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COMMENT

BY WAY OF PROLOGUE

WHY QUADRANT FOR A NAME?

A variety of associations cluster round the word. It is this quarter of the globe we are particularly interested in. . . . As a quarterly, we divide the year's round into four segments. . . . Or you may think of our magazine as an instrument for measuring the altitude—of ideas—or perhaps of brows. . . . Alternatively, there is the quadrant on the steering column of vintage cars, along which the throttle and the spark are adjusted. . . . Or, taking the idea of squareness which is lodged in the word, it is also a sign that we stand squarely by certain principles and values. . . . Or if you are unkind you can suggest that we are attempting the hopeless task of squaring the circle, namely, trying to run an intelligent magazine in Australia on a commercial basis without loss. We think we can do it, though.

The principles and values referred to above are not arbitrarily chosen but the very life and impulse of our venture. They are:

To be Australian in our orientation, quite naturally, because we are interested in this country, its people, its problems, its cultural life, its liberties, and its safety;

To publish work of interest and merit on any topic without regard to the affiliations or repute of the author, the sole requirement being that the material should be worth reading;

To be guided, when an editorial attitude is called for with regard to questions of civil liberty or public standards, by the principles underlying the parliamentary institutions of this country and the Common Law—than which we know no better school of freedom and civility and prudence, in the old high sense of those words; for to be a good Australian is to be a local variety of that 'free and lawful man', the traditional ideal of Western civilization.

Our aims and hopes may perhaps be further illuminated by making clear some of the things we do *not* intend to do or be:

We shall never, we hope, confuse an Australian regionalism and proper pride with the ugly nineteenth-century vice of cultural nationalism, which imposes 'Australianity' as an anti-intellectual criterion, limiting the scope of the mind and serving only as a means of giving a false value to mediocrity. We shall try to be up-to-date, lively, and receptive, without the superficial cultivation of mere *chic*, intellectual or aesthetic; and without feeling obliged to grovel before a decayed *avant-garde* mentality which is actually living in the past.

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We shall try to be liberal and progressive, without falling into the delusion that to be liberal and progressive means to rehearse with childish obstinacy the rituals of a sentimental and neurotic leftism. We shall remain suspicious of the idea that the totalitarian Beast from the Abyss is really a big woolly bear which the little men who have had a busy day in this country can safely cuddle as they sink into the dreamland of Peaceful Co-existence.

In spite of all that can be said against our age, what a moment it is to be alive in! What an epoch for a magazine to emerge in!

In November 1955, two scientists at Berkeley synthesized from inert chemical compounds a virus—a substance classed as living matter. For some time past we have had self-adjusting machines conducting complex operations which were previously possible, if at all, only through the electrical system of the human brain. Automation and nuclear power are launching us into a second industrial revolution whose consequences are incalculable.

At the same time this is the first age in which all men exist in a single inter-communicating world. In our language there now exist accurate expositions of the religions, philosophies and social systems of civilized and uncivilized communities which even in the last century were the subject of crude misunderstandings and fragmentary knowledge. And beyond all these different cultures we glimpse the problem of a truly universal free intellectual order in which all can participate.

Even our difficulties and dangers are an invigorating challenge if we do not lose our nerve. Every menace and risk is at the same time a privilege, and an opportunity—so long as we live, as Ortega y Gasset put it, 'at the height of our time', and not in a careless or resentful mediocrity.

There is a thoroughgoing crisis in social relations. The very notion of authority has been treated with the acids of modern criticism. In the name of liberty and justice unheard-of demands are being made on society, and made as if they were a matter of course. Sexual relations, marriage, and the family have become a field for revolutionary demands and fantasies. The idea of happiness has been rendered largely unintelligible; and personal life is being invaded more and more with anxiety, mental illness, psychosomatic disorders, and moral delirium.

Economic development in this country is poised on critical issues. How is rural development to be undertaken, and with what relation to urban development? Can we keep abreast of technological innovations so as to develop strength even while remaining a small nation? Can we overcome the tendency to huge urban agglomerations and decentralize our economy?

