thick, and drizzling rain and mist came on, so that not knowing our port we stood as far as we could go to the eastward, and in the evening came to an anchor in the Canal de Haro, about half a mile from the shore. On the 27th drizzling rain and light wind continued, and made the Cormorant's steam-power very serviceable. She towed us back again, with the Pandora astern of us. At seven A.M. we observed Port Victoria, the Hudson's Bay settlement, dignified with the name of Fort, and were soon at anchor.

In the afternoon, a strong north-east breeze having sprung up, and clearing off the misty hazy weather which we had had for three days, the snowy peaks of Mounts Rainier, Baker, and Olympus shone out in splendour. It continued fine, with a southerly wind until the 1st of July, when an easterly wind brought cloudy gloomy weather. A south-west breeze followed so strong that



the boats were unable to go on with the sounding. On the 2nd the wind went down, and remained moderate during our stay, but the sky was cloudy, almost gloomy, and the sun was rarely seen, which was no doubt attributable to the vicinity of the mountains.

The harbour of Victoria is little more than a winding and intricate creek; but three miles to the westward is Esquimalt, a very good one, of which the Pandora afterwards made an accurate survey. Although the entrance of the latter is less than a quarter of a mile wide, yet the depth of water is so convenient that there would be no difficulty in warping a vessel in, and then the most perfect little harbour opens out. The first bay on the right hand going in is sheltered from every wind, and has a depth from five to seven fathoms within a hundred yards of the shore. Victoria may be the farm, but Esquimalt will be the trading port. At present, however, subsistence being the chief object, Victoria no doubt is the most advantageous site for the settlement.

There appears to be a want of fresh water in this harbour as well as at Victoria. Boring has been tried in the fort at Vancouver, but at present without success, and the whole of the south coast of Vancouver may be expected to be deficient in this respect. However, science will easily overcome this difficulty by pointing out where Artesian wells may be made with advantage.

The Hudson's Bay Company selected Victoria from the excellent nature of the soil, and, anticipating the surrender of the Oregon territory to the United States, intended to make it their chief settlement on this coast. In walking from Ogden Point round to Fort Victoria, a distance of

little more than a mile, we thought we had never seen a more beautiful country ; it quite exceeded our expectation ; and yet Vancouver's descriptions made us look for something beyond common scenery. It is a natural park ; noble oaks and ferns are seen in the greatest luxuriance, thickets of the hazel and the willow, shrubberies of the poplar and the alder, are dotted about. One could hardly believe that this was not the work of art ; more particularly when finding signs of cultivation in every direction, enclosed pasture-land, fields of wheat, potatoes, and turnips. Civilization had encroached upon the beautiful domain, and the savage could no longer exist in the filth and indolence of mere animal life. The prospect is cheering, the change gladdening ; for after making every allowance for the crimes of civilization, still man in a savage state exists in all his grossness, and in more than all his grossness. While nature has imparted to most animals a desire of cleanliness, uncivilized man, with all the intelligence, ingenuity, cunning, and skill of his class, seems in general to be uncleanly, to revel in filth.

The fort of Victoria was founded in 1843, and stands on the east shore of the harbour, or rather creek, about a mile from the entrance. The approach is pretty by nature, though somewhat rude by art. The first place we came to was the dairy, an establishment of great importance to the fort, milk being their principal drink ; the rules of the company in a great measure debarring the use of wine and spirits. The attendants are generally half-caste. We were astonished at all we saw. About 160 acres are cultivated with oats, wheat, potatoes, tur-

nips, carrots, and other vegetables, and every day more land is converted into fields. Barely three years had elapsed since the settlement was made, yet all the necessaries and most of the comforts of civilized life already existed in what was a wilderness. The company, when forming an establishment such as Victoria, provide the party with food for the first year, and necessary seed for the forthcoming season ; after that time it is expected that the settlements will provide completely for their future subsistence. Of course the settlers have many facilities, —the fertility of a virgin soil, an abundant supply of the best seed, and that great inducement to industry, the desire of independence, and the assurance, almost amounting to certainty, that success will attend their endeavours.

