

The Views of Lieutenant George Peard, R.N., on Alta California, 1826 and 1827

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INTRODUCTION

The materials for the study of California history prior to the American conquest in 1846 are, in large measure, accounts written by Europeans who visited there. Often these were written by ships' officers intent on publishing their narratives at the completion of their voyage. One such was Captain Frederick William Beechey of Her Majesty's Ship *Blossom*, and his *Narrative of a Voyage to the Pacific and Beering's Strait, to Co-operate with the Polar Expeditions . . . 1825-28*, a two-volume work first published in London by Admiralty authority in 1831, contains a valuable description of Alta California in the 1820s.¹

Beechey was not the only person in the *Blossom* to record details of the visit to California. The journal of his brother, Richard Beechey, is in private hands in Dublin. That of James Wolf, Admiralty mate, is in the Yale University Library. Yet another, that of Lieutenant George Peard, First Lieutenant in the *Blossom*, is deposited in the British Museum, London, and portions of that manuscript are published herein by kind permission of the Trustees of that institution.

Peard's journal is a lucid account of one of the most interesting British naval voyages to the Pacific after the days of Cook and Vancouver. After the Napoleonic Wars, the Royal Navy renewed its peaceful missions, and Captain Beechey took up the work of these great navigators in the exploration of the Pacific and the search for the fabled North-West passage. The opening paragraph of the journal describes the objects of Beechey's voyage, and serves as an example of Peard's copious narrative:

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On Thursday the 19th of May 1825, His Majesty's Sloop, Blossom (having been fitted out by orders of the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty to meet Captains Parry and Franklin at Behrings Straits should these officers be fortunate enough to effect the objects of their Voyage) sailed from Spithead for Rio Janeiro. As it was not intended she should reach Behrings Straits before August 1826, their Lordships with that desire to enlarge the boundaries of science which so much distinguishes them, determined that the intermediate months which must necessarily intervene between the time of the Blossom's Arrival in the Pacific & that period, should be spent in making accurate surveys of some of the Islands in the South Seas, and accordingly the ship was provided with hatchets, beads and many other articles for trafic with the different Natives. She was also furnished with extra stores, for all of which see list No. 1 in the Appendix, peculiarly adapted for the Service she was going on. The supply of Instruments was very liberal and an Assistant Surveyor, as also a naturalist, appointed to the expedition. The ship's sides were doubled for the purpose of effectually resisting the pressure of the Ice should it be found necessary for her to proceed amongst it, and the ship's Company had received six months wages in Advance & two suits of clothing gratis from Government²

During the four-year period, 1825 to 1828, the *Blossom* made her way by way of Cape Horn to the Pacific, called at various places within the Pacific rim, and searched in vain for the Parry and Franklin expeditions. Peard gives good descriptions of the islands visited, among them Pitcairn Island and the Gambier, Tahitian and Hawaiian groups.

Little is known of the writer of the journal. Born in 1793 at Gosport, England, of a naval family, he entered the Royal Naval College in 1809, served in H.M.S. *Lavinia* and H.M.S. *Conquestador*, and had the misfortune of being taken prisoner by the French in 1811. He was released in 1814 on Napoleon's abdication. Then followed his examination for Lieutenant in June 1814, his promotion to that rank on July 5, 1815, his service on Lake Ontario and on the South America station, and his last appointment in March 1825 as First Lieutenant of the *Blossom*. He continued to serve in the last mentioned capacity from the date of advancement to Commander's rank, May 7, 1827, until his being superseded at Rio de Janeiro in August 1828. Peard was never again employed in the service at sea, but this is understandable in view of the economy measures undertaken by the British gov-

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ernment during the 1830s and the consequent reduction in the size of the fleet. He died on February 16, 1838, at the age of forty-three.³

The Peard account follows the same basic pattern of Beechey's *Narrative of a Voyage to the Pacific*. . . , but it gives a less detached view of the places visited, including Alta California. It stresses geographical, anthropological, geological and botanical matters. Occasionally naval references are included, but the narrative of the journal is not hindered by details such as can be found in a ship's log. Peard had an inquisitive, scientific mind which has produced a clear discursive narrative, and his journal shows that exploration in the early nineteenth century revealed much knowledge of lands and peoples of the Pacific.

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Monday 23 [October 1826]. Made the Aleutian Islands, and ran through a Channel formed by the Islands of Omenak and Cogalga. This Channel is 10 miles wide, and we struck soundings in it with 35 fathoms of line. We saw no appearance of Inhabitants. The Weather was thick, the land high, and the distant hills enveloped [*sic*] in clouds. At night we observed the lightning playing around them. From this time we never lost our fair wind until the 5th of November, when we made the Coast of California about 50 miles to the northward of San Francisco in which port we anchored on the 7th and found several American whale ships laying there.

