

# VANCOUVER'S VOYAGES

*The Adventurous History of the English Captain who Proved Conclusively that there was no North-East Passage—Drawn from Original Sources—Fourth Paper in the Series, Vikings of the Pacific*

By Agnes C. Laut



WITH Gray's entrance of the *Columbia*, the great drama of discovery on the North-west Coast of America was drawing to a close.

After the death of Bering on the Commander Islands, and of Cook at Hawaii, while on voyages to prove there was no North-East Passage, no open waterway between Pacific and Atlantic—it seems impossible that the myth of an open sea from Asia to Europe could still delude men; but it was in hunting for China that Columbus found America; and it was in hunting for a something that had no existence, except in the foolish theories of the schoolmen, that the whole North-west Coast of America was exploited.

Bering had been called "coward" for not sailing through a solid continent. Cook was accused of fur-trading, "pottering in peltries," to the neglect of discovery, because his crews sold their sea-otter at profit. To be sure, the combined results of Bering's and Cook's voyages proved there was no waterway through Alaska to the Atlantic; but in addition to blackening the reputations of the two great navigators in order to throw discredit on their conclusions, the schoolmen bellicosely demanded, might there not be a passage south of Alaska, between Russia's claim on the north and Spain's on the south? Both Bering and Cook had been driven out from this section of the coast by gales. This left a thousand miles of American coast unexplored. Cook had said there were no Straits of Fuca, of which the old Greek

pilot in the service of New Spain had told legends of fictitious voyages two centuries before; yet Barclay, an East India English trader, had been up those very straits. So had Meares, another trader. So had Kendrick and Gray, the two Americans. This was the very section which Bering and Cook had left untouched; and who could tell where these straits might lead? They were like a second Mediterranean. Meares argued they might connect with Hudson Bay.

Then, Spain had forced matters to a climax by seizing Meares' vessels and fort at Nootka as contraband. That had only one meaning. Spain was trying to lay hands on everything from New Spain to Russian territory on the north. If Spain claimed all north to the Straits of Fuca, and Russia claimed all south to the Straits of Fuca, where was England's claim of New Albion discovered by Sir Francis Drake, and of all that coast which Cook had sighted round Nootka?

Captain George Vancouver, formerly midshipman with Cook, was summoned post-haste by the British Admiralty. Ostensibly, his mission was to receive back at Nootka all the lands which the Spaniards had taken from Meares, the trader. Really, he was to explore the coast from New Spain on the south to Russian America on the north, and to hold that coast for England. That Spain had already explored the islands of this coast was a mere detail. There remained the continental shore still to be explored. Besides, Spain had not followed up her explorations by

possession. She had kept her navigations secret. In many cases, her navigators had not even landed.

#### THE AIM OF VANCOUVER'S LIFE

Vancouver was still in his prime, under forty. Serving in the navy from boyhood, he had all a practical seaman's contempt for theories. This contempt was given point by the world's attitude towards Cook. Vancouver had been on the spot with Cook. He knew there was *no* North-East Passage. Cook had proved that. Yet the world refused credence.

For the practical navigator there remained only one course, and that course became the one aim, the consuming ambition of Vancouver's life, to destroy the last vestige of the myth of a North-East Passage, to explore the northwest coast of America so thoroughly there would not remain a single unknown inlet that could be used as a possible prop for the schoolmen's theories, to penetrate every inlet from California to Alaska—mainland and island; to demonstrate that no one possible opening led to the Atlantic.

The two ships, *Discovery* and *Chatham*, with a supply ship, the *Daedalus*, to follow later, were fitted out for long and thorough work. Vancouver's vessel, the *Discovery*, carried twenty guns with a crew of a hundred men. The tender, *Chatham*, under Broughten, had ten guns and forty-five men. With Vancouver, went Menzies, and Puget, and Baker, and Johnstone—names that were to become place marks on the Pacific. The *Discovery* and *Chatham* left England in the spring of 1791. A year later found them cutting the waves from Hawaii for America—the New Albion of Drake's discovery, forgotten by England until Spain's activity stimulated memory of the pirate voyage.

A swashing swell met the ships as they neared America. Phosphorescent lights blue as sulphur flame slided the sea in a trail of rippling fire; and a land bird, washed out by the waves, told of New Albion's shore. For the first two weeks of April, the *Discovery* and *Chatham* had driven under cloud of sail and sunny skies; but on the sixteenth, just when the white fret of reefs ahead forewarned land—heavy weather settled over the ships. To the fore, bare, majestic, compact as a

wall, the coast of New Albion towered out of the surf near Mendocino. Cheers went up from the lookout for the landfall of Francis Drake's discovery. Then, torrents of rain washed out surf and shore. The hurricane gales that had driven all other navigators out to sea from this coast now lashed Vancouver. Such smashing seas swept over decks that masts, sails, railings were wrenched away.

