

580 days into
Prater
Going at anchor at Prince of Wales Sound at 12 M. at
Wednesday May 17th 1864.

The boats returned at 11 O'clock at night in the rain which had been falling all day. The men were cold and very much fatigued after an absence of 5 days. The following is the history of the proceedings as given by John. R. Root got a boatsteward who was one of the party Friday May the 12th. The boatsteward, greater boats of the ship, Garataga, W. T. Wheaton started an exploring expedition with provisions and apparatus for hunting and fishing.

We pulled around the northern end of the Island which formed the western side of our harbor, through what appeared to be a narrow passage, but which gradually expanded into a broad bay full of islands of various shapes and sizes, from the low flat rocks covered with earth and supporting a small cluster of trees, to the conical with its base girdled around with a belt of living green gradually diminishing in size showing plain its snow laden top till its smooth white summit blends gradually with the clouds so the gazer is often at a loss to define its true summit.

At the distance of 20 or 30 miles from the ship we discovered the fossil remains of a whale and it being the purpose of the expedition to ascertain if they visited there regions the discovery was rather favorable.

From this Island we steered in a southerly direction with the open Sound on our left hand and string of Islands on the other which as we passed along was ever changing their appearance looking the moving scenes of a Panorama at a distance showing the appearance of a solid Mass. The distance of 45 miles from the ship we landed on a little Isl. for which we had been steering and after a few minutes rest we left taking a more southerly direction for an Isl. at which we arrived at about 12 M. distance about 25 miles from ship. There we concluded to dine which pleasant operation was hardly closed when we discovered a speck on the water which as it drew we had out to be a canoe with 3 native Indians who came within a short distance of the beach seemingly afraid to approach and occasionally uttering a shrill halloo which noise was finally accounted for by the appearance of another canoe with 3 more natives one of which seemed to take the lead of the party. They finally came along side of the boats and we conversed with them by signs as well as we was able. They were mostly dressed in skins, tanned and made in European fashion.

After leaving them we steered for a larger Isl. to the S. and E. of us which we reached in about 3 hours. We continued a pulling around

the eastern end of it admiring the beautiful and varied scenery sometimes tapering under the high jagged rocks rising almost perpendicular to the height of 2 or 3 hundred feet, then again the forest belt gave quite to the water edge. Often on abruptly turning a jutting point of rocks, starting from their quiet rocks, hundreds of sea fowl who would rise away seaward screaming at the strange intruders. The day was now far spent and we and we commenced looking for a convenient spot to pitch our tent which we found in a cove on the southern side of the Isl. We soon had our boats above high water mark, put our house in order which was composed of 9 top gallantails which was supported by a ridge pole and two uprights with one end closed and the floor covered with boughs a foot thick. Dream time had started a fire and was preparing supper which was hardly finished when the weather which had been fine through the day changed to snow and rain. At sundown we put our jackets and blankets and retired to sleep, being as near as we could judge 50 miles from the ship our route was much further. After a good night's rest we awoke in the morning and found it had snowed. Quite hard so we rebuilt the fire and breakfasted and concluded to remain where we were till better weather. Toward noon we launched a boat and tried to shoot some ducks and geese but they were so wild we could not get near them we also tried for fish with no better success. The day finally passed and we added more green wood to our fire and retired to our beds but not very comfortable bed. During the night the wind increased to a gale and started one of the stakes that supported our tent to the ground so a part of us were obliged to turn out and repair it. The morning dawned with better weather. Took an early breakfast and started with a fair wind for a point of the main land steering about N. for the distance of 20 miles. There we found but little to attract our notice. After dinner a small bay we changed our course to the S. and for a bluff which formed one of the heads of a Bay which we were to explore. We arrived at the bluff and steered along the main land with a bold rocky shore with here and there deep landlocked coves one of which we entered. We had supposed it to be a small place but found it to be some miles in extent with many lakes. I have often admired the bewitching scenery of a southern climate but have never before seen the majesty and beauty of nature so finely blended. The gazer at almost one glance sees the steam rising from the Fingertell the smooth water the rowing with startling truthfulness the surrounding scene a great variety of water fowl a hundred here and deemed not to fear the destroyers until the loaded birds scattered in their panic then they were in the startling cries while the surrounding hills gave