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CHAPTER VI.

Enter Admiralty Inlet—Anchor off Restoration Point—Visit an Indian Village—Account of several boat Excursions—Proceed to another Part of the Inlet—Take Possession of the Country.

AGREEABLY to the proposed destination of each vessel, the Discovery and Chatham, at noon, on Friday the 18th of May, directed their course towards the objects of their respective pursuits; and as I had already traced the western shore in the boats, we now kept the eastern side on board, which, like the other, abounds with those verdant open places that have been so repeatedly noticed. On one of these beautiful lawns, nearly a league within the entrance of the inlet, about thirty of the natives came from the surrounding woods, and attentively noticed us as we sailed along. We did not discover any habitations near them, nor did we see any canoes on the beach. On the south side of the lawn, were many uprights in the ground, which had the appearance of having formerly been the supporters of their large wooden houses. We used our endeavours to invite these good people on board, but without effect. After advancing about four leagues up the inlet, the pleasant gale, which had attended us from the N.W. died away, and a strong ebb making against us, we were compelled to anchor for the night, in 18 fathoms water, about half a mile from the eastern shore: Marrow-Stone point bearing by compass N. 56 W.; the N.E. point of Oak-cove S. 48 W.; and Foulweather bluff S. 51 E.[1]

During the night, we had a gentle southerly breeze, attended by a fog which continued until nine o'clock on Saturday morning the 19th, when it was dispersed by a return of the N.W. wind, with which we pursued our route up the inlet; our progress was, however, soon retarded by the fore-topsail yard giving way in the slings; on examination it appeared to have been in a defective state some time. The spare fore-topsail yard was also very imperfect; which obliged us to get the spare main-topsail yard up in its room; and it was a very fortunate circumstance, that these defects were discovered in a country abounding with materials to which we could resort; having only to make our choice from amongst thousands of the finest spars the world produces.

To describe the beauties of this region, will, on some future occasion, be a very grateful task to the pen of a skilful panegyrist. The serenity of the

[1] The anchorage was off Bush Point, Whidbey Island.

