

rain. At four o'clock in the afternoon, the weather cleared up, and it was announced from the mast-head that land was seen to the N.N.W., exactly in the direction of our course. It was a low, woody island, the length of which, from N. to S., is three miles, and its breadth three-quarters of a mile. As no single islands are known in this part, I concluded it to be a new discovery, and called it New Year's Island, it having been first seen on new-year's day. The faint wind did not permit us to make any further examination this day; a countless number of fish sported round the Rurick: we saw fewer birds, from which I concluded the island was inhabited. We tacked during the night; the weather was uncommonly fine; the full moon looked magnificently in the starry heavens, and guarded us against every danger.

The 2d, at break of day, the island lay distant from us five miles, W. by N. As on the north side a very long reef extended to the north, I directed my course to the south, where we saw no surf, and where we hoped to be able to effect a landing. We had very fine weather, but only a faint breeze from E.N.E. The lovely verdure of the island had a very pleasing look, and the rising columns of smoke had in our eyes something very inviting. When we were distant but two miles from the south point, we were surprised by seven canoes, each rowed by five or six men, which