

ADELBERT VON CHAMISSO  
1816

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Before leaving Sitka, Rezanov advised Governor Baranov that the Russians' only chance for survival lay in establishing a colony a few miles north of San Francisco Bay. A base there, he argued, could assure a steady supply of grain to Alaska; it would be far enough away to avoid conflict with Spain, and still be close enough to trade with the missions and hunt otter on the bay. Three years after Rezanov's visit to San Francisco, the Russian-American Company sent a preliminary expedition to Bodega Bay, about fifty miles north of San Francisco. For most of 1809 the surrounding lands were explored and the ship returned with 2,000 otter skins. By 1812 two colonies were established—Bodega Bay for otter hunting and, eighteen miles to the north, Fort Ross, an agricultural post. Initially Fort Ross housed ninety-five Russians and eighty Aleuts, making the little fort larger than any Spanish *presidio* in California.

For the next ten years an uneasy peace prevailed between Russian and Spanish California. The Russians were repeatedly asked to leave, and they in turn replied with equivocations, complaining they could not understand demands made in an unfamiliar language. Trade with Fort Ross, at first unthinkable, became a necessity after 1808 when Spain's always flimsy grip on Alta California was severed

by the French invasion of Spain, ending the dispatching of supply ships from San Blas. Mexico had no military or economic support to lend, for it was embroiled in a revolution begun by Father Miguel Hidalgo in 1810. California's military leaders, reduced to wearing rags and eating what the mission *padres* doled out, acknowledged that trade with Fort Ross could provide at least some of life's essentials. "Necessity makes licit what is not licit by law," admitted Gobernador Argüello. From San Francisco to San Diego, the declining fortunes of Spain were seen as no more than a temporary wrinkle of fate—surely the order of the king would soon be re-established throughout his possessions and the Russians would be driven out.

Against this backdrop of colonial intrigue sailed the *Rurik* in 1816. A round-the-world expedition launched from St. Petersburg in July 1815, the *Rurik* was sponsored by Count Nikolai Rumjanzoff, the recently retired chancellor of the Russian Empire. It had two stated goals—to explore the islands of the South Pacific and to search for a passage to the Atlantic around the tip of Alaska. It also sailed with a third, ulterior objective—to intimidate Californian officials with a show of Russian strength.

The *Rurik* itself seemed unimpressive—a modest, 180-ton, two-masted brig commanded by a twenty-six-year-old German lieutenant named Otto von Kotzebue. In reality, the expedition of the *Rurik* set a new standard of efficiency, free from traditional naval practices. The small size of the ship was ideal for sailing through ice-covered arctic seas. With a tiny crew of only thirty-one (including a surgeon, an artist, and two naturalists), it could carry state-of-the-art navigational devices and plenty of anti-scorbutic rations with no worry of overcrowding. In fifteen months at sea it had sailed from its home port of Kronstadt through the Baltic Sea, across the Atlantic Ocean, around Cape Horn, through the South Seas, and up the Pacific Coast to the Bering Strait. It was there that depleted supplies required the *Rurik* to head back down the coast to San Francisco.

The chief naturalist of the expedition, Adelbert von Chamisso, a literate scientist and poet with a wry sense a humor, kept a personal

diary of the expedition. He was born in Château de Boncourt in Champagne in 1781, the youngest son of a count from the highest strata of the French aristocracy. His family was forced into exile during the French Revolution, their cattle destroyed and lands confiscated. Chamisso's youth was spent traveling extensively through Europe, staying at Liège, Aachen, the Hague, Düsseldorf, Würzburg, and Bavaria before moving permanently to Berlin in 1796. Notwithstanding a French background and education, he came to identify strongly with his adopted country and entered the Prussian army as an ensign in 1798. More interested in science and literature than politics or war, he turned down a comfortable future as an officer in 1809 to study botany and zoology at the University of Berlin. He also tried his hand at writing—his fable *Peter Schlemihl's Wonderful History*, the story of a man who sells his shadow and wanders from place to place in a pair of seven-league boots, was published to wide acclaim a few months before Chamisso signed up for the *Rurik* expedition.

