

questions in physical geography, geology, natural history, terrestrial magnetism, anthropology, and meteorology, which are referred to in the accompanying letters from the above-named scientific Societies. This Society, after a careful consideration of the subject, is convinced that its geographical results would be of great value.

In 1865 our late President, Sir Roderick Murchison, took steps to bring the subject of Arctic exploration before Her Majesty's Government; but his application was put on one side, and a decision was postponed until the question of the most advisable route could be decided by the expeditions then about to be despatched by the Swedish and German Governments by way of Spitzbergen. Seven years of unsuccessful labour in that direction have led to the collection of further proofs, by the leaders of both the Swedish and German expeditions, that the experience of all previous navigators was not at fault as to the impracticability of penetrating the ice in that direction. Arctic authorities are now, therefore, unanimous in the opinion that the route by Baffin's Bay and Smith Sound promises the largest amount of valuable scientific results combined with the best assurance of safety.

The American expedition, commanded by Captain Hall, has gone in an entirely different direction up Jones Sound, and must return in 1873. It consists only of one small vessel, and the results that can be obtained by it must necessarily be limited.

Apart from the purely scientific point of view, the various explorations of the Arctic Regions, by British navigators, have, since 1818, redounded to the national honour and repute, and have, in no small degree, contributed to keep alive, through a long period of peace, that spirit of courage, enterprise, and self-denial which is so essential to the character of the seamen of a great maritime nation.

Neither I nor those who are acting with me would submit this proposal if its adoption involved any undue risk of life, such as existed in former days. The experience acquired between 1850 and 1872, during which period expeditions commanded by British, American, Swedish, and German officers have safely, and at many points, gone to and fro within the Arctic Circle, has proved that, with the help of steam and other modern appliances, and of the knowledge gained concerning the proper organization of travelling