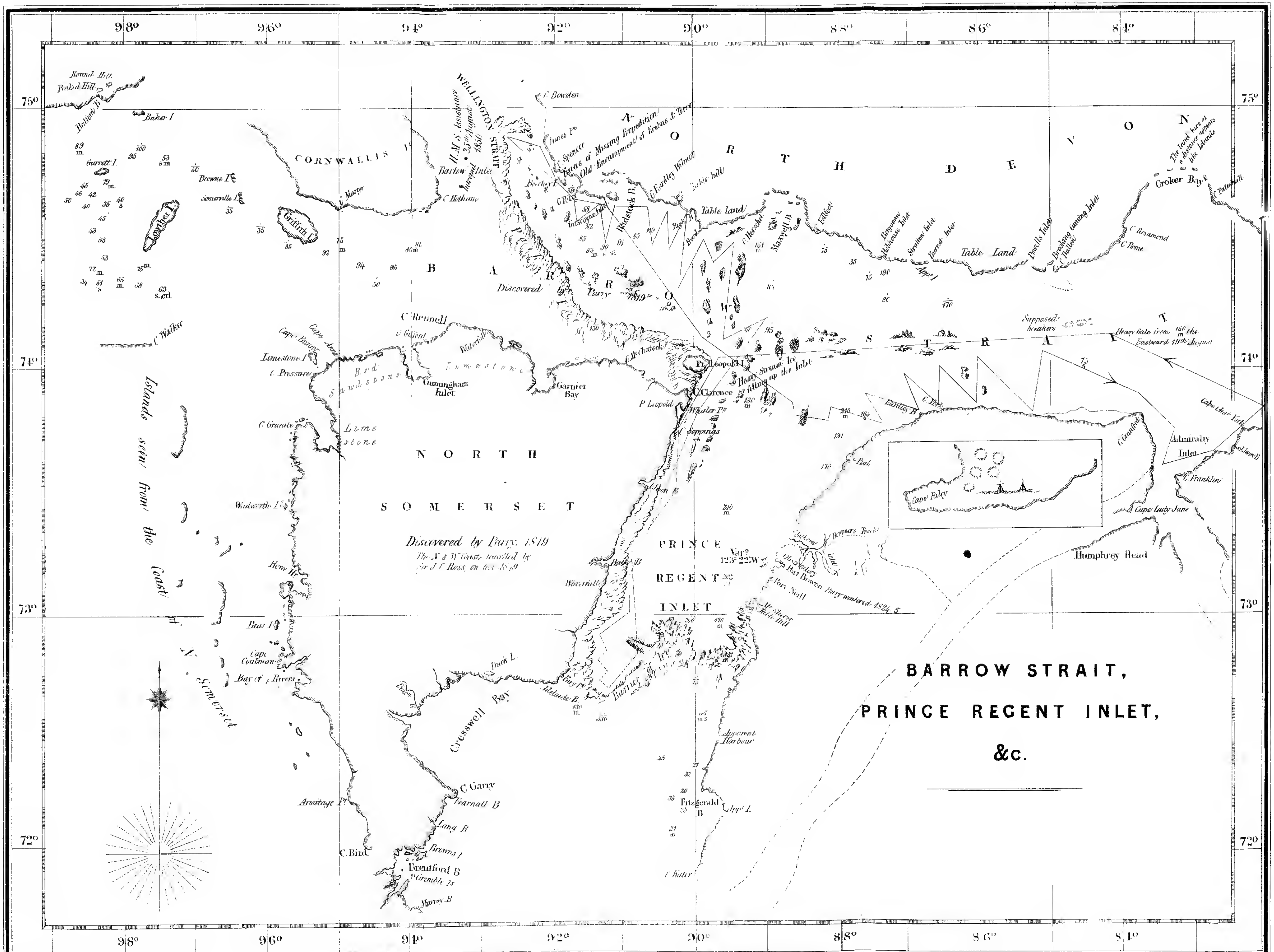
BARROW STRAIT,
PRINCE REGENT INLET,
&c.
NORTH DEVON
BARROW STRAIT
NORTH SOMERSET
Discovered by Parry 1819
The N & W Coasts travelled by Sir J C Ross, on foot 1849
PRINCE REGENT INLET
CORNWALLIS I.
WELLINGTON STRAIT
H.M.S. Assistance & Intrepid 25th August 1850
Traces of Missing Expedition
Old Encampment of Erebus & Terror
Discovered by Parry 1819
Islands seen from the Coast of N. Somerset
Round Hill
Peaked Hill
Bedford B
Baker I
Garrett I.
Browne I.
Somerville I.
Lowther I.
Griffith I.
C Martyr
C Hotham
Barlow Inlet
C Bowden
Innes Pt
C Spencer
Beechey I.
C Riley
Gascoyne Inlet
Radstock B
C Eardley Wilmot
Table hill
Table land
Rigby B
C Herschel
Maxwell B
C Fellfoot
Bowman Hobhouse Inlet
Stratton Inlet
Barnet Inlet
Table Land
Powells Inlet
Brooking Canning Inlet
C Bullen
C Rosamond
C Home
Croker Bay
C Paterhall
The land here at a distance appears like Islands
Supposed breakers
Heavy Gale from the Eastward 19th August
C Walker
C Rennell
C Gifford
Cape Bunny
Cape Anne
Limestone I
C Pressure
Red Sandstone
Gunningham Inlet
Waterfall
Limestone
Garnier Bay
C McClintock
Pr. Leopold I.
Heavy Stream Ice filling up the Inlet
C. Clarence
P Leopold
Whaler Pt
C Seppings
Earnley B
C. York
C Crawford
Admiralty Inlet
Cape Chas York
C Franklin
Cape Lady Jane
Humphrey Head
Cape Riley
C Granite
Lime stone
Whitworth I.
Howe Hr
Bear I
Cape Coutman
Bay of 4 Rivers
Elwin B
Batty B
Waterfalls
Var. 123° 22' W
Jackson Inlet
Beppners Tracks
Observatory
Port Bowen Parry wintered 1824. 5
Port Neill
Mt Sherer Table Hill
Duck L.
Cresswell Bay
Fury Pt
Adelaide B.
Barrier of Ice
Apparent Harbour
Fitzgerald B
Appt I.
C Kater
C Garry
Fearnall B
Lang B
Browns I
Brentford B
Gramble Is
Murray B
Armitage Pt
C. Bird
Peak
98° 96° 94° 92° 90° 88° 86° 84°
75° 74° 73° 72°

Basire lith

THE SEARCH

FOR

SIR JOHN FRANKLIN.

A LECTURE DELIVERED

AT

THE RUSSELL INSTITUTION.

JANUARY 15, 1851.

BY CHARLES RICHARD WELD.

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THE SEARCH

FOR

SIR JOHN FRANKLIN.

It is not without some sorrow and regret that I address you; for in undertaking to guide you for a brief space of time through the intricacies of the Arctic Seas explored by our countrymen, you may well conceive how much more agreeable my task would be, were it in my power to show you how the fortitude and heroism of British seamen had triumphed over formidable difficulties, and had rescued from the icy jaws of death that gallant band who adventured forth in the fulness of hope to add renown to their country by discovering the North-West Passage.

But although this pleasure is denied me, I feel persuaded that you will share my feelings of gratitude and happiness, that men have volunteered in numbers, far exceeding the requirements of the enterprise, willing and ready to peril their lives in the endeavour to perform one of the noblest duties of man—the relief of brethren in misfortune; and I venture to hope that some account of their efforts will cause you to regard the time which you devote in listening to me as not altogether unprofitably spent.

You are all doubtless aware, that from the period when the North American Continent became better known to us by the spirit of northern enterprise, which has rendered famous the names of Zeno, Gomez, Cabot, and others, the discovery of a passage from Europe to India, through the seas which bound the coast of North America, was the favourite project of many maritime nations.

Monarchs were eager patrons of bold navigators who launched their barks into those unknown seas; and our own Elizabeth stands honourably recorded as contributing the sum of £4000 to Frobisher's expeditions, which

had for their main object the discovery of a North-West passage to Eastern Asia.

The repeated endeavours and failures to achieve this important object did not damp the ardour of succeeding mariners, who by continually adding to our knowledge of the seas and lands of the Arctic regions, kept alive the fond hope that the coveted route to the land of pearls and spices would surely be discovered.

The passing of an Act of Parliament, in the latter part of the 18th century, offering a reward of £20,000 for the discovery of any northern passage by sea between the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans, tended considerably to fortify this hope, and an expedition was fitted out under the command of Captain Cook, in which that celebrated navigator lost his life, for the express purpose of essaying the passage on the side of Behring's Straits; and so much hope was entertained of his getting through, that Lieutenant Pickersgill was sent with a ship to Baffin's Bay to await his arrival.