The Harbour of San Francisco is most capacious, & but for a Bar with 5 fathoms water on it situate $2\frac{1}{2}$ miles from the Mouth and over which a heavy Surf breaks in long parallel lines often in the stillest calm, would be as desirable a one as a ship could put into. The Entrance is a mile and a half wide. On its southern point stands a Fort with 9 guns,⁴ and about three quarters of a mile from it is the Presidio, a Barrack built on the sides of a Square for the Commandant and his Soldiers.⁵ Three miles further up and round what we name "Sketch Hill"⁶ is the little bay of Yerba Buena where the Blossom was moored with an

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Open Hawse to the Westward in $2\frac{3}{4}$ fms at low water Spung Tides and two cables lengths from the shore. From Sketch Hill, an inlet 23 miles long and 10 broad runs to the SE, and round it are settled the Missions of San Francisco, Santa Clara and San José. On the North W. side of the harbour,⁷ not far from the Entrance, lay the American Vessels to the Southward of a long shallow Inlet beyond which from near the Isle de los Angeles⁸ there is formed an immense Bay of far greater extent than that of Santa Clara; which contains many smaller ones & receives the tribute of innumerable streams. Into this basin also empties itself, the Great North River,⁹ which is said to be navigable for many hundred miles, & whose banks are peopled with numerous tribes of Indians.

There are many Rocks and high Islands in the Port of San Francisco. The Isla de los Angeles abounds with deer and is 3 miles in circumference. We discovered several sunken rocks and shoals which had been hitherto either not known at all, or laid down too inaccurately. We had no opportunity of examining the Farallones Islands that are situate off the Harbour at a distance of about 30 miles SW from the Fort, whence they are seen distinctly, but were given to understand that they are barren rocks accessible and that with difficulty only in one place, and that six or seven miles WNW of them lay some very dangerous sunken rocks.

The Inhabitants of Cobiga¹⁰ (a small settlement the Russians have contrived to establish on the Coast 18 leagues North of San Francisco) frequent the Farallones in their Skin Baydous¹¹ and Cayacs¹² for the Sea Otters and Seals that abound there.

Wednesday the 8th of November, the day after our arrival we hoisted out the Barge, Unbent Sails & commenced stripping the Ship. The Astronomical Instruments were landed and the Observatory erected.

Our people who had been for so considerable a length of time on short allowance of Salt Provisions found it no disagreeable change to plenty of fresh Beef, Mutton and Game, and the beneficial results of this Altercation in diet

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soon became visible amongst them.¹³ Nearly 6000 lbs. of good biscuit were purchased from the Whale Ships.

Sunday the 12th. I rode to the Mission of San Francisco distant three miles from Yerba Buena and about as far from the Presidio. It consists of a few rows of low huts and a Church containing amongst the rest two curious pictures that are intended to represent Heaven and Hell with the Rewards that are to be expected in the first, and the tortures that await the Sinner in the latter. The Priest Padre Tomas we found good humoured, obliging and hospitable. To him we were afterwards indebted for the greater part of our supplies. He sometimes visited us on board, and in his own house the best of what he had was always at our disposal.

The ride to the Mission is mostly over Sand-hills and through woods where one is in constant danger of being knocked off by projecting branches of the trees.

On the 13th, Don Ignacio Martinez, a Lieut. in the Army and Commandant of the Presidio & Fort dined on board and was saluted with 6 Guns.¹⁴

On the 27th, an Expedition under the command of Ensign Sanchez¹⁵ consisting of 21 Soldiers 21 Volunteers and 150 tame Indians that had been sent out against the natives who a short time since surprised one of their boats returned with 42 prisoners mostly Women and children; amongst the rest was a fine boy 4 or 5 Years old, whose mother was shot when trying to save herself and Offspring by flight, and thus furnished a subject for the mirth of her executioners. Many such instances of wanton cruelty occurred, the blame of which we were told was to be imputed solely to the Tame Indians and their thirst of revenge. The Soldiers wear leather Caps, Coats and Shields that are Arrow proof; however one of their party lost his life in consequence of the breech of his Musquet flying out and fracturing his skull. Every exertion to save him was used by our Medical Men and he lingered for 12 days.

