

Our self-importance as Arctic heroes of the first water received a sad downfall when we were first asked by a kind friend, what the deuce we came home for? We had a good many *because*s ready, but he overturned them altogether; so we had resort to the usual resource of men in such a position: we said, "There was a barrier of ice across Wellington Channel in 1850." Our friend said, "I deny it was a permanent one, for the Americans drifted through it!" "Indeed!" we exclaimed, "at any rate there was one there in 1851." "Yes, granted, on the 12th of August; but you know there was a month of open season left: and, like an honest man, say how long it would take for that barrier, fifteen or twenty miles wide, to disperse." "As many hours!" was our reply: "and we have forsworn in future barriers of ice as well as barriers of land."

What the deuce we came home for? and why we deserted Franklin? were pleasant questions; and at first we felt inclined to be angry. Those, however, who asked them had cause and reason for doing so. We were in the dark as to much that had been arrived at in England. We knew but of our own limited personal experience, and had had neither time nor opportunity to compare notes with others. The public at home sat down with the accumulated evidence of two British expeditions and an American one. They passed a verdict that Franklin had gone up Wellington Channel, and that, having gone up there, in obedience to his country's orders, it was the duty of that country to send after him, save him, or solve his fate. I for one knew I had done my duty in the sphere allotted to me, although feeling at first that the public verdict reflected somewhat upon me as well as others. But "*Vox populi, vox Dei.*" I bowed tacitly to its decision, until attempts were made to damp the hopes of the more sanguine,—in fact, to save our