The failure of this expedition seems, however, to have deterred our Government from making any further attempt at that period

for the solving of this great geographical problem; and it was not until 1817, when authentic news reached England, that the vast fields of ice which had barred the eastern coast of Greenland for four centuries had given way, and that the Arctic seas had become much more open than they used to be, that discovery-ships were again sent out to those regions.

The Royal Society participated warmly in the projects and renewed efforts of the Admiralty, and although these were unrewarded by the desired success, they developed a passage through Barrow's Straits, extending half the distance between the entrance to Lancaster Sound and Behring's Straits.

I allude particularly to the expedition under the command of the present Sir Edward Parry, which discovered the Parry Islands, and passed a winter on Melville Island, and returned to England after an absence of eighteen months, with every officer and man, with only one exception, in as robust health as when they left their country.

It is almost unnecessary to state, that the time had long passed when such expeditions

as these were expected to develop commercial advantages. This hope had nerved our early voyagers to deeds of daring in the Arctic seas; but the nobler motives of science actuated their successors, and the result of later expeditions was the acquisition of much scientific knowledge, particularly as regards the gravity of the earth, and terrestrial magnetism, including the discovery of the magnetic pole, and extensive and complete information respecting the configuration of the north coast of America, and a portion of the lands and seas between it and Barrow's Straits.

A nation that has done so much towards developing and verifying the phenomena of terrestrial physics in the Arctic zone will ever hold a high place among the intellectual communities of the globe; but these are not the only results which have proceeded from our Arctic expeditions. It has been well said, that every line of march which a civilized being traces through a savage land is a rocket or light, which however rapid be its course, still leaves a few of its sparks behind. The presents made by the different expeditions to the Esquimaux are so many

good seeds, which will bear fruit in due season; and the acts of humanity and justice which the commanders and officers of those expeditions have displayed, have not been witnessed by the Indians without making a deep impression on their minds.

A beautiful illustration occurs in an anecdote related by Sir George Back, who, when on one of his Arctic journeys, was seen by the natives destroying the mosquitoes in his tent by the wholesale process of smoking.

Some Indians who were present remembered the forbearance of Sir John Franklin in previous expeditions, when teased beyond expression by the insects, and particularly when taking observations, he would quietly desist from his work, and patiently blow the half-gorged animals from his hands; and although several years had elapsed since that period, the act of mercy retained such a hold on the memory of the natives, that they broke forth into regrets that Captain Back should be so unlike the GREAT CHIEF who never destroyed a single mosquito.

Reverting to the more immediate subject of this Lecture, it will be seen that though

our information respecting the Arctic regions was greatly increased, the grand problem of the North-West Passage still remained in obscurity.

Such was the state of the question when, in December 1844, the late Sir John Barrow, who had devoted much time during his long official life of Secretary to the Admiralty, to the subject of a communication by sea between the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans, submitted a plan to the Admiralty, and to the Council of the Royal Society, strongly urging the desirableness of making one more attempt to discover the North-West Passage. He showed that Parry's voyage through Lancaster Sound to Melville Island had opened half the distance to Behring's Straits, and he argued that the remaining distance of about nine hundred miles could be accomplished by ships holding a course midway between Melville Island and the north coast of America.

After some correspondence between Lord Haddington, at that time First Lord of the Admiralty, and the late Marquis of Northampton, then President of the Royal Society, it was determined to equip an expedition for the

twofold purpose of endeavouring to discover the North-West passage, and of making magnetical observations.

Two ships, the 'Erebus' and 'Terror,' which had but recently returned from a voyage of discovery in the Antarctic Regions, were prepared for the service. The 'Erebus' carried twelve warrant and petty officers, and fifty-eight seamen and marines; the 'Terror,' eleven warrant and petty officers, and fifty-seven seamen and marines, making a total of one hundred and thirty-eight men. The ships were provided with every necessary for the service which the experience of previous expeditions suggested; but they differed in one respect from all other ships sent out to the Arctic Seas, being furnished with a small steam-engine and Archimedean screw.

The command was given to Sir John Franklin, and his official instructions directed him to proceed through Lancaster Sound and Barrow's Straits to Cape Walker, and to use every effort to penetrate from that point to Behring's Straits; but in case of being unable to effect this object, full liberty was allowed him to try any other passage.

On the 19th of May, 1845, the ships sailed

from the Thames; their voyage to Baffin's Bay was prosperous, and they were last seen all well on the 26th of July of the same year, moored to an iceberg in the middle of that bay, and about two hundred miles from the entrance to Lancaster Sound.

I have thought it unnecessary to enter more minutely into the equipment of this expedition, because, in a Lecture which has been published, and extensively circulated, I have dwelt at some length on this subject, and other channels of information have doubtless made you familiar with the leading facts connected with it.

The experience of Sir John Franklin, the energy and determination of his character, and of those under him, were sufficient guarantees that every possible exertion would be used to effect the grand object of the expedition; which, however, the most sanguine persons did not conceive could be accomplished in one season.

Indeed, Sir John himself appears to have fully dwelt on his labours being extended over even more than two seasons; for in a letter to Colonel Sabine, he expressly states his intention of prolonging the endeavour

beyond two years, should the state of his provisions, and the health of his crews justify it.

When, however, 1847 passed away without giving us any tidings of the explorers, it was deemed advisable to send in search of them; and as you may remember, three expeditions were organized in the early part of the following year; one to follow in the track of the 'Erebus' and 'Terror,' through Lancaster Sound; one to be sent to Behring's Straits, and the third, consisting of a boat party, to descend the Mackenzie, and search the American coast to the Coppermine River, leaving the coast to the west to be explored by boats belonging to the ships despatched to Behring's Straits.

The expedition to Lancaster Sound, comprising two ships, the 'Enterprise' and 'Investigator,' built expressly for the purpose, was naturally regarded with the greatest interest, which was increased by the knowledge that the command was entrusted to Sir James Ross, whose experience in the Arctic seas in every way entitled him to the position.

But the results were singularly barren.

The ships did not succeed in getting beyond Regent Inlet, at the western entrance of which they wintered. Failing at all other points, it became of the utmost consequence to reach Cape Walker, as that was one of the points at which Franklin had agreed to leave information of his movements; but the ice in the direction of the Cape was so "hummocky" and impracticable for travelling, that Sir James Ross was obliged to direct his walking party down the western side of North Somerset, which he explored as far as Point Armitage.

When the ships were liberated from Port Leopold, in the summer of 1849, Sir James Ross hoped to proceed to Cape Walker and Melville Island; but being met at the mouth of Regent Inlet by a vast body of pack-ice driving to the eastward, in which the vessels became imbedded, they were carried in their icy cradles along the southern shore of Lancaster Sound, and out into Baffin's Bay, from whence they sailed to England, bringing no intelligence whatever of the 'Erebus' and 'Terror.'

The exploration of the North American coast, between the Mackenzie and Copper-

mine rivers, which was entrusted to Sir John Richardson and Mr. Rae, was equally unprofitable. Those officers examined the shore for a distance, including the larger inflections of the coast line, of eight hundred miles, without finding any traces of the missing ships, or hearing any tidings of them from the numerous Esquimaux with whom they had interviews.

No better success attended the Behring's Straits' expedition. The ships 'Herald' and 'Plover,' under the command of Captain Kellett and Commander Moore, were unable, during the summer and autumn of 1849 and 1850, to penetrate further north than latitude 72° 51′, where they were arrested by a perfectly impenetrable pack of ice.

While beating about on the 17th of August, 1849, during a sharp squall and heavy snow, the exciting report of "land" was made from the mast-head, and the weather having cleared enabled the party to distinguish very extensive and high land to the northwards. A small island was reached by means of the boats, and taken possession of, and it proved a great disappointment to Captain Kellett, that he was unable to ascend

a mountain on the island, having an elevation of 1400 feet, from the summit of which, as he states, "much could have been seen, and all doubts set aside. It becomes," he adds, "a nervous thing to report a discovery of land in these regions without actually landing on it; but as far as a man can be certain who has one hundred and thirty pairs of eyes to assist him, and all agreeing, I am certain we have discovered an extensive land, and I think it is more than probable that the peaks we saw, are a continuation of the range of mountains seen off Cape Jakan, and mentioned by Baron Wrangel in his 'Polar Voyages.'"

This is rather subversive of the general opinion entertained among hydrographers respecting the Arctic Sea. Accounts have generally agreed as to the open nature of this sea, as seen from the north coast of America. But Captain Kellett, who must now be ranked as an Arctic officer of great experience, says: "I have no faith in the sea being clear at any time, by the fact of not seeing ice; for, in the Arctic seas, at least, packed ice cannot be seen in clear weather more than ten miles from a ship's mast-head.

