

Rev. Titus Coan: Diary of a visit to the Falkland Islands, 1834

Schooner 'Antarctic' off Cape Virgins  
Sabbath January 26th 1834

Arose this morning and found the "Antarctic" passing out of the mouth of the Straits and pressing her way into the billows of the Atlantic. The "Antarctic" is a fine vessel of 173 tons, with a good cabin and better accommodations than any other sealing vessel I have seen; but her stores of provision are so bare that the Captain cannot assure us a passage farther than the Falkland Islands, unless he can replenish them there. Made arrangements with the Captain for preaching in the cabin in the afternoon, but before the hour appointed arrived I became so much affected by seasickness as to be unable to officiate, consequently, the services were omitted.

While passing out of the Strait this morning we descried a large Barque entering under the north shore, but at so great distance that we were unable to speak her.

Monday Jan 27th. We have lost sight of land, and are now plowing an unbroken ocean in search of the Falkland Islands. Winds light, and plain sailing. Nothing of interest has occurred during the day, and my sea-sickness has been so oppressive that scarcely any thing could possess power to interest me.

Jan. 28th. At 9 o'clock A.M. we made the "Falklands" and in the afternoon run into a little bay and came to anchor near the shore. Here we found the Schooner "Caroline", Captain Storer, of New York.

Went on shore with Brother Arms and nine of the crew to shoot geese etc. for fresh stores. Took about 30 in all of geese, ducks and other fowls with which these Islands abound. Returning on board we found Captain Storer of the "Caroline" and Captain Pendleton, of the ship "Hamilton" which is lying at New Island about 70 miles from us. These vessels are connected in the whaling business, and make these Islands the place of their rendezvous. They have been out 12 months from the States. Had conversation with Captain Nash and Captain Pendleton in relation to the Western Coast of Patagonia. Both of these men have been much on all parts of that coast and they both concur with others whom we have consulted on the subject that it is the most dreary and desolate shore in the world. Captain Nash stated that in passing up on the inside and down on the outside of the Islands on that coast from the western entrance of the Strait to the Island of Chiloé, he saw but one solitary canoe of natives, and that the fertile fields of luxuriant clover spoken of by Morrell in his published journal are objects which never met his eye.

Captain Pendleton spoke of a Mr. James Frampton Watson [first written as Hamilton - corrected. Ed.] of Philadelphia, who in 1830 explored the N.W. coast of Patagonia, saw many of the Natives, ascended the Cordilleras etc.

Albemarle Harbour, Falkland Islands, Jan 29th. We are in a little lagoon almost surrounded by small Islands. On the South is "Arch Island", so named on account of a natural arch opening a passage entirely through one end of the Island, so that boats and small vessels can pass in and out of the harbour under this natural bridge.

A scene somewhat painful occurred on board the "Antarctic" this morning. A young man by the name of Luther B. Johnson who went out as 2d mate of Captain Nash, was some time ago deposed from his office and turned before the mast on account of his bad conduct. Since then, the Captain and all his officers report that Johnson has been labouring to disaffect the minds of the Sailors against the officers, and has so far succeeded that unless prompt measures are adopted the

Captain apprehends a mutiny among his crew. I am also told that by the threats and menaces of Johnson the life of the Captain is in danger. Having therefore taken advise of others, and having been told by his officers that if Johnson were suffered to return unconfined to the States they would leave the vessel, the Captain gave Johnson a writing this morning, in which he offered to leave him on the Islands or to put him in irons and confine him in the steerage, and in this situation convey him to New York. The latter alternative was chosen by Johnson, and he is therefore confined on board.

The Schooner "Hancock", Captain Davison, of Stonington, Connecticut came into the harbour this morning, and the Captain and some of his crew came on board the "Antarctic". The "Hancock" is bound to the western coast of Patagonia, on a sealing expedition.

I learn that the ship which we passed on coming out of the Strait was the English Surveying Barque "Beagle", Captain Fitz Roy. Towards night the "Antarctic" left "Port Albemarle" and ran down the Islands a few miles and anchored for the night in a little cove. From the deck we descried a large number of hair seals lying on the beautiful beach opposite us. A boat was launched, and eighteen men with guns and clubs went on shore to engage with these animals. While rowing in, many of these huge creatures dove into the water and came swimming around our boat, rearing their heads several feet out of the water, snorting, growling, gnashing their teeth etc.

Landing at a little distance from the place where the seals lay, by a circuitous route we came upon them unawares, but they were so near the water that, though there were more than a hundred on the beach, we succeeded in taking only three. One of these was what is called the "Sea Lion", a name very properly given him from his huge dimensions, his bold front, and his power in combat. This animal measured 10 feet 4 inches in length. When these were taken the Bay was made to foam by the multitude of seals who were flouncing in it, rearing their heads to observe our movements and sometimes coming close to the shore as if to attack us "en masse". Many of them were shot in the water, but as they sunk immediately to the bottom they could not be obtained. Two large foxes coming down upon the beach to pay us a visit were unceremoniously shot. This made up our complement of game and we returned on board.

