

(editor's note: This paper was transcribed from a handwritten cursive copy with various difficulties. For a perfect rendition, the reader might wish to consult the original, itself a copy, in the volume entitled *Literary Club Papers I*, 1885 – 1886 Oct 3, '85 to May 29, '86) The original is very badly faded.

Around the Horn

In the early part of the month of November 1872, I found myself reviewing old associations, laughing again over the pranks and scrapes of former days, and living once more in the pleasures and trials of the past, all of which were conjured up by the site of those ships and guns and flags, and beautiful parks and carefully kept grounds which together make the U.S. Naval Academy at Annapolis Maryland such an attractive, interesting, and impressive spot. About forty of my classmates, all graduates of this institution had, for the first time since our graduation, and after more or less eventful experiences again met in the arena where for four years we had waged, not always intellectual, but sometimes, in the moments when the blood was aroused, physical battles with each other. We had been ordered to pass once more through the ordeal of an examination for promotion the anticipation of which, full of terrors and anxieties as it was to most of us who, amidst the hurry, excitement, and duties of active service afloat had never thought of books, could not altogether quell the hearty laugh of relator and listener, as the experiences of former days were talked over. – And these examinations, like unto all others of every age and clime, are always voted by those to be examined unmitigated nuisances; and there is an unanimous failure to understand how in the slightest degree they can subserve any public or private good. When, in addition to the dark forebodings of failure, and the overwhelming consciousness of shortcomings never so fully felt as when encountering the chamber of horrors where if ever he who enters has need of all his self-possession and self confidence, is added the ceremony red tape, gold lace, and impressive paraphernalia with which examinations for promotion are conducted and surrounded in the naval service, you will say with me that we, whose future standing in life was dependent upon the result, were in fact as well as in appearance a light-hearted and careless number, thus to be able to laugh and joke and play. But there is an end to it all, fortunately, and it came. We succeeded, in due course of time and occasionally it did not take long in telling those old admirals and commodores with their swords and gold lace all we knew about calculus, differential and integral, navigation, gunnery, seamanship, French, Spanish, fortifications, naval tactics, astronomy, and the scores of other subjects which are supposed to form the stock in trade of a naval officer. The results were promulgated with their accompanying pleasure and triumphs for some,

and alas, the sadness and defeat for others. The hour of parting came. The farewell was spoken, and we went are several ways, some of us never again to meet.

While at Annapolis on this occasion I applied for orders to the U.S. Portsmouth then fitting out at the Brooklyn Navy Yard for a three years cruise in the Pacific Ocean. My application was granted, and after a flying visit of three days to my home, I reported myself on board to Captain Skerrett who was in command. The Portsmouth was a sailing sloop of war, carrying 14 guns and a complement of 11 officers and 175 men as staunch and true a vessel as ever floated. It was in commission when I joined her, and all was ready for sea with everything aboard except her powder. This was taken aboard a few days after while lying off the Battery in N.Y. harbor.

We were bound for the Pacific Ocean by way of Cape Horn to survey and lay down on charts the position of numerous rocks and islands in that ocean reported by whalers and merchantmen to exist, and which their limited astronomical appliances had prevented them from accurately locating when seen. The importance of this mission will be realized by all those who know the danger to property and lives on the sea by and through unknown rocks and shoals. And yet day by day passed and no orders came but in their place rumors that the cruise had been abandoned and one to Europe substituted; again that the ship was going out of commission, and we were to be ordered home. We grew restless, uneasy, and more uncomfortable as the weather grew colder; the north winds coming over the icy waters off the bay were very searching. As the weeks sped on and the holidays approached, we began to anticipate our interview with Santa Claus at our homes, and in imagination were already in the midst of the attendant pleasures and festivities. These hopes were doomed to be disappointed, however; we were not even to eat our Christmas dinner in New York Harbor. All these castles of air came tumbling down about our heads, on the 22nd day of December we were placed under sailing orders; then began the hurry and rush of final preparation. No one was allowed to go on shore except on duty; fresh provisions were laid in, tugs were engaged to tow us down the bay to Sandy Hook, the anchor was hove short, ready to be tripped at a moment's notice, adieus were spoken and written, and the thousand and one things, already left for the last-minute, done. Anxious to get away as we had been, we were yet disappointed, now that we were actually going, and each one of us felt convinced that it would have been so much better, so much more agreeable, if those orders had been delayed a few days longer, so that we might have