"As for a polar basin," he adds, "there may be one, but well filled with lumps of ice. Wrangel's always coming to open water proves nothing, from the circumstance of ice not being seen for a greater distance than ten miles. Arctic voyagers can tell when they are approaching ice at a considerable distance by the blink, and also when near the pack, of open water by the sky. I have seen myself the blink very plain one dark night off Wainwright Inlet; but then I do not think I was more than ten miles from it."

The discovery of land, which there is every reason to believe is a continuation of that seen from Cape Jakan, gives a new complexion to the geography of this part of the Arctic regions, and tends still further to embarrass and complicate the question of the North-West passage by means of ships. For as the line of Banks, land looms to the west, it is quite possible that it may be connected with that discovered by Captain Kellett, in which case the existence of open water between Melville Island and Behring's Straits becomes more than ever problematical.

As the ships commanded by Captain Kel-

lett and Commander Moore, were enabled to make so little progress to the eastward; it was resolved to despatch a boat expedition along the coast from Wainwright Inlet, near Behring's Straits, to the Mackenzie. Lieutenant Pullen, of the 'Plover,' was appointed to this arduous duty, and his interesting narrative of its accomplishment forms another proud trophy of the heroism of our mariners. The distance, which, taking into account the inflections of the coast, cannot be less than nine hundred miles, was performed in four boats, with a crew, including officers, of twenty-five men, and provisions for seventy days. The gallant party left Wainwright Inlet on the night of the 25th of July, 1849; and after a voyage abounding in adventure and suffering, arrived at the mouth of a branch of the Mackenzie on the 27th of August.

Independently of the difficulties which they encountered in navigation, the Esquimaux proved on more than one occasion very troublesome, and it became necessary to resort to fire-arms, which happily had no effect beyond frightening them away.

Immense quantities of drift-wood were

always found on the shore, and it is stated, that the greatest enjoyment of the party was warming themselves before large fires made of this wood. Although successful in reaching the Mackenzie, the main object of the expedition, which was to gain intelligence of Sir John Franklin failed in all but negative results. "Every endeavour," says Commander Pullen, who, it may be mentioned, was promoted for his very arduous undertaking; "has been made to gain intelligence of our missing countrymen: and if I have at all deviated from my orders, it was with a firm conviction that I was doing all for the best. I have had little or no trouble with the natives in making them understand what we wanted; even those with whom we had the skirmish were questioned on our first meeting; and all that we have met have looked at us gravely, and with astonishment. Every corner, every part of the coast has been thoroughly searched, with the exception of Harrison's Bay; and there I should not think it likely they would go. All marks on the coast, and many poles have I seen and examined, taking us often very much out of our course, and giving us a wet walk; in fact,

I fear to say there is but little hope of any news of our gallant countrymen, at least, the way we have come. I have seen no difficulty in a proper ship, getting on by the same route as we have come, and can hardly think there is no deep channel into the Mackenzie, where such a rapid current is met with. Our boats I found very small for the voyage; if we could have kept the sea at times, we should have performed it in half the time. In the river work the men have been greatly at fault, particularly when we came to the tracking over large stones, our only way of getting on; and we arrived here very weary, the gentlemen and parties at the different ports wondering how we got on, and expressing astonishment at our small and deeply laden craft; nevertheless, they did do their work well. We all started with but little hope of getting thus far, and it was out of the question our taking sufficient clothing with so many other stores; and I know there was not a blanket among fourteen men."

This expedition, with that of Sir John Richardson, have swept the entire coast line of the North American continent from

Wainwright Inlet to the Coppermine River, except Harrison's Bay, and have been of great, though unfortunately, of negative utility, as they prove that our missing countrymen have not struck any portion of that coast.

The most promising attempt made in 1849, to succour our long lost friends, was, perhaps, that by Mr. Rae, who had been instructed by Sir John Richardson, to conduct an exploring party to the north of Wollaston and Victoria lands; regions wholly unexplored, and which it was supposed with much justice, might have been resorted to by the crews of the 'Erebus' and 'Terror.'

Mr. Rae left his winter quarters at Fort Confidence, on Great Bear Lake, on the 9th of June, 1849; and after a most harassing and dangerous voyage, during which his party incurred great dangers from the masses of drifting ice, they reached the mouth of the Coppermine River on the 14th of July. The sea was found encumbered by ice, but by making several portages, they contrived to attain Cape Krusenstern on the 30th of July. Here they were at the most convenient place for crossing to Wollaston Land, but the

icy condition of the sea was such as to bar all immediate hopes of effecting the passage. They consequently encamped and waited for the first favourable change in the ice. "Our situation," says Mr. Rae, "was most tantalizing to all the party; occasionally at turn of tide, a pool of water, a mile or more in extent, would appear near us, and everything would be prepared for embarkation at a minute's notice, in expectation of the opening increasing and permitting us to cross; but our hopes were always disappointed."

Animated however by that spirit of endurance which so eminently distinguishes Arctic voyagers, an effort was made to traverse the channel, and an advance effected of seven miles, when a stream of ice was met with so close-packed and rough that they could neither pass over nor through it. Thus foiled they were under the necessity of returning to the main land, and there being every appearance of an early winter, as the fine weather had broken up, although only the 22nd of August, Mr. Rae deemed it advisable to return to Fort Confidence, where he arrived on the 1st of Sep-

tember, 1850, having had the misfortune to lose his Esquimaux interpreter and boat in one of the rapids.

It is important to state, that while on the coast, Mr. Rae fell in with several parties of Esquimaux, with whom he had interviews. They all agreed in affirming that they had not seen any white men, and declared that the natives of Wollaston Land, with whom they had communicated during the preceding winter were equally unpossessed of any knowledge of Sir John Franklin or his party.

The natives, however, of this part of the American coast are shy and timid, for Mr. Rae relates that on one occasion, when approaching their lodges, the Esquimaux informed him that they had been so much alarmed at seeing the boat under sail, as to be on the point of running away.

These unhappy failures, acting powerfully on public sympathy, determined the Admiralty to organize more extensive measures for the discovery of Sir John Franklin. The first in order of date, was the despatch of the 'Enterprize' and 'Investigator' to

Behring's Straits. The command of the expedition was given to Captain Collinson, with instructions to do all in his power to penetrate eastward from Behring's Straits, as far as Melville Island, a distance of nine hundred miles. The ships were provisioned for three years, and fortified in every respect for the service.

The 'Enterprize' found a steamer belonging to the Pacific squadron waiting at the entrance of the Straits of Magellan to tow her through; but as the 'Investigator' had not yet come up, Captain Collinson sailed through, and left the steamer to help on his consort.

It subsequently appeared that the two ships, which had parted company on leaving the English Channel, had not been above a day's sailing distance from each other during the run, and the 'Investigator' arrived at the Sandwich Islands the day after the 'Enterprize.'

By despatches which have been received from Captain Collinson, dated September 13, 1850, it appears that the 'Enterprize' arrived at Wainwright Inlet on the 15th of August, and reached the latitude of 72° 40′ N.

in the meridian of 159° 30′ W. without any serious obstruction. There, however, the ice was so compact, that it was impossible to make way in any direction except to the southward. Under these circumstances, Captain Collinson came to the conclusion that he would better perform the important duty confided to him by returning to the south and replenishing his provisions, than by wintering on the Asiatic shore, where his ship could not be of any use to the missing expedition. He therefore proceeded to Hong-Kong for the winter, and by the latest accounts has again left that port to resume his explorations in the Arctic Sea.

Captain M'Clure, of the 'Investigator,' was more fortunate than Captain Collinson. Favoured by an extremely rapid run of twenty-six days from the Sandwich Islands to Cape Lisburne, the 'Investigator' was seen on the 5th of August by the 'Plover,' in latitude 70° 44′ N., and longitude 159° 52′ W., standing to the north under a heavy press of sail, and as the sea to a great extent was comparatively open, it is exceedingly probable that Captain M'Clure has been enabled to take the in-

shore route, and has carried his ship very far to the north-east before the setting in of winter.

Anticipating the probability of being detached from the 'Enterprize,' Captain M'Clure proposed penetrating in the direction of Melville Island as far as possible, without waiting to communicate with Captain Collinson. His plans are conveyed in the following despatch from him to the Admiralty, dated July 20, 1850:

"After passing Cape Lisburne, it is my intention to keep in the open water, which, from the different reports which I have read, appears, about this season of the year to make between the American coast and the main pack, as far to the eastward as the 130th meridian, unless a favourable opening should earlier appear in the ice, which would lead me to infer that I might push more directly for Banks' Land, which I think is of the utmost importance to thoroughly examine.