#### THE ENGLISHMAN MISSES FINDING THE COLUMBIA

Was it ill-luck or destiny that caught Vancouver in this gale? If he had not been driven off shore here, he might have been just two weeks before Gray on the Columbia, and made good England's claim of all territory between New Spain and Alaska. When the weather cleared, on April 27, the ocean was turgid, plainly tinged river-color by inland waters; but ground swell of storm and tide rolled across the shelving sandbars. Not a notch nor an opening breached through the flaw of the horizon from the ocean to the source of the shallow green. Vancouver was too far off shore to see that there really was a break in the surf wash. He thought—and thought rightly—this was the place, where the trader, Meares, had hoped to find the great river of the West, only to be disappointed and to name the point Cape Disappointment. Vancouver was not to be fooled by any such fanciful theories. "Not considering this opening worthy of more attention," he writes, "I continued to the Northwest." He had missed the greatest honor that yet remained for any discoverer on the Pacific. Within two weeks, Gray, the American—heading back to these baffling tides with a dogged persistence that won its own glory—was to succeed in passing the breakers and discovering the Columbia.

#### HE SIGHS THE OLYMPUS RANGE

As the calm permitted approach to the shore again, forests appeared through the haze—that soft, velvet, caressing haze of the dreamy, lazily swelling Pacific—forests of fir and spruce and pine and cypress, in all the riot of dank, spring growth, a dense tangle of wind fall and underbrush and great vines below, festooned with the light green

stringy mosses of cloud-line overhead and almost impervious to sunlight. Myriad wild fowl covered the sea. The coast became beetling precipice, that rolled inland forest-clad to mountains jagging ragged peaks through the clouds. This was the Olympus Range, first noticed by Meares, and to-day seen for miles out at sea like a ridge of opalescent domes suspended in mid-heaven.

#### VANCOUVER MEETS GRAY

Vancouver was gliding into the Straits of Fuca when the slender pennant of a far ship floated above the blue horizon outward bound. Another wave roll and the flag was seen to be above full-blown sails and a square hulled, trim, little trader of American colors. At six in the morning of April 29, the American saluted with a cannon shot. Vancouver answered with a charge from his decks, rightly guessing this was Robert Gray on the *Columbia*.

Puget and Menzies were sent to inquire about Gray's cruise. They brought back word that Gray had been fifty miles up the Straits of Fuca, and most astounding to Vancouver's ambitions, that the American had been off the mouth of a river south of the straits at  $46^{\circ} 10'$ , where the tide prevented entrance for nine days. "The river Mr. Gray mentioned," says Vancouver, "should be south of Cape Disappointment. This was passed on the forenoon of the twenty-seventh, and if any inlet or river be found, it must be a very intricate one, inaccessible . . . owing to reefs and broken water . . . I was thoroughly convinced, as were most persons on board, that we could not possibly have passed any cape . . . from Mendocino to Classet (Flattery)."

Keen to prove that no North-East Passage existed by way of the Straits of Fuca, Vancouver headed inland, close to the south shore, where craggy heights offered some guidance through the labyrinth of islands and fog. Eight miles inside the straits he anchored for the night.

#### DISCOVERS AND NAMES MT. BAKER

The next morning the sun rose over one of the fairest scenes of the Pacific Coast—an arm of the sea, placid as a lake, gemmed by countless craggy islands. On the land side were the forested valleys rolling

in to the purple folds of the mountains, and beyond, eastward, dazzling as a huge shield of fire in the sunrise, a white mass, whiter than the whitest clouds, swimming aerially in mid-heaven. Lieutenant Baker was the first to catch a glimpse of the vision for which every western traveler now watches, the famous peak seen by land or sea for hundreds of miles, the playground of the jagged, green lightnings on the hot summer nights, and the peak was named after him—Mount Baker.

For the first time in history white men's boats plied the waters of the great inland sea now variously known as Admiralty Inlet, Puget Sound, Hood Canal. There must be no myth of a North-East Passage left lurking in any of the many inlets of this spider-shaped sea. Vancouver, Menzies, Puget and Johnstone set out in the small boats to penetrate every trace of water passage. Instead of leading north-east, the tangled maze of forest-hidden channels meandered southward. Savages swarmed over the water, paddling round and round the white men, for all the world like birds of prey circling for a chance to swoop at the first unguarded moment. Tying trinkets to pieces of wood, Puget let the gifts float back as peace offerings to woo good will. The effect was what softness always is to an Indian spoiling for a fight—an incentive to boldness. When Puget landed for noon meal, a score of redskins lined up ashore and began stringing their bows for action. Puget drew a line along the sand with his cutlass and signaled the warriors to keep back. They scrambled out of his reach with a great clatter. It only needed some fellow bolder than the rest to push across the line and massacre would begin. Puget did not wait. By way of putting the fear of the Lord and respect for the white man in the heart of the Indian, he trained the swivel of the small-boat landward and fired in mid-air. The result was instantaneous. Weapons were dropped. On Monday, mid-day, June 4, Vancouver and Broughton landed at Point Possession. Officers drew up in line. The English flag was unfurled, a royal salute fired, and possession taken of all the coast of New Albion from latitude  $39^{\circ}$  to the Straits of Fuca, which Vancouver named Gulf of Gorgia. Just a month before, Gray, the American, had preceded this act of possession by a similar ceremony for the

United States on the banks of the Columbia.

