

6 CORRESPONDENCE, &c. RESPECTING ARCTIC EXPEDITIONS.

Opinion of Captain
Beechey.

and headlands examined, for traces of the objects of their search, &c.; all of which would, under any circumstances, occupy much time.

As I am informed by Sir John Franklin's nearest connexions that he placed much expectation in Wellington Inlet, I think it ought to be minutely examined and traced to its head, as far as the ice will permit with safety of return; and that Regent's Inlet should at the same time be closely watched on both sides; and this can hardly be done by one vessel, for we cannot reckon upon Sir James Ross's return from Banks' Land, seeing he was so late in his operations last year, and as he evidently does not contemplate it himself. These, and other reasons which could be mentioned, seem to me to render it necessary, as an ultimate measure, that a whaler should be hired expressly for the occasion, and placed in charge of a steady officer, and manned with volunteers; that she should be ready to start by May or by June, should the information from Kamtschatska not arrive before; that she should carry out provisions for the "Investigator," to enable her to remain as long as the "Enterprise" continues in the Arctic Seas; that she shall make the best of her way to Cape Rennell, and effect a communication with the "Investigator," and co-operate with her in searching the straits, &c. as above mentioned; and at the close of the summer leave the "Investigator" moored in the position assigned her by Sir James Ross (always supposing him not to have been communicated with, and nothing to have occurred to render an alteration of this arrangement necessary), and then, landing all that can be spared, make her way home to this country.

I am sure you will excuse this long letter; but, independent of the interest we must all feel for our absent countrymen, Sir John Franklin, besides being a much-valued friend, was my greatly esteemed commander on the first Polar Expedition, on which memorable occasion his coolness and fortitude were so eminently displayed, to the saving of the lives, in all probability, of all who had the pleasure of making that voyage with him.

(signed) *F. W. Beechey.*

— No. 4. —

Opinion of Colonel
Sabine, R. A.

REMARKS of *Colonel Sabine, R. A.*, on rendering further Assistance for the Relief of *Sir John Franklin's Expedition.*

Woolwich, 9 January 1849.

YOUR letter presses for a reply, and I therefore make one by return of post, though I should have preferred to have had a day or two for reflection.

If Franklin has taken the south-westerly route, after passing through the Straits which bear your respected father's name, and has persevered in that course, we shall either hear of him on the side of Behring's Straits, or either Ross or Richardson will surely come upon his traces; and further, if any accident had happened to the ships, retreat to the continent, every part of which is so well known to Sir John himself, might reasonably be expected.

Circumstances may be very different, however, if, failing in the south-west, he returned at the end of a twelvemonth, and with diminished resources, to make trial of Wellington Channel. If that channel be, as it appeared to me, a continuation of the deep and open sea which we found in Barrow's Straits, and if it conduct into an open sea like that which occupies the upper part of Baffin's Bay (for which nothing else is requisite but that the sea should be deep and unencumbered with land), it may be far more difficult to determine the direction which Franklin may have taken, or to conjecture, otherwise than on the spot, the most eligible course by which he may be followed. It is to this quarter therefore that one's thoughts are naturally directed, and unfortunately, in respect to that quarter, I am ignorant what Ross intended to do himself, or to direct the "Investigator" to accomplish. There has been time, however, for much that is important to have been done; for it is probable that navigation is open in the immediate neighbourhood of Barrow's Straits far later in the autumn, as well as earlier in the spring, than when further advanced in the ice-encumbered sea south of the Parry Islands.

It is probable that Captain Bird knows, or will know before any advices from this country could reach him, what is the aspect of things at the northern extremity of Wellington Channel, and may have executed at least a partial search for traces