

also, by arriving before the squadron, materially aid it by acting as pilots, in case we should need such guidance. On the 6th the weather began to moderate, and the wind to haul to the westward. Shortly afterwards we had strong winds accompanied with rain. The lower scud was seen passing rapidly from the northward and westward, whilst the upper scud was moving from the south-southwest. We found the current setting to the north-by-east, about fifteen miles in twenty-four hours.

On the 8th we had a sudden fall of the barometer to 29.500 in., but without any change in the weather except fog and mist. The wind was from the west-northwest. On the 11th, the wind hauled to the southwest, when the barometer began to rise, and the weather to clear off. On the 12th, the barometer again fell to 29.500 in., which brought thick weather and rain, with a heavy bank of cumuli to the southward and westward, a precursor of bad weather. In a few hours we had heavy squalls, with hail and rain, the weather becoming sensibly colder. Temperature 46°. The next morning we made Staten Land, and soon afterwards Cape St. Diego, Tierra del Fuego. The land was broken, high, and desolate. The Straits of Le Maire were before us: we were just in time to take the tide, and with a fair wind we sailed rapidly through the strait, passing its whirls and eddies, now quite smooth, but in a short time to become vexed and fretted by the returning tide. The squadron glided along with all its canvass spread to the breeze, scarcely making a ripple under the bows. The day was a remarkably fine one for this climate, and the sight beautiful, notwithstanding the desolate appearance of the shores.

I cannot see why there should be any objection to the passage through the Straits of Le Maire, as it gives a vessel a much better chance of making the passage round the cape quickly. No danger exists here that I know of. A vessel with the tide will pass through in a few hours. As for the "race and dangerous sea," I have fully experienced it in the Porpoise on the side of Staten Land; and am well satisfied that any vessel may pass safely through it, at all times and in all weathers, or if not so disposed, may wait a few hours until the sea subsides, and the tide changes. We were only three hours in passing through. We entered the straits with studding-sails set, and left them under close-reefed topsails. Squalls issuing from the ravines were frequent and severe, and were accompanied occasionally by a little snow. The barometer had fallen to 29.250 in. Contrary to my expectations, we had on the next day delightful weather, with light and variable winds from the eastward, and at times calms. This gave me an opportunity of examining the currents. Many rips were observed,