Bay of St. Salvador, Jan 30th. At daylight this morning the "Antarctic" was got under way, and we ran down through the Falkland Sound which separates the two principal Islands of the group, and at 4 P.M. came to anchor in this bay, having sailed nearly 100 miles. Our sail through the Sound was delightful. With a fine breeze and a smooth sea we glided along at the rate of 10 knots an hour. The Island on our left in many places presented a bold shore of perpendicular rock several hundred feet high, while in the rear the land rose to a mountain range, sprinkled here and there with patches of snow. On our right the land was low and level presenting a scene somewhat like the pampas of Patagonia.

Spoke two vessels on our way, but did not understand the name of the first. The second was the little schooner Eagle which was built at these Islands from the wreck of a vessel and is constantly plying in these Seas. The object of our visit to this Bay is to get some spars and other articles belonging to the Antarctic which were left on her passage out, and also to make some repairs on the vessel before going to sea.

Went on shore at 5 P.M. with several of the crew in search of game. Immediately on landing we saw a Sea Elephant basking on the shore and the men soon succeeded in killing him which was done only by firing into the roof of his mouth. He measured 15½ feet and will make about three barrels of oil. The Sea Elephant is the largest species of the seal, and is sometimes found measuring 30 feet in

length, and affording 25 barrels of oil. Took some geese, ducks etc. and returned to the Schooner.

[January 31 -- no entry]

Feb. 1st. Saw three men on horseback on the shore, and the Captain sent a boat to ascertain who they were. In a little time the boat's crew returned with the intelligence that they were men who range the Islands on horse-back for the purpose of taking wild cattle and horses which abound here. They are Spaniards and mountaineers, [perhaps from "montoneros", mounted men or guerrillas. Ed.] or native Indians from Buenos Ayres, of whom there are now seven on these Islands. Their headquarters were formerly at Port Louis, a little Spanish village, and the only settlement on the Islands; the English Colony at Port Egmont having some time ago been broken up.

Port Louis was formerly under a Governor by the name of Vernet who was commissioned by the Buenos Ayrean Government, and a man by the name of Brisbon [sic - Brisbane, Ed.] acted as Lieut. Governor. These men attempted to monopolize the seal fishery about these shores, and actually took many of the American sealing vessels which touched at the Islands, seizing the cargoes, and putting the men in confinement or banishing them on some desert Island. When this news was communicated to the U. S., the Sloop of War Lexington was sent out to break up the establishment. Governor Vernet fled to Buenos Ayres, and Brisbane was taken prisoner and conveyed thither. This was in 1831. Since then the English have attempted to establish a colony at Port Louis, the particulars of which I have not yet learned. I am told however that Brisbane returned to Port Louis and either by compromise or in some other way, obtained command of the place. He was rigorous with the mestizos and on the 26 of August last they arose and massacred Brisbane and four others of the colonists. The mestizos have abandoned Port Louis and now prowl about the Islands like a roaming banditti. They go armed with muskets, pistols, cutlasses, dirks, knives etc., and seem determined not to be taken alive.

Of the three who appeared on the beach today, two were Indians, and the other a Spaniard. The Indians were banished here some years ago for murder. The Captain wishing to obtain some beef enquired of them if they had any bullocks on hand. They told him that they had one some 4 or 5 miles distant up the shores of the lagoon, and that they would sell it to him if he would send a boat for it. They also agreed to catch 7 more and bring them down to the vessel tomorrow. A boat was sent for the bullock, and after a long and fatiguing row against wind and tide, we found the Indians and the beef in a deep valley near the shore. It was now about sundown, and by the time we again got on board the "Antarctic" it was 10 o'clock in the evening.

Sabbath Feb. 2d. All has been bustle and labour on board today in overhauling the cargo, and fitting for sea, and we have had no preaching. It is painful to see such a disregard for the Sabbath among those who have been taught better things, but we hope ere long to see a change in this respect.

Johnson who has for some days been in shackles has become tired of his confinement and petitioned the Captain for a discharge from the Schooner and to be left on the Islands. The Captain has granted his request and will land him with a musket, ammunition, boat, provisions etc. before he sails.

Feb 3d. Early this morning six men appeared on shore with eleven horses and four fat bullocks. These beeves they sell at \$5 per head and receive pay in powder and ball, rum, tobacco, bread etc. The cattle and horses on these Islands are very wild and often dangerous. Seamen usually take them with dogs and muskets; but besides these helps, the mestizos use the "Lasso" or noose, and "bolas".