"In the event of thus far succeeding, and the season continuing favourable for further operations, it would be my anxious desire to get to the northward of Melville

Island, and resume our search along its shores and the islands adjacent, as long as the navigation can be carried on, and there remain for the winter in the most eligible position which offers.

"In the spring of 1851, as soon as it is practicable for travelling parties to start, I shall despatch as many as the state of the crew will admit of in different directions, each being provided with forty days' provisions, with directions to examine minutely all bays, inlets and islands towards the north-east, ascending occasionally some of the highest points of land, so as to be able to obtain extended views, being particularly cautious in their advance, to observe any indication of a break up in the ice, so that their return to the ship may be effected without hazard, even before the expenditure of their provisions would otherwise render it necessary.

"Supposing the parties to have returned (without obtaining any clue of the absent ships) and the vessel liberated about the 1st of August, my object would then be to push on toward Wellington Inlet (assuming that that channel communicates with the Polar

Sea), and search both its shores, unless in so doing some indication should be met with to show that parties from any of Captain Austin's vessels had previously done so, when I should return and endeavour to penetrate in the direction of Jones' Sound, carefully examining every place that was practicable. Should our efforts to reach this point be successful, and in the route no traces be discernible of the long-missing expedition, I should not then be enabled longer to divest myself of the feeling, painful as it must be to arrive at such a conclusion, that all human aid would then be perfectly unavailing, and therefore under such a conviction, I would think it my duty, if possible, to return to England, or, at all events, to endeavour to reach some port that would ensure that object upon the following year.

"In the event of this being our last communication, I beg to assure your Lordships that no apprehension whatever need be entertained of our safety until the autumn of 1854, as we have on board three years of all species of provisions, commencing from the 1st of September proximo, which, without much deprivation,

may be made to extend over a period of four years, as, moreover, whatever is killed by the hunting parties I intend to issue in lieu of the usual rations, which will still further protract our resources.

"It gives me great pleasure to say that the good effects of the fruit and vegetables (a large quantity of which we took on board at Waohee) are very perceptible in the increased vigour of the men, who at this moment are in as excellent condition as it is possible to desire, and evince a spirit of confidence and a cheerfulness of disposition which are beyond all appreciation.

"Should difficulties, apparently insurmountable, encompass our progress, so as to render it a matter of doubt whether the vessel could be extricated, I should deem it expedient in that case, not to hazard the lives of those entrusted to my charge after the winter of 1852, but, in the ensuing spring quit the vessel with sledges and boats, and make the best of our way either to Pond's Bay, Leopold Harbour, the Mackenzie, or for the whalers, according to circumstances.

"Finally, in this despatch I have endeavoured to give an outline of what I wish

to accomplish, and what, under moderately favourable seasons appears to me attainable, the carrying out of which, however, not resting upon human exertions, it is impossible even to surmise if any or what portion may be successful. But my object now, is to place your Lordships in possession of my intentions up to the latest period, so far as possible to relieve your minds from any unnecessary anxiety respecting our fate; and having done this, I have only to add that, with the ample resources which a beneficent Government and a generous country have placed at our disposal (not anything that can add to our comfort being wanting), we enter upon the distinguished service with a firm determination to carry out, as far as in our feeble strength we are permitted, their benevolent intentions."

It is impossible to read this despatch without a feeling of great congratulation that the arduous service which it contemplates will be directed by such a man as Commander M'Clure, who unites every qualification for the task. The formal nature of a public despatch precludes that warmth of language which breaks forth

in a private letter from the gallant officer to a friend at home, and in which, after explaining his plans, he says: "Where much is expected, much must be hazarded. In the event of losing my ship by endeavouring to carry into execution to the utmost their Lordships' intentions, the end to be obtained will, I dare venture to hope, justify the sacrifice. None are better aware than yourself what the anxiety attending such a proceeding will be. I have considered the matter well; my utmost exertions shall be cheerfully given to the good cause; the result I leave to the Great Disposer of all events. But should you never hear of me again, let me beseech you not to allow my fair fame to be darkened."

Captain Kellett, of the 'Herald,' having made three voyages to the Arctic Sea by Behring's Straits, determined on returning to England. It was arranged, however, that the 'Plover,' under Commander Moore, should be fully victualled, and winter in Grantley Harbour, which anchorage she reached on the 30th of August. It is described as being "in every respect preferable to Kotzebue Sound for wintering in, being

of less extent and well sheltered from the severe northerly and easterly winds. The ship's position is on the north side, about two miles and a half from the entrance, where the tides and currents are scarcely perceptible, and where the nature of the soil, close to the beach, is favourable for building."

During the sojourn of Captain Kellett and Commander Moore in the vicinity of Behring's Straits, various reports reached them from the Esquimaux that a number of people "like themselves" had arrived at a River called the 'Kopak,' the situation of which was unknown; that they had bartered their arms for food, and eventually died and had been buried by the natives.

Other reports stated that "the white men had quarrelled with the natives, who then shot them with arrows and stabbed them with knives till they were all killed, after which they were buried, some on one side of the river, and the remainder on the other." The natives at Point Barrow told Commander Moore that they had heard the same story from the Esquimaux who had come from the 'Kopak' to barter, and that

this river is situated a little to the westward of the Mackenzie.

Happily the expedition of Commander Pullen, which travelled along the coast from Wainwright Inlet to the Mackenzie, completely annuls the credibility of these reports. In Captain Kellett's opinion they were entirely created by the anxiety of all on board the 'Plover' to obtain information, which caused the natives to be fully aware of the subject on which the strangers wished chiefly to be informed. "The Esquimaux," he observes, "are quick, and when it is likely that their natural cupidity would be gratified, are ever ready, can they but get a lead, to exercise their ingenuity by inventing a story. In fact," he adds, "the whole of the small extent of coast accessible to ships is, at this moment, alive with native reports."

The opinion of so experienced an Arctic officer as Captain Kellett respecting the utter want of sincerity among the Esquimaux should put us on our guard against attaching any value to the unauthenticated reports derived from them.

The failure of Mr. Rae's endeavour to

reach the north of Bank's Land, led Government to order that gentleman and Commander Pullen to renew the search in the same direction last season. But as the stock of provisions at their disposal would not admit of two expeditions being equipped, it was arranged that Commander Pullen, who is much better fitted for such an undertaking than himself, (Mr. Rae's health having, I regret to say, given way under the privations and fatigues of his late Arctic journeys), should lead a party, taking with him 4,500 lbs. of pemmican and dried meat.

Sir John Richardson has had the kindness to favour me with the following letter, explanatory of Commander Pullen's proposed expedition:

"Commander Pullen was to descend the Mackenzie in July last with one of his own whale-boats, and one of the Hudson Bay Company's trading bateaux, calculated for river navigation and for carrying a large cargo, but not well suited for sea navigation. Some of his own men having suffered from the fatigue of the previous year's work, were sent home, and their place supplied by

Company's men hired for the voyage. The idea of striking out from Cape Bathurst for Melville Island was Lieutenant Osborne's, and was urged strongly by Dr. Scoresby and Lady Franklin. With boats constructed for navigating a stormy sea, and at the same time light enough to be hauled upon ice as Parry's were, the scheme seemed to me to be practicable; but with the few resources available to Commander Pullen, I held it, and hold it to be extremely hazardous, and look for no good results. God grant that I may be mistaken. When asked by the Admiralty to offer any suggestions, I did not express a direct disapproval of the scheme, as, where a man so competent to judge of the dangerous navigation of the Arctic Sea as Dr. Scoresby, strongly urged the enterprize, I did not think that it was my part to oppose a plan which offered a chance of relief to a lost party; but I pointed out the difficulties Commander Pullen would have in procuring proper boats and victualling them for such a voyage, and counselled the Admiralty to leave him full liberty, either to undertake or decline it, and not to attach any blame to him if he found his means inadequate.

This they did in their instructions. He will also have to contend with the Esquimaux of the Mackenzie River; but of their attempts to plunder he is well aware. He will return either by the Mackenzie, which is his safest course, or by a river which falls into Bathurst Inlet, but as the navigation of this river is unknown, he will be wise to avoid it if he can. Lastly, he may, if led far to the eastward, ascend the Coppermine River, and cross to Fort Confidence, in which case he would likely see or hear of Rae and his party. His obvious and safest course is, however, to ascend the Mackenzie.

"Mr. Rae will have, I suppose, about seven men with him, and Mr. M'Kenzie, an active Hudson's Bay officer. His plan was to descend the Coppermine in September last, to visit his depots of pemmican on the coast, that he might know how far he could rely on them, as there was a possibility of their being discovered by the Esquimaux. If all was right, he purposed in the spring of 1851 to cross to Wollaston Land on the ice; and in the summer to do the same in his boat, if the sea should open.

