

The American expedition.

The American explorers were prevented from taking any part in the searching operations of the spring by their experiencing the same kind of involuntary ejection from Lancaster Sound which befel Sir James Ross's expedition in the *Enterprise* and the *Investigator*. Their vessels were frozen in opposite Wellington Channel, and were carried thence to the east, slowly and rigidly, and in stern defiance of all possible resistance by man, to a point south of Cape Walsingham. They drifted a linear distance of at least 1050 miles, and suffered much from the commotion of the ice, and were not set free till the 10th of June.

Sir John Ross's theory respecting Sir John Franklin's fate.

Sir John Ross's connexion with the searching squadron was mainly distinguished—or at least is so in the popular estimation of it—by a peculiar theory which he formed, on the faith of an adopted Esquimaux, respecting the fate of Sir John Franklin's party,—that they were all massacred by a tribe of natives on the east coast of Baffin's Bay. This theory was mooted, during the outward voyage, when most of the squadron were in company, near the scene of the alleged massacre, and was anxiously investigated by a council of the officers, and pronounced utterly incredible. Sir John Ross, too, was understood to discard it ; yet, in spite of the opinion of the council, and in spite of subsequent sure evidence that the *Erebus* and the *Terror* had wintered far to the west, he revived the theory, and on his return home, made formal offer of it, as his solution of all the mysteries of the Franklin expedition.

Captain Austin's opinion.

Yet Captain Austin seems to have thought, as well as Sir John Ross, that the *Erebus* and the *Terror* had gone back to Baffin's Bay ; for, after the failure of the searches for further traces of them west and north of the mouth of Wellington Channel, he supposed that they probably tried to reach the Polar sea through Jones' Sound, which opens off the north side of the upper part of Baffin's Bay. He accordingly went round to that place with his two steamers, and explored it.