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In internal politics, mass democracy is undergoing a rapid inner evolution. The parliamentary process has lost some of its former significance as the party system has developed, and as systematic administrative controls and planning are demanded. In labour democracy fissures have opened up which make it unlikely that the old combination of diverse radicals, reformers, utopians, Christians, secularists, crooks, opportunists and totalitarians can be restored. Faith in Democratic Socialism has died almost overnight, leaving a word which is used only for sentimental rhetoric or as a false front in factional manoeuvres. Meanwhile, in external politics, the ending of colonialism has brought about the fragmentation of the free world and the *reductio ad absurdum* of nationalism.

In the arts, the modernism which for several decades seemed to be leading us out of the slums of dingy naturalism and decayed romanticism seems almost bankrupt: we see that after all it was mostly a last writhing, under various disguises, of the naturalistic and romantic traditions it pretended to attack.

In many minds there is a profound spiritual crisis. The well-lit hygienic structure of secularist and hedonist enlightenment has been secretly undermined by ungrateful inmates, who are escaping, some towards the materialist religion of Communism, others towards various eastern-tinted religiosities, mysticities and gnostic lures, others towards a resurgent Christianity.

All this goes on under the threat, not only of obliteration by nuclear warfare, but also of the advance to world domination of Communism. Suddenly this one huge glaring visage, this enormous mask made of blood and lies, starts up above the horizon and dominates the landscape, a figure of judgment speaking to each person in a different tone or tongue, but with the same question: And what do you think about *me*? Then indeed we hear the ghosts of rhetorical humanisms, academic positivisms, and progressive illuminisms (whose frightening heir and fulfilment Communism is) squeak and gibber in the streets, imploring us to maintain the most rigorous neutrality as between the 'warring fanaticisms' of right and wrong, truth and falsity, liberty and slavery, honour and dishonour, resistance and submission. But events whirl these ghosts resistlessly around and away, like dead leaves in the gale.

Truly an exhilarating time!—on condition that we have relevant principles worth living and dying for, and are not unnerved by the lightnings and thunders, the whispers and temptations, the beatings and brainwashings . . . or by the rustle of dead leaves. . . .

JAMES COOK, SEAMAN

Alan Villiers

IN AUSTRALIA, we look upon Captain James Cook, R.N., F.R.S., as a remarkable man, not only as the British seaman who put Australia finally on the world map where the island continent should be. But I wonder whether we really appreciate just how remarkable a man he was. He virtually established the modern science of hydrography. After he had sailed the Pacific, nothing remained but to fill in knowledge in odd corners: yet scores of other 'discoverers' had sailed those seas before Cook ever had the chance to think of going there. He kept sickness in check at sea over long voyages in ill-found and ill-equipped ships (by modern standards) in a way that had never been achieved before, and has not been maintained always since. His is one of the few real success stories, one of the all-too-few cases where the right man turned up at the right time, was chosen, and being chosen, was given the chance really to show what he could do.

Yet, at the time of his appointment to command the great expedition which led to his unrolling the map of Australia, he was not even a commissioned naval officer. Outside the Navy and the port of Whitby, he was not known at all. Inside the Navy he was well known only to a few surveyor-specialists and a handful of senior officers who knew an outstanding sailing master when they saw one, and had had the good fortune to employ him. His only command, in the Navy, had been a small schooner. His entire sea career had hitherto been spent in two restricted spheres—the North Sea in Whitby colliers, and the North Atlantic station in the Royal Navy. He was known as a first-rate seaman, but so were a thousand other sailing masters. What specialist knowledge he had gained—such as in surveying—he had given himself, for he was a man of little education and no advantages other than those of his own merit.

