Many a time, Swan recorded the weather three times a day, at seven each morning, two in the afternoon, nine at night; notes down when salmonberry popped into spring bloom, when autumn's geese began to come.

Unfortunately entirely misdiagnosed itself—and the coastal days that showed as doubloon-bright as the most exhilarating anywhere; and account of letters written and received, and books borrowed and lent, and of his exceedingly ramshackle finances.

His jottings overflow the day-by-day pages onto the inside covers of the diaries: mailing addresses (including Matilda's and those of Swan's two brothers in the East), Indian words and their definitions, sketches. On one back page,

sketch of a little Indian girl on the wharf at Seattle, prettily prone, the child stomach down on the planks as she holds a tiny fishing pole to the water and directs a level stare at the pencilman creating her.

Elsewhere, the unmistakable pyramidal outline of Mount Baker, the outline of a galloping horse and above it in block letters the name SWELL, with five-pointed star, fore and aft; if Swan carried out the design, Swell sailed under the gaudiest canvas in the North Pacific.
to aim past to the southern horizon; logs all ships that sail past his eyes; remarks his days of illness.

dominant peak of the Strait country; how many thousand times Swan saw its white cone. On yet another end-page, the roughed
Terrific as all the expended energy is, page upon page and volume after volume, the simple stubborn dailiness of Swan's achievement seems to me even more dazing. It compares, say, to that of a carpenter whanging an hour's hammerstrokes on the same framework each morning for forty years, or a monk or nun spending the same span in recitation of the breviary. Or to put it more closely, a penman who, a page or so a day, writes out a manuscript the span of five copies of War and Peace, accomplishing in frontier town and Indian village and sometimes no community at all.

Swan's own brevets of identification still are on the diaries—a small paper label on each cover where the title of a book would appear, the year inked there in his slanting hand—and on opening the earliest one, 1859, I found that it advertises itself as Marsh's Metallic Memorandum Book WITH METALLIC PENCIL The writing of which is as permanent as when written with ink.

a claim I could now tell Swan is not nearly true. Luckily his experiment with Marsh's pen stylus ended when Swan ran out of pages in the memo book on the last day of August and switched to a plain tan pocket notebook and an ordinary pencil of blessed black clarity. But it is back in those dimmest of pages, early 1859, that Swan's daily words of his Pacific Northwest life commence: the twenty-ninth of January, when he embarked at San Francisco on board ship Dashaway Capt J M Hill... bound for Pt Townsend, W.T.

When the Dashaway hove into Port Townsend on a morning in mid-February—a few weeks past Swan's forty-first birthday, almost precisely at the midpoint of his life—the diary shows that Swan at once aimed himself
as many directions as there were routes of water spoking out from
the little frontier port. The editor of the San Francisco Evening
Bulletin had agreed to take from him a series of articles about
Washington Territory; what San Francisco didn't take, he found he
could place in one or another of the weekly papers
the port towns of Puget Sound; and there still was that proclaimed
notion of his to examine certain harbors, with a view of ascertaining
the best locality for a whaling station. Whenever a ride could be hitched by schooner, steamboat or canoe, then off Swan would jaunt along the Strait or into the serpentine length of Puget Sound, up amid the San Juan archipelago or across Admiralty Inlet to long-cliffed Whidbey Island. His wake of ink shows him voyaging in and out of Port Townsend, his purported new site of enterprise, eight times in the first six months.

Inside all that motion, however, a pattern is taking shape. Time upon time, Swan's loops of travel happen to stretch westward the same distance, like the whorls of topographic map compressing at an abrupt face of landscape:

March seventeenth: ...came to anchor in Neah Bay and after dinner went ashore to Mr. Webster's house where I passed the night.

June fourth, fifth and sixth, again at Neah Bay.

September fourteenth, Left Port Townsend at 5 a.m. in Swell's canoe...for Neah Bay. Nine days, he stays this time.

October ninth, back at Neah Bay. Length of stay: fifty-five days.

At that time, Neah Bay had its place as the geographical pinpoint on the American map that, say, Alaska's Point Barrow holds today: a final tribal outpost before the north margins of the planet take over entirely. The eye of bay and its namesake village peek out between headlands at the entrance to the Strait of Juan de Fuca. The site nicks into the top—that is, the north-facing shore—
of the coastal prow of rock which was dubbed "Cape Flattery" by Captain James Cook on his 1788 voyage, when a deceptive indent of the shoreline "flattered us with hopes of finding a harbour there."

It says much about the stormy remoteness of Cape Flattery that along its coastline, the luck of even the incomparable Cook was nil. Two and a half explorations around the world by sail, but here not only was Cook misled about a harbor prospect, he missed as well in the gray drifts of weather a chance to discover the twelve-mile-wide entrance to the Strait of Juan de Fuca, and the 1,250-mile shoreline of Puget Sound beyond.

It is safe to say that the inhabitants of Cape Flattery, the few hundred Makah tribal members at Neah Bay and four smaller villages dotted west and south along the peninsula, would have guffawed at seamanship of such low order. Out on their promontory into the Pacific which Swan began to share from them in 1859 and I now try to share from him, the Makahs casually launched away in canoes to hunt creatures ranging in size and threat from sea otters to gray whales. In land terms, that would be spaniels to dinosaurs.

A prodigious sea-going people, these, and small wonder that from here on the Makahs come off Swan's pages like people flinging open a door.

#... The Makahs are fond of music, and many of their songs and chants, when sung in chorus, are melodious... They readily pick up tunes from others, and, as many of the men have made voyages to San Francisco on lumber vessels, they have learned a number of popular tunes... Some have purchased accordions, on which they play very well. I was
astonished, on entering a lodge one day, to hear a party singing

"Oh Susannah" and "Old Folks at Home!" accompanied by an accordion...

The Makahs, in common with all the coast tribes, hold slaves....

In former times, it is said, the slaves were treated very harshly...

and their lives were of no more value than those of dogs. On the death of a chief, his favorite slaves were killed and buried with him...

but latterly, this custom seems to have been abandoned, and their present condition is a mild kind of servitude. The treaty between

N 29, 1861 -

showery—most of the snow that fell last night has melted but the weather feels very cold. This morning some squaws were swimming in the brook at high tide and sporting about as if it was midsummer. I don't think these people are as sensitive to pain as whites. They cut themselves on all occasions without seeming to mind it at all. And go into water at times when a white man would be chilled to death....