The sum total of Vancouver's work so far had been the exploration of Puget Sound, which is to the West what the Gulf of St. Lawrence is to the East. It seemed his ill-luck to miss by just a hair's breadth the prizes he coveted. He had missed the discovery of the Columbia. He was now to miss the second largest river of the Northwest—the Fraser. He had hoped to be the first to round the Straits of Fuca, disproving the assumption that they led to the Atlantic; and he came on the spot only to learn that the two English traders, Meares and Barclay; the two Americans, Kendrick and Gray, and two Spaniards, Don Galiano and Don Valdes, had already proved practically that this part of the coast was a large island, and the Straits of Fuca an arm of the Pacific Ocean.

#### THE STRAITS OF FUCA A SECOND MEDITERRANEAN

Fifty Indians, in the long dugouts, of grotesquely carved prows and gaudy paint common among Pacific tribes, escorted Vancouver's boats northward the second week in June through the labyrinthin passages of cypress-grown islets to Burrard Inlet. To Peter Puget was assigned the work of coasting the mainland side and tracing every inlet to its head-waters. Johnstone went ahead in a small boat to reconnoiter the way out of the Pacific. On both sides the shores now rose in beetling precipice and steep mountains, down which foamed cataracts setting the echo of myriad bells tinkling through the wilds. The sea was tinged with milky sediment, but fog hung thick as a blanket, and Vancouver passed on north without seeing Fraser River. A little farther on, towards the end of June, he was astonished to meet a Spanish brig and schooner exploring the straits. Don Galiano and Don Valdes told him of the Fraser, which he had missed, and how the Straits of Fuca led out to the North Pacific. They had also been off Puget Sound, but had not gone inland, and brought Vancouver word that Don Quadra, the Spanish emissary, sent to restore lands to England, had arrived at Nootka, on the other side of the island, and was waiting. The explorers all proceeded up the straits together, but the lit-

tle Spanish craft were unable to keep abreast of the big English vessels, so, with a friendly cheer from both sides, the English went on alone.

Strange Indian villages lined the beetling heights of the straits. The houses, square built and of log slab, row on row, like the town streets of the white man, were situated high on isolated rocks, inaccessible to approach except by narrow planking forming a causeway from rock walls across the sea to the branches of a tree. In other places rope ladders formed the only path to the aerial dwellings, or the zig-zag trail up the steep face of a rock down which defenders could hurl stones. Howe's Sound, Jervis Canal, Bute Inlet were passed, and, in July, Johnstone came back with news he had found a narrow channel out to the Pacific.

The straits narrowed to less than half a mile with such a terrific tide-wash that on Sunday, July 29, the ships failed to answer to the helm and waves seventeen feet high dashed over decks. Progress was made by hauling the boats along shore with ropes braced round trees. By the first of August a dense fog swept in from the sea. The *Discovery* crashed on a sunken rock, heeling over till her sails were within three inches of water. Ballast was thrown overboard, and the next tide-rush lifted her. By August 19, Vancouver had proved—if any doubt remained—that no North-East Passage was to be found by way of the Straits of Fuca. Then, veering out to sea at midnight through squalls of rain, he steered to Nootka for the conference with Spain.

#### ETIQUETTE AT A LOG FORT

Vancouver came to Nootka on the 28th of August. Nootka was the grand rallying place of fur traders on the Pacific. It was a triangular sound extending into the shores of Vancouver Island. On an island at the mouth of the sound the Spaniards had built their fort. This part of the bay was known as Friendly Cove. To the north was Snug Cove, where Cook had anchored; to the south, the roadstead of the fur traders. Mountains rose from the water line, and on a terrace of hills above the Spanish fort was the native village of Maquinna, the Indian chief.

Here, then, came Vancouver, met at the harbor mouth by a Spanish officer

with pilot to conduct the *Discovery* to the Spanish fort of Nootka. The *Chat-ham*, the *Daedalus*, Vancouver's store ship, two or three English fur trading ships, Spanish frigates bristling with cannon, were already at anchor, and the bright Spanish pennant, red and yellow, waved to the wind above the cannon-mounted, palisaded, log fort of Nootka.

Donning regimentals, Lieutenant Puget marched solemnly up to the fort to inform Don Juan de la Bodega y Quadra, representative of Spain, that Captain George Vancouver, representative of England, had arrived at Nootka to await the pleasure of New Spain's commander. It was New Spain's pleasure to receive England's salute, and Vancouver's guns roared out a volley of thirteen shots to the amazement of two thousand or more savages watching from the shores. Formally accompanied by his officers, Vancouver then paid his respects to New Spain. Don Quadra returned the compliment by breakfasting next morning on board the *Discovery*, while his frigates in turn saluted England by a volley of thirteen guns. In all this solemn parade of formality, Maquinna, lord of the wild domain, began to wonder what part he was to play, and ventured to board the *Discovery*, clad in a garb of nature, to join the breakfast of the leaders, when he was summarily cuffed overboard by the guard, who failed to recognize the Indian's quality. Don Quadra then gave a grand dinner to the English, to which the irate Maquinna was invited. Five courses, the dinner had, with royal salutes setting the echoes rolling in the hills. Seventeen guns were fired to the success of Vancouver's explorations. Toasts were drunk, foaming toasts to glory, and the navigators of the Pacific, and Maquinna, grand chief of the Nootkas, who responded by rising in his place, glass in hand, to express regret that Spain should withdraw from the North Pacific. It was then the brilliant thought flashed on Don Quadra to win the friendship of the Indians for all the white traders on the Pacific coast through a ceremonious visit by Vancouver and himself to Maquinna's home village, twenty miles up the sound.