The fort itself is a square enclosure, stockaded with poles about twenty feet high and eight or ten inches in diameter, placed close together, and secured with a cross piece of nearly equal size. At the transverse corners of the square there are strong octagonal towers, mounted with four nine-pounder guns, flanking each side, so that an attack by savages would be out of the question ; and, if defended with spirit, a disciplined force without artillery would find considerable difficulty in forcing the defences. The square is about 120 yards ; but an increase, which will nearly double its length from north to south, is contemplated. The building is even now, though plain to a fault, imposing from its mass or extent, while the bastions or towers diminish the tameness which its regular outline would otherwise produce. The interior is occupied by the officers' houses, —or apartments, they should rather be called, —stores, and a trading-house, in which

smaller bargains are concluded, and tools, agricultural implements, blankets, shawls, beads, and all the multifarious products of Sheffield, Birmingham, Manchester, and Leeds, are offered at exorbitant prices. There being no competition, the company has it all its own way: it does not profess to supply the public; indeed, although it does not object to sell to people situated as we were, yet the stores are for the trade in furs, to supply the native hunters with the goods which they most value, as also for the use of its own dependants, who, receiving little pay, are usually in debt to the company, and are therefore much in its power. In fact, the people employed are rarely those to whom returning home is an object; they have mostly been taken from poverty, and have at all events food and clothing. The work is hard, but with health and strength this is a blessing rather than otherwise. Want of white women appears to be the drawback to this prospect of success, and generally leads to connections with the natives, from which spring half-castes, who, from the specimens we saw, appear to inherit the vices of both races; they are active and shrewd, but violent and coarse, while neither their education nor conduct admits them into the society of the European settlers. This must engender a bad state of feeling, and might be remedied by taking more pains with the education and training of these hardy and enterprising, yet more than half brutalized people. We felt quite disgusted in seeing one of these half-castes, bearing as good a name as any in Scotland, beating and kicking a score of Indians out of the fort, with as little compunction as if they had been dogs, scorning them as natives, though

his mother had been taken from one of their tribe and had been no more educated than they were.

Mr. Finlayson, the gentleman in charge of the establishment, appears to be an intelligent man, who by perseverance and a uniform system of adhering to his word and offering stated prices in barter, never receding or offering less, seems to have succeeded in impressing the natives with a considerable degree of respect for himself and the fort. Only one brush has the company had with the Indians, but it ended in a day or two; the gates of the fort having been closed, a nine-pounder fired several times to show what could be done, and judicious and conciliatory advances made to the chief, the peaceable intercourse—from which sprang blankets, hatchets, knives, fish-hooks, and harpoons—was speedily re-established.

On the opposite side of the harbour is a large native village; the distance across is only 400 yards, and canoes keep up a constant communication between it and the fort. Certain supplies to the chiefs keep them in good humour with their intruding visitors. Although all is not done that might be effected, yet some good must result even from this intercourse. The present generation will not change, but their descendants may do so, and improvement will be the consequence. The houses are dirty in the extreme, and the odour with which they are infested almost forbids close examination; but they are built with solidity, the climate rendering it necessary to guard against the cold,—and arranged with some degree of order in streets or lanes with passages running up between them. Several families occupy the

same house—one large shed, little better than an open cow-house or stable in an indifferent inn, the compartments or walls hardly excluding the sight of one family from another. There are chests and boxes rudely made, in which blankets, furs, and smaller fishing gear are kept; indeed the natives seem to resemble their forefathers, as Captain Cook describes them, as much as it is possible for one set of men to resemble another.

On the 4th of July we heard that a murder had been committed on the chief of Neagh Bay, who called himself King George. This man came on board the Herald when we were off Tatoche Island and remained a night; he left early the next morning, and a few days afterwards we saw him at Fort Victoria, bargaining about a sea-otter skin, for which he received eight blankets. On his way home he was waylaid by some Chinooks, who had witnessed the bartering, and either shot or stabbed him. He had doubtless in his time played many tricks of the same kind as that to which he now fell a victim; they usually act and react one upon the other. This King George, when visiting us, was accompanied by an American seaman, who lived among the Indians, and had, in short, become one of them; we understood that he was in little repute in the tribe, and was or had been a slave, and that, after effecting his escape, he had returned once more to the abominable filthy mode of life. To what a depth of degradation must that man be reduced, who, bred up in the poorest ranks of civilization, voluntarily resumes the habits of a savage! We imagine it to be, and no doubt it is so; nevertheless it is not uncommon. It takes an age to raise the savage one step in

the scale of humanity, but civilized man often sinks suddenly into the bestiality seen among these tribes.

