

THE JOURNALS OF  
CAPTAIN JAMES COOK  
ON HIS VOYAGES  
OF DISCOVERY  
VOLUME III PART ONE

The Voyage of the *Resolution*  
and *Discovery* 1776–1780

J.C. Beaglehole



THE HAKLUYT SOCIETY

The Journals of Captain James  
Cook on his Voyages  
of Discovery  
Volume III, Part One

The Voyage of the *Resolution*  
and *Discovery*, 1776–1780

Edited by  
J.C. BEAGLEHOLE

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THE JOURNALS OF CAPTAIN JAMES COOK  
ON HIS VOYAGES OF DISCOVERY

EDITED FROM THE ORIGINAL MANUSCRIPTS BY  
J. C. BEAGLEHOLE

FOUR VOLUMES AND A PORTFOLIO

III  
THE VOYAGE OF THE  
*RESOLUTION* AND *DISCOVERY*  
1776-1780

PART ONE

HAKLUYT SOCIETY  
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Portrait of Captain Cook  
By John Webber

THE JOURNALS OF CAPTAIN JAMES COOK  
ON HIS VOYAGES OF DISCOVERY

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THE VOYAGE OF THE  
*RESOLUTION AND DISCOVERY*

1776-1780

EDITED BY

J. C. BEAGLEHOLE

PART ONE

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## PREFACE

**N**o one can study attentively the records of Cook's third, and last, voyage without being convinced that it was of the same order of greatness as its two predecessors. It differs from them in scope, geographically speaking: its principal new discoveries were North Pacific, not South Pacific, ones. It lasted a year longer than either of them. In the main stated object of the instructions to its commander—the discovery of the North-West Passage—it failed utterly, though the title-page of the official publication describing it put an elaborate gloss on that failure with its references to the coast and the extent of North America. Yet its discoveries were remarkable, and one cannot think the gloss unjustified. There are also in it what one must call elements of drama—though the great drama is, of course, the death of Cook. Cook dies, and the voyage goes on; but without the central figure it by no means loses its interest. It is, indeed, still his voyage.

Cook's death brings his journals to an end. The voyage is still his. What, then, are we to do to complete its documentation? We may note, too, that his own documentation, through some unhappy fate that afflicted his papers, ceases a month before his death. There is no single journal that adequately covers the remainder of the voyage. Cook was succeeded by Clerke, who could write but was a dying man, and died six months after Cook. Clerke was succeeded by Gore, who could not write. The Admiralty got over the difficulty, in its official publication, by putting Lieutenant King, a highly literate person, to complete the account in a whole third volume. We cannot make King complete our account, in an edition devoted to the original manuscripts; for King's own journal breaks down. At the same time we have a wealth of material, however uneven. The 'journal' here presented, therefore, after Cook's death, is a composite one, and it contains, for what seems sufficient reason, some repetition. This repetition comes mainly in the Hawaiian period, in printing as part of the main text, alternately, both Clerke and King—Clerke because of his key position as commander and his idiosyncrasy of expression; King because he was a chief actor as well as a careful observer and a conscientious recorder. While Clerke can still write, he is the best man for the weeks of navigation, on the passage to

Kamchatka and in the Arctic episode that follows. For what happens ashore on the first visit to Kamchatka, however, one must revert to King; after Clerke gives up, among the ice, to Burney; on the second visit to Kamchatka, to the skeleton entries of Edgar, the *Discovery's* master; on the passage home, to the brief pages, not strictly a journal at all, though the only connected account we have, of the midshipman George Gilbert. The concatenation is not completely satisfactory: at least we get the voyage as seen from both the *Resolution* and the *Discovery*.

In this volume a great deal of space, it will be observed, is occupied in the appendixes by extracts from journals other than Cook's—so much so that the binding of the volume in two separate parts is necessitated. The number of extant logs and journals for the voyage is only half a dozen greater than for the second voyage, and there is the normal proportion of negligible ones. On the other hand, there are more persons who realize the importance of the voyage, more who write at length, who have something individual to contribute to its history, whose contribution cannot simply be incorporated in a footnote or a series of footnotes. One must, for example, have large extracts from the invaluable Clerke and King; though such is the quantity of writing that one can afford to dispense in the end with anything extended even from so good a writer as Burney. There seems no alternative to providing two of the journals in full, whatever the space they occupy—those of Anderson and Samwell. For the account of the first voyage Hawkesworth drew heavily on Banks; Cook himself drew much on Wales for his own account of the second; for the third he was prepared to draw similarly on Anderson, and Dr Douglas, preparing Cook for the press, did use a vast amount of Anderson. Anderson cannot go into footnotes, except once or twice when a sort of immediate 'confrontation' with Cook seems called for; it is all or nothing. Similarly with Samwell, known heretofore mainly as the author of a pamphlet on Cook's death; and if one does print him all, it is better as part of this work, where the cross-lights are closer, than separately. Apart from this sheer bulk, the plan of the appendixes differs in only one way from that previously adopted, in the omission of a section devoted to Cook's own letters and reports during the voyage. They are too few in number, and those few can more conveniently be incorporated in the general Calendar of Documents.

There are passages of more massive annotation in this volume than in the two previous ones. The main divisions of the voyage are clear enough; some of its details have been far from clear. Much work had

been done, in one way or another, on the previous voyages, before this present edition was taken in hand; Australian and New Zealand students had followed Cook carefully on the coasts of their own countries. I do not know of any previous attempt, however, to do the like even around Hawaii, or of close correlation of all there is to learn about Hawaii from this voyage, undoubtedly distinguished as Hawaiian scholarship has been. Nobody, so far as I know, has previously looked with care at Cook throughout his examination of the difficult north-west American coast and the Bering Sea, and of what we may call the beginning of both the eastern and western coasts of the Arctic Ocean. Wagner went through his place-names, and is useful, but Wagner is cartographical only, and stops at the Aleutian islands.<sup>1</sup> If one adopts again the primary object of deciding precisely where Cook went, where he was at any given moment, why he said what he did by way of description and explanation, then one has a wearing task indeed; but it must be undertaken. I have had to undertake it, except in one particular spot, with the help only of charts and the printed word against which to check the charts and the written words produced on the voyage; and no one knows better than I how many conjectures I have had to make, and how fruitful—how destructive, sometimes, to laborious reconstruction—might be a detailed examination from the sea of that long coast, with the modern chart and modern instruments of navigation at one's hand as well as Cook's journal under one's eye. I am well aware of the Johnsonian dictum that no man is talked down but by himself; nevertheless I feel it due to the reader to make clear that I enter all my statements, however dogmatic they may appear, with due reserve and modesty. How could one read Vancouver—whom I have quoted so much—and not be aware of the hazards of observation from a distance, even under favourable conditions? For cold fact one can lean on the *South-East Alaska Pilot*, the *Bering Sea and Strait Pilot*; but they do not explain the accidents of weather, on some particular day in 1778, which made Cook write as he did.

Where Cook went, why he said what he did, the accidents of weather: all this may be taken as matter of historical geography. The more that sort of thing is scrutinized, however, the more the conviction is forced on one that the history, the emergent geography, depend on a man. This voyage is different from the first or second, not merely in object and scope, but also, for the student, in feeling. Cook himself, the agent of discovery, has never been more interesting.

<sup>1</sup> Henry R. Wagner, *The Cartography of the Northwest Coast of America to the Year 1800*; Berkeley, California, 1937.

I have used the word 'drama'; we have certainly a psychological problem; the study of a voyage is also the analysis of character. Hence the introduction to the present volume, as the record of a voyage, is longer than either of the preceding ones. To make Cook intelligible, as part of that record, and to make the record intelligible, as it was affected by the commander of the voyage, I have argued a hypothesis. Like most hypotheses, no doubt, it can be controverted; but it seems to me at least tenable, and worth arguing, even if it makes more lengthy, and more complex, a discussion already of necessity both complex and long.

While the annotation of Cook's journal and of some other pages is, as already remarked, very full, in other places it is light or non-existent. Where I have annotated Cook fully, I have not done so for similar passages in the appendixes, though I have sometimes used cross-references. For Anderson and Samwell, therefore, important as they are, the editorial accompaniment will be found uneven. There is nevertheless a little repetition, where the reader's convenience seems to require it—so far as an editor can judge from his own experience.

There are two matters that may infuriate the purist. The first is inconsistency in geographical nomenclature and its spelling. Whatever the international rules may say, I cannot bring myself to render the original English Kerguelen Land as Ile Kerguélen, though that name, with its accented *é*, figures officially in the latest edition of the *Antarctic Pilot*.<sup>1</sup> At the same time I have tried to give the islets and rocks and bays of this group their now accepted names—Ile Howe, Baie Blanche, Presqu'île Prince de Galles—however much Cook would have been revolted by the practice. Nor can I claim complete consistency over the Russian names of eastern Siberia. The second matter is Polynesian spelling and the use of the hamza or glottal stop ('). When I began to edit Cook I was specifically warned, as a non-philologist, against trying to use it in Tahitian, and the French have never adopted it officially. I therefore still present to the reader Raiatea, which should strictly be Ra'iatea; and I have written *arii* generally though not invariably, and not *ari'i*. But in Tongan the thing, ignored in earlier dictionaries, is now official; and in Hawaii pressure is strong for its general adoption. Hence Kalani'opu'u or Kalei'opu'u for the journal's Terreeboo, and *ali'i* instead of my Tahitian *arii*. Here again I cannot claim total consistency, though I have done my best—whether the reason be

<sup>1</sup> It may be noted that M. Jean Etienne Martin-Allanic, in the two volumes of his recent (1964) *Bougainville navigateur et les découvertes de son temps*, a work of formidable scholarship, spells the name without the accent. I have followed him, as well as my own prejudice.

weariness of the spirit, or what the eighteenth century, too often gratuitously blaming the printer, called 'faults of the press'.

Looking in some trepidation at the eighteen hundred pages of this volume, I am nevertheless comforted when I think of the many institutions and persons who have been unhesitating with their assistance. To libraries, librarians and archivists my debt is beyond computation. The British Museum and Public Record Office go without saying; to them I add the libraries of the Royal Society, the National Maritime Museum, the Admiralty, the Botanical Department of the British Museum (Natural History), the Royal Observatory, Herstmonceux; the Liverpool Public Library, the Sheffield City Library, the William Salt Library, Stafford; the libraries of Yale University, Princeton University, the Peabody Museum of Salem, Mass., the University of California at Los Angeles, the Sutro Library, San Francisco, the Bernice P. Bishop Museum, Honolulu; the Provincial Archives of British Columbia, Victoria, B.C.; the National Library of Australia, Canberra; the Public Library of New South Wales and the Mitchell and Dixson Libraries, Sydney; in New Zealand the Auckland Public Library, the General Assembly Library, Wellington, and very certainly the Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington, whose custodians have paved my way with kindness. From most of the foregoing I have pillaged documents. To a number of private persons, also, I owe permission to print materials in their possession: in England Mr Victor Montagu, for the Sandwich Papers; Mr Rex de C. Nan Kivell; Mr Kenneth A. Webster; in America Mr Stephen Phillips of Salem; and in New Zealand add the Poverty Bay Club, Gisborne.

To those who have helped me in innumerable other ways my thanks go in no smaller measure than with the earlier volumes. In the United Kingdom I must name the joint secretaries of the Hakluyt Society: Mr. R. A. Skelton, who has added to his work on previous volumes that on the graphic records of this voyage, and on the choice of illustrations; Miss Eila Campbell, for a great deal of sympathetic administrative help. Dr Helen M. Wallis, of the British Museum's Map Room, and Mr G. P. B. Naish, of the National Maritime Museum, have been ever-patient correspondents; the late Mr J. C. B. Redfearn, M.B.E., devoted great care to sketch-maps; and for some particular matters I thank Miss Phyllis Mander Jones, Dr J. E. Dandy, Keeper of Botany in the British Museum (Natural History), Mr A. G. C. Grandison and Mr P. J. P. Whitehead of the zoological staff of that institution, and Dr H. B. Carter of Edinburgh. Last—but perhaps she should be first—I thank Mrs Alison Quinn,

who has indexed the daunting thing. In the United States I turn first to Hawaii, to Miss Amy Greenwell, who introduced me with a lavish hand to Kealakekua Bay, and to members of the staff of the Bernice P. Bishop Museum: Dr Kenneth P. Emory, Mrs Marion Kelly, Mrs Dorothy Barrère (whose guidance through the intricacies of Hawaiian genealogy I cannot admire enough), Miss Marie C. Neal, Mr Edwin H. Bryan, Jr., and Miss Margaret Titcomb; and I record the assistance of Mrs Mary Kawena Pukui, great in lexicography, Professor Albert O. Bushnell, of the department of microbiology, University of Hawaii, and Dr Gordon A. Macdonald, of the department of geology of that university. Elsewhere in America Professor Joseph Ewan, of Tulane University, New Orleans, has supplied me with an infinity of botanical information; while Mr Karl W. Kenyon of the U.S. Fish and Wild Life Service, Mr Donald G. Eberlein of the U.S. Geological Survey, my friend Professor F. J. Turner and Professor Clyde Wahrhaftig, both of the University of California, Berkeley, and Dr E. C. Carpenter, of the San Fernando Valley State College, California, have advised me on things within their special competence. Farther north on that American west coast I received help unusual in an academic career, when the firm of Macmillan, Bloedel and Powell River Ltd, of Vancouver, B.C., in April 1962 lent me an aeroplane to take me to Nootka Sound. To this magnanimous firm, its chairman, the Hon. J. V. Clyne, Mr Emerson Wallace, the pilot of the Grumman Goose *Dryad*, and to Mr Geoffrey C. Andrew, now of the Canadian Universities Bureau, Ottawa, whose magic wand created the operation, I render my grateful thanks. So I do also to Professor Harry B. Hawthorn of the University of British Columbia, to Mrs Hawthorn, and to their colleagues Dr N. J. Wilimovsky, Dr I. McT. Cowan and the late Dr W. A. Clemens, for much help on anthropology, birds and fishes. To Professor Hawthorn in particular my debt is great.

In the southern hemisphere, I follow Cook's route and record my obligation initially to Dr H. B. Rycroft, Director of the National Botanic Gardens of South Africa, and then to Professor V. V. Hickman, who has been very helpful over the zoology of Tasmania. Professor Kenneth F. Russell, of the department of anatomy, University of Melbourne, settled a difficult point in art history for me. In the Pacific Islands south of the line I have been aided by Judge H. J. Morgan of the Land Court, Rarotonga; MM. Jacques Barrau and L. C. Devambeze, both of the South Pacific Commission, Noumea; the Hon. Ve'ehala, Keeper of the Palace Records, Nuku'alofa; and Mr Andrew Afeiaki of Tonga. In New Zealand I

have been subjected to a severe discipline over Tongan chiefly relationships by my colleague Miss Dorothy Crozier. I have gone for the Maori tongue to Mr J. M. McEwen, for Welsh to the Rev. Percy Thomas. For a wealth of advice on natural history I have drawn on Dr R. A. Falla, Director of the Dominion Museum, and Dr R. K. Dell and Messrs John Moreland, C. McCann and F. C. Kinsky of his staff; while for matters ranging from botany to international law I have leant equally hard on my own colleagues Professor H. D. Gordon, Dr J. G. Gibbs, Dr J. W. Dawson and Mr K. J. Keith.

In recording the patient care in production taken by my printers, I cannot but record my special thanks to Mr John Easton.

Two great debts remain to be acknowledged. One is to the Government of New Zealand: which, having contributed largely to making possible the whole enterprise of Cook's *Journals*, has made possible also, through a further financial grant, the publication of this third volume in the form it now takes, with the journals of Anderson and Samwell added to Cook's. And it was particular government help that originally freed me, in 1949, to embark on the work. Without the support most generously given to it and to me since then by my University, its continuation and completion would have been impossible. I am very conscious of this. My last words must be devoted to the Council of the University, and to colleagues who have viewed with long-continued sympathy and toleration the activities of one rejoicing (not too obviously, it is hoped) in his release from the more onerous parts of the academic routine; and they must be words of profound gratitude.

J. C. B.

Victoria University of Wellington

*July* 1966



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#### PORTFOLIO

The original charts and views reproduced in the Portfolio (published in 1955) are here cited as Chart XLIII, XLIV, etc.

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(with abbreviations used in the Introduction and Notes)

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- |                |   |  |
|----------------|---|--|
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| Log            | } | Copy by <i>Resolution's</i> clerk of Cook's 'Log and Proceedings', from which the Journal was adapted, 10 February 1776–27 November 1778; in P.R.O., Adm 55/111–112.                 |
| Log Adm 55/111 |   |  |
| Log Adm 55/112 |   |  |
| Log            | } | Part of second copy by <i>Resolution's</i> clerk of Cook's 'Log and Proceedings', 26 April 1778–6 January 1779; in P.R.O., Adm 55/113.   |
| Log Adm 55/113 |   |  |

### II. *Other MS Logs and Journals kept in the Resolution or Discovery, or later MSS*

- |          |   |
|----------|---|
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| Bayly    | Log and journal of William Bayly, astronomer <i>Discovery</i> , in P.R.O., Adm 55/20.   |
| Bayly T  | Log of William Bayly, in Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington.  |
| Bayly JT | Journal of William Bayly, in Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington.  |
| Bligh AL | Marginal notes by William Bligh, master <i>Resolution</i> , in the Admiralty Library (London) copy of <i>A Voyage to the Pacific Ocean</i> by Cook and King.  |
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| Burney M | Journal of James Burney, in Mitchell Library, Sydney.   |
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## INTRODUCTION

### § *The Plan*

IT would be helpful to the biography of Cook to know the date of a dinner-party. We can, however, with reason place this date early in February 1776—probably a day or two before the 10th. The date was that on which Cook volunteered for a third great voyage. He had, as we have seen, shown some caution in accepting his appointment to Greenwich Hospital in August 1775: ‘a fine retreat and a pretty income’, yes; ‘but whether I can bring my self to like ease and retirement, time will shew.’ He had little gift for leisure; and he had made it plain to the Lords of the Admiralty that he considered himself still capable of service in exploration. There is an unmistakable note of regret in his words to John Walker about the *Resolution*: ‘she will soon be sent out again, but I shall not command her, my fate drives me from one extrem to a nother’. The prospect at Greenwich, between the hill and the river, was doubtfully inviting, to a man for whom a few months ago the whole southern hemisphere was hardly big enough.<sup>1</sup> He was not going to be as idle as he thought. The tempests and battles of his second voyage were not yet over, but they were now on the domestic ground of London, they were concerned with John Reinhold Forster and the rigours of English prose composition, as he prepared his journal for publication. The Admiralty asked his advice. He had a home at Mile End, and there was Mrs Cook, and his sons. He must have had agreeable moments, at home, at Royal Society dinners, with the Great—even moments of joy; but his ship no longer moved beneath his feet; life, he must have felt, was inglorious.

Certainly he learnt quite soon that there was another voyage in prospect for the *Resolution*; his letter to Walker is dated two days after the Admiralty gave orders to the Navy Board that the ship was to be dismantled only so far as necessary for refitting her.<sup>2</sup> That was in August 1775. In September the order for refitting was made.<sup>3</sup> Three months later there is an order for the purchase of another ship, ‘of about 250 tons’, as consort,<sup>4</sup> the *Adventure* having disappeared from

<sup>1</sup> II, pp. cxiii, 958, 960.

<sup>2</sup> Admiralty to Navy Board, 17 August 1775, ADM/A/2694.

<sup>3</sup> 13 September 1775, ADM/A/2695.

<sup>4</sup> 13 December 1775, ADM/A/2698.

the scene, and within the next three weeks we have Cook and the Deptford Yard officers inspecting and reporting on several vessels. One is bought and taken into dock; Cook is consulted on the alterations necessary to fit her for her destined service, and the Navy Board reports on this on 23 January.<sup>1</sup> This is nearly six months after the return of the ships from the second voyage: the idea of another voyage is clear enough, preparations are actively going forward, experience in exploration is now vast, the best advice is at hand, and is being taken. The only thing the Admiralty is short of is a commander, and as clear as anything else is the fact that there is a sense of great embarrassment. One may here turn from official papers to Dr Kippis, the first biographer of Cook.