Onboard the *Rurik*, Chamisso collected and named hundreds of unusual plants and flowers from all over the world. His most famous find was the golden poppy (later designated the state flower of California), which he named *Eschscholtzia californica* in honor of the *Rurik*'s surgeon, Johann Friedrich Eschscholtz. Chamisso's assistant, a twenty-year-old Russian artist named Louis Choris, made evocative sketches of the landscapes and native peoples he encountered during the trip that are today perhaps the *Rurik*'s most important legacy.

The *Rurik* left San Francisco on November 1, 1816, and visited the Hawaiian Islands for three weeks. Hawaii, like California, was undergoing a gradual but relentless transformation in the early nineteenth century as European and American traders and explorers unwittingly introduced diseases that devastated its native population. After 1820, American missionaries and planters would establish extensive sugar plantations on the islands and come to increasingly dominate Hawaii's economy, religion, and government. Anglo-Americans were also expanding across North America in these years,

using dubious treaties, violence, and sheer numbers to overrun and usurp vast tracts of Native American lands. In 1803, the Louisiana Purchase extended the U.S. border to the Rocky Mountains, encouraging westward migration and notions of “manifest destiny.” In short, the Europeanization process that was reshaping California was by no means exceptional.

Chamisso pleaded with Kotzebue to allow him to spend a year at Hawaii so he could study in depth the native languages and literature of the islands before they disappeared. Kotzebue refused, but Chamisso obtained enough information to later compile a book on Hawaiian grammar. The *Rurik* returned to Europe in August 1818, almost three years after it left. Chamisso went on to become director of Berlin’s Royal Herbarium and an accomplished lyrical poet. His poetic cycle *Frauenliebe und Leben* was later made famous when set to music by German composer Robert Schumann. Chamisso died in Berlin in 1838. His private diary of the voyage of the *Rurik* was published the following year. This excerpt from his diary begins on October 2, 1816.

ADELBERT VON CHAMISSO

from *A Voyage Around the World*

On October 2, 1816, at four o’clock in the afternoon, we sail into San Francisco harbor. There is great activity in the fort on the southern entrance of the channel. They hoist their flag, we show ours, which does not seem to be known here, and salute the Spanish flag with seven guns, which, according to Spanish regulation, are returned with two fewer. We drop anchor in front of the *presidio*, and no boat pushes out from the shore to come to us, because Spain does not have a single boat on this bay.

I was immediately ordered to accompany Lieutenant Shishmarev to the *presidio*. Lieutenant Don Luís de Argüello<sup>1</sup>—after the death of the colonel, the interim commandant—received us in an exceptionally friendly manner, immediately saw to the most pressing needs of the *Rurik* by sending fruit and vegetables on board, and on the same evening, sent a messenger to the governor of New California in Monterey to report our arrival to him.

On the next morning (the 3rd) I met Artillery Officer Don Miguel de la Luz Gómez and a pater of the local mission, who came aboard ship just as I was about to go to the *presidio* on an errand of the captain’s. I accompanied them on board; they were the bearers of the friendliest promises of assistance on the part of the commandant and the very powerful mission. The clerical gentleman also invited us to the mission of San Francisco on the following day,

<sup>1</sup>Luis Antonio Argüello, now age thirty-two, was officially appointed *comandante* of San Francisco *presidio* a few months after Chamisso’s visit, a post he held until becoming *gobernador* in 1822.



Adelbert von Chamisso (1781–1838). Courtesy of the California Historical Society, North Baker Research Library, FN-31309.

which was a saint's festival day, for which purpose we would find riding horses ready. At the express wish of the captain, we were most abundantly supplied with beef cattle and vegetables. In the afternoon the tents were set up on the land, as were the observatory and the Russian bath. In the evening we paid the commandant a visit. Eight guns were fired from the *presidio* to receive the captain.

But it was not these superfluous courtesy guns that the captain desired, but rather the two that were still owed to the Russian flag, and he insisted tenaciously upon their delivery. There were long negotiations on this subject, and only against his will and under compulsion (I don't know, but it took a command from the governor) did Don Luís de Argüello finally agree to provide belatedly the two missing cannon shots. Also, one of our crew had to be sent to the fort to repair the line for hoisting the flag, for it had broken when last used, and there was no one among the inhabitants who could climb up the pole to fix it.

The feast of St. Francis [October 9] gave us the opportunity to observe the missionaries at their work and the peoples to whom they are sent when these peoples are in a subjugated condition<sup>2</sup>....

Here, as in Chile, the captain was able to accustom the commandant and his officers to our table. We dined on land under the tent, and our friends of the *presidio* were usually not slow in arriving. This relationship occurred almost automatically. The misery in which they had been wallowing for six to seven years, forgotten and forsaken by Mexico, the motherland, did not permit them to be

<sup>2</sup>In his "Notes and Opinions," Chamisso had this to say about the mission *padres*: "The contempt that the missionaries feel toward the peoples to whom they are sent seems to us to be an unhappy circumstance in view of their pious purpose. None of them seem to have concerned themselves with their history, customs, beliefs, or languages. 'They are unreasoning savages and there is no more to be said about them!'" *Rurik* artist Louis Choris noted that "severe fevers occur constantly among the [mission] Indians. These maladies commonly carry off a great number....I have never seen one laugh. I have never seen one look [you] in the face. They look as though they were interested in nothing."



Indian neophytes gambling at Mission San Francisco de Asís, 1816, by Louis Choris. Courtesy of the California Historical Society, Templeton Crocker Collection, FN-30509.

hosts, and the need to pour out their hearts in speech impelled them to approach us, as life was easy and pleasant with us. They spoke only with bitterness of the missionaries, who in the face of a deficiency in imported goods nonetheless enjoyed a superfluity of the products of the earth and would let them have nothing now that their money had run out, except in return for a promissory note—and, even so, only what is absolutely necessary to maintain life, among which things bread and flour are not included. For years they had lived on maize, without seeing bread. Even the detachments of soldiers who are placed in every mission for their protection were only provided with absolute essentials against promissory notes. “Our leaders are too good!” cried Don Miguel, meaning the commandant. “They should requisition, demand that they provide what we need!” One soldier went even further and complained to us that the commandant would not permit them to secure natives in order to get them to work for them, as they did in the missions. It also

caused dissatisfaction that the new governor of Monterey, Don Pablo Vicente de Solá,<sup>3</sup> since he assumed office had wished to oppose smuggling, which is the only way they have of obtaining their most essential necessities.

On October 8 the courier came back from Monterey. He brought the captain a letter from the governor, announcing his imminent arrival in San Francisco. In accordance with Mr. von Kotzebue’s wish, Don Luís de Argüello had been empowered to send a messenger to Mr. Kuskov<sup>4</sup> in Port Bodega, and the captain wrote to the latter in order to draw from his flourishing trading center some of the things that were beginning to be lacking on the *Rurik*.

“Mr. Kuskov,” says Mr. von Kotzebue, “Mr. Kuskov, agent of the Russian-American Company, settled at Bodega at the command of Mr. [Aleksandr] Baranov, who is the head of all the possessions in America, in order to provide the possessions of the company with supplies.” But Bodega, situated about thirty miles, a half-day’s journey, north of San Francisco, was counted by Spain, not without some appearance of justice, as part of its territory; and on Spanish territory, therefore, Mr. Kuskov, with twenty Russians and fifty Kadiakans [Kodiakans], had erected a fort in the midst of peace, a fort that was equipped with a dozen cannon, and there he practiced agriculture, possessed horses, cattle, sheep, a windmill, etc. He had a trading center there for smuggling with the Spanish harbors, and from there he sent out his Kadiakans each year to catch a few thousand sea otters along the California coast, the skins of which, according to [Louis] Choris, who may have been well informed, were sold in Canton [China] at an average price of sixty *piastres*, thirty-five *piastres* for the poorer skins and seventy-five for

<sup>3</sup> Pablo Vicente de Solá (1761–ca. 1826), a fierce royalist, was California’s last Spanish *gobernador* (1814–1822).