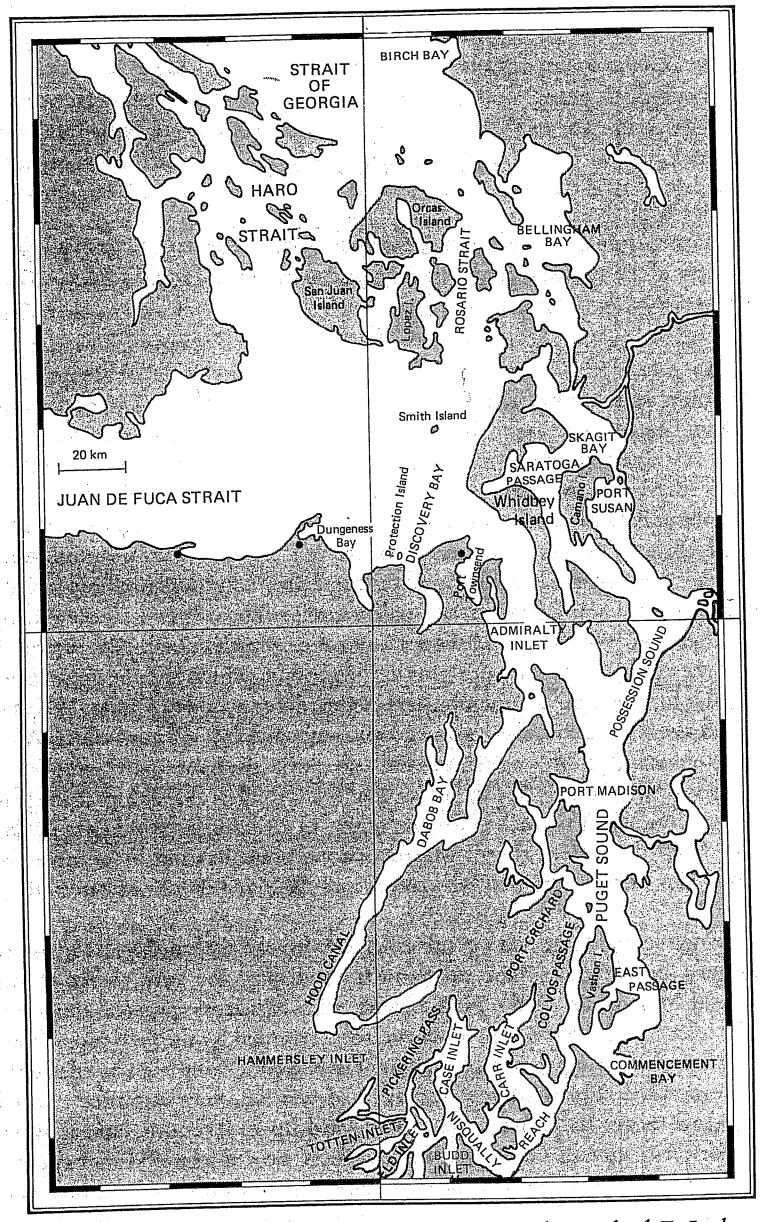

Figure 1. Puget Sound to Birch Bay. *Base map by Michael E. Leek.*

climate, the innumerable pleasing landscapes, and the abundant fertility that unassisted nature puts forth, require only to be enriched by the industry of man with villages, mansions, cottages, and other buildings, to render it the most lovely country that can be imagined; whilst the labour of the inhabitants would be amply rewarded, in the bounties which nature seems ready to bestow on cultivation.

About noon, we passed an inlet on the larboard or eastern shore, which seemed to stretch far to the northward,[1] but, as it was out of the line of our intended pursuit of keeping the continental shore on board, I continued our course up the main inlet, which now extended as far as, from the deck, the eye could reach, though, from the mast-head, intervening land appeared, beyond which another high round mountain covered with snow was discovered,[2] apparently situated several leagues to the south of mount Rainier, and bearing by compass S. 22 E. This I considered as a further extension of the eastern snowy range;[3] but the intermediate mountains, connecting it with mount Rainier, were not sufficiently high to be seen at that distance. Having advanced about eight leagues from our last night's station, we arrived off a projecting point of land, not formed by a low sandy spit, but rising abruptly in a low cliff about ten or twelve feet from the water side.[4] Its surface was a beautiful meadow covered with luxuriant herbage; on its western extreme, bordering on the woods, was an Indian village, consisting of temporary habitations, from whence several of the natives assembled to view the ship as we passed by; but none of them ventured off, though several of their canoes were seen on the beach. Here the inlet divided into two extensive branches, one taking a south-eastwardly,[5] the other a south-western direction.[6] Near this place was our appointed rendezvous with the Chatham; and under a small island to the S.W. of us,[7] appeared an eligible spot, in which, with security, we might wait her arrival; but, on approaching it, we found the depth of water no where less than 60 fathoms, within a cable's length of the shore. This obliged us to turn up towards the village point,[8] where we found a commodious roadstead; and about seven o'clock in the evening, anchored about a mile from the shore in 38 fathoms water, black sand and muddy bottom. The village point bore by compass N. 4. E.; the nearest opposite shore[9] of the main inlet N. 52 E. about a league distant; and the direction of its southern extent S.E.; the above island lying before the branch leading to the south-westward, bore from S. 36 E. to south, about half a league distant; and the appearance of a small inlet or cove, west, about the same distance.[10]

[1] Possession Sound.

[2] Mount St. Helens (9,671 ft.), a volcano long dormant that erupted suddenly, with great violence, in May 1980.

[3] The Cascade Range.

[4] Restoration Point, on the W shore.

[5] East Passage.

[6] Colvos Passage.

[7] Blake Island.

[8] Restoration Point.

[9] Alki Point.

[10] Rich Passage, the entrance to Port Orchard.

We had no sooner anchored than a canoe in which were two men, paddled round the ship. We attempted to induce them, but they were not to be prevailed upon, to enter the vessel; and having satisfied their curiosity, they hastily returned to the shore. Before the evening closed in, I proceeded to acquire some information respecting the small opening to the westward. It was nearly dark before I reached the shore, which seemed to form a small cove about half a mile in width, encircled by compact shores, with a cluster of rocks above water, nearly in its centre,[1] and little worthy of further notice.[2] On my return on board, I directed that a party, under the command of Lieutenant Puget and Mr. Whidbey, should, in the launch and cutter, proceed, with a supply of provisions for a week, to the examination of that branch of the inlet leading to the south-westward; keeping always the starboard or continental shore on board; which was accordingly carried into execution, at four o'clock the next morning.[3]

