final editing of Queen Charlottes material: except for Day 66, which Merlyn retyped most of, I pasted together the final version from the prior ms, inserting adds of my own. This is the jumbled leftovers of that.
into the hemlock and set the lower branches dancing, almost before its blue sheen has registered on my retina.

The Nakahs explained to Swan that the blue jay was the mother of a rascally Indian named Kwaltie. She had asked him to fetch some water, saying that she wished he would hurry, because she felt as if she were turning into a bird. Kwaltie ignored her and went on making the arrow he was at work on. While she was talking she turned into a blue jay and flew into a bush. Kwaltie tried to shoot her, but his arrow passed behind her neck, glancing over the top of her head, ruffling up the feathers, as they have always remained in the head of the blue jay. It seems to me as good an explanation as any for this

hooded jay and
wonderfully chromish bird.
At last, the one that haunts me in dismay:

And the most arresting of Swan's notations: During the spring,

when the flowers are in bloom and the humming birds are plenty, the

boys take a stick smeared with the slime from snails, and place it

among a cluster of flowers... if a humming bird applies his tongue
to it he is glued fast. They will then tie a piece of thread to its

feet and holding the other end let the birds fly, their humming being

considered quite an amusement. That scene is doubly horrific to me--

doom the fate of the hummingbirds, and the knowledge that had I been one

of the Makah boys I would have had my own captive bird whirring like

a toy on the end of a tether.
Master of perfunctory encouragement that Baird was, he nonetheless
did enrich Swan's life at Cape Flattery. The specimens asked for—
birds and fish, particularly—made a welcome change of task from the
routine.
Neah Bay was described as attending to the sick,
listening to Indian complaints of various kinds and looking after
things generally. And as Swan sent in his hodgepodge of promising
items, Baird sent west to him an array of books of science, another
bonus to a frontier life such as Swan's. Most vital of all in these
Neah Bay years, however, Baird's encouragement sat Swan down to an
ambitious piece of scholarly writing: an anthropological study of the Makahs.

The Indians of Cape Flattery took Swan more than two years to write,
and his constant deskmate was interruption.

S to B, Nov. '63
In order to have the work go on as rapidly as possible with the
Government buildings I have been obliged to sink the teacher
into the caterer for the mess,

Swan wrote to Baird in the midst of the schoolhouse construction,
and a person arranging for the appetites of six hearty men who must have three full meals
per day cannot find much opportunity for belles lettres.
while bathing, heard a rustling sound in the air, at which he became
frightened, and covered his face with his blanket, whereupon a raven
alighted within a few feet of him and uttered a hoarse croak. He
then peeped through a corner of his blanket, and saw the raven with
its head erect, its feathers bristled, and a great swelling in its
throat. After two or three unsuccessful efforts, it finally threw up
a piece of bone about three inches long, then uttering another croak
it flew away. Remaining quiet a few minutes, till he was satisfied
that the raven had gone, he picked up the bone, which he gravely
informed me was of the Ha-hek-to-ak. He hid this bone near by, and
returned to his lodge, and, after relating the occurrence, was informed
by the Indian doctors that it was a medicine sent to him by his tamanawas,
and this proved to be true, as he entirely recovered in three days....

The tale of the raven alighting near him is not improbably, as
ravens as well as crows are very plenty and very tame; nor is it
impossible that the raven might have had a bone in its mouth, and
finally dropped it; nor is it entirely uncertain that the circumstance
so affected his superstitious imagination that it caused a reaction in
his system, and promoted his recovery. The same effect might perhaps have been produced by a smart shock from a galvanic battery.

The manuscript done, Swan sat back to await publication by the
Smithsonian. It began to be a long sit.
In the microfilm's blizzard of lines, a year passes, two, three.
Swan is writing heavier and heavier nudges to Baird. The second of November, 1868: Can you give one any encouragement that it will appear within the next decade? Yet another year; sixteenth of November, 1869:

S to B, Nov 16, 1869

When that Makah memoir is published??!!! I should like some copies to send to several officers at Sitka who are much interested in Indian matters....

Either the deprivation of the Sitka officers or the explosion punctuation did the job. At the start of 1870, The Indians of Cape Flattery, even yet the primary source on the historical Makahs, came into print.
Day forty

A silver-bright day. Air clear and cold, ready to crinkle like silk, and for the second night in a row, frost has daubed its way all across the ground and up into the first branches of the evergreens.

I have a queer edgy clarity in myself, consequence of so few hours' sleep: a grittiness like diamond dust. Luckily, sleeplessness comes to me in small seasons--two or three nights in a row, then vanishes--else I cannot imagine what my daily mood would be like.