eaten that Christmas dinner in peace and comfort. This conviction would have been doubly strong if we had been known what an uncomfortable meal it was to be for us. At 8 o'clock in the morning of Monday, December 23rd the shrill whistles and hoarse calls of the boatswain's mate called us to up anchor, and officers as well as men repaired to their respective stations, the towing hawsers were given to the tugs, the anchor was hove up, and our last hold upon our native land was broken. While the little tugs were puffing and blowing, and dragging the vessel down the bay, we may look about us, become acquainted with the officers, learn something of the crew of the ship, the rules and regulations, the manners and customs, and the duties of those aboard her, and in so doing we will gain a general knowledge of all vessels of our navy, for she was a typical man-of-war. First as to the vessel herself.

A wooden sailing vessel, entirely dependent on canvas: she had four decks or floors: – the hold, where is kept all the powder, projectiles, provisions, fuel and water, anchor, cables, etc. is the cellar of this floating home of 200 souls; next above that the berth deck, containing the wardroom or staterooms, mess room and general living room of the fore-castle officers; next forward of it the steerage or berths, mess room living room of the fore-castle officers such as midshipmen, ensigns, etc., and forward of that the living room of the crew. Next above that the gun deck, where are the cabin of the captain, and as its name indicates the principal part of the armament of the ship, consisting aboard this vessel of 12 – 8 inch guns, 6 of a side. Here are also the capstans for hewing up the anchor. Next above that the spar deck, or roof of the house, where all the work of maneuvering the ship is performed; – this deck is divided into quarter deck, the sacred place reserved for the officers, and where the crew is not allowed to be except while on duty, and forward where the crew remain while on watch. On the quarter deck is the wheel for steering, the compass, oil tanks, and the stern chaser, - a gun so called because its muzzle is continually pointed over the stern of the vessel. There are three masts which rise perpendicularly from the deck, called respectively the fore, main, and mizzen masts. On these masts, at various heights from the deck are horizontally suspended the yards called the lower, topsail, top gallant, and royal yards; from these yards the sails are suspended. The masts of course are firm and rigid, being steeped into the keelson of the ship, but the yards are movable, so that they, and with them the sails may be braced or moved into the various positions, and at the different angles the changing winds may make necessary. In the direction of the length of the ship, and projecting beyond her bows are the bowsprit, jib boom, and flying jib boom, from which are hoisted the headsails pushing the bow to leeward, the

spinnaker at the other end of the bow counteracting this.

The size of these sails is mathematically determined, and great skill is required in their making. A multitude of ropes are necessary in the manipulation of these yards, and sails, and each of them has a name and a distinct place, with both of which every man in the crew must make himself so thoroughly familiar that on the darkest night, and in the greatest emergency he can instantly and without hesitation pick it out from among its scores of companions, for, when the squall is upon you there is no time for study. Some of the smallest of these ropes seek to hide their insignificance and diminutive size by parading in the longest names like some people, (more of whom live in Waterville however) who apparently thinks that by the addition of the high-heeled boot and the tall silk hat their corporeal length has been materially increased. The shortest rope has this short name "Starboard main top gallant studding sail boom tricing line." I need not assure you that it takes some practice to be able to roll that name glibly over the tongue in giving an order on an emergency. The officers to whose care, skill, and judgment this vessel and her crew are entrusted are 11 in number, all of course graduates of the Naval Academy. First, the captain, familiarly called the skipper or old man. He is truly monarch of all he surveys; for the time being not even the Czar of Russia possesses more absolute power than he does; his word is law, and none dare dispute. He lives solitary and lone in his cabin for to mess or live with the other officers might have, it is feared, a tendency to obliterate that well-defined circle surrounding his majesty. It is right, proper and necessary that this should be so, for in the scrupulous maintenance of the distinction in rank and power lies the safety, the happiness, and perhaps the life of every individual in this community so far removed from opportunity of invoking law or other safeguard. Were this distinction and gradation of rank not fully and unequivocally recognized and submitted to by all on board, anarchy and mutiny would be the inevitable result.