James Cook, indeed, had gone to sea curiously late in life, at a time when it was customary for seafarers to follow that calling from childhood. He was at least seventeen, and perhaps eighteen years old, when he was bound apprentice to the Walker ships of Whitby. This was in 1746. What could have induced him to remain for over a year in the employment of a petty storekeeper in the bleak little hole of Staithes it is difficult to say, unless it was the wishes of his parents. His father had done his best to provide the lad with some education, and if he was opposed to

the idea of so able a youth going to sea, there was reason for the opposition. In those days and for a century afterwards, drowning was accepted as the common end of a seaman's life. The Merchant Service and the Navy alike offered an early death from either disease or drowning, and it was unusual for a poor boy to find much advancement in either profession.

At Staithes young Cook knew direct contact with the sea, for the winter sprays break over the roadway by the Cod and Lobster public house, in front of the Sanderson store, and the harbour is open to the north-east. It is a small place, a sort of hole in the Yorkshire coast at the seaward end of a valley, hemmed in by heavy cliffs. Easterly and north-easterly weather, common in the winter, bring an awful sea breaking on those cliffs and rushing right into the harbour. At such times the local fishermen were in the habit of standing-by, ready to launch their cibles to go to the aid of sailing vessels in distress, and Cook must many a time have joined one of the weather-beaten groups watching the progress of hardpressed ships in the North Sea so close outside, watching to see if they cleared the headlands and were not dashed ashore. The coast was a wild one, and in the days of small sailing ships, there were many casualties. After a year or so in such a place, a grocer's assistant who wanted to change the shop for the ships would know what he was doing.

If he had deliberately set out to fit himself for a career as an explorer whose function it would be to sail small square-rigged ships to the farthest ends of the earth—as of course he could not—then he could have chosen no better apprenticeship than the hard North Sea trade. Entering in that trade, it is doubtful whether he could have found better owners than the Walkers of Whitby. The Walkers were Quakers who took an interest in their seamen, especially in their apprentices. They kept their ships up well. They had their own rigging loft, sail loft, and spar yard. Like most other shipowners of the times, they did their own maintenance and their own major repairs, and their apprentice seamen were the labour force in these employments. Their coasting ships were laid up in the winter months and given a major refit. An apprentice in such a trade learned his work thoroughly, if he took any interest in it at all. If he took no interest, he would soon find himself seeking work elsewhere.

The Walker ships were small square-rigged ships, brigs and barks. The barks were square-rigged on all three masts but, being small ships, they carried no topgallant mast on the mizzen. A big, deep square topsail was set on a tall topmast, and they could set below it either a spanker or a crossjack, or both.

JAMES COOK, SEAMAN

In either brig or bark the life was one of almost incredible severity. The amount of physical hardship which was accepted then as a commonplace necessity in the seafaring life, is now almost unbelievable. Although most of the Walker vessels were in the coastal coal trade, the accomplishment of each voyage was a considerable achievement. Ships loaded the maximum that could possibly be stowed aboard them and, all too often, kept the seas long after their useful careers should properly have been ended. They were manned with minimum crews who worked at least a twelve-hour day under conditions of great hardship. The ships leaked and frequently opened their seams and even their decks, and every severe onshore gale strewed the east coast of England with their broken hulls. Living quarters were wet, ill-ventilated, and without head-room. Food was coarse, and often inadequate. Conditions ashore were also harsh, and the seaman did not regard himself as especially ill-treated. He took an intense pride in his calling and, in the coastal trade, there were committees of his fellows who passed judgment on his competence. These seamen's 'boards' could be more ruthless than any present-day Ministry of Transport examiner. The active seafarer under sail was well aware of the importance of a thorough knowledge of his profession, both in himself and in his shipmates.

Cook's practical training was comprehensive and thorough. It is typical of the man that, at that stage, he did not seek service in long-voyage ships. He did not sail in any such ships during his time in the Merchant Service. It seems almost as if he realized that his North Sea training was the best there was. In some ways, deepsea ships offered an easier life, for, once away from the land, they usually enjoyed long periods of good weather. There was no assurance of *any* good weather in the North Sea coastal trade, and though the ships did lay-up over the winter months, it was a short lay-up, forced on them by the need for periodic refits even more than by the bad weather. A small wooden ship whose motive power consisted of a number of sails supported from wooden masts and yards, the whole held aloft and controlled by a complicated and exceedingly expendable array of cordage, required a deal of upkeep both aloft and below.