Wild hogs, foxes and hares abound here, and fowls are actually innumerable. Of these there is a great variety, such as the Albatross, Mollymauk, five or six kinds of Penguins, several varieties of ducks, two kinds of geese, Port Egmont Hens, Shags, Gulls, Pigeons and a great diversity of small birds. These birds are constantly wheeling in the air, gliding on the water, spangling the shores, or perching in countless throngs upon the beetling cliffs [sic], which rise like the ruined walls of some ancient castle. In the Spring of the year, eggs may be obtained at these Islands in any quantities. I am told that from 30 to 40 puncheons have been gathered from a single Rookery in a few days.

The land here is rather cold and the soil for the most part barren, though in many places fruits and vegetables might be cultivated with success under the hand of diligent husbandmen. There is no wood, but peat is abundant. Many of the Islands are covered with tussocks, or a large rush-like grass which grows on bogs and is sometimes six feet high, and so thick as to form a complete screen for wild animals and fowls. The roots of the tussock are very palatable, possessing a flavour much like that of a boiled chestnut.

Tuesday 4th. Two men appeared on the beach this morning and on the Captain's sending a boat, they were found to be an Englishman and an Indian from Port Louis. In the afternoon they came down again and the Englishman came on board with a line from Governor Smith to Captain Nash. He gave us more particular information respecting the horrid murders which had been committed at Port Louis, and stated that the Indian who accompanied him as guide was one of the murderers who had returned and given himself up after the arrival of Governor Smith, which was 4 weeks ago, and that on becoming King's Evidence he had received pardon. This Indian brought back two horses which are all now at the port, the murderers having taken the whole which belonged to the settlement, fifty in number, when they evacuated the place.

Feb. 5th. Governor Smith came over from Port Louis today accompanied by Captain Rea, an Indian and an escort of six British Marines. Captain Rea is in the service of the English Admiralty, and in attempting to reach the newly discovered "Grahams land" lost his vessel and is now waiting here for an opportunity to leave the Islands. The Governor and Captain Rea came on board and entered into conversation about the murderers, and having heard that Captain Nash had aided these desperadoes the language of the Governor soon became warm and threatening, even declaring that if he had an armed vessel he should proceed immediately to seize the "Antarctic". Captain Nash told him that he did not fear him nor all the force he could bring, and that he had done nothing for which he felt guilty. Mr. Smith said that Captain Nash had involved himself and his country in serious difficulty with the Government of Great Britain by aiding and abetting her enemies. He had been informed that the murderers had all been on board the "Antarctic", and he highly censured Captain Nash for not seizing and retaining them.

The fact was that matters had been misrepresented to the Governor, only one of them having been on board the "Antarctic", and this was at the time when two of her men were on shore with the rest of the Gougers [sic - Gauchos, Ed.] who would doubtless have murdered them had their leader been retained. Besides the fact that the Gougers never put themselves in the power of Captain Nash: he had then no legal warrant for taking them, nor did he know of any proper authority to whom they could be delivered, not having even heard that a government was [re?]established at Port Louis.

Captain Nash told the Governor that he had a good vessel, armed with six nine-pounders,

and a full complement of muskets, pistols, cutlasses and boarding pikes; that he was well able to defend himself, but notwithstanding this he would take the "Antarctic"

to Port Louis and deliver her up if the Governor desired it.

The Governor now began to retract and said no, he did not wish it, and after a fuller explanation of the subject on the part of Captain Nash he became very pacific, invited the Captain to Port Louis, offered him any assistance in his power etc. but requested him to have no more to do with the Gougers. Captain Nash told him that he had engaged four more beeves of them, but that he would not take them, but would leave the bay early tomorrow morning. Governor Smith replied that he might take the beef, but not pay the Gougers for it. He also insisted that the Captain should remain here as long as he chose, and as he and Mr. Rea wished to forward letters and documents by him he assented to remain a day or two.

When about to return to the settlement the Governor insisted that Brother Arms and myself should accompany him and spend the night at his house, offering to send some of his marines to conduct us back tomorrow. We accepted the invitation and at 4 P.M. set off for the port where we arrived at a quarter past eight - distance 10 or 12 miles. There were but two horses in the party, one of which the Gouger rode, and the other was used by Captain Rea, Brother Arms and myself in rotation; the Governor and the Marines walking all the way. Before we arrived at the settlement the men had taken at least a dozen rabbits, an animal which abounds on some of these Islands.

The Governor has two milch cows which were taken wild and kept by means of tethers, and we were regaled by milk and fresh butter, articles which we had not seen since we left New York.

Port Louis consists of 10 or 12 low houses, some built of stone and others of turfs with thatched roofs. At the time of the massacre these were mostly pulled down and plundered and the place now exhibits a sense of wild ruin, two or three only of the buildings having been repaired for the reception of the Governor and the few men with him, amounting only to 23 in all. The Government house contains one comfortable room, furnished with a stove, a table, a cupboard, an old sofa and chest of drawers and a few chairs. In this room Brisbane was butchered in open day, by receiving a musket ball through his body, a blow over his head with a cutlass, and three stabs with a knife. His body was then dragged a considerable distance by a horse and plundered. Brother Arms and myself were furnished with a Crick bed and a Sofa to sleep on, while the Governor, Captain Rea and a Mr. Foxton slept on the floor, all of us occupying the same room.

