

happen, and causes one to look forward with hope to overcome the difficulties that may lie in the path. After a short time we saw the Peacock and Flying-Fish under sail, following us.

The wind continued light, with fine weather, until the afternoon. The whole scenery around us was viewed to great advantage, under a mild state of the atmosphere, taking away from it the usual gloomy aspect which a sky, overcast and boisterous, gives. A dense bank of cumuli in the southwest foretold that we were not long to enjoy such moderate weather. About 4 p. m., a heavy squall struck us, which soon took us clear of the islands, on our course to the southward.

On the 26th, we discovered a sail, which proved to be the whale-ship America, from New Zealand, bound to New York, and afforded us an opportunity of writing home, which we gladly availed ourselves of. The master of the America informed me that he had experienced constant heavy winds, and had been thirty-five days from New Zealand; that the ship was very leaky, but having a full cargo of three thousand eight hundred barrels of oil, he was in great spirits. I have seldom seen at sea a more uncombed and dirty set of mariners than his crew. How they preserve any tolerable state of health I know not, and it is not at all surprising that the ravages of scurvy should be felt on board of some vessels belonging to the whaling fleet, if this is the usual state in which they are kept.

After delivering our letters, we bore away to the southeast, the wind inclining to the northwest and blowing heavy, with a high and remarkably regular sea following. This afforded me an opportunity I had long desired, for making observations to determine the height of the waves, together with their width and velocity. It is obviously very difficult to do this with correctness. I shall therefore state the means which I adopted, in order that it may be perceived what reliance is to be placed on the results.

This opportunity was far more favourable than that which occurred off Madeira, when I was enabled to get only an approximation to their velocity: they were not then urged on by any fresh impetus, as in the present case.

The Porpoise was directly ahead of the Sea-Gull, and but two waves apart; the rate of sailing was about eight knots an hour, both vessels being apparently very steady. In heaving the log, I found that the chip, in drawing in the line, was, when on the top of the next wave astern, distant by line three hundred and eighty feet, equal to one-sixteenth of a mile, and the schooner being on the next wave, was twice the distance, or one-eighth of a mile. The time occupied for a wave to pass from the schooner to the brig was thirteen seconds,