

On the 17th April, the time having expired for the return of the Relief, I concluded to leave Orange Harbour with the Vincennes and Porpoise. Believing the Relief had been detained, the Flying-Fish and Sea-Gull tenders were both left to await her arrival, for ten days, to take the scientific gentlemen on board, and join us at Valparaiso, in order to prevent detention by the slow sailing of that ship.

We got under way; but the wind drawing ahead, with appearances of bad weather, we anchored in Scapenham Bay. The weather becoming stormy, and thinking the place in which we were anchored too much exposed, we again got under way, ran back, and anchored in Orange Bay.

Before leaving these desolate and stormy regions, it may be expected that I should say a few words relative to the passage round the Cape. There are so many opinions relative to the best manner of proceeding in this navigation, that one in consulting them derives but little satisfaction, no two authorities agreeing in their views upon the subject. I am inclined to believe that as much depends upon the vessel, and the manner in which she is navigated, as the route pursued, whether the Cape is passed close to, or given a good berth: the object of all is to pass it as quickly as possible, and taking into consideration the difficulties to be incurred from boisterous weather, heavy seas, and ice, it is impossible to lay down any precise rule: that course which appears most feasible at the time ought to be adopted, keeping, however, in view, that there is no danger to be apprehended in navigating on the western coast of Terra del Fuego, as the current sets along its coast, and it is perfectly safe and practicable to navigate it as far as Cape Pillar. The great difficulty exists in passing the pitch of the Cape; there is none afterwards in getting to the westward. On the coast, the wind seldom blows long from the same quarter, but veers from southwest to northwest: the gales generally begin at the former quarter and end at the latter. Previous to the southwest gales, it would, therefore, in all cases, be advisable, when indications of their occurrence are visible, (which are known by the banks of cumuli in that quarter, some twenty-four hours previously,) to stand to the southward and westward in preference, with as much sail as well can be carried, that when the change occurs, you may be ready to stand on the other tack to the northward. One thing every navigator ought to bear in mind, that it requires all the activity and perseverance he may be possessed of, to accomplish it quickly.

On the 20th we took our final leave of these waters, and on the 21st lost sight of land, passing to the northward of the island of Diego Ramieres.