At daybreak this morning I was awakened by children singing and on getting up I found it proceeded from twelve girls who were going in a sort of procession with Sustais, who has had her months' turns commence... for the first time. She had a blue blanket over her head and the party went a short distance up the beach where she was washed and then covered with a white blanket and the procession started for home. They came out twice afterward and had two more washes....
...The division of labor between husband and wife, or between
the males and females, is, that the men do all the hunting and fishing,
and cut the firewood. The women dress and cure the fish or game, bring
wood and water, and carry all burdens of whatever nature that require
transportation. They also attend to the household duties of preparing
and cooking food; but the men wash and mend their own clothes, and
in many instances make them....The women also provide a portion of
the food, such as berries and various edible roots, to a limited
extent, cultivate potatoes. The fact that they assist in procuring
food appears to secure for them better treatment by the men, than
is usual among the buffalo-hunting tribes east of the Rocky Mountains.
The husband, however, claims the privilege of correcting the wife, and
some of them receive very severe beatings; but, on the other hand,
they have the privilege of leaving their husbands, which they do for
a slight cause....
They believe that, originally, mankind were animals, and that the present race were formed by a series of transformations.

The Mackah tribe were a hybrid race, half-dog and half-Indian—the progeny of a white dog and the daughter of a great chief or necromancer, who lived on Vancouver Island, nearly opposite Neah Bay. This chief being angry with his daughter, sent her and her seven progeny to Cape Flattery, where a magician turned them into human beings, and the present race of Mackahs are their descendants...

More than legend linked the Makahs and their Vancouver Island cousins, the Nootkas: the tribes shared a brilliant skill—

their seagoing hunting of whales—which sets them apart in the history of this coast.

From what Swan could judge, the Makahs by the late 1850's were not as avid about whale-hunting as they had been in their past. Whether the whales were more numerous, or that the Indians, being now able to procure other food from the whites, have become
indifferent to the pursuit, I cannot say... Yet when Swell in the
autumn of 1859 recited off for Swan the total of whales killed in
the past year, the total came to seven, which seems not so in-
different a tally. Fully practiced or not, the ocean abilities
of the Makahs were such that Swan set down his estimation in the
most impressed terms a Massachusetts man could think of: They are,
in fact, to the Indian population what the inhabitants of Nantucket
are to the people of the Atlantic Coast.

As Swan discerned, when whales went north past Cape Flattery in
their spring migrations, the Makahs would go out to hunt the sea behemoths
with methods and tools they had honed to stiletto keenness.
Their canoes were swift, high-powered blades of cedar which
carried crews of eight. Helmsman, six paddlers, harpooner. This
last was the gladiator, the one who triggered death for the whale:
he stood above the whale with a harpoon eighteen feet long, twice
the length of a modern javelin, made of two pieces of yew scarfed
and lunged it home. The splicing bark, when the whale was struck, this wooden
shaft would detach, leaving imbedded in the flesh the harpoon point
of sharpened copper or iron. To add clutching power, this point
was barbed with spikes of elk or deer horn; they clawed within
the whale's body the way a fishhook snags itself with wicked
angle inside a trout's mouth.

Roped to the harpoon point with a cord of whale sinew was
a sealskin float made by the Makahs by skinning a seal and turning
the pelt furside in, as if pulling a sweater inside out. Then
the apertures of the head, feet and tail are tied up airtight,
Swan explained, and the skin inflated like a bladder. When further harpoons were hurled into the body of the whale, it is not unusual for from thirty to forty of these buoys to be made fast to the whale, which, of course, cannot sink, and is easily despatched by their spears and lances.

Dispatched and towed ashore, the whale begins to become bill of fare. All hands swarm around the carcass with their knives, and in a very short time the blubber is stripped off in blocks about two feet square. The portion of blubber forming a saddle, taken from between the head and dorsal fin, is esteemed the most choice, and is always the property of the person who first strikes the whale.

The saddle is termed u-butsk. It is placed across a pole supported by two stout posts. At each end of the pole are hung the harpoons and lines with which the whale was killed. Next to the blubber at each end are the whale's eyes; eagle's feathers are stuck in a row along the top, a bunch of feathers at each end, and the whole covered with spots and patches of down....The u-butsk remains in a conspicuous part of the lodge until it is considered ripe enough to eat, when a feast is held, and the whole devoured or carried away by the guests...
Swan would, and did, journey almost anywhere with the coastal Indians in their canoes, but I can discover nowhere in his diary pages or other writings that he ever went whale hunting. My guess is that he lost any such appetite early on, the time he was in full a canoe of Makahs when a whale innocently broached beside them in the Strait as they were paddling to Port Townsend. Swan came out of the resulting commotion enormously grateful that no harpooning equipment was aboard and the Indians had to give up their excited notion of pursuing the whale to the end of the earth or to his death, whichever arrived first.

His knowledge of the whale hunts, then, stops at the shoreline, and my questions are unmet. Whether the seabirds shadowed the canoes in gliding flocks as the whalemans stroked out from Cape Flattery into the ocean. Whether there came—I cannot see how else it could have been—an audible silence of held breaths before the first paddler behind the harpooner judged the distance to the whale and cried: Now throw! Whether the crew made a united great cry when the harpoon blade snagged home, a chorus of conquest. And whether a tincture of fear mixed with whatever else they shouted, for success meant this: their canoe lashed behind the harpooned whale: a seagoing cart harnessed to a creature several times the size of a bull elephant and dying angry.
Yet if he did not go see whales stabbed, not a lot else escaped Swan's attention. What a listener he must have been, the rarest kind who aims his ears as if being paid by the word. Whatever the majority of the Makahs thought of their
white newcomer—and just as surely as his constant mentions of
some of them testifies that they were attracted to him in
friendship or something very close to it, there would have been
those who suspected Swan, thought him silly or perhaps even
vaguely dangerous—a great number of the tribal members would talk
with him, allow him to shadow along on the rim of Neah Bay life.
Even now in his words, their personalities breathe hotly; Swell,
with his knack for fact and his easy competence. His brother
Peter, a brawler and restless under the cleft of the white men's
growing power over the natives. The obliging Captain John, something
of a tribal bard, who drew on the first page of this book one of
the skookums who cause the lightning by running out its tongue.

(Swan in turn later sketched Captain John into the front
of a diary—an oval ochre face, low broadlipped mouth, dark
quarter-circle eyebrows of surprising delicacy, amused eyes.
Swan estimated him as without exception the biggest coward in the tribe
and at the same time the biggest braggadocio, but he is shrewd and smart
and accomplishes by finesse...as much as some of the others do by their
physical prowess.)

