

It was in 1844 that Sir John Franklin was appointed to the charge of his latest Polar expedition. His first visit to the Arctic regions had been in 1818, as a captain in Commodore Buchan's squadron; and after this had returned unsuccessful, he had headed that most fearful of all the overland journeys of our period, the descent to the mouth of the Coppermine River. Still later, in 1825, he had gone back to the same field of toil, and had delineated, in conjunction with Sir John Richardson, the more western portions of Arctic America.

No officer could have been found in the marine of any country who combined more admirable qualifications for the duties of an explorer. To the resolute enterprise and powers of endurance, which his former expeditions had tested so severely, Sir John Franklin united many delightful traits of character. With an enthusiasm almost boyish, he had a spirit of large but fearless forecast, and a sensitive kindness of heart that commiserated every one but himself. He is remembered to this day among the Indians of North America, as "the great chief who would not kill a mosquito."

His vessels, the *Erebus* and *Terror*, were soon fitted for sea; and on the 25th of May, 1845, he weighed anchor, with a picked crew, and as noble a band of officers as ever volunteered for a service of peril. They were met by a whaler on the 26th of July following, in the upper waters of Baffin's Bay, moored to an iceberg, and waiting for an opening in "the pack." They have not been seen since.

When the year 1848 had arrived without any tidings of this gallant party, Great Britain dispatched three separate expeditions to reclaim them. These