

*leucogaster*) is a kind of gannet. The full-grown birds are white on the belly, with a black head and throat; the black ending on the neck, where it joins the white in a straight conspicuous line. The back is dark. The younger birds are brown all over. Some few of both birds soon came off to have a look at the ship.

We moved gradually up to the islands, sounding as we went the Captain and Lieutenant Tizard mounted into the foretop, and steered the vessel from thence, looking out for rocks. The water is deep right up to the rocks, and a hawser was sent on shore in a boat, and made fast round a projecting lump of rock, and the ship was moored by means of it in about 100 fathoms of water, although not more than 100 yards distant from shore. Such an arrangement is only possible under the peculiar circumstances which occur here. The wind and current are constantly in the same direction, and keep a ship fastened to the rock always as far off from it as the rope will allow.

I never properly realized the strength of an oceanic current until I saw the equatorial current running past St. Paul's Rocks. Ordinarily at sea the current of course does not make itself visible in any way; one merely has its existence brought to one's notice by finding at mid-day, when the position of the ship is made known, that the ship is 20 miles or so nearer or farther off from port than dead reckoning had led one to suppose she would be, and one is correspondingly elated or depressed. But St. Paul's Rocks is a small fixed point in the midst of a great ocean current, which is to be seen rushing past the rocks like a mill-race, and a ship's boat is seen to be baffled in its attempts to pull against the stream.

Between the two extremities of the main body of rocks is a bay, enclosed by a somewhat semicircular arrangement of the rock masses. We landed on the eastward side of this bay. Landing from a boat is a little difficult. There is a perpetual swell running in the bay, although it is on the sheltered side of the rocks, and one has to jump as the boat rises, and cling to the rocks as best one may.

I landed in the first boat. The rock was covered with noddies, and their nests, some containing eggs, whitish in colour, with red spots at the larger end, and others with young in them, little round balls of black down. The air was full of noddies and boobies, circling about, and screaming in disgust at the invasion of their home.

The noddies' nests are made of a green seaweed (*Caulerpa clavifera*) which grows on the bottom in the bay and around the rocks, and which getting loosened by the surf, floats, and is picked up by the birds on the surface. The weed is