

Enclosure in No. 50.

Government Emigration Office, Waterford,
27 May 1852.

Sir,

IN reference to your letter of the 10th instant, requesting to have all the information I could gain from the masters of the several vessels that sailed from this port bound to North America, respecting the two ships reported to have been seen on the ice by the "Renovation" in April 1851, I have the honour to acquaint you, that all that I have as yet been able to collect is from the masters of the vessels named in the margin, and that the first mentioned, commanded by Mr. Peter White, fell in with the ice on the 26th October 1851, in latitude 43° 47' N., longitude 48° 38' W., and states that he only saw three small icebergs, and no vestige or sign of a vessel; also that he never has, in conversation with his brother captains, ever heard any of them say that they had seen or fallen in with ships on the ice, and is certain that if they had they would have told him of it; is of opinion that the ships said to have been seen by the "Renovation" were not Sir J. Franklin's vessels, but deserted whalers.

The next named, commanded by Mr. John Bellord, sailed from hence on the 12th May 1851, saw only one small piece of ice on his voyage to Quebec.

The third named, commanded by Mr. Brothers (a very intelligent person) sailed from hence 17th April 1851, and in latitude 43° 30' N., longitude 47° 40' W. on the 18th May 1851, fell in with a few icebergs, rather large, but saw no vessels near them; never heard at Quebec of the two ships seen by the "Renovation;" is also of opinion that they must have been deserted whalers, or merchant vessels.

The last vessel, now fitting out here, for North America, is commanded by Mr. Rees, but who was not in her last voyage, nor is there any one on board that was, except John Tower, A.B.; he states that they did not see the ice, or fall in with any vessels in distress, or water-logged; and on asking him if he had ever heard of a large reward having been offered to any vessel or persons giving information as to the fate of Sir John Franklin's ships, he answered in the negative, nor had he ever heard it a subject of conversation between the seamen.

The only further information that I have at present gained is from Mr. Thomas Dawson, master of the ship "Crown," 1,284 tons, now lying at Passage, put in here from Liverpool, with 500 emigrants for New York, reported to you in my letter of the 24th instant; he has acquainted me that when in the command of the "Lady Constable," they sailed from Liverpool, 9 April 1851, and on the 20th April, in latitude 47° N., longitude 48° W., he fell in with several icebergs, and further to the northward and westward, a great deal of field ice, so much so as to be impeded for about 10 days, and then had to bore their way through the ice, but saw no vessels or wrecks; is of opinion that those seen by the "Renovation" were merchant vessels; once saw a small schooner so circumstanced that was afterwards liberated by the breaking up of the ice.

In offering my own opinion that the vessels seen by Mr. Simpson, mate of the "Renovation," commanded by Mr. Coward, were not the "Erebus" and "Terror," but whalers, or merchant vessels, I may be excused by the Commissioners for so doing, when I acquaint you, that, as agent for transports, in the "Barretto Junior" I accompanied Sir John Franklin to the edge of the ice, and with my boat's crew, on the 12th July 1845, was the last person on board the discovery ships to take leave of them; and from that moment it will easily be believed that I have felt the deepest possible interest in their safe return, and given the subject my most anxious consideration.

It has been stated by Mr. Simpson, and I believe since by Captain Coward, that the largest of the vessels seen by them was from 600 to 700 tons, and the smallest about 300. The "Erebus" is 370 tons, and the "Terror" 326 tons. The vessels seen are also described as full-rigged ships; the "Erebus" and "Terror" are both barque-rigged, and low in the water, neither of them being so high as the "Enterprise," "Investigator," "Resolute," or "Assistance." If these last points could be decided to a certainty by them, or by Mr. Lynch, the passenger that was on board, it would be conclusive: this last gentleman's evidence would be valuable.

I have, &c.

(signed) *Edward Griffiths,*
Lieutenant, R. N.To S. Walcott, Esq.,
Secretary to the Colonial Land and Emigration Office.