<sup>4</sup> Ivan Aleksandrovich Kuskov, an official with the Russian-American Fur Company, was Fort Ross’s manager.

the better ones. It was only regrettable that the port of Bodega could only take ships that did not draw more than nine feet of water.

It does not seem incomprehensible to me that the governor, when he obtained late information about this settlement, was outraged about it. Different steps were taken to force Mr. Kuskov to vacate the premises. For everything they directed toward him, he had referred the Spanish authorities to Mr. Baranov, who had sent him there and at whose command, in case they could get him to make it, he would very gladly withdraw again. This is the way matters stood when we entered San Francisco. The governor now placed his hopes in us. I, too, will have conferences and negotiations to talk about and shall reveal to the world the memorable events of my diplomatic career. But we haven't gotten to this point yet.

On October 9 some Spaniards were shipped to the northern shore to use the *lasso* to catch some horses for the courier to be sent to Mr. Kuskov, and I seized the opportunity to look around over there.... The year was already old, and the area—which in the spring months, the way Langsdorff saw it, should resemble a flower garden—now offered the botanist nothing but a dry, dead field. In a swamp in the vicinity of our tents, a water plant is said to have been green, and [*Rurik* surgeon Johann Friedrich] Eschscholtz asked me about its pedigree. I hadn't noticed it, but he had calculated that a water plant, my special fancy, would not have escaped me and so had not wanted to get his feet wet. That's the kind of thing you can expect from your closest friend.

On the naked plain that lies at the foot of the *presidio*, farther to the east, a solitary oak tree stands in the midst of a shorter growth of brush. Recently my young friend Adolph Erman saw it too; if he had observed it more closely he would have found my name carved in its bark.

On October 15 the courier dispatched to Kuskov returned; and on the evening of the 16th, artillery salvos from the *presidio*

and the fort announced the arrival of the governor [Solá] from Monterey. Right after that a messenger came down from the *presidio* to request the help of our physician for two men who had been dangerously wounded firing off a cannon. Eschscholtz immediately acceded to the request.

On the morning of the 17th Mr. von Kotzebue waited on board ship for the first visit of the governor of the province, and the governor in turn, an old man and an officer of higher rank, waited in the *presidio* for the first visit of Lieutenant von Kotzebue. The captain was notified by chance that he was expected in the *presidio*, whereupon he sent me to the *presidio* with the unpleasant task of politely telling the governor that he, the captain, had been informed that he, the governor, wished to visit him on board this morning and that he expected him. I found the little man in dress uniform and all his decorations, except for a sleeping cap, which he still wore on his head, ready to take it off in time. I discharged my task to the best of my ability and saw the little man's face lengthen three times its normal size. He bit his lip and said he regretted that he could not bear the sea before eating and that he was sorry that for now he must forego the pleasure of meeting the captain. I saw it coming that the old man would mount his horse and start out again on his trip back through the wilderness to Monterey without having accomplished his mission, for it could not be assumed that Mr. von Kotzebue, once the rift had been expressed, could give in.

Pondering this, I slunk down to the beach again, when a good genius intervened and, before unpleasantness could occur, sealed the prevailing peace with the fairest bonds of friendship. The morning had gone by, and the hour came when Mr. von Kotzebue had to go ashore to sight the noonday sun and wind his chronometers. The lookouts in the *presidio* reported that the captain was coming, and when he stepped ashore, the governor strode down the incline toward him. He in turn ascended the incline toward the governor's

reception, and Spain and Russia fell into each other's open arms halfway toward each other.