Heavy Irons, starvation & other strong coercive measures, with persuasion & the different mode of treatment they see practised towards those belonging to the mission,

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make the prisoners ready in ten days or a fortnight to receive baptism, and consent to enter the community.¹⁶ The Mission of San Jose alone contains 1500 Indians. The Mayor domo with a salary of 8 dollars per month & other allowances has the superintendance of them under the Padre and on an offender may inflict twenty five lashes but not more at any one time. The young unmarried women are locked up regularly every evening in a room by themselves. The government of each respective Mission is in the hands of the Padre, he takes charge of the produce of the Land, and portions it out for the Subsistence of the Indians. When he can find a Market he sells the Superfluity, and is thus enabled to pay the Officers that act under him and to buy clothing for his flock.

Every year after the Crops are gathered in, that is about the latter end of August, the Padre gives them leave of absence for three weeks or a month to visit if they please, their Native Tribes. Some of these occasionally do not return immediately, but are almost certain of being recovered. If however their friends persist in concealing them, this is considered sufficient pretext for an Expedition against them, and consequently a great number of Captives are taken to supply the place of the Runaways. Besides the Mayor domo the Padre selects one or more of those amongst his Indians he considers the most trustworthy and places him over the others as Alcalde with an increased quantity of Rations and some few privileges by way of distinction. His duty is to decide on and adjust any matters of dispute amongst his brethren. The Californian Indians have a singular but favourite custom of collecting together in huts built partly underground and sometimes large enough to contain several hundred persons, which being closely roofed in, is heated by means of great fires at the entrance or hot ashes piled up within. Here the Natives seat themselves, in a circle, and when in a state of most violent perspiration, rush out and plunge into the first stream or pool of water that is at hand. So fond are they of this mode of Bathing, that it is considered absolutely necessary to provide them with the means of in-

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dulging in it at the different missions. The Indian Tribes are very numerous, and their language differs so much, that sometimes those distant only a days journey from each other cannot make themselves understood, but notwithstanding this, it appears that their Manners and Customs are nearly alike.

I was told they have an idea of a good being, the Creator of all things who resides in the heavens, and of an evil one living there also but lower down, that the first is the particular object of their Adoration, and they pray to the other that he may not molest or injure them; but I rather suspect that if any have so enlightened a view of religion, it can only be a few in the immediate vicinity of the Missions, who may probably have learnt thus much in their occasional intercourse with them. By far the most common received opinion is that they worship the Devil, the Pecolote or horned Owl, and pay adoration to the Sun by bowing to him when he rises and sets. The Males usually go entirely naked and the Women wear a piece of deers skin round the waist and a bunch of feathers or long piece of stick or bone in the ears. They live in Villages composed of circular rush huts with a hole to enter in by and an aperture at the top to allow the escape of the smoke. Rushes also serve them instead of Canoes for crossing rivers or even arms of the Sea.

Each village or Tribe has a Chief or Captain called the Metish who sometimes takes four or even five wives, the rest contenting themselves with one or two. They make neat dresses & baskets of Rush ornamented with feathers & small bits of Mother of Pearl. The bows are very ingeniously constructed and are strengthened and have great elasticity given them by means of a Rein Deer's tendon, which with the ends of the Bow thrust into it, is firmly glued to the outer side. The Arrows are mostly headed with flint, and are sometimes highly painted and varnished. We were informed that numbers of Indian Tribes inhabit the banks of the North River, and that if we were inclined to visit them, and would take with us an Interpreter to explain the motives of our coming to be Traffic

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or Curiosity, they would receive us in a friendly manner & without distrust. To the Acorn they are indebted for their principal subsistence, and the gathering it on the grounds belonging to their neighbors is often the occasion of wars between them. They are also subject to the Dysentery, but neither this disease nor their quarrels with each other bear any proportion in their destructive effects, to those caused by the Attempts to Civilize them.

When the Spaniards first settled in California they found the country well peopled; since then the decrease of the Native population has been considerable every year. It is possible that many tribes may have retired further in to the Interior, but we know that numbers of lives are lost every year in the expeditions that under the most frivolous pleas are sent against them, and that from some cause or other which I have not been able to discover, a great Mortality to which the children are particularly subject takes place amongst the Indians in the Missions.

The Spanish Settlers call the Wild Natives, Gentiles; those converted to Christianity, Indios; whilst on themselves they bestow the more dignified Appellation of Gente de Razon (rational beings.): Besides these, as might naturally be supposed, there is a half Cast, something between an Indio and a Gente de Razon.

With the exception of Padre Tomas and a few more, the Priests are ignorant and bigoted, nor should I consider any of them calculated for the charge and authority they enjoy. The situation of the Padres in general is just now rather critical, and it is to be expected they will not be permitted to remain much longer in this Country. Notwithstanding the frequent invitations they have received, all without exception still refuse to take the Oath of Allegiance to the New Government of Mexico, who irritated at their refusal, have at length sent orders for the Prefecto or Chief Padre to quit California immediately. Don José María [de] Ech[e]andía, the Governor of the Province resides at San Diego, a Port on the Sea Coast 300 miles beyond Monterey, or 400 to the Southward of San Francisco.