These strange persons, ourselves. Needing the dark but sometimes at odds with entirely wasteful of it. My nights when sleep will not come I roll like a drifting log on one of Swan's beaches, and between last bedtime and early morning I wallowed a deep trough in the dark. In the bed beside me, Carol's breathing form calmly ingested the blackness, channeled it on its smooth underskin routes. While my mind was a black blaze. Anything makes fuel--a walk taken around the neighborhood after supper, the day's writing, a letter from a friend. I try a number of sleep-making stunts: breathe deeply, with forced regular rhythm, make my tongue loll, try to beat the mind with a white blankness. I have the success of a man trying to win attention to his coin trick against the roaring backdrop of a three-ring circus.
The frustration is double. Sleep at best is a sharp cost of time, not always... not-sleep is a cost to both. Yet where is this morning's cold clarity, as if the white duff of frost had come into me during the night too.

Swan on the Makah version of restlessness: Last evening Peter wanted his squaw to go home. She was then in Tahahowtl's lodge.

She refused whereupon Peter pitched into her, pulled her hair and blacked her eye. Tahahowtl interfered and Peter went at him and they had a hair-pulling match and finally separated to get their guns but friends interfered so they were separated.
The fifth of April, 1866: Yesterday Ahayah killed the first whale of the season...

The next day:

(626) April 6 - I was much amused last evening with John's moves. It seems he feels ashamed that he has not killed any whales and has concluded to go through the ceremonies to constitute him a skookum whaleman.

Which ceremonies consist of going without sleeping or eating for 6 days and nights, to bathe in the salt water and run on the beach to get warm.

John went into the water with his accoutrements on but soon got so cold that he was glad to come and warm himself by my fire. He had gone all day without eating and I think his courage was failing him for he admitted that he thought he could not stand it more than two days and if that would not suffice to make him a whaleman he could kill sharks. He intended to stop by my fire all night and occasionally go out and wash in the bay, but when I got up this morning he was gone and I learned that he was afraid to sit alone by my fire and had sneaked out about midnight with his courage completely cooled and had concluded that from shark killing he will be content with killing dogfish.
Day forty-two

God, how the blood strums in such weather. What it tinges out is: be truant. Which I am.

I woke with the sense that the day would be clear and cold, and that I needed to be out in it at once. When daybreak came like a confirming crackle of light onto the frost, I already had arrived here at Shilshole. The Olympics, clouds caped on their backs, as yet are pale, wraithly, in the beginning day. Snow gods, asleep standing up, like horses. Going past is a big seagoing tug, in from the north and in a hurry. It seems to ride the floe of white water pushed up by its impatient bow. Freighter traffic is starting to procession past, two ships inbound to the Seattle dockfront, two out. Three of the fleet are outlined in traditional lines of superstructure, masts and plow-pointed bow, but the fourth is squatty as a huge barge, some new style of vanship. Swan would enter in his ship list an occasional herm brig--hermaphrodite brig, with a square-rigged foremost but a triangular schooner-sail on its mainmast. The day now of the herm freighter?

One inbound vessel overtakes the other, and as it begins to pass, the dark sharp shapes merge, then slowly attenuate, pulled longer and longer like a telescope.
being extended, until they are two again.

Mid-morning. Here at the desk, attenuation again. Swan has begun to pull from his five years at Neah Bay.

I am... surprised with myself, he has recently said in the diary, to find that I have so much patience as I have with these children. I get almost discouraged at times and then again I feel as though they were doing something. But they try my patience sorely and occasionally I feel like giving up my situation in despair of ever being able to do any good for these children.

In April of 1866 had occurred the tensest time Swan experienced at Cape Flattery, the arrival of troops to arrest Peter for stabbing the Elwha to death, he had anted into the rivalry with the Elwhas. The Makahs resented the show of force, the soldiers resented being plopped down on the back porch of the continent, and we are all heartily sick of their protracted stay. Also, the month's weather was phenomenal even for Cape Flattery: 11 7/10 inches of rain 3 pleasant days during month. The diary pages twang more than a little. The Swan who liked to intone that he never carried any calibre of self-defense...
among the Indians—I have always found that a civil tongue is the best weapon I can use—now inscribes something different:

Bought a Remington revolver of Mr Philips this (May 15, '66)
Nerves cool a bit in the next weeks, but in mid-summer Swan takes a twelve-day respite from Neah Bay—visiting in Victoria, Port Townsend, and Port Angeles—and a few days after his return, there is the entry the year's diary pages have been leading toward. Wednesday, the twenty-second of August.

Notified Mr. Webster of my intention of sending in my resignation as teacher when I send in my monthly report, the resignation to take effect on the 1st of October.