A regular watch is kept here night and day, and a reinforcement of horses and men is constantly expected, when a vigorous effort will probably be made to catch the murderers. The Governor stated that he had pursued these men for two days at a time, but that it was impossible to take them without horses.

Feb. 6th. At a little before 11 A.M. we bade farewell to the horrid desolations of Port Louis and to our hospitable friends there, and set out for Salvador Bay. We declined an escort of Marines, and were accompanied only by the Indian Gouger for a guide, and a sailor to take back our horse. In order to quicken our speed and prevent the fatigue of walking we doubled the horses, but it required about as much effort of muscle to propel the one my companion and I rode as to force a boat against wind and tide. We arrived however safe on board the "Antarctic" between one and two P.M.

When we came on board we learned that the Gougers had been down to the beach with four bullocks (dressed) the evening before, that Captain Nash had informed

them of the prohibition to his taking them, or at least paying for them. The Gougers replied that they should not carry the beef back, and that if he did not choose to pay for it, he should be welcome to it. They then left it on the shore where it lay all night, and this morning it was brought on board the vessel.

[February 7th -- no entry]

Feb. 8th. Our anchor was weighed and our sails spread this morning for the purpose of going to Eagle Island, but as there was no wind the tide drifted the "Antarctic" towards the shore and she soon grounded. A kedge anchor was carried out from her bows and she was hauled off into deeper water. A breeze now sprung up and we beat out of the Bay.

Learning that a French Man of War, and an English Schooner had just arrived at Port Louis, the Captain determined to pass that way, and send a boat from the mouth of Berkeley Sound (16 miles) up to Port Louis to ascertain what Ship it was, and to get some little stores. Before noon the wind again died away, and at one P.M. the boat was sent to Port Louis though we were then more than 20 miles from the town. Brother Arms went in the boat. The calm continued all the afternoon so that we made no progress.

Port Louis, Berkeley Sound, Lord's day Feb 9th. Had a dead calm all the night, but found this morning that the tide had drifted our vessel into the mouth of Berkeley Sound. Saw the French Ship beating out against a head wind. The "Antarctic" was hove to wait the return of her boat which went out on yesterday. Spoke the Man of War as she passed us, and found her to be the "Victorious" twenty two days from Rio Janeiro and bound to Valparaíso. Our boat returned at half past ten A.M. with an earnest invitation from the Governor for the "Antarctic" to visit Port Louis when the Captain immediately put her before the wind to run up thither. All hands were busy in putting the vessel in order to receive visitors etc., and no time or place was found to remember the Sabbath.

At 2 P.M. we came to anchor at Port Louis and Captain Mallas [sic - Mallros, Ed.] and another gentleman from the English Schooner "Hopeful" were immediately on board.

When they had remained about 2 hours, Captain Nash went on shore with them to visit the Governor. Thus the day has been one of more than usual interruption and trial.

My soul is pained at such palpable disregard of the Sabbath, and I have often longed for the wings of a dove that I might seek a resting place from these distressing scenes.

Monday Feb. 10th. The hands have been engaged in taking in water for sea. At one o'clock Captain Nash sent to the Government house and invited the Governor, Mr. Rea and Mr. Foxton on board to dine. They all accepted the invitation and several hours were spent in friendly conversation with these Gentlemen. Captain Nash presented the Governor with a guanaco skin mantle, an article which he had never before seen. At evening the Governor sent a pitcher of milk on board, which was not a little refreshing in this desert land.

Feb. 11th. Took a ramble on shore in the morning and visited the village church yard. This, like the village, and every thing about it, appears in a neglected and dilapidated condition. Four rude boards mark the resting place of as many English and American seamen who have fallen here. The other graves are undistinguished by any memorial of their cold tenants.

Went to see a "Carol" [sic - corral, Ed.]. This is nothing more than an

enclosure with high turf walls for the purpose of confining wild cattle, several hundreds of which have sometimes been thus shut up together. Out of these the butcher selects for the consumption of the settlement and for market as occasion requires. These bullocks are let out of their pound to feed either by being secured by a tether or carefully watched by herdsmen until they become tame. Only fourteen cattle are in the "carall" at this time, the cattle being more scarce than formerly, and there being a want of horses and experienced men to take them.

Called on the Governor and took a walk with him in his garden and in the fields. His garden contains an acre of ground and the soil appears fine, but he arrived too late in the season to cultivate many vegetables this summer. He is, however, putting it in order for the next year.

In the afternoon the Governor presented Captain Nash with a quarter of beef.

A boat was sent out on a fishing expedition, and returned at evening with more than Peter caught, after having let go two thirds of the quantity which were hauled to the shore. These fishes are about the size of a large shad, and may be taken in the coves about these Islands in large quantities.

