

searching parties in the dark months while in the neighbourhood of Beechey Island. To follow any of these further would lead to no results, for unless we have a foundation on facts or circumstances, we cannot form a correct view. Declining, therefore, lest I should be in pursuit of a phantom always on the wing, I turn with attention to the absence of traces connecting the lost ships. It is a fact upon which too much stress cannot be laid, that every article found by Dr. Rae and Mr. Anderson goes no further than to show that they had belonged to a boat party, and excepting every trace in one view, a party such as that seen by the Esquimaux in 1850, could, without difficulty, carry all that was found.

It is satisfactory to know that in the statement made by Dr. Rae, in that of Mr. Anderson, as in the report lately brought home by Captain Penny, all are silent on the position of Franklin's ships. The Esquimaux seen on Boothia, Victoria Land, and on the Great Fish River, when asked the direct question if they had seen the ships, answered in the negative, and without placing any reliance on their statement, its truth is powerfully apparent by the absence of traces connecting the ships with them. Had they informed us otherwise, the absence of such traces on them would have proved their assertion false. That two ