

VOYAGING
SOUTHWARD FROM THE
STRAIT OF MAGELLAN
BY ROCKWELL KENT





Voyaging

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WITH ILLUSTRATIONS BY THE AUTHOR



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GLACIER NEAR THE VALLEY'S SUMMIT

have hindered our wading it, we would not readily submit to the discomfort of wet clothes. The valley proved at close hand to be more broken into minor hills and dales than our first distant view of it had discovered, and the meadowlands, alas, proved bog. It was after we had been for an hour or more immersed in the entanglements of the jungle that we again attained a height from which we held an unobstructed view of the valley. The day was grey but clearer than the day before, and beyond the varied slope in the blue haze of the distance appeared a vast plain enclosed, apparently, by mountains. Yet that it somehow opened toward the sea the streams were evidence.

At last the main river again impeded our path; and rather than follow it to where against the northern range it flowed through a deep gorge, we undertook to cross it. The river here was deep and swift and for an hour we were occupied in bridging it with a long tree trunk. With this accomplished we carried our packs across and continued dry-shod.

It often seemed that whatever way, after careful deliberation, we chose was the wrong one; the left bank, if we trod the right, soon smiled at us invitingly; and if we forsook the river entirely for the illusion of another route, new obstacles appeared to reproach us for our bad judgment. So it was not long after our triumphant, dry-

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ed we should pursue. We had resumed our packs and were striding merrily
beaten cattle paths upon our chosen way. Northward across from us stood
ed range along whose base we had toiled. Occasional peaks lifted their high
into the region of winter—but all the rest was verdant with late spring. Our
following the curving river's course along the valley as it appeared. Our
reappeared among the groves of trees that grew in scattered clumps along
when suddenly emerged a moving form, a horseman galloping on the

dden shout he stopped and looked about as if amazed: and then he saw
pasture hillside. He turned his horse and rode a devious way to meet us.
appeared and with astonishment upon his face rode up and greeted us.
ve told him whence we had come, there came into his face a wonder as
en angels dropped from heaven. We were, he told us, at an outlying camp
ia Austral of Yendegaia Bay, on Beagle Channel, and but a little distance
of Lapataia Bay. He told us that we were certainly the first ever to have
from the north.* The realization that we were discoverers filled us with

on.
od-hearted, generous fellow, this Chileño shepherd, by name Francisco;
ful, sloppy, dirty, easy-going, easy-natured chap. His house was like a
miserable shanty of two little rooms—a filthy, dirt-floored kitchen, if
to call it that, and an untidy bunk room—but he made it ours with
one who gave us all he had. In his enthusiasm over our exploit he
we recount it over and over again. A short, cheap road to Punta
to him, a way of escape from employers whose petty meanness, we
ade their service a degradation.

ailed upon us to ride with him to the estancia, and the following
for the trip. He appeared to contemplate a kind of showman's pride
us, and he dwelt upon the enthusiasm with which our discovery of
received by his patrones. Meanwhile, the day was before us; and
t milk and sour bread we mounted two horses, a mare and a geld-
pon an excursion toward Lapataia Bay.

ed out of the enclosed pasture into the open range when we were
allions; and throughout the two hours of our ride this jealous,
d no end of diversion and excitement; and finally upon a naked
t in locked embrace above the mountain peaks, they staged with
ats and the screams of bitten rage and pain a conflict of such

ssionary report from Ushuaia
ndians of the northern chan-
the mission, having crossed
orted great difficulties on the
and valleys. These Indians,

being unused to land travel, may have exaggerated the diffi-
culties. The remains of Indian shelters that we found would
indicate our route as being the one travelled by the Alaca-
loofs. Our subsequent inquiries confirmed that we were the
first white discoverers of the pass.



VIRGIN FOREST

VOYAGING



ANCHORAGE OFF BAILEY ISLAND

Experience had taught us to distrust fair weather; and, with hope so strongly set upon our destination, we never entered upon a passage of open water without anxiety lest a wind should rise and retard us or drive us back to shelter. But the day held always calm—the hushed unnatural and portentous calm of forces mustering for a storm. We crossed Tekemica Bay and passed between Packsaddle Island and the mainland of Hardy Peninsula; and then, with only rain clouds darkening and ob-

around the school-room I shall not meet with his bright smile, nor remark the beauty of his eyes again. Poor little Peter! He was accustomed to say, 'I want to be like Jesus!'

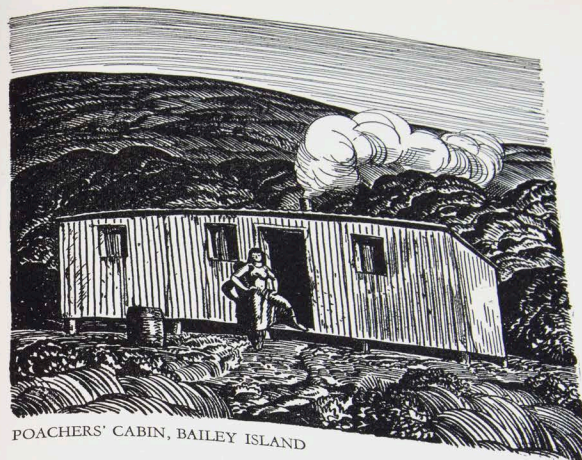
It happened that the *Alton Gardner* was carrying back to their home on Navarin two little fellow Indians of Peter. Now it was not the tradition of those savage people to respect property—they merely loved it. The two lads saw aboard the cutter many little things they liked, and they had opportunity on the long voyage from the Falklands to attach a few of these. They did. The articles were missed, the boys were searched, the lost was found. The captain was a stern and upright man, and he reproved the boys accordingly and called them names, no doubt, that little Christians early learned the horrid and disgraceful import of.

It was Sunday when the *Alton Gardner* anchored at Woollya, and, while the boys—hotly resentful of the captain's anger—

mingled with their relatives on shore, the captain, accompanied by his entire crew—excepting the cook, who was in the galley busied with plum-duff—proceeded to one of the native wigwags, where he began the solemnization of divine service.

The Yahgans were unusually interested this Sunday morning; they gathered about the Christians in a great crowd. And when the benediction had been said they took up sticks and stones and killed the white men one and all.

The cook, hearing the uproar and discovering its cause, jumped overboard and swam ashore. He fled into the forest and eventually, in miserable plight, reached the south coast of Navarin, where he fell in with another tribe of natives. There, there being nothing to be gained by killing him, treated him well; and after a lapse of time he was picked up by a ship and returned to his own land.



POACHERS' CABIN, BAILEY ISLAND