Choiseule's Bay Feb. 12th. Left Port Louis early this morning for Eagle Island. While we were getting under way the Governor came on board to leave some dispatches and to bid us farewell. The more I see of this man, the better I am pleased with him. He is easy and familiar in his manners, appears to treat all his dependents with kindness and urbanity: and exhibits little of ostentation and haughtiness, so often seen in men of rank.

Captain Mallros of the English Schooner "Hopeful", also paid us a farewell visit, and sailed some distance down the Sound with us, when he left us and returned to his vessel.

Captain Prior of the English Sloop which was lost in the ice in search of the newly discovered Islands in the South Seas, takes a passage for himself and four of his crew, to New Island, on board the "Antarctic".

While passing the "South Rocks", in the mouth of Berkeley Sound, we saw them covered with fur Seals, while the waters around the rocks were literally alive with the gambols of these animals. Boats were prepared to launch in pursuit of them, but as the rocks were small and ragged, so that there was little prospect of taking many, the expedition was finally abandoned. Probably there were more than a 1000 on these Rocks.

The manner of taking Seals is, to land without noise, on the little Islands and rocks where they haul up, and before they have time to leap into the sea dispatch them with clubs of 4 feet in length.

The seal is a very slow clumsy animal on land, but extremely swift and expert in the water. When attacked they will attempt to defend themselves with great resolution, but when they find that there is no hope of escape, it is said that they will utter the most piteous and supplicative moans, and even shed tears like a human being.

Many hundreds are often killed on a single rock, and perhaps as many pups, or young ones, left without their dams [their mothers, Ed.], to perish by starvation. As these pups when very young are of no value, the sealers either kill in sport or compassion, or else leave them to the lingering death of famine. These little animals often live 8 or 10 days after their mothers are killed; but by the fourth and fifth days the pains of hunger begin to press them, so that

their cries of agony are said to be heart-piercing. They will crawl about upon the rocks and attempt to draw nutriment from each other, or from rags on the sailors' trousers, and as death approaches, they will gnaw the rocks in convulsive agonies, rolling their eyes and uttering [cries?] which might move a heart of stone.

Saw two ships off the entrance of Berkeley Sound but were unable to speak them. After a pleasant sail of about 45 miles, we came to anchor in this Bay about sundown, to await the arrival of another day, as sailing among these rocky Islands in the night is dangerous.

Feb. 13th. At daylight this morning our anchor was weighed and we proceeded on our way. With light and head winds, our progress was slow. Passed numerous small islands, some composed of naked rock, some clothed with grass, and others yielding peat and tussocks [Author's note: Tussac grass, *Dactylis caspitosa*. Ed.] in abundance. Did not reach our port of destination as we had expected and were obliged to keep out to sea during the night.

Clark's Harbour, Eagle Island, East Falklands. Feb 14th/34 Came to anchor in this harbour early this morning. Most of the crew spent the day on shore in search of wild hogs and other game. Some geese and a variety of birds were taken but no hogs.

Feb. 15. Mr. Johnson, who has been some time in irons was put on shore today at his own request. He is to be left here with two boats, a gun and ammunition, a quantity of provisions, his share of seal skins etc.

Went on shore in the morning in company with a boat's crew, to take a ramble in search of geese. Twelve were taken together with a variety of smaller fowls, also a fine swan. Returned on board at 2 P.M. in a rough sea and a high wind, so that we were all well drenched by the waves. Just at night two Schooners came into the harbour and anchored along side the "Antarctic". One was the "Unicorn", an armed English vessel, now engaged in surveying these Islands under the direction of the British Government. The other was the "Elizabeth Jane", Captain Albertson of New York. Captain Albertson came on board. He has been on a sealing voyage to the western coast of Patagonia, but having been unsuccessful he has come to these Islands to spend a few months in the Whale fishery.

Lord's day Feb. 16th. The wind has been so high during the day, that none of the vessels have attempted to leave the harbour. To see three Schooners anchored side by side among these desolate Islands makes one almost feel that he is in some maritime port. Here I find the American, the Englishman, the Scotchman, the Irishman, the Frenchman, the Dutchman and the African mingling together in these "Isles afar off".

Captain Nash invited the officers and crews of the "Unicorn" and the "Elizabeth Jane" to attend divine service on board the "Antarctic" in the afternoon. At the hour appointed a signal was set and these hardy sons of the Ocean collected together and filled our cabin. Here I was permitted to address an attentive audience from many and remote nations, some of whom I expect to see no more till the day of final retribution. My text was Jeremiah 29:13 "And ye shall seek me and find me when ye shall search for me with all your heart". I think I felt thankful for an opportunity once more to "preach Christ crucified" to a little assembly of immortal beings, a privilege which I had not been permitted to enjoy for more than three months.

Falkland Sound, Feb. 17th. The "Antarctic" sailed this morning in company with the "Elizabeth Jane" for "Arch Islands", distant 30 miles. After beating against a head wind all day we were unable to reach the place of our destination and

came to anchor for the night under lee of the shore.

