

hended from them. To conclude, I am satisfied that under ordinary circumstances, to pass through the Sooloo Sea will shorten by several days the passage to Manilla or Canton, and be a great saving of expense in the wear and tear of a ship and her canvass.

On the 13th, we passed near the location of the Viper Shoal, but saw nothing of it. It is, therefore, marked doubtful on the chart. As I had but little time to spare, the look-outs were doubled, and we pursued our course throughout the night, sounding as we went every fifteen minutes; but nothing met our view.

On the 14th, although we had the northeast monsoon blowing fresh, we experienced a current of twenty-two miles setting to the north. This was an unexpected result, as the currents are usually supposed to prevail in the direction of the monsoon. On the 15th, we still experienced it, though not over fifteen miles. On the 16th, we found it setting west, and as we approached the Malayan Peninsula it was found to be running southwest.

On the 18th, we made Pulo Aor and Pulo Pedang, and arriving off the Straits of Singapore I hove-to, to await daylight. In the morning at dawn, we found ourselves in close company with a Chinese junk. The 19th, until late in the afternoon, we were in the Singapore Straits, making but slow progress towards this emporium of the East. The number of native as well as foreign vessels which we passed, proved that we were approaching some great mart, and at 5 P. M. we dropped our anchor in Singapore Roads. Here we found the Porpoise, Oregon, and Flying-Fish, all well: the two former had arrived on the 22d of January, nearly a month before, and the latter three days previously. Before concluding this chapter, I shall revert to their proceedings since our separation off the Sandwich Islands.

The instructions to the brigs have been heretofore given; but it may not be amiss to repeat here that the object in detaching them was, that they might explore the line of reefs and islands known to exist to the northward and westward of the Hawaiian Group, and thence continue their course towards the coast of Japan. Had they effected the latter object, it would have given important results in relation to the force of the currents, and the temperature of the water. It was desirable, if possible, to ascertain with certainty the existence on the coast of Japan of a current similar to the Gulf Stream, to which my attention had been particularly drawn.

The first land they made was on the 1st of December, 1841, and was Necker Island. Birds, especially the white tern, had been seen in numbers prior to its announcement. Necker Island is apparently a mass of volcanic rocks, about three hundred feet high, and is destitute