Our situation being somewhat incommoded by the meeting of different tides, we moved nearer in, and anchored in the same depth, and on the same bottom as before, very conveniently to the shore. Our eastern view was now bounded by the range of snowy mountains from mount Baker, bearing by compass north to mount Rainier, bearing N. 54 E. The new mountain was hid by the more elevated parts of the low land; and the intermediate snowy mountains in various rugged and grotesque shapes, were seen just to rear their heads above the lofty pine trees, which appearing to compose one uninterrupted forest, between us and the snowy range, presented a most pleasing landscape; nor was our western view destitute of similar diversification. The ridge of mountains on which mount Olympus is situated, whose rugged summits were seen no less fancifully towering over the forest than those on the eastern side, bounded to a considerable extent our western horizon;[4] on these however, not one conspicuous eminence arose, nor could we now distinguish that which on the sea coast appeared to be centrally situated, and forming an elegant bi-forked-mountain. From the southern extremity of these ridges of mountains, there seemed to be an extensive tract of land moderately elevated and beautifully diversified by pleasing inequalities of surface, enriched with every appearance of fertility.

On Sundary the 20th, in the meadow and about the village many of the

[1] Orchard Rocks.

[2] Owing to the darkness Vancouver did not discover at this time that Rich Passage led to Port Orchard.

[3] Puget notes that 'the two Boats [were] well armed, the Launch carried two Swivels besides Wall pieces Musquetoons & Musquetts.' – May 20. Menzies joined the party and made a comment that would be applicable to almost all the later expeditions in which he participated: 'though their mode of procedure in these surveying Cruizes was not very favorable for my [botanical] pursuits as it afforded me so little time on shore at the different places we landed at, yet it was the most eligible I could at this time adopt for obtaining a general knowledge of the produce of the Country.' – May 20.

[4] The Olympic Mountains.

natives were seen moving about,[1] whose curiosity seemed little excited on our account. One canoe only had been near us, from which was thrown on board the skin of some small animal, and then it returned instantly to the shore.

Our carpenters were busily engaged in replacing the topsail yards with proper spars, which were conveniently found for that purpose. Some beer was brewed from the spruce, which was here very excellent, and the rest of the crew were employed in a variety of other essential services. The gentle N.W. wind generally prevailed in the day, and calms, or light southerly breezes during the night.

Towards noon I went on shore to the village point, for the purpose of observing the latitude; on which occasion I visited the village, if it may be so dignified, as it appeared the most lowly and meanest of its kind. The best of the huts were poor and miserable, constructed something after the fashion of a soldier's tent, by two cross sticks about five feet high, connected at each end by a ridge-pole from one to the other, over some of which was thrown a coarse kind of mat, over others a few loose branches of trees, shrubs, or grass; none however appeared to be constructed for protecting them, either against the heat of summer, or the inclemency of winter. In them were hung up to be cured by the smoke of the fire they kept constantly burning, clams, muscles, and a few other kinds of fish, seemingly intended for their winter's subsistence. The clams perhaps were not all reserved for that purpose, as we frequently saw them strung and worn about the neck, which, as inclination directed, were eaten, two, three, or half a dozen at a time. This station did not appear to have been preferred for the purpose of fishing, as we saw few of the people so employed; nearly the whole of the inhabitants belonging to the village, which consisted of about eighty or an hundred men, women, and children, were busily engaged like swine, rooting up this beautiful verdant meadow in quest of a species of wild onion, and two other roots, which in appearance and taste greatly resembled the saranne, particularly the largest; the size of the smallest did not much exceed a large pea: this Mr. Menzies considered to be a new genus.[2] The collecting of these roots was most likely the object which attached them to this spot; they all seemed to gather them with much avidity, and to preserve them with great care, most probably for the purpose of making the paste I have already mentioned.

[1] These were Suquamish Indians, who occupied most of the W shore of Puget Sound S from Appletree Cove, which is about a dozen miles N of Restoration Point. At times they had settlements on the E shore as well. Elliott Bay, on the E shore opposite Restoration Point, around which the city of Seattle has grown up, was occupied by the Duwamish Indians, who were closely related to the Suquamish. Indeed, Chief Seattle, the Duwamish chief after whom the city was named, was also a chief of the Suquamish.