A meal was served under our tent, and in the matter of Port Bodega, which was discussed, the captain had the opportunity to regret that he was without instructions to counter the wrong that had been imposed against Spain. From that port a large baidare arrived on this day and brought everything from Mr. Kuskov that the captain had requested. With this same baidare, which returned on the next day, the 18th, Mr. von Kotzebue, in the governor's name, requested Mr. Kuskov to appear in San Francisco for a conference.

On the 18th we did not see the governor, who perhaps expected a state visit in the *presidio*. On the 19th we dined in the *presidio*, and artillery salvos accompanied the toast to the alliance of the sovereigns and the friendship of the nations. On the 20th we were again the hosts at noon and danced in the *presidio* in the evening. When the eight o'clock bell sounded, the music was silent for a while, and the evening prayer was read in the silence.

Mr. von Kotzebue was prepossessingly charming in social intercourse, and Don Pablo Vicente de Solá, who was very much a stickler for formalities and had eschewed any deficiency of them, had been consoled in this respect and now devoted himself completely to us. The popular spectacle here of a fight between a bear and a bull was promised to us. On the 21st ten to twelve soldiers went over to the mission on the northern shore—in the longboat—in order to *lasso* bears there. Some claimed that in the late evening they heard cries from the direction of the sea, which were interpreted as coming from the bear hunters on that coast; however, no campfire could be seen. The Indians are said to be able to raise a very piercing scream.

Not until the evening of the 22nd did the hunters bring in a very small she-bear. They had also caught a larger bear, but too far away from the sea for them to transport it to the shore. The animal,



"Dance of the California Indians at the Mission of San Francisco," 1816, by Louis Choris, twenty-year-old artist of the *Rurik* expedition. *Courtesy of the California Historical Society, North Baker Research Library, Templeton Crocker Collection, FN-00963.*

which was to fight the next day, stayed overnight in the longboat; and contrary to custom, its head and mouth were kept free so that it would stay fresher. The governor spent the whole day, noon and evening, in our tents. At night, on the land behind the harbor, great fires burned. The natives are in the habit of burning the grass in order to further its growth.

On the 23rd the bear-baiting took place on the beach. Unwilling and bound as the animals were, the spectacle had nothing great or uplifting about it. One must pity the poor creatures that are so shamefully treated. I was in the *presidio* with Gleb Simonovich for the evening. The governor had just received the news that the ship from Acapulco, which had stayed away for so many years, had finally again sailed into Monterey to provide California with supplies. Along with this news he also received at the same time the latest newspapers from Mexico. He shared these papers with me, to whom he showed himself inclined and obliging at every opportunity....

Don Pablo Vicente, when he descended the hill to our tents, once brought a present *a su amigo* Don Adelberto, a flower, which he had plucked by the wayside and which he solemnly handed to me, the botanist. By chance it was our cinquefoil or five-finger (*Potentilla anserina*), as beautiful as it could grow near Berlin.

In Monterey at the time, there were prisoners of various nations, whom smuggling and sea otter hunting had enticed to seek adventure on these coasts, and these few individuals were paying for the derelictions of others. Among them were a few Aleuts or Kadiakans, with whom seven years ago an American sea captain had engaged in otter hunting in the Spanish harbors of this coast. The Russians not only misuse these northern peoples, they also deliver them over to others for misuse. I have even encountered dislodged Kadiakans in the Sandwich Islands. Among the prisoners in Monterey was a certain Mr. John Elliot de Castro, of whom I shall have more to say further on. After many adventures as supercargo of a ship of the Russian-American Company sent out to smuggle from Sitka by Mr. Baranov, he and others of the crew had fallen into the hands of the Spaniards. Besides the prisoners there were three other Russians there, former servants of the Russian-American Company who had deserted the settlement at Port Bodega and now, missing the language and customs of home, regretted having taken the step.

