

The squadron was now on the eve of sailing, having on board stores and provisions for a long cruise. As this winter's cruising was particularly intended to examine the portion of ocean that was not included in my instructions, I shall, before narrating the details of the proceedings of the squadron, give, in a general view, the intended operations.

The movements of the squadron were, at this time, particularly directed to the examination of parts of the ocean possessing great interest in their connexion with that important branch of national industry, the whale-fishery; and the course I proposed to adopt will be understood from the following statement of the objects I now had in view.

The Porpoise, as before remarked, had been sent towards the Pao-motu Group, or Dangerous Archipelago, lying to the eastward of Tahiti, to examine some islands that were reported as doubtful, and others whose positions were not well ascertained. She was also to leave a party on one of them, to bore through the coral rock, the Expedition having been provided with an apparatus for that purpose. Thence she was to proceed to Tahiti, and from Tahiti towards Penrhyn and Flint's Island; and return to Oahu by the end of March, 1841. The Porpoise sailed, as has been stated, on the 16th of November, 1840.

The Peacock, with the Flying-Fish as tender, I designed should visit and examine the location of several of the doubtful islands, passing along, the magnetic equator westward from the meridian of 160° W.; thence to a small group of islands in longitude 174° W., which I had partly examined in the Vincennes, and had found some new islands among them; these I had called the Phoenix Group. Thence the Peacock was to proceed to search for the Gente Hermosas of Quiros, or the islands reported to me at Upolu, when I was there in 1839, as existing to the northeast; thence to Upolu, to re-survey the south side of the island, not having been able to satisfy myself with the former survey of it; at the same time directing Captain Hudson to inquire into the late murder of an American seaman, of which I had received information from our consul, Mr. Williams.

Lieutenant-Commandant Ringgold had, as before stated, made a demand for the murderer, but the chiefs had refused to comply with the treaty. The circumstances of the murder of Gideon Smith, as given by affidavits made before the consul, (which will be found in Appendix XX., Vol. III.,) are as follows.

Gideon Smith was a native of Bath, Massachusetts. He belonged to the whale-ship Harold, of Dorchester, Massachusetts, but left her on