

(the first recorded in so high a latitude. 70° north), the *Investigator* reached Cape Bathurst on 31st August. There more Esquimaux were met with; a fine race of people, as it seems, with whom the navigators were soon on the best of terms. Indeed, if scandal speak truth, some of the bold mariners were soon on such terms with the bright-eyed girls of Cape Bathurst, that Captain M'Clure was obliged to use his authority to keep them on board ship. When a whale is killed by one of these Esquimaux, a grand banquet takes place, to which all the men and women of the tribe are invited; and after the roast venison, the stewed whale, and the other delicacies of the season have been discussed, the entertainment winds up in a fashion more suitable, one would imagine, to a relaxing southern meridian than to the borders of the Arctic Ocean.

From Cape Bathurst the *Investigator* followed the landwater to a level with Cape Parry, from whence they struck a northerly course, sighting, on the 7th of September, the southern cape of Banks's Land. One can not help smiling at the grave manner in which this loyal British captain—not knowing that the land he saw had been discovered before—landed on the bleak and miserable shore, and announced to the icebergs and the winds that he claimed the country for his mistress Queen Victoria. But it is a habit with English sailors. A short while before, Captain Kellett, of the *Herald*, sighted land to the north and northwest of Behring's Straits. It was so wretched a place, with so iron-bound a coast, that, with all his exertions, Captain Kellett could not climb the bluffs, or be quite certain in his own mind whether he stood on the beach or on the ice: nevertheless, he "hoisted the jack, and took possession of the island, with the usual ceremonies, in the name of Her Most Gracious Majesty Queen Victoria." It is to be hoped it will do her good.

There were still a few days of summer left, and a lane open to the northeast. Through this the *Investigator* was worked slowly against head-winds; on their left they had the high bluffs of Banks's Land, on their right, at a distance of some thirty miles, stretched another island, which loyal Captain M'Clure named Prince Albert's Land. Creeping between the two, by the 9th September they were irresistibly led to the conclusion that the channel in which they were must lead to Barrow's Strait. One can readily understand Captain M'Clure's agitation at the thought, "Can it be possible that this water shall prove to be the long-sought Northwest Passage? Only give us time, and we shall discover it!" They pushed on, northward, working bravely; but when they were in latitude 73° 10' N., only thirty miles from Barrow's Strait, winter overtook them. It was the 17th September. Four more days would probably have solved the problem; but those four days were denied them. On the 17th they were stopped by the ice; on the 18th it formed

round the ship; they began to drift with the pack; before the week was out they had resolved to winter there, and were at work housing the ship, and making all needful preparations for escape in case she should be crushed by the ice. These preparations were made under circumstances that might well shake the nerves of a strong man. As the ice surged the ship was thrown violently from side to side, now lifted out of water, now plunged into a hole. "The crashing, creaking, and straining," says Captain M'Clure, in his log, "is beyond description; the officer of the watch, when speaking to me, is obliged to put his mouth close to my ear on account of the deafening noise."

While wintering here, Captain M'Clure's loyalty was very near cutting short his career of usefulness. On the eastern side of the strait there was an ice-bound tract of land (forming part, in fact, of Prince Albert's Land, already visited) of which the gallant Captain felt bound to take possession for his Gracious Mistress. He did so accordingly, "with the usual ceremonies;" but on his return to the ship, when the party reached the junction of the land and sea ice, they found, to their horror, a yawning black gulf fifty yards wide. Night was just closing in: they had no boat; their only provision was one can of preserved meat, so hard frozen that knives would barely scratch it; the men were jaded by a twenty miles' walk over hummocks and rocks. They did the only thing they could do—walked about to keep up the circulation, and fired guns to attract the attention of the people on board the ship. It needed all M'Clure's energy to prevent the fagged men from sitting down to snooze; but he kept them moving, and, after a while, the ship answered their signals, and a light was seen approaching over the ice. The Captain's party now began to speculate anxiously on the chances of their friends having brought a boat; for without one, of course, assistance was useless. They watched the light draw nearer and nearer to the lane, one man swearing that he heard the sound of the sledge-boat on the ice, another persisting that there was no sound but footsteps; till at last the relief party was within hailing distance. Every man held his breath as M'Clure shouted, "Have you a boat with you?" There was a moment's silence, as if the men across the gulf were taken by surprise by the question. Then came the answer, "No; we didn't know you wanted one." M'Clure instantly sent them back to the ship for the Halkett's boat. It was a critical moment. Tired as the men were, it was quite unlikely that they could be kept moving till the party returned to the ship and brought the boat. But by one of those providential accidents which so often occur in Arctic navigation, a second relief party, with a boat, met the first on their way to the ship, and so all were saved.

Before winter set in completely, Captain M'Clure determined to test the vital question, whether the channel in which the ship lay did