The exuberant—

Billy Barlow, who took Swan duck hunting and exuberantly wanted
me to shoot everything I saw from a crow to an old woman who was
at work on the prairie. (Oct 26, '59)

Tsowiskay, an inveterate old savage implacable against white men;
on his death a rarely harsh Swan writes that the old fellow is
no loss and his death did not affect the other Indians (except
his own family) any more than if a dog had died. A second Makah
his

Colchote, a war chief who recited skinsnake, this
Makahs tribes as if from a list in hand. And the one of them all I would give most to have stood beside Swan and heard, an ancient woman—one of Colchote's slaves—from Nootka Sound on Vancouver Island, who recounted for Swan the white explorers she had seen arrive from the sea; she said she remembered when Meares brought a lot of Chinamen to Nootka, and built a schooner: 1788, more than seventy years before. And Vancouver, whom she called Macowber: 1792. And she saw the massacre on board Astor's ship, the Tonquin, and spoke of Mr. McKay, the purser, who it was supposed blew the ship up: 1811, the year before Swan was born.

Two sudden and vital friendships emerge here in Swan's notations of these first visits to Neah Bay. The earliest, and the one that would last for decades, was with the single resident of Neah Bay who was not a Makah: the white man Henry Webster, owner of a trading post at the eastern headland of the bay. It is enough to say of him now that Webster was a bleak-faced, obstinate entrepreneur who did not get along with Indians notably well. In these early months of Swan's acquaintanceship with him, an incident occurred in which, after an argument of some sort, five Indians pummeled Webster with rocks, dragged him far along the beach, and threatened to kill him. The battering did not dissuade Webster from staying on at his trading post, or indeed from patiently pulling political strings for a couple of years until he won appointment as the first Indian agent for the new Makah Reservation. Swan had a tendency to lean on chestier men than himself—Russell, Isaac I. Stevens—and Webster amply seems to have been of the type.
He also, Swan noted promptly and gladly, was a man who knew how to fill a table. The old adage that "God sends meat and the devil sends cooks" does not apply to my friend Webster's culinary department. Epicurus himself would have rejoiced over the nice and palatable dishes of fresh codfish tongues, fried; fresh halibut fins, broiled; fresh salmon, baked; together with side dishes of sea eggs, deep sea oysters and brook trout; with puddings made of the luscious salal and other rich berries of the season, winding up with cranberry tarts and pies; the whole the product of the ocean and land in the immediate vicinity of the house.
The other immediate friend, supple and deft as Webster was grannitic, of course was Swell. Swan was able to know the Makah chieftain for about a year and a half before the life was blasted from Swell in the breakers at Crescent Bay. As will be seen, the

Rapidly in the diaries it becomes evident how remarkable a companion Swell proved to be. The pages of Swan's eight weeks at Neah Bay in the autumn of 1859 bustle with the forming friendship: Went to Swell's house and made a sketch of some tamanawas boards...Swell told about their land, that they were not satisfied with the way the treaty was written...Went to Swell's house. He says that the past year there were 30 canoes engaged in the whale fisheries, eight men to each canoe, and they averaged all been out this past year 1000 gals.---gallons of whale oil being the commercial yield of the hunts--to each canoe....Swell says that there are in the Makah tribe 220 men, 300 women, 200 children, 100 slaves...Total 820....Made sketch of Swell....Swell started for Dungeness this morning. Saluted him with the swivel, one gun....Made a carving today of Hahaketoak or the animal that makes the lightning, the thunder-bird. I cut it on a piece of sandstone from the cliff and intend giving it to Swell...

Elsewhere, Swan writes of Swell's intelligence, of his knack for leadership, his prowess as a canoe-ray--I could almost say, reading not very deep between the lines, his alacrity to meet and learn about the white way of life that had come calling at Cape Flattery. They are a pair of mutually interested men, Swan and Swell: At first,
Curiosities to one another, then exchangers of lore, then friends.

Such a growth of regard sometimes will happen when two people are

cupped together in a single happenchance season of closeness—

and discover that they have similar lobes of mind. Swan

was able to know the Makah chieftain for about a year and a half before

the life was blasted from Swell in the breakers at Crescent Bay. By

that late-winter night, the two of them had entered what I would call

a kind of adopted kinship, stronger than differences of blood can

ever be. Winter brothers, I call them.

But what of Swan? What, besides tireless ears, did a

domestic fugitive from Massachusetts have to offer Swell and

the other Makahs? That answer too emerges from these diary

entries, in the remark of a sketch here, a carved gift there;

clearest of all in the laconic and intriguing entry for October

an October day in 1859 that he had gone down to a sandstone cliff

along the Neah Bay beach and carved a swan into the rockface.

Artistry. There was Swan's ticket into the Makah community.

Virtually the only skill-of-hand lacking in Swan was the

ability to clutch a dollar, and in this instance, he could perform

a number of tasks admired by a tribe which loved ornament: draw,

cut stone, invent patterns of paint, produce creatures from

within the covers of his books. What was more, nothing daunted
him: Went to Billy Balch's house and finished the thunderbird. This was the hardest sketch I ever undertook. The lodge was dark and the board covered with smoke and grease and hid by baskets of food. The Indians removed these and washed the board with urine and then the only way I could decipher the painting was to mark round the drawings with red crayon.

The Makahs met him at least halfway in enthusiasm for picturizing, as Swan noted some years later when he wrote at length about his role as a frontier ambassador of art:

I have painted various devices for these Indians and have decorated their ta-ma-na-was masks; and in every instance I was simply required to paint something the Indians had never seen before. One Indian selected from a pictorial newspaper a cut of a Chinese dragon, and another chose a double-headed eagle, from a picture of an Austrian coat-of-arms. Both these I grouped with drawings of crabs, faces of men, and various devices, endeavoring to make the whole look like Indian work; and I was very successful in giving the most entire satisfaction, so much so that they bestowed upon me the name of Cha-tic, intimating that I was as great an artist as the Cha-tic of Clyoquot—a tribe living north of the Makahs, on the coast of Vancouver Island.

No small gifts, these—twin-headed eagles, dragons from beyond the rim of the Pacific, new flaunts of paint—to a people as vivid and showy as the Makahs.
Whale hunters, coastal annalists, slaveholders, art fanciers, the Makahs also were a people who chafed more than a little under the pale regime of frontier bureaucrats who wanted to refashion the tribe's life. In another of Governor Stevens's brusque treaty parleys, the tribe had been told that only the tip of Cape Flattery from Neah Bay westward was now their land; even to so seaward-looking people as the Makahs, this new Reservation seemed scanty firmament.

The first annual installment of treaty goods did nothing to reassure the Makahs about the bargain: a strange assortment of stuff, Swan wrote as he watched it brought ashore, old plantation hoes, scythe blades...sickles, pitchforks, frying pans, Mexican spurs, and a lot of trash as though...some New York hard ware store had been emptied out on the beach at Neah Bay.

