

independent funds should become exhausted, which I do not foresee, I shall not even ask your Lordships for the ordinary pension of a rear-admiral's widow, to which I presume I am entitled. My request to your Lordships will be limited to such assistance as is entirely independent of money, and indeed, to such as I have been assured, on the highest authority, will not be denied.

4. And this leads me to add, as my last ground for remonstrating against the immediate decision which Dr. Rae's claims have given you occasion to announce, that its greatest evil, and that of which I should have the most reason to complain, would be the discouragement it gives to many a noble-minded man, who, in volunteering for this service, desires to do so with the confidence that he has your Lordships' approbation as well as permission. Your present adjudication would be to tell the public and the navy in particular that, in your Lordships' opinion, all has been done that can or need be done; that there is nothing more to learn or nothing worth knowing, or nothing commensurate with the cost and risk incurred (little as that cost and risk would be) to obtain it; and it is to brand with infatuation and obstinacy the feelings and convictions that prompt a different course. But if indeed the object of so many years' labour and anxiety spent, but not wasted, in wrong directions, is to be abandoned at the very moment when we know where and how to grasp it—if that which has hitherto been a nation's duty, be now dwindled to a private concern—at least let me entreat that you will not strive to stifle those last private efforts by any act of yours.

Permit me to add one concluding observation:—

It may be surmised that, at the present moment, I have a new incentive to farther search, inasmuch as justice has hitherto been withheld from my husband and his companions as the first discoverers of a north-west passage, and withheld on the ground that future investigation was necessary, in order to determine the extent to which it might be found that they had carried those discoveries to which they had sacrificed their lives.

Such was the barren, though kindly-expressed result of an appeal, which, believing my motives must be above suspicion, I took courage to make to a Select Committee of the House of Commons, appointed to inquire into the claims of Sir Robert Maclure to reward, when I found that the right of my husband's expedition—not to reward, but—to the distinction of prior discovery was ignored, or not understood, or forgotten. And yet one would have supposed that the full examination of any conflicting claims lay at the very root of a just judgment, and that those who could not plead their own cause because their voices were hushed in the grave, would have found an advocate in every man in that assembly, as they did, I gratefully acknowledge, in some.

But this painful remembrance does not enter, or enters but little into the feelings which prompt my efforts for farther search, which I should not desire the less, even did I anticipate that its consequences might be to dissipate the convictions I now have, instead of to confirm them. Nor, perhaps, should I have touched upon this subject at all, except as leading me with less appearance of presumption to express my opinion, that it is due to a set of men who have solved the problem of centuries by the sacrifice of their lives and in the very act of dying, that their remains should be sought for in the place where they perished, and that, as they assuredly devised some means of preserving from destruction the last words they dictated to those they loved and the records of their five long years of adventure and suffering, the recovery of these precious documents should be the aim of persevering exertion and held out as a fitting object for reward.

The best tribute that could be paid to the first and only martyrs to the great Arctic discoveries of the present century, would be a national and final expedition for this holy purpose. The objections against a useless repetition of the attempt will be unanswerable, when once an adequate effort for the attainment of these objects has been made in vain; and then may England feel that she is relieved of her responsibilities, and can close with honour one of the noblest episodes in her naval history.

I have trespassed long on your Lordships' patience, for which I beg to apologise, while renewing my respectful protest against the impending adjudication of the reward, and my earnest request that it may be delayed till such time as the result of the last expedition be known.

I have, &c., &c.,

JANE FRANKLIN.

TO THE LORDS COMMISSIONERS  
OF THE ADMIRALTY.