Port Albemarle, Feb. 18th. Our anchor was weighed at daylight this morning and with a fresh breeze we soon found ourselves in the place to which we were bound. In this harbour we found the Ship "Charles Adams", Captain Staunton, of Stonington, Connecticut. With her tender the brig Uxor: also the Barque "Commodore Barre", Captain Chester, of New York. These vessels are all engaged in the Whaling business, the ships lying in port as receivers, while the tenders cruise about these seas in search of whales. With our own Schooner and the "Elizabeth Jane" there are now five American vessels lying in this bay, giving it the appearance of a naval port.

In consequence of failing to get a supply of provisions at these Islands Captain Nash has decided that he cannot carry us home, and we are to seek a residence on board some vessel until an opportunity presents of leaving these shores. Thus our hopes of soon revisiting our native land are again blasted.

Fish Bay, Feb. 19th. Left Port Albemarle for New Island early this morning. Were becalmed during the forenoon, but in the after part of the day a breeze sprung up and wafted us pleasantly along. We passed many Islands, of various forms and sizes, some of which were literally covered with birds, filling the air with wild and multiform notes. I should judge that 20,000 of birds might often be found on islands not more than two miles in circumference. The history of the "Jonny Rook" [Author's note: *Corvus frugilegus*. Ed.] - a bird somewhat resembling the crow - is rather amusing. This fowl is an errant thief, and surpasses all the feathered tribe in impudence. It is always watching the sailor when on shore, hovering and screaming just over his head, following him from place to place and when he lays any small article upon the ground slyly stealing it away, often from within two feet of him. It seems to delight in mischief for its own sake, and will break hundreds of eggs which seamen have collected, if left for a few moments on the ground unguarded. It will even dig up articles which are buried in the ground and, if possible, destroy them or convey them away, and hide them. It has been known to take jack knives, powder horns, flasks, caps and other small articles, and sometimes to drop them into the middle of a pond in sight of their owners. These qualities render the Rook an object of resentment among sailors, and the most cruel and shocking tortures are often practiced upon it without any apparent compunction.

Not being able to reach New Island our vessel was brought to anchor in Fish Bay, at 9 o'clock in the evening.

Feb. 20th. The Captain concluding to remain here until he is ready for sea, a boat was sent to New Island - a distance of 7 miles - to see some vessels which are lying there, I took passage in this boat in order to see Captain Pendleton of the Ship "Hamilton", to engage a residence for my companion and myself until an opportunity offers for returning to our native land. The day was very stormy and cold, but we arrived safely at the Ship, where we concluded to spend the night. The Hamilton is a fine Ship of 500 tons, and is employed in the Whale fishery. She remains at anchor in Island Harbour, and is attended by two Schooners viz. the "Macdonough" [McDonough, Ed.] and the "Caroline" which ply about in these seas in search of whales. Captain Pendleton agrees to receive us on board his ship whenever the "Antarctic" goes to sea. In the "Hamilton" found some trunks which we left on board the "Mary Jane" to send back to the U.S. I also found two young sailors who left the Patagonian Indians two days before Brother Arms and myself embarked in the "Antarctic".

Feb. 21st. Received an invitation to return to Fish Bay in the Schooner "Hancock", Captain Davidson. Went on board and in about two hours we were along side of the "Antarctic".

Feb. 22d. All is bustle on board in fitting for sea. Spent most of the day in writing and preparing letters for friends, as the "Antarctic" is to sail in a day or two.

Sabbath 23d. The Captain intends going to sea early tomorrow morning, and all hands are engaged at work as on other days. In the afternoon the vessel was got under way and taken down to New Island near the "Hamilton", on board of which Brother Arms and myself are to remain. No religious worship has been attended on board today - A total disregard of the Sabbath prevails, and I am pained at what my eyes behold. The Captain informed us that we should probably have to remove our effects on board the ship today, but as he did not arrive until evening we are saved the interruption and wait until morning.

Monday 24th. My companion and myself bade farewell to the "Antarctic" today and took up our residence on board the "Hamilton". To be left here with little prospect of an opportunity to return to my native land within 6 or 8 months is rather painful, when viewed through the dark medium of an earthly vision; but the assurance that this, like every other event, is under the control of an all wise God, and will be overruled to some good end, not only reconciles me to my situation, but even makes me joyful in it.

A thick fog and a head wind have prevented the Antarctic from sailing today, and she waits for fair weather. Left a bundle of letters on board for dear friends in America.

Feb. 25. The atmosphere still thick, so that the Antarctic has not left the bay. Find my situation as it regards temporal favours very comfortable, but there appears to be little of the fear of God in this ship. Spent the day in reading, writing, conversation etc.

Received a visit from Captain Nash. He generously refuses to receive any compensation for our passage to this place.