I want not to see Swan step from Neah Bay; the Boston bird drift back townward from the ultimate point of the west; It may account for my own tautness of the past days. The glimpses I have had into the diaries ahead do not show the wealth, richness of these regal ledger pages, there is grit in the ink to come, I judge. But whatever I might wish here in 1866 is Swan's cosmos, not mine. He did not invite me in out of the ether of the future, he traces his own way with that ceaseless pen. And in the last five weeks of more than two hundred and fifty spent at Neah Bay, that pen begins to record farewells.
The first seemed to come from Cape Flattery itself. At 11 p.m.,

the twenty-ninth of August, I felt the tower vibrate perceptibly so much

so as to cause my closet door which was open to rattle so that I

got up and closed it. I have frequently noticed these jarring sensations
of the tower at night when all the house were asleep. I at first thought them caused by heavy surf on the beach. At others by the action of the wind on the flagstaff. But they have so frequently occurred during the past three years at times when it has been perfectly calm and still that I am of the opinion they are caused by a motion of the earth not sufficient to be termed earthquakes, they may perhaps be termed earthshakes...Then the chuminess from exactly the quarter it could be expected. This morning, the twenty-third of September, Capt John brought me in his box of "whale medicine" which under promise of secrecy on my part he showed me after going up into the tower and locking the door....
The relics were in a box enclosed in a bag and had evidently been under ground a long time as they were covered with mould which stuck bag and box together so as to make it difficult to open them. When at last the box was opened there a piece of coal which had been rolled by the surf into an oval pebble as large as a goose egg....John very grandly assured me that it was taken from a dead whale and was a great medicine...The other was nothing but the blow hole of a porpoise...
...the great medicine came last, the bone of the Hah-hake to ak-

This was unrolled from some old trash and presented to me. It was a
shapeless piece of rotten quartz, which had no resemblance to a bone
of any kind.... John's father had been humbugged by some smart Indian
into this belief that the quartz was a real bone and John was firm in
the same belief. I thought that any animal who had such heavy bones
must acquire considerable momentum in darting through the air, and it
was not surprising it could split trees, or kill whales when ever it
struck them.

*recessional, Neah Bay style.*

Then, the last. After closing up my business, the first of October,
and packing my books and effects I went to Baadah to pass the night with
Mr Webster previous to taking my final leave of Neeah Bay.

I have been gratified and surprised at the manifestation
of feeling on the part of the Indians at my departure. They
are not usually very demonstrative but children and adults
appeared very much affected—well they might have, with the
mercurial agent Webster to look forward to—the former shedding
tears and the latter singing a chant expressive of their sorrow.

I have tried to do my duty towards these Indians and
these friendly expressions on their part are more grateful to
me than the approval of others who can not know by report the
value of my labors.
Day forty-five

So to Swan's next frontier address: Port Townsend. Even now, the place is a destination not on the route to anywhere else. No ferry from the cities of Puget Sound connects to Port Townsend, and the road to its flange of headland on the Strait is a dozen-mile veer from the main highway of the Olympic Peninsula. In fogless weather I can very nearly see to the town, north past the jut of Point No Point, from the bluff above our valley.

but driving here on this day of muck, the sky like watered milk and the road spraying up brown slush, Port Townsend seemed to me far-off and elusive as a lookout tower atop a distant crag.

From its first moment of settlement, which was in 1851, the remarkable siting has been Port Townsend's blessing and curse.

As the first community astride the Strait of Juan de Fuca—Puget Sound water route, claiming a spacious headland with a sheltering bay along its southeastern side, Port Townsend looked to be a golden spot in the map. But the promontory site turned out not to be the dreamed-of stroke of geography collecting all inbound ships, but merely a nub of coast around which the lane of maritime commerce bent, like a roped pulleyed over a limb, and lowered cargoes onward to the docklands of Seattle, Tacoma, Everett and Olympia. Those cargoes still are going past.

The civic personality did not quite work out as anticipated, either.
In more places than one, and the West. Huge aspiring Victorian houses and unexampled views across water are side by side with the scrub and shagginess of a forest clearing. The town is divided between the waterfront and (Sunday—check this—Ap 3, 1877)

(Sunday—check this—Ap 3, 1877)

(brink-like in more ways than on; Swan once reported to his diary that One Arm Smith the waterman fell through the privy of the Union hotel down onto the beach and injured himself severely & perhaps fatally) and

the expansive reach of bluff behind it, where the big old betrimmed houses rise like a baker's shelves of wedding cakes. Downtown is divided again, between the blocks of brick emporiums of the 1880s and a struggle of modern stores which looks as if they have been squeezed from a tube labeled Instant Shopping Center.
Port Townsend always has lived a style of boom-and-bust, and that record of chandiness is a main reason I cherish the town. How svelte their skyscrapers are, Port Townsend still knows that life is a dice game in the dirt. I have been in and out of the place as often as I could for the past dozen years, and I can almost feel in the air as I step from the car whether Port Townsend is prospering or drooping. Small shops will blossom in the old downtown buildings. My next visit, they have vanished. A grand house will be freshly painted one day; peeling has begun when I look at it again. This time, I have been in town only moments when I heard that a few of the vastest old mansions have been trying life as guest houses. That seemed promising, but now the state is requiring every room and mansion propriety that they be fitted with metal fire doors. The guest house owners proclaim themselves staggered toward bankruptcy by the prospect.
I discovered that
Swan made his move from Neah Bay to here at Port Townsend by way
of Boston, a transcontinental detour not surprising from him; if
he had been paid by the mile in this Strait period of his life, he
would have made it to millionairishood. The holiday season of 1866
and the first months of 1867, Swan spent with his daughter and son,
Ellen and Charles, and not incidentally was on hand to claim a
windfall: an inheritance of $6,427.14 from an uncle. (McD;137--check)
About half the sum, he rapidly poured off for merchandise consigned
to Port Townsend (...I doz money belts, the pocket diary begins
enumerating day by day, I covered wagon...I set harness...cod lines...
pistols etc.). Much of the rest flowed away in gifts for Ellen
and Charles, and in an astounding number of $25 checks written to
himself. By the first of June, 1867, he had his bank balance
successfully depleted to $647.32, and took ship for the Himmest west
again.
In mid-July Swan was back here at Port Townsend--he had shortcutted by way of Panama--and in mid-August drifted out the Strait to visit at Neah Bay. Near year's end, he made a buying trip to San Francisco for one of the Port Townsend storekeepers, and

Swan had had another windfall, of sorts. The ship Ellen Foster smashed apart on the rocks near Neah Bay, and he undertook to salvage the wreck. This was beachcombing in the truest sense of the word, and Swan had no illusions about it. The warehouse he rented on the Port Townsend waterfront to sort the Foster's bounty is consistently dubbed in his diary the junk store.

Simultaneous with the junkwork, Swan began to take on paperwork. As the customs port for the Puget Sound region and a county seat and the biggest dab of settlement between Victoria and Seattle, Port Townsend was a kind of official inkwell for the Strait frontier. Swan always swims best in ink. Rapidly, he plucks up semi-job of some official sort after semi-job. I have established myself here at Port Townsend, he soon writes in one of his letters to Baird at the Smithsonian, having

been appointed by the Governor as a notary public and Pilot Commissioner, and by the Supreme Court as United States Commissioner, and having appointed myself as a commission merchant and ship broker. Thus you see honors are easy with me....I reverse the saying that a prophet is without honor for I have the honors without the profit.
Day forty-eight

Rain trotting in the drainpipe when we woke up. Now, at ten
in the morning, a gray pause has curtained between showers, a
halfhearted wind musses among the trees. Today and yesterday are
standard Puget Sound winter—rain and 45 degrees—after the weeks
of cold clear weather. A winter of two seasons, this time of
frost, time of cloud.

Last comment from Swan on the railroad adventure. Did not alter
my opinion, I found him suddenly grumbling, apropos of nothing, during
a visit to Tacoma years later. That it is unfit place for terminus.
Days fifty-one, fifty-two

Pleasant day, nothing of interest occurred except a fight...

between Ginger Reese and Sam Alexander in Reese's saloon....

Dave Sires, Lieut. Paige and several officers of the Cutter gave
me a serenade about 12 o'clock P.M....

Col. Larrabee & Col. Paddock passed the evening with me discussing
Swedeborgianism....

Fighting and singing and discussing frontier Americans as they
dumped themselves together into this barely-in-out-of-the-weather
settlement they called Port Townsend. To the local Cjallams and
visiting Makahs, they must have seemed exotic as albino bears, this
white tribe.

Their customs and rites of leadership were sporadic but frenzied.

(Most remarkable, at least by Swan's report, was the election of 1860:

N 17, '60

The Republicans burned a tar barrel in honor of the supposed victory
of Abe Lincoln.)

They have a fascination on honorific officers from
the army post near town always addressed as 'Colonel' and 'Major,'
those from ships on station in the harbor as 'Captain' and 'Lieutenant';
at the courthouse, it's 'Judge' and 'Sheriff.' (Swan himself in
these years served for a time in charge of a municipal court and
became thereafter on the streets of Port Townsend 'Judge Swan'.)

This they extended to the Indians, the Cjallam chief Chetschemoka
renamed 'the Duke of York,' one of his wives 'Queen Victoria.'
Their sacred notions did not focus on the earth and its forest and its roof of sky, but on obscure quibbles among humans. (As early as his Shoalwater days, Swan made note of the chief of an Oregon tribe who shook his head firmly when told the story of Christ's crucifixion. The Indians had enough trouble getting along with each other without borrowing conflict, he said; this Jesus matter was a quarrel the whites would have to settle among themselves.) They held a strange sense of territoriality, basing it on invisible boundaries: not the measurable borders of forests where you knew yourself liable to ambush from another tribe, but seams on the earth somehow seen through their spyglasses.

