FOUR

Muchos Pocos Hacen Un Mucho

In the three days since Trinidad disappeared astern *Joshua* has crossed a square predicted on the Pilot Chart as having 5 per cent calms. And yet, the average was 148 miles a day. For the horse latitudes that is real luck. She is heading SE, leaving to the north two other squares marked 6 per cent calms, with a strong predominance of contrary winds predicted as well as the damned calms.

By now, the wind has eased a little, but the sails are full and *Joshua* is still moving fast on a broad reach, not tossing at all in the nearly following swell.

The log turns steadily. Before I left, I could not see the point of continually towing a log in the middle of the ocean, wearing out the mechanism for nothing. I find a log most useful when nearing the capes or in coastal sailing, where accurate dead reckoning is essential.[1]

Nonetheless, I promised the Vion company to tow the log during the whole trip, to test out their equipment. I do not regret it, because the log helps me trim the sails to their optimum. A variation of a quarter of a knot is hard to feel; the log picks it up. And a quarter of a knot means six extra miles in 24 hours. The overall average has risen to 129.5.

On October 3 the log turns more slowly; on the 4th, not at all. It recorded barely 93 and 23 miles for those two days. The overall average falls abruptly to 126.2 because of a two day bummer. Actually, it is not so bad. The wind has really treated us very well since Trinidad. *Joshua* is in the horse latitudes, and

[1] In working a celestial sight, one can base the calculation on an estimated position that is completely absurd; the position line will bring the boat back to her true location. If the intercept is too long one need only redo the calculation using the new estimated position, which will be more accurate than that shown by the log, especially after a meridian sight. Just for fun, I have sometimes deliberately picked a position 600 miles off. In two calculations (easily done with the HO 249 tables) the boat took her true position on the chart.

it is natural that the normally prevailing conditions return. Flat calm now. A long SW swell moves across the sea, with a shorter one from the south. In addition, the sky was covered with cirrus yesterday, with lots of altocumulus this morning. These signs all point to an early return of the wind.

I pull on my wetsuit. Now is a good time to take care of the gooseneck barnacles, which have probably thrived since the Equator, and must slow us down somewhat in light airs. They are crustaceans with a peduncle long enough to keep their branchiae out of the toxic zone of the best antifouling paints. The few I find are big ones, especially on the zinc anodes which protect the hull from electrolysis, and under those parts of the keel that could not be treated when I hauled out at Toulon in June.

The sea ripples, and the wind rises again. It blows gently from the SW for the first time; force 2 then a nice steady force 4. Fantastic, in only 26° south latitude!

Joshua gets all the right cards: 110 miles covered by the October 5 sight, 147 next day, 143 on the 7th.

The sea has got cooler, and I have two sweaters and a pair of wool trousers on. The 484 sq. ft genoa is back in its bag, replaced by the little 161 sq. ft jib, with the storm jib on the pulpit, all ready to use.

To think we have actually caught the westerlies where there are normally calms and SE winds! The barometer is falling slightly, so it is going to last. I spend a lot of time on deck adjusting the sheets to make the most of this miracle.

Racing? Yes!—racing the seasons. Hitting all three capes at their best times is not possible, so you try to press on to avoid reaching the Horn during the southern autumn. If everything goes according to schedule *Joshua* will round Good Hope a little early in the season (no choice), Leeuwin and New Zealand just right, and the Horn still at a good time. There's no sense in thinking about that for the moment; it's still too far ahead. I just have to get my boat to do her best.

I hoisted the 75 sq. ft storm jib in addition to the big 194 sq. ft staysail, and a second 54 sq. ft storm jib as a bonnet under the main boom. While I watch the log turn, I watch the wake, I heave on the staysail halyard just a bit. . .no, too much. . .I slack it half an inch. . .there, it's perfect now, and the staysail draws all the wind of the sky and turns it into flecks of foam