By saying that the captain lives alone, I do not wish to be understood as meaning that the officers of the ship are never suffered to approach him socially; far from it, for many a time and often do they call upon him, and does he invite them to break bread with him. Were it otherwise, his would indeed be a sad and bitter life, without a single ray of sunshine. As it is, it is a most trying position. I know of none more so; to feel that lives and property are absolutely dependent upon him alone, must indeed provoke a feeling of responsibility, and none share it with him. His voice alone orders,

his hand alone guides, – great is the power and the honor, but it also are the responsibilities. Next to him comes the first lieutenant or executive officer, familiarly called the first luff, who is, as his name indicates, the executive and channel through whom all orders of the captain are executed. He is responsible to the captain for the way in which everything about the ship is done. His office is no sinecure. Next comes the navigating officer, who takes all observations, calculates the position, course, and progress of the ship, has charge of all the chronometers, sextants, and other instruments. Then come the quarter deck or watch officers, who stand their watches on the weather side of the quarter deck, and sailed the ship, giving all the orders. The forecastle or steerage officers are also watch officers, but stand their watches on the forecastle their duty being to see the orders of the quarter deck officers executed in the forward or bow part of the vessel. These officers, who are all directly concerned with the ship, her sailing, management etc., are called line officers. – In addition thereto are the paymasters, the surgeons, the engineers on steamers, and sometimes but very seldom the chaplains, who are called staff officers, & have nothing whatever to do with the ship itself. My time is too limited to permit me to go into a recital of the different grades among the sailors of a man of war; suffice it to say they are numerous, and their order of precedence is as well defined and as jealously guarded as in any station of civil life. The crew however is equally divided into two principal and important divisions, called respectively the starboard and port watches. These watches do duty alternately for four hours while at sea except when the occasion requires the presence of all hands. The night watches, and by this I mean the hours of watch are first 8 to 12, second from 12 to 4, the first dog watch from 4 to 6, the second dogwatch from 6 to 8 these latter two being 2 hours each so that the same watch may not have the same hours of duty every day. The time of day is struck every half-hour day and night on the ship's bell. At 12 1/2 is one bell, and is so-called at one o'clock 2 bells, at 1 1/2 3 bells, and so on up to 4 o'clock which is 8 bells. Then with 8 1/2 it is one bell again, and goes up to twelve o'clock which is 8 bells. When 8 bells are struck at night and the relief watch is to be called, it is done by the boatswain's mate's who have a peculiar shaped pipe or whistle, and whereon they have no rival, for whistling is never permitted aboard ship, which they blow as a prelude to their hoarse call of “All the starboard watch,” which is immediately followed by such calls as “Come tumble up, tumble up now - don't be a week about it – rouse out – rouse out – eight bells – don't you hear the news” – and so on ad libitum, until every one of the new watch is on deck when the look outs are relieved, and the old watch can go below and turn in.

At sea, lookouts are posted at night in various parts of the ship to keep watch for lights, and in order that they may be compelled to keep awake, they are required at the instant the ship's bell is struck to call out successively their respective stations, beginning at the starboard cathead, –then post, then starboard gangway, then port, then starboard quarter, then port. At sea, every sailing vessel, no matter of what nationality, carries but two lights above the rail, a green light on the starboard, & a red on the port side, and by this means the direction of an approaching vessel is determined. When a ship first goes into commission, the executive officer makes out the station watch and fire bells in which the position to be taken, and the duties to be performed by every man and every maneuver that is made on board are distinctly laid down, and specifically defined, and no variations are ever permitted: here are the stations at making and taking in sail, for getting underway, for getting up anchor, for coming to anchor, for tacking ship, for wearing ship, for wasting ship, boatscrews are named, gun screws are designated, stations in case of fire are arranged, in short, for every one of the many concerted works a crew is called upon to perform, the station of every number is clearly designated, and there must he be found when the time comes. Frequent drills, in which the utmost care is exercised by the officers soon so familiarize the crew and every man with his duties, that when the order is given its execution follows so swiftly and noiselessly as to border on the marvelous. A man of war with a good and well drilled crew is a beautiful and wonderful piece of mechanism