‘For the conduct of an enterprise,’ writes Kippis, ‘the operations of which were intended to be so new, so extensive, and so various, it was evident that great ability, skill, and experience were indispensably necessary. That Captain Cook was of all men the best qualified for carrying it into execution, was a matter that could not be called in question. But however ardently it might be wished that he would take upon himself the command of the service, no one (not even his friend and patron, Lord Sandwich himself) presumed to solicit him upon the subject. The benefits he had already conferred on science and navigation, and the labours and dangers he had gone through, were so many and great, that it was not deemed reasonable to ask him to engage in fresh perils. At the same time, nothing could be more natural, than to consult him upon every thing relative to the business; and his advice was particularly requested with regard to the properest person for conducting the voyage. To determine this point, the captain, Sir Hugh Palliser, and Mr. Stephens were invited to Lord Sandwich’s to dinner. Here, besides taking into consideration what officer should be recommended to his majesty for accomplishing the purposes in view, many things were said concerning the nature of the design. Its grandeur and dignity, the consequences of it to navigation and science, and the completion it would give to the whole system of discoveries were enlarged upon in the course of the conversation. Captain Cook was so fired with the contemplation and representation of the object, that he started up, and declared that he himself would undertake the direction of the enterprise. It is easy to suppose, with what pleasure the noble lord and the other gentlemen received a proposal, which was so agreeable to their secret wishes, and which they thought of the highest importance towards attaining the ends of the voyage. No time was lost by the Earl of Sandwich, in laying the matter before the king; and Captain Cook was appointed to the command of the expedition on the 10th of February, 1776.’<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Navy Board to Admiralty, 23 January 1776; ADM/B/191.

<sup>2</sup> Andrew Kippis, *The Life of Captain James Cook* (London, 1788), pp. 324–5.

There is a little romantic glow over this passage, a little foreshortening, for the dramatic purpose, in the picture; there is no reason to doubt its essential truth. Kippis, after all, got some of his information from the noble lord and other gentlemen he refers to, and they are not likely to have misled him on a transaction which they seem to have thought did them credit. On this point we may entertain some doubt. There can be little doubt that in making Cook a volunteer they had realized their secret wishes, little doubt that Sandwich would lose no time in going to the king. We may doubt their wisdom. We may even find some discredit in the simple plot so obviously concocted by three friends of Cook, whom he admired, to make him a volunteer for a service they would have been ashamed to ask him to enter upon—even in the light of his expressed wish, when he formally applied for his post at Greenwich Hospital. 'Not even his friend and patron, Lord Sandwich himself, presumed to solicit him upon the subject.' They knew what he had done; they had read his journal; they had some inkling of 'the labours and dangers he had gone through'. They seem to have had no inkling of the strain of mind he had gone through. Perhaps he had none himself. They thought they knew their man. Up to a point they did: they knew him well enough to entrap him, a willing prisoner. Though Sandwich was a highly intelligent, and not merely a noble, lord, it does not seem to have entered his thoughts that it was his duty, as head of the navy, to impose a period of rest on Cook. His captain was not an old man, nor exhausted, nor sick—though he had been very sick a year or two before. His faculties had simply been stretched to the uttermost for a long period, and whatever he thought of himself, whatever conception he had of his own duty, however much he sheered off the idea of idleness, some sort of idleness was his fundamental need, not the activity that was his constant desire. Sandwich, and his colleagues, did not look deep enough. The dinner-party was a great success, a triumph of management. It was a disaster.

The date Kippis gives for Cook's appointment to command, 10 February 1776, seems correct. We do not have his formal commission. We do have his formal application of that date for appointment, written at the Admiralty Office, like many other communications Cook made to the secretaries that brought instant action; we have Stephens's immediate reply; and we have a reference to the same date in the *Resolution's* muster book.<sup>1</sup> The application reminds us that Cook was not a man oblivious of the future: he was relying, if their Lordships 'condesend to except this offer, [that] they will on my

<sup>1</sup> See pp. 1459, 1486 below.

return, either restore me to my appointment in the Hospital, or procure for me such other mark of the Royal Favour as their Lordships upon the review of my past Services shall think me deserving of'. A great many letters and orders were passing on the 10th. It was on the 14th that Cook got his first order from the Lords, 'Having appointed you Commander of His Majesty's Sloop the Resolution at Deptford' . . . to use the utmost dispatch in getting her ready for the Sea accordingly'—an order of a sort he had had before, though now one with which he would have had difficulty in complying literally, so great was the pressure on him in preparing instalments of his book for the literary scrutiny of Dr Douglas. It was on the 14th also that he wrote once more to John Walker.<sup>1</sup> He expected to be ready to sail about the end of April—a too hopeful forecast. 'I know not', he continued, 'what your opinion may be on this step I have taken. It is certain I have quitted an easy retirement, for an Active, and perhaps Dangerous Voyage. My present disposition is more favourable to the latter than the former, and I embark on as fair a prospect as I can wish. If I am fortunate enough to get safe home, theres no doubt but it will be greatly to my advantage.'

What was this enterprise, the operations of which, according to Dr Kippis, were intended to be so new, so extensive, and so various; the grandeur and dignity of which were of such extraordinary magnitude; its design so pregnant of consequence both to human knowledge and to Cook? On 2 April 1776 Mr James Boswell met the captain, and recorded the meeting with due attention in his journal: 'It was curious to see Cook, a grave steady man, and his wife, a decent plump Englishwoman, and think that he was preparing to sail round the world'.<sup>2</sup> No mere voyage round the world could have called forth language of such amplitude as that of Dr Kippis. This enterprise was the discovery of the North-West Passage.

We are brought back to a second cardinal problem of eighteenth century geography, to an illusion just as sedulously nurtured as that of the great southern continent. The problem was more intractable than the first, because there was in fact a North-West Passage, just as there was a North-East Passage: the illusion did not lie there. It lay in the assumption that a passage had only to be discovered to be navigable, and it was allied with another illusion, the product of much pseudo-scientific thought and argument in the later eighteenth century, that of an ice-free arctic sea. Whereas the continent, for all the centuries of belief behind it, was a fantasy of abstract argument

<sup>1</sup> p. 1488 below.

<sup>2</sup> *Boswell: The Ominous Years* (London, 1963), p. 309.

to be dissipated by one great and splendid voyage—simply denounced, as it were—the Passage was a reality to be affirmed, denied, affirmed again, in a process of experiment protracted, painful, and often enough tragic: a passage that could not be passed, until long after its existence was known; and when known and passed, could have given little joy to the Elizabethans and their fathers who first dazzled themselves with the vision of smooth access to the riches of the South Sea and Cathay. The ice-free arctic sea was a notion that had more in common with the southern continent: a logical deduction from premisses not quite wilfully asserted, accepted rather with a determination to believe—that the ocean cannot freeze, for example, that oceanic ice is therefore a river-product. The shade of Robert Thorne seems to beckon over two centuries to these urban men of theory, inviting them across the pole, through the Strait of Anian and south to the fabulous lands. Premisses misleading and inadequate: it was ice that was the all-conditioning factor, ice on the seas and on the coasts, ice over deeps and shallows, filling channels from shore to shore in seeming immobility, or parting deceitfully only to return again, ice that came and went with the seasons, a floating mass decaying but ever renewing, an element and a terror centred on the stupendous fortress of the pole, a fortress that was a white waste. It was a terror that could be faced, an element that could be conquered; but nothing that the eighteenth century could do could be more than a foray, aided or hindered by luck. The voyage that Cook was asked to make, therefore, could not be a climax, like the voyage he had just completed. It could be a great, a valuable, an essential voyage, one of remarkable and unexpected consequences. In relation to its central object it could be no more than a step in a series. Its failure was preordained.

The earlier steps in the series must first be examined. Before Cook there had been something like fifty voyages in search of the North-West Passage—if one begins, as one logically should, with John Cabot in 1497—though the connection of some of them with the North-West Passage may be taken as a matter of courtesy only.<sup>1</sup> As Magellan had found a southern passage through America from the Atlantic to the Pacific, so these attempts were aimed at a passage

<sup>1</sup> Ernest S. Dodge has printed a list in his *Northwest by Sea* (New York, 1961), pp. vi–xi, which runs from 1497 to 1958. He omits from his list the unfulfilled Pacific plans of the Drake, Narborough and Byron voyages. The reader may be recommended to this book, a most useful and interesting compendium. For the eighteenth century voyages in particular see the excellent work of Glyndwr Williams, *The British Search for the Northwest Passage in the Eighteenth Century* (London, 1962). Dr Williams was generous enough to let me study his book while it was still in typescript, an act of which I remain deeply appreciative. R. A. Skelton, *Explorers' Maps* (London, 1958) has some excellent reproductions.

westward through North America between the same two oceans. It was a route to the Pacific that seemed a likely one, and at first it seemed to have astounding success; for in 1509 Sebastian Cabot, having been in Hudson Bay, was convinced that he had found the way to Cathaia.<sup>1</sup> After him the two great names in his century are those of Martin Frobisher, whose lustre was bedimmed by the frantic attempts of other men to make his three voyages of 1576-8 a means of rapid riches; and John Davis, a scholar in geography and navigation as well as a brilliant practitioner, who in three voyages, 1585-7, sailed both coasts of Davis Strait, between Greenland and Baffin Island, and as far north into Baffin Bay as 72° 12' before he was stopped by head winds and ice. 'The passage is most probable, the execution easie,' he wrote to his backer, the great London merchant William Sanderson. But further English attempts were swallowed till after the turn of the century, by the Spanish war and East Indies voyages. Our next great names are Henry Hudson, who in 1607 was sent by the Muscovy Company to sail to Cathay over the Pole, and did reach 81° N, and in 1611 was set adrift by his mutineers in the bay named after him; and William Baffin, who, after work in Hudson Bay in 1615 for the North-West Company, in the following year turned his attention to Davis Strait, forced his way north to the limit of Baffin Bay, and discovered the three great sounds, Smith, Jones and Lancaster, a truly wonderful performance, in a fifty-ton ship. After his Hudson Bay voyage, Baffin had considered the possibilities. If his opinion were required by any, his answer must be, he wrote, 'that doubtles there is a passadge', but not from anywhere within Hudson Strait: 'the mayne [passage] will be upp fretum Davis'.<sup>2</sup> After this later voyage he was otherwise convinced: 'there is no passage nor hope of passage in the north of Davis Straights. We having coasted all, or neere all the circumference thereof, and finde it to be no other then a great bay, as the voyage doth truely shew.'<sup>3</sup> This

<sup>1</sup> J. A. Williamson, 'The north-western voyage of Sebastian Cabot', in his *The Cabot Voyages and Bristol Discovery under Henry VII* (Cambridge, 1962), pp. 145 ff., provides the latest study of the evidence.

<sup>2</sup> C. R. Markham, *The Voyages of William Baffin* (London, 1881), p. 137.

<sup>3</sup> *ibid.*, p. 150. The quotation is from Baffin's letter to Sir John Wolstenholme, 'one of the chief Adventurers'. He goes on in words which sufficiently register the disappointment for that century: 'Wherefore I cannot but much admire the worke of the Almighty, when I consider how vaine the best and chiefest hopes of men are in thinges uncertaine; and to speake of no other then of the hopeful passage to the North-West. How many of the best sort of men have set their whole endeavoures to proove a passage that wayes? not onely in conference, but also in writing and publishing to the world. Yea, what great summes of money have been spent about that action, as your worship hath costly experience of. . . . And for my owne part I would hardly have beleevved the contrary untill my eyes became witness of what I desired not to have found; still taking occasion of hope on every likelihood, till such time as we had coasted almost all the circumference of this great bay.'

opinion seemed conclusive, though if Baffin's journal and map had been properly published it is hardly possible that he should not have had successors to investigate his sounds; and Sir James Lancaster's Sound, off which the shore ice caused him great discouragement, was in fact the opening to a veritable passage. The North-West Company, however, was satisfied; Davis Strait and Baffin Bay were abandoned; the remaining exploratory voyages of the seventeenth century—those of Button, Munk, Foxe and James<sup>1</sup>—interesting, useful, and one tragic, were confined to Hudson Bay, and thus doomed to failure, and they were over by 1632. Not for upwards of a century did men take heart again.

That they took heart again was due not to any overwhelming interest in geographical principles—which need cause us no surprise—but to a new shade of variety in economic interest. This arose as a late consequence of the foundation of the Hudson's Bay Company—the Governor and Company of Adventurers trading into Hudson's Bay—in 1670. The Company's charter paid due obeisance to 'the discovery of a new passage into the South Sea'. What really concerned it was 'the finding of some trade for furs, minerals, and other considerable commodities'; and a considerable commodity furs did indeed turn out to be. With its trade organized as a tight monopoly, the Company prospered: its North American competitors were French, not British, and as long as the French in time of peace had to track overland from the south, the Company could, though not without some alarms, hold its own. Its forts commanded the river-mouths; the Indian trappers came down the rivers to trade; Company ships moved in the right season from post to post picking up their cargoes; its factors did not need, they thought, to stir a step. The factors and their men perfected the technique of living comfortably through the arctic winters; the shipmasters that of navigating the uncomfortable strait; the Governor and Committee sat back in London and let go no secrets. A malign fate may disturb the happiest of dreams. Fate in the first instance was French—the enterprising French traders whose activities threatened to cut off the supplies of furs at their Indian source, and French arms that came near to driving the Company right out of the Bay; in the second instance, it was James Knight, who after the Treaty of Utrecht in 1713 became the Company's own governor in Hudson Bay; in the third, it was Arthur Dobbs, high sheriff of the county of Antrim and a member of the Irish House of Commons; and Dobbs, after war, was a real irruption.

<sup>1</sup> [Sir] Thomas Button, 1612–13; Jens Munk, 1619–20; Luke Foxe, 1631; Thomas James, 1631–2.

The Anglo-French armed struggle, up to 1713, may be regarded as irrelevant to the present story; and the work that Knight, a servant of the Company since 1676, was sent out specifically to do, was no more relevant. It was to reorganize the Company's affairs in the Bay. An energetic though ageing man, he worked hard at this; but he had ideas of a trade that would far transcend in value the one in furs. Copper he heard of from northern Indians—copper that indubitably existed—a 'yellow mettle' on the coasts of a western sea. The western sea was perhaps the Great Slave Lake; the yellow metal might have been one of several sorts. For Knight the sea was the northern Pacific, the coast the western coast of North America, the metal could only be gold. To gold he added silver and pearls, like any visionary of the sixteenth century; and knowing from actual journeys into the interior that the crossing of the continent overland to the Pacific would mean travel long and hard, devoted himself to enquiries after a passage by sea, a passage that would bring him to the ocean by way of the Strait of Anian of the old maps. For by the time Knight completed his term as governor and left for England in 1718 it is clear that he was a man obsessed. He would return and find the passage himself. Somehow, by vehement persuasion and possibly the threat of going elsewhere for help—someone else in the sacred Company preserve!—he managed to get from the Company command of two ships, of which he himself paid one eighth of the cost of fitting out and cargo. He was to sail north up the west side of Hudson Bay, starting at latitude 64°, his goal the Strait of Anian, and his guide the high flood-tide that he confidently expected would sweep through from the Pacific to that shore. (Observations of, and arguments about, tidal directions in the northern part of Hudson Bay were to become complicated and passionate.) He was to keep away from the Company's settlements and its trade except in the utmost extremity of need. He sailed from Gravesend early in June 1719. He was not seen at the Hudson Bay settlements; he was not seen any more. Company captains in 1722 and later picked up a few relics, heard a story or two from Eskimos; it was not until 1767 that the men of a whaling sloop found the hulls of Knight's vessels under five fathoms of water in a little cove on the coast of Marble Island, off Rankin inlet (latitude 62° 36' N), and on the shore the remains of a house and many graves. The Company was prepared to explore a little for copper and the extension of its fur-trade, but not to sink more money in the Strait of Anian.

A decade elapsed after the Knight disaster before there was further trouble. It was Arthur Dobbs—not a very likely person—who caused

it, and he caused a great deal. Though an Ulster landowner, he was interested in trade, and kept on widening his interest, from the trade of Ireland to that of Britain and the colonies. This took him, as it took so many other publicists and commercial philosophers in that age, to the consideration of colonial policy in North America and to the necessity of thwarting the ambitions of France. He became curious about explorers, and mounting in his ambition for the results of British exploration, and without any experience whatever in navigation, persuaded himself that the North-West Passage was there for the taking. He was convinced that it opened out of Roe's Welcome, a strait in the north-west corner of Hudson Bay that in fact led in the wrong direction to the large expanse of water and ice called Foxe Basin.<sup>1</sup> This, or some strait near this, was what Knight was after. Dobbs had never heard of Knight, and thought he was reviving an idea exploded only 'in a manner' for a hundred years. He made an elaborate though abstract study of the tides, which took him in the same direction.<sup>2</sup> He collected other observations of doubtful validity to generalize upon, as that of a clear sea in northern Hudson Bay while the south was frozen over; and of whales on the western side, which could only have come from the Pacific. And he was gullible in the extreme over the printed word. He went back in his reading to *Purchas His Pilgrimes*, the seventeenth century collection of voyages, a sort of enormous appendix to Hakluyt, wherein he found the story of the meeting in Venice in 1596 between Michael Lok, the disillusioned patron of Frobisher, and an old Greek pilot called Juan de Fuca. This man told Lok that he had served forty years with the Spaniards in the West Indies and the South Sea, where he had lost much money when his ship was captured by the Englishman Cavendish. After this he was twice sent by the viceroy of Mexico in search of the Strait of Anian. The first attempt was unsuccessful, because of a mutiny of the soldiers. On the second, in 1592, beyond California, between latitudes 47° and 48°, he found 'a broad Inlet of Sea . . . hee entred thereinto, sayling therein more

<sup>1</sup> Out of the north-west corner of Foxe Basin did in fact open the ice-choked Fury and Hecla Strait, discovered by Sir Edward Parry, on snow-shoes, with sledges, in 1823; and this, leading to the great Gulf of Boothia, does link up, on paper, with the much-desired passage.

<sup>2</sup> This tidal theory is best summarized, not by Dobbs himself, but by Henry Ellis, one of his later supporters, in the following passage: 'We may consider Hudson's-Bay, as a kind of Labyrinth, into which we enter on one side through Hudson's-Straits, and what we aim at, is to get out on the other side . . . the Tide is a Kind of Clue, which seems to lead us by the Hand through all the Windings and Turnings of this Labyrinth, and if studiously and steadily followed must certainly lead us out.'—*A Voyage to Hudson's-Bay by the Dobbs Galley and California* . . . (London, 1748), pp. 330-1. I take the quotation and the reference from Glyndwr Williams, p. 32.

then twentie dayes, and found . . . very much broader Sea then was at the said Entrance, and that hee passed by divers Ilands in that sayling. And that at the entrance of this said Strait, there is on the North-west coast thereof, a great Hedland or Iland, with an exceeding high Pinacle, or spired Rocke, like a piller thereupon. Also he said, that he went on Land in divers places, and that he saw some people on Land, clad in Beasts skins: and that the Land is very fruitfull, and rich of gold, Silver, Pearle, and other things, like Nova Spania.' He came into the North Sea, 'which is our North-west Sea', and concluding that he had completed his task, returned to Acapulco. He was rewarded for his discovery neither there nor in Spain; and 'therefore at the length he stole out of Spaine, and came into Italie, to goe home againe and live among his own Kindred and Countrymen, he being very old. Also he said, that hee thought the cause of his ill reward had of the Spaniards, to bee for that they did understand very well, that the English Nation had now given over all their voyages for discoverie of the North-west passage, therefore they need not feare them any more to come that way into the South Sea, and therefore they needed not his service therein any more.' So de Fuca was prepared to come to England, and, for fitting payment, take a ship through the strait to the Pacific in thirty days.<sup>1</sup> Somebody invented, whether Michael Lok or de Fuca we do not know; and the invention seemed to Dobbs to have the undoubted ring of truth. He poured it with his other data into a memorial he composed in 1731, together with what he could pick up about Spanish, Portuguese and Dutch discoveries in the north Pacific—discoveries all rich, all promising, Yedso, Rica de Oro, Gama Land, Company Land—and broke into the usual peroration about the short and easy way to China, the advantages to be anticipated in either war or peace, the new markets for manufactures and the employment of the poor, the 'Legal and just pretension to Settle Colonies in proper places without the other Powers of Europe having any pretence to make any'.<sup>2</sup> With these arguments, and this peroration, he set off for London to see the Board of Trade, the Admiralty, and the Hudson's Bay Company.

Nobody was at first, or for some time, encouraging: delays were to be measured in years, and not merely did Dobbs come to dislike the Company extremely, and accuse it of deliberate refusal to forward the main aim of its charter—in his eyes the discovery of the passage—

<sup>1</sup> Samuel Purchas, *Hakluytus Posthumus . . .* (Glasgow, 1906), XIV, pp. 416–17. Dr Williams has reprinted the paragraphs, with some other interesting material, and noted the critical discussions, pp. 273–6. There actually was a Greek pilot called Juan de Fuca working on the Mexican coast in 1588–94. See also the map, Pl. 1.