[2] 'Several of the women were digging on the Point which excited my curiosity to know what they were digging for & found it to be a little bulbous root of a liliaceous plant which on searching about for the flower of it I discovered to be a new *Genus* of the Triandria monogina.' – Menzies, May 28. Newcombe identifies it as some species of *Brodiaea* (wild hyacinth).

These people varied in no essential point from the natives we had seen since our entering the straits. Their persons were equally ill made, and as much besmered with oil and different coloured paints, particularly with red ochre, and a sort of shining chaffy mica, very ponderous, and in colour much resembling black lead; they likewise possessed more ornaments, especially such as were made of copper, the article most valued and esteemed amongst them. They seemed not wanting in offers of friendship and hospitality; as on our joining their party, we were presented with such things as they had to dispose of: and they immediately prepared a few of the roots, and some shell fish for our refreshment, which were very palatable. In these civil offices, two men who appeared the most active, and to be regarded by their countrymen as the most important persons of the party, were particularly assiduous to please. To each of them I made presents, which were received very thankfully; and on my returning towards the boat, they gave me to understand by signs, the only means we had of conversing with each other, that it would not be long ere they returned our visit on board the ship. This they accordingly did in the afternoon, with no small degree of ceremony. Beside the canoes which brought these two superior people five others attended, seemingly as an appendage to the consequence of these chiefs, who would not repair immediately on board, but agreeably to the custom of Nootka, advanced within about two hundred yards of the ship, and there resting on their paddles a conference was held, followed by a song principally sung by one man, who at stated times was joined in chorus by several others, whilst some in each canoe kept time with the handles of their paddles, by striking them against the gunwale or side of the canoe, forming a sort of accompanyment, which though expressed by simple notes only, was by no means destitute of an agreeable effect. This performance took place whilst they were paddling slowly round the ship, and on its being concluded, they came alongside with the greatest confidence, and without fear or suspicion immediately entered into a commercial intercourse with our people. The two chiefs however required some little intreaty before they could be induced to venture on board. I again presented them with some valuables, amongst which was a garment for each of blue cloth, some copper, iron in various shapes, and such trinkets as I thought would prove most acceptable. In this respect either my judgment failed, or their passion for traffick and exchange is irresistible; for no sooner had they quitted the cabin, than, excepting the copper, they bartered away on deck nearly every article I had given them, for others of infinitely less utility or real value, consisting of such things as they could best appropriate to the decoration of their persons, and other ornamental purposes, giving uniformly a decided preference to copper.

In the morning of Monday the 21st, fell a few showers of rain, which were neither so heavy as to retard our business on shore, nor to prevent the friendly Indians paying us a visit on board. Convinced of our amicable disposition towards them, near the whole of the inhabitants, men, women and children,

gratified their curiosity in the course of the day by paddling round the ship; for neither the ladies nor the children ventured on board. This was the case also with the generality of the men, who contentedly remained in their canoes, rowing from side to side, bartering their bows and arrows; which, with their woollen and skin garments, and a very few indifferent sea-otter skins, composed the whole of their assortment for trading; these they exchanged, in a very fair and honest manner, for copper, hawk's bells, and buttons, articles that greatly attracted their attention. Their merchandize would have been infinitely more valuable to us, had it been comprised of eatables, such as venison, wild fowl or fish, as our sportsmen and fishermen had little success in either of these pursuits. All the natives we had as yet seen, uniformly preferred offering such articles as composed their dress, arms, and implements for sale, rather than any kind of food, which might probably arise either from the country not affording them a super-abundance of provisions, or from their having early discovered that we were more curious than hungry.

In the evening, some of the canoes were observed passing from the village to the opposite shore, for the purpose, as we supposed, of inviting their neighbours to partake of the advantages of our commerce. This was confirmed the next morning, Tuesday the 22d, by the return of our friends, accompanied by several large canoes, containing near eighty persons, who after ceremoniously paddling round the ship, came alongside without the least hesitation, and conducted themselves with the utmost propriety. The principal number of these evidently belonged to the other side of the inlet; they were infinitely more cleanly than our neighbours; and their canoes were of a very different form. Those of our friends at the village, exactly corresponded with the canoes at Nootka, whilst those of our new visitors were cut off square at each end; and were, in shape, precisely like the canoes seen to the southward of cape Orford, though of greater length, and considerably larger. The commodities they brought for sale were trifles of a similar description to those offered by the other society: in all other respects, they corresponded with the generality of the few inhabitants of the country with whom we had become acquainted.