In addition to the regular complement of line and staff officers, we had on board a number of civilians, an ichthyologist and an entomologist who represented the Smithsonian Institution, and an officer from the Hydrographic office to prepare and draft the charts of our surveys. For these gentlemen staterooms had been built on the gun deck as also an extra stateroom which was given to J. W. Danenhower (Dan as we familiarly called him) one of the surviving members of the illustrious Jeanette, and a classmate of mine – and myself. This stateroom of ours being on the gun deck, and having a large port or window and plenty of light, when beautified with rugs and curtains and pictures, and the many evidences of the consideration and thoughtfulness of friends, and the loved ones at home, was a cozy and pretty den, but this gala dress was donned only in port. As soon as we went to sea they were all carefully stowed away. The room contained but one berth or bed one of us alone could use it, and the other must swing in a hammock. Some time ago, our mutual friend, well giving you a most

interesting account of his trip abroad, told you how he and his companion du voyage tossed up a penny (or it may have been the more valuable coin) to determine who should occupy the lower, and until then considered, the more desirable of the two berths in the state room to which they have been assigned. On board a man of war, such questions as this are determined by relative rank, and Danenhower and myself had no difficulty consequently in determining who was entitled to that berth.

But enough of this detail. I must now hasten on to the main purpose of this paper, – a description, meager at best it must be, of our cruise over more than 20,000 miles of water. While going down the bay the wind was very light, but it required no practiced eye to see in the lowering clouds unmistakable evidence of the rough weather we were to encounter as soon as we should be well clear of the land.

As soon as we crossed the bar, and had laid our course to the southeast all hands were called to make sail, the tow lines were cast off, a farewell cheer from the crews of the tugs, was answered by an occasional wave of the hand, and we were off. Topsail's and courses were set, and the old ship, like a thing of life, fairly danced over the tumbling waves. Everything was made ready; ropes were neatly coiled down, ready for instant use, and the watch balbro, as that part of the crew which is off duty is called, sent below. The wind kept veering to the eastward, and, before night settled into a blow from the NE. The sea kept coming up, the ship danced livelier, and at midnight the wind had increased to a gale: topsails were close reefed, and courses hauled up; then the mizzen topsail was furled, followed soon by the fore topsail, and we were under as little canvas as the ship would carry. This gale lasted for seven days, and most uncomfortable days they were; the cutting wind and snow, the icy spray, the discomforts of wet and slippery decks made it altogether a most unpleasant holiday season for us. Our Xmas dinner was a myth, for the sea was so rough that the fire in the galley was put out, and we had to content ourselves, officers and men, with a cold meal. On Xmas night a heavy sea struck the ship, threw me out of my berth, wrenched the old bureau in our state room from its fastenings, and before it could be secured had knocked its ornamentation, our wash stand, and several of our pictures to pieces to say nothing of numerous little articles of bric-a-brac we had packed away in the recesses of its capacious drawers, and had scattered everything, books, chairs, clothes, and lamp over the floor, and few breakables were unbroken.

On the morning of the last day of the year, I had to watch from 4 to 8. The wind had moderated considerably during the night and was still going down. The clouds were breaking away and every indication betokened an attempt on the part of the dying year to establish friendly relations with us once more, obliterate the disagreeable impressions the recent stormy days had left, and if possible cause a pang of regret within us at the coming separation by going out in the glory of sunshine and blue skies. But it could not be done. Remembrances of the lost Xmas dinner were still too vivid to permit us to stifle the feelings of just indignation, at the base stratagem, and the unanimous feeling was that we were glad she was going, and as the hour of parting came, we taunted her with the expressed belief that the new year would certainly not treat us so shabbily.

Did you ever see a sunrise at sea? It will not compare with the sunrise onshore: there are no songs of birds, no awakening hum of humanity; no glancing of the first beams of the king of day upon hills and spires and trees and housetops; it has none of these accompaniments to give it life in spirit; there is no singing. But although the actual rise of the sun at sea can not be beautiful, yet nothing will compare for melancholy and dreariness with the early breaking of day upon "old Ocean's gray and melancholy waste." There is something in the first gray streaks stretching along the eastern horizon, and throwing and indistinct light upon the face of the deep which combines with the boundless and unknown depth of this sea around, and gives one a feeling of loneliness, and dread and of melancholy foreboding and dreary is it to him who has been on watch since 4 o'clock a.m. and is now standing in the midst of cascades of water used in the daily ablution of which every ship of war is subjected, trying to restore his circulation by drinking that which he is holding in his hands a mysterious product of the cook of the mess which he calls a cup of coffee but which to the unlearned mind is nothing more than a cup of hot water with a lot of solid black particles in it, which keep time in their dancing to the tumbling sea. A cup of ship's coffee. What a compound it is! I never drink coffee now. From this time on we had several days of beautiful weather, —our course was laid due south, and every moment indications of our approach to the tropics multiplied. Soon the Southern Cross appeared above the horizon: this is in about 18° north latitude, and the heavens at night; how beautiful they were. Is it only imagination or is it a fact that in those southern climes the stars shine with an added luster? I know not. Day by day we were nearing the equator, and the sailors made their preparations for receiving Neptune who permits no vessels pass through his dominions without boarding her. And how those