Schooner Hancox [sic], Ship Harbour. Feb. 26th. The Antarctic sailed this morning with fair weather and a fine breeze. Two boats were early manned from the ship on a whaling excursion, but in consequence of too much sea they returned before noon. One whale was seen and the harpoon thrown into him, but in order to save the boat and men the line was cut and the monster moved off with the barbed iron in his flesh.

Captain Davison of the "Hancox" came on board and invited one or both of us to spend our time in his vessel until the arrival of the "Talma" from the Shetland Islands [The South Shetland Islands, close to Antarctica. Ed.]. The Talma is in company with the Hancox in the seal fishery, and is every day expected here on her way to the States.

A hope to obtain a passage in her and a desire to use every precaution not to fail of seeing her on her arrival induced me to leave the Ship and take up my abode with Captain Davison for a season. He appears to be a very fine man and assures us that he will do all in his power to obtain a passage for us.

After I went on board the Schooner she was got under way and with a fresh wind we soon ran down to West Point harbour, a distance of thirty miles. Here we came to anchor for the purpose of catching some fish, fowl etc., but in consequence of high winds and rain the Captain did not go on shore.

[February 27th -- no entry]

Feb. 28th. Spent the two past days chiefly in reading, now and then taking a ramble on shore. There is little variety in the scenery of these Islands: barren rocks, "heath clad hills", swales [low-lying areas, Ed.] of coarse, rank grass, with here and there an Island of peat and Tussock are the principal objects of an inanimate kind which meet the eye, while the ear is constantly saluted with the harsh croaking of innumerable sea fowls, and the "eternal roar" of the surges, as they clash among the craggy cliffs of an iron bound shore.

March 1st. Took a ramble on shore this morning, and, in the lovely solitude which reigns here I discovered a little graveyard, where the remains of seven sailors are deposited. While musing on the lot of seamen a shade of melancholy sympathy stole across my mind. Cradled in the storm and tossed upon the mountain billow, he knows little of repose and the calm and hallowed scenes of rural and domestic joy, or of the better consolations of religion. Driven through life upon a restless element, he often lies down in death, not among kind and sympathizing kindred beneath the paternal roof, but in some distant, perhaps barbarous land, on some desolate Island, or among the corals of the deep, while the dark waves form his winding sheet and the moaning winds sing his funeral dirge. There is scarcely an island or a shore so distant, so obscure or so dreary, but that it shows the footsteps of some shipwrecked or wandering tar, or affords a resting place for his ashes. How many thought I, how many widows and mothers and sisters shed the bitter tear for husbands and sons and brothers who have made their graves on some distant continent, or island, or who lie deep beneath the cold waves of the ocean; and whose history and fate, in many instances, will not be revealed till the sea shall give up the dead who are in it. It is high time that the attention of philanthropists and Christians be more generally turned towards this numerous and suffering class of men, and that more vigorous efforts be made to ameliorate their condition and to elevate them in the scale of intellectual and moral worth. Until recently they have been thought almost beyond the reach of moral culture, and few and feeble have been the efforts made to redeem them from destruction; and where their bodies have been dashed and broken upon wild and dreary rocks, there also their immortal spirits have felt the shock of a final and fearful wreck.

March 2d. Sabbath. The morning opened with much calmness and serenity and my glad heart hailed its rising beams with the sweet anticipation of a more peaceful and undisturbed sabbath than any I had recently enjoyed. Entered into conversation with the Captain about the church going scenes in our native land, and finding him interested I gradually [led] to the subjects of "Righteousness, temperance and a judgment to come". He conversed with much candour and evident tenderness of feeling, and on my proposing preaching on board in the afternoon, he very readily acceded to it, and seemed pleased with the idea. I had selected my subject and the hour had nearly arrived for preaching, when the cry of "Sail ho!" broke from the deck. A Schooner was descried coming into the harbour, and as this crew have long waited here for the arrival of the Talma from the Shetland Islands - a vessel with which the Hancox is joined in sealing - all was bustle until it was ascertained that she was the expected vessel. She came in and anchored near us, and the remainder of the day was spent in the passing and repassing of the crews from one vessel to another, and in attending to the business of their compact. Thus our religious services were prevented, and the feelings of sobriety and reflection, which had been induced were again dissipated. Saw Captain Allyn of the Talma who is intending to sail as soon as possible for the U.S., and though he has a large crew and little provision, yet he agreed to take Brother Arms and myself as passengers.

On board the Talma I found Mr. Luther B. Johnson, the man who was confined in irons for a time on board the Antarctic and who was finally left by Captain Nash on Eagle Island. Captain Allyn, hearing of his condition, sailed down to the place of his banishment and offered him a passage to the States, which offer was

readily accepted by the lonely exile. I had never before had an opportunity of speaking to Johnson and I find that his statements in relation to his difficulties differ very materially from those of Captain Nash.