Their weaponry was powerful and mysterious, and getting more so all the time. (Lieut Hanbury, US Topographical Engineer called on me today; he is engaged on steamer Celilo taking account of force of current at various points on the Sound for the purpose of ascertaining if it is practicable to make use of torpedoes as a means of harbor defence.)

Their boats are even more prodigious. Schooners which moor at the sawmill settlements and take aboard what had been entire groves of trees. Steamboats which with their thrashing sidewheels can travel without the wind.
Their food ranges from disgusting—hard salted beef which the sailors call "mahogany horse"—to marvelous: molasses, rice, coffee.

Their notions about whiskey were inconstant: some Port Townsend whites irate about the Indians sharing it, others making a commerce of the liquid fire. (Thomas Stratton brought a bottle of whiskey to me which he took from a Clallam Indian this noon under the wharf of the hotel. The Indian said he got it at Sires saloon and it was lowered through the floor to him.)

So too their notions on sex: the white men are ostentatious about preferring women of their own skin, yet Port Townsend has a growing population of half-breed children.

They are ostentatious as well about their dead, keeping them about for the sake of ceremony instead of putting them at rest in the earth.

Most of them were several baths per month less clean than the Indians. (Especially less so than the Makahs, of whom)

(Swan recorded of the Makahs that whenever they finished a grimy task, such as flensing a whale carcass, they would at once scour themselves in sand and surf and came out clean and bright as so many new copper tea kettles.)
Above all, this: they are a moody people, hard to predict, their community sometimes boisterous, sometimes silent. The day, make it, that Swan and the other townspeople learned that the iron wagons of the railroad would not be coming: watch them from the eyes of Chetsemoka the Duke of York, how the bearded men cluster and mutter and slump away to their houses, how the street stands emptier than empty after them, how even the whiskey voices in the saloons cannot be heard.

You might imagine, the myth already finding words inside your lips, that this odd white tribe had got aboard one of its wheeled boats and gone away.
And then Port Townsend would jerk awake again and scarcely blink between excitement. In 1874, Swan inscribes these doings between the first day of January and the last day of March:
Jan. 2, '74

Edwin Jones died during the night of heart complaint. He had been playing in the band at a dance in Masonic Hall and was on his way with the rest to Allens to get supper. He stopped in at Urquharts Saloon where he had a room, laid down and died immediately.

Jan 7, '74

About Midnight Wednesday night Bill Lenhards cow came into my entry and I drove her out.

Then Ike Hall brought a drunk man into his office and I got up to see who it was and took cold by so doing....

$26, '74

A Clallam Indian was cut in the head by another Indian and the squaws came & complained. The Sheriff took the guilty Indian & locked him up.

March 4, '74

John Martin stabbed Poke & Jack this morning about 2 o'clock in Hunts Saloon....
March 6, '74

Joseph Nuano, the half breed Kanaka who murdered Dwyer on San Juan—was hanged today at the Point near the Brewery.

March 29, '74

The 6 canoes of Haida Indians who have been camped on Point Hudson for several days left this morning. They first went to Point Wilson where they burnt up the body of a Hydah man who died in Port Discovery 3 days ago—then they gathered up the bones and carried them off all leaving for Victoria and thence to their homes on Queen Charlottes Islands.
Day sixty-six

From under that civic cloud, which at least was newly lined with

the Smithsonian's silver, Swan set off for the Queen Charlotte Islands

in mid-June of 1883. He voyaged in the highest style available in the

North Pacific, out of Victoria aboard the Otter, a Hudson's Bay Company

supply steamer, and with complete cachet. In effect, Swan was going

north as the invited guest of British Columbia's Superintendent

of Indian Affairs, Dr. Powell, in the company of one of Powell's field

agents, James Deans. The one hitch in this hospitable arrangement was

that Deans missed the boat.

Swan shrugged—watched for Mr Deans till the Steamer was under way

but he did not appear, the diary says, and lets it go at that—and

settled back to enjoy the cruise. The Otter made its

He was more than veteran at shipboard life by now; since his voyage

to Britain four decades earlier, I count more than a year of his life spent

on vessels breasting off to somewhere or another. The Otter's seven-

day slalom of supply calls along the North Pacific coast was a cozy round

of visits for Swan. Metlakatla. (As I had but a very short time

to remain on shore I hurried to Mr Duncans house where I was very cordially
received, but the hour was too early for these settlers who had but
just got up. I notice this listlessness, and desire to lie in bed
mornings to prevail in Victoria and everywhere I have been in British
Columbia and Alaska. Sit up late at night and get up late in the morning.

Duncan, exceptional in rising
The early rising Duncan as in all else, toured Swan through the
community's cannery and woolen mill before the Otter's whistle blasted.