<sup>2</sup> Williams, pp. 37–8.

but to organize a public outcry and parliamentary enquiry into its affairs with the object of breaking its monopoly. Before he felt himself stirred to go to such lengths, however, he thought he had got the co-operation of the Company in 1735, when it was decided to send sloops northward from Fort Churchill to Roe's Welcome, primarily to beat up trade, but certainly also to explore. No attempt was in fact made till 1737, and then so unenthusiastically that it was hardly an attempt at all, falling short of the Welcome by two hundred miles. When the Company set out to persuade Dobbs that a thorough examination had been made, after which the risking of vessels and men's lives could not be justified, Dobbs, who had his own sources of information, was not pleased. His main informant was Captain Christopher Middleton, the ablest of the Company's shipmasters, a man with a scientific interest in his trade of navigation, Fellow of the Royal Society, and, if not a whole-hearted believer in the passage, a disbeliever in scamped work. Dobbs and Middleton worked hard on the First Lord of the Admiralty, Sir Charles Wager, to get official naval help; Wager spoke to the King, and in 1740 George II handsomely gave his consent.

An expedition sailed from the Thames in June 1741—two ships commanded by Middleton, with Captain William Moor, another Company man, in the second. It was different from previous expeditions in one respect: it was naval, and set a new pattern for the century. Middleton had a naval commission, and had resigned from the Company's service. The Company was not happy at the turn things had taken, suspecting the worst in infringements of its trade monopoly—a worst which Dobbs by this time would have been very happy to ensure; nevertheless in the end was prevailed on to promise relief if needed, while Middleton was throughout scrupulous in respecting its rights. Middleton's instructions came from the Admiralty, though without doubt Dobbs had a hand in them. Once in the Bay, he was to make for Roe's Welcome and look for the flood-tide from the west, which would indicate the passage. After navigating this, he was to explore the western coast of America, make alliance with the native inhabitants, take possession of all lands in the king's name—we are entering a realm of the pure imagination—winter on that coast or on some suitable island, or return through the passage as he thought best, perhaps off California meet Anson, who had sailed on his anti-Spanish voyage to the Pacific round the Horn in 1740; and so on. Granting a number of impossible premisses, like the existence of a discoverable passage, a set of first-rate officers and crew, and limitless supplies, the imagination was not without logic. What

happened was that on reaching Hudson Bay the expedition had to winter at once at the Company's post at Churchill, where thirteen men died (most from scurvy); and then, setting off north at the beginning of July 1742, push its way painfully through ice up to the Welcome. Here, in about latitude  $65^{\circ} 10'$ , a deep inlet was found and explored—Wager Bay, not a passage; and then, north-east beyond the other end of the Welcome, the two forbidding pieces of water Repulse Bay and Icy Strait. The flood-tides had been all the wrong way, from the east, the north-east, the south-east; one had to disbelieve in whales as guides. Middleton arrived home in October 1742, hopes of a passage quite gone.

Quite gone, that is, except for the irrepressible hopes of Dobbs. At first convinced by Middleton, within a few months he was launching a full scale unscrupulous attack upon the unfortunate man, in which he was aided by four of Middleton's company (including Moor), who must have been bribed in some way to contradict their former agreement with their captain. Middleton knew well how to defend himself, and the usual artillery of eighteenth-century pamphleteering roared away, with its *Vindication, Reply, Remarks, Answer, Rejoinder*. One would have thought Middleton secure enough, but his prospects in the navy were blighted. The injustice did not help to discover a passage to the Pacific. Dobbs's vehemence and confidence and tenacity resulted in still another attempt from Hudson Bay. The attempt would have been impossible without the current popular hostility towards the Hudson's Bay Company for its inactivity in competing against French expansion and settlement, its monopoly in the Bay, its bland indifference to the national interest—that is, the interests of 'all the Merchants in Britain'. The climax of this hostility was still some years off when Dobbs organized a petition to the House of Commons that government should offer a reward for the discovery of a passage; Dobbs also organized the witnesses before the committee examining the petition, and the testimony the witnesses gave; and the act that was passed in 1745 providing for a reward of £20,000 must be regarded as a triumph for him—even though the Company was strong enough to have inserted a statement that nothing in the act was to prejudice any of its rights or privileges. As the Admiralty had refused to try again (and this might seem some sort of guarantee to government that its money was safe), it was necessary to raise money for what was, in essence, a piece of private speculation. Subscriptions were taken; if the passage were discovered, the reward would have added to it the proceeds of sale of the ships and other assets of the venture, and the whole would be divided

among the subscribers. One regulation laid down was that after this division 'each of the Subscribers . . . shall signify, whether he is willing to be concerned in prosecuting further Discoveries through the said Passage, and in opening a Commerce with the Natives of the Countries, which may be discovered adjoining, or near, to the said Passage'.<sup>1</sup> The threat to the Company was apparent, though it was but a shadowy threat; and the Company was duly, though needlessly, alarmed. For the two ships that set out in May 1746, named symbolically *Dobbs Galley* and *California*, and commanded by Captain Moor, were to return with the same icy answer that the despised Captain Middleton had brought back. Once again the expedition had to winter at a Company settlement and lose men from scurvy, once again it was puzzled by tides; once again, and in vain, it explored the Wager river. Its positive contribution to geography was its discovery of Chesterfield Inlet, which Middleton had missed, not far from the entrance to Roe's Welcome; inadequately investigated, this was to instil false hopes in some people in the future. The officers quarrelled, the men were dispirited; the ships reached home in October 1747 with new disappointment for Dobbs to stomach, and the London merchants cut their losses. The North-West Passage, they concluded, could go hang. It could still be used as an ingredient of petitions to Parliament against the great monopoly; though even if it were found, what use would it be? In 1749 the Commons declared for the Company, Dobbs ceased his efforts though not his faith, and a few years later embraced the less glorious career of colonial governor in North Carolina.

By the mid-eighteenth century, then, it might well seem to the person with a taste for evidence rather than enthusiasm that the case for a North-West Passage was lost. The previous century, if its results were to be taken as final, had ruled out Baffin Bay as a possible area of approach; the eighteenth, Hudson Bay. There were still, however, persons of enthusiasm; and there were still those, among professed students, who may be called geographical romantics. In the succeeding decades, effective investigation of the Hudson Bay coast and its interior was to be carried on by the Company's men, under instructions which had now become strict. With the passage of time the Company seems to have become more sensitive to criticism. The main quest was for minerals, still reported by Indians to exist on the banks of a great river; and as a possible way into—perhaps through?—the continent, perhaps as the very river, Chesterfield Inlet was examined. It was not the river, it was an inlet and no more: 'for I am

<sup>1</sup> *Articles of Agreement* . . . (London, 1745), quoted in Williams, p. 85.

Certain and Shure that there is no Pasage into the Western Ocan in this Hudsons Bay', wrote Moses Norton, factor at Churchill, in 1764.<sup>1</sup> Then in 1767 two Indians, sent exploring to the north and west by Norton some years before, returned with news of the river, samples of copper ore, and a mystifying map. Verification was essential. Thus came about the great journey of Samuel Hearne. Hearne left Churchill in November 1769 with Indian companions and instructions to investigate fur prospects as well as copper, to ensure good relations with the Indian population, and to ascertain the position of the river-mouth. This attempt was abortive; likewise another a short time after. Finally, on 7 December 1770, he departed with better hope, travelled slowly till he reached the Coppermine River on 13 July 1771, and followed it down to its mouth on Coronation Gulf five days later. Along the coast-line there was a narrow margin of clear water; beyond he saw the ice of the Arctic Ocean. Here was some copper, but no mine, there were no fur-bearing animals, the river was not navigable. Between the shore of Hudson Bay and the shore of the Arctic he had crossed no salt water and no great river, and his latitude was  $71^{\circ} 34' N$ , his longitude  $120^{\circ} 30' W$ . So he reported. His calculations were not accurate: the mouth of the Coppermine lies in fact in latitude  $67^{\circ} 48' N$ , longitude  $115^{\circ} 47' W$ . His conclusion, however, was inescapable. 'Though my discoveries are not likely to prove of any material advantage to the Nation at large, or indeed to the Hudson's Bay Company, yet I have the pleasure to think that I have fully complied with the orders of my Masters, and that it has put a final end to all disputes concerning a North West Passage through Hudson's Bay.'<sup>2</sup> It is a curiosity of Hudson's Bay Company policy that Hearne's report, like all other reports of its servants, routine or exceptional, was regarded as a matter for the Company only. When Cook's voyage was in preparation it was divulged to the Admiralty and to Cook by, one might say, a special act of grace; to the public for the first time only in Dr Douglas's introduction to the history of that voyage, published in 1784. Hearne's own book did not appear till eleven years later, twenty-four years after his journey.<sup>3</sup>

If the Governor and Committee of the Hudson's Bay Company could have imagined that they had some duty to science, if they could have persuaded themselves that the geographical reports of their servants were not for themselves alone, they might both have mitigated the unpopularity from which they suffered as one of the

<sup>1</sup> Quoted by Williams, p. 132.

<sup>2</sup> Hearne, *A Journey . . . to the Northern Ocean* (London, 1795), p. 303.

<sup>3</sup> It, also, was edited by Douglas, Cook's editor.

most jealous of monopoly powers, and contributed more to the commonwealth of knowledge, at a time when geographical fantasy was peculiarly rampant. They were not a disinterested body. It was a time when the competitive spirit was matched by the fear of competition, and official secrecies by the rashness of public assertions; when every decade the commerce of the world seemed to be at stake anew, and private persons implored ministers of state to carry out immediately (and secretly) some great piece of exploration that would at a stroke outwit the French (or the English, or the Russians, or the Spaniards), transform the appearance of the globe, and forever put the Britannic (or the Gallic) crown in a position of unassailable superiority over the remainder of its inhabitants. Hence a great deal of the interest in the Southern Continent; hence the excitement, on some hands, at the reported least trickle of water into the western side of Hudson Bay, and a refusal to believe that ice-choked inlets were really only inlets, or ice-choked; hence the growing conviction that the north-west side of America must be explored, and would infallibly produce some vast and profitable revelation; hence a renewed interest in England, after two centuries, in the North-East Passage.

The triumphant end of the Seven Years' War had removed from the British mind the fear that the French, through brilliant exploration of a linked great lake and river system, would be first over the North American continent to the Pacific. Nevertheless the resumption of British interest in that Pacific coast, and a possible western entrance to a north-west passage, seemed to the British government sufficiently logical. The interest was a return to the sixteenth century, to the Strait of Anian projects of Sir Humphrey Gilbert and Sir Richard Grenville. These were, in a sense, complementary even if competing projects in the great ferment of Elizabethan thought and action—Gilbert's imperfectly scientific *Discourse of a Discoverie for a new Passage to Cataia* the more influential, setting so much the pattern of so much heroic and defeated endeavour; and Grenville's 'Project' for the discovery of the continent by a ship which would return home through the Strait of Anian, to be discovered from the Pacific end.<sup>1</sup> What Grenville projected, Drake was set to carry out. What Drake did on the Pacific coast of South America in 1578 and 1579 we know well enough; what he did on the coast of the states of

<sup>1</sup> Cf. I, pp. xlii–xliv; and more at length J. A. Williamson, introduction to *The 'Observations' of Sir Richard Hawkins* (London, 1933), pp. xxvi–xxxvi, and *The Age of Drake* (London, 1938), pp. 150–3, 157–9; A. L. Rowse, *Sir Richard Grenville of the 'Revenge'* (London, 1937), chap. V.

Washington (if he did in fact go as far north as latitude 48°) and California in June and July 1579 we know less well. Certainly we know that the Strait was then supposed to open into the Pacific at a latitude no higher than 40°; and that, though Drake was no great explorer, he was well-advised to let it go, refit his leaky ship perhaps somewhere in San Francisco Bay, and return to England in the very different direction of the Spice Islands—having added New Albion, a rather dubious gem, to the Elizabethan crown. Nobody was very attentive to it, any more than to the story of Juan de Fuca's broad inlet of sea, relayed to Purchas through Michael Lok, and first advanced to the world in 1625. There may have been something of de Fuca in the plans for the voyage of Sir John Narborough, sent into the Pacific by the Admiralty in 1669, with the double object of breaking the Spanish monopoly of trade and surveying the north-west coast of America beyond New Albion for the sake of the passage (it was in 1670, as we have noted, that the Hudson's Bay Company got its charter, with its reference to the discovery of a passage into the South Sea). Narborough's farthest north was Valdivia in Chile, whence his difficulties with the Spaniards sent him home in December 1670, after only a few weeks in the Pacific. Between then and the end of the century there were English buccaneers in the ocean, and the Spaniards maintained their regular voyages between Mexico and Manila and back. No one was inclined to explore to the north, least of all the buccaneers. Yet it was the buccaneer Dampier who, describing his adventures off the coast of Mexico, brought up the plan again, in his *New Voyage round the World* of 1697. 'In my opinion', he writes, 'here might be very advantageous Discoveries made by any that would attempt it: for the Spaniards have more than they can well manage.' There was the dog in the manger. He goes on:

'I know there have been divers attempts made about a North West Passage, and all unsuccessful: yet I am of opinion, that such a Passage may be found. All our Countrymen that have gone to discover the N.W. Passage, have endeavoured to pass to the Westward, beginning their search along Davis's or Hudson's Bay. But if I was to go on this Discovery, I would go first into the South Seas, bend my course from thence along by California, and that way seek a Passage back into the West Seas. For as others have spent the Summer, in first searching on this more known side nearer home, and so before they got through, the time of the year obliged them to give over their search, and provide for a long Course back again, for fear of being left in the Winter; on the contrary, I would search first on the less known Coast of the South Sea-side, and then as the Year past away, I should need no retreat, for I should come farther into my know-

ledge, if I succeeded in my attempt, and should be without that dread and fear which the others must have in passing from the known to the unknown: who, for ought I know, gave over their search just as they were on the point of accomplishing their desires.<sup>1</sup>

The dog in the manger theory of Spanish policy has something in it, though it is extremely doubtful whether any other power, situated as the Spaniards were, would have adopted a more generous one. Spanish exploration by land had been persistent and heroic. They had done little by sea, perhaps because their American hinterland, so much of it, was so forbidding. But they had been looking for the Strait of Anian thirty years before Sir Richard Grenville conceived his plan. It was in 1542 that Juan Rodriguez Cabrillo headed from Acapulco up the coast, outside the Californian peninsula, to reach to about latitude 38°, just north of San Francisco Bay; and in 1543 that Bartolomé Ferrello pushed on for four or five degrees further. The Spaniards then let go the search for sixty years, and it was the maritime enterprises of the English and the Dutch, certainly, that stimulated another voyage. In 1602 Sebastian Vizcaino, a Basque who had traded in the Philippines and fished for pearls in the Gulf of California, was sent north to find the strait and the 'populous and rich city of Quivira', first heard of by Coronado in 1540, and supposed to lie on a river near the strait, about latitude 40°. Vizcaino, like Ferrello, went as far as 42° or 43°, making many landings and conferring many names: he returned in 1603 with no strait and no city, but with a theory that Upper and Lower California together must form a great island, with the strait running off the Gulf inside. Here the matter rested again for the Spaniards, for a century and a half and more, and Dampier could make his comment.

It did not rest entirely, according to one circumstantial account, given to the world in 1708 in an English periodical entitled *The Monthly Miscellany or Memoirs for the Curious*.<sup>2</sup> The 'Letter from Admiral Bartholomew de Fonte, then Admiral of New Spain and Peru, and now Prince of Chili', was a Gulliver-like document, without the style, which may have been imposed on the editor, or regarded by him as a promising squib. If the latter, it was damp, and no one could foresee how it would in time dry out and take fire. According to this letter the Court of Spain in 1639, disturbed by advice that the Hudson Bay–Strait of Anian attempts were now being 'undertaken from some Industrious Navigators from Boston in New England',

<sup>1</sup> *Dampier's Voyages* (ed. Masefield), I, pp. 287–8. Dampier adds that he would follow the same plan if he were to go to discover the North-East Passage.

<sup>2</sup> Dr Williams has reprinted the greater part of the document, pp. 277–82.

commanded de Fonte to search the Pacific coast with four ships. The admiral left Callao on 3 April 1640, and had a pleasant passage to the river Los Reyes in  $53^{\circ}$ , inside an archipelago called St Lazarus. He detached one of his captains, Pedro de Barnarda, to explore another river at that point, which took this captain to a large lake; up this he sailed east-north-east to its end in  $77^{\circ}$ . De Fonte himself sailed up the Los Reyes north-east to a lake Belle, then up another river to lake de Fonte, 160 leagues long and 60 broad, and so to a second lake, Estricho de Ronquillo. There he met a ship that had come from the opposite direction, from Boston, commanded by a Captain Shapley. Though his orders were to seize any ship 'seeking a North West or West Passage into the South Sea', the generous Spaniard refrained at this time, saying that he 'would look upon them as Merchants trading with the Natives for Bevers, Otters, and other Furs and Skins'; there were mutual courtesies, de Fonte gave Shapley a thousand pieces of eight for his fine charts and journals, sailed back down the lakes and rivers to the South Sea, and in September returned to Callao; 'having found that there was no Passage into the South Sea by that they call the North West Passage'—i.e. the way taken by Barnarda, one of whose seamen had had to go overland to Davis Strait—but a clear, and it appears enjoyable, waterway through the continent to the place of meeting with Shapley. There was a good deal of inviting circumstantial detail about fish ('excellent cod and ling, very large and well fed'), deer, berries, wild fowl, timber and honest Indians, as from one whose eyes had seen.

The thing made no noise at all in 1708. It was disinterred from the defunct pages by Dobbs, as eager as he had been over de Fuca, to have its great success after the publication of his *Account of the Countries adjoining to Hudson's Bay* of 1744. Dobbs made no doubt of the genuineness of the story, though insisting on his own North-West Passage as well, which ran south of the de Fonte discoveries. The extraordinary part of the affair is how it was taken up by some of the leaders of French scientific geography and cartography—and in cartography the French were then the leaders of Europe—most notably by Joseph Nicholas Delisle and Philippe Buache. Rarely can disbelief have been so willingly suspended. They quarrelled between themselves over de Fonte's latitudes; Delisle in 1752 made the 'Déroit de Ronquillo' synonymous with the actual Wager Bay, while Buache would not carry the 'Lac de Ronquillo' right through to the eastern coast but considered (like Dobbs) that there was a salt-water passage farther south. But both tended somehow or other

to include everything; for example both have an immense expanse of water inland north of California, the Mer de l'Ouest, discovered in 1592 by de Fuca (says Delisle) with an opening from the ocean on each side of a large island, the northern one that of de Fuca, the southern that of Martin de Aguilar, the lieutenant of Vizcaino. The two rash men were assailed by equally eminent compatriots, and by Germans, English, and at least one learned Spaniard. In England John Green, who published a very good *New Chart of North and South America* in 1753<sup>1</sup> was particularly biting, his remark that both de Fuca and de Fonte were 'palpable forgeries' being only a start. (In England, however, there were absurd enough maps published.)<sup>2</sup> The decisive voice, if only it could have been heard at large, was sounded in Spain. There a *Noticia de la California*, in three volumes, by Padre Andrés Marcos Burriel,<sup>3</sup> was published in Madrid in 1757. It was a valuable work, with its account of Jesuit deeds about the Gulf of California, and its appeal for expansion to the north-west; and its third volume contained a hundred and fifty pages of critical examination of de Fonte, Delisle and Buache. Like Green, Burriel clearly marked out the abounding ridiculous in the story; but, unlike Green, he could also examine the Spanish records. From them it was plain that no voyage took place and no de Fonte existed. Unfortunately when an English translation was published in 1759, not only were the destructive pages deliberately omitted: the editor also argued that the work showed the discovery of a passage to be 'a very probable thing'.<sup>4</sup> The later Dutch, French and German translations<sup>5</sup> were from the English one, not the original. It became obvious that the only way to settle the argument was to go and look.

Byron was the man the Admiralty in London, in 1764, selected to go and look, against a background of British arrogance, French suspicion and Spanish nervousness that need not here be again described.<sup>6</sup> There was in some political minds, at least, a very large

<sup>1</sup> Cf. p. 672, n. 2 below.

<sup>2</sup> See, e.g. the reproduction of the Jefferys map of 1768, with its close paralleling of de Fuca's and de Fonte's straits, in R. A. Skelton's *Explorers' Maps*, p. 131; and also Pl. I.

<sup>3</sup> *Noticia de la California, y de su conquista temporal y espiritual*. It is one of the monuments of American Jesuit history. The book is also known over the name of another father, Miguel Venegas, who added to Burriel's manuscript history of 1739 and published it; Sabin's *Bibliotheca Americana* catalogues it thus.

<sup>4</sup> *A Natural and Civil History of California*, 2 vols., London, 1759. Two whole appendixes were excised: VI, an account of the English voyages in search of the Passage; and VII, the examination above referred to. English publishers played fast and loose with more than one foreign work of this sort: cf., on Callander's treatment of de Brosse, I, pp. lxxxi-lxxxiii.

<sup>5</sup> Dutch 1761-2, French 1767, German 1769-70.