On Wednesday the 23d, we had some lightning, thunder, and rain, from the S.E.; this continued a few hours, after which the day was very serene and pleasant. Some of our gentlemen having extended their walk to the cove I had visited the first evening of our arrival, found it to communicate by a very narrow passage with an opening apparently of some extent. In consequence of this information, accompanied by Mr. Baker in the yawl, I set out the next morning, Thursday the 24th, to examine it, and found the entrance of the opening situated in the western corner of the cove, formed by two interlocking points, about a quarter of a mile from each other; these formed a channel about half a mile long, free from rocks or shoals, in which there was not less than five fathoms water. From the west end of this narrow channel the inlet is divided into two branches, one extending to the S.W. about five or six miles, the other to the north about the same distance, constituting a most complete

and excellent port,[1] to all appearance perfectly free from danger, with regular soundings from four fathoms near the shores, to nine and ten fathoms in the middle, good holding ground. It occupied us the whole day to row round it, in doing which we met a few straggling Indians, whose condition seemed excessively wretched and miserable.[2] The country that surrounds this harbour varies in its elevation; in some places the shores are low level land, in others of a moderate height, falling in steep low cliffs on the sandy beach, which in most places binds the shores. It produces some small rivulets of water, is thickly wooded with trees, mostly of the pine tribe, and with some variety of shrubs. This harbour, after the gentleman who discovered it, obtained the name of PORT ORCHARD.[3] The best passage into it is found by steering from the village point for the south point of the cove, which is easily distinguished, lying from the former S. 62 W. at the distance of about $2\frac{1}{2}$ miles, then hauling to the N.W. into the cove, keeping on the larboard or S.W. shore, and passing between it and the rocks in the cove; in this channel the depth of water is from nine to fifteen fathoms, gradually decreasing to five fathoms in the entrance into the port. There is also another passage round to the north of these rocks, in which there is seven fathoms water; this is narrow, and by no means so commodious to navigate as the southern channel.

On my return to the ship I understood that few of our friendly neighbours had visited the vessel. The party was evidently reduced, and those who still remained having satisfied their curiosity, or being compelled by their mode of life, were preparing to depart with all their stock and effects. These it required little labour to remove, consisting chiefly of the mats for covering their habitations, wherever it may be convenient to pitch them; their skin and woollen garments, their arms, implements, and such articles of food as they had acquired during their residence; which, with their family and dogs, all find accommodation in a single canoe; and thus the party is easily conveyed to any station, which fancy, convenience, or necessity, may direct. The dogs belonging to this tribe of Indians were numerous, and much resembled those of Pomerania, though in general somewhat larger. They were all shorn as close to the skin as sheep are in England; and so compact were their fleeces, that large portions could be lifted up by a corner without causing any separation. They were composed of a mixture of a coarse kind of wool, with very fine long hair, capable of being spun into yarn. This gave me reason to believe that their woollen clothing might in part be composed of this material mixed

[1] Port Orchard, which is about 15 miles in length. Vancouver's examination was not complete, although sufficient for his immediate purpose. At the N end he missed Liberty Bay, which branches off to the NW, and Agate Passage, a narrow water way to the NE that provides an outlet to Puget Sound. In the S he did not note the narrows leading to Dyes Inlet. The S end of Port Orchard, now named Sinclair Inlet, is the site of the major U.S. Bremerton Naval Base.

[2] Two tribes of Suquamish Indians had villages in Port Orchard and the inlets that branch off from it.

[3] H. M. Orchard, clerk of the *Discovery*.

with a finer kind of wool from some other animal, as their garments were all too fine to be manufactured from the coarse coating of the dog alone. The abundance of these garments amongst the few people we met with, indicates the animal from whence the raw material is procured, to be very common in this neighbourhood; but as they have no one domesticated excepting the dog, their supply of wool for their clothing can only be obtained by hunting the wild creature that produces it; of which we could not obtain the least information.[1]

The weather continued delightfully serene and pleasant; the carpenters had executed their task, and the topsail yards were replaced.

In the course of the forenoon of Friday the 25th, some of our Indian friends brought us a whole deer, which was the first intire animal that had been offered to us. This they had killed on the island, and from the number of persons that came from thence, the major part of the remaining inhabitants of the village, with a great number of their dogs, seemed to have been engaged in the chase. This and another deer, parts of which remained in one of their canoes, had cost all these good people nearly a day's labour, as they went over to the island for this purpose the preceding evening; yet they were amply rewarded for their exertions by a small piece of copper not a foot square. This they gladly accepted as a full compensation for their venison, on which the whole party could have made two or three good meals; such is the esteem and value with which this metal is regarded!