[March 3rd -- no entry]

March 4th. Left Ship Harbour in the Hancox to return to my companion at New Island. Captain Allyn remains a few days, to prepare for sea, when he promises to come to New Island and take us should we have no opportunity of getting back to Ship Harbour. On our passage to New Island we saw large numbers of whales, sporting around us and "making a path to shine after them" as they passed through the deep. Were becalmed most of the day so that at night we had advanced but a few miles on our way.

March 5th. Wednesday. Our vessel rolled about upon the sea during the night and when morning came we were still several miles from the place of our destination. A light breeze sprung up and about 7 A.M. we came to anchor near the Hamilton. Found one of her tenders, the McDonough, Captain Clift, of New London, discharging a large whale which she had recently taken, while the great kettles were smoking with the blubber which was trying. It is supposed that this whale will produce more than 100 barrels of oil. Endeavoured to get a conveyance for ourselves and our effects to the Talma, but were unable, as it is a favourable time for whaling and all hands are busy.

Captain Davison of the Hancox has treated me with great kindness. He has taken a deep interest in our situation and has spared no pains in endeavouring to secure for us a passage to the States. He is bound on a sealing voyage to the western coast of Patagonia, and feels that he must lose no more time at these Islands, else he would return with us to the Talma. Indeed he would even now do it, could he obtain the consent of his crew.

Ship Hamilton, March 6th. A fresh northerly wind prevailing this morning, the Hancox left the harbour for the Strait of Magellan. Shortly after her departure the Whale ship Atlantic of Bridgeport, Connecticut, Captain Young, came in. She is to make this harbour her rendezvous. Captain Young came on board and brought us papers up to the first of November last. He has lost one of his men since he came out, in an effort to take a whale. This mighty animal, finding himself smarting with the harpooner's iron became furious with rage, and turning upon his pursuers with his ponderous flukes cut the boat twice in two and scattered the whole crew upon the bosom of the deep. One man was instantly killed, the rest all escaped and were taken on board another boat. It requires no little courage, as well as skill, to take these huge animals, as those who make fast to them have no surety that they will not be, the next moment, launched into eternity. I am told that scenes of danger often occur in this business in which the most hardened turn pale. It is but a few days since a boat's crew from this ship (Hamilton) made fast to a whale but were towed through the water with such velocity that two of the men leaped overboard in a fright, and the boat steerer was obliged to cut loose from the whale and attend to saving his men. But notwithstanding all the danger attending this business, multitudes are continually engaged in it, with the hope of a little profit.

At 4 P.M. the Talma came in and was hailed by my companion and myself with no little joy, as we hope, through the goodness of our Heavenly Father, that she will soon convey us over the deep to our native shores. Our little harbour has this day contained two ships and four schooners, all from my own beloved country, and all the Captains from my native State.

[March 7th -- no entry]

March 8th. Went on shore this morning to take my last ramble on these islands. After walking over a weary hill and through the rank Tussocks for a mile and a half, came to a large Rookery of Penguins, Mollymauks etc. This rookery covered several acres and I am told that in the season of incubation it is so completely covered with birds that the ground can hardly be seen. Most of the birds have now reared their young and left the Rookery, though several thousands are still left, as their young ones are not yet sufficiently grown to leave their nests. Saw several young mollymauks on high nests raised with mud and grass from the ground. They are now larger than a goose, though not yet so fledged as to be able to take wing.

On returning from this tour my guide pointed out to me the spot where the crew of a whale boat - six in number - were all drowned together by means of the boats being towed under water by a whale. This sad event transpired about a year ago.

In the afternoon took our luggage on board the Talma ready to sail for New London. Captain Pendleton of the Hamilton not only refuses to accept of any remuneration for our board while with him but also - in connection with Captain Young of the "Atlantic" who asked the privilege - generously supplies us with stores for our voyage. Since we have been in this harbour we have been uniformly treated with much kindness and respect, both by officers and sailors, and on bidding them farewell we received many a hearty good wish for our speedy and safe arrival in our native land.

Schooner Talma, Lord's day. March 9th. As the morning was pleasant and the wind favourable the Captain ordered the anchor to be weighed and the sails unfurled for sea. It would have been more agreeable to my feelings to have commenced our voyage on some other day than the Sabbath; but there are few ship masters who appear to be conscientious on this subject. I have now been at these islands about six weeks, during which time I have fallen in with several hundreds of immortal beings, mostly my own countrymen, and as I leave these shores probably forever, and these souls, perhaps till the judgment, my eye affects my heart. Most of these sailors are thoughtless and impenitent, with few salutary restraints to check them in their rapid and fearful descent down to the gulf below! When will the storm-cradled sailor find the haven of eternal rest?

The weather continued fine during the day and we receded rapidly from the land, till the last lingering peak of the Falklands faded from my view in the evening twilight. There has been much quietness on board today. Brother Arms is afflicted with seasickness, but, as yet, I escape the influence of that uncomfortable disease.

<end of extract>