#### THE WHITES VISIT THE INDIANS

Cutter and yawl left Friendly Cove at

eight in the morning of September 4, coming to Maquinna's home village at two in the afternoon. Don Quadra supplied the dinner, served in style by his own Spanish lackeys; and the gallant Spaniard led Maquinna's only daughter to the seat at the head of the spread, where the young squaw did the honors with all the hauteur of the Indian race. Maquinna then entertained his visitors with a sham battle of painted warriors, followed by a mask dance. Not to be outdone, the whites struck up fife and drum, and gave a wild display of Spanish fandangoes and Scotch reels. In honor of the day's outing, it was decided to name the large island which Vancouver had almost circumnavigated—Quadra and Vancouver.

When Maquinna returned this visit, there were fireworks, and more toasts, and more salutes. All this was very pleasant; but it was not business. Then Vancouver requested Don Quadra to ratify the international agreement between England and Spain; but there proved to be a wide difference of opinion as to what that agreement meant. Vancouver held that it entailed the surrender of Spain's sovereignty from San Francisco northward. Don Quadra maintained that it only surrendered Spanish rights north of Juan de Fuca, leaving the northwest coast free to all nations for trade. With Vancouver, it was all or nothing. Don Quadra then suggested that letters be sent to Spain and England for more specific instructions. For this purpose, Lieutenant Broughton was to be dispatched overland across Mexico to Europe. It was at this stage that Robert Gray came down from the North on the damaged *Columbia*, to receive assistance from Quadra. Within three weeks, Gray had sailed for Boston. Don Quadro for Spain, and Vancouver to the South, to examine that Columbia River of Gray's before proceeding to winter on the Sandwich Islands.

#### VANCOUVER HAS THE COLUMBIA EXAMINED FOR A HUNDRED MILES

The three English ships hauled out of Nootka in the middle of October, steering for that new river of Gray's of which Vancouver had expressed such doubt. The foaming reefs of Cape Disappointment were sighted and the north entrance seen



just as Gray had described it. The *Chatham* rode safely inside the heavy cross swell, though her small boat smashed to chips among the breakers; but on Sunday, October 21, such mountainous seas were running that Vancouver dared not risk his big ship, the *Discovery*, across the bar. Broughton was entrusted to examine the Columbia before setting out to England for fresh orders.

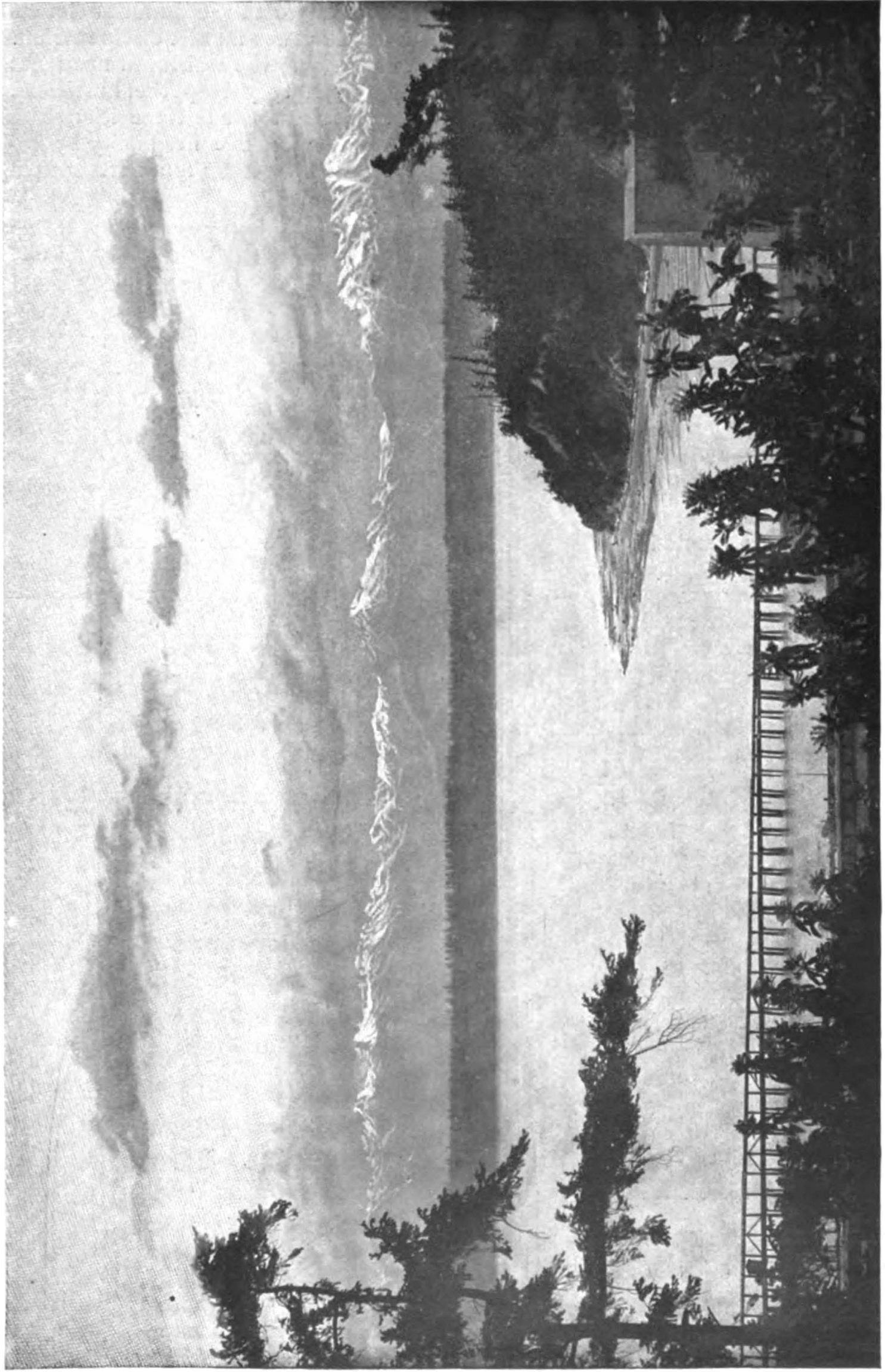
The *Chatham* had anchored just inside Cape Disappointment on the north, then passed south to Cape Adams, using Gray's chart as guide. Seven miles up the north coast a deep bay was named after Gray. Nine or ten Indian dug-outs with one hundred and fifty warriors now escorted Broughton's row boat up stream. The lofty peak ahead covered with snow from summit to base was named Mt. Hood. For seven days Broughton followed the river till his provision ran out, and the old Indian chief with him explained by the signs of pointing in the direction of the sunrise and letting water trickle through his fingers that waterfalls ahead would stop passage. Somehow, Broughton seemed to think because Gray, a private trader, had not been clad in the gold braid regimentals of authority his act of discovery was void; for Broughton landed, and with the old chief assisting at the ceremony by drinking healths, took possession of all the region for England, "having" as the record of the trip explains, "every reason to believe that the subjects of no other civilized nation or State had ever entered this river before; in this opinion he was confirmed by Mr. Gray's sketch in which it does not appear that Mr. Gray either saw or was ever within five leagues of the entrance."