About four in the afternoon, agreeably to our expectations, the Chatham was seen from the mast head over the land, and about sun-set she arrived and anchored near us. Mr. Broughton informed me, that the part of the coast he had been directed to explore, consisted of an archipelago of islands[2] lying before an extensive arm of the sea stretching in a variety of branches between the N.W. north, and N.N.E. Its extent in the first direction was the most capacious, and presented an unbounded horizon.

On due consideration of all the circumstances that had fallen under my own observation, and the intelligence now imparted by Mr. Broughton, I became thoroughly convinced, that our boats alone could enable us to acquire any correct or satisfactory information respecting this broken country; and although the execution of such a service in open boats would necessarily be

[1] 'This was the area where the wool dog was bred, and its fleece was mixed with mountain goat wool, the down of ducks, and the cotton of fireweed to create an unusual blanket for clothing and bedding.' 'These dogs were especially domesticated for wool bearing. They were sheared like sheep'. – Gunther, *Indian Life on the Northwest Coast* (Chicago, 1972), pp. 76, 259. Vancouver notes on a later page that Whidbey walked along the shore of Whidbey Island with Indians 'attended by about forty dogs in a drove, shorn close to the skin like sheep.' When commercial cloth became readily available, late in the 19th century, there was no longer any point in maintaining any purity in the race, and the dogs soon disappeared in the mongrel packs that were characteristic of Indian villages.

[2] The San Juan Islands. Broughton's account of his explorations is printed in the appendix, to supplement Vancouver's very brief mention of them.

extremely laborious, and expose those so employed to numberless dangers and unpleasant situations, that might occasionally produce great fatigue, and protract their return to the ships; yet that mode was undoubtedly the most accurate, the most ready, and indeed the only one in our power to pursue for ascertaining the continental boundary.

The main arm of the inlet leading towards mount Rainier still remained unexplored. It became evident from the length of time Mr. Puget and Mr. Whidbey had been absent, that the inlet they had been sent to examine, had led them to a considerable distance. We had no time to spare, and as it was equally evident none ought to be lost, I directed that Mr. Johnstone, in the Chatham's cutter, should accompany me in the morning, in the Discovery's yawl, for the purpose of examining the main arm;[1] and that Mr. Broughton, on the return of our boats, which were now hourly expected, should take Mr. Whidbey in one of them, and proceed immediately to the investigation of that arm of this inlet, which we had passed on the eastern shore, stretching to the N.N.E.;[2] and I desired that the Chatham might be anchored within its entrance in some conspicuous place on the starboard side, where the Discovery or the boats would easily find her, in case the result of my inquiries should render it expedient for the vessels to proceed further in that direction.

On Saturday morning the 26th, accompanied by Mr. Baker in the yawl, and favored by pleasant weather and a fine northwardly gale, we departed, and made considerable progress. Leaving to the right the opening which had been the object of Mr. Puget and Mr. Whidbey's expedition, we directed our route along the western shore of the main inlet, which is about a league in width; and as we proceeded the smoke of several fires were seen on its eastern shore. When about four leagues on a southwardly direction from the ships, we found the course of the inlet take a south-westerly inclination, which we pursued about six miles with some little increase of width. Towards noon we landed on a point on the eastern shore, whose latitude I observed to be 47° 21′,[3] round which we flattered ourselves we should find the inlet take an extensive eastwardly course. This conjecture was supported by the appearance of a very abrupt division in the snowy range of mountains immediately to the south of mount Rainier, which was very conspicuous from the ship, and the main arm of the inlet appearing to stretch in that direction from the point we were then upon. We here dined, and although our repast was soon concluded, the delay was irksome, as we were excessively anxious to ascertain the truth, of which we were not long held in suspense. For having passed round the point, we found the inlet to terminate here in an extensive circular compact bay,[4] whose waters washed the base of mount Rainier, though its elevated summit was yet at a very considerable distance from the

[1] The East Passage of Puget Sound.
[2] Possession Sound.
[3] Browns Point, in lat. 47° 18′ N.
[4] Commencement Bay. The city of Tacoma now occupies its S and SW shores.