Swan termed the whole invoice a fraud on the Indians, who seemed amused that "Washington" should send out such worthless stuff. Another short-failed amused the Makahs not at all. Swan is once more at Neah Bay—his sixth stint there so far—when in the autumn of 1861 the Makahs
decided to exact their price for the death of Swell. What amazes is that it took six entire revengeless months by the territorial officials before the Makahs made their decision to act. But once resolved upon, their vengeance on the Elwha Clallams began to be brewed, savored.

Conference, more conference, the Elwha village sketched on the sand, a plan of attack argued out. As Swan watched and jotted, Neah Bay's largest canoes were worked up into fighting trim; the outsides blackened, interiors daubed a fresh red. Lord Nelson, with his blood-colored battle decks, would have nodded approval. Bow and stern of each canoe were sprigged with green spruce limbs. Onto long poles were lashed faggots of pitchy wood to torch the hapless Elhas' lodges. Guns,
knives, spears, clubs, arrows, bows were hefted judiciously, made ready.

At last, the nineteenth of September of 1861, two hundred and two days after Swell's death, the war party milled together in final encouragement on the Neah Bay beach. Some speeches, a few dances, and they leaped to their decorated canoes and headed east the sixty miles to deliver holocaust to the Elwhas.

Twelve canoes, with eighty warriors, they aimed up the Strait past Swan like a volley of arrows on the water. His account of the scene was published in a territorial newspaper, and so has been polished and extended beyond the usual:

I stood on top of the rocks at Webster's point and saw them pass....Their green headdresses, black faces and brown arms, flashing paddles and beautiful canoes, urged to their utmost speed, presented a scene at once novel and interesting.

I watched until a projecting point hid them from view.

Then the waiting, the war spirit still boiling in the Makah village. Women and children, seated on the tops of their houses, were beating the roofs with sticks and uttering the most piercing shrieks I ever heard. Every day at sunrise and sunset they performed these savage matins and vespers...

On the third day, the canoes flashed back into sight, the crews announcing themselves across the water by exuberant musket shots and songs of victory. The war, however, turned out to
have been considerably less than total. The avenging Makahs landed
on the beach opposite the monument of Swell... and forming into a line
came up the beach in single file with old Cowbetsi, their great war
chief, at their head. A short distance behind him came a savage
holding with both hands a bloody head that had been severed from
the body of an unfortunate Elwha. Two or three Indians followed
this and then another grim trophy, held in the same manner as the
first.

Swan learned that the war party had come upon the unlucky
pair of Elwhas hunting seals at Crescent Bay, the precise site
of Swell's murder. When blood was most ready to answer blood,
the two were simply the targets of opportunity. Having shot and
beheaded them, the Makahs noted the alarms being shrieked by
several Elwha women who had watched the ambush from a distance,
held a rapid council, and decided revenge had been sufficiently
done.

In all of this Swan took greatest interest, so much so that he
made the mistake of spectating too close to the song circle which
had formed around the severed heads on the home sand of Neah Bay.
After they had finished their war song, I heard my name called,
and thinking I was in the way of some of their operations was
about moving off, when I was again summoned in a manner that left
no doubt in my mind but that I was wanted.
The Makahs directed Swan into the circle, beside the heads.

Cowbetsi and an Indian who was to interpret to Swan faced him.

Cowbetsi orated to Swan that they had killed the Elwhas because the territorial Indian agent had not settled the matter of Swell's murder. A line of fact indisputable.

Swan responded gingerly that the Indian agent at the time had been removed from office, consequently he could not come as he had promised, but that he had not lied for I knew that he fully intended to have done just what he had promised to do; that Mr. Simmons was a friend of Swell's and they all knew—a careful veer here—I was a friend also.

"Yes," said Cowbetsi, "we know you are our friend, and we are friends of yours."

Swan noted a degree of relief when I was assured of the fact; but I thought that their friendship was of the kind that might induce them, should I give offence, to stick my head on top of a pole for a memento... He stood silent through a victory dance performed while four Makahs pointed guns at the heads and his general vicinity, and did not give offense. Only the two heads of the Elwhas went up on poles above Neah Bay like queer jack-o-lanterns.

Swan by this time has made his way through three diaries—black, tan, and black again—and been back and forth between Neah Bay and Port Townsend until he seems more a citizen of mid-water than either community. Late in the third year's diary and early in the fourth—the green pocket volume for 1862—a different rhythm begins to come out to me. Swan is at Neah Bay
with the hope now, through Webster's doggedly achieved new position as agent in charge of the Reservation, of staying on for some steady span of time, and a beat of hour comfortably nudging hour, of settledness, sets in.

Wind N.E. fresh, the seventeenth of March. Caught a large male skunk. Finished the tomanawas stone for John. Sundown, schooner Alert off San Juan harbor trying to beat out. A ship and two barks also worked out slowly. A year ago the salmonberry and other shrubs were in blossom. Now no signs of vegetation are visible. Peter came up today and I cut out a coat for him out of some blue flannel he had.

Wind east, cold, the eighteenth of March. Ship William Sturgis from Port Townsend hove to this forenoon and landed Charley Howard, who came down as pilot. Howard brought letters and papers....Caught another skunk...measured 28 inches from nose to tip of his tail.

Wind S.E. very light, the twenty-first of March, foggy with constant rain. Brook very high. Peter came up today and told me that he had made up his mind to buy Totatulum, Colchote's daughter, but he didn't wish other white men or Indians to know it except myself. He wishes to make the girl a present and will bring it up to me and wishes me to give it to Totatulum...I am curious to see the result of this courtship.

Light airs from S.E., the twenty-second of March, with calms and thick fog. Walked down to Neeah to see Totatulum and announce to her Peter's desire. She was somewhat surprised and said she
would think about the matter....Old Sally, the paralyzed woman, died last night, and the Indians buried her by caving in the bank of sand under which she has been lying since they turned her out of the lodges. They are cruel wretches to the poor and sick.

Calm, cloudy and some fog, the twenty-third of March.

Carried Peter's present--calico, needles, thread and two bars of soap--down to Totatetum, who received it very modestly...

Wind s.e. Morning, cloudy and showery, p.m. calm, the twenty-seventh of March. John said that the people in Victoria told him that Queen Victoria had ordered a very hot summer to make up for the cold winter. Caught another skunk--8.

Day and day and day, the diaries say it now: Swan's life is patterning itself to this frontier coast. Tomorrow, then, to the first of the coastal sites where Swan's paths and mine braid together.