Any comment on this proceeding is superfluous. It was evidently in the hope that the achievement of Gray—an unassuming fur trader, backed by nothing but his own dauntless courage, would be forgotten—which it certainly was for fifty years by nearly all Americans. Three days later, on November 3d, Broughton was back down stream at the *Chatham*, noting the deserted Indian village of Chinook as he passed to the harbor mouth. On November 6th, in heavy rain the ship stood out for the sea, passing the *Jenny* of Bristol, imprisoned inside the cape by surf. Broughton landed to reconnoiter

the passage out. The wind calmed next day, and a breach was descried through the surf. The little trading ship led the way, Broughton following, hard put to keep the *Chatham* headed for the sea, breakers rolling over her from stem to stern, snapping the tow rope of the launch and washing a sailor overboard; and we cannot but have a higher respect for Gray's feat, knowing the difficulties that Broughton weathered.

Meanwhile, Vancouver, on the *Discovery*, had coasted on down from the mouth of the Columbia to Drake's Bay, just outside the Golden Gate of San Francisco, where the bold English pirate had anchored in 1579. By nightfall of November 14, he was inside the spacious harbor of San Francisco. Two men on horseback rode out from the Spanish settlement on the south side, a mile back from the water front, firing muskets as a salute to Vancouver. The next morning a Spanish friar and ensign came aboard the *Discovery* for breakfast, pointing out to Vancouver the best anchorage for both wood and water. While the sailors went shooting quail on the hills, or amused themselves watching the Indians floating over the harbor on rafts made of dry rushes and grass, the good Spanish padre conducted Vancouver ashore to the presidio, or house of the commandant, back from the landing on a little knoll surrounded by hills. The fort was a square area of adobe walls fourteen feet high and five deep, the outer beams filled in between with a plaster of solid mortar, houses and walls whitewashed with lime made of sea shells. A small brass cannon gathered rust above one dilapidated carriage and another old gun was mounted by being lashed to a rotten log. A single gate led into the fort, which was inhabited by the commandant, the guard of thirty-five soldiers and their families. The windows of the houses were very small and without glass, the commandant's house being a rude structure, thirty by fourteen feet, whitewashed inside and out, the floor sand and rushes, the furnishings of the roughest handicraft. The mission proper was three miles from the fort, with a guard of five soldiers and a corporal. Such was the beginning of the largest city on the Pacific Coast to-day.

Broughton was now sent overland to England for instructions about the transfer



Photograph by W. E. Curtis. Copyright E. H. Harriman, 1901.

*A winter view of the Olympus Range.*

of Nootka. Puget became commander of the *Chatham*. The storeship *Daedalus* was sent to the South seas, touching only at Monterey.