An apprentice then was essentially a crew member: there was none of the 'brassbounder' atmosphere with the alleged apprentices either kept to the dirty work, or the time-keeping, and a seaman who served in the small crews of such ships had to be supremely competent. He was master of the three ancient aspects of his calling—to hand, reef, and steer. His duties included

a share in the sailing of the ship, the actual 'handing' of her canvas and cordage as necessary for the progress and the safety of the vessel, and also steering both by the wind and by the compass, by night and by day, in fair weather and in foul; using the leadline, heaving the logline, keeping his turn at the lookout, keeping his quarters clean, assisting in port with the berthing of the vessel, her stowage, and the working of her cargo—or ballast—in and out; warping or kedging the ship up and down rivers, and working her in tidal waters and in estuaries; and being at all times ready, fit and competent to cope immediately with any accident that might happen. He had to acquire the instinct to do the right thing at the right time; he was a member of a small band of brothers whose livelihood and very hope of survival lay in the complete ability of them all to work as an effective team, and as competent and level-headed individuals. No wonder the seamen's committees insisted on rigorous standards of professional ability!

An apprentice then in the short sea trades was an apprentice to the ancient sailing art, the calling of the seaman. He was not necessarily an embryo officer. Advancement to positions of authority was by selection on the basis of character and personal competence, as shown consistently in the ship at sea. It could not, in the Merchant Service of those days, be assured by the mere acquisition of a certificate granted after examination ashore and approval by bureaucratic regulations. A seaman became an able seaman by gaining the acceptance of his fellows: he rose to command them by force of character and the proven qualities of leadership as shown at sea. There were no certificates of competency. All that was to come.

Cook had to wait nine years before he was offered a command. After his apprenticeship had been served, and served well, he had to spend a further two years as able seaman in the *Three Brothers* and the *Maria* before being selected as mate. Cook went to sea in 1746. He sailed in the *Freelove*, *Three Brothers*, *Maria* and the *Friendship*, all small vessels. In 1755 he was offered command of the *Friendship*, and it is a tribute to his qualities as a seaman and as a natural leader, that his advancement should have been so rapid. He was quite without influence or money. Family influence could be important, in those days, in procuring selection as shipmaster. A shipmaster in the Merchant Service was often also the business manager of his ship at ports other than her home port. He had to be a man of known integrity, and some sort of financial interest in his command was regarded as an asset.

One other thing James Cook learned in abundant measure from his nine years in the North Sea trade. He learned not to be afraid of the land. A mariner trained in deepsea ships might easily acquire a dread of working ship near the land. It was the land which caused the loss of most sailing ships, not the accidents of the sea. Being driven on a lee shore, getting on a sandbank, or rocks, or shoals—these were the ever-present dangers of coastwise sailing. In the Whitby ships, these risks had to be taken. Every voyage, every passage they made, had to be made in the face of the constant dangers of the North Sea banks, the difficult and treacherous approaches to the Thames, the appalling ability of the grey North Sea to rise in anger and do a devilish best to drive ships upon the English coast.

James Cook knew the risks very well, and he knew how to cope with them—by the expert and continuous maintenance of his vessel, by the exercise at *all* times of good judgment, iron resolution, and expert seamanship. Beating down inside the banks deeply laden with Northumbrian coals, gaining a discharging berth before a rival in the crowded Thames—by the use of subterfuges such as the muffled windlass when the anchor was raised, tiding in by night, above all by fearless seamanship which knew how to take risks and when not to take them, to get the last possible inch of advance from a square-rigged ship while the tide served—these were the stuff of the sailing-ship sailor, brought up upon the wild North Sea. In a well-found ship, no combination of dangers could find him unprepared, or unwilling and unable to fight back with all the resources that he had. It was the most splendid training for seamen that could have been devised.

In all this, practical astronomical navigation could have no place, and it is probable that Cook had no practice in that art until he chose to leave the Merchant Service to join the R.N. He was a seaman first, and a navigator and a surveyor afterwards. A shipmaster in the North Sea trade had little occasion to fix the position of his ship by means other than those traditionally used by short-voyage seamen—his eye and his personal knowledge, supplemented by the leadline.

When in 1755 the Walkers of Whitby offered Cook command of one of their larger ships, it was a splendid offer. Command of a Whitby ship was by no means a dead-end. The way was wide open for a competent man, possessed of integrity and drive, to rise to part-ownership and thence to ownership and wealth. Cook had the qualities and could have so risen. He was doubtless well aware of these things, for there is evidence that the Walkers

trusted him and advised him, to the best of their ability. In Whitby, even two centuries after Cook had sailed out of the Yorkshire port, there is still a local tradition of the tall studious mariner who had been a favourite with his owners, encouraged to increase his knowledge, and marked for early advancement.

Exactly why the young man, on the threshold of a prosperous and respected career, chose to turn his back upon the whole thing has been argued over for years. At a time when most men had either to be pressed into it or born into it, Cook chose to join the Royal Navy, of his own free will. With a Merchant Service command, he was himself free from the molestations of the press-gang. He could not join the Navy, desperate as it was for men, for petty officers and for officers, as anything other than able seaman, and it must have been hard for a man, accustomed to the comparative freedom of a merchant ship and the responsibility of an authoritative position abaft the mast, to accept life as a foremast hand on the crowded, dirty, and disease-ridden mess-decks of a man-o'-war. But Cook knew what he was doing. It seems unlikely that he would have taken such a step without good advice. In 1755, the Royal Navy was going through one of its many periods of hasty build-up. The Seven Years War was about to begin, and the Navy had to have men. Among the riff-raff, the drunken, the debauched and the hopelessly incompetent brought in by the press-gang, a seaman such as Cook stood out like the Wolf Rock lighthouse. Head and shoulders physically above his fellow recruits, he was far above them mentally too. His advancement in the Navy was rapid. Within a month he was appointed Master's Mate of the sixty-gun *Eagle*.

By joining the Navy, Cook showed himself a great adventurer in the true sense of that word. Whether or not he felt assured of advancement, he had first to accept a degree of unnecessary hardship which must have been at least irksome to a merchant seaman. The hardships he had previously known—and they were many—had one redeeming quality. They were regarded as strictly necessary. It must have been obvious to the clear-headed Cook that much of the dirt, disease, and poor discipline on the mess-deck of the King's ships could be avoided.

Cook did not remain a Master's Mate for long. A Master, in the days of the sailing navy, was a senior and highly experienced seaman who had charge of the practical working of the ship and the care of her spars and rigging. This was an important responsibility, and he had mates to assist him. A ship of war had to be an effective fighting machine, but she had to be an efficient sailing ship first. It was the function of the Master and his mates

to keep her so, and Cook must have been in his element. It is not surprising that he was marked for early advancement. It was a piece of gratuitous good fortune that brought Captain Hugh Palliser—afterwards Admiral Sir Hugh Palliser—to command the *Eagle* while Cook was there. It was deserved good fortune. Palliser realized the exceptional qualities of his petty officer (and showed his own by his perception). Cook was promoted to Master. The direct cause of his promotion was a piece of salvage and expert seamanship in towing a captured French East India-man to port. Cook received his warrant as Master of the *Solebay* in June 1757, within two years of enlisting in the Navy.