"Commander Pullen may fall in with Cap-

tain Collinson or Captain M'Clure, as both will be pushing on towards the same point at the same time, and this will be very desirable."

Despatches have been received by the Admiralty from Commander Pullen, dated Fort Good Hope, Mackenzie River, July 17, 1850, in which he thus announces his preparation for the expedition:

"We have constructed a new boat, forty feet long, which we have named the 'Try Again,' and which answers as well as could be expected. The 'Logan' boat has been thoroughly repaired, and we have now completed our supplies, amounting to forty-five pieces, sufficient for one hundred and twenty days for our party of seventeen.

"Should we fortunately attain Banks' Land, and find the sea clear to the entrance, with a favourable breeze, I am led to expect that we may possibly proceed to Port Leopold; but I only name this as a possible chance, should their Lordships not hear from me of our return this season. Again, could we only reach Cape Bunny with our boats, whence Sir James Ross turned to the south, we shall certainly not return, but proceed

on foot, for which I think we cannot be better provided, all hands being equipped with dresses and mocassins of moose leather, than which nothing is better adapted to resist the icy blasts of the frigid north, requiring less under-clothing, which should always be of flannel or woollens, except for the feet, duffle or blanket wrappers being far preferable to any kind of sock or stocking, and thus the men are less tightly and cumbersomely clad than with the usual provision of cloth garments, English leather shoes, &c.

"We are just on the point of starting, and I hope to reach the sea about the 23rd instant. Whenever I meet with remarkable headlands or points, either on this coast or otherwise, I shall take care to leave conspicuous notices of our visit, and perhaps a deposit of provisions. Our stock, on leaving Point Separation, will consist of 2,300 lbs. of dried meat, and 1,700 lbs. of pemmican; also half-a-dozen cases of preserved meat, which will remain so to the last.

"Agreeably with the opinion expressed in the latter part of my journal, I do not think that Captain Collinson's ships will be able to get along the Coast from Point

Barrow, if they reach so far, unless the ice be further removed from the shore than at the time of our last voyage. The steam-launch will have a good chance, as driftwood is plentiful along the coast east of Cape Halkett; and, of course, boats may do again what boats have done before.

"The season has been extraordinarily fine, and our steersman (an intelligent man), who was on the coast on both expeditions of Sir John Richardson and Mr. Rae, is confident of an open sea. Others also, natives of the country, are of the same opinion.

"Should I find provision and fuel plentiful on Banks' Land, it is possible that I may winter there, for the further prosecution of of my search next season.

"In conclusion, I beg to assure their Lordships that no efforts (as I before said) will be spared to endeavour to carry out their wishes to the utmost; and hope that the termination of this season may, by God's blessing, throw some light upon the whereabouts of the missing ships."

Whatever expectations may be entertained of the utility of these expeditions, it is manifest that our greatest hopes of finding

the lost party must rest on ships following the track marked out to Sir John Franklin.

It was natural, therefore, that the strongest arm of help should be held out towards the east, and there were no less than six ships sent by the Admiralty, and four others, including the American vessels in the spring of this year to that part of the Arctic seas.

Of the latter, two have been equipped by the munificence of Mr. Grinnell of New York, one was fitted out by Sir John Ross, aided by public subscriptions, under the patronage of the Hudson's Bay Company, and the fourth was a private enterprise undertaken almost entirely at the cost of Lady Franklin, and subject to her orders.

The Admiralty expedition consists of the ships 'Resolute' and 'Assistance,' and their screw-steamer tenders, the 'Pioneer' and 'Intrepid,' placed under the command of Captain Austin; and of two smaller ships, the 'Lady Franklin' and 'Sophia,' entrusted to the command of Captain Penny, a whaling captain of great enterprise, experience, and energy, who tendered his services to the Admiralty for the search, and was, much to the credit of their Lordships, accepted.

Sir John Ross's expedition includes the yacht 'Felix,' and a galley-tender of twelve tons, which by the latest accounts from the Commander has been converted into a row boat of ten oars, and will prove, as he expects, very effective.

The American, or as it has not been inappropriately named, 'the Grinnell Franklin exploring Expedition,' comprises two brigs, the 'Advance' and 'Rescue,' of one hundred and forty-four, and ninety-one tons respectively. In their build, fittings, and capabilities, they are in every way suited for the service in which they are engaged, and indeed are stronger than any other vessels in the Arctic seas. The command of the expedition was given to Lieutenant De Haven, who served under Captain Wilkes in the American exploring Expedition, and the crews are placed under the regulations of the United States' Navy to ensure discipline.

Lady Franklin's expedition consisted of the 'Prince Albert,' a ketch of eighty-nine tons, fitted in all respects for Arctic research, and commanded by Captain Forsyth.

All the English ships sailed in the months of April, May, and June, and the American vessels left New York on the 23rd of May.

Captain Austin is instructed to use every exertion to reach Melville Island, and employ one or more of his ships to search the shores of Wellington Channel and the coast about Cape Walker. In case of being obliged to winter in those localities, he is ordered to send out overland exploring parties during the winter, and on the return of the open season to renew the search; but it is expressly commanded that he shall return to England in the autumn of 1851, unless some trace should be found of the missing Expedition which will lead him to believe that a further delay may contribute to the rescue of Sir John Franklin.

Captain Penny's instructions are not very binding, it is merely stipulated that he is to search Jones's Sound, and to proceed if possible through it in the direction of Wellington Channel, and on to Melville Island. Failing to penetrate Jones's Sound, he is left to his own discretion to act as he may deem best; but should his search be extended beyond the summer of 1850, he is to use his most active endeavours to secure the return of his ships to this country in 1851.

Sir John Ross, who is accompanied by

Commander Phillips, will doubtless direct his ship to those localities where his efforts are most likely to be crowned with success, and he has an especial view to Melville Island and Banks' Land.

The instructions to Commander De Haven, are to proceed through Barrow's Straits to Wellington Channel, and on to Cape Walker, or otherwise to Wellington Channel, after which, the state of the ice and other circumstances must guide his course. He is conditionally urged not to remain more than one winter in the ice, but as is understood, his intentions are not to return home until his three years' provisions are exhausted; and it is apparent that the hope of effecting the North-West Passage enters into the views, both of his Government and himself, though in a subordinate degree to that of the rescue of the missing Expedition, and we need not grudge our American coadjutors this secondary object, since in endeavouring to accomplish it, they will necessarily push on in the track which Franklin himself, with a similar aim has probably taken; and I am informed, as evidence of the earnestness and energy of Commander De Haven, that he had no parti-

cular harbour in view, but was prepared to winter in the pack-ice if necessary.

You will observe that in the instructions to the officers commanding these expeditions, no allusion is made to the searching of Regent Inlet, and the passages connecting it with the Western Arctic Sea S.W. of Cape Walker.

The desirableness of this search is manifest for several reasons. First: The probability of Sir John Franklin having abandoned his vessels to the S.W. of Cape Walker. Second: The fact that, in his charts an open passage is laid down from the west into the south part of Regent Inlet. Third: That Sir John Franklin would be more likely to take this course through a country known to possess the resources of animal life, with the wreck of the 'Victory' in Felix Harbour for fuel, and the provision stores left by the 'Fury' further north in view, than to fall upon the barren region of the north coast of America; and that he has not adopted the latter alternative is pretty clearly established by the fact of no traces of him having been discovered by Commander Pullen or Mr. Rae.

Under these circumstances, Lady Franklin resolved on sending out a ship for the im-

portant work, and it is to her untiring energy that the equipment of the 'Prince Albert' is due. Some willing hands were held out to help, but on her principally has fallen the cost of the expedition, which amounts to nearly £4,000.

Captain Forsyth, who enjoyed the friendship of Sir John Franklin in Australia, and was employed in some colonial service under his government, volunteered his services gratuitously in this sacred and noble cause.

The 'Prince Albert' sailed from Aberdeen on the 5th of June, and it is to her return to England that we are put in possession of the movements of the searching squadron up to the 25th of August last, and of the exciting intelligence which throws extraordinary interest on the co-operating explorers of the Arctic Seas.

It would exceed the time at my disposal, on the present occasion, were I to detail the particular operations of each vessel from the period of entering the ice. Following the customary route by the east side of Baffin's Bay, the expedition succeeded in clearing the middle ice, which all ships have to do before entering Lancaster Sound.