Don Pablo Vicente de Solá offered to deliver the Russians—among whom the Aleuts and Kadiakans also were numbered—to the captain, while he refused them to Mr. Kuskov. It does not seem that the Spaniards asked any service of or received any advantage from these people, whom foreign greed had deprived of their homeland to profit from their strength here. The king of Spain gave recompense, or was supposed to give recompense, of one-and-one-half *reales* a day for each prisoner of war. The captain, limited by circumstances, could take only the three Russian deserters on board

and offer Mr. Elliot passage to the Sandwich Islands, from where he could easily get to Sitka or wherever else he chose. The governor sent for these Russians, and when they had arrived he handed them over to Mr. von Kotzebue after he had demanded and received from him his word of honor that they, who had sought and found protection in Spain, should not be punished in any way for this. I found his behavior on this occasion very noble.

Among these Russians there was one, Ivan Strogonov, an old man, who was sincerely happy to have come among his compatriots again. As he was hardly fit for duty as a seaman, the captain earmarked him for duty in the main cabin and made this known to us. On the last days we spent in port, he was sent out to hunt. The poor wretch! On the eve of departure his powder horn exploded, and he was brought back mortally wounded. He wanted only to die among Russians. The captain kept him on board out of pity, and he died on the third day of the passage. He was quietly lowered into the sea, and with him went the last hope our boots had of ever being polished again. Peace be with you, Ivan Strogonov!

But I am getting ahead of myself; let me turn back.

On October 25 Mr. Kuskov arrived from Port Bodega with seven small baidares. A clever man, capable in every way of taking care of his affairs.

On the 26th the diplomatic conference took place in the *presidio*. Don Pablo Vicente de Solá, governor of New California, elucidated fully Spain's indisputable right to the territory occupied by the Russian settlement under Mr. Kuskov and called upon Mr. Kuskov to vacate the area occupied counter to international law. Mr. Kuskov, agent of the Russian-American Trading Company and supervisor of the settlement at Port Bodega, without going into the question of law, which was not his concern, manifested the greatest willingness to depart from Port Bodega as soon as he was empowered to do so by his superior, Mr. Baranov, who had ordered





Indians at Mission San Francisco de Asís, 1816, by Louis Choris. Courtesy of the California Historical Society, Templeton Crocker Collection, FN-30510.

him here. Thereupon the governor called upon Mr. von Kotzebue to intervene in the name of the tsar and effect the evacuation of Bodega. Otto von Kotzebue, lieutenant in the Imperial Russian navy and captain of the *Rurik*, declared himself to be without jurisdiction to act in this case, even though the justice of the case seemed so clear that it merely had to be stated to be recognized. And so then we were as far as we had been before.

Hereupon it was decided to issue a statement about the day's negotiations and the state of affairs and to send it, *in duplo*, signed and sealed by all participants in said negotiations, to the two high sovereigns: His Majesty, the tsar of Russia, through the captain of the *Rurik*; and His Majesty, the king of Spain, through the governor of New California.

The editing of this document, I, as interpreter, had to supervise. I discarded the first draft, in which I felt that something was missing. "For," I said to Don Pablo Vicente, "by bringing this matter to the



Indians' feather headdresses, 1816, by Louis Choris. Courtesy of the California Historical Society, North Baker Research Library, Templeton Crocker Collection, FN-31034.

thrones of the high sovereigns and expecting to secure an alleviation of this wrong and the punishment of the servants responsible for it from the tsar of Russia himself, you are divesting yourself of the right that you indisputably have of taking action into your own hands against the invader, and then must not anticipate the high decision of the monarchs."

Pablo Vicente de Solá had no objection to this. He praised my insight, had the statement rewritten, and when it was signed in the *presidio* on the evening of the 28th, he gave his solemn word of honor not to undertake any act of force on his own initiative against the aforesaid Kuskov and the Russian settlement in Port Bodega and to leave affairs *in statu quo* until the decision of the high courts was made. I signed the document *en clase de intérprete*, as interpreter.

