

trusively exerted) towards their particular welfare, as well as to the more general furtherance of the schemes of humanity in which they were engaged, and the great exertions you have gone through.

You are well aware that I have always entertained the most sanguine views with regard to the discovery of ships; and that, notwithstanding nearly eight years have elapsed since tidings were received, I still see no reason to despair. A mass of evidence is before us* to show that the Polar regions abound in animal life: the cases of four Russian sailors who spent six years on Spitzbergen, 1743-9, and that of Sir John Ross and party, who were four years ice-bound, afford precedents for the existence of the party now sought for; and when we consider moreover that only the *mere* portals have yet been passed, and scarcely the threshold entered upon of that vast unknown region, in *any* part of which it is possible the missing voyagers may be detained, we may relieve ourselves from fear of a charge of unreasonableness or obstinacy in the persistence of earnest *hope* that

* Wrangell, Anjou, Parry, Richardson, Petermann, &c.