Fort Simpson. (While at Metlakatla I noticed the houses were nearly
all of very plain box like appearance without any attempt at architectural
beauty, and unpainted... At Ft Simpson where the Indians have been
couraged to display their taste they have done so and produced some
very neat looking cottages painted or whitewashed...) Alaska's Tolstoi
Point, and Fort Wrangell. Then,

slalom of supply calls—Fort Simpson, Metlakatla, Tolstoi Point—
and at the end of the afternoon of June twenty-fifth anchored in

chugged toward an island shore which appeared low and quite level,
but as it was very rainy we did not get a good sight.
The dim landfall was Graham, largest island of the Queen Charlottes.

Arrived at Massett at 5 PM...

letrek, June 25.

delivered my letters of Introduction...took account of my freight as it was landed--wisely: 2 sacks flour short in my count & notified Purser Sinclair--and then went to a very comfortable cottage in the enclosure of the HB Co...Unfold a map of the North Pacific, and you find not far under the overhang of Alaska the Queen Charlotte island group, looking like a large shard which has fallen out of the continental cliff of shoreline.

The illusory plummet has carried the chunk fifty miles to sea, striking its western edge into some of the harshest weather of the entire Pacific, and shattering the landmass into a hundred and twenty-five fragments from the size of rocky hummocks to 00-mile-wide Graham. This daunting archipelago, still one of the remotest loose ends of North America, Swan thought he knew exactly how to approach. By canoe.
The idea came to him out of what had thwarted the last white
expeditionary to the Charlottes: the wild broth of weather along
the islands' western shore. Geologist George M. Dawson in 1870
had sailed and clambered at will among the Charlottes, except
along that shore.

"The time and means at my disposal did not enable me to make
a survey or geological examination of the west coast of the islands,
which would require to be carried on during the early summer...the
least boisterous portion of the year. It is a very dangerous lee
shore for sailing craft and would, I believe, be most easily dealt
with in one of the canoes of the country manned by a good Indian crew."

Dawson's advice sounded right to Swan. The matter was to find, among
the waning Haidas, a strong canoe crew.

Swan was advised at Masset that the man he wanted was the chief
who had ruled on the absolute northwesternmost fragment of the
Charlottes—then called simply North Island, now on the maps as
Langara Island. North Island could serve as the piton for the
journey along the western shore: relatively calm waters from Masset
to North, assured shelter there on the chief's home isle, then the
headland-to-headland descent by canoe 00 miles down the coast to the
settlement at Skidegate. The one omission in the smooth plan echoed
the absence of Dears back at the Victoria dock: at the moment, the
chief was away somewhere on another canoe errand.

On wait at Masset, Swan began to entertain himself typically,
with his pen. Went out and counted
Day seventy-seven

Swan's final few days of gleaning the Queen Charlotte. Ellswarsh and three paddlers came for Swan and Johnny Kit Elswa the morning of the fourth of September, and hard weather at their heels. The party canoe'd out of Skidegate Inlet and around the first point of coast southward, met the full whap of storm, then pulled for shore. The wind blew so violently that it was difficult to pitch my tent but having succeeded with the united aid of the whole party I found myself very comfortable, and I invited Ellswarsh to share my tent and table. (And mentally invited the memory of Edinso to look on and howl?) Johnny Kit Elswa and the canoemen occupied a second tent and took their meals in the open air by the camp fire. Unluckily for Swan, the first of those meals featured some red berries which they mixed with grease...They were sour and...cleaned me out good.

Freshly scoured from the inside out, Swan woke the next morning to a fair wind. This rare chance to put up the genoa sail brought them early to the village of a chief named Skedance. He gave us a hearty welcome and soon had a breakfast ready, composed of dried halibut and fish oil, fish eggs, boiled dried salmon, and boiled dried dulse mixed with fish eggs and red huckleberries. So far off his feed from the previous night's experiment with berries-and-oil was Swan that he passed up this imaginative smorgasbord for bread and tea. His mood, anyway, was to bargain. After breakfast, Skedance showed me a fine chest or box elaborately carved, but did not name any price. He showed me some other things, and I bought of him two dancing hats, a bow and arrows made of copper, used as ornaments while dancing and a carving in wood resembling an eagle's foot holding a salmon.
Shopping done at Skedans, at the top of the afternoon the canoe party pushes on. The next village, Laskeek, is one Swan has been keen to see. The previous chief of the place had visited Port Townsend, which automatically meant meeting Swan.

Known in Port Townsend. He often invited me to go to the Queen Charlotte Islands and visit him, but I had never been able to do so during his lifetime.

Now young Kitkune who married the widow of the one I knew and is heir to his name and property, accompanied us from Skedans village.

When the canoe nosed ashore at Laskeek, this second Kitkune effected an entrance to the house by knocking off one of the planks through which he crawled and then opened the front door, and we moved all our things from the canoe into this house, which is the finest and best house I have seen.

After the days of burial caves and ghostly villages on the western shore of the islands, here was the living face of the Haida culture.