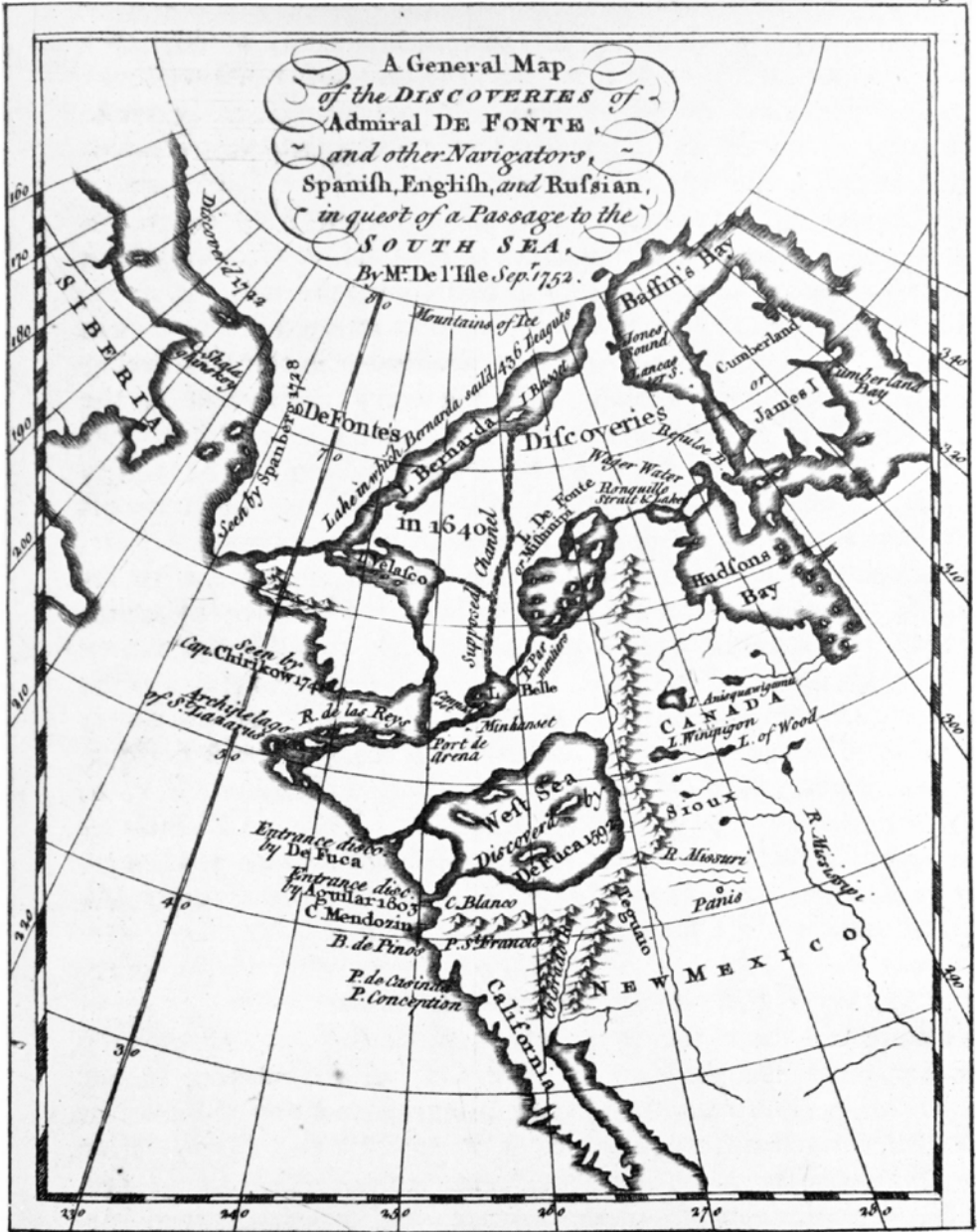
<sup>6</sup> Cf. I, pp. lxxix-xc; though the most recent study, Dr R. E. Gallagher's edition of *Byron's Journal of his Circumnavigation, 1764-66* (Cambridge, 1964), makes desirable some rephrasing of the analysis there given.

scheme of control of the Pacific ocean, through control of its approaches, in the light of which Spanish history and Spanish pretensions seemed, if not irrelevant, quite negligible. The person most vehement in this scheme was the Earl of Egmont; and it is to be noted that the first and most essential object for Byron, whatever other objects Egmont provided for him, was the exploration of the Falkland Islands, as the key to the ocean. Nevertheless the planners had studied the current geographical controversies; for the preamble to Byron's instructions referred to the 'mariners of great Experience who have thought it probable that a passage might be found between the latitudes of  $38^{\circ}$  and  $54^{\circ}$  from that Coast into Hudson's Bay'; and the instructions themselves directed him, after his Atlantic business, to go to Drake's harbour in New Albion, about latitude  $38^{\circ}$  or  $38^{\circ} 30'$ . From this latitude he was 'to search the said Coast with great care and diligence . . . as far to the Northward as you shall find it practicable, making all such observations of . . . Head Lands, Harbours, Bays, Inlets &c<sup>a</sup> as may be useful to Navigation, and endeavouring by all proper means to cultivate friendship and alliance with the Inhabitants. . . . And in case you shall find any probability of exploring a Passage from the said Coast of New Albion to the Eastern side of North America through Hudson's Bay, you are most diligently to pursue it and return to England that way, touching at such place or places in North America, for the Refreshment of your men, and for supplying the Ship and Frigate with Provisions, Wood and Water, as you shall judge proper.'<sup>1</sup> Before even he entered the Pacific, Byron thought his ships too much disabled for this grandeur of programme, 'the California voyage'; the expedition, he wrote to the Admiralty from Port Famine, had already gone through an infinite deal of fatigue and many dangers; and he decided 'to run over for India by a new Track'.<sup>2</sup> It was not a track absolutely new; its chief virtue was that it took him home remarkably quickly. The British eye was still fixed on the Pacific, but, for sufficient reason, on the south Pacific—with what results we have seen at considerable length in the preceding volumes of the present work. Cook's two voyages were of a magnitude to dwarf the North-West Passage.

We must note, at this time, the very lively European scientific scene. Mathematics and astronomy, so important for navigation; chemistry, physics, geology, botany and other departments of natural history; certain aspects of medicine—all were being investigated with enterprise and often fundamental thought. Even when fundamental thought was lacking, however—even when, as with

<sup>1</sup> P.R.O. Adm. 2/1332, pp. 99 ff.

<sup>2</sup> Gallagher, *Byron's Journal*, p. 159.



PL. I. Map of the alleged discoveries of Juan de Fuca  
and Admiral da Fonte

Engraving in Müller's *Voyages from Asia to America*, 1761



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some geographers, a woeful lack of scepticism prevailed—enterprise and ingenuity sometimes had some practical effect. There was, among scientific men, a good deal of mutual stimulus in ideas. There was a good deal of scope for the ardent amateur. It was a time, too, when organized academies of science were eager to exert what influence they could over governments. In England the part played by the Royal Society in originating Cook's first voyage is patent, and its interest in the astronomical side of his second voyage not less so. Some of its council members, like Maskelyne, the astronomer royal, were men of real weight in influential positions. Others, without profundity or technical accomplishment, had wide interests and useful connections, like Daines Barrington, the lawyer and antiquary, the friend of Gilbert White and Banks and Lord Sandwich, the misled friend of John Reinhold Forster.<sup>1</sup> Barrington had developed an interest in arctic exploration; he was almost inevitably the sort of man who would make large generalizations on an insufficiency of data and argue theories doomed to demolition by facts; and he became a correspondent of Samuel Engel, a Swiss of Geneva. Engel was convinced that, as sea water did not freeze, the polar sea must be free of ice—or rather, free of ice that was not the product of rivers debouching on its coasts, that was therefore seasonal and could be avoided by a ship that sailed at the right time in the right direction. He buttressed his theory, apart from abstract meteorological and physical arguments, on testimonies reliable or unreliable, from a variety of seamen and travellers who reported, or were alleged to report, ice-free waters in high latitudes.<sup>2</sup> Barrington was smitten by his enthusiasm and by his methods, and it was the strenuous advocacy of Barrington, on the Council of the Royal Society and as a friend of the First Lord, that led in the summer of 1773 to the despatch into polar seas of the specially strengthened *Racehorse* and *Carcass*, under the command of another person in the Banks–Sandwich circle, the naval Captain Constantine Phipps. Ice-pilots from the Greenland whaling fleet were taken.<sup>3</sup> The hope was that the ships

<sup>1</sup> Cf. II, p. xlv.

<sup>2</sup> It should be noted that the fundamental theory, on whatever arguments it was based, did not perish with the eighteenth century—indeed, not for another hundred years. See John K. Wright, 'The Open Polar Sea', in *Geographical Review*, 43 (1953), pp. 338–65. As Wright points out, 'In itself the theory of an Open Polar Sea was not "outrageous" during its lifetime', though credulously and rhetorically embroidered upon.

<sup>3</sup> Banks talked of going on this expedition, after his return from Iceland, and at the Hague in March 1773 collected all the information he could on ice and ocean-currents from 'a Levee of Greenland Captains'. He did not go. Bougainville was talking of going on a like expedition, and another friend of Banks, the Comte de Lauraguais, suggested that the two should join forces, be given a ship by the French government, 'et le globe serait découvert et connu'.—J. C. Beaglehole (ed.), *The Endeavour Journal of Joseph Banks* (Sydney, 1962), pp. 82, 95–6.

would work by way of Spitsbergen through an outer ring of ice, and then sail on smoothly to the pole. Phipps did get far up the west coast of Spitsbergen, to latitude  $80^{\circ} 37'$ —several miles beyond Hudson's farthest north; then, unable to sail on to the pole, extricated himself with difficulty from the ice-field that had closed round him, and reached home in a much worse state than when he had set out. Barrington should have been discouraged. He was not. He shifted his point of attack.<sup>1</sup> He went over, and got the Royal Society to go over, to the North-West Passage.

It was not the North-West Passage alone that drew a revived public interest about this time. There was also the North-East Passage to Asia that had been sought by the English and Dutch in the second half of the sixteenth century, by Willoughby and Chancellor and Borough, Pet and Jackman, Brunel and Barents and Hudson;<sup>2</sup> and, after the discovery of Spitsbergen and Novaya Zemlya and the Kara Sea, and a profitable trade with the Russians, had been let go.<sup>3</sup> For indeed, it provided no immediate spectacular promise, like Hudson Bay that could itself seem to be for a short time the Pacific. Then the Russians showed their interest, and gave a fresh theme to European scholarship and speculation. Russian statesmanship and the Imperial Academy of Sciences at St Petersburg began to assume a large importance for geographers. Business men were not immune: we find in England traces of their interest in other records than those of the Admiralty—in the papers, for instance, of Lord Dartmouth, secretary of state for the American colonies from 1772 to 1775. Barrington was not the only one to be smitten by Engel. Dartmouth preserved a letter written by one Cramond, a retired merchant who had traded in Persia and Russia, and who had been struck with the

<sup>1</sup> At the same time, he does not seem to have been able to leave the subject of polar exploration alone entirely, to judge from one of his letters to Sandwich, 28 September 1774. This seems to have nothing to do with the Cook voyage; but, though irrelevant, I print it here because of its wider interest. He will not, he says, push the Royal Society to apply to the Admiralty again. 'As your Lordship does not seem to pay much regard to the testimonies of Greenlandmen I fear it never can be prov'd that the Polar Seas are open beyond  $80\frac{1}{2}$ ; your Lordship however will permit me to observe that Cap<sup>t</sup> Phipps himself in his lately publishd voyage does not give the least intimation of the barrier *being perpetual*, though he most undoubtedly was obstructed by ice in that latitude. / With regard to the attempt being made at the expence of the Royal Society, we are really, my Lord, unequal to it as a corporation, because we can but just live from hand to mouth. / As for a private subscription I am not of sufficient consequence to be the first mover, or to place my name at the head of it; if any other person however will undertake this, I will for a younger brother with a very small income contribute a handsome proportion.'—Sandwich Papers.

<sup>2</sup> By Hudson, strictly speaking, in 1605–7.

<sup>3</sup> Perhaps one is bound to mention the one later attempt, the 'futile and farcical expedition led by two drunken Englishmen, Wood and Flawes, in 1676'.—The quotation is from L. P. Kirwan's admirable *History of Polar Exploration* (Penguin ed., 1962), p. 51.

'Probability (I say the Certainty)' of a North-East passage about 1730. He had heard in Russia from 'Count Gallowin, first Lord of their Admiralty', of the Russian determination to find it, 'being assured by the Inhabitants on the Rivers in the North Sea that their Ancestors had frequently gone through the Streights of Anian round to Kamtschatka'. On his return to England, continued Cramond,

'I acquainted Lord Hallifax and M<sup>r</sup> Charles Townshend in Confidence with my Design of fitting out two Ships to look for a North East Passage instead of the North West which was in agitation and So much talk't of at that time; I was greatly encouraged to go on by a Memorial from M<sup>r</sup> Engel on the same Subject which was put into my hands by M<sup>r</sup> Valtravers. . . . Whilst I was preparing for the Expedition I had a Visit from Lord Anson, to whom M<sup>r</sup> Townshend had thought proper to mention what I was about, his Lordship approv'd very much of my Plan—but was of opinion that it ought to be executed by Government, Said that he had two Ships which had been intended to be Sent to the South Seas<sup>1</sup> and that he would get Cap<sup>t</sup> Dennis and Captain Campbell to take the Command of them, to which after some days consideration I consented, in the Interim he judg'd it necessary to communicate the affair to M<sup>r</sup> Pelham, who desired me to Speak of it with the Directors of the E India Company, which I did accordingly and found them of various and very different Sentiments concerning the Expediency of making the discovery; So that it was deferr'd from time to time till the breaking out of the [Seven years'] Warr which put an end to our Speculation. . . .'

Lately Cramond had heard that the Russians were still devoted to the search and would send ships eastwards from Archangel, but his letters to Sandwich and Lord North had been fruitless: 'I must confess that nothing has come to my knowledge which seems to deserve so much being investigated Since the Discovery of America and the Cape of Good Hope'. He enclosed an analysis of Engel's work, 'the whole being intended to show the Impossibility of a North West Passage and to prove the Practicability, Certainty and Safety of a Passage by the North East'.<sup>2</sup>

The contrary nature of the advice from which ministers might

<sup>1</sup> This intention seems to refer to Anson's project of 1749 for a voyage of Pacific discovery, which was dropped on Spanish protests, and not resumed until fifteen years later with Byron's voyage.

<sup>2</sup> Cramond to George Lewis Scott, 24 December 1772, Dartmouth Papers (William Salt Library, Stafford), D 1778, V 284. Scott was a well-known figure of the time, a mathematician who had been sub-preceptor to George III when Prince of Wales; later a commissioner of excise—quite a good avenue to a minister. The encounters with the politicians seem likely to have taken place in 1748-9. They would be ministers: Halifax was president of the Board of Trade 1748-61, and in 1748 Townshend was one of its members. Pelham was prime minister 1743-54. Anson was a lord of the Admiralty 1748-9. This fits the Anson date of the previous note.

suffer is illustrated by the enthusiastic and patriotic, rather incoherent memorandum, also among Dartmouth's papers, of John Hanson. Hanson, who brings forward the old arguments on the nature of ice, wants a passage both ways, though he is strongest on the north-west: 'by the Discoveries that have been Made, it plainly Shews: that this Supposition was Not idely founded, whoever takes an accurate Survey of the Globe, will be Convinc'd; that this passage does Absolutely Exist. . . .' But it was necessary that a new method should be tried,

'and as it is highly Interesting; to the Honour of the British Nation, as being the first Maritime power in Europe, to Undertake it; upon a Noble and Extensive plan, to put the Existence; or Non Existence; of these passages, beyond a doubt, the Discovery of which; will Reflect Eternal Honour upon the British Nation, whereas, Should it be discovered by any European Nation; Especially the French, it will tarnish the laurels of Great Britain, & Rob her of a precious Jewel; which may be hers if She pleases, It is Necessary to Change the Rout of former voyagers; and make the attempt to the North East, between Danish Lapland, & Spitzbergen, & go Northward; between Spitzbergen & Nova Zembla, but as this may be attended with Disappointment also, in order to frustrate the French & to Succeed in the Attempt; as far as human possibility can foresee, I would humbly Recommend to the wisdom of Administration, that two attempts be Made at the same time; the one to the North East; the other Round Callifornia; the last of which; altho' Tedious & long; will Not be Exposed to so Many Inconveniencies; as that to the N. East; as there are a Number of places for them to touch at, such as the Gallipagoas, & the Islands of St Mary<sup>1</sup> & c<sup>a</sup>. Many advantages would arise from the performance of this voyage, Several Improvements made in Geography; and would Sufficiently Compensate for the Expence, which would Not Exceed thirty thousand; should the vessells Return in Safety. they may take a full view of the vermillion Sea,<sup>2</sup> & Settle all Disputes Relative to the Isthmus of Callifornia,<sup>3</sup> & when they double all the land of Callifornia they may winter upon the American Coast, and then construct a bay Craft, which they may Carry out with them; Ready fram'd for that purpose, which will serve to go into Shoal Water, and Explore the Different Harbours, Bays, Rivers, Creeks & c<sup>a</sup> along that Shore, some Miners, Refiners & c<sup>a</sup> may be

<sup>1</sup> The Maria Islands, or Las Tres Marias, north-west of Cape Corrientes, Mexico.

<sup>2</sup> The Gulf of California. Who first called it 'the Vermilion Sea' is unknown; but Fray Antonio de la Ascension, who recorded Vizcaino's voyage, refers to 'the Sea of California, called Mar Vermejo'; and later writes, 'others call it "Mar Vermejo", on account of the reddish appearance of the water'.—H. R. Wagner, *Spanish Voyages to the North-west Coast of America in the Sixteenth Century* (San Francisco, 1929), pp. 258, 266.

<sup>3</sup> 'Disputes Relative to the Isthmus of Callifornia': perhaps this is a reference to the too long-lived theory, first set on foot by Fray Antonio de la Ascension, who had sailed with Vizcaino, that the Californias formed an immense island, with the Strait of Anian running off from the 'Mar Vermejo' inside it.

sent with them, to try the ores and metals they may Chance to find, some Rangers under Experienc'd & Capable officers, may be sent with them, to traverse the Continent, at its Narrowest limits; & Explore the interiour part of the Country, & by the vessells Coasting along Shore, the whole Exstent of it will be Ascertain'd, & Great Britain made acquainted with the Bounds of Her Empire in America, Many advantages may arise to Great Britain, & the Reality of a passage put beyond a doubt; if it is found; one ship may Return to England with the Agreeable News; whilst the others; prosecute their voyage Round Asia; thro the Sea of Kamp-schatka, to Japan &c<sup>s</sup> thro' the Sea D'amour;<sup>1</sup> to China, & so to Great Britain; Round the Cape of Good Hope, this will be a tract; which Never any Ship yet Sailed, this, together with the voyage now in Execution by Cap<sup>t</sup> Cooke, with those perform'd already by his Majesty's Ships, must settle every disputed point in Geography; & will Crown great Britain with Never fading Laurels, & Justly Entitle her; to the title of Empress of the seas; it will be fulfilling the Holy Scriptures, by Extending the Name of our Bless'd Saviour; to the utmost Corners of the Earth, from Pole to Pole. this Honour seems to be Reserved for the British Nation;

'NB [Hanson thoughtfully adds]. Two Ice boats may perhaps be not thought improper, to be taken along with them, to Sail upon the ice, in case of obstruction.'<sup>2</sup>

Strip away the undue excitement from this document, and some of the absurd details, such as those of miners and refiners, and 'Rangers . . . to traverse the Continent, at its narrowest limits', which read like the dreams of some crazy would-be *conquistador*, and what have we but an elaborated—an over-ornamented—version of the voyage projected for Byron? It lacks the more dignified tread of the eloquence of a Dr John Campbell addressing the Merchants of Britain on the economics of empire, on the imperishable glory of getting in first: nevertheless it probably represents well enough a state of public feeling, a background against which statesmen, however sceptical, would find it safe to act. The plan which Barrington matured at about the same time as this one—which has the appearance of a purged and rational version of this one—seemed rational to Barrington, in the end, just because of his disbelief that ice could be an effective hindrance to it.

He took his plan to the Council of the Royal Society in February 1774, and among those who ratified it, and a consequential letter to the Admiralty, were Banks, Solander, Henry Cavendish, Maskelyne the astronomer royal, and Samuel Wegg the deputy-governor of the

<sup>1</sup> Not as romantic as it looks: the Sea of Amur—i.e. the Sea of Japan. The 'Sea of Kampschatka' corresponds to the western part of the Bering Sea.

<sup>2</sup> The memorandum is dated 18 January 1774; Dartmouth Papers, D 1778, V 286.