Horses are in great plenty; many of our Party purchased

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some for a few dollars each and others hired some during the time we might remain, and kept them tied up near the tents. Numbers were brought down every Sunday to await the coming on shore of the Liberty men.¹⁷ The people here are not such good horsemen nor so expert in throwing the Lazo as those I have seen in South America.¹⁸ They use tremendous spurs, and great clumsy wooden stirrups, with a loose leather flap before to guard the foot from branches of trees & c, or as we found it to wear out the toes of our boots. A Leather hide that fits over the Saddle is made large enough to turn back and protect the rider's thighs & legs. Some of the Officers rode to Monterey which may be about 120 miles distant by land.¹⁹ They found it fatiguing, although they rested the first night at the Mission of Santa Clara, and the second at that of San Juan, so taking three days to go and as many to return.—What relays of horses they were likely to require in the days journey, as also the baggage mules were driven before and caught for them as the Occasion required.

We found the prices of Provisions at San Francisco to be as follows. Bullocks from 3 to 8\$, Sheep 2\$, Fowls 1\$, per couple; Eggs 2 reals pr. dozen; Milk [space] Potatoes 3 dollars a quintal,²⁰ Flour from 14 to 20 reals the Aroba;²¹ Calavanses²² 3 dollars the fanega.²³ Indian Corn, cheese & butter also to be obtained, as well as Aquardiente Wine & a little cyder.

The dollar was worth four shillings and two pence, by the existing rate of exchange but our attempts to get Quarterly Bills cashed failed both here and at Monterey. As for the payment of what was required for the use of the Ship, Mr. Hartnell²⁴ an English Merchant resident at the latter place who expected a supply of cash from Lima, accepted the Government Bills and he came answerable for the Amount.

Besides Potatoes, we got Cauliflower, Cabbage, Pumpkins, Tomatoes, Capsicums²⁵ & Beet root. Good sallad [*sic*] is to be had in the proper season.²⁶ Fine Quinces²⁷ were sold at 16 for a dollar. The Water Melons, Apples, & Pears are indifferent. It was not the time of the year for Grapes or

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figs. We found some Mushrooms and made several bottles of good Ketchup.

The country abounds with Rein and fallow deer, Bears, Wolves, a sort of Jackal or fox dog called Cuiote,²⁸ Foxes, a small species of Lion (Leoncillo), Mountain cats, Hares, rabbits, animals of the Weazel kind, Squirrels, Moles and Mice. The Fox dogs, Mountain Cats and Wolves are very numerous, and one night devoured two sheep belonging to the Captain that were tied up near the Observatory. Bears although scarce near San Francisco, are met with in plenty about Santa Clara and other parts of California and are said to be remarkably strong and ferocious. Fights are got up between one of these Animals and a Wild Bull, in which the former calmly awaiting the Attack of his Antagonist, stops him in the midst of his Career and generally proves victorious. To catch the Bear for the purpose, they lay the carcase of a horse in a convenient place, then wait in ambush, and when the Creature approaches easily secure him with their Lazos.

To the Sportsman, the Country on every side affords abundance of attraction. The Ponds are full of all kinds of Wildfowl, and the Woods contain innumerable beavies of the crested Quail or California Partridge.

These are white and grey Pelicans, Cranes, Herons, Wild Geese, Ducks, Teal, Widgeon, Curlew, Rail, Waterhens, Plover, a sort of Starling with rid on the pinion joint, Larks, Wagtails, Kingfishers, Woodpeckers, Wrens, sparrows, humming birds, Turkey buzzards, Kites, Hawks, Jays, and beautiful large horned Owls.

Two kinds of evergreen Oak trees are natives of this country, and in some places grow to as large a size as any of our English Oaks. One of them I believe is the *Quercus Agrifolca*. The *Pinus rigida*,²⁹ or black pine would have supplied us with lower Masts, had we been in need of them. We sent a party to cut spars, but they found nothing where they were directed to go, but a species of cedar that would not answer the purpose.

Close to the Beach in Yerba Buena Bay and convenient for bringing off, the Willow tree provided us with fuel and

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Brooms. The tree Lupin springs up every where like a weed; and amongst the numbers of shrubs to be met with in the woods, I must not omit to mention the Yedra³⁰ as it is here called, a plant whose poisonous effects are said to be sometimes felt by persons passing near it, whereas others, and Padre Tomas told me he was one of these, might even handle it with impunity. A Boatswain's Mate belonging to the Blossom, who had been on shore attending the Wooding party, was confined to his bed for several days in consequence it is supposed of his having come in contact with it. The hedge strawberry grows luxuriantly.

