

through the greater part of the night, which was of the clearest star-light,—the Southern Cross garnishing the zenith, and the Magellan clouds showing more distinctly than I had ever before seen them. The weather, during our cruise south, was very unfavourable for witnessing any very splendid exhibitions of the aurora; for, with few exceptions, during our stay in the Antarctic Circle, we were enveloped in dense fogs, or found only occasional relief from such falls of snow, as may fairly be classed with any one of our old-fashioned snow-storms at home.

The greatest dip obtained, from the experiments with Dolland's needle, was 78° ; and in the latitude of 68° S., we found nearly four points easterly variation.

Mr. Peale has been fortunate enough to obtain as specimens, some new and rare Antarctic birds.

The officers and crew have enjoyed excellent health, been prompt and efficient in the performance of their respective duties; and for their cordial co-operation and aid in carrying out my views, deserve my warmest thanks; and I beg you will officially say so in your report to the Honourable Secretary of the Navy. I herewith enclose you Lieutenant Walker's report, who certainly deserves, with his officers and men, great credit for his perseverance.

I have drawn up this report in great haste, for the purpose of despatching the Flying-Fish to you, with the earliest intelligence, and shall proceed direct to Valparaiso, to carry out your instructions there.

Very respectfully,
(Signed) W. L. HUDSON,
Commanding U. S. Ship Peacock.

CAPTAIN CHARLES WILKES,
Commanding Exploring Expedition.

U. S. Schooner Flying-Fish,
At Sea, March 26th, 1839.

SIR,—

In obedience to your order of to-day, I have the honour to report, that after separating from you on the evening of the 26th ultimo, we hove-to under a reefed foresail until near meridian the next day, when, the gale moderating, we kept off the wind, with the hope of again falling in with you; and on the evening of the next day made a large sail to the northward of us, standing to the westward; we immediately gave chase, but on coming up, made her out to be a British merchantman.

We then stood to the westward for our first rendezvous, with strong