#### THE WRONG CULPRITS EXECUTED

Vancouver sailed to winter in the Sandwich Islands. Here two duties awaited

earth's ends, beyond the reach of law—may have acted among these simple people may be guessed from the conduct of Cook's crews, and Cook was a strict disciplinarian. Those who sow to the whirlwind need not be surprised if they reap the hurricane. White men, welcomed to these islands as gods, repaid the native hospitality by impressing natives as crews to a northern cli-



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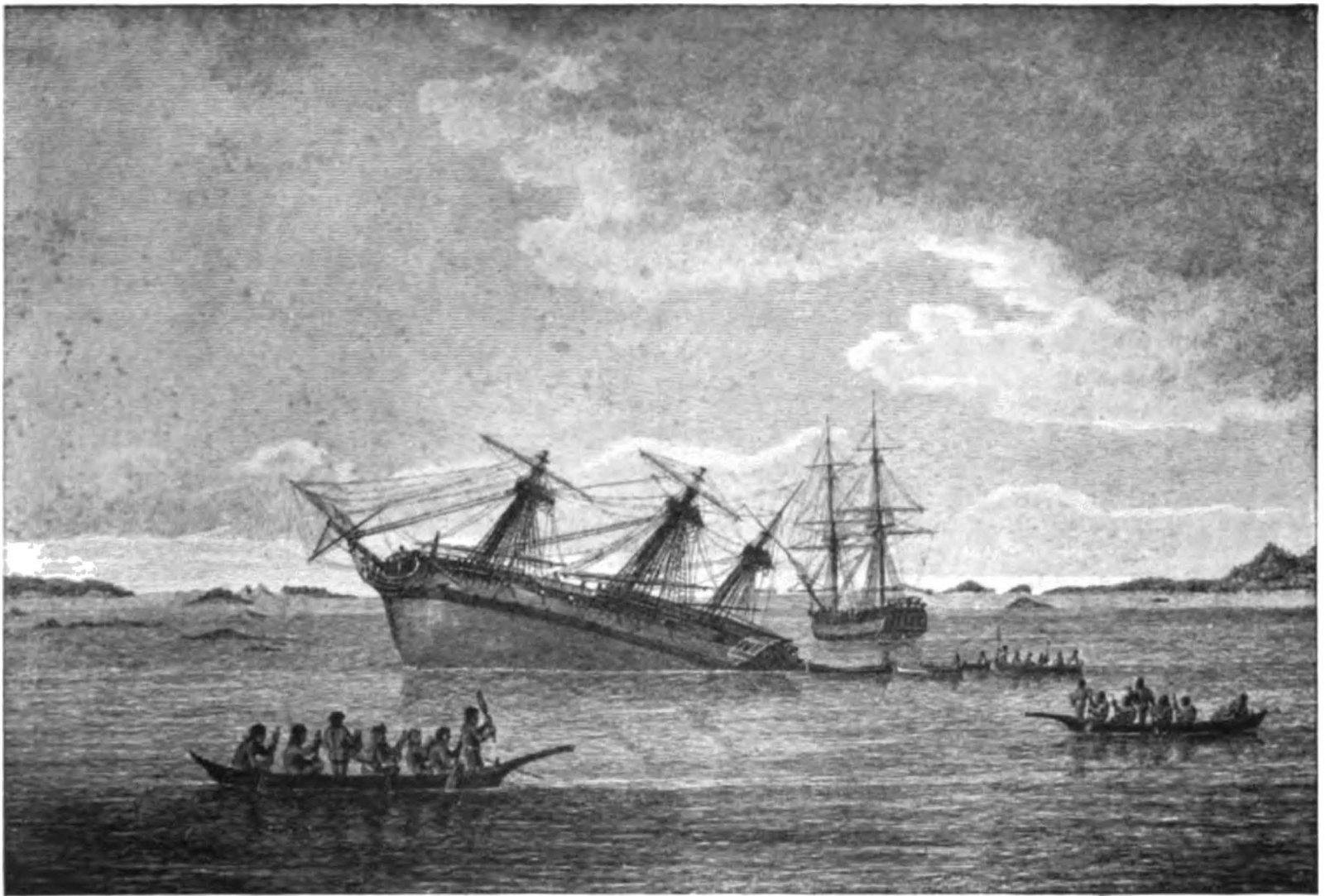
*Captain George Vancouver.*

*From the portrait by Lemuel Abbot in the National Portrait Gallery, London.*

the explorer, which he carried out in a way that left both a streak of glory and of shame across his escutcheon. The Sandwich Islands had become the half-way house of the Pacific for the fur traders. How fur traders—riff-raff adventurers from