The Country round the Harbour of San Francisco is a Sandstone formation under which a transition clay Slate sometimes appears as under Sketch Hill, and in other places it is interrupted by beds of Jasper and Serpentine.³¹ The fort is built on a Rock of the last mentioned material containing Bronzite and traversed in all directions by veins of Stealite and Amianthus. At this spot we obtained also Specimens of Noble Serpentine.

The Opposite side of the Entrance is chiefly composed of Jasper. Further on at that part of the Main Land nearest to the Isla de los Angeles, the Serpentine occurs for about half a mile. On the high hills near the Mission, the Jasper protrudes here and there from the Summits or sides & some of it contains small portions of Native Silver. In the lower hills Serpentine often occurs in the same manner, and as well as the Slate occasionally passes into Actynolite. The best specimens of Actynolite were found in detached pieces near the Serpentine bed on the Northern shore mentioned above. Flint and Jasper sometimes pass into each other and both these stones are met with containing Iron Pyrites. Several pieces of Hornblende Greenstone had been brought into the Mission for building, but we did not discover their locality. In the Neighborhood of San José are several sulphur springs.

The only exports from this Country consist in Hides and Tallow. At some of the Missions, they weave blankets, ponchos & other coarse woollen stuffs & manufacture Saddles, boots & c. Instead of Soap, two kinds of Bulbous roots,

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the one named Amoles³² the other I do not recollect are in common use amongst them; However some soap is made in which instead of Barilla³³ they mix a small salt supposed to be Native found on the edges of a Lake near the Mission of San Juan. This we purchased at the rate of a dollar for four lbs. and a half. Padre Tomas made candles for the Purser and charged him three dollars and a half the Aroba or 25 lbs.

Foreign Merchant Ships *are charged* twenty one real per ton *as harbour dues, excepting the Whalers* that put into the different Ports for refreshments, & pay only 10\$. Besides, the duties on the Cargo sold amount to 42½ per Cent. The Money collected from these imposts is under the control of the Commandant, to purchase clothing for his Soldiers. As to pay; they have received more since the year 1810. The new Government, indeed more liberal than the former one, sent their troops in Calefornia a few months since, as a reward for the services, and in lieu of the wages due to them, one hundred thousand dollars worth of paper segars.

The post for Monterey and San Diego leaves San Francisco about the middle & latter end of every month, and the letters are forwarded on to Mexico as opportunity allows or business requires.

Although we occasionally filled a few casks for present use from the ponds near the Anchorage, we were obliged to send for good water either to the Isla de los Angeles, or where we found it still better and in greater quantity to a small Bay abreast of the Whale Ships.

The time of high Water in the Bay of Yerba Buena is the full and change of the Moon is 9..30;³⁴ At the Mouth of the harbour, it is two hours and a half or even three hours later. The tides particularly about the Springs are very strong and irregular; The greatest Rise and fall is 8 ft. 8 Inches, the least during the Neaps—1 ft. 7 Inches.

The wind more especially during the latter part of our stay at St. Francisco was generally from the Northward. In November the mean temperature at Noon was 66°, at

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Midnight 57° . In December it was 56° and 51° . The SE wind blew fresh & brought with it much rain. We were given to understand that thick fogs always occurred in the four Summer months of May, June, July & August, which is the coldest and most unpleasant part of the year.³⁵

On the 14th of December, one of the Marines, Joseph Bowers, wading into a Duck pond for his game, got out of his depth and was unfortunately drowned.³⁶

On the 29th, we weighed and made sail out of the Harbour. From the entrance we steered SW, had smooth water and not less than six fathoms and a half over the Bar. We were afterwards informed that a SW^bS³⁷ Course from the Fort would carry with it as much as eight or eight and a half [fathoms].

[Footnote.] The same night at 11:30, the Weather fine, with light Northerly airs, after a vivid flash as of lightning, I observed near the Star Procyon and 45° above the Horizon magnetic South from the Ship, a Brilliant Meteor extending about 10° from East to West and in breadth a third of the Diameter of the Moon. In the middle of it was a Nucleus of a deeper red colour. After remaning near a minute, it assumed the form of a round white cloud, which continued visible for about ten minutes.

On New Years day [1827] we anchored in the Bay of Monterey off the Town in $10\frac{1}{2}$ fms., the Fort Flagstaff bearing S 50° W, the NW point (Point Pinos) N 62° W, and the East end of the Presidio S 7° E.