Hudson's Bay Company. As coming from the Royal Society, it was put solely in terms of science. It had one original point, in its suggestion of a western approach to the problem, rather than the preliminary passage round South America. An expedition fitted out in either Europe or the East Indies might be victualled finally at Canton in China: 'whence the run to the Northern parts of New Albion will not be, probably, longer than from England to Jamaica', and the American coastline could thus be investigated with a minimum of delay. If no passage should be found, then 'the coast of the North Eastern parts of Asia, Kamshatska & Korea may be explored; with regard to which we are so imperfectly informed at present'; and the vessels might afterwards return in proper time to Canton.<sup>1</sup> The Admiralty reply to this communication was that as no provision had been made for so expensive an undertaking, their Lordships did not think themselves at liberty to engage in it.<sup>2</sup> This was only the necessary first official response, and the real negotiations then started. Sir John Pringle, the president of the Royal Society, was to see the Speaker. Sandwich thought this meeting had better be deferred until he himself had talked with Barrington. Sandwich's inclination was clear: there would have to be, however, an additional vote for naval expenses if anything were to be done in 1774, and 'the leading friends of Administration in the House of Commons' would have to be sounded out. The leading friends did not agree: nevertheless there was triumph, and by the end of March Barrington could inform the Council that although 1774 was impossible, the voyage 'will be undertaken after the return of Cap<sup>t</sup> Cook in 1775; when a similar expedition will be fitted out, which will in general follow the outline proposed by the Council of the Royal Society to the Board of Admiralty'.<sup>3</sup> Barrington did not leave the matter there: he could neither organize nor hasten the expedition, but he must have felt he could organize Parliament, and certainly he had much to do with the bill introduced in the early part of 1775 to vary the terms of the act of 1745 which offered the £20,000 reward. The Royal Society's proposals were all science—'for the promotion of Science in general, and more particularly that of Geography'; the 1745 act was all trade—'of great benefit and advantage to the trade of this Kingdom'; it was now, in 1775, possible to bring science before a British parliament, and the bill was aimed at the 'many advantages both to commerce

<sup>1</sup> R. S. Council Minutes, VI, pp. 216-17, 17 February 1774. The full text of the letter is given on pp. 1483-4 below.

<sup>2</sup> 7 March 1774; *ibid.*, pp. 220-1.

<sup>3</sup> Sandwich to Barrington, 12 March 1774, Sandwich Papers; Barrington to Horsley, 30 March 1774, R. S. Council Minutes, VI, p. 227.

and science' that were promised by the discovery. The projected expedition was a naval one, and the inducement of the reward was no longer confined, as it had been, to private vessels. The 1745 act had specified that the passage should lie between the Pacific and Hudson Bay; in 1775 it must be north of latitude 52°, and Hudson Bay was unmentioned.<sup>1</sup> Barrington had not forgotten the North Pole: he managed to get into the bill the promise of £5000 to the crew of the first ship to approach within a degree of it, since 'such approaches may greatly tend to the discovery of a communication between the Atlantic and Pacific oceans'. He had wanted more—why not £20,000?—had been forced to temporize with £10,000, and finally set down at half that sum by the adamant and unpolar-minded Sandwich.<sup>2</sup> The bill passed finally in December 1775. By that time more practical preparations for the voyage were in train, and Admiralty thoughts were moving in a rather wider scope. The Royal Society influence diminishes.

It diminishes—or rather the force of Barrington's proposal of Canton as a base is quite lost—because (almost certainly, we are compelled to think) of a new Russian geographical theory that became public in 1774. Possibly, also, an attentive re-reading of Anson's experiences in 1742–3 may have diminished faith in the Chinese as victuallers of an exploring expedition. One must without doubt, however, turn to the history of Russian exploration in the north Pacific; for what the Russians did was to be of fundamental importance for what Cook might do when he at last found himself in that part of the world. The Strait of Anian, not as a passage through North America, but as a possible or probable division between North America and Asia, is again before us. One is carried back to Mr Cramond's conversations with 'Count Gallowin' about 1730. One is carried back farther, indeed, to the eastward journeyings of Russian hunters and fur-traders across Siberia in the seventeenth century—a frontier movement that parallels the movement westward of French and English hunters and fur-traders in America about the same time. There were forays to the Arctic coast of Siberia, some coastwise journeys on the ice; some, in favourable seasons, by sea; certainly no

<sup>1</sup> See p. lxvii below.

<sup>2</sup> He never parted with his belief in the possibility of sailing to the pole. In 1775, the year his proposal for the reward was beaten down, he published *The Probability of Reaching the North Pole Discussed. Additional Proofs that the Polar Seas are Open*, a Royal Society paper of December 1774; and republished it in his *Miscellanies* of 1781 (after the return of Cook's ships) with another paper entitled *Thoughts on the Probability, Expediency and Utility of Discovering a Passage by the North Pole*, also first published in 1775. Phipps's experience, he argued, had by no means the force of finality. The ice-field changed its position (which was true enough); Phipps had tried in a bad year. There are three of his letters to Sandwich on the bill in the Sandwich Papers; 15 May (two), and 20 November 1775.

continuous accomplishment of a north-east passage. One such journey, if we are to believe him who claimed it, was that of Semen Dezhnev, a Siberian Cossack fleeing eastwards from serfdom, who in 1648 with a boat's crew followed the coast round by sea from the Kolyma river to the mouth of the Anadyr river. Now the Kolyma river flows into the East Siberian Sea, the Anadyr through Kamchatka into the Bering Sea; so that if Dezhnev was right, he had gone through Bering Strait, past the East Cape that is now in his honour called Cape or Mys Dezhneva, and solved one of the great geographical problems of the age. His feat was unnoticed by contemporaries, was hailed in the next century, denied in the nineteenth, and has now, it seems from the Russian re-naming of the cape in 1898, become a thing of orthodox belief; it remains however not quite proven.<sup>1</sup> We can stand more securely when we come to the eighteenth century, though the ground is not always clear: to a far-reaching plan of Peter the Great and the notable figure of the seaman Bering.

In the early years of this century Kamchatka was invaded and in some sort 'conquered' by the Russians; and beyond Kamchatka was the sea. Peter had long meditated a further expedition; at the end of 1724 he drew up instructions for it, and before he died in February 1725 had selected three of the principal officers for it. These were Bering, the Dane Martin Spanberg, and the Russian Alexei Chirikov. Vitus Bering was himself a Dane, born in 1681, who had gone into the Russian navy in 1704, rendered distinguished service, and had experience both in the East and the West Indies. His two lieutenants have their separate importance, because of the parts they later played in the great plan, though at first they were quite subordinate to Bering. The plan was to build ships in Kamchatka; to sail north along its eastern coast, which might, for all that was known, connect with America: if it did so, to find a European ship or settlement,<sup>2</sup> and bring back a chart and all possible information. The three men left St Petersburg in early February 1725. Such was the greatness of the journey and other difficulties that it was not until 13 July 1728

<sup>1</sup> For a very cogent examination of the matter, and a verdict against Dezhnev, see F. A. Golder, *Russian Expansion on the Pacific 1641-1850* (Cleveland, Oregon, 1914), pp. 71-95. The contrary verdict is given in the article by L. Breitfus, 'Early Maps of North-Eastern Asia and of the Lands around the North Pacific'; *Imago Mundi*, III, pp. 87-99. Terence Armstrong, *The Northern Sea Route* (Cambridge, 1952), p. 23, n. 2, refers to the Russian work of L. S. Berg as showing 'that the more widely held view that Dezhnev did go all the way by sea is probably right'. Berg's work is *Otkrytiye Kamchatki i ekspeditsii Beringa, 1725-1742* [*The Discovery of Kamchatka and Bering's expeditions, 1725-1742*], (3rd ed., Moscow and Leningrad, 1946), pp. 27-38.

<sup>2</sup> This seems to be the intent of the instructions, given in Golder, *Russian Expansion*, p. 134; but Chirikov thought that the mouth of the Kolyma, an Asian settlement, would qualify.—*ibid.*, p. 144.

that they could sail from the Kamchatka river, on the Gulf of Anadyr, in the single ship *St Gabriel*. In her they pushed up the coast, through a great deal of fog, head winds and rain, to about  $65^{\circ} 30'$ , on 13 August. Here Bering held a council. They had, he thought, passed the most easterly point of Asia; should they go on, or look for a harbour?—and where should they winter? Spanberg advised going on till the 16th, and then to return to the Kamchatka river; Chirikov to sail on round the coast to the Kolyma—since without doing so there would be no certainty that America was separated from Asia—or until they met with ice; or, if the land continued to the north, to go on for twelve more days and then look for winter quarters. Bering agreed with Spanberg and put certainty beyond his grasp: on the 16th, in latitude  $67^{\circ} 18'$ , out of sight of any coast, though on the northern side of the strait that he merely assumed to exist, they turned back; next day sighted the islands of St Diomede in the middle of the strait, but not the fog-hidden American shore; two days later discovered and named St Lawrence Island, and reached the Kamchatka river on 2 September. They had sighted no eastern land at all, apart from the islands, and they might all the while have been in an enormous bay that swung round between Asia and America far in the north.<sup>1</sup> Bering, nevertheless, was convinced that the continents were separated; but he was convinced of that before he started out. He was convinced that he had obeyed his instructions. Obviously it was Chirikov, not Bering, who understood the nature of proof; and in St Petersburg the Admiralty was unconvinced. Nor did a voyage of a few days to the eastward in 1729, while Bering was on his way to Okhotsk, provide any further proof of anything.

While he was in St Petersburg, managing to survive hostile criticism (he had friends as well as critics) something else was done. From the Chukchi, the inhabitants of the north-eastern district of Siberia, the Russians heard of islands close to the Anadirski cape, at the entrance to Bering Strait, particularly of an island they called 'the large country' (Russian *bolshaya zemlya*)—which was not, as we now know, an island at all. In the summer of 1732 a surveyor called Mikhail Fedorovich Gvozdev left the Kamchatka river in Bering's *St Gabriel* to investigate these islands, landed on one of the Diomedes, and from it saw the *bolshaya zemlya*. He had some conversation with a Chukchi who came off in a kayak, but did not land because of the sailors' insistence on returning to Kamchatka; and there he returned without realizing, apparently, that he had crossed a strait and seen

<sup>1</sup> 'Three and a half years of laborious preparation, two months of inconclusive search!'—Wroth, *Early Cartography of the Pacific*, p. 132.

America. Not until 1743 was a report of this voyage made for the Admiralty. Meanwhile in the Russian capital, owing to the efforts of Peter the Great to introduce contemporary European thought to his country, there was a growing interest in the scientific as well as geographical exploration of Siberia, and under the empresses Anne and Elizabeth there was to be an immense harvest of knowledge gathered by the travelling young geographers and astronomers and natural historians, many of them German and French, who reported to the Imperial Academy of Sciences. The geographical Delisle brothers, the great Pallas, Gmelin and Steller the naturalists, Müller and Krashennikov the historians, and a number of others, made altogether a very large contribution to the descriptive sciences; and into the large general plan were fitted new schemes for the employment of Bering, Spanberg and Chirikov the seamen. Bering had himself drawn up large plans of Siberian exploration and economic development, apart from the important ones for our purpose, those for discovery by sea. America could not be far from Kamchatka, nor could the Kurile and Japanese islands (the source of much confusion to previous sailors and geographers); and both with America and with Japan trade might be profitable. Bering anticipated no difficulty with either discovery. It was decided to send him and Chirikov on the American voyage, and Spanberg to elucidate the Kurile-Japan muddle. It may be added here that Spanberg's success was only moderate (though he blew away some hoary fictions), and what he did enters little into later English calculations. Bering's voyage, on the other hand, though it also had only moderate success, was to be one of Cook's chief points of reference on the North American coast. Georg Wilhelm Steller, the naturalist, sailed as surgeon with Bering; Louis Delisle de la Croyère, the geographer and astronomer, with Chirikov.

Caught up in a tangle of procrastinations, inefficiencies, and intrigues, Bering, though he arrived at Okhotsk in 1734, was not able to begin his voyage from the harbour of Petropavlovsk till 5 June 1741. He was then aged sixty, a much badgered and depressed man, unfit to master emergencies. He had two ships, his own *St Peter*, with Chirikov in the *St Paul*. His original plan had been to sail early in May, winter in America, and return the following year. As it was he left late, and short of stores. The plan was now to sail south-east to about latitude  $45^{\circ}$ , picking up in succession the badly-charted coasts called Company Land and Gama Land, and then America. If land was not found on that course, a change to east by north must bring the ships to America, the coast of which should be followed north to between  $64^{\circ}$  and  $66^{\circ}$ —where lay the north-eastern limit of Asia; then

they should turn due west to Asia and run down the coast to Petropavlovsk, which should be reached in September. They duly sailed to  $46^{\circ}$ , changed course, and in awkward weather on 20 June parted company. They could not meet again. Continued changes of course were forced on Bering, but keeping generally east, on 16 July he at last sighted land, a chain of snow-covered mountains in about latitude  $58^{\circ} 28'$ .<sup>1</sup> He named the highest of these after St Elias, whose day was 20 July, and on that day, after beating some distance north-west of his landfall, anchored off Kayak Island (lat.  $59^{\circ} 48'$ , long.  $144^{\circ} 36' W$ ). Here water was obtained, Steller was allowed on shore for a few hours to work, but no one set foot on the mainland; and next day Bering, in an increasing alarm over the future, ordered immediate departure for home. The return journey, in baffling winds and storms and fogs off the Aleutian islands, sighted from time to time, with Bering and many of his men down with scurvy, was a frightful one. The first man to die was buried on Nagai ('Shumagin') island, then men died almost daily. Fog and storm continued, and on 6 November the ship was wrecked on a coast thought to be Kamchatka, in reality Bering Island, just over 100 miles away, the larger of the two Commander or Komandorski islands. Bering died on 8 December, one of the thirty who perished on land or at sea. The survivors wintered fairly successfully, built a small vessel from the timbers of the *St Peter*, and managed to get to Petropavlovsk on 27 August 1742. Meanwhile Chirikov in the *St Paul*, on 15 July 1741, also sighted the coast of America, in about latitude  $55^{\circ} 21'$ , three degrees south of Bering's landfall. Two days later he anchored in a bay in  $57^{\circ} 50'$  and sent a boat ashore with eleven men. It did not return. On the 23rd, fearing an accident, he sent a second boat with four men to investigate. This did not return either. It seems likely that he was off Lisianski Strait, between Yakobi and Chichagof islands, and that both his boats, going in on a flood tide, had been caught in the strong current of Lituya Bay and lost, as La Pérouse lost two boats in 1786—a fate far more probable than destruction by Indians.<sup>2</sup> Chirikov had no boats left, and after three more days,

<sup>1</sup> Bering's noon latitude for this day was  $58^{\circ} 17' N$  by observation; his longitude by dead reckoning  $151^{\circ} 26' W$ . But during the greater part of the voyage a current had set him constantly to the eastward, and his longitude was more than  $9^{\circ}$  out. The correct figure would be about  $142^{\circ} 10' W$ .

<sup>2</sup> The conjecture is a strong one. But other conditions are equally risky. The tidal stream at Lituya Bay flows at 8 knots at neap tides, 12 knots at spring tides. 'The ebb stream, running out against a south-westerly swell, causes heavy overfalls across the entire entrance, in which no small boat could survive . . . no stranger should attempt to enter except at slack water, which lasts from 10 to 20 minutes.'—*South-East Alaska Pilot* (3rd ed., 1948), p. 405.

unable to land and in want of water, decided to return to Kamchatka. He made a passage easier than Bering's, though bad enough from storms and inadequate clothing and provisions. Six more men died from scurvy and exhaustion, including Delisle de la Croyère just as the ship anchored in Avacha Bay on 10 October. Chirikov himself was seriously ill, but recovered and was able to go to sea again in May 1742, hoping to reach the American coast and find Bering. He did not pass near Bering Island, north of his route, though before the weather forced him back he found Attu, one of the Near group, and Atka, one of the Andreanof group, among the chain of the Aleutian Islands.

So ended that effort. Bering looks to have been a valuable rather than a great man, of little original force of mind, and entering on his last service when past his prime. It must be remembered, nevertheless, that he was sailing unpleasant and treacherous waters, and that both he and Chirikov in 1741 had the worst possible luck. We can trace and analyse this voyage with a great deal of certainty now. Such certainty is a matter of comparatively recent scholarship,<sup>1</sup> and eighteenth century students and sailors had little real idea of what had happened. The essential point of Bering's first voyage was well enough known: it was not complicated, and Cook could pick it up in, for instance, Campbell's edition of Harris. For the second voyage there was no published journal and no adequate history. The best account was in the third volume of the *Sammlung Russischer Geschichte* of the Gerhard Friedrich Müller who had served on the great Siberian enterprise and became in 1747 official historiographer of the Russian Empire. This volume appeared in 1758; part of it was translated into English under the title of *Voyages from Asia to America* and published in 1761.<sup>2</sup> It gave to the world some account of Bering's first voyage of 1728, of Gvozdev, and of the American voyage of 1741-2. It also provided a map of great importance in our story, which duly appeared in English guise.<sup>3</sup> This map showed a firm

<sup>1</sup> See F. A. Golder (ed.), *Bering's Voyages*, 2 vols., New York, 1922-5. This is an annotated edition of the extant logs of the voyage, and of Steller's extremely interesting journal, and provides an invaluable chart showing the courses laid down.

<sup>2</sup> *Voyages from Asia to America for completing the Discoveries of the North-West Coast of America. To which is prefixed a Summary of the Voyages of the Russians on the Frozen Sea in search of a North-East Passage . . . Translated from the High Dutch of S. [sic] Müller . . . by Thomas Jefferys. With the addition of three new maps . . .* London, 1761; second edition 1764. There was a French translation in 1766.

<sup>3</sup> See Pl. 2. This map in its first state is dated 1754, and a reproduction appears in Wroth's *Early Cartography of the Pacific*. I do not discuss here the earlier maps taking in the Bering voyages, the Le Rouge map of 1746, the J. N. Delisle-Buache map and Delisle memoir of 1750/52, and the John Green chart of 1753, because I do not think they are very relevant to an analysis of the knowledge available to Cook. They are interesting, however, and will be found discussed in Wroth's book, pp. 136-40, and Williams, pp. 142-53.



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Pl. 2. Müller's map of the North Pacific Ocean  
 Engraving in Müller's *Voyage*

MAP  
of the  
discovery made by the RUSSIANS  
in the  
North-west  
part of AMERICA.  
As it is  
the property of the  
Academy of Sciences at Petersburg.  
By  
W. M. JEFFREYS  
Geographer  
to His Majesty.



Map of the Russian discoveries  
 voyages from Asia to America, 1761



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coastline of northern Asia, fronting on the 'Icy Sea', from the Gulf of Ob and Novaya Zemlya right round to Kamchatka and the Kuriles, except for a conjectural magnified north-east point. It marked the ancient sea-route along this coast to the Sea of Anadyr, and referred to the Dezhnev voyage of 1648. Gvozdev's discovery was given a hard outline; so were the islands sighted by Bering, and the bits of Alaskan 'mainland' supposed to be sighted by him, with some of the names he gave, and one or two conferred, perhaps, by Müller. This was done also for the American sightings of Bering and Chirikov. South of Chirikov's discovery the coast was mere dots (including the de Fonte area) until it became a hard line again with the entrance to de Fuca's strait, and on past that of Martin de Aguilar, New Albion, and San Francisco Bay to what was then called California. The map had no truck with north-west passages: the nearest it came to a waterway across North America was a River of the West between Lake Winnipeg and (conjecturally) Martin de Aguilar's opening. This was the French and not the English conception. On the other side of the ocean Spanberg's results in the Kuriles and Japan were included. Courses were marked for Bering and Chirikov. But perhaps the most interesting thing, in retrospect, was the suggested outline for the American coast opposite Kamchatka and that part of Asia to its north. This took the form of a great blunt-ended peninsula, a continuous projection to the west of North America, its northern side running roughly parallel with the Asian coast, its southern side fringed with Bering's islands. Far to the north, after a large break, was conjectured another piece of coastline roughly parallel with Baffin Bay. If all this proved true—and Müller, reasonably hesitant, wrote, 'My work herein has been no more than to connect together, according to probability, by points, the coasts that had been seen in various places'—then it would seem fairly sensible, geographically speaking, to use the port of Canton for the start of a voyage into these northern waters, a voyage through Bering Strait to the sea that Hearne had found: to approach, that is, from the south-west. The map, then, was a by no means rash collation of the known and the unknown, and was for almost twenty years taken as standard, a document on which Barrington quite naturally assumed he could base his proposals.