It was grandiose. Kitkune's lodge measured 57 feet long by 51 feet wide—large enough to put my own into like a wallet in a purse, I notice—with a great fire pit in the center and two successive broad platforms of plank around the entire width and length of the structure. Everything about this building is of the same massive proportions, even the latch of the door is made of a piece of old iron.
Nor did the wonder of the Laskeek house stop there.

Young Kitkune opened a secret door skillfully framed into one side of the house so as to be unnoticed even by careful search and disclosed a chamber or building place where were stowed away for sake keeping the sacred emblems of the old Chief. These are the finest of any I have seen but the young man was not willing to part with many of them and for these he asked a large price. I purchased a few rare and curious masks. One of these represents the Odllalla, a demon who used to come from the mountains and devour the Indians. This mask was a head piece representing a skull from which descended a perfect jointed skeleton of wood arranged by means of strings so that the teeth would gnash, and an arm would stretch out and point a bony finger to an intended victim. The whole was intended to resemble a mourdy
Next morning, the sixth of September. Swan takes account of the rest of Laskeek's houses and its carved columns. Found twenty nine houses, old and new.

13 totemic columns, 31 mortuary columns. 11 posts with carved animals at base and boxes on top of each containing remains of some dead person.

There are also 15 small houses containing remains of the dead; in fact the village presents the appearance of a cemetery, rather more than the abode of the living...
Valhalla-like as the village may have seemed, its hospitality was
robust and its food even better.

Sallal berries, the largest and sweetest I have ever seen, abounded,
and Swan and Johnny Kit Elswa made sallal
pudding a delight for the many children, each with a clam shell,
dipping it into the kettle of stewed berries which they eat with the
relish of young bears...

The morning, and familiar weather.....

(58) FRIDAY, September 7th, 1882. Gale all last night with much rain,
which continued all day long, a very strong gale. This made us keep
inside the house. Johnny and William carving stone totem columns.

Peter making sprit for sail. Sampson getting wood ready, and I writing
and listening to legends....As inspired as any of this was the task
occupying the canoe chief, Ellswarsh.

Sept. 7, '83, pocket diary
My best hat having got mashed in my clothes bag, Ellswarsh
wet it and having first put it in a cloth to keep it clean,
he filled it with wet sand and gravel and pulled & rubbed
it into shape and dried it with a hot flat iron & handed it
to me as good as new.
Day one

...Capt John was here today, Swan writes from a century ago, and I related to him a dream I had last night, in which I saw several Indians I formerly knew who are dead. John said it was a sign the "memelose" or dead people are my friends and I would soon see that they would do something to show their friendship....

Fifteen past nine. Out in the dark, the Sound wind visits favorite trees, is shaken off, hankers along the valley in stubborn search. The gusting started up hours ago, during the wink-like pause of daylight that is December evening, and by now seems paced to try to last the night. Until the wind arrived the day was nordic: sunless, but silent and dry. The neighborhood's lion-colored cat, inspector-general of such weather, all this morning tucked himself atop the board fence outside the north window as I read Swan. Out of his doze each several minutes a sharp cat ear would twitch; give the air a tan flick just to be certain it still could. Then the self-hug into snooze again.

The breakers, now the third morning after Swan's dream, tore up the beach and rooted out immense numbers of clams which were thrown up by the surf. I gathered a few buckets full and soon the squaws and Indians came flocking up like so many gulls and gathered at least fifty bushels....

Nine eighteen. I see, by leaning to hear into the wind, that the night-black window which faces west off the end of my desk collects the half of me above the desktop and a sheaf of copied
diary pages into quiet of my own. My square-bearded face reflected there could be a photographic plate of any of the museful old Scotsmen who transplanted our family name to the western mountains of America. I think of another set of Swan's words. The time he tells of a Peninsula settler driven to highest fury when some visiting Makahs were clumsy with a canoe mast being stowed for the night and crashed an end through the hard-bought one window of the homestead cabin. This suburban house glints with thirteen more windows besides the glass my reflection occupies, windows to every direction and inclination. Wobbly mast-bearers could pass none of my walls without creating crystal.

Nine twenty. Capt. John told me, this the morning following the beach bonanza, that the cause of the great quantity of Clams on the beach yesterday was the dead people I dreamed about the other night and they put the clams there to show their friendship....
Day two

His name was James Gilchrist Swan, and I have felt my pull toward him ever since some forgotten frontier pursuit or another landed me into the coastal region of history where he presides, meticulous as a usurer's clerk, diarying and diarying that life of his, four generations and as many lightyears from my own.

This is the 18th day since Swell was shot and there is no offensive smell from the corpse. It may be accounted for in this manner. He was shot through the body and afterwards washed in the breakers, consequently all the blood in him must have run out. He was then rolled up tight in 2 new blankets and put into a new box, nailed up strong.