poor fellows, who had never entered his realm before, dread his approach. Finally, on January 15th we were there and so was he, with wife, and child, and babies. "Ship ahoy!" comes the cry over the water. "What ship is that!" "The USS Portsmouth" "Where from and where bound?" "From N.Y. to Valparaiso by way of Cape Horn." He comes nearer; soon he is over the bow and on deck. He is a sight to behold with his long and flowing beard, his locks matted with seaweed, his trident in hand, and followed by his loving spouse Amphitrite who, with maternal solicitude leads their first born by the hand; and at a respectful distance by his faithful servant the barber whose enormous razor, fashioned from a rusty hoop would make the stoutest heart wish there were no such things as beards. He comes aft, and possession of the ship is given him. He recognizes among the crew some old friends of his whom he has met frequently; he asks them confidentially whether any of the crew have not passed him before. They said yes, – not many but some, whereupon they are constituted his ministers plenipotentiary to bring these landmen into his august presence and they do it and none would say that they do it gently. In the lee gangway they have fixed up a rude barber chair or seat, and immediately behind it is a miniature lake formed by suspending a large tarpaulin by its corners and sides, and filling it with salt water.

Neptune seats himself upon an improvised throne. Mrs. Neptune and Neptune, Jr. with him, and the barber, sleeves rolled up, hoop razor in hand, and a large tub of soap suds out of which protrudes the handle of an ordinary whitewash brush, is ready for business. The first poor landman approaches, is politely motioned to put himself down into the barber's chair, with his back to the lake. He does so. Neptune then asks him if it is really true that he has never been in his realm before. As the victim opens his mouth to answer no, the barber has filled it with a brush full of suds, and then lathers him all over, – not alone in the face but the hair of the head, nose, eyes, ears, and mouth; then gives him three or four scrapes with the hoop razor, and as the shaven one can not see for the soap in his eyes, picks him up by the feet and plunges him backward into the water, whence others pick him up fish him out as soon as he has been thoroughly soaked and nearly drowned. And so the others are brought up from the gun deck (where they have been kept during the operation, so that the surprise to them may be all the greater one by one, and subjected to the same treatment. It is not a very gentle treatment, nor is it unalloyed pleasure for him who is being shorn, but the old salts enjoy it hugely. It took a whole afternoon to thus properly initiate our landmen. This is a most curious custom, and is undoubtedly another of those unmarkable survivals of ancient practices begun as actual worship of

some deity, and finally existing as mere custom, without any significance. Anciently the Greeks sacrificed on nearing any prominent cape, on many of which temples to the deities were erected. During the Middle Ages the present ceremony of receiving a visit from a propitious Neptune arose when it was not of course performed at the equator, but on arriving within the tropics, crossing the Arctic Circle, and even in passing certain capes. Byron in *The Island* makes this allusion to this custom

“A seaman in a masquerade
Such as appears to rise from out of the deep,
When o'er the line to merry vessels sweep,
And the rough saturnalia of the tar, Flock o'er the deck in Neptune's
borrowed car.
And pleased, the god of ocean sees his name
Revive once more though but in mimic game
of his true sons.”