On this assumption fell very heavily in 1774 a new book and a new map, a copy of one issued by the St Petersburg Academy of Sciences in 1773.<sup>1</sup> Bering's men had brought back reports not merely of islands but of sea-otters, seals, and foxes. In 1745 a Siberian merchant,

<sup>1</sup> *Nouvelle Carte des Découvertes faites par des Vaisseaux russiens.*

Mikhail Nevotsikov, crossed to these islands and found them astonishingly rich in the fur-bearing animals. A trading company was immediately organized under imperial patronage (the beginning of the Russian-American Company), and there began a murderous onslaught upon the inhabitants of the Aleutian islands, human as well as animal, which was in due course to carry the Russians along the whole length of the islands to the Alaskan peninsula and the main American continent, setting up storehouses and armed posts as they went. Traders and hunters were perforce discoverers. It is sometimes difficult, amid a confusion of names, to tell what they discovered—as with the ‘Kadiak’ or ‘Kodiak’ of Stepan Glotov in 1762; and abler explorers were the naval officers such as Peter Kumikh Krenitsin and Mikhail Levashev among the Fox Islands and on the Alaskan mainland coast in 1768–9. The one who got most immediate attention, though no vast admiration, was Lieutenant Synd or Sind. It is difficult also to follow exactly the two voyages of Synd. The first, from Okhotsk in 1764, took him northwards in the Bering Sea with no particular ascertainable result; on the second, in 1767, he discovered the island of St Matthew, visited Bering’s island of St Lawrence, and touched on the American continent south of Cape Prince of Wales, somewhere between latitudes 64° and 66°. He returned without making any survey of the coast: thus, so far as America was concerned, adding little to Gvozdev. In the book of 1774, however, he was given a large importance. This was the volume entitled *An Account of the New Northern Archipelago, Lately Discovered by the Russians in the Seas of Kamtschatka and Anadir*, by Jacob von Stählin or Jakob Stählin von Storksburg, the secretary of the Russian Academy of Sciences.<sup>1</sup> Published in its original German in Stuttgart, it was brought before the Royal Society in June by Dr Maty, the secretary, and a translation into English put in hand at once, so that it was out in London before the end of the year.<sup>2</sup> It seems therefore to have caused some excitement within the geographical

<sup>1</sup> He was another of the Germans who lent lustre to Russian learning, but of a lesser order than those already mentioned. Born in 1710, he spent the years 1735–85 (when he died) at St Petersburg, writing miscellaneous on the fine arts, literature, geography, and other subjects. In geography he might have learnt caution from Müller.

<sup>2</sup> The translation was by C. Heydinger; the introduction was signed ‘M.M.’—Matthew Maty. Maty was closely identified with the production—we shall see the map referred to below in the journals as ‘Dr Maty’s map’.—It was a peculiar compilation: the greater part of it (pp. 41–118) is devoted to ‘A Narrative of the singular Adventures of Four Russian Sailors, who were cast away on the desert island of East Spitzbergen’, by ‘Mr. P. L. Leroy, Professor of History, and Member of the Imperial Academy of Sciences at St. Petersburg’—very likely as a makeweight to the thinness of the rest of the book. The first twenty pages only are devoted to ‘A Brief Account of the New Discovered Islands in the Northern Seas’; pp. 21–39 to an ‘Extract of the Report made to the Directing Senate, from the Chanceries of the Government of Irkuzk, Kamtschatka & Bolscherezk . . .’, on the islands discovered.

group of the learned, and it must undoubtedly have influenced the Admiralty.

The Empress Catherine, wrote Stählin, desired the eastward expansion of her dominions in trade and navigation.

‘Further to promote this end, the Admiralty-Office at Ochotskoi on the sea of *Pensinsk*, or of *Ochotskoi*, had orders from her Majesty to assist this trading company of *Kamtschatka*, in the prosecution of their undertaking; to provide them with convoys; and to endeavour to procure all possible information relative to the islands and coasts they intended to visit, to the north and north-east, beyond *Kamtschatka*. In the year 1764, they accordingly sailed, from the harbour of *Ochotskoi*, with some two-masted galliots, and single-masted vessels of Siberia, called *Doschtschenik*, a kind of covered barges, under a convoy from the aforesaid Admiralty-Office, commanded by the Lieutenant, Mr. SYNDO. They passed the sea of *Ochotskoi*; went round the southern cape of *Kamtschatka*, into the Pacific Ocean; steered along the eastern coast, keeping nothward; and at last came to an anchor in the harbour of *Peter Paul*, and wintered in the *Ostrog*, or pallsided Village, belonging to it. The next year they pursued their voyage farther north ward; and in that and the following years, 1765 and 1766, by degrees discovered a whole Archipelago of islands of different sizes, which increased upon them the farther they went, between the 56th and 67th degrees of north latitude; and they returned safe, in the year 1767. The reports they made to the Government’s Chancery at *Irkutzk*, and from thence sent to the Directing Senate, together with the Maps and Charts thereto annexed, make a considerable alteration in the regions of the sea of *Anadir*, and in the situation of the opposite coast of America; and give them quite a different appearance from what they had in the above-mentioned Map, engraved in the year 1758.<sup>1</sup> This difference is apparent, by comparing it with the amended Map published last year, 1773, by the Academy of Sciences;<sup>2</sup> and is still more visible in the very accurate little Map of the new discovered Northern Archipelago here annexed, which is drawn up from the original accounts. In this are delineated both the former tracks of BEHRING and TSCHIRIKOFF; and more particularly the late voyage of our trading company of *Kamtschatka*, under Lieutenant SYNDO, together with all the new islands he discovered, are set down according to their situation and apparent magnitude, some with names, and some without.’<sup>3</sup>

‘It is needless to name every one of the islands which compose our new Northern Archipelago,’ goes on Stählin, ‘as they are set down in the Map hereto annexed, with their situation and size. As to the absolute accuracy of the two first articles, namely, the true situation,

<sup>1</sup> The Müller map.

<sup>2</sup> A map one of the amendments in which made Bering Strait more than 300 miles wide.

<sup>3</sup> Stählin, *Account*, pp. 12–15.

as to geographical latitude and longitude, and their exact dimensions, I would not be answerable for them, till they can be ascertained by astronomical observations.<sup>1</sup>

Stählin's 'very accurate little Map'<sup>2</sup> looks as if some large fist has come down on the fragile surface of Müller's north-west American peninsula, shattered it into displaced fragments and sent some of it into thin air. The largest of the fragments is an island called Alaschka, between what we may for convenience call East Cape or Cape Dezhnev and a bulge on the American shore—but twice as far from America as it is from Asia. The bulge is labelled North America, Great Continent, and 'Stachtan Nitada', which last form of words seems to be quite meaningless. Due south of Alaschka are a few small islands and a larger one, of uncompleted outline, called Unalaska. From there a semicircular fringe, a good deal of it named Aleutskia Isles, runs round towards Asia, straddling the 60th parallel and screening off the Sea of Anadir from the vast ocean. There is some truth of conception here, no sense of direction: a chain of Aleutskian or Aleutian islands, one of the larger of which is Unalaska, does run out as an extension of an Alaskan peninsula, though it was wise of Stählin, in this unwise piece of cartography, not to make himself answerable for the 'absolute accuracy' of his rendering. His unjustifiable rashness lay in the large passage he left between his Alaschka and his North America or 'Stachtan Nitada', because no one had looked there yet, and to argue that because some islands existed everything must be islands was the height, not merely of unwisdom, but of absurdity. Daines Barrington, sceptical for once in a rather unsceptical pamphlet, refused to give any credit to the map at all;<sup>3</sup> and William Coxe, the first English historian of the Russian voyages, was after a critical examination equally condemnatory.<sup>4</sup> Coxe's book was not published till 1780, no help to voyagers who sailed in 1776; and there the new Northern Archipelago was, noted down by Lieutenant Synd and other explorers, put into a very accurate little map; and who could be blamed for hitting instantaneously on the admirable way, open, spacious and direct, thus presented up the American coast from New Albion into the sea, not entirely frozen, on the shore of which Samuel Hearne had stood? Certainly that would be preferable to an approach from Canton, with its unblest merchants and mandarins.

<sup>1</sup> *ibid.*, pp. 16–17.

<sup>2</sup> Pl. 3.

<sup>3</sup> *Summary Observations and Facts . . . to show the Practicability and good Prospect of Success in Enterprises to discover a Northern Passage* (London, 1776), p. 24.

<sup>4</sup> *An Account of the Russian Discoveries between Asia and America* (London, 1780), pp. 283–4, 300–2. Coxe had spent some time in Russia.



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C. Heydinger in the Strand June 20<sup>th</sup> 1774.

T. Kitchin Sculp.

the Russian discoveries  
 the New Northern Archipelago, 1774



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Whatever might be thought of Canton, we can now see emerging the grand strategy of an actual voyage.<sup>1</sup> Hearne, the Barrington-Engel ice theory, the Stählin island theory, are all there. During 1775 we must regard the mixture as settling down in the Admiralty mind: presumably in the Royal Society mind also. Some time or other Cook was brought into the discussion: if we are to lean on Kippis's dramatization of the proceedings, in February 1776. To bring Cook in was to listen to Cook's ideas on strategy; and though Cook might know nothing about the Arctic, he knew a good deal about the Pacific, and had his own experience of bases. After his second voyage, he thought he knew the Pacific winds. The most natural and the most advantageous way for him to get into the ocean and to the eastern side of it would be not by Magellan's strait or the Horn, like Byron or himself on his first voyage, but by the Cape of Good Hope. There he knew the possibilities of refreshment and had friends in the business; and if nothing went wrong with his timing he would be able to look round a little south-east of the Cape, on his eastward passage, and verify the discoveries the French had made in that part, with the news of which Crozet had obliged him in March 1775. Once within the Pacific his base would undoubtedly be the familiar Tahiti—though perhaps the Friendly Islands would be useful also—and Tahiti would not be too far south for recruitment during the arctic winter. This would fit in too with the necessity of getting Omai back home. The passage from Tahiti to the north-west American coast could present no difficulty. We can see at the back of Cook's mind one or two other thoughts: he could, on the long

<sup>1</sup> The mention of Canton and strategy brings up the questions of trade and strategy in the military and naval sense. My argument since the mention of Dobbs's attack on the Hudson's Bay Company has been almost all geographical. True, the background to British foreign policy, naval strategy and exploration in this period was economic, just as much as it ever was. Exhortations to the British government (cf. Cramond and Hanson above) never failed to mention trade. It is perfectly true that the discovery of a navigable north-west passage would have revolutionized British overseas commerce, and that in 1774 the East India Company, which had been only lukewarm about Cramond's proposal, was very much more interested in Engel (Williams, pp. 182-3). 'Commerce and science' were joined in the Act of 1775 instituting the great reward. It may be significant that the decision in 1774 for a north Pacific voyage was taken in the same year that the Falkland Islands were given up to Spain; and it is again perfectly true that both the Spaniards and the French were uneasy about this voyage, as they had been uneasy about the previous British Pacific voyages. It is perfectly true that Cook had the usual instructions to take possession of appropriate places. But I agree with Dr Williams (p. 183) that 'there is little evidence that trade considerations played the leading part in the decision to send Cook in search of a passage'; and unless further evidence turns up, I should say the same about strategic considerations. It seems to me that with this voyage, as with Cook's second voyage and with Phipps's northern voyage in 1773, Admiralty feeling about a positive result (southern continent, ice-free Pole) was probably sceptical. Yet Sandwich, among others, had a lively and curious mind, the duty to science was recognized; and for 'Administration' in general the remotely possible prize was so great that the thing was worth a gamble. One does not see much sign of swelling hearts among ordinary politicians or merchants.

stretch from the Cape to Tahiti, look at Van Diemen's Land, omitted by him on two previous voyages, and if he called in at Queen Charlotte's Sound he could certainly refill his water and collect greens, and might even pick up information about the disaster that had befallen Furneaux's men in 1773.

At some moment, probably in the six months between 10 February 1776, when Cook formally volunteered for the service, and 6 July, when his instructions were signed, all these thoughts, from Royal Society to Cook, were co-ordinated, and the plan was given its final form. There were to be two ships. Cook was to go as directly as possible to the Cape, there to refresh and take in supplies. Leaving at the end of October or beginning of November (which might be deemed early summer) he was to go south to latitude  $48^{\circ}$ , search for the islands of Marion du Fresne and Kerguelen, and if possible find a good harbour there, which 'may hereafter prove very useful, although it should afford little or nothing more than shelter, wood, and water'. Thence he was to proceed to Tahiti or the Society Islands, calling at New Zealand if he thought fit. Omai was to be landed. The islands should be left at the beginning of February 1777, or sooner if Cook judged it necessary. (Not much time is being left for contrary chances, but Cook must have approved the timing.) Then without any delay to New Albion, not looking deliberately for new lands on the way, and reaching the American coast at about latitude  $45^{\circ}$  N: thus there would be a spring and summer for the real work of the voyage. He was to sail northward along the coast to latitude  $65^{\circ}$ , or farther, if you are not obstructed by lands or ice; taking care not to lose any time in exploring rivers or inlets, or upon any other account, until you get into the before-mentioned latitude of  $65^{\circ}$ , where we could wish you to arrive in the month of June', 1777. Why  $45^{\circ}$ ?—why  $65^{\circ}$ ? Because, in the first place, the necessity of refreshing again, on the American coast, was foreseen; and secondly—one is justified in thinking—though there was no faith at all in Juan de Fuca in latitude  $47^{\circ}$ – $48^{\circ}$ , or de Fonte in latitude  $53^{\circ}$ , it would be useful to ascertain the lie of the coast north of  $45^{\circ}$ , and put into it, in proper relation, the discoveries of Bering and Chirikov. It was at about  $65^{\circ}$  that the Russian Great Continent or Stachtan Nitada bulged west; here it was that Gvozdev and Synd had landed; it was about here, or farther north, that a passage leading to Hearne's sea must debouch, if one existed at all. It was here that Cook was 'very carefully to search for, and to explore, such rivers or inlets as may appear to be of a considerable extent, and pointing towards Hudson's or Baffin's Bay': even now we cannot quite get rid of Hudson Bay. The injunction

seems firm and exclusive enough; however, we have the usual elasticity—'nevertheless, if you shall find it more eligible to pursue any other measures than those above pointed out, in order to make a discovery of the before-mentioned passage (if any such there be), you are at liberty, and we leave it to your discretion, to pursue such measures accordingly.' If the passage was found, sail through it; if not, winter at Petropavlovsk in Kamchatka, or somewhere better, and try again in the following spring, 1778, for either a north-west, or a north-east, passage. The passage round Asia, between the Pacific and the North Sea, the Russian route, might after all be the answer.—The general tenor of these instructions is, geographically, cautious: it is possible that Daines Barrington would have given a more confident ring to them; but they did give scope for triumph. If triumph was impossible, then Cook was to return to England by such route as he might think best 'for the improvement of geography and navigation'.

We do not know when the Admiralty was visited by a further thought on the improvement of geography and navigation; for its grand strategy was suddenly made even grander by an Atlantic addendum. Why not, some person seems to have asked, look for the passage at both ends?—and in this query Hudson Bay was excluded. Baffin Bay, however, had not been tried since Baffin himself came back defeated in 1616, 'having coasted all, or neere all the circumference thereof' and found it 'to be no other then a great bay'—not been tried, that is, in the sense of closely examined for a passage leading out of it. The whalers who realized the hope of profit foreseen in their trade by Baffin knew something about the more southern part. The time seemed ripe for re-examination. This should occupy two seasons. In 1776 a naval vessel would be going out to the Bay for the protection of British whalers against American ships of war: the American revolt had begun in 1775, one must remember, and if Barrington had not made his plea as early as he did, it is highly unlikely that there would have been a third Cook voyage, or supplementary voyages, at all. When the safety of the whalers had been guaranteed, this vessel should explore the coasts of the Bay in a preliminary fashion, returning with nautical information, surveys and charts; on the basis of which another voyage should be made in the following year, specifically to explore the western shores of the Bay for a passage. In the summer of 1777 Cook was expected to be at the other end—assuming there was one: and who knows?—though this was not a hope expressed in any of the documents—the two explorers might meet in the middle. Thus, two hundred years after

the Project of Sir Richard Grenville, the plan and its addendum stood complete.

### § *The Ships*

No vessel, as we have seen, could have been more perfectly shaped to Cook's purpose than the *Resolution* on the second voyage. No vessel could have withstood harder usage from the elements for a longer time. Whitby never made a sounder ship, and at the end of that voyage she was still sound. She was of course in need of overhaul; but if there was to be another exploring voyage it is difficult to think of a sailor who would not have taken her automatically to make it in. The Admiralty had no doubt, and on 17 August 1775—a month after her return—informed the Navy Board that she was not to be dismantled further than necessary for docking and refitting 'for foreign service'.<sup>1</sup> On 13 September, when she was in the Deptford naval yard, the order was given, in the conventional words, to put her in a condition for 'a voyage to remote parts', and by early January 1776 she was in a condition to receive men. She did not begin to take in men, however, till 10 February, by which date Cook had his own appointment, and the orders for provisioning and stores were beginning to pour out of the offices. We may note here, then, that the overhaul, the fundamental work of refitting, occupied three and a half months, during which Cook had no connection with the ship at all. Before the previous voyage he had had his eye on every detail, and we have reason to believe it was an attentive eye. This time he came on to the administrative scene only after the primary work was done, and he still himself had a great deal of work on hand quite unconnected with getting away to sea again. That primary work, we have again reason to believe, was done disgracefully. The special pleading of Palliser, the head of the Navy Board, when he came to read Cook's journal, and his remark, virtually, that Cook did not know what he was talking about when he was talking about rigging, does not really carry conviction. Palliser did not need to read as far as that to conclude that the officers of Deptford Yard, who took their orders from the Navy Board, had done a thoroughly bad job, and that some responsibility was ultimately his. One need not go into the subject of administrative corruption, or the state of the navy yards in general at the outset of the war of American Independence, after twelve years of peace; yet one may still feel some indignation that a

<sup>1</sup> Authority for this sort of statement will be found in the *Calendar of Documents*, pp. 1485 ff. below, and there is no need for its repetition here.

fine ship, faithfully and—one may almost say—nobly built in her home yard, strong enough to resist the battering of so many antarctic seas and sub-tropical storms, should begin to leak like a sieve when she was hardly out of the Channel on a new voyage, simply because her caulking had been scamped. Her carpenters had something to say at Nootka Sound when they considered the fore and mizen masts that had been put into her in England. It would not be fair to blame Deptford for all a ship's misadventures over three or four years; but obviously the *Resolution* was not the ship she had been on the second voyage, and it is equally obvious that that was due to dishonest work and slovenly supervision at Deptford. There is little more that can be said about the *Resolution*: she received no structural alteration, and to outward appearance she was the ship that had sailed from England in 1772. She was still good enough, though it needed constant and tedious work to keep her watertight, to see out a voyage of four years, which included some very arduous months indeed.

The *Resolution*, it will be remembered, was a 462 ton vessel; the *Adventure* 340 tons. Cook's ship was to have a companion on this voyage too, and early in January he was, as we have seen, inspecting vessels with the Yard officers, or independently, and advising on their merits. One, the brig *Diligence*, was surveyed quite closely; a second brig, the *Precilla* or *Percela* (the name appears in several versions) was inspected as closely as her cargo of coals would admit of; a third, the *William*, not further described, was 'looked at' by Cook. The choice fell on the *Diligence*, another Whitby-built collier, '1 year 6 months old, single bottom, full built, is very roomly, and . . . appears a fit ship for the service'. The builder's name is not mentioned: it was the firm of G. and N. Langborn.<sup>1</sup> She was something over 298 tons burthen, her lower deck length 91' 5", her extreme breadth 27' 5", the depth in her hold 11' 5", her height between decks from 5' 7" to 6' 1".<sup>2</sup> The value of her hull was £1865; it was estimated that necessary alterations would cost £550. By 9 January she was bought. The smallest of all Cook's vessels, she was not the least worthy; the name chosen for her was *Discovery*. She was 'sheathed and filled', like her consort, for protection against the teredo. Neither ship received any extra protection against ice: the *Resolution* had not had it in the south, and if Barrington and Engel were right, there would not be great danger from ice in the north. We have to

<sup>1</sup> She was built 'for Mr. Wm. Herbert of Scarborough', from whom she was bought. The Rev. George Young gives the information, *A History of Whitby, and Streoneshall Abbey* (Whitby, 1817), II, p. 859 n.

