

even then at the risk of being frost bitten, one day being scarcely distinguishable from another, save by extra tediousness or discomfort, that the crews were compelled to wear out existence, during these three long dreary months of darkness. What prison could be more dreary? With what joy they beheld the return of light, for the most hazardous duty was a change for the better, and any change was a benefit, as it roused them from the torpor of their spirits, and the stagnation of their blood.

So soon as the great severity of the winter had passed, several short preliminary journeys were made, in April and May, to carry out small depôts of provisions to the west of Cape Clarence and to the south of Cape Seppings; and on the 15th of the latter month, Sir James Ross, with Lieutenant Mc Clintock and a party of twelve men, with forty days' provisions, tents, blankets, clothes, and other necessaries, lashed on two sledges, departed to examine all the smaller indentations of the coast, in which any ship might have found shelter. He traversed the north coast of North Somerset, beyond Capes Rennell, Gifford, and Bunney; where, finding the land tend nearly due south, he followed it, over land never before trod by civilized man, being all new discovery, to that part of the coast opposite Kerswell Bay. It had been his intention to reach the magnetic pole, where he had previously been, but owing to some of the party becoming useless from debility and lameness, he was obliged to forego the attempt. Sir James, however, accompanied by Serjeant Hurdich and W. Thompson, a seaman of great endurance, advanced eight or nine miles beyond the rest, to the extreme south point of a small peninsular, latitude $72^{\circ} 38' N.$, longitude $95^{\circ} 40' W.$, from whence they obtained an extensive view, and from the atmosphere being at the time peculiarly favorable for distinctness of vision, observed the extreme high cape of the coast, not more than fifty miles distant. After having traversed nearly 400 miles over the boundless region of ice, mostly at night time, to avoid snow blindness,—an almost unparalleled feat of exploration,—the party returned to the ships on the 23rd of June, after an absence of thirty-nine days, so completely worn out by fatigue, that every man was, from some cause or other, under the doctor's hands for two or three weeks.

During this time, Capt. Bird had despatched parties in several directions. One under Lieut. Barnard, to the north shores of Barrow's Straits; a second, under Lieut. Brown, to the east shores of Prince Regent's Inlet; and a third, under Lieut. Robinson, along the western shores of that Inlet; each party going about fifty miles, and at the farthest point leaving a cylinder under a heap of stones, with particulars of the position of the ships, &c. All the parties were unsuccessful in the main object, and all suffered severely from snow blindness, sprained ancles, and debility.

The season was still extremely backward, there being scarcely a pool of water visible on the surface of the ice, yet Sir James was so anxious to push westward to Melville Island, that all hands that were any way able were set to work to cut a canal through the ice to the harbour's mouth, a distance of more than two miles. A line having been marked by the officers, 15 and 18 feet saws were worked with triangles, cutting, on an