

On the 11th of May they again weighed their anchors, and sailed through the narrows.

Twelve miles more brought them to the anchorage off Nisqually, where both vessels dropped their anchors about eight o'clock.

Nothing can exceed the beauty of these waters, and their safety; and not a shoal exists within the Straits of Juan de Fuca, Admiralty Inlet, Puget Sound, or Hood's Canal, that can in any way interrupt their navigation by a seventy-four gun ship.

The shore rises abruptly to a height of about two hundred feet, and on the top of the ascent is an extended plain, covered with pine, oak, and ash. Fort Nisqually, with its out-buildings and enclosure, stands back about half a mile from the edge of the table-land.

The Porpoise, with two of the Vincennes' boats, took up the survey of Admiralty Inlet; the launch, first cutter, and two boats of the Vincennes, the survey of Hood's Canal. The land parties intended to explore the interior were allowed eighty days for the explorations.

Drayton and Waldron of the Vincennes, Lieutenant Wilkes, and two servants, proceeded to the Columbia to visit Astoria, then Fort Vancouver and the Willamette settlement, and to proceed up the river as far as Wallawalla. From Astoria they proposed to send parties from the Peacock into the interior, and to set on foot the survey of the Columbia River by means of her boats.

Fort Nisqually is constructed of pickets, enclosing a space about two hundred feet square, with four corner bastions. Within this enclosure are the agent's stores and about half a dozen houses, built of logs and roofed with bark. This fort was considered quite large when it was first established, but since it has become an agricultural post as well as a trading one, it is found to be too small. Its locality is also ill chosen, on account of the difficulty of obtaining water, which has to be brought from a distance of nearly a mile.

Having seen the parties all off, or ready to start, the party set out. It was a strange cavalcade, for most of them were but sorry horsemen, and they had every variety of accoutrements, from the saddle and bridle to the bare back and halter. They were eight in number: Messrs. Drayton, Waldron, and Lieutenant Wilkes, two servants, two Indians, and a Cana-