I know the beach at Crescent Bay where the life of Swell, a chieftain of the Makah tribe, was snapped off. Across on the Canadian shore of the Strait of Juan de Fuca the lights of modern Victoria now make a spread of white embers atop the burn-dark rim of coastline, and west from the city occasional lighthouses make blinks against the black as the Strait seeks toward the Pacific.

of coastline. But on Swell's final winter night in 1861, only a beach campfire at Crescent on our southern shore flashed bright enough to attract the eye, and Swell misread the marker of flame as an encampment of traveling members of his own tribe. Instead, he stepped from his canoe to find that the overnighters were of the Elwha village of the Clallam tribe, among them chanced to be a particular rival of Swell, and his bullet spun the Makah dead into the cold surf.

It was a killing less casual than the downtown deaths my morning
newspaper brings me three or four times a week— the Elwhas and the
Makahs at least had the excuse of lifetimes of quarrel—or that I
might go see in aftermath, eligible as I am for all manner of intrusion
because of being a writer, were I to accompany the Seattle homicide
squad. James C. Swan did go hurrying to be beside Swell's corpse, and
there the first of our differences is marked.

Truth told, I find among Swan's words that more than one motive
carried him west along the Strait from Port Townsend to the death
scene. Swell was his best-regarded friend among the coastal tribes, a
man he had voyaged with, learned legends from. Swan's diary pages
show them steadily swapping favors: now Swell detailing for Swan the
Makahs' skill at hunting whales, now Swan painting for Swell in red
and black his name and a horse on his canoe sail. Swell said he
always went faster in his canoe than the other Indians... like a
horse, so he wanted to have one painted... But solid as the
comradeship may have been, so was Swan's Yankee instinct to retrieve
the goods which Swell had been consigned to bring home by canoe to
another of Swan's coastal acquaintances, a trader situated at the
western extent of the Strait. From the merchants of Port Townsend,
Swan compiles a list of Swell's cargo, then in his quick hand
sums his resolve: Must therefore look for 1 British tea pot, 1 small
brass kettle, 1 tin trunk...

I ponder this, mulling what it would take to send me off on such
an errand... a crate of books, the chance to hear a grand story...But
then, this winter, this deliberate season of frontier, is itself a
fetch of similar sort...

A morning soon after learning of Swell's death, having traveled with a friendly chieftain of the Clallam band nearest to Port Townsend, Swan strolled into the Elwha village. Charley, the murderer, then got up and made a speech. He said that he shot Swell for two reasons, one of which was, that the Mackahs had killed two of the Elwha's a few months previous, and they were determined to kill a Mackah chief to pay for it. And the other reason was, that Swell had taken his squaw away, and would not return either the woman or the fifty blankets he had paid for her.

Swan was not swerved. I could not help feeling while standing up alongside this murderer...that I would gladly give a pull at the rope that should hang him... The day's chastisement was administered with vocal cords rather than hemp, however. Swan haggled out of Charley the potwear, several blankets and a dozen yards of calico, and when he was done, it became the turn of the visiting chieftain to erupt to his Clallam cousins about the paltry compensation Charley was handing over. This talk produced two more blankets which closed the business.

Swan next carried the matter of Swell's death to the federal Indian agent for Washington Territory. Met inconclusion there. Sent a seething letter to the newspaper in the territorial capital of Olympia... an Indian peaceably passing on his way home in his canoe, laden with white men's goods...fouly murdered...agents of our munificent government have not the means at their disposal to defray the
expenses of going to arrest the murderer... And at last canoed once more along the Strait to accompany Swell, still nailed up strong, for the hundred miles to burial at the Makah village of Neah Bay.

There, Swell's brother Peter came and wished me to go with him and select a suitable spot to bury Swell...

I did as he desired, marked out the spot and dug out the first sand.

And this further: He also brought up the large tomanawas boards--the Makahs' cedar tableaus of magic which would be the grave's monument--of Swell for me to paint anew...

There, then, is Swan, or at least a start on him. A man from Boston asked to trace afresh the sacred designs of a buried Makah chieftain. I can think of few circumstances less likely, unless they are mine: an onlooker who has set himself a winter's appointment back so many dozens of years and across geography to the Olympic Peninsula and elsewhere along the coastal tracery of Puget Sound and the Strait of Juan de Fuca, and indeed into the life of a person born 121 years before him. Yet

But I am attracted to Swan the way he was to Swell: that here flashes the representative of a vivid tribe. The first-comers from the east of this continent to its west were an advance party of the American quest for place. (Position, too, maybe, but that is pilgrimage that interests me less.) Swan is not typical of American Westers, no more so than a Swell who always went faster in his canoe than the other Indians...like a horse. But he was observant, almost obsessively so; seems to show some new beguiling facet every time I glance his way; and was early, among the very earliest, in stepping the paths