Having finished our survey of Port Victoria and its vicinity, we stood across the straits for Port Discovery. This excellent and commodious harbour, named by Vancouver after his ship, has only one fault, the depth of the water being rather too great. Protection Island, as it is aptly termed, forms a breakwater, and a vessel in any part of it is completely landlocked. Vancouver has described it so well that there is little to add. Several streams of good water fall into it, the holding ground is very good, the shores are generally steep, and there is no danger in working in or out. A few ruined villages and burial-places are seen on the shore; and the pathless woods, preventing in almost every direction any ingress into the country, render the scene rather monotonous. At the time of our visit, too, the trees were one mass of uniform green; had it been autumn we should have enjoyed all those diversified colours of the foliage so characteristic of a North American forest—the sombre brown, the light yellow, and the bright scarlet.

Few natives visited us at this place; they prefer, it would seem, the outer coast, as being nearer the fishing-ground. Those we came in contact with were friendly, and brought abundant supplies of salmon. They are fully aware of what a man-of-war is, and, if goodwill had been wanting, our numbers would have deterred them from hostility. Firmness, showing that one is prepared to resist encroachment, and at the same time conciliatory conduct in little things, and taking care to be just in all transactions of barter, will always overawe and

induce them to behave properly. They are great beggars, and, except salmon, have little to offer in exchange. Their vociferations are ludicrous in the extreme: "Jack you patlach me shirt," "Makook salmon," "Clooosh salmon," "Waâke jacket," are specimens of them. 'Patlach' is give; 'makook,' buy; 'clooosh,' very good; and 'waâke,' very bad. If something very old and bad is offered, they turn it over with scorn, pronouncing it to be 'peeshaak,' a term of contempt and reproach, for which they seem to have a great aversion if applied to themselves. Although the women are said to be not much considered, and have to do a great deal of drudgery, yet we observed that before concluding any bargain their opinion was always final. In barter, knives, hatchets, clothes of all kinds, if not too old and if free from holes, are valued. They sometimes ask for 'muk-a-muk,' something to eat, and oftener for 't-chuckk,' something to drink. 'Pill-pill,' or vermilion paint, and 'pullale,' or gunpowder, are also in request. They display considerable ingenuity in making arrows, fish-hooks, grotesquely carved figures, masks, and, from the gut of the whale and deer, ropes. Their canoes are quite symmetrical, and we saw one forty feet long and four broad; they are hollowed out with an iron instrument fitting into a handle, something like a cooper's adze. The wood is first charred, and then worked away with this gouge sort of chisel adze. The curious process of flattening the foreheads is practised by all the tribes we saw.

On the 13th of July we anchored in Port Townshend. The distance between the latter and Port Discovery by sea is not more than eleven or twelve miles; by land the

two are not five miles distant. Townshend is a more convenient harbour than the former, and water, though it is not so plentiful, can be obtained more easily. The land rises more gradually from the sea, and is not so encumbered with wood. The natives we found civil and obliging. They are very dirty in their habits and perfectly indifferent to exposure; decency has no meaning in their language. The costume of the men is a blanket loosely tied over the neck and shoulders; even the women have nothing in addition, save a sort of girdle round the middle, made of the fibre of the cypress-tree, a substance which is also made into ropes and fishing-lines. They keep dogs, the hair of which is manufactured into a kind of coverlet or blanket, which, in addition to the skins of bears, wolves, and deer, afford them abundance of clothing. Since the Hudson's Bay Company have established themselves in this neighbourhood, English blankets have been so much in request, that the dog's-hair manufacture has been rather at a discount, eight or ten blankets being given for one sea-otter skin. Their mode of fishing is ingenious. The line is made either of kelp or the fibre of the cypress, and to it is attached an inflated bladder, which is held in the same hand as the paddle. When the bait is taken the bladder is let go, the fish is buoyed up, and, in its effort to go down, soon becomes exhausted.