I do not mean to boast about this turn of things. For even if the good Don Pablo Vicente de Solá had not sworn this oath, he

would hardly have opened hostilities and undertaken a campaign against the Russian fort at Port Bodega.

I have heard that the said statement did not fail to reach its real destination in St. Petersburg and, without ever being acted upon, was consigned to the files in the appropriate ministry. But a Russian order of merit is said to have been sent to Don Pablo Vicente de Solá, Gobernador de la Nueva California. I received a fine otter skin from Mr. Kuskov as a gift of recognition, and you can have it displayed to you in the Berlin Zoological Museum, to which I donated it.

An immediate consequence of the conference of October 26 was not a favorable one for the *Rurik*. The negotiations had stretched out beyond the noon hour, and someone else had wound up the chronometers for the captain. He confided to me that hereafter the large chronometer had changed its operation to such an extent that he must consider it ruined.

Spain's claims to the territory of this coast were not esteemed any more highly by the Americans and English than they were by the Russians. The mouth of the Columbia River was also counted by Spain as part of its territory. The history of the settlement there the Spaniards and Mr. Elliot both told in about the same way. The Americans from New York had gone there partly by land and partly by sea and founded a settlement. During the war between England and America [War of 1812], the frigate *Raccoon*, Captain Black, was sent out to take possession of this post. The English merchants from Canada went there by land, and when the warship that threatened the colony was in sight of the harbor, for the sake of a prize of money—50,000 pounds sterling—they took possession of the colony and raised the English flag. A land trade route is supposed to connect the Columbia with Canada. I merely report what I have heard.

The time of our stay in California had run out. On October 26, a Sunday, after a ride to the mission, there was a festive farewell dinner in our tents. The *Rurik's* artillery roared an accompaniment

to the toast to the alliance of the monarchs and the peoples and to the health of the governor. A good missionary had dipped his cloak too deeply into the blood of the grapes and swayed visibly under the burden.

On the 28th camp was struck, and the tents brought aboard ship again. While we sealed our statement in the *presidio*, Mr. Kuskov, with the foreknowledge of Mr. von Kotzebue, had sent two baidares out to catch otters at the rear of the bay.

On the 29th Mr. Kuskov left early in the morning with his flotilla of baidares for Bodega on the one hand, and on the other, later in the day Don Pablo Vicente de Solá left for Monterey. The latter took our letters for transshipment to Europe, the last our friends received from us on our voyage. With them our trail vanished. For when in the fall of 1817 we did not return to Kamchatka, in Europe they gave us up for lost.

On the 30th all animals were aboard and vegetables in great abundance. At the same time a terrible number of flies came aboard, thickening the air. We had taken on fresh water, which in this port, especially in the summer, is a difficult business. We were obliged to the governor for a cask of wine from Monterey. Our friends from the *presidio* dined with us at noon on the *Rurik*. We were ready to sail.

On the 31st our friends were still with us for a last farewell, and some of us rode to the mission in the afternoon. Late in the evening Mr. John Elliot de Castro arrived, still undecided whether he would take advantage of the captain's offer or not. He finally decided to accept.

On November 1, 1816, All Saints' Day, at nine o'clock in the morning, we weighed anchor while our friends were in church. We saw them arrive at the fort just as we sailed past. They hoisted the Spanish flag to the accompaniment of a one-gun salute; we did the same with ours. They saluted us first with seven guns, which we returned shot for shot.

## *A World Transformed*

The water of the harbor of San Francisco was highly phosphorescent from very fine particles of light, and even the surf on the beach of the coast outside of the bay unrolled with a perceptible shimmer. I examined the water of the harbor under the microscope and observed in it small amounts of exceptionally small infusoria, to which I however cannot ascribe the luminescence.

Here we daily observed the play of the banks of fog, which were blown across the sun-drenched land by the prevailing sea breeze, where they broke apart and became dissipated. The spectacle that they prepared for us upon departure was especially fine, as they first enshrouded and then unveiled various peaks and areas of the coast.