In the afternoon, we exchanged a Salute of 15 Guns with the Fort, and the next day Captain Don Joachim Gonzalez the Commandant on his coming on board was saluted with nine. We found the American merchant Brig Harbinger laying here and purchased from her 920 Gallons of Rum.³⁸ We got also from Mr. Hartnell³⁹ a supply of Cocoa, Sugar and Salt beef for the ship and several hundred weight of Potatoes for the private stock of the Officers.

Immediately on our arrival the Carpenters had been dispatched to cut Spars, and we found no difficulty in pro-

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curing good ones as many as we wanted, (one of which was for maintopsail Yard) of the Black or Pitch Pine Species.⁴⁰

The town of Monterey is situate in the Bay of the same name and about two miles from Point Pines the southern extremity. It consists of a presidio and a few scattered Houses, containing altogether not more than five hundred souls, and is built on a gently rising ground which being studded with groups of fine Oak trees has much the Appearance of our park lands in England, whilst an agreeable finish is given to the picture by the woods of lofty Pines that cover the hills at the back of the town. It is fifteen miles NNE across to Santa Cruz on the Opposite side of the Bay, therefore the Anchorage is none of the most secure. The Mission of San Carlos is situate 3 miles from the Presidio. In the bay of Monterey, shells of the *Haliotis* Iris kind are found in great quantities.

Friday 5th of Jan^y. Made sail from Monterey, gained a good offing and then steered S $\frac{1}{2}$ W to get into the Latitude of some Islands said to lay in that direction. We ran into 16° North and then bearing up, over the place where a group of them were supposed to be in that parallel, heaving to every night to prevent a possibility of passing them if they really existed. On the 20th, we crowded all sail for Woahoo, and five days after saw Owyhee, but were again deprived of a view of Mounaroa.

Friday, the 26th. Made Woahoo, hove to off Onorooroo during the night, and the next morning made sail between the Reefs into the Harbour, where we brought up in 5 fathoms. . . .

[Before her second visit to Upper California, the *Blossom* ran into a heavy gale in Latitude 45° 17'N, Longitude 47° 50'W.]

The wind shifted round from the NE by the South to West, and at four PM it blew exceedingly hard. No ship would behave better than the *Blossom* under her storm staysails. The barometer fell to 28.45 and got up again as rapidly. At 8 the gale moderated.

[Footnote.] About the 25th Oct. [1827] three or four of

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the Ships' company were attacked with scurvy, in consequence of which on the Ship's arrival at Monterey, a double allowance of vegetables were served with hot bully beef to the crew, and the sick soon recovered.

After this, the breeze although variable continued fair, and on Monday the 29th we arrived at Monterey where we found an American Whaleship. Several other vessels of the same description, and two Russian brigs from Sitka came in a few days afterwards.

We moored in 8 fms. about a quarter of a mile from the shore, and with an open hawse to the N.W. At Monterey, the intelligence first reached us of the death of H.R.H. the Duke of York.

30th Saluted the fort with 15 Guns.

1st November, The General Commandante of the Province, Don José María [de] Ech[e]andía dined on board & was received with a salute of 13 guns and the yards manned; we found him an active, intelligent, and agreeable man, but he has bad health, & his efforts to promote the welfare of California appear to be in a great measure defeated by restrictive orders from Mexico, and the obstinacy of the Settlers.

On the 6th having occasion, to get the cables up, and restow the holds, shifted to a more secure Anchorage under the fort, and moored with an open hawse to the NNE.

I never saw mackerel in such abundance or so easily taken. We observed no difference between them and those caught on the coast of England. They come in to feed off the blubber with which the Bay is frequently covered, and were accompanied by large shoals of Sardinia, and some horse mackerel. Whales (of the Humpbacks species) their enemy the Killer fish, Seals and Sea Otters are often seen sporting about in all directions.

The time of high water at full and change is 9..15, and the greatest rise and fall from six to seven feet.

In consequence of a late regulation, we were not allowed to cut firewood gratis, and the Purser was obliged to pay a small consideration for it.

Finding no good water was to be had at Monterey, the

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Captain determined on going to San Francisco, for which port we sailed on the evening of the 17th, and arrived there on the following morning. For the convenience of watering, we anchored in 8½ fathoms in Whale bay on the NW shore of the harbour about three miles from the Presidio, and two cables length from the shore. Laid the Stream anchor⁴² out to the Westward and moored ship with an open hawse to the South.