<sup>2</sup> The *Precilla* would have been a more comfortable ship in one respect, although a smaller one; for her height between decks was 6' 6". Her great cabin was also larger.

reconcile this with the preparations for Phipps's voyage in 1773. His *Racehorse* and *Carcass* were 'bombs', heavily-built ships to begin with, and they were specially and very considerably strengthened, with double bottoms and reinforced bows. No whaler would have sailed for Baffin Bay in a ship like Cook's. On the other hand, whalers' voyages were then relatively short, and it is difficult to think that the Admiralty really envisaged a long voyage for Phipps. Extra weight would have much slowed down the *Resolution* and *Discovery*, not fast ships to begin with, and they had an enormous distance to cover. The chief defence must be seamanship. The *Discovery* was converted from a brig to a ship—i.e. given three masts instead of two—though both ships were classed in naval parlance as sloops.<sup>1</sup> Her armament was eight 4-pounders, eight swivel guns and eight muskets, as against the twelve 4-pounders, twelve swivels, and twelve muskets of the *Resolution*.<sup>2</sup> Where there was departure from the conventional provisioning of vessels on long voyages it was to meet Cook's wishes, or suggestions approved of by him: we hear no more of Baron Storsch's marmalade of yellow carrots, the matter of so much ink and paper before the second voyage, as a bastion against scurvy. Stores of better quality than ordinary—powder, seine nets—were also supplied at the captain's demand; and his technique seems to have been the one he perfected before the second voyage—to write out his request at the Navy Office, and more often than not to get agreement on the spot. One article we have not met with before: a sort of life-saving device for a man overboard, made of a wooden pole with a bell on the end and cork supports. It does not seem to have been a highly practical device. There was an adequate supply of trade goods, though not the bewildering variety and quantity that Banks had provided in 1772. On the second voyage two small vessels 'in frame' had been carried, for possible use in places where the ships themselves could not go. They had never been used. They were, however, again supplied: it was even thought that one of them might negotiate the passage, if it were found, and found to be impossible for the *Resolution* or the *Discovery*. We have no mention in the journals of their even being thought of for service during the voyage. They might no doubt have been useful in case of wreck, presuming their survival; but for boat work in general the ships were well enough equipped.

The *Discovery* was perhaps a little over-masted—'much over masted', according to the master's mate Alexander Home, but no

<sup>1</sup> This had nothing to do with rig: the naval sloop was a relatively small vessel, carrying her guns on the upper deck only.

<sup>2</sup> See II, pp. 915, 916; and pp. 1485, 1487 below.

other person makes that criticism. In sailing qualities the two ships were pretty well matched. A fortnight after leaving the Cape—that is, midway through December 1776—we have Anderson in the *Resolution* writing, ‘We observ’d that in the forenoon when there was a fresh breeze of wind with smooth water both ships with exactly the same number of sails set saild nearly alike or if there was any advantage it was on our side’. Almost exactly a year later, heading north from the Society Islands, the *Discovery*, for whatever reason, proved faster than the *Resolution*.<sup>1</sup> She could also claw off a lee shore better, says Cook. We hear no murmurs from either ship over the behaviour of the other. They were, it is plain, excellent company-keepers.

### § *The Men*

The character of Cook, on this last voyage, in his last years, will sufficiently emerge from later pages not to need immediate discussion. In July 1776 he was a man still short of his forty-eighth year, which we may think not old in the abstract, though certainly with him an age of complete maturity, and of a kind of experience in command unmatched in any of his contemporaries, from captains to admirals. He was the oldest man amongst the companies of both ships, apart from one or two able seamen and marines. We call age to mind with an effort, however, in considering these men: like their captain, they move for us now in an atmosphere of the sea, of a timeless intercourse with the sea, that inclines us to consider them merely as Cook’s lieutenants, or perhaps—those in the fore-castle—merely as that vague entity, so vague as to be scarcely an entity at all, the typical eighteenth century seaman. Some of those we can discern more clearly were very lively figures indeed; and we may remember again William Windham’s exclamation to James Burney, on hearing of Bligh’s great boat-voyage in 1789, ‘But what officers you are! you men of Captain Cook; you rise upon us in every trial!’ There were some of them who sank, it is true, in trials of various sorts rather than rose; but looking through the muster-books of these two ships, we do come upon a surprising amount of half-formed or embryo distinction, as if a voyage with Cook—particularly this third voyage—were a species of graduation in a school of merit. We see a dozen future captains, and an admiral, we see the gap of time bridged between Cook and the so very different Nelson; we see adumbrated much adventure, much enterprise, some further voyages of fame in the history of discovery, some tragedy.

<sup>1</sup> See p. 256, n. 2 below.

Clerke is the man who may most engage the attention of some readers, at 33 Cook's second in command, and in the *Discovery* sailing his own ship. He had survived with spirit unimpaired a war, West Indies service, and three circumnavigations, and on Cook's two voyages he had grown up. After the second voyage he got his first taste of independence as commander of the *Favourite* sloop, and it was rumoured that it was he who would take a ship to the Pacific with a homeward-bound Omai. His natural high spirits, his capacity for general amusement, his leaning towards the facetious, had undergone some modification; the Clerke of the third voyage is a hard-working and devoted officer, a serious man, whatever the habitual humour of his phrase. The warmth of his feelings is illustrated by his letters to Banks, their depth by the last letter of all; the intimacy that must have existed among some of Cook's officers by Gore's allusion to 'Charles'. Genial he seems to have been always, but not weak in judgment or in act: his refusal to be stampeded into an easy and bloody vengeance on the Hawaiians for Cook's death, either by his own distress or by the pressure of his officers and men, is a proof of it. Was he rather weakly generous in guaranteeing the debts of his brother Sir John Clerke?—for his action brought disaster upon him. The affair is obscure in its details and dates. He must have made himself security for these debts to money-lenders some time after his return from the second voyage—an act which proved him in the eyes of J. R. Forster (who had some experience in matters of debt) 'a man of a noble disinterested spirit'.<sup>1</sup> Then Sir John, a captain in the royal navy, sailed off to the East Indies. It may have been the announcement that Charles Clerke himself was about to sail off in a different direction that brought the 'Israelites' down on him, and he was certainly committed for debt. Whether he was actually in the King's Bench prison for a time is not quite clear.<sup>2</sup> Certainly he was living within the Rules of the Bench, and so far confined from activity in his profession; and if he could not get release he could not go the voyage. The efforts of his friends, however influential, were of little avail. He may have extricated himself in the end by doing as he had resolved to do—simply 'to decamp without beat of drum, and if I can out sail the Israelites get to Sea', i.e. by secret flight from London to his ship at Plymouth.<sup>3</sup> Extricate himself he somehow did, but not without a grim gift from the unpleasant region where he had been lodged, the

<sup>1</sup> Forster, *History of the Voyages and Discoveries made in the North* (London, 1786), p. 399.

<sup>2</sup> Though he writes to Banks in his last letter, 'The disorder I was attacked with in the King's bench prison has proved consumptive . . .', which seems on the surface clear enough.

<sup>3</sup> See his letters to Banks, pp. 1508–9 below.

germ of tuberculosis, that bane of the age and of seamen. There was no defence; and above all there was no defence on a voyage that first went down to the sleet, the fogs and the storms of Kerguelen Land and then to the fogs, snow, and storms of the Arctic. By the time Clerke reached the Pacific, a year later, he knew that all was not well with him, and so did his shipmates. He was not the only doomed man: Anderson, the surgeon, was another. Burney tells an interesting story. When the ships were at Tahiti, in August 1777, he says,

'Anderson represented to Captain Clerke their inability to encounter the severities of a frozen climate, and they mutually agreed to ask leave of Captain Cook to resign their situations, that they might remain where they were, and trust themselves to the care of the natives, as the only hope left them of being restored to health. When the time approached for the ships to sail, Captain Clerke's papers and accounts were not in order; and as we were next bound to *Huaheine*, one of the *Society Islands*, it might answer their purpose as well to quit the ship there as at *Otaheite*. At *Huaheine*, the same thing happened, and the execution of their plan was deferred to our going to *Ulietea*, the next island. At *Ulietea*, the ships remained above a month; but that time did not suffice Captain Clerke for the settlement of his accounts. As Captain Cook proposed to stop at *Bolabola*, the last of the *Society Islands*, Mr. Anderson consented to the postponement of their intention to our arrival at that place; and there I believe Captain Clerke, if the opportunity had not failed, would have really landed and settled. All this, just as I relate it, I had from Mr. Anderson about a month before his decease. We arrived at *Bolabola*, but from unsteadiness of the wind, missed getting into the harbour, and did not anchor. On the evening of the same day, we sailed away, taking our final departure from the *Society Islands*. At the *Sandwich Islands* to which we afterwards came, the natives were strangers to us, and appeared less civilized than the *Society* islanders; and as we fell in with them unexpectedly, no previous arrangement of the kind had been thought of by either.'<sup>1</sup>

There seems no reason to disbelieve this: neither man babbled about his state, though the professional knowledge of Anderson may have given him a clearer sight of the inevitable than Clerke then had; and to Anderson, not yet thirty, not unaware of the work for science he could do, and hardly unaware (surely) that he had talent for such

<sup>1</sup> Burney, *Chronological History of North-Eastern Voyages of Discovery* (London, 1809), pp. 233-4. There is an oddly twisted bit of confirmation of this story in Lieutenant George Tobin's journal of Bligh's second breadfruit voyage, in the *Providence*, 1791-3, told 'on the authority of Captain Bligh'. Clerke had formed the intention of staying at Tahiti, and 'on the day of their departure he went on board the *Resolution* to intimate such a wish to his commanding officer, who, having being apprised of the circumstance, avoided a meeting, instantly proceeding with the two vessels to sea'.—Mitchell Library MS, quoted by George Mackaness, *Life of Vice-Admiral William Bligh* (Sydney, 1951), p. 128. This version of the matter is obviously absurd.

work, life must have seemed worth prolonging. Whether Clerke would actually have left his ship, when it came to the point, we do not know: one might think, perhaps, that his accounts, if he had really wished to settle them, would not have presented so very formidable an obstacle. It may seem, rather, if one read back from his last letter to Banks (and it is a letter that one who has accompanied him through three voyages cannot read without some anguish), that it was a sense of duty to Cook and to the voyage that pinned him where he was; and if that meant he would not return to England he was willing, though doubtless not eager, to accept the alternative.

Two judgments on Clerke are worth brief examination. The first is from Samwell, another young surgeon. 'Capt<sup>n</sup> Clerke was a sensible Man & a good Sailor, but did not possess that degree of Firmness & Resolution necessary to constitute the Character of a great Commander. He was ever diffident of himself & consequently wavering and unfixed in his Conduct, except where a certain Line of Action was chalked out to him & then no man was readier to pursue it than himself; he was fitter to be second than first in Command, fitter to execute than plan.' These words may utter an important truth; if so, how—one is impelled to ask—did Samwell know? The only experience he had of Clerke as chief commander was for the six months between the death of Cook and the death of Clerke himself—when, he goes on, Clerke's 'Perseverance in pursuing the Voyage . . . notwithstanding his own bad state of Health, will ever reflect Honour upon his Memory'. If this is the impression that a dying man leaves, then we may assume that in health he would show at least perseverance.<sup>1</sup> It may be that the words 'diffident', 'wavering', 'unfixed' are a reflection of Clerke's uncertainty on the wisest policy to adopt in the time immediately following the appalling fact of Cook's death, when the suddenness in the change of command, and the circumstances, would have embarrassed any man not recklessly self-confident. His journal entries, and those of others, show that he kept a cool head, and handled his men well. Pacific history is rather too full of men who acted with too much decision, with melancholy consequences for too many people. It may be that he could not take himself seriously enough to be a 'great' commander. It is certain that he was better fitted to be second in command to Cook, rather than Cook's superior; and Cook, whom Samwell admired barely this side idolatry, was the only 'first in command' that Samwell had ever

<sup>1</sup> Cf. King, *Voyage III*, p. 281: 'The vigour and activity of his mind had, in no shape, suffered by the decay of his body . . .'.

known. The question, to which there is really no answer, can be pursued too far, in a work not devoted exclusively to Clerke's personality.

The other judgment is also Samwell's: that Clerke's 'happy convivial Turn & humourous Conversation', his 'open generous Disposition' engaged him in excesses which laid the foundation of the complaint of which he died. No doubt Clerke tossed the bottle around in a thoroughly convivial way; one of his favourite terms of praise was 'social'; no doubt he had an eye for 'a fine woman' wherever he was; but a man who had been doing hard service at sea since the age of twelve could hardly have had much time, comparatively speaking, for desperate excesses. He does not write in the tone of a libertine. He was as much aghast as Cook at the damage the excesses of his men could do in the islands. The foundation of his complaint is clear enough; and it was a generosity far removed from that of wine and women. Samwell, whose morals we ourselves can judge quite well, if we care to be censorious, appears here to indulge in an excess of moralistic cant. That J. R. Forster, a man who could never praise—and, with all his jealousies, he could praise well—without some drastic rider, should say very much the same thing does not appreciably strengthen the case.<sup>1</sup>

From Clerke we pass to his old shipmate Gore, his senior in years (the oldest officer on the voyage, indeed, next to Cook), his equal as a circumnavigator, earlier his senior in rank, now outdistanced in promotion—perhaps because of his absence from service on Banks's Iceland voyage and during a subsequent period of half-pay—and sailing in the *Resolution* as Cook's first lieutenant. One would like to know what else had happened to Gore between voyages. Was it then that he met his 'Favourite Female Acquaintance' called Nancy? Was Nancy a child or one of elder years? The phrase does not argue a wife, and we read nothing otherwise of a Mrs Gore. There was a 'Young one' whom Banks 'was so kind as to promise an attention to in case of' Gore's death: was this possibly the son who was said to have sailed with Portlock and Dixon to the north-west coast of America in 1785–8? Was Mrs Baker, 'she who petition'd to go the voyage with us',<sup>2</sup> connected with the 'young one'? Whom had she

<sup>1</sup> Forster must have been attracted by Clerke, in spite of the violent difference of their personalities. 'In his second voyage he calculated the tables for the Ephemerides for two years; he was also a very experienced and intrepid sea officer, of a sprightly disposition, almost bordering on levity, but blended with much benevolence and magnanimity. His juvenile extravagancies had enervated him to such a degree, that at length, in those cold regions, he sunk under manifold attacks of misery.'—*Voyages and Discoveries made in the North*, p. 406.

<sup>2</sup> See Gore's letter to Banks, 12 July 1776, p. 1512 below.

petitioned? Had Gore been laid low by a Nancy Baker?<sup>1</sup> Gore did not write easily or well, and on the first voyage seemed the most unromantic of men; in his journal (if it can be called a journal) of this one we come on a most surprising outburst of his own romantic place-names on the west coast of America, as if he were a Frobisher or Baffin on the other side of it; and then he subsides again. The other curious side of his character, so much made up of tough and sober competence, was his occasional stubborn persuasion of the existence of some non-existent phenomenon in geography, and his success in making Cook pause for it. We have seen this off the New Zealand coast in 1769-70; and we shall see Cook in the end show some impatience over it. Good as Gore may have been as a practical seaman, useful as he certainly was to his commanders—'an honour to his profession'—one may legitimately doubt, much more than with Clerke, whether he would ever have shown much individual brilliance. After Clerke's death he brought the ships home safely (and some of the company did see Canton); and we get the impression from King that once or twice it was good luck rather than an exhaustive acquaintance with the charts that saved the *Resolution* from piling up on some fatal spot in the China Sea. On the other hand, when the ships were, if not quite home, at least in Stromness harbour, he showed a reluctance to encounter contrary winds that was infuriating to midshipmen anxious to get to London. As between Gore and his midshipmen one had better fall silent.

James King, second lieutenant of the *Resolution*, was the intellectual of the voyage, unless we are to bring in Anderson under that heading. It was he who was so distressed when Cook cursed the scientists:<sup>2</sup> and indeed, to a genteel young man with a respect for learning, that must have been a grave shock. He was in 1776 in his mid-twenties, the son of a Lancashire village parson, with naval and political connections in the Norton family. He had brothers intimate with the Burkes—one of them, Walker, Edmund Burke's close associate in journalism and later Bishop of Rochester; he was himself well enough known to Burke to write to him from the Cape on the voyage out, and after his return spent some time at Beaconsfield.<sup>3</sup> This was a circle that few

<sup>1</sup> Gore's will, if it could be found, might answer some of these questions. But I have not been able to find it. He mentions one in his letter to Banks just referred to: 'Inclosed you have my will, and that with a good will'. What Banks did with it is unknown. If he retained it after Gore's death, it may have been destroyed in the grand dispersal of the Banks papers. There are few references to Gore in Mr Warren Dawson's calendar of the *Banks Letters* (London, 1958); and Gore, surprisingly, is unknown to the dictionaries of naval biography.

<sup>2</sup> 'Curse the scientists, and all science into the bargain!'—II, p. xlvi.

<sup>3</sup> Hence, perhaps, his interest in politics—'he has a true Genius for Politics & is by far the best informed on the subject of any one I ever conversed with.'—Samwell, the surgeon,

young sailors moved in. Entering the navy in 1762, and serving on the Newfoundland station under Palliser and in the Mediterranean, he was a lieutenant at 21; and then—an odd thing for a naval lieutenant—in 1774 went to Paris to study science, and from Paris to Oxford for a period with his brother Walker. At Oxford he met Dr Thomas Hornsby, the professor of astronomy; on Hornsby's recommendation he was selected for the voyage. With enough sea service and his special training he was for Cook's purpose exceptionally well-equipped: he shared in the responsibility for the chronometer, that veteran of the second voyage—his signature shares innumerable lines of recorded observation with Cook's own—and his presence ruled out the need in the ship of a professional astronomer. In other ways than astronomy he was a helpful man: he had read all the books; he could think for himself; he could carry through a complicated geographical argument.<sup>1</sup> He was a good observer, though when on shore his technical duties kept him from wandering as widely as some of his colleagues. This was made up for not merely by his quickness and literacy in recording what he did see, but also by the sympathetic attractiveness of his character, which more than once made him an invaluable delegate for Cook—so that in Hawaii he could even be taken for Cook's son. There must have been an almost youthful charm about King, a certain refinement of mind and of body, a humanity, a kindness, a generosity and sensitivity of spirit without touch of the effeminate unusual among seamen—or amongst men: the combination of qualities that led the ardent young midshipman Trevenen to write of him (we must allow for the idiom of the age), 'In short, as one of the best, he is one of the politest, genteelest, & best-bred men in the world'.<sup>2</sup> Not even this admired

to his friend Matthew Gregson, a Liverpool upholsterer, 16 May 1782; Liverpool Public Library, Gregson Correspondence, XVII. All Samwell's letters hereafter quoted are from this source.

<sup>1</sup> An instance will be found in a piece of King MS in the Yale University Library, Western Americana MSS, S 8, on the construction of 'a Chart of the Seas which separate the Continents of Asia and America'. It seems to be a preliminary draft, polished a good deal but afterwards discarded, for pp. 262 ff. in Vol. III of the *Voyage*, written by King. Though interesting, its importance seems too marginal to justify printing in the present volume.

<sup>2</sup> Trevenen to his mother, 9 September 1780.—C. V. Penrose, *Memoirs of James Trevenen*, Alexander Turnbull Library MS, Appendix, pp. 123–4. Five years later, and nine months after King's death, touring in Switzerland Trevenen met Wilberforce, then in his mid-twenties; and writing to his old shipmate James Ward (July–August 1785) could find only one standard of comparison: 'He seems a most excellent little man, and I was much struck with the resemblance between him and Capt: King; (I kiss the name) the same quickness in his manner, the same ease in his behaviour, the same mildness gentleness and persuasion . . .'.—*ibid.*, p. 363. Samwell the surgeon shared the high opinion: 'I never in my Life knew a warmer Friend or a worthier Man than he is';—and again, 'I admire him altogether so much that you see I can hardly ever refrain from talking of him.'—Samwell to Gregson, 1 May, 16 May 1782.

person, however, could be universally admired. It is not clear whether the master, William Bligh, detested him or merely held him in contempt: to Bligh, anyhow, he seems to have been, at best, a hypocritical and pretentious poseur.<sup>1</sup> Why Bligh should feel so strongly in this way one can but guess: perhaps King was simply too small-bodied, too well-bred, too genteel, for a young man who even then, it seems, affected brusqueness, who may have considered himself a tar; who never, so far as we know, earned hostility by being polite; whose vanity may have been affronted by the very modesty of the other. We find no counter feeling in any words of King.<sup>2</sup>

There may have been 'something about' Bligh. His position as master of the *Resolution* was a responsible one, and he was master at 22, ten years after he had entered the navy. He is mentioned a good deal by Cook, as he went about his duties, sounding and reconnoitring harbours, and never with dispraise; his name was given, early in the voyage, to Bligh's Cap, an islet off the coast of Kerguelen. He did exceptionally well in surveying and charting, and in the technical work of the voyage should have been the natural ally of King. He was good and helpful to Trevenen the midshipman, as he was good and helpful to other young men later in his career. He made one fast friend in Burney, though Burney was for most of the voyage in the *Discovery*. He could not therefore have been immune to the more agreeable side of human converse. Yet, among all the promotions at the end of the voyage, Gore and King to post-captains, so many midshipmen his juniors to lieutenants, he was passed over; and it was not till late in 1781, after some fighting service, that he got his commission. When the history of the voyage was published, his work on the surveys and charts was unacknowledged, and attributed to his own mate, Henry Roberts—an able man and a skilful draughtsman,

<sup>1</sup> Bligh let himself go in marginal comments in his copy of the *Voyage*, now in the Admiralty Library (hereafter cited as Bligh AL). E.g. in Vol. III, p. 75, King laments the illness which confined him on board: 'Whenever any dangero[us] situation should be ta[king] place he allways being ill', adds Bligh. Or Vol. II, p. 482, on a footnote by Douglas that King had been so good as to communicate instructions he had had from Cook and particulars of the fatigues he underwent (see pp. 1433-5 below): 'C. King might well say it was fatigues he underwent for he never bore any nor was he capable—His whole account if he had been a seaman he would have been ashamed to have related, but as he conceived few would read it who had been present with him, he had . . .' (The last words are lost.)