To Dungeness.
Day fourteen

Today Mr. Brooks, William Ingraham and myself finished setting the posts for the main building of the school house and when we had all ready, which was at noon, I told Capt. John to call the Indians. Some 25 or 30 came out and when Mr. Brooks was ready I told John, who then gave the word and the sticks were lifted into their places and the whole of the sills for the main building fastened together in about an hour. I told John that when the buildings were done Mr. Webster would give them a treat to pay for the good feelings evinced on this occasion. They have been opposed to having the building erected back of their lodges and I have had a deal of explanation to make to do away with the superstitious prejudices of the old men. But by the exercise of a great deal of patience I have succeeded in inspiring them with a confidence in me, which makes them believe not only what I tell them is true, but what we are doing is for their good.

The noontime came on the twenty-fifth of October, 1862, and the exertions which overtopped the longhouses of the Makahs with the framework of a schoolhouse lofted more good for James G. Swan than he let his pen admit.

Precisely when his mind had become set on securing the job as teacher at Neah Bay, there is no direct evidence. But
hints murmur up from the diary pages. Likely as early as those first visits to Cape Flattery in 1859 Swan divined that Henry Webster would try for the appointment as Indian agent when the Makah Reservation came into being. Even more likely is that Webster, noticing Swan’s knack of getting along with the Indians, advised or asked him to seek a Reservation job.

Those discernments, and Swan’s rummaging curiosity about Makah tribal life, were the pulls to Neah Bay. The push was that Port Townsend was not working out well for Swan, and a fundamental reason seems to have been whiskey.

Once I happened across the lines of a diarying compatriot of Swan’s, a Scot named Melrose who also had arrived to the Pacific Northwest—to Victoria, north on the Canadian coast of the Strait—early in the 1850’s. The alcoholic atmosphere of the frontier enthused Melrose to near rapture. "It would almost take a line of packet ships," he wrote, "running regularly between here and San Francisco to supply this isle with grog, so great a thirst prevails among its inhabitants." He took care to note down how far his companions in thirst overcome their parching—whether each had become one-quarter drunk, one-half drunk, three-quarters drunk, or wholly drunk. Every so often, the Melrose diary presents the forthright notation: "author whole D."
Swan, I hardly need say, was not a man to record himself as whole D or any other degree of it. But that he was tussling with the temptation of the bottle is plain enough in his own diary even so.

Joined the Dashaway Club of Port Townsend—a group who took a pledge of abstinence and whom one unsympathetic editor dubbed a claque of "high-toned drunkards."

Cut my lip with a brush hook this evening in Gerrishes store in a scuffle with Maj. Van Bokkelin—Van Bokkelin one of Swan's closest friends and a pillar of community respect, and a scuffle hardly thinkable of a sober Swan.

Days later, Made a pledge...not to drink any more liquor for two years from this date, the ninth of December, 1860.

That pact may have been as much with Webster, the gatekeeper to future employment at the Makah Reservation, as with himself. Whether or not, most of the next twenty-one months until Webster finally was able to pluck the appointment as Indian agent found Swan odd-jobbing in sobriety at Neah Bay.

(And quartering at the Baadah Point trading post with Webster and whoever else happened to be on hand, in what seems to have been a peppery household:

N 8, 1859

During the evening a skunk came into the kitchen to eat swill. Mr Webster fired at him with his pistol, cutting some of his hair off with the ball. The skunk made his escape but filled the house with his stench.)
Several months more

had to pass before Webster could enroll Swan on the Makah

Reservation payroll as teacher. But then, the first of July

of 1862, at last Swan having secured position and salary, some

immediate dignification sets in. Three and a half years of

jotted doings in pocket notebooks leave off, and the first of

Swan's ledger diaries, the pages long and officious and handwriting scrupulously clear and margined, begins.
What is recorded for the first year and more has nothing to do with education, except that over this course of time Swan's classroom ever so slowly gets carpentered to completion. Instead, Swan spent the time lending a hand in the sundry chores of the other two white men of the Reservation work force, a farmer named Maggs who was to put Neah Bay on an agricultural footing and a blacksmith named Hitchcock. Hitchcock's Cape Flattery career was brief. Early on in Swan's first set of months on the payroll, the Makah named Captain John came down with smallpox. (Swan visiting the patient: John is alone in one corner, surrounded by a mat screen. He tells me that the smallpox will collect in his head and when it leaves him it will come out of the top of his head like a puff of smoke. To prevent it spreading he has a large hole left open in the roof directly over his head, through which the sickness is expected to escape. During rain a board is slipped over the opening, but a pole is left handy to punch it open as soon as John feels the gas escaping from him.) Declaring himself leery of the disease, Hitchcock departed and Swan saw him off in the diary with entire lack of regret: His services will not be missed on this reservation, as he has done little else than shirk work ever since he has been here. He is about the most perfectly nullus--the Chinook jargon word for "worthless"—man I ever met with. Luckily Maggs, and a subsequent hardworking farmer named Jones, was more congenial, and probably more interesting to Swan. They were the earnest bearers of agriculture to damp Cape Flattery.
"Making the earth say beans instead of grass," Thoreau teased himself about his garden at Walden. At Neah Bay, the official notion was that the coastal soil ought to orate potatoes.

...we plow the land twice, harrow it twice, then plow in the potatoes and harrow the whole over again... If what we plant grows as thrifty as the wild raspberry, currant, gooseberry and elder and nettles, cow parsnip and other rubbish grew we shall have a famous crop.

There is a kind of Hibernian woefulness about this idea of remaking such a people of the sea as the Makahs into potato farmers. I think of the "potato Protestants" of Connaught in the Irish famine, forced to barter their religion for the meals of survival. The Makahs, however, were not at the edge of desperation, and so managed to make the best of the potato policy. As democratic eaters, they blithely claimed their spud allotments whenever a harvest was produced. But as uninspired agriculturists, they conspicuously left most of the plowing and other field labor to Maggs, Jones, and Swan.

Through 1862 and most of 1863, then, Swan dabbled beside Maggs or Jones in the potato farming. (Gathers lore from the Makahs. (Captain John is an everready, if problematical, fountain of it: John as a general thing is a great liar, but he is well informed on all historical matters...))

Sketches, Diaries. Does sketchwork. Keeps the diary constant. And otherwise disposes of days until the carpenter hired by Webster would at last complete the schoolhouse. Webster himself was absent from Neah Bay much of the time, now that he had Swan and the others in...
place there, and Swan fairly often found himself standing-in as arbiter among the Indians.