This ice, I may remark, which is well known to Arctic voyagers as the 'middle ice,' cements Greenland and America firmly together during the long winter months. Summer, which in that region is a brief but ardent season of constant life, makes rapid inroads upon this icy sea, and leaves a huge central tongue of ice, known as the middle pack. It rarely happens that this pack can be cleared at what is called the middle passage between the latitudes of 65°, 50′, and 75°. The general course of the vessels is to the north of it, round Melville Bay, and this was the route taken by all the ships last year.

When off Cape York, a report was received from the Esquimaux acting as interpreter on board Sir John Ross's ship, that in the winter of 1846, two ships had been broken up by the ice forty miles to the northward, and burned by a fierce and numerous tribe of natives, and that the crews, being in a weak and exhausted condition, had been murdered. The Esquimaux adhered so pertinaciously to his statement, that, although the sea was now open, Captain Austin wisely determined, before proceeding farther, to investigate the credibility of the story, and it resulted that the sole

apparent foundation for the dreadful report, was that the 'North Star' had wintered in Wolstenholme Sound, the locality referred to.

Letters, however, from the American ships mention a circumstance which may possibly have had some influence in giving rise to the above report.

They state that near Cape York, more than twenty corpses of frozen Esquimaux and dogs were found ice-preserved, excepting their eyes and lips, and lying down, lifeless dog by lifeless master. The cause of this passing away of life was a mystery, for there was food around them, and where food and fuel are nearly convertible terms, they could hardly have been without fire or light.

As soon as Captain Austin's ships entered the open water, on the west side of Baffin's Bay, he determined that the 'Resolute,' which is his own ship, and her tender, should proceed to Pond's Bay, communicate with the natives there, and then search the south shores of Lancaster Sound and Barrow's Straits, while the 'Assistance' and her tender should examine the north shores of the same Sound and Straits.

Captain Penny crossed to the west side of Baffin's Bay in the same latitude as the other ships, but being unable to enter Jones's Sound, from the quantity of ice which barred the entrance, he passed through Lancaster Sound and Barrow's Straits, and overtook Captain Ommaney at the entrance to Wellington Channel. The American ships followed the route through Barrow's Straits, while Sir John Ross in the 'Felix,' before entering those Straits resolved on examining Admiralty Inlet.

Captain Forsyth in the 'Prince Albert,' having been towed clear of the ice in Baffin's Bay, by Captain Austin's steam-tender, made the land off Cape Liverpool on the 18th of August, and kept close to the shore as far as Wollaston Islands, one of which was examined. A gale of wind prevented a party landing on Cape Hay, to ascertain whether the fuel and provisions sent out by Lady Franklin in 1849, by the 'True-love' whaler, and deposited on that Cape, had been touched; but from what could be seen from the deck, they did not appear to have been disturbed.

The 'Prince Albert' continued her westerly course until the 21st of August, when she

arrived off Leopold Island, at the entrance to Regent Inlet. The harbour was closed with heavy ice, which completely prevented the ingress of the ship, but it was so important that this locality should be examined, as being the place where Sir James Ross had left one of his steam-launches and a large quantity of provisions, that Captain Forsyth ordered Mr. Snow and a party of men to take the gutta-percha boat, and endeavour to reach the shore. Had it not been for this boat, the material of which is singularly effective in resisting the pressure of ice-floes, it would have been almost impossible to have gained the harbour, for the ice was so thick, and in such convulsive motion, that Mr. Snow declares any boat made of wood would have been crushed like an egg-shell. As the 'Prince Albert,' although the last discovery-ship which left England, was the first to reach Leopold Harbour, we can well understand that it was an anxious moment when the cylinders found in the house on the beach were examined.

"Eagerly," says Mr. Snow, "did I open them and take out their contents. Three papers were in one, and two in the other. My agitation was so great that I could

hardly see to read; and my hands fairly trembled."

To the great disappointment of the party there was not a line concerning those whom they sought, the papers simply giving an account of the provisions and stores deposited in the harbour by Sir James Ross, and of the 'North Star,' which ship had been there only a few days before them.

With the exception of some rents in the sides and top of the house, it was found in good order, and all the stores and provisions were in excellent preservation.

Mr. Snow having regained his ship, Captain Forsyth bore south down Regent Inlet, in accordance with his instructions, but being met, when off Fury Beach, by great quantities of drift ice, through which he could not penetrate, and which, in his own opinion, and that of his mates, presented no prospect of opening, he stood out again to the northward, with the intention of proceeding to the western side of North Somerset, but was prevented carrying this into execution in consequence of the pack ice which extended across Barrow's Straits.

Running along the edge of this pack, he

reached Cape Riley at the eastern entrance to Wellington Channel. The American ship 'Advance' was discovered close in shore, apparently beset by icebergs, and it was from her Captain that the startling intelligence was learned, that traces of an encampment had been found on the Cape.

Mr. Snow, who had been sent by Captain Forsyth to examine the ground, reports the Cape to be composed of a high bluff headland, with a projecting tongue or crescentic spit rising in the middle, twelve or fourteen feet above the water. The headland, or cliff, consists of a series of terraces, and, as Mr. Snow informs me, admits of being ascended.

He was first struck by the appearance of two cairns, or signal stations, one of which had been erected by the crew of the American vessel, the other by a party who had landed from Captain Ommaney's ships. This was ascertained by the discovery of a paper, stating that Captain Ommaney, with the officers of H.M.'s ships 'Assistance' and 'Intrepid,' had landed on the 23rd of August, 1850, that is to say, only two days before, when they found traces of an encampment,

and collected the remains of materials, which evidently proved that some party belonging to H.M.'s ships had encamped on that spot. Beechey Island, which is close to Cape Riley, had been also examined, and similar traces found on it. Captain Ommaney added that he was proceeding to Cape Hotham and Cape Walker, in search of further traces of Sir John Franklin.

While Mr. Snow was copying this paper, the four sailors who had accompanied him were examining the ground, and found some beef, pork, and birds'-bones, besides a fragment of ash-wood, a portion of canvas, and a piece of rope forty inches in length. All these vestiges were discovered on the spit of the land, with the exception of the rope, which was found on the lowest terrace of the cliff, and about twenty feet from the water. Mr. Snow also states, that traces were very distinct of the position of five tents, and groups of stones, disposed apparently for the support of instruments.

More might, perhaps, have been discovered had Mr. Snow continued his search, but his time was limited to less than

an hour, and charged with the precious relics, he returned on board the 'Prince Albert.'

Well may we comprehend the interest with which he regarded that barren spot, for he at once associated the vestiges which he had found there with Sir John Franklin's expedition. Nor has the conclusion been disputed; for, after the most rigorous examination of the bones and rope by Sir Edward Parry, Sir John Richardson, and the officers of Chatham Dock-yard, it is declared that they are the remains of stores furnished to Sir John Franklin's expedition, and, moreover, it is supposed that the period of the encampment was in the autumn of 1845.

The traces of the five tents form another strong argument in favour of this conclusion. You will remember that Sir John Franklin was specially charged to make magnetical observations, and whenever he landed for that purpose, five tents would be required.

It is part of the system of these observations, which are carried on at various magnetical stations throughout the world, that at the latter end of each month a term-day occurs, that is, a period of twenty-four

hours, during which the magnetical instruments are observed every two minutes.

Now, it is quite possible that Sir John Franklin, who was much interested in terrestrial magnetism, landed on Cape Riley to make observations on one of these term-days. He was, as I have stated, last seen on the 26th of July, 1845, in the middle of Baffin's Bay, and, presuming that his progress was not much obstructed, he would arrive off Cape Riley about the end of August, where he might land to make a series of observations, the term-day on that month in 1845 falling on the 29th, and the circumstance of no written record having apparently been left of his visit, is, to my mind, strong evidence of the prosperity, at that period, of the expedition, and that their stay at the Cape did not exceed the time necessary for their scientific duties, which would be about forty-eight hours.

Captain Ommaney, as is evident, felt confident that he had discovered decisive traces of the missing expedition, and although he gave no explanation of the nature of those traces, yet, as it is pretty clear that he spent the greater part of a day and night on the Cape, he must have gleaned more intelligence

respecting Sir John Franklin than we are aware of.

And we have evidence even more confirmatory of this, for when Captain Ommaney parted from Captain Austin, his instructions were to examine the north shore of Lancaster Sound to Wellington Channel, and then to proceed up that Channel as far as practicable, until he felt fully satisfied that it has not been the course of the missing ships.

These are positive orders, obliging Captain Ommaney, before going elsewhere, to satisfy himself fully that the 'Erebus' and 'Terror' had not proceeded up Wellington Channel; but instead of exploring this Channel, we find that, after visiting Cape Riley, he resolves immediately on pushing on to Cape Hotham and Cape Walker, thus leaving us to infer that he felt entirely satisfied Wellington Channel had not been the course of the missing ships; and that it was practicable to go farther up that Channel is evidenced by the fact of the 'Rescue' being as high up as between Cape Innes and Cape Bowden.

