

Sir,

I have the honour to enclose a journal of my proceedings and track chart of my route while in command of the Melville branch of sledges.

I proceeded on the 22d September with the sledges "Discovery" and "Fearless," the latter under Mr. G. S. Nares (mate), provisioned and equipped for 25 days, and carrying a depôt of 20 days' provisions for spring operations: also a chart for land travelling.

After rounding Cape Bounty on the 23d ult. in company with three sledges of the Banks Land Division, found the water ran in towards the beach, which obliged us to land to the eastward of Cape Halse and proceed along it to within a short distance of Point Wakeham. Being unable to drag the sledges over the beach, the cart was loaded with the heavy baggage and manned by half the crews, while the sledges proceeded with the rest along the beach and grounded hummocks. On the 24th we experienced a heavy gale from the north with a blinding snow-drift, which, together with the difficulty of keeping the cart and sledges in company (the former having been considerably damaged by being upset), obliged us to encamp and remain so until noon of the 25th, and on the afternoon of that day we arrived at an old floe, over which we travelled and arrived at the depôt on the morning of the 26th. After taking it up parted company with the Banks Land parties and proceeded to the head of Winter Harbour, at which point I deposited the cart and 160 lbs. of pemmican. Our journey across Melville Island to Liddon's Gulf occupied until October 4th. On both the 28th and 29th we lost half a day's journey, the former date from bad weather, the latter in search of a man who was for seven hours lost in a snow drift while searching for a rifle missed from the sledge the night before. The sledges not being adapted for land travelling, and the snow being too deep for the cart, we were obliged to contrive various means for getting our heavy loads along. Making portages, double manning, together with many hours of standing pulls, were daily resorted to.

Within five miles of the sea on each side the land was more bare of snow and very stony. In the centre the snow was generally about a foot deep, but so loose and soft that the sledges cut through it to the ground. We found the country level, but intersected by several ravines, which could never be seen until within a few yards of them. Crossing the smallest of these was always a heavy job. I have named two curious cuts in the land Stony and Icicle Pass, in passing through which we had very great trouble. I am, however, in hopes that in the spring we shall find more frozen snow upon the ground, which will of course decrease the labour materially.

We struck off the land into Liddon's Gulf between the Esquimaux remains and the Lagoons mentioned by Sir Edward Parry. The very hummocky ice and a westerly gale frustrated my plan of proceeding direct to the westward by Cape Beechey. I therefore made along the southern shore and deposited the depôt at Cape Hoppner, from which I shall be able next spring to make a westerly course towards the land about Cape Hoare.

Being uncertain of what trouble we should experience in recrossing the land, we commenced our return on the 17th day, and on the same morning in a ravine, $8\frac{1}{2}$ W. of Hooper's Island, collected about one hundred-weight of coal, which lasted until our return.

In recrossing more to the westward we escaped several ravines, and hit upon an encampment of Captain McClintock's in 1851. His track across is decidedly the best to follow.

(For particulars of encampment, vide Journal of October 10th.)

On the 12th instant, while examining the sandstone boulder off Winter Harbour, I found upon the top of it a document from Commander McClure, containing an account of his proceedings since leaving the "Herald" in Behring's Straits; also a chart which to the astonishment of us all unfolded the mystery of the North-west Passage, and solved all the problems with regard to Banks and Wollaston Lands.

With this intelligence I proceeded directly for the ship, where I arrived on the 14th instant all well, (except James Tullett, slightly frost-bitten in