Whale Bay would be a more desirable Anchorage than any other at San Francisco, were it not for the distance from the Presidio and the difficulty of getting regularly supplied with fresh beef and vegetables, and there can be but little doubt that a farm established on this spot would soon make the fortune of its owners. At one time, besides the Blossom, there was an American Merchantship, and six or seven whale vessels, there together. The land on this side is high, and the favourite resort of the fallow deer. On the 24th, I shot one that might have weighed about 130 lbs. but the venison although well flavoured was no means in good condition. With a little caution these animals may be easily surprized, and during the Months of May and June are said to be very fat and excellent eating.

On the 26th, The American Whaleship Sophia ran foul of us and carried away the Sprintsail Yard, swinging boom, and did us other damage. The next day we [were] sent 8 or 9 miles off to somewhere near the Mission of San Rafael & cut a spar to make a Sprintsail Yard, of a tree, (I believe the *Pinus taxifolia*) that abounds in the neighbourhood. The Spec[ific]. Grav[ity]. of this tree before its juices are dried up is greater than that of Salt Water, its interior wood is red, it grows to a great size, and is split into plank by the Settlers.

29th. Jas. Bailey (Marine) died of liver complaint, and was buried the following morning abreast of the Ship. In the Afternoon of the 30th, Robt. Elwin, an Englishman, received on board from the Eagle, Am. Whale vessel for cure of a bad leg had the limb amputated. Sent a boat to San Rafael and took Wm. Matthews a seaman that de-

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serted from the Blossom at Monterey in January last. High Water in Whale bay at full and change 10..30.

3rd of December, Therm. down to 39° ; snow on the hills during the 3rd and 4th, shifted into the fairway near the Yerba buena bay, and anchored in 9 fms. Fort flag staff WSW, Sketch Hill $S\frac{1}{2}^{\circ}W$. The next day dropped down and came to off the presidio in $7\frac{1}{2}$ fms. Flag staff $S67^{\circ}W$ & peak of Isla de los Angeles $N3^{\circ}W$.

Thursday the 6th. Sailed from San Francisco. After a fine smooth water passage, saw cape St. Lucas on the 17th, and experienced a strong SW^y. current. Ran through the Tres Marias Islands on the 19th, and the following morning passing to the Southward of the Piedra blanca de Mar, a rock rising abruptly out of the sea to the height of 150 feet and 12 miles West from the Port [San Blas], anchored in the road of San Blas in 5 fathoms. . . .

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NOTES

Editorial Note. We are grateful to the Trustees of the British Museum for permission to publish portions of the Peard Journal. The journal can be found in the British Museum, Add. MSS. The entire journal was edited by Professor Gough and published by the Hakluyt Society in 1973. The Society has also given its gracious consent for republication. In bringing this important early California item to publication, we should like to note that one major editorial change has been made: all marginal entries or headings in the original journal have been deleted. *The Editor.*

¹A less detailed version is in Robert Huish (comp.), *The Voyage of Capt. Beechey, R.N., to the Pacific and Behring's Straits, and the Travels of Capt. Back, R.N., to the Great Fish River and Arctic Seas* (London, 1836). See also, J. Richardson *et al.*, *The Zoology of Captain Beechey's Voyage* (London, 1839) and Sir William Jackson Hooker and George A. Walker Arnott, *The Botany of Captain Beechey's Voyage* (1841; reprint, London, 1965). On the California visits of H.M.S. *Blossom*, see A. Lincoln, "The Beechey Expedition Visits San Francisco," *Pacific Discovery*, XXII (January-February 1969), 1-8, and "The Natural History of the Beechey Expedition," *ibid.*, XXII (July-August 1969), 1-8, both of which are well illustrated, and Barry M. Gough, *The Royal Navy and the Northwest Coast of North America, 1810-1914: A Study of British Maritime Ascendancy* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1971; reprinted 1974), pp. 41-43.

²The autograph journal of Lieutenant George Peard, the First Lieutenant of H.M.S. *Blossom*, Commander Frederick William Beechey, during a cruise to the Pacific and Bering Strait, 1825-1828, British Museum Add. MSS 35, 141, f.1. The complete journal has been published by the Hakluyt Society in 1973.

³John Marshall, *Royal Navy Biography*, IV, Pt. II (London, 1835), pp. 232-38, and *Nautical Magazine* (1837), p. 279. Peard's efficiency in handling the *Blossom* won him the praise of Beechey. Frederick William Beechey, *Narrative of a Voyage to the Pacific and Beering's Strait, to Co-operate with the Polar Expeditions . . . 1825-28* (2 vols.; London, 1831), I, xvi.

⁴The Castillio of San Joaquin, 1794-1846, originally mounted 12 guns.