On the 21st of July we sailed for New Dungeness, named by Vancouver from its resemblance to the point in Kent. New Dungeness juts out three or four miles north-east-by-north (magnetic), forming a secure anchorage with all winds, except north-north-east and

south-east. This sandy flat, being about four miles long, and at the base two broad, is hollowed out with lagoons and pools, so that it is a shell of sand and not a flat. The beacons seen by Vancouver still have their successors on this coast; they must have been erected with considerable trouble and labour; the upright centre-piece, supported by spurs diagonally placed, was in one instance thirty feet, in another twenty-seven feet high. Their use, or the intention with which they were erected, is still unknown.

On the 22nd we stood across the straits for Quadra's and Vancouver's Island, and anchored nearly in the same spot as that to which we had been towed by the Cormorant on our first arrival. Three trees with a dark patch of ground so exactly resembled the masts and hull of a vessel, that—the weather being hazy—every one was deceived. Cordova Bay, as our anchorage was called, brings a pleasant circumstance in Vancouver's career to remembrance—his uniting with the Spanish Commandant Quadra in all friendly offices, and giving him all the aid and information in his power, though Spain and Great Britain had at the time some dispute about the possession of Nootka Sound. The fame and name—albeit famous in those days—of the Spanish armament of 1790 has passed, but it should not be forgotten that in this distant part of the world commanders belonging to rival nations joined in acts which tended permanently to benefit mankind; and it is to be hoped that the name given to this island will be retained, and that Quadra and Vancouver may remind future ages when and how to agree.

On the 29th we worked round to Victoria, and on the 1st of August we anchored to the northward of the Race Islands, about eight miles from Victoria. This dangerous group, which juts out a mile and a half into the fairway of the strait, is appropriately named, for the tide makes a perfect race round it. We tried to shift to Sooke Bay, about ten miles to the westward, but it blew so fresh, that after battering at it for nearly six hours we were compelled to bear up and anchor in the same place. On the 7th our attempts to reach the bay succeeded, and we found that it would be no desirable anchorage during south-westerly gales.

On the 16th we got under way, working for Neagh Bay. It came on thick and hazy, and about noon the breeze freshened much, and we could neither see nor do anything. The tides being strong and irregular, our position was one of some anxiety. In the afternoon we got a glimpse of the land, which showed that we were very near the shore, close to Sooke Bay. The vessel was kept away, and we came to an anchor almost in the spot we left on the 12th. These details will give some notion of the navigation of the straits, which, unless the anchorages are well known, must always be attended with difficulty and danger.

The climate of this region is milder than that of England. From April to August the weather is generally fine, but occasionally interrupted by rain, fogs, and breezes. Heavy rain is expected in September, October, and November, gales between December and March. During our stay the weather was generally beautiful; the nights were finer than the days. It was seldom, however, that

the double peak of Mount Baker or the snow-clad range of Olympus were in sight. The limit of perpetual snow in latitude 45° is given as 8366 feet above the sea; if the theory is correct, these mountains are fully as high, for the summer was far advanced, yet no diminution was apparent in their snowy mantles.

On the 18th we anchored in Neagh Bay. The fog was so dense that nothing could be seen a hundred yards off. In the winter this bay is frequented by whalers—Boston ships, as the Indians call them; while English men-of-war are termed King George's ships. A large village, or rather a series of villages, exists in the neighbourhood. The Captain visited the chief, Flattery Jack, who received him lying down on a raised bench—which usually extends all round the native abodes,—his favourite wife reclining on a board close to his feet. On the rafters overhead were fish in every state of drying; Winifred Jenkins would have been reminded of the old town of Edinburgh, and would have said that there were no fits in the Straits of Juan de Fuca.

On the 29th of August the survey was finished, not so much to the satisfaction of Captain Kellett as he could have wished, but the fogs in August had been so dense and continuous that the month was in a great measure lost. On the 2nd of September we bade adieu to Victoria and Mr. Finlayson, the company's officer in charge of the fort, to whom we were so much indebted for his uniform hospitality and kindness.