Peter came in this evening and had a long talk with me relative to his conduct since he came back from California. He promised to do better and said he hoped I would be friendly to him. I told him I always had been his best friend and was now, but his actions had displeased me and in particular the fact that he had not paid a debt he owed in Fort Townsend to Sheehan the tinsmith... And sometimes the tumbleweed white population as well. Capt Melvin arrived in the schooner Elisabeth. He had been down on a trading voyage and had been trading whiskey among the Nittinat Indians in the vicinity of Barclay Sound. He had been told that it was my intention to complain of him for selling liquor among...he assured me positively that he had not nor would he sell any liquor near the reserve. He however inadvertently showed me his account book and I saw that he had with his potatoes one barrel 33 gallons whiskey...I advised him to keep away from where I was for so soon as I had proof of his selling whiskey so sure would I complain of him.

Finally, in mid-November of 1863, the potato harvest was in, the schoolhouse stood roofed and windowed, and Swan undertook to bring white education to the Makahs. I painted the alphabet on the blocks Mr Phillips made for me and tomorrow I intend to commence teaching.
Swan as disclosed by the few, damnably few, photos of him.

In a portrait studio at age sixty-five, he sits wearing a small round-crowned hat, brim serenely without crimp, and has trimmed his snug white beard, toyed a chain-and-fob into precise place above the middle button of his vest, and primped a little show of handkerchief at the breast pocket of his jacket. His right hand, holding wire-rim reading glasses, rests amid books and sheafed paper atop a tablecloth so Victorianly brocaded that it looks as if it would stand in place without the table beneath it. Just slightly, he faces to the left of the camera, the photographer's experience evidently having been that dignity is an oblique matter. Angled as he is, a white wedge of collar stands out sharply between his high-cut vest and his left jaw-line. This stiff bright fence of fabric at his neck and the dark orb of hat exactly flat across his head make the portrayed figure startlingly like a priest, probably come in to pose while far home on leave from some missionary billet or another.

Five years later in a crowd scene at Port Townsend, his beard is fuller, and he sports a derby with the brim making a dapper little swoop to his brow. Here he looks like a highly slighter...elfin; somehow not quite of the same world as the foursquare townfolk all around him.

Another shot, when I judge him to be perhaps fifty. Hatless this time, and his hairline arcing fairly far back. A comb has done careful work, and scissors have tidied around ears and back of neck. White, or more likely gray, is wisping into
the beard only at either side of his chin. According to what one writer of regional history has remarked, the dark cheek portions of beard and Swan's hair were brown, but I have no word yet from any contemporary of his on that. One surprise: the corners of his eyes are touched with only a few brief lines. I conclude that dry Montana of this century, which early put a web of lines on the upper faces of my father and grandmother and made a noticeable start on me, is more erosive than Swan's maritime frontier of a hundred years ago.

Next, Swan older again, and in high regalia. He wears a fez and a broad sash, evidently trigged up for a convention of the Order of Red Men, one of the several Port Townsend lodge groups he was a member of. As a frontier caliph, Swan looks splendidly silly, and there may be a hint held-in around his lips that he more than suspects it. The new feature here, fez and sash aside, is the clear profile of Swan's nose. For most of us the nose is an open hinge in the center of the face, shaped to no discernible purpose except revenge on us by forgotten ancestors. But Swan came off rather well, a straight unfleshy version proportioned comfortably between the wide set of his eyes and the emphasis of his barbered beard. A restrained nose.

A smatter of other scenes exists--one I particularly grin
over, Swan at ease in his Port Townsend office with a deluge of Indian regalia covering every wall and shelf around him—but the place looked as this writing room of mine is beginning to with the copied heaps of Swan's paperwork stacked around—but they do not offer further detail. Except one final pose, undoubtedly snapped the same day in the studio as the priestly portrait. This time Swan perches on a queer chair-sized square of small notched logs, evidently the photographer's notion of a rural setting, and with casual care is holding a large canoe paddle slantwise across his body. If a flash flood should sweep through the studio, he will be ready atop his small square floe. He has company in this photo, a blocky and strong-faced young Haida named Johnny Kit Elswa. Wearing a suit jacket which his chest and shoulders threaten to explode, Johnny Kit Elswa stolidly stands just apart from Swan, also grips a paddle, and a fistful of arrows and a small bow as well.

Both men, one of Massachusetts and the other of the wild native coast of the North Pacific, are stiffly tethered by their stares to the camera's lens. But precisely between them breaks out a vertical riot of animated faces: a ceremonial Indian carving roughly the length and shape of the canoe paddles, agog every six inches with some fantastic wood-faced creature or another popping its eyes in the direction of the camera. Giddy, droll, mischievous, outright hee-hawing, the carvings are an acrobatic ladder of forest imps. In this company, the
humans seem dry solemn stuff indeed.

Swan, then, in the entirety of his gallery of likeness.

Slightly narrow-shouldered, with a tendency to build at the waist-line. Surprisingly long-armed: a 32-inch sleeve when he orders a coat from Boston. Average chest: 37 inches, on that same garment. He is perhaps five feet eight inches in height, and not heavily built. Batsie took me across the Waatch Creek on his shoulders, the diary discloses, say, at his best-fed, perhaps 160 pounds. All in all, a shape which could be pared and stretched a bit into my own, I notice. But his beard, with its regular, combed smoothness, is nothing like my copper-wire version. My bet is that he grew it aboard the Rob Roy, coming west to California in 1850: new life, new face. In the ceremonial pictures in his later years, he seems to have begun shaving his cheeks along the top of his beard, declaring a definite border such as a department store Santa's beard has. Which leads to the thought that, like me, he may have been a touch overproud of a firm face of beard. A sack of hair from ear to ear may be less enhancing than we imagine.

Not an elaborate man, but with a small dressy touch or two. A ring with a stone there on the ring finger of the left hand; that chain and fob.

A pocket watch which he tries, with no great success, to keep accurate with the clock of the Port Townsend jeweler.
Average vanities aside, Swan impresses as tidy; deft enough within his radius of interests; indeed, even painstaking about any he thinks sufficient to warrant it, a sufficient matter such as presenting his face for the world to see. And yet in every pose, more distance to him than merely the span from the camera's lens. An inward man, a winterer within himself as well as his far-frontier surroundings.

As I finger through the photographs, Swan seems more than half familiar to me, the kind of visage seen from the tail of my eye and not quite willing to register. At last the resemblance clicks. Swan looked more than a little like the history-book portraits of the steel king of the nineteenth century, Andrew Carnegie. Similar wide clear brow, same trim half-face of beard with downward arc of mouth in it. Between brow and beard, however—exactly there across the eyes and cheekbones, entire difference arrives.