shore,[1] with which it was connected by several ridges of hills rising towards it with gradual ascent and much regularity. The forest trees, and the several shades of verdure that covered the hills, gradually decreased in point of beauty, until they became invisible; when the perpetual clothing of snow commenced, which seemed to form a horizontal line from north to south along this range of rugged mountains, from whose summit mount Rainier rose conspicuously, and seemed as much elevated above them as they were above the level of the sea; the whole producing a most grand, picturesque effect. The lower mountains as they descended to the right and left, became gradually relieved of their frigid garment; and as they approached the fertile woodland region that binds the shores of this inlet in every direction, produced a pleasing variety. We now proceeded to the N.W. in which direction the inlet from hence extended, and afforded us some reason to believe that it communicated with that under the survey of our other party.[2] This opinion was further corroborated by a few Indians, who had in a very civil manner accompanied us some time, and who gave us to understand that in the north western direction this inlet was very wide and extensive; this they expressed before we quitted our dinner station, by opening their arms, and making other signs that we should be led a long way by pursuing that route; whereas, by bending their arm, or spreading out their hand, and pointing to the space contained in the curve of the arm, or between the fore-finger and thumb, that we should find our progress soon stopped in the direction which led towards mount Rainier. The little respect which most Indians bear to truth, and their readiness to assert what they think is most agreeable for the moment, or to answer their own particular wishes and inclinations, induced me to place little dependance on this information, although they could have no motive for deceiving us.

About a dozen of these friendly people had attended at our dinner, one part of which was a venison party. Two of them, expressing a desire to pass the line of separation drawn between us, were permitted to do so. They sat down by us, and ate of the bread and fish that we gave them without the least hesitation; but on being offered some of the venison, though they saw us eat it with great relish, they could not be induced to taste it. They received it from us with great disgust, and presented it round to the rest of the party, by whom it underwent a very strict examination. Their conduct on this occasion left no doubt in our minds that they believed it to be human flesh, an impression which it was highly expedient should be done away. To satisfy them that it was the flesh of the deer, we pointed to the skins of the animal they had about them. In reply to this they pointed to each other, and made signs that could not be misunderstood, that it was the flesh of human beings,

[1] In spite of appearing to be relatively close at hand, Mount Rainier is about 45 miles from Tacoma.
[2] This assumption was correct. Vancouver had entered Dalco Passage, which links the S ends of East Passage and Colvos Passage. Between them lies Vachon Island, 11 miles long. Puget had surveyed its W side; Vancouver had travelled down its E side.

and threw it down in the dirt, with gestures of great aversion and displeasure. At length we happily convinced them of their mistake by shewing them a haunch we had in the boat, by which means they were undeceived, and some of them ate of the remainder of the pye with a good appetite.

This behaviour, whilst in some measure tending to substantiate their knowledge or suspicions that such barbarities have existence, led us to conclude, that the character given of the natives of North-West America does not attach to every tribe. These people have been represented not only as accustomed inhumanly to devour the flesh of their conquered enemies; but also to keep certain servants, or rather slaves, of their own nation, for the sole purpose of making the principal part of the banquet, to satisfy the unnatural savage gluttony of the chiefs of this country, on their visits to each other. Were such barbarities practised once a month, as is stated, it would be natural to suppose these people, so inured, would not have shewn the least aversion to eating flesh of any description; on the contrary, it is not possible to conceive a greater degree of abhorrence than was manifested by these good people, until their minds were made perfectly easy that it was not human flesh we offered them to eat. This instance must necessarily exonerate at least this particular tribe from so barbarous a practice; and, as their affinity to the inhabitants of Nootka, and of the sea-coast, to the south of that place, in their manners and customs, admits of little difference, it is but charitable to hope those also, on a more minute inquiry, may be found not altogether deserving such a character.[1] They are not, however, free from the general failing attendant on