On the 6th of January we were again overtaken by a succession of gales which lasted until the 13th and abruptly ended in almost a dead calm. It grew very hot; so hot sometimes that the pitch was drawn out of the deck seams. Showers or rather downpours of rain had become frequent, and no matter how bright and clear the heavens were, we always went on watch with our southwesters and rubber coats. On the 21st of January in the latitude 19° south or about 250 miles north of the latitude of Rio de Janeiro, we sighted a Norwegian brig with signals of distress flying. We headed for her, and were soon within speaking distance. She was ten days out from Rio, and bound for Christiania, had yellow fever on board, and begged us to send a boat to her. Our second cutter was manned, and we pulled aboard. It was indeed a sad sight. On the deck lay a corpse, just dead, and two more at almost the last gasp. They had already burned six of the thirteen who left Rio as her complement, and only had four, including the captain, able to do any duty. The Captain, a most intelligent man, begged us to send him some medicines, for they had nothing of the kind. We returned to our ship, took on board a quantity of calomel, quinine, sulfate of magnesia, and other remedies used, and pulled back to her. The captain was very grateful, and while we were still alongside, gave doses to the poor fellows lying on the deck. We then pulled back to our ship, sails were filled, and parted company, and never heard anything more of her. This was one of the saddest pictures of life at sea I ever looked upon.

A day or two after this, we had our first view above the horizon of the Magellan clouds, which consist of three small nebulae in the southern part of the heavens two bright like the milky way, and one dark, over the southern pole. Our pleasant weather ended on the first of February; it began to grow cold and stormy, for we were getting quite well to the south. On the 3rd we saw the first albatross or cape sheep as the sailors call it, and they believe it sleeps on the wing, that seabird, whose home is in the high latitudes, and which is the largest of web footed birds. They can be caught with a hook and line, and one that was so caught by one of our men measured ten feet from tip to tip of the wings, and weighed only fifteen pounds. It is a majestic bird, and floats on rather than flies in the air, the movement of the wings being perceptible only when it rises from the water. The heavier the gale the happier this bird seems to be.

On the 4th, we saw several schools of porpoises, some whales and dog-fish, and on the 7th the first ice. On the 8th a tremendous sea struck the ship on the starboard bow causing her seemingly to stand still in her tracks; the whole volume of water shot into the air, and then fell upon the decks like a roaring cataract covering them with over two feet of water, and carrying some of the crew off their feet. It had carried away, as though cut by an ax the whole forward bulwark. We now begin to secure the ship for Cape Horn weather, although we were still considerably to the North of the Falkland Islands, off the coast of Patagonia. These preparations consist in sending down all the upper yards and masts, getting all the rigging belonging to them out of the way, for these sails are never used off the Horn; – also in covering all the hatches or stairways except two (one for the officers and one for the men) with tarpaulins which are nailed down securely, the purpose of course being to keep any sea that may be taken on board, from going below. The storm continued without interruption until the 14th, and during most of this time we carried as little sail as we could. On the afternoon of the 14th for the first time since leaving New York we heard the cries from the masthead of “Land ho.” It was Cape de la Virgruis, the northern entrance to the Straits of Magellan. The captain tried to get into the Straits, and if possible to go through them instead of around the Horn, for it was very cold. But he soon gave it up, the West wind being too strong. The Straits are a dangerous pass to go through, because of the Swift current and variable winds, the latter being caused by the high shores of Patagonia and Tierra del Fuego.

Soon the course was laid to the south east again, between the Falkland Islands and Tierra del Fuego. On the 16th we saw Staten, Island, the S.