Cape Hotham is about thirty miles from Cape Riley, and Mr. Snow states that when the 'Prince Albert' was midway between

Cape Spencer and Point Innes, and about a mile from the shore, he saw the 'Assistance' pressing on through a channel of open water within about fifteen miles of Cape Hotham. The 'Intrepid' steam-tender was near her, and there were apparent 'leads' or lanes of water in various directions.

Captain Penny's two ships were midway in Wellington Channel, not far from the 'Assistance,' and the American ship 'Rescue' was far up the same channel, purposing, as Lieutenant De Haven told Mr. Snow, to push towards Cape Hotham, where the 'Advance' intended joining her.

It was further ordered that Captain Ommaney should leave intelligence of his proceedings at Griffith's Island, to which place Captain Austin would proceed, and as there was about a month of open season before them, there is little doubt but that all the ships met at that locality, which had been appointed as a rendezvous.

Should they have been unable to penetrate farther westward, the position of that island is highly favourable for walking explorations during this winter and spring, and unless th ice prove quite impassable, parties will

certainly reach Cape Walker and Melville Island.

But it is conceived that the Expeditions have penetrated beyond Griffith's Island, and that their probable position is as follows:

Captain Austin with the 'Resolute' and 'Pioneer' somewhere between Cape Walker and Banks' Land; Captain Ommaney with the 'Assistance' and 'Intrepid,' in Winter Harbour, Melville Island; Captain Penny in the neighbourhood of Bathurst Island, and the Americans in the vicinity of Banks' Land. Should the ships take up these positions, exploring parties will be enabled to examine a vast area of the Arctic seas, and the discovery of Sir John Franklin, or of decisive information respecting him becomes almost a matter of certainty.

Feeling satisfied that the search to the westward would be effectually made by the ships just enumerated, Captain Forsyth, whose mission was confined to Regent Inlet, judged it prudent as there was no port which he could enter at that moment, in the vicinity of his proposed sphere of operation, to return to England.

On the 29th of August, he examined the western entrance to Admiralty Inlet, and coasted to Possession Bay, when he fell in with the 'North Star' on her way home. On the 2nd and 3rd of September, he explored Pond's Bay, and then steered for England, and arrived at Aberdeen on the 1st of October, thus terminating one of the most remarkable voyages in the Arctic seas; for, from the day of their departure until their return, the gallant little bark had not once cast anchor.

Although the objects of this Expedition have not been accomplished, yet in consequence of its return we have received the only decisive intelligence respecting Sir John Franklin which has reached us since he left our shores.

The discovery of traces of that officer does not however diminish the propriety of Lady Franklin's project of again sending out the 'Prince Albert.' Those traces which are not at all suggestive of a disabled party, indicate that Franklin was following out his instructions, and the 'Prince Albert' Expedition was founded on the same theory. Indeed, it being now manifest that the 'Erebus' and

'Terror' succeeded in attaining a considerable westerly longitude, it is the more probable that their crews would in case of being obliged to desert their ships, strike across North Somerset, on which supposition a relief Expedition to the western shores of Regent Inlet, might be of the greatest possible service.

Indeed, it is so evident that the search for our lost friends cannot be regarded as complete until the southern part of Regent Inlet has been explored, that it will not excite surprise that Lady Franklin, who is so deeply interested in the efforts now making to relieve her gallant husband, should desire to render them as effectual as possible.

She has, therefore, determined on re-equipping the 'Prince Albert,' which ship is happily in a most admirable condition for the proposed voyage. The command of the Expedition will be given to Mr. Kennedy, late an officer in the Hudson's Bay Company's Service, who has come over from Canada for the purpose of affording his gratuitous services. Mr. Kennedy was eight years on the coast of Labrador, and was the first European who visited its northern coast. He has had

consequently very great experience in the kind of service to which he has now so honorably devoted himself. A whaling Captain of very great experience has been engaged to conduct the 'Prince Albert' under the orders of Mr. Kennedy to her destination, with a crew, comprising three of the number who were engaged last year, and a sapper and miner who was engaged in Sir John Richardson's Expedition. The most notable person, however, who is to accompany the Expedition, is Hepburn, who served under Sir John Franklin in his memorable land journey, and who has expressed the greatest desire to go out in search of his former chief. A surgeon who has been in the Arctic seas will accompany the Expedition, and it may be mentioned that by voluntary agreement among the men no spirituous liquors will be taken beyond what may be required for medicinal purposes. Though the mission of the 'Prince Albert' is to explore Regent Inlet, yet in the event of any important information being obtained at the rendezvous appointed by Captain Austin, it will be at the Commander's discretion to return home immediately.

You may remember that the searching Expeditions were provided with small balloons, for the distribution of messages stating the position of the ships and the locality of depôts of provisions. I do not learn from Captain Forsyth that any of these balloons had been despatched when he communicated with the ships, but it was expected that they would be seen in a more westerly longitude.

Sir John Ross, as you are probably aware, took out two pairs of carrier-pigeons, which had been presented to him by Miss Dunlop of Ayr.

Sir John expressed his intention of liberating a pair of these birds on his either finding the lost Expedition, or being frozen in for the winter; and you may have seen in the papers the reported arrival of two of these pigeons at their dove-cote.

Miss Dunlop, in a letter to Lady Franklin, positively identifies one of these pigeons, although it is the bearer of no message. As Sir John Ross had not advanced beyond Lancaster Sound when last seen, it is probable that he has been frozen up in that locality. Let us hope, should another of

these pigeons return to its native home, it may, like the holy dove of old, bear to us the olive branch, typical of the discovery of our long lost friends.

It is gratifying to know that all the searching ships are equipped and provisioned in the most efficient manner. In the latter respect, the present expeditions are greatly superior to that under Sir James Ross. An officer in Captain Austin's ship, writing home, says: "With regard to our provisions, I can only say that I have been to sea for upwards of thirty years, and in the whole course of my experience, I have never eaten meat equal to that which is served out to us. As for our preserved meats and soups, they are not only super-excellent in quality, but every canister that has been opened exceeds its stated weight by one quarter of a pound, exclusive of the tin. What a contrast to our voyage with Sir James Ross, when 34½ lbs. of salt beef used frequently to weigh 17 lbs., and sometimes 13¼ lbs., and never exceeded 20 lbs., while an 8 lb. canister used to weigh 6¾ lbs. to 6lbs., one 4 lbs. and one 3¾ lbs. Had it been our fate to have been blocked up for four or

five winters in Barrow's Straits, what an awful responsibility would certain parties have been lain under — not only to their fellow-man, but to their God!"

Captain Forsyth describes the performance of screw steam-ships as admirable. They were literally pioneers, cleaving the ice and opening passages for the sailing-ships. It is thus proved that steamers, assisted occasionally by blasting, when floes of heavy ice present unusual resistance, are the best vessels for navigating the Arctic seas.

The officers on board Captain Austin's steam-ships report, that if they had double their present amount of power, they could cut through the thickest ordinary pack ice with the greatest facility.

Under these circumstances, it is greatly to be lamented that the Government have not determined on sending a steamer this summer to communicate and co-operate with the searching squadron. Such a step would be in every way calculated to be useful, and would assuredly be the means of putting us in possession of the operations of the searching expeditions at a much earlier period of the autumn than can now be

hoped for, and should it have been the good fortune of Captain Austin, or his coadjutors, to have rescued any of the lost party, the advantages which a steamer would afford of enabling those rescued to be restored sooner to their country than they could otherwise be, can hardly be sufficiently appreciated.

While it is a subject of congratulation that the officers and men attached to the searching ships, were at the period of Captain Forsyth's return in excellent health, and confident of success, we must not forget, in case of failure, that formidable difficulties attend every step of the Arctic explorer. Exposed to snow-storms, and a degree of cold of which we can form no conception, he is constantly perplexed by meteorological phenomena, which distort the vision, and create hopes as destitute of foundation as the baseless fabrics which gave them birth: I allude more particularly to the phenomenon of refraction, which in the Arctic regions exceeds the marvellous illusions of the mirage.

Mr. Goodsir, in his first voyage in search

of his brother, who accompanied Sir John Franklin, relates that when their ship was running along the south shores of Lancaster Sound, he was standing on the forecastle examining with a telescope every part of the coast most anxiously, when with a thrill of joy he recognized a flag-staff and ensign. He gazed earnestly at it, and so distinctly did it appear to him, that he could even make out the waving of the flag. Unwilling, however, to trust his own vision only, without saying a word, he put the telescope into the hands of a man who was standing near him, and desired him to look at the point ahead. The man did so, and with a start immediately exclaimed that a signal was flying. Delighted and overjoyed, he snatched the glass from his hands and applied it to his eye. For an instant—but for an instant only, he saw the wished-for signal, then it faded—then re-appeared—now distorted into a broken and disjointed column, now into an upturned and inverted pyramid, until at last the image became resolved into its real form, which was that of a hummocky piece of ice.

