

average, 200 feet per day, four, sometimes six saws being employed at one time; the ice varying in thickness from 3 to 5 feet. The ships were thus gradually got down to the entrance, where, the pack in the inlet having considerably receded, a motion was created that materially assisted in loosening the ice, so that, on the 28th of August, they got quite clear of the harbour.

The Expedition now attempted to reach the north shores of Barrow's Straits, to examine Wellington Channel, and reach Melville Island; but soon came on a fixed land of ice, that had not melted all the season. Here the ships met with an adventure almost unparalleled in the annals of Polar navigation: A strong wind, which suddenly rose on the 1st of September, brought the loose pack of ice through which they had been struggling down upon the ships, so closely besetting them that they sustained the most severe pressure. There was no escape: skill and ability were of no avail. High ridges of hummocks were thrown up around them, and the temperature falling below zero, the whole was soon formed into one solid mass, extending from shore to shore of Barrow's Straits, and as far to the east and west as the eye could discern from the mast-head: a dismal prospect, as it appeared extremely improbable that it would again break up before winter. It was therefore with a mixture of hope and extreme anxiety, that on the wind shifting to the westward the whole body of ice was observed to begin to drive eastward, carrying with it the ships and the human beings they held, perfectly helpless, in its terrible gripe, at the rate of eight or ten miles daily. They were thus—in the centre of a field of ice more than fifty miles in circumference—taken along for twenty-three days, through Lancaster Sound and beyond Pond's Bay; and having been in this singular manner conveyed so far on their voyage home, at the moment when nothing less than their destruction was expected, their release was almost miraculously brought about by the great field of ice of itself being suddenly rent into innumerable fragments, as if by some unseen power, and all sail being made through the floe, a few hours brought them into open water. It being now too late in the season for further operations, Sir James judiciously determined to return to England, and arrived at Scarborough on the 3rd of November.

Sir James speaks in the highest terms of all associated with him, especially expressing his deep obligations to Captain Bird, for "his cordial co-operation and zealous support;" also, his admiration of the conduct of both officers and crews, between whom the greatest harmony existed. The same spirit of emulation seemed to animate every one: they had to grapple with difficulties of no ordinary nature, and to endure toil and privation, and the perilous incidents unavoidably attendant on such an expedition, which, by skill, daring, and steady perseverance, they triumphantly surmounted. The whole enterprise was nobly and gallantly conducted; nothing was left unattempted that anxiety could suggest or foresight contrive. If it failed, no fault can be imputed to the party under Sir James Ross: the powers of nature overcame the efforts of man, and they were forced to return; not, however, without having performed important services, which may yet be productive of much good. It is the