

The selection of the crews of the three vessels was faultless; I can pay the men who composed them no higher tribute than by bearing testimony to their constant cheerfulness, their instant obedience of orders, their incessant vigilance, and their fearlessness under all circumstances of danger. There were no punishments on board the ships until our return to civilization, and the few cases then were caused entirely by rum.

If not a breach of official etiquette I would state that our success in the work which we had the honor to accomplish was made possible, first, by the munificent appropriation of the Congress of the United States; second, by the unceasing energy of yourself and the Secretary of War; your masterly comprehension of the problem to be solved by the expedition; your indefatigable activity in fitting it for its work, and your unflagging interest in preparing everything which concerned its success. This spirit was caught up by the officers and men you honored and was the mainspring of their action when absent. Much of the success of the expedition is due to you, and when I say this I only convey to you the sentiment of all who served with me in the difficult, dangerous, and honorable duty which you intrusted to our charge.

I inclose herewith a series of photographs to illustrate the conditions of ice at various points of the passage in Melville Bay. These photographs are numbered, and represent the conditions of ice as met by the expeditionary ships; they will explain much better than a volume of words some of the difficulties which were encountered and some of the reasons why delay was necessary at times; further reference to them in the body of this report is therefore unnecessary.

The track chart accompanying contains the route pursued by the ships on the outward and homeward journey; the data on its margin explains itself.

In conclusion, I beg to thank you for your earnest, prompt, and cordial support in preparing the expeditionary force for its work, and, above all, for the lasting honor conferred upon me and upon the officers and men composing it in connecting our names and our efforts with yours in a relief which had filled the nation, and indeed the civilized world, with the gravest solicitude for a year past.

I congratulate you on the achievement of this expedition, fitted under your personal observation and care.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

W. S. SCHLEY,
Commander, U. S. Navy,
Commanding Greely Relief Expedition of 1884.

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