The Master's position was important and his career assured, but it was not a commissioned appointment and, for any lesser man, could have been a dead-end. It was a fact well appreciated in the Navy that merchant seamen made good master's mates and masters, but, very often, that was as far as they got. But Mr Cook, Master of H.M.S. *Pembroke*, 60-guns, was soon distinguishing himself by surveying the approaches to Quebec, in order that Admiral Saunders might safely bring the big ships up the St Lawrence to a position within striking distance of the town. The French had removed the marks, by which their ships had been able to make the difficult ascent of the river. It was Cook's job to make such a survey, and to master the pilotage so thoroughly, that a fleet of large ships could safely be brought to the assault landing. It was a responsible assignment which he carried out with splendid efficiency. Once again, he came to the favourable attention of his senior officers and soon afterwards, Cook was Master of the flagship on the station. The *Northumberland* was much employed in the waters of the Gulf of St Lawrence, and Cook lost no opportunity of making further surveys of harbours, roadsteads, and bays in the area. In the bad winter weather the *Northumberland* usually secured at Halifax. Here Cook spent all the time he could in improving his knowledge of higher mathematics and the science of astronomical navigation as it was then understood.

Before long, he was making valuable surveys of the coast of Newfoundland, at first from the flagship and later, with a special appointment as King's Surveyor, in command of a little surveying schooner called the *Granville*. An accurate and thorough survey of the coast of Newfoundland had long been necessary, for the place abounded with navigational dangers. The weather was often bad, and the conditions for a small schooner were arduous. Properly to carry out his duties, Cook had to take serious risks: once again the experience he was gaining was invaluable and

well-nigh unique. The thorough seaman soon became the competent surveyor, and was rapidly developing into the accomplished navigator. While engaged on his Newfoundland surveys, an eclipse of the sun gave him the opportunity of making a series of special observations which became the basis for a paper to the Royal Society, where his efforts were properly commended. While he commanded the schooner *Granville* on this Newfoundland survey, Cook usually sailed home in the winters—when surveying was impossible—to do the paper-work, which was extensive. The charts he made then from his surveys are still the basis of those currently used for that area.

The years passed. Cook reached the age of forty, still a warrant officer, still surveying, still steadily increasing not only the seaman's knowledge of a dangerous coast but his own knowledge, abilities, and fitness as a seaman, a leader, a surveyor and a navigator. James Cook was already a remarkable man.

In the meantime, Commodore Byron had flitted across the Pacific in the swift frigate *Dolphin* and had achieved very little. Wallis had followed him, in the same ship and, apart from the discovery of Tahiti, had achieved little more. The redoubtable Carteret had been harassed almost to death by the appalling unsuitability of the sloop which had grudgingly been allotted to him. But at last the Admiralty had decided to send a real expedition to the vast South Seas. The occasion was ostensibly the Royal Society's expedition to observe the transit of the planet Venus, which could best be done from an island in the South Seas such as Wallis's newly-discovered Tahiti. For years Dalrymple and others had been pressing their theory of the existence of a great southern continent, *Terra Australis*, ranging from New Guinea or New Zealand towards Tierra del Fuego or the Diego Ramirez rocks by Cape Horn. If there were such a continent, it behoved the dominant power in the Indian Ocean at least to know about it. The expedition to observe the transit of Venus gave an admirable opportunity for a good seaman to sail about the great South Pacific Ocean and to examine thoroughly the theory of the southern continent. Byron and the rest—and Magellan and the Hollanders before them—had all struggled northwards from the regions of Cape Horn as quickly as they could, got their ships into the belt of the S.E. trade wind where westing was easily made, and stayed there. All except Carteret had made this sort of voyage, and Carteret's good efforts had been brought to very little by his decrepit ship, his abandonment by Wallis in the Straits of Magellan, and the disease among his crew.

JAMES COOK, SEAMAN

It was left to a plain Yorkshire seaman, a man trained in the grim collier brigs of the cold North Sea, a man who had risen from the lowest obscurity, at last to sail the Pacific Ocean, and make known what was really there, and what was not. The choice of James Cook (promoted hastily to the rank of Lieutenant, R.N.) to command H.M. Bark *Endeavour*—or H.M. Ship *Endeavour* Bark—seems now an obvious one. It was probably Palliser who was influential in the choice. There could have been no better, and Lieutenant Cook proceeded at once to show how long-distance exploratory voyages really should be conducted.

Cook took command of the *Endeavour*—a Whitby ship, and therefore of a type thoroughly familiar to him—at Deptford in May 1768. He sailed from Plymouth on 26 August, in a ship with a waterline length of 100 feet, with 94 persons aboard—some of them wished on him and useless to the vessel—bound round Cape Horn or through the Straits of Magellan as he might choose, towards Tahiti in the first instance, and also to clear up the mystery of *Terra Australis*, once for all. It was a great adventure; but it was such an enterprise as would have appalled the ordinary warrant officer, and most commissioned officers as well. It was a voyage that only a man who combined the qualities of seaman-navigator and leader to the degree of genius could hope to undertake and bring to a full measure of success. It was, above all, a voyage for a consummate seaman.

Look at what Cook did, from a seaman's point of view, that great first voyage. He took a small Whitby ship—his choice of such a ship shows what a seaman he was—through the Atlantic, to the west'ard round the Horn, and on into the South Pacific, making much of his westing not in the pleasant tropic zone, where the wind was fair and the weather good, but in the forties where the wind was against him and the weather generally anything but good. His instructions enjoined him to search for the southern continent, but it was not long before the signs of the sea brought home to him that wherever else such a continent might be—if anywhere—it was not in the Roaring Forties of the Pacific Ocean. Nonetheless he persisted, and his persistence led to clearing up the mysteries of New Zealand (which Tasman, after a hasty look, had thought might be the north-western tip of the continent) and discovering the east coast of Australia. Look at his seamanlike rounding of the Horn—a passage which had worried many navigators before him and was notorious in the Navy because of Anson's trials there. Yet down went Cook with his Whitby bark; he slips through the Straits of Le Maire between Staten Island and the Patagonian coast, is completely

unafraid to close with the land when and where he feels like it, sails boldly into half-a-dozen anchorages, and weathers the dreadful Cape in a matter of days.

That westward passage of the Horn was then, and was to remain while the ocean-going sailing ship existed, the most difficult and the most dreaded of all that a square-rigged ship was required to make, anywhere. Its advantage over the Straits of Magellan, for a west-bound ship, was that at least it offered open water. Once through the Straits of Le Maire (though desirable, it was not strictly necessary to go that way) a ship had only to keep clear of the Diego Ramirez rocks and away from the Horn itself, and she would have all the open water she wanted, to fight in—hundreds and hundreds of miles of it. In the Straits of Magellan the passage was often narrow, with foul ground and poor anchorages, and frequent heavy squalls howled down the mountain-sides to harass ships. Cook chose Cape Horn and Cook was right. Cook chose to go through the Straits of le Maire, to steal a march on the westerly gales, and Cook was right. His good seaman's sense, acquired painfully from the North Sea apprenticeship and sharpened in many a Newfoundland fog and gale, indicated to him that the best way to weather Cape Horn was to sail down, on the Atlantic side, as close in to the Patagonian coast as he safely could. His familiarity with pilotage enabled him to do this without fear; and that innate ability to take every possible advantage of every chance to advance, which was the collier-man's sixth sense, was of great service. Many men were to round the Horn to the west'ard after Cook. None was to discover a better way.

The feat was typical of the man. His subsequent voyage is history. His following two great voyages are equally immortal. After Cook, it remained merely to follow up, to develop and exploit. He was the first seaman with courage enough boldly to approach the unknown eastern coast of New Holland from the Pacific side, and to navigate the length of the Coral Sea. He found the Great Barrier Reef, and defeated that too. He found a way through Torres Strait, and sailed boldly through. Where others had seen odd beaches of Western Australia as wretched pieces of sand, Cook came upon the real Australia.

He succeeded where others had failed because, first and foremost, he was a truly great seaman and humanitarian, and he had in abundance those great North Country qualities of character, courage, and integrity.

Alan Villiers