<sup>2</sup> The two men are brought together in a way that Bligh might not have liked, in a rather high-pitched letter from Trevenen to his brother Matthew at Trinity College, Cambridge—*Memoirs*, Appendix p. 108, where it is not dated. 'Thus was my life annihilating, when two friendly hands were reached out, & saved me from the gulph into which I was plunging; & if ever I get any promotion in the service, which Ambition bids me hope, I shall always gratefully acknowledge that it is totally owing to Capt: King & M<sup>r</sup> Bligh our master; they took notice of me, & offered me the use of their cabins & advice.'

it is true—who had merely copied them for the engraver. This may have been no more than one of those things that tend to happen in any work the production of which goes on too long; but Bligh was justly annoyed.<sup>1</sup> Can it be that, in general, his shipmates were put off by an altogether too rough and ready tongue: that, unable to suffer fools gladly, he thought too many men were fools, and made it apparent? Certainly, when he came to write his comments on the printed *Voyage*, they were an odd mixture, some shrewd, some dogmatically wrong; in some he is as bitter as if he had lost the *Bounty* already and were giving his opinion of the mutineers. It is hardly surprising that when naval expenditure was cut down at the end of the American war, and so many half-pay lieutenants were walking the streets, he was not preferred above them. It was high luck that his family connections could give him command, during the needy years, in the merchant service. It was doubtful luck that brought him the friendship of Banks and the command of the *Bounty*.

The real psychological problem is that of John Williamson, third lieutenant of the *Resolution*. We have known far too little of this man, and we still do not know enough. Presumably he was much of a contemporary of the other lieutenants. We know that he behaved in an anomalous manner at the time of Cook's death; we know that he behaved disgracefully, in the eyes of a court martial, at the battle of Camperdown, and Nelson thought he should have been shot.<sup>2</sup> The question—or one question—is how, with his capacity for making himself disliked, he could have been promoted captain as early as 1782. He may have had interest. In 1779 he said he misunderstood a signal from Cook; in 1797 he said he misunderstood a signal from Admiral Duncan. Possibly there were other things he misunderstood. All the evidence we have from Cook's voyage points to a self-righteous character: we cannot say cold, because we have one instance of passionately brutal maltreatment by him of a helpless Raiatean, told by Bayly, no exaggerator of things he saw; we cannot call him generally passionate, in the absence of consistent evidence. It was he who, while reconnoitring a landing-place at Kauai, in January 1778, shot dead a Hawaiian—'a cowardly, dastardly action for which Capt<sup>n</sup> Cook was very angry', says one account; an action for which Williamson himself gives a long and circumstantial justification.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Bligh AL, title-pages to Vols. I and II; also his letter to Burney, 26 July 1791, p. 1565 below. On the other hand, many of the coastal views in the *Voyage* were rightly ascribed to Bligh. He did get a share in the profits—p. cc, n. 1 below.

<sup>2</sup> *Despatches and Letters of Lord Nelson*, III (ed. Nicolas, London, 1845), pp. 1–2.

<sup>3</sup> See p. 267, n. 1, and pp. 1347–9 below.

He and Captain Cook 'entertain'd very different opinions upon y<sup>e</sup> manner of treating indians': Cook in an emergency believed in firing small shot, Williamson was 'determin'd never to fire but when necessity oblig'd me & then to do execution. . . . y<sup>e</sup> different opinions Cap<sup>t</sup> Cook & I held on this matter, made me request him never to send me on duty where I could not act from reason & y<sup>e</sup> dictates of my own Conscience'. A man, even a seaman, should have a conscience; one would like to know what Cook said in answer to Williamson expatiating on his. If it was Williamson's reason and conscience that made him shoot to kill, then it is difficult to see why he should express such horror at Cook's destruction of houses and canoes on Moorea when Cook's own reason and conscience were doubtless consulted—even though, we may think, inadequately. Hand in hand with reason and conscience went a sense of grievance and a sense of propriety which would impress us more if the grievance seemed better based and the propriety more in touch with a voyage of discovery. He was much affected by 'the strange conduct of Capt<sup>a</sup> Cook . . . much more affected by such arbitrary proceedings, than by the loss of my gun';<sup>1</sup> when the conduct was not strange, the proceedings not arbitrary, and the loss of his gun entirely his own fault. As for propriety, he was not the first or the last man to find some Polynesian dances improper—and so they were if judged by the conventions of Europe; but what are we to say to the feeling that Cook 'rather let himself down' when he let his hair hang loose and stripped himself to the waist at the behest of his Tongan hosts, rather than be shut out from observing the details of an important ceremony? It need not surprise us—it was almost natural—that so censorious a person should be called out in a duel:<sup>2</sup> opportunities for irritation must have been innumerable in that crowded ship. If he had fallen, he would not, apparently, have been regretted. Mr Trevenen may have spoken the general voice at the end of the voyage when he wrote, 'Our first Lieutenant, Williamson, is a wretch, feared & hated by his inferiors, detested by his equals, & despised by his superiors; a very devil, to whom none of our midshipmen have spoke for above a year; with whom I would not wish to be in favour, nor would receive an obligation from, was he Lord-High-

<sup>1</sup> See pp. 1342–3 below.

<sup>2</sup> According to Griffin, at Matavai Bay, with Lieutenant Molesworth Phillips (p. 210, n. 3 below); he is also said to have fought a duel with the same person at Kealakekua Bay, after Cook's death, and another at the Cape, on the passage home. Reliable testimony is not easy to come by. No journal mentions a Matavai affair—Griffin was writing a post-voyage account—or one at the Cape, though to be sure after Canton there was little journal-keeping. There may have been a convention that officers did not mention such things; they were private matters between gentlemen.



**PL. 4. *The Resolution***

Pencil drawing by Webber.—B.M., Add. MS 17277.1



PL. 5. Portrait of Captain Charles Clerke, by Nathaniel Dance, 1776  
Government House, Wellington, New Zealand



Pl. 6a. Portrait of Captain James King, by Samuel Shelley  
Title-page medallion, *Voyage to the Pacific Ocean*, III. 1785



b. Portrait of Captain John Gore, by Webber, 1780  
National Library of Australia, NK 3680



PL. 7a. Portrait of Henry Roberts  
National Maritime Museum



b. Portrait of John Webber, by Mottet  
Bernisches Historisches Museum in Bern

Admiral of Great Britain.<sup>1</sup> This is damning, and we regret the lack of enough circumstantial detail. No other officer, on any of the voyages, was so denounced. We have before us a strange man, and—depending on what heights self-approval can reach—possibly an unhappy one.

Clerke's first lieutenant was Burney, whose rise in rank had been very satisfactory since he sailed in the *Resolution* in 1772 as A.B. True, his father was a friend of Lord Sandwich; but the young man now had a great deal of experience, and his merit was great. Though he had had promotion in the *Cerberus* frigate on the American station in 1774-5, the offer of another Pacific voyage was not to be resisted, and the whole Burney family was delighted that Jem should be sailing again with Cook.<sup>2</sup> No more need be said about him, except that he was another valuable officer, acute and literate, perhaps a little full of himself at the outset—'Sometimes Young Officers Forget there Place', as Gore wrote to Banks: none the less one of the men whose presence on the voyage we are heartily glad of. Second lieutenant in the *Discovery* was John Rickman, about whom we know nothing except for his part in the fatal sequence of happenings in Kealakekua Bay, and his authorship of an anonymous account of the voyage. He never rose beyond the rank of lieutenant. The *Discovery's* master, Thomas Edgar, is a clearer figure, a great journal-keeper and describer of harbours, a careful man with his charts; not very highly educated perhaps, but with considerable capacity; a little sentimental, to judge from his words on the Angels of Tahiti; one would conclude a worthy conscientious hard-working man. Promoted lieutenant in 1781, he remained a lieutenant in active service for many years, sinking—like innumerable such men—his disappointments in drink, harking back, for his juniors, to the heroic years.<sup>3</sup> Of the master's

<sup>1</sup> Trevenen to his mother, 9 September 1780, *Memoirs*, App. p. 125. Cf. Griffin, already cited, 'a very bad man & a great Tyrant'. Williamson had after Clerke's death become by seniority first lieutenant of the *Discovery*, to which Trevenen was also transferred.

<sup>2</sup> Fanny Burney to Mr Crisp, 14 April 1775; 'There is much talk of an intended South Sea expedition: now you must [know] that there is nothing that Jem so earnestly desires as to be of the party; and my father has made great interest at the Admiralty to procure him that pleasure; and as it is not to be undertaken till Capt. Cooke's return, it is just possible that Jem may be returned in time from America. This intended expedition is to be the last . . .'.—*Early Diary of Frances Burney* (London, 1913), II, p. 38.—To Crisp again, July 1776: 'But the great Man of Men is your friend James, who is now, in *fact* and in *power*, Captain of his ship, though, alas! not in *honour* or *profit*. The case is, Captain Clarke has obtained permission to stay some time longer in town, to settle his affairs, and in the hope of profiting by some Act—that I don't very well understand—concerning debtors. . . . An order has been sent from the Admiralty to our Lieutenant to carry the ship himself to Plymouth.'—*ibid.*, pp. 140-1. The act referred to by Fanny was probably the annual Act for the Relief of Insolvent Debtors. But to profit thereby, Clerke would have had to have surrendered himself by 26 June, and there were other difficult provisions.

<sup>3</sup> He became, for the juniors, a rather comic figure: there are some amusing stories about him in the *Recollections of James Anthony Gardner* (Navy Records Society, 1906).

mates, Roberts had already earned Cook's high opinion. Harvey had been a midshipman on the two previous voyages with Cook, who seems to have thought well of him, so that it was a pity he provoked his captain's wrath at Huahine and was disgraced; Lanyon had been midshipman and master's mate in the *Adventure*. Both were to finish this voyage as lieutenants. We may feel we know better Alexander Home of the *Discovery* if we read the spirited, admiring, libellous and anonymous book by his son,<sup>1</sup> in which he is the conventional sea-dog, retired; jovial, reminiscent, respected; half-blind and growing blinder from his adventures with powder and shot, his exertions for his country, as he waits on his starveling Berwickshire farm for triumph in his claim to an earldom. A jovial shipmate probably he was; beyond that a good average honest master's mate, with no frills, who would get promotion but not too much of it. Nathaniel Portlock, American-born, was a more interesting man, with a more distinguished future before him, in both the north and south Pacific. Among the midshipmen, or young gentlemen in training for midshipmen, were three destined to high distinction, Trevenen in the *Resolution*, Riou and Vancouver in the *Discovery*. Trevenen, a Cornish youth from the naval Royal Academy at Portsmouth, leapt at the chance of sailing with Cook as his first sea-going experience; clever, of generous spirit, warm-hearted, ready and vivid with his pen as a letter-writer or note-maker (we have no journal), ready and not so vivid as a spinner of verse, he had great affection returned to him by many men. Devoted to his work, the two persons he admired most were Cook and King. Impulsive, impatient to be up and doing even after a four years' voyage, he would write from harbour at Stromness to his mother, 'Constantly hearing of engagements, victories, & defeats, it is with the greatest indignation I look on our, now useless hulks of ships, hitherto, when actuated by a proper spirit and conduct, so active & vigorous in their operations, I mean when actuated by the sublime & soaring genius of a Cook.'<sup>2</sup> He liked a sublime and soaring mind; if he could not quite have that, he would serve under King with enthusiasm; and after the war, on half-pay, he would travel France and Italy with enthusiasm, and wait on the dying King with devotion; and after that, his own spirit would soar at the idea of another North Pacific voyage of discovery, for the Russians;<sup>3</sup> and that falling through, he would think it his duty to

<sup>1</sup> *Memoirs of an Aristocrat* (London, 1838). It was written by Home's son George, and suppressed for its libels.

<sup>2</sup> 7 September 1780, *Memoirs*, App. pp. 119-20.

<sup>3</sup> Joseph Billings, one of Cook's A.B.s from the third voyage, was already employed by the Russians on such a voyage.

fight in the Russian cause against the Swedes, and so meet his death at the age of thirty. Riou, also to die in battle, was he who was thought the perfect naval officer, the 'poor dear Riou' whose loss at Copenhagen was irreparable, said Nelson; the only one of Cook's men who attained a monument in St Paul's Cathedral. Vancouver, a little their senior, was the only one whose work as a marine surveyor was to put him in the class of his commander; and to read his great book, with its constant recurrence to Cook, with Cook as its standard of value, is to realise alike the importance of a training under Cook and the admiration he evoked. He worked the young gentlemen hard; he loosed his wrath upon them; no doubt at times he would have preferred them a little more austere. They called him despot. It does not appear that they complained.

One would like to think that the Irishman Molesworth Phillips, the lieutenant of marines, was all hero, and certainly he behaved well on the day of Cook's death. He was, said Mr Crisp, the Burney's friend, in 1782, when he married Susan Burney, 'a fine made, tall, stout, active, manly-looking young fellow as you shall see';<sup>1</sup> he was then aged 27. Forty-one years later, Charles Lamb, going down the roll of the friends he honoured in his 'Letter to Southey', marked 'the high-minded associate of Cook, the veteran Colonel, with his lusty heart still sending cartels of defiance to old Time'. This may mean merely that the Colonel was growing old gracefully; certainly he had long ceased to be a hero. He was, rather, a failed gentleman-farmer, who preferred to spend his time in London to looking after his estate, who was detested by all the Burneys except James for his unpleasant treatment of Susan; and he had had, in truth, no active service since his voyage in the *Resolution*. That had made him a captain; his other promotions were merely to brevet-rank. This later record persuades one that there may be a savour of truth in Bligh's denunciation of him as a 'person, who never was of any real service the whole Voyage, or did anything but eat & Sleep';<sup>2</sup> for on the voyage there was little that the marines, as soldiers, were useful for apart from guard-duty. Phillips in 1776 was a new second lieutenant, with no training, and all the evidence suggests that he was unable to train his men, and did not try. His good sense and presence of mind at Kealakekua Bay are not in question; nor his disgust at inactivity, when activity was demanded, that made him call out Lieutenant Williamson.

There was not very much that surgeons could do on this voyage

<sup>1</sup> Joyce Hemlow, *The History of Fanny Burney* (Oxford, 1958), p. 147.

<sup>2</sup> 'This person, who never was of any real service the whole Voyage, or did any thing but eat and Sleep, was a great Croncy of C. King's, and he has taken care not to forget, altho' it is very laughable to those who knew the Characters.'—Bligh AL, III, p. 53.

either, so attentive were Cook and Clerke to the fundamentals of health at sea. Nevertheless the ships were well provided with them. Anderson, in the *Resolution*, was undoubtedly the ablest of them intellectually—indeed one of the best minds of all the three voyages.<sup>1</sup> Once again we know little of the origins of a man important in our story: only that he was a Scot, and apparently educated at Edinburgh, and must early have become interested in all the departments of natural history as studied at the time. Surgeon's mate with Cook on the preceding voyage, he observed and noted carefully; and it is not improbable that the London scientists, knowing that he was going on this one, did not press for a more professional person. It appears from his papers that he took with him reagents, a blowpipe, a microscope, and spirits of wine. With Anderson, in fact, and Banks's man David Nelson in the *Discovery* for plant-collecting, and Bayly for astronomy as well as King, the expedition was not at all ill-manned scientifically.<sup>2</sup> Anderson too had the advantage of being a pleasant as well as an acute man. Like King, he had a mind of his own, was capable of criticizing even a course pursued by Cook; as a day-to-day chronicler he seemed to have an instinct for supplementing Cook; in scientific observation Cook drew on him unhesitatingly. His linguistic talent was careful as well as eager. In one other thing, at least, he could be too eager: it was he who convinced himself that the people of the Sandwich Islands were cannibals—on what one is bound to consider inadequate evidence.<sup>3</sup> When the history of the voyage was to

<sup>1</sup> King told Douglas that he was 'by far the most accurate & inquisitive Person on board'.—Draft of a letter from Douglas to Sandwich, on the forms of Polynesian names, 20 November 1782; Egerton MS 2180, ff. 57–58v.

<sup>2</sup> Some of the London scientists had evidently had earlier thoughts, and had looked into the possibility of enlisting a Banks party. Lind writes to Maskelyne from Edinburgh, 30 January 1775, 'Nothing will give me more pleasure than to have the honour of going on the intended voyage you mentioned, for the making discoveries on the N.W. side of America beyond California, provided my friend, M<sup>r</sup> Banks, goes. But, I assure you, I shall not go to oblige Government after the ungracious treatment I received from them in return for the Sums which I laid out in order to equip myself for their service on the late S. Sea expedition, and for the loss which I sustained from suspending my business. . . . But to serve and attend on M<sup>r</sup> Banks on whatever Expedition he shall undertake, I shall esteem my Duty, as well as my greatest pleasure, for the real regard I have for so noble and excellent a man.' There is more to the same effect.—Banks Correspondence, Botany Library, BMNH, I, pp. 82–3. Unfortunately we do not have Maskelyne's letter. Lind writes also to Banks, 2 March 1775, 'M<sup>r</sup> Maskelyne wrote me some time ago, that there was a Voyage proposed after the return of Captain Cook . . . and that He hoped you would be of the party, and that I would accompany you. . . . If any thing is going on you will oblige me much in letting me know.'—*ibid.*, pp. 89–90. The original of this second letter is in the Webster collection. If one thing is certain, it is that Banks would not have gone in the *Resolution*.

<sup>3</sup> See *Voyage*, II, pp. 208–9, 210–11, 214. King, who was quite unconvinced, comments in III, p. 132–4, on the arguments; and on the confusion shown by one person suspected of indulging in the practice, remarks, 'no one could have been surprized at it, who had seen the eager and earnest manner in which Mr. Anderson questioned him'.

be printed his journal was indispensable. Alas! for that fatal germ, the progress of which he watched so stoically; for we should like him to have survived.

In personality no one could be more different from Anderson than his first mate Samwell, of whom we know so much more, and no one could have greater success in giving us the more frivolous side of the voyage. It had its frivolities. The Welshman stands by the Scotsman, darting continually from the Scotsman in observations of a very different nature from those of botany and zoology. There does not seem to be any question of his professional competence or seriousness:<sup>1</sup> but where Anderson's non-professional interests are scientific, Samwell's are social and literary, and as with many other parsons' sons, by no means holy. In his twentieth year he had been on a voyage to Greenland; and now he was highly pleased to be in the *Resolution*, writing in very high spirits, to a bosom friend, 'Honest Matt . . . I daresay Matt that you will rejoice when I tell you that I am a lucky Dog, for such I certainly am. a very fair Prospect lies before me, almost a Certainty of being made Surgeon when I come home—a voyage agreeable to my wishes—a better Appointment than I cou'd have expected—for thro' M<sup>r</sup> Crosier's Recommendation to Captain Cook I am made first mate & what will render the Voyage still more pleasing, an old Schoolfellow and Countryman of mine is 2<sup>nd</sup> Mate. The *Resolution* is a very fine Ship but the *Discovery* is but a small one. I wou'd rather have gone 2<sup>d</sup> mate of the *R.* than first mate of the *D.*'<sup>2</sup> Again, a few weeks later: 'I am sorry to inform you that your expectations with regard to my botanical Splendor will be entirely disappointed. There is not one person in his Majesty's Dominions more improper & whose Genius is so ill turned for simpling than myself. . . . If Master Omiah's Countrywomen are not handsomer than him I shall bring many of my Nails back.'<sup>3</sup> Again, a fortnight before the ship sailed, 'Omiah is a droll Animal & causes a good deal of Merriment on Board. For my part I live as happy as I cou'd wish only that one's cut off from the Society of the Dear Girls.'<sup>4</sup> Samwell, that is, was a hearty young extrovert—or, as his contemporaries would have said, a generous, open and candid man. The Dear Girls were his constant preoccupation. He would probably, in a higher station in life, have been merely a rake with literary leanings. He

<sup>1</sup> After the voyage, in 1780–81, he attended the surgical classes of the Hunterian School: 'most of my time is spent in D<sup>r</sup> Hunter's delectable Congregation of dead Carcasses', he writes to Gregson, 5 February 1781.

<sup>2</sup> Samwell to Gregson, 25 March 1776. Crosier, one supposes, was the surgeon to whom Samwell had been apprenticed; probably John Crosier, surgeon in the *Dolphin* on Byron's voyage.

<sup>3</sup> 17 May 1776.

<sup>4</sup> 29 June 1776.