

It would not be prudent for ships bound to America, to pursue our route, if they are not ready for sea by the middle of November, or the 10th of December at farthest. The long and heavy delay we met with, after leaving Samboingan, is the best proof of the difficulties we found in getting to the Eastward at this period of our voyage; when the currents also run more rapid, and the season is more tempestuous, as we have reason to believe, than in the months of November and December.

1788.
May.

It had been our intention, at one time, to perform this voyage by sailing round New Holland, and stretching sufficiently to the East, to fetch the Sandwich Islands previous to our making the coast of America; or we had the choice of pushing through Endeavour Straits, and performing the same point; but this latter course was rejected on account of the dangerous archipelago of islands scattered to the Eastward of those straits; and the former was abandoned from the circuitry of its navigation, which would demand a much longer time than we could spare: it was accordingly conjectured, that if a passage was attempted through the Sooloo Archipelago, then stretching to the Eastward, to weather New Guinea, New Ireland, and New Hanover,—and again tacking to the Northward, to obtain the Westerly winds, that we should have a quick and easy passage opened to America.

The event proved that we had judged rightly in adopting the last;—but, in my opinion, a still easier and much better passage is now opened to America; and it is submitted whether, in future, it would not be preferable for ships bound there, to effect their way by the passage between Luconia and Formosa. This opinion is not the fanciful result of vague conjecture, but has, as I conceive, somewhat of an experimental foundation on the following circumstances:—

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