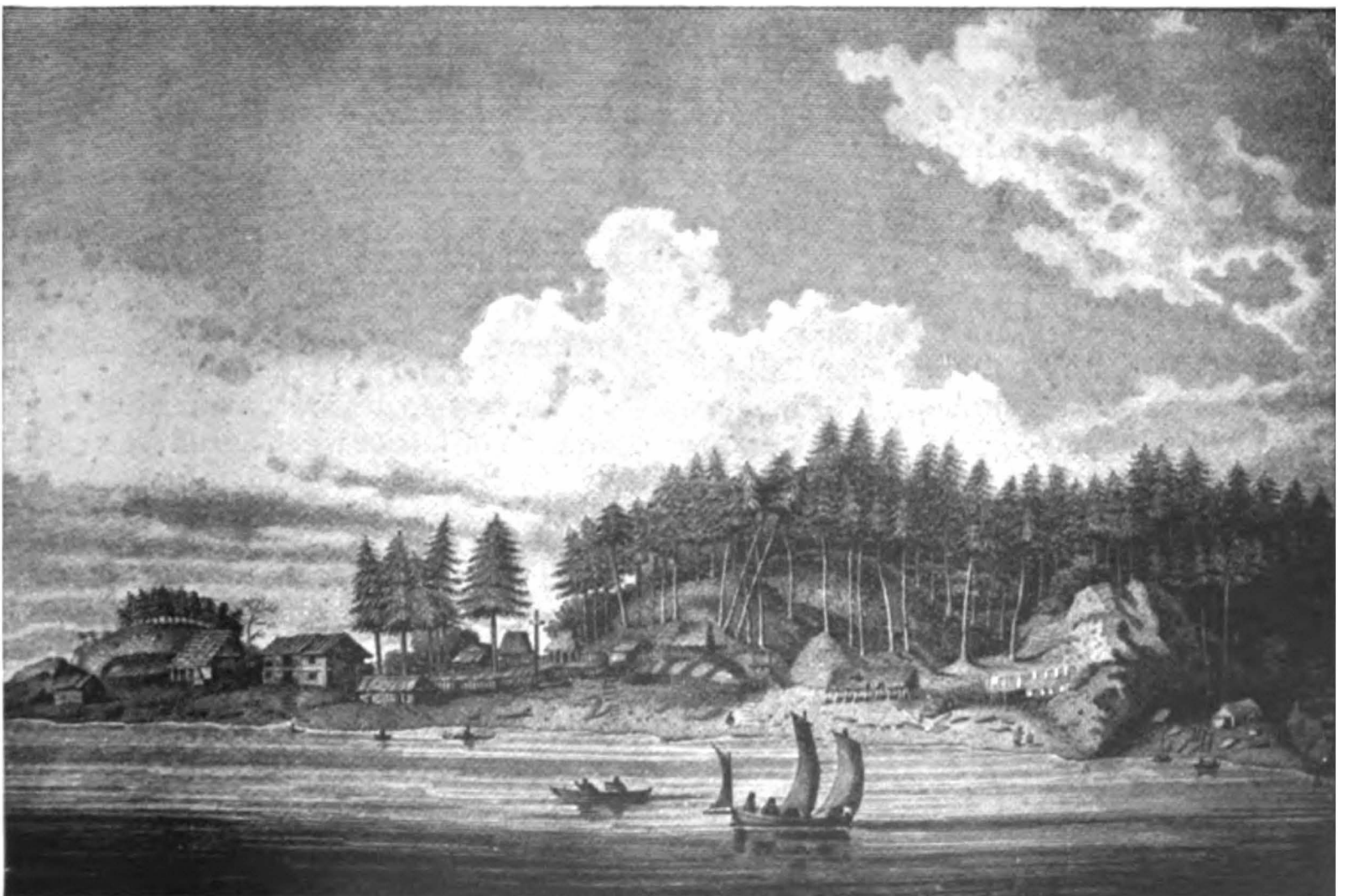
mate where the transition from semi-tropics meant almost certain death. For a fur trader to slip into Hawaii, entice women aboard, then scud off to America where the victims might rot unburied for all the traders cared, was considered a joke. How





*The "Discovery" on the rocks.*

*An old print in "Vancouver's Voyages," originally sketched by Z. Mudge, an eye-witness.*



*Indian settlement at Nootka.*

*From the original drawing by H. Humphries, a member of the expedition.*



Photographs by Fleming Bros., Victoria.

### *The Straits of Juan de Fuca.*

the joke caused Captain Cook's death the world knows, and the joke was becoming a little frequent, a little bold, a little too grim for the white trader's sense of security. The Sandwich Islanders had actually formed the plot of capturing every vessel that came into their harbors and holding the crews for extortionate ransom. How many white men were victims of this plot—to die by the assassin's knife or waiting for the ransom that never came—is not a part of this record. It was becoming a common thing to find white men living in a state of quasi-slavery among the islanders, each white held as hostage for the security of the others not escaping. Within three years three ships had been attacked, one Spanish, one American, one English—the storeship *Daedalus*, on the way out to Nootka with supplies for Vancouver. Two officers—Hergest and Gooch—of the *Daedalus* had been seized, stripped naked, forced at the point of spears up a hill to the native village and cut to pieces. Vancouver determined to put a stop to such attacks. Arriving at the islands, he trained his cannon ashore, demanded that the murderers of the *Daedalus'* officers be surrendered, tried the culprits with all the

solemnity and speed of English court martial, sentenced them to death, had them tied up to the mast-poles and executed. That is the blot against Vancouver. For the islanders had put up a trick. The real murderers had been leading chiefs. Not wishing to surrender these, the islanders had given Vancouver poor slaves quite guiltless of the crime, so that the wrong men were executed.