It is during the lingering hours of sunset when in summer the

> "——— midnight Arctic sun
> Sets into sunrise,"

that the refractions are most beautiful and strange.

"The earth," says Mr. Kane, of the American ship 'Advance,' in a letter to a friend, "borrows from the sky its clouds and its colours till it is hard to tell when they do, or do not mingle; and the line where you look for the horizon flits up and down so capriciously, and it is so bestudded with glowing figures, some of them coming up from the water, and others down from the sky, that you cannot help puzzling yourself with the notion that your little vessel has somehow or other got out of her place, and is either swinging or hanging between them. I have seen in the course of a single night, regularly castellated feudal towers, glittering pinnacles, with pennons streaming from them, mountains crimsomed with lava fires, oriental domes of golden tracery, and heaven knows what all of ideal architecture, mixed up with bizarre forms of hieroglyph heraldry,

things that have been and are, and things that imagination has never dreamt of, melting into each other, like the phantoms of a dream. One evening, the 15th of August, we saw a fleet of ocean steamers in the air, with their tall smoke-pipes sailing along in line, as if to marshal us on our way."

And now, in conclusion, you may expect me to say a few words respecting the probable position and fate of the party who are the subject of so much solicitude and anxiety. In a few months, six years will have elapsed since Sir John Franklin led his gallant band to the Arctic seas, and, as you will remember, they were provisioned only for three years. With proper management, their stock might have been rendered available for four years, beyond which time, however, they would have to depend on other resources. Under these circumstances, it is cheering to know that Melville Island is resorted to by rein-deer and musk oxen, and that large herds of these animals migrate over the ice from North America to Banks' Land. Thus, should Sir John Franklin have been entangled in the neighbourhood of the Parry Islands, as I think will prove to have been

the case, we are warranted in cherishing the hope that, by hunting and fishing, existence may have been maintained for a considerable period, and that the present expeditions have found at least a few of our countrymen alive. It cannot be too strongly borne in mind that Arctic Expeditions, in their stern and severe struggles with tempests and icy seas, have been attended with a singularly slight loss of life; out of nine dispatched to the Polar regions, which employed six hundred and nine officers and men, only seven persons died from causes directly or indirectly connected with the expeditions, although they were severally absent from England an average period of three years.

There is, probably, more danger to be apprehended from the well-known energy and zeal of the parties themselves than from any other cause. Franklin left our shores feeling that the eyes of the civilized world were on him, and that it was hoped and expected he would accomplish what our most learned hydrographers regard as feasible. He would not, therefore, abandon the struggle with mighty bergs and thick-ribbed ice, as long as the smallest chance of obtaining

the much-desired prize remained. It is recorded that when attempts were made to dissuade Sir Martin Frobisher from engaging in the discovery of a north-west passage, he answered, "It is the only thing in the world that is left yet undone whereby a notable mind might be made famous and fortunate."

The apprehension is, that the efforts of our countrymen have been rashly prolonged beyond the period of safety; but on this very account should our exertions to save them be increased.

It is, therefore, a pleasing fact that there are at this moment four hundred and twenty-six men prosecuting the search for their unfortunate brother mariners. From them we have a right to expect much, but it must not be forgotten that it is to Him who has told us that a sparrow falleth not to the ground without His will, that we must ever look for a happy issue from all our cares and afflictions.

POSTSCRIPT.

As this sheet was going through the press despatches arrived from Commander Pullen, dated Fort Simpson, Mackenzie River, October 29th, 1850, stating that he had returned from the Arctic Sea by way of the Mackenzie, and that his expedition had been a total failure, he having not even succeeded in attaining Cape Bathurst.

This was in every way unexpected, as the early spring and fine weather which favoured his passage down the Mackenzie, led him to feel very sanguine of reaching open water.

On the 9th of August he was stopped in latitude 70° 37′ north by pack ice, which entirely prevented further progress; and this was the more provoking, as he was only a few miles from Cape Bathurst:—

"Not liking to go back," he reports, "we ran into a small sandy bay, only open to the S.W., where a channel half a cable's length was left between the shore and a large berg thirty feet in height, which was aground, and stretching to the opposite shores of the bay, forming a snug shelter. On landing, I walked up to the top of the bank at least forty feet above the water mark, and saw that unless there was an open channel between the island and Cape Bathurst, our advance in any direction was completely stopped. From N.W. round by north to east was, as far as I could see, a dense field of ice closely jammed into the shores. After walking along the bank for a couple of miles towards the Cape without any alteration, I returned to the camp, turning over in my mind what was now best to be done. In our former trip from Point Barrow to the Mackenzie, I do not recollect ever seeing such large masses of ice, excepting for a short distance in Camden Bay. This was certainly not formed in one season, for it was in clear, clean, glassy masses. I conclude that it has been driven down from the north-west

last fall, and has never since been off the coast.

"This was indeed a damper to our hopes of reaching Banks' Land in this direction. To be so effectually stopped from getting out to sea I never expected, but from the many difficulties already encountered only thought that the barrier might check us, and then only well off the land.

"I now resolved on retracing our steps in the only direction where open water was visible, pass inside the islands to Cape Bathurst, go along the coast, and endeavour to follow out the plan I had agreed on to try before crossing Liverpool Bay. That course would be taking us to the southward again, and some success might yet attend us."

But the ice proved an insurmountable barrier, and after conferring with several Esquimaux, all of whom agreed in stating that no open water existed to the north, and waiting until the 15th of August, the party made preparations to return. On the 27th of that month they reached the mouth of the Mackenzie, and on the 17th of September

arrived at Fort Good Hope. Commander Pullen states that all along the coast they fell in with vast numbers of Esquimaux, "of both sexes and all sizes, very friendly, but without exception the most persevering pests ever met with, picking up everything they could clap their hands on, and shoving their noses everywhere, never displaying the slightest hostility, but on the contrary, showing every inclination to assist, by fetching wood, water, &c. Our dresses," he adds, "proved great curiosities, both men and women handling us most annoyingly. I have not been sparing in presents to either men, women, or children, and the poor creatures are highly delighted with the most trifling article. I think we have really gained their friendship."

It is much to be regretted that the friendly disposition of these poor natives should have been outraged by a most cowardly and cruel massacre, perpetrated by the Loucheux tribe of Indians, on a party of Esquimaux close to Point Separation, in which four of the latter were killed, and others severely mutilated. Commander Pullen adds, "what makes

the matter worse is, that white men were present at the time."

This wanton aggression may be productive of fatal consequences to us at some future period, if we should have occasion to send an expedition again to that part of the North American shores, inhabited by this tribe of Esquimaux.

Although the unsuccessful issue of Commander Pullen's expedition was most mortifying, yet his boats appear to have so ill answered the expectations entertained of their efficiency, that had they reached open water and proceeded to sea, it is very doubtful whether they could have survived for any length of time the perils of arctic navigation The fate of the party would then indeed have been most desperate, and Commander Pullen is evidently of the same opinion, for he says in a letter which accompanied the despatches, "had it been possible for us to get beyond Cape Bathurst, I do not think you would have ever heard of us again."

The failure of this expedition renders the decision of the Admiralty not to send a steamer out this summer to Barrow's Straits

to communicate with Captain Austin more than ever to be regretted, because—as the latter will still believe Commander Pullen to be engaged in prosecuting the task allotted to him—that portion of the Arctic Seas where his search lay, will be unvisited by parties from Captain Austin's ships.

To the evidence in favour of steam as the only effectual method of navigating the Arctic Seas, may now be added that of Commander Pullen, who strongly advocates its use.

Letters of a more recent date than those mentioned in the foregoing lecture have also been received from Captain Collinson. He states that he ordered Lieutenant Barnard and Mr. Adams to proceed to Michaelowski in Norton Sound, and from thence to the interior to ascertain whether any communication takes place between the Russian ports and the natives inhabiting the shores of the Polar Sea. He adds, that the happiest disposition prevails, on the part of the Russian authorities, to aid in the search for our lost friend, and that instructions have been given to reinforce the port of Michaelowski by an additional number of men and boats, which

are to be placed at the disposal of our officers.

Thus there is every prospect of the coast to the east of Behring's Straits being well examined, and the 'Dœdalus' frigate has conveyed provisions for twenty months to the 'Plover,' by which means the search may be prolonged until the autumn of 1852.

THE END.

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