easternmost point of South America, and on the 17th Cape Horn. I shall never forget the day. It was bright and clear; the sun we had not seen for many a day shone again, the wind was fresh but not heavy, and was favorable. Cape Horn was in plain sight and with a good glass the furrows on its stony face could be clearly seen. Several sail were in sight, coming from the westward, but none going west as we were. We did splendidly that day making on an average 9 knots an hour, and were already congratulating ourselves that we would slip around without any trouble, and by 4 P.M. we were directly south of the cape. But alas, again where we doomed to disappointment for by 5 o'clock the sky assumed a livid hue, just as though we were near a great prairie fire. Suddenly an old sailor said to me, (for we were all on the spar deck,) "look, Mr. Mayer, there comes Cape Horn;" and cause enough was there for the remark, for off in the westward directly where our course lay, a mist was coming over the water, with the speed of lightning flash. Instantly all hands were called to furl fore and mizzen top sales and foresails, and close up the main topsail, and hardly had the men got aloft when it burst upon us with a fury once experienced will never be forgotten, and the sun and Cape Horn in the moment were gone; the first not to reappear for thirteen days, and the latter was never seen again by me. The men had hard work to furl the sails the wind was blowing with such terrific violence; as if by magic the sea came up, and all our hopes of an easy passage were gone. Instead of steering west we had to lay our course southwest and were of course every moment getting farther and farther from the "haven where we would be." The 13 days that followed were the severest and stormiest and most miserable I had ever spent. It continually blew a gale. The sea was in reality "mountains" high, for the waves here attain an altitude of 40 feet, the highest seas in the world. Sometimes in standing upon the quarter deck, it seemed as though the bow were directly under one, and in looking out astern you would involuntarily bend the head down, to escape the angry, green monster curling up over you, and menacing to engulf. It was very cold, and most of the time the sea was so rough that no fires were lighted. The decks below were continually wet, for we shipped many a sea, and the ship was so much strained that at times water would come through the seams. We had no way of drying our clothes, had snow or rain almost continuously, and in consequence, nearly every one suffered frost bites. One of our watch officers was taken very sick, was unable to do duty, and we had to stand three watches, that is, four hours duty in every twelve, or eight hours per day. We were blown to the south from about 56° south, the latitude of Cape Horn, to 65° S. or over 500 miles out of our way; and it was 13 days before we were able to get back again into the latitude of

the Horn. It was a most trying passage, and one never to be forgotten.

Finally on the 2nd of March we made the 56° of south latitude, and although it continued to blow hard, until the 6th, yet we were well around, and could stand up along the coast. From this time on to the 16th we had pleasant weather, favorable winds, and smooth sea. On this day we anchored in the harbor of Talcahuana, Chili, having been 84 days out from New York. What a delicious feeling it was to be at rest again after these many days of continual tumbling about, and be able to exchange salt pork, beans, and hard tack for fresh provisions and fruits. The more one has of ships fare the less one likes it; it is one of those things that does not improve by experience. Talcahuana, on Concepcion Bay, a good, land locked harbor is the sea-port of Concepcion, a city of 10,000 inhabitants lying about 10 miles in the interior, in a large fertile plain. It is beautifully located, but often visited by earth quakes, and in consequence, the great majority of houses are but one story in height.

The first thing a sailor usually does when he gets ashore after a long voyage is to take a horseback ride, and always with one inevitable result, – he tumbles off; but all of our party reached Concepcion *à cheval* finally. The people, among whom are quite a number of French and Germans, are very hospitable, and we regretted exceedingly the necessity of leaving them or it may have been the return trip on horseback had its terrors. The captain's purpose in putting into Talcahuana was first to clean up the ship, for she looked very badly after her rough trip and second to survey Concepcion Bay, and give us the practical experience we so much needed. This last, then, was our constant employment during our stay there, and when on the 3rd of April the survey was finished, and the vessel once more in ship shape order, we sailed for Valparaiso, arriving there on the 4th, after an 18 hour's trip.

This is a beautiful city of about 35,000 inhabitants, and its business portion consisting of one long street, lies along the shore of the bay. The residences are picturesquely situated on the heights overlooking the town. The harbor is open to the north, and when their northers, (as the north winds are called) blow, is unsafe. While lying here we were treated to one of the attractions of this country, namely an earthquake and to accompanying tidal wave. They said it was quite a light one, yet we differed from them there, and being ashore at the time, I noticed that they all, with one accord ran into the center of the street, and from there to the plaza, to escape any tumbling houses. There is an uncertainty about the length and extent of these rockings of the

earth beneath your feet that is not at all reassuring or comfortable.

We enjoyed our stay in this thriving and busy city, and viewed with a certain degree of astonishment its many fine buildings and stores. It lies at the foot of the Andes, and from the windows of my stateroom I could see Anacaqua, 24,000 feet high, hiding its head under a mantle of snow. From here we went by rail to Santiago, the capital, lying in the midst of the Andes. This railroad is a wonderful feat of engineering. We made numerous excursions into the surrounding mountains, mostly on horseback, and climbed to the summit of Mt. Campana, one of the highest mountains in this region, whence a grand view is had. On the sides of this mountain are quite a number of copper mines.

We regretted very much leaving our kind friends, who had done so much for our amusement and pleasure. On the morning of April 16th we left Valparaiso for Honolulu, where, after a very pleasant voyage of fifty-three days, we arrived on the 7th of June.

Wm G Mayer