Even as his most carefully benign, Carnegie's scrutiny comes off the page at you as that of a man gauging just how far you can be tantalized with the gift of a public library. Swan blinks the middle-distance gaze of a fellow who would be in that Carnegie library thumbing through the collected works of John Greenleaf Whittier all the afternoon.
Day eighteen

Swan's day-upon-day sluice of diary words: why?

Was the diarizing habit something which surfaced out of instincts, the unslakable one that says in some of us that our way to put a mark on the world is not with sword or tool, but pen? Or did content mean more to him than the doing of it—the diary a way to touch out into life as it flowed past him and skim the most interesting as an elixir? Either way, Swan clearly was not using his pen nib merely to pass the time. So much interested him, inside the covers of books along this coastline, and wherever else his glance fell, that boredom seldom seems to have found him. I do accept that the inked words helped to keep straight in memory what he was seeing or being told; Swan had a granny's passion for gossip, and a broker's fixity on exact sums and issues.

But passions and fixities do not commonly last for forty years and two and a half million words by hand. Any of us

serve terms as diarists. Somewhere in the tumble of family items in a closet of this room is the five-year diary I began in my first year of high school. I lasted at it a few months, and now tell me nothing but a recital of football and basketball scores and journeys between my boarding place in town and the sheep ranch. The dry stick of a youngster tracing such items into my life, I can scarcely recognize. Almost twenty years passed before I undertook a diary again—oddly, the occasion was the same as that earliest of Swan's river of paper, a time spent in Britain—and even now I make the constant excuse that pages should be threfing, not
the field boss, to evade for days, weeks, at a time. This journal of winter I face down into regularly because it must be kept, as a ship's log must. To navigate by, know the headway. But Swan's diary plainly masters him. His style of diary-keeping is not merely maintenance, but like architecture, the calm construction of something grand as it is odd. Swan works at his pages as steadily, incessantly, as a man building a castle out of pebbles.

Casting his own life, I suppose, while I have the luck to look on in curiosity.
Day twenty-one

Sick in body and mind, and all air and earth that touch the two.

Any of us who have had such news of death know Swan's disorder, and its cure: routine. After some days of

permanent

remorseful entries, probably whetted all the sharper by that goodbye.

In 1850, Swan turns to schoolroom worries again.

Today, the fifteenth of February, quite a number of children were in attendance but David and some others came in about trade which I do not desire and frightened the children away.... I have been to Baadah every Saturday at Mr Webster's request to issue goods to Indians in payment for work done on the reservation. This has caused the others to think I am the trader and they continually come to me to sell oil, skins and blankets, much to my annoyance.

Annoyance is a broad step up from misery, and as the months of 1864 pass, Swan's words brighten. The classroom was large enough for slow work teaching these Indians. They appear intelligent enough in most respects but appear to take but little interest in learning the alphabet) giving way to the sheen of the Makahs themselves.
Julia and another squaw came up today, the tenth of April, and stated that the Hosett Indians had discovered that Keyyttie, one of the old men...had caused the late spell of bad weather which has kept the Indians from fishing or whaling. A squaw and a boy had overheard him at his incantations and had reported to the others whereupon the whole village turned out and proceeded to Keyyttie's lodge and told him if he did not immediately stop and make fair weather they would hang him. Keyyttie promised to do so. John, who told me the story, very gravely added his belief that now we should have fine weather.

I told him it was all cultus talk, but he said no, that the Indians in former times were capable of making it rain or blow when they pleased.

There was one of the Kwillehuytes who made bad weather...during the halibut season and the Kwillehuytes hung him, and immediately the weather became fine.

Billy Balch, Kyallanhoo and others who have been absent since Tuesday returned this forenoon, the tenth of June. They were blown out of sight of land for several days and afterwards made land at Quiet corner the 15th of May, and remained there till this morning. There was a large crowd of their
friends and relatives collected together this morning, thinking they
were lost and some of the squaws seemed sorry that they did not have
a chance to howl.

The Indians told me this morning, the thirtieth of July, that
Hadassub, one of the best and quietest Indians in the tribe died
suddenly last night at Kiddekbubut. I went down after breakfast on
foot to the village and learned that he died of apoplexy. He had been
very well all day and had joined in the dance at a potlatch given
by Chekotte at Peter's house, and in the evening had taken part in
a wrestling match and afterward partaken freely of rice and molasses.
He had not eaten any molasses for a long time as it did not agree
with him but on this occasion thought he would eat some... The Indians
always attribute an unusual death to the operation of some bad tomanawas,
and as there is a party of Quenailult here I did not know but they might
charge it upon them. I explained the natural causes that would
most likely have produced his death and strongly urged them in
future not to bury any one until they had tried every means of testing
animation.
In the autumn, marking Swan's first year in the classroom, school woes return to his daily pages.

For one thing, he has worked out the appalling calculation that to keep the drafty schoolhouse warm will require 100 cords of wood—

that is, a woodpile four feet high, four feet wide and eight hundred feet long, every sliver of it needing to be wheeled from the Makahs by barter of potatoes. For another,
The attendance at school has been very meagre the past week and this afternoon I sent for Youail (Old Doctor) and had a long talk with him on the matter. I told him that the Government at Washington had been at great expense to have the school house built and now I wanted the children to come and be taught and wanted him to let his second son Kachim come and board with me and be one of a class with Jimmy... That if a few of the boys took an interest to learn others would be induced to come, and finally all the children could be taught. I also told him that the old men were dying off and these boys would shortly take their places and if they would come and learn now they could be useful when they grew up and could better adapt themselves to the white men's customs than the old men who were so prejudiced against the whites.

Old Doctor said my talk was "all good," "all good," and he would send the boy and talk to the other Indians...

Two days later, Swan had in residence with him at the schoolhouse Kachim, Jimmy, and five other boys. They spent the day working on the alphabet and amused themselves in the evening, and that night's diary page exults that Today has been the first time that it has seemed like a regular school.

Soon after this triumph of regularity, however, Swan wakes a little after five in the morning to a houseful of smoke. I found George in the kitchen with a big fire in the stove... and a pot of potatoes on cooking and the smoke just pouring out into the room. As it created an atmosphere like that which he has been
accustomed to in the Indian lodge, he thought it was all right and that he was doing finely.

Swan opened the damper and commended him for his zeal but told him he need not get up another morning till daylight. The smoke.

George's breakfast smoke seems to hang on and on in Swan's pages, clouding the earlier sanguine estimations of the schoolboys' new displayed diligence....the principal inducement at present is the novelty of the thing and the plenty of food I give them to eat. They can be influenced by their stomachs much sooner than their brains...