[1] In 1941 F. W. Howay stated that 'The established opinion today is that the Indians of the Northwest Coast were not cannibals', and took the view that 'not one well authenticated instance of cannibalism had been produced'. – *Voyages of the 'Columbia'*, 66n. But doubts persisted, and in 1973 Warren Cook could still refer to it as 'the touchiest [topic] in Northwest Coast ethnography'. – *Flood Tide of Empire*, p. 190. Christon Archer has now refuted the charge of cannibalism conclusively and explained the circumstances that gave rise to it in a paper entitled 'Cannibalism in the Early History of the Northwest Coast: Enduring Myths and Neglected Realities' (*Canadian Historical Review* LXI (1980), 453–79). It sprang initially from statements made in the published journals of Cook and Meares. Archer points out that the records of the first three Spanish expeditions, which visited the coast in 1774–9, contain no suggestions that their leaders either found, or expected to find, any evidence that the Indians were cannibals. Cook, by contrast, 'began his explorations in New Zealand and the South Pacific, [and] he and his men were accustomed to witnessing and reporting cannibalism'. He had come to regard it as a characteristic of primitive peoples, and readily believed that 'the horrid practice of devouring their enemies' existed amongst the Indians at Nootka 'as much as at New Zealand, and other South Seas Islands'. – *Journals*, III, 297. Some members of the expedition were not convinced; Clerke, King and Samwell all reserved judgement in their journals, and it is evident that Vancouver shared their doubts. But many years were to pass before those journals were published, whereas Cook's account appeared fairly promptly. Thanks to his great personal prestige his opinion prevailed, and his journal 'became the authoritative handbook for all who would navigate the North Pacific and contact the Northwest Coast inhabitants'. John Ledyard had already added a grisly detail to the charge of cannibalism in his unauthorized account of Cook's third voyage, published in 1783, in which he claimed that he had been offered 'a human arm roasted', had tasted it himself

a savage life. One of them having taken a knife and fork to imitate our manner of eating, found means to secrete them under his garment; but, on his being detected, gave up his plunder with the utmost good humour and unconcern.

They accompanied us from three or four miserable huts, near the place where we had dined, for about four miles; during which time they exchanged the only things they had to dispose of, their bows, arrows, and spears, in the most fair and honest manner, for hawk's bells, buttons, beads, and such useless commodities.

and found it 'very odious'. Cook's opinion was accepted as gospel by the maritime fur traders, and in particular by John Meares, who was at Nootka in September 1788. His journal, published in 1790, attracted wide attention because of his involvement in the Nootka Sound controversy. Meares stated repeatedly that the Indians were cannibals, and that Chief Maquinna 'was so much attached to this detestable banquet, as to kill a slave every moon, to gratify his unnatural appetite'. – *Voyages*, p. 225. He claimed, moreover, that Maquinna 'had avowed the practice'. – *ibid*, p. 256. Archer notes that the trading captains found the conviction that they were dealing with cannibals useful in some respects. It helped with crew discipline; Meares noted that 'the idea of being eaten by the Americans [Indians] haunted the imaginations and preyed upon the spirits of many of our people'. – *Voyages*, p. 191. And when they came to write an account of their adventures, at a time when books on exploration and primitive peoples were popular, cannibalism 'added spice to a travel narrative and sold books'. Archer aptly characterizes the fur traders' narratives as 'an interesting blend of fact, fiction and misunderstanding', and comments further: 'Although Meares warped the truth in almost every respect, no one bothered to question his material on cannibalism.' Cook's opinion was accepted by many later Spanish visitors as well as by the fur traders. For example, Martínez, who had sailed with the first Spanish voyage in 1774, returned to Nootka in 1789 and after spending some months there wrote in his diary that the Indian chiefs were 'accustomed, when there is a scarcity of fish, to eat the boys whom they take as prisoners'. – Quoted in Iris Wilson (ed.), *Noticias de Nutka*, by José Mariano Moziño (Seattle, 1970), p. 22n. He added that Maquinna and his brother 'have been the most addicted to this use of human flesh'. Caamaño blackened Maquinna's reputation further by describing the grim game of blindman's-buff by which it was alleged that Maquinna selected his victims – a story repeated by one of the Franciscan fathers who was at Nootka in 1792. – For translations of these statements see Cook, *Flood Tide of Empire*, pp. 190, 296. Upon a good many occasions traders and others were undoubtedly shown or offered human hands which appeared to be cooked, and which were taken as proof of cannibalism; but it is reasonably certain that these were in fact war trophies – the dried, shrunken and preserved (rather than cooked) hands of defeated enemies. It is notable that neither of the white men who lived for a considerable time with the Nootka Indians – John McKay in 1786–7, and John Jewitt in 1803–5 – makes any mention of cannibalism.

[1] Colvos Passage.
[2] Vachon Island.
[3] The Narrows.