

notwithstanding this precaution, they lost much way till the 12th of October, when the tempest abated.

The diseases, which already prevailed among the crew, became worse, and the scurvy increased its ravages more and more. A day seldom passed without a death, and scarcely men enough were left in health to navigate the vessel. In this melancholy situation they were undecided whether to return to Kamtschatka, or to seek some port in which they might winter on the American coast. The lateness of the season, the want of fresh water, and the great distance from Petropawlowka, appeared to render the latter measure indispensable. In a council held on board, it was however, resolved to attempt the former. A favourable wind springing up, they set sail, steering to the north at first, and after the 15th of October, to the west. They passed an island to which they gave the name of St. Macarius, and on the 29th and 30th of October, they came in sight of two others, which, by their situation, size, and figure, they took to be the two first Kurile islands. This opinion caused them to steer to the north, instead of which, if they had continued to run to the west two days longer, they would have arrived at the port of Awatschka.

This step was attended with the most fatal consequences. In vain they resumed their course to the west; they were unable to discover the coast of Kamtschatka, and they had no hope of reaching any port in such an advanced season. The crew, exposed to the most intense cold and incessant rain, continued to labour without intermission. The scurvy had made such ravages that the man who guided the helm was obliged to be supported to his station by two of his comrades, who still possessed sufficient strength to keep their legs. When he became unable either to sit up or to steer, another, who was in a situation very little better, took his place. They durst not carry a press of sail, because, in case of necessity, there was no person to lower those which might be too much. The sails themselves were so worn out, that the first gale would have torn them to pieces, and there were not hands sufficient to hoist the spare sails which they had taken out with them.

The incessant rain, which had fallen till now, was succeeded by hail and snow. The nights grew longer and darker, and their dangers were consequently increased, because they every moment had reason to apprehend that the ship would strike. At the same time their fresh water was entirely consumed. The excessive labour became insupportable to the few hands