After more than a year of the effort to hold classes and compel attendance, two glum notations. The twenty-seventh of December, 1864: My time is constantly occupied from early in the morning till 10 and often 12 o'clock at night without an hour that I can call my own. Cooking, looking after the house, attending the sick, prescribing medicines and trying to teach and the results are far from being in proportion to the great care and anxiety I feel. The next day: John had a talk last evening in Russian Jim's lodge about the school...and among others who spoke Jim said that he did not want his boy to learn to read and write for it would be of no use to him. He could not get anything by it but if he learned to kill whales and catch halibut he would have plenty of things....This attempt to form a school is the most unsatisfactory thing I have ever tried.
Days twenty-five, twenty-six, twenty-seven

Bay once more

The Neah schoolroom again, that wrestling site for Swan's tutoring and the Makahs' resistance to it. This morning after breakfast, the fourth of January of 1865, all the boys left without saying anything to me and have not returned all day. Swan took.

Swan took the opportunity to do some housecleaning, inspect the trail being built from the village to the cattle pasture at Waatch Prairie, and watch a wrestling match in Captain John's lodge. The first who commenced were boys, stripped naked. They seized each other by the hair and twisted and wrung themselves about like snakes. Some were successful and threw their opponent while others after a spell of hair pulling had to desist. Some little girls also joined in the sport with the exception that they did not disrobe themselves. But in the diary, Swan stayed in a huff about the absence of his students, and his powerlessness to stop them from passing in and out of the schoolroom like hummingbirds.

I think best for them to stay away till Mr. Webster comes. I have said all I could and shall say no more. They seem to think they are doing me a great favor by coming and I want them to know that the favor is towards them and not me.
Till Mr Webster arrives was proving an elusive moment. The Indian agent's absence now counted up to two and a half months, and the agency was running low on supplies as well as authority. The twenty-eighth of January:

Jan. 28 (p. 5177) All hands out of work. Mr. Jones has been packing up his things to go home. Mr. Jordan has no lumber to work with, and Phillips no coal. I have no boarders, as I have nothing but potatoes to give them and they won't eat potatoes without something else. A few boys come in to warm themselves and will look at their books a few minutes and then leave. I can scarcely call it a school...
The fifth of February, a rare open grumble against Webster:...There

seems to be some bad management in some quarter or another that

detrains him away so long. It is none of us can imagine. He

has been gone over three months and with the exception of a very

short note sent from Fort Townsend he has not communicated with

the employees since his left. We are almost entirely out of provisions,

seven months pay in arrears, and no one to instruct or advise us

how to proceed.

The next day, Swan's mood was swinging from fulmination to reflection:

My occupation is

It is pretty regular every day. As soon as I get up, which is from half

past 6 to 7, the Indians begin to come for medical treatment, some

who want prescriptions only I serve before breakfast but others

who have sores to be dressed have to wait till I have done eating.

Then it is dressing scrofulous sores, syringing out sore ears,

bathing sore eyes and bandaging up wounds. Then round to visit patients.

By this time it is eleven o'clock and I then sit down to write, or

if any children come in, try to teach them. And with the exception

of a walk to Jones or Jordans, keep in the house all the time so

as to be ready either as teacher or physician.
Of these aither, the Makahs plainly preferred Swan as physician, and logical choice it was. Mending an ill was welcome enough; changing the tongues of the tribe's children was not.

For rickety and fumbling as it was, this new white men's governance of Cape Flattery, with the plow and schoolhouse as its cutting tools, meant cataclysm for the Makah way of life. *Swan himself once remarked honed the metaphor.*

We have indeed caused the plowshare of civilization to pass over the graves of their ancestors, *Swan once wrote*; and open to the light the remains of ancient lodge fires.

Many of the Makahs must have known the consequences as well as Swan—probably better—and the wonder is that the tribe did not stiffen harder against the demand that they surrender their sons and daughters to alphabet and agriculture.

Part of the answer must be the beguilement that Swan and his paper and pen represented. The Makahs respected potent abilities, and Swan as the Reservation's deftest hand with paperwork had a magic.
He it was who would provide a "paper" by which anyone who brought
him an amount of firewood would be paid off in potatoes; would draw
up a document attesting that a canoe-man had helped rescue shipwrecked
sailors and so deserved the trust of whatever white man was reading;
out of his book strange creatures and their stories; would produce animals and stuff out of his book. Swan
had surveyed and mapped the Makah Reservation, taken its census,
noting down whenever a whale was killed and who the harpoonist
was, made arithmetic of the very weather by measuring rain and wind
and temperature and giving it a history in his tremendous ledger. This
perpetual counting and scrawling added up to something the Makahs
weren't quite clear on—no more than we would be if people came out
of the sea to us and spoke green sparks which hung in the air—except
that it carried power:

were nervous about. (557) The Indians have a belief that I can tell
by referring to my book containing the census of the tribe what becomes
of any Indian who may be missing, so last evening a great many came to
ask me to look in my book and tell what had become of Long Jim and
the others who had gone for seals and had not returned. I told them
I told them my book told nothing but it was my opinion that Jim and his brother who are young and strong would return, but as for Old George and the boy who were in a smaller canoe I thought they would not get back so soon. His prediction was right, and The Indians now think that my book tells the truth and they have increased confidence in it.

Some other matters about Swan must have been as baffling to the Makahs as his writing hand. He rejected coldly their attempts to bargain payments out of him for letting their children attend his school, yet he would pay rewards for mere seashells brought to him from the beach. He scolded about the drinking of whiskey, indeed questioned the Makahs steadily about its purveyors so that he could report them to Webster, yet at Port Townsend it was said that Swan himself had a weakness for putting the poison into himself. Over the years Swan had arrived and departed among the Makahs entirely casually, but now he insisted their children must live steadily with him in the schoolhouse.

F 16, '16
(The boys will not come as day scholars and there will have to be an entire change of things before the school will ever amount to anything.)
All of which is to say, here at this point in his winter diary of routine to the natives of Cape Flattery, something of a drifter himself, was irony's choice to bring white grooves of routine to the natives of Cape Flattery.
At last, the twenty-fifth of February, Webster and supplies.

Evidently

Swan promptly made a fist at him about the gaping absence of authority at Neah Bay the past three months. Before Webster's next vanishing act a few weeks later, he handed me a document which he had written placing me in full charge of the government property during his absence.

Swan and diary lose their winter ire.

There is a fashion note: March 10 (p. 550) Some of the Indians have purchased umbrellas at Victoria and today there was quite a display on the beach. This is quite an innovation, their old style of warding off rain with bearnskin blankets and conical hats.

Heard frogs singing this evening for the first time this spring.

At work trimming shrubbery, training rosebushes and transplanting currants, blackberries and gooseberries.

Then, the evening of the fourteenth of April, a reverberation set off