#### AND RESTORES WOMEN STOLEN BY WHITES

In contrast to this wrong-headed demonstration of justice was Vancouver's other act. At Nootka he had found among the traders two young Hawaiian girls, not more than fifteen and nineteen years of age, whom some blackguard trader had forcibly carried off. The most of great voyageurs would not have soiled their gloves interfering with such a case. Cook had winked at such crimes. Drake, two hundred years before, had laughed. The Russians outdid either Drake or Cook. They dumped the victims overboard where the sea told no tales. Vancouver might have been strict enough disciplinarian to execute the wrong man by way of a lesson, but he was





*The Olympus Range, from Victoria, B. C.*

consistent in his strictness. Round these two friendless savages he wrapped all the chivalry and might of the English flag. He received them on board the *Discovery*, treated them as he might have his own sisters, prevented the possibility of insult from the common sailors by having them at his own table on the ship, taught them the customs of Europeans toward women and the reasons for those customs, so that the young girls presently had the respect and friendship of every sailor on board the *Discovery*. In New Spain he had obtained clothing and delicacies for them that white women have, and in the Sandwich Islands took precautions against their death at the hands of Hawaiians for having been on the ship with strange men by securing from the Sandwich Island chief the promise of his protection for them and the gifts of a home inside the royal enclosure.

April, of 1793, saw Vancouver back again on the west coast of America. In results, this year's exploring was largely negative; but the object of Vancouver's life was a negative one—to prove there was no passage between Pacific and Atlantic. He had missed the Columbia the previous year by standing off the coast north of

Mendocino. So this year he again plied up the same shore to Nootka. No fresh instructions had come from England or Spain to Nootka, and Vancouver took up the trail of the sea where he had stopped the year before, carrying forward survey of island and mainland from Vancouver Island northward to the modern Sitka or Norfolk Sound. Gray, the American, had been attacked by Indians here the year before, and Vancouver did not escape the hostility of these notoriously treacherous tribes. Up Behm Canal the ships were visited by warriors wearing masks, who refused everything in exchange for their sea-otter except firearms. The canal here narrowed to a dark cañon overhung by beetling cliffs. Four large war canoes manned by several savages daubed with war paint succeeded in surrounding the small launch, and while half the warriors held the boat to prevent it escaping, the rest had rifled it of everything they could take, from belaying pins and sail rope to firearms before Vancouver lost patience and gave orders to fire. At the shot, the Indians were over decks and into the sea like water rats, while forces ambushed on land began rolling rocks and stones

down the precipices. One gains some idea of Vancouver's thoroughness by his work up Portland Canal, which was to become famous a hundred years later as the scene of boundary disputes. Here so determined was he to prove none of the passages led to the Atlantic, that his small boat actually cruised seven hundred miles without going more than sixty miles from ocean front. By October, of 1713, Vancouver had demolished the myth of a possible passage between New Spain and Russian America, for he had examined every inlet from San Francisco to what is now Sitka. While the results were negative to himself, far different were they to Russia. It was Vancouver's voyage northward that stirred the Russians up to move southward. In a word, if Vancouver had not gone up as far as Norfolk Sound, or Sitka, the Russian fur traders would have drowsed on, with Kadiak as headquarters, and Canada to-day would have included the entire gold fields of Alaska.

#### IN '94 FROM NORTH TO SOUTH

Again, Vancouver wintered in the Sandwich Islands. In the year 1794, he changed the direction of his exploring. Instead of beginning at New Spain and working north, he began at Russian America and worked south.

Only once did the maze of waterways seem to promise a North-East Passage. It was up Lynn Canal, where so many gold seekers have rushed to have their hopes dashed, like Vancouver. Two officers had gone up the channel in a small boat to see if any opening led to the Atlantic. Boisterous weather and tremendous tide had lashed the tide to foam. The long daylight was so delusive that the men did not realize that it was nearly midnight. At ten o'clock they had rowed ashore to rest from their fight with wave and wind, when armed Indians suddenly rushed down to

the water's edge in battle array, spears couched. The exhausted rowers bent to the oars all night. At one place in their retreat to open sea the fog lifted to reveal the passage between precipices only a few feet wide with warrior's canoes on every side. A crash of musketry drove the assailants off. Two or three men kept guard with pointed muskets, while the oarsmen pulled through a rolling cross swell back to the protection of the big ships outside.

#### ERA OF DISCOVERY ENDS IN SITKA SOUND

On August 19, as the ships drove south to Norfolk or Sitka Sound, the men suddenly recognized head lands where they had cruised the summer before. For a second they scarcely realized. Then they knew that their explorations from Alaska southward had come to the meeting place of their voyage from New Spain northward. Just a little more than fifty years from Bering's discoveries, the exploration of the Northwest Coast of America had been completed. Some one emitted an incoherent shout that the work was finished! The cheer was caught up by every man on board. Some one else recalled that it had been April when they set out on the fool quest of the North-East Passage; and a true April's fool the quest had proved! Then flags were run up; the wine casks brought out; the marines drawn up in line, and three such volleys of joy fired as those sailors alone could feel. For four years they had followed the foolish quest of the learned world's error. That night Vancouver gave a gala dinner to his crews. They deserved it. Their four years' cruise marked the close of the most heroic epoch on the Pacific Coast. Vancouver had accomplished his life work—there was no North-East Passage through the west coast of America.