⁵The presidio, established in 1776 as the northern outpost of the Spanish empire, was Mexico's main military base in California from 1822 to 1835.

⁶Telegraph Hill.

⁷Sausalito. According to Beechey there were seven whalers there. Beechey, *Narrative*, I, 347.

⁸Angel Island.

⁹The Sacramento River.

¹⁰Bodega. The Russians first visited the California coast in 1805, and from 1812 to 1841 maintained Fort Ross Colony, of which Bodega was part.

¹¹In Arctic seas, the Eskimos used baidars: these vessels were a frame of drift wood covered by walrus skins, sharp at both ends, very fast, and carried ten to thirteen men. Huish, *Voyage of Captain Beechey*, pp. 366, 368.

¹²Kayak, an Eskimo canoe of a light wooden framework covered with sealskins. Unlike the baidar, the kayak was enclosed on the top around where the paddler sat.

¹³Several men had been suffering from the dreaded scurvy.

¹⁴According to Beechey, Martinez was acting governor in the absence of Don Louis. Beechey needed to purchase provisions for the *Blossom*; he learned that although the missions could supply flour, beef, vegetables and salt, he would have to

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turn to the American vessels and provisioners at Monterey for other commodities. Beechey, *Narrative*, I, 347-48, 372-88. Officers were sent to Monterey but as provisions and medicines were not procurable, Beechey sailed for the Sandwich Islands and Canton.

¹⁵Details of this expedition were kept by Sanchez in a journal, published in Beechey, *Narrative*, I, 363-65. See also, Beechey's views on the church and the Indians, *ibid.*, pp. 365-71.

¹⁶Peard crossed out an earlier section and inserted this passage. In the earlier version, he noted that it was common that prisoners were distributed among the various missions, and that he had heard say that coercive measures were used in baptism. Huish points out that there were various reports of the manner of getting the Indians to join the faith, some not favourable to the Church. In any event, he concludes, their life in the missions was more civilized than that in the forests. Huish, *Voyage of Captain Beechey*, pp. 419-20. On the church and the government at this time, see Beechey, *Narrative*, I, 351-59.

¹⁷Riding became a favourite amusement for the officers and men of the *Blossom*, especially on Sundays when Beechey "allowed every man to go out of the ship." *Ibid.*, p. 424.

¹⁸In South America at this time, a lasso was made of a rope of untanned hide. An interesting account of the use of the lasso in South America was given by Captain Basil Hall, R.N. of H.M.S. *Conway*, in *Extracts from a Journal written on the Coasts of Chili, Peru, and Mexico in the Years, 1820, 1821, 1822* (2nd ed.; 2 vols., Elinburgh, 1824), I, 146-53.

¹⁹They went in search of medicines, provisions and stores for the *Blossom*. See above, note 14.

²⁰A hundred-weight.

²¹The *aroba* was a Spanish weight of about 25 pounds.

²²Peard probably meant Calabanzos, meaning calabash, pumpkins or gourds.

²³A measure of grain of about a hundred-weight, or an English bushel.

²⁴William Hartnell, "interpreter, translator and merchant"; acted as unofficial British consul until 1843 when James Alexander Forbes was officially appointed. A. P. Nasatir, "International Rivalry for California and the Establishment of the British Consulate," *California Historical Society Quarterly*, XLVI (1967), 64.

²⁵Green peppers.

²⁶Here he added, but later crossed out, "and tolerable grapes."

²⁷These resemble large yellow apples.

²⁸Coyote.

²⁹The timber of "pitch pine" is darkish-yellow or reddish-brown in color. F. H. Titmuss, *Commercial Timbers of the World* (3rd ed.; Technical Press, London, 1965), p. 188.

³⁰*Yedra arborácea*, a poison ivy.

³¹A full geological description of San Francisco Bay, complete with a plan, is given in Richardson, *Zoology of Captain Beechey's Voyage . . .*, pp. 174-76.

³²A soap-root.

³³Barrilla, a salt-wort, a mineral alkali extracted from the *Salicornia* genus of plants.

³⁴g: 30 A.M.

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³⁵Here is added X M.P.J., the note of a reader.

³⁶Bowers, greatly respected by Beechey, was hunting with an officer, and in his excitement ventured into the pond to retrieve the fowl.

³⁷South West by South.

³⁸Finding this brig was most fortunate for Beechey, "his last cast being abroach." Huish, *Voyage of Captain Beechey*, p. 46o.

³⁹On Hartnell, see above, note 24.

⁴⁰See above, note 29.

⁴¹Honolulu.

⁴²The stream anchor was used to steady the stern of a ship.