

and it was found, as the vessels were on different sides of them, they were set in opposite directions. The current on the outside of a line drawn from Cape Good Success to Cape Horn sets to the eastward, and vessels sailing to the westward would greatly facilitate their passage by beating within this line, taking advantage of the tide on its ebb, and passing between the Hermit Islands and the main through Nassau Bay, if the time is at all favourable for it. In case of necessity, they may obtain good anchorage.

To the eastward of Cape Horn I obtained a sounding with the deep sea thermometer to the depth of four hundred and fifty fathoms. The temperature at the surface was 44° , and when the thermometer came up it showed but 28° . The sounding was perpendicular, and the thermometer had been examined by two or three persons before going down, so that we were assured there was no mistake. So remarkable a circumstance surprised me not a little. It was too late to attempt another sounding that night, and I regretted in the morning to find myself on soundings in eighty fathoms water. The temperature at that depth did not fall below 46° , whilst at the surface it was at 49° .

The coast of Terra del Fuego presents the same general character throughout, of high, broken, and rugged land, which appears of a uniform elevation of about one thousand or fifteen hundred feet, with here and there a peak or mountain covered with snow, rising to some four or five thousand feet. The whole wears a sombre and desolate aspect. It may be said to be iron-bound, with many high and isolated rocks, that have become detached from the land apparently by the wear of ages. Numerous unexpected indentations occur all along the coast, many of them forming harbours for small vessels, and some of them very safe ones.

On Captain King's report of Orange Harbour, I had determined to make that our place of rendezvous previous to our first Antarctic trip, and accordingly all the vessels were ordered to proceed thither. We had his directions, although we were without the chart. I felt confident I might repose full reliance in them, from his well-known ability; and I now offer an acknowledgment of their value and general accuracy.

The channels formed by the islands are deep, with no anchorage except in the coves near the rocks; but a vessel is generally safe in passing through, as there are no dangers but those which show themselves, and wherever rocks are, kelp will be found growing upon them. To pass through the kelp without previous examination is not safe. It borders all the shores of the bays and harbours, and effectually points out the shoal water.