

convenient for you to enter the Pacific either by the Balintang Channel or closer round the north end of Luzon Island.

You are supplied with a set of Admiralty charts of the Pacific on which I have had clearly marked all the doubtful positions which require to be rectified; their name is legion, and I cannot hope under the most favourable circumstances that you will be able to accomplish much in this direction during the three months at your disposal. The weather, moreover, will be against you, for during January and February you must expect much rain at New Ireland, New Britain, and the Solomon Islands. Under these circumstances, it must be left to your own judgment and experience on the spot how far you will penetrate to the eastward, or what precise direction you will take—all is new ground.

If circumstances permit, I should wish you to visit the Pelew Islands, in the neighbourhood of which there are several doubtful dangers; thence you might endeavour to push eastward and make a short visit to New Britain and New Ireland. Our knowledge of these remarkable islands is very limited, but you are supplied with all the works of D'Entrecasteaux and D'Urville both on these and on the north coast of New Guinea, which, though imperfect, cannot fail to be of great assistance to you. Belcher also visited New Ireland in July 1840, when the rain was incessant, but some partial surveys were made, especially of Port Carteret and the anchorages in its neighbourhood; these will be of assistance to you. If you visit the Solomon Islands, it will be desirable if possible to settle the position of the small isles and reefs which lie about one hundred miles to the southward of this group. Bellona and Rennel Islands, and especially Pandora and Indispensable Reefs, which are well known to exist, although their positions and extent are very inaccurately defined. Also Neptune Reef, which was erased from the chart by Captain Denham, but on which a vessel has since been wrecked. Many partial surveys of the Solomon Isles by the missionary vessels and from other sources are supplied to you, but they must be regarded as mere sketches, which may assist you, but in which no great confidence can be placed. Whether you get farther eastward into the Pacific must depend on circumstances, but it will be desirable that you should reach Japan by the middle of March 1875.

You will have previously communicated with the admiral commanding on the China station in order to ensure that, if necessary, provisions and stores should be sent to Nagasaki or Yokohama, whichever may be most convenient, and after refreshing your crew you may profitably pass two months in the investigation of the neighbouring seas, and, especially, in regard to the great Japan current.

No hydrographical operations will be necessary on the coast of Japan. For some years, as you are aware, the survey of these coasts has been systematically pursued by the Admiralty, and although the surveying vessel has for the present been withdrawn, this work will doubtless be resumed at an early period. Moreover, your stay should obviously be directed to the main objects of the expedition.

On leaving Japan you should carry a line of deep soundings across that section of the ocean between it and the coast of America, although the strong winds which may be looked for in these latitudes will probably necessitate considerable intervals between your observations, and you should reach Vancouver's Island, if possible, during the months of June or July. Esquimalt will be your port for refit and obtaining supplies before setting out on the last stage of your voyage, which will be the long sea passage to Valparaiso previous to your return to England.

The depth of this eastern section of the Pacific will probably be found very considerable, but physically it is a region of great interest, and every effort should be made for a full investigation of it. You would probably sight no land until you reached Easter Island and Sala-y-Gomez, which should both be examined. You would then proceed on to Valparaiso, which port you would leave about November, and return to the Atlantic by the Straits of Magellan. Should you pass through the channels by the Gulf of Penas, you will observe by the notes on the charts that there are certain portions of those channels which are out of adjustment, and a few days devoted to their rectification would be well spent.

You would be at liberty to call at the Falkland Islands, Rio de Janeiro, and Ascension, and to complete any work in the Atlantic which circumstances may have prevented on your outward voyage, and your return to England might be looked for in the spring of 1876.

During your absence you will communicate to this department from time to time all hydrographical and other information which you may obtain, and you will make timely demands for all surveying stores, and