

islets on the east side of Baffin Bay. After a brief rest, Franklin pushed forward across the bay to Lancaster Sound, his course being much impeded, however, by the pack-ice, which had not yet broken up. His ships were "spoken" about this time by a Hull whaler, the *Prince of Wales*, to whose master Franklin and Crozier reported that all were well, and all confident of successfully accomplishing their high enterprise. That same evening, the 26th of July, the ice gave way; and the *Erebus* and the *Terror*, steering to the north-west, plunged into Lancaster Sound. And then a cloud, as it were, descended upon them; a darkness and a mystery: they passed into the frozen wastes of the Arctic World, and disappeared as completely as if the sea had suddenly engulfed them. Of late years, some memorials of them, as we shall see, have been discovered; but even now the record is imperfect, and the whole story of the fate of Franklin's expedition will never be revealed to the curious gaze of mankind.

It was not expected that any news of the progress of the voyagers would reach England until the summer of 1846, or even the spring of 1847; and no apprehensions, therefore, arose as to their safety until the latter date had passed. When the summer of 1848 came, without intelligence, a natural anxiety seized upon the public mind; and when the winter went by, and still nothing was heard of Franklin and his men, the anxiety deepened into alarm. At length the Government resolved to send expeditions in search of the missing heroes. One was despatched under Sir James Ross, and another under Sir John Richardson; but both failed to discover the slightest traces of their course. A third expedition, under Captains Moore and Kellet, started from Behring Strait, and worked towards the east: in their boats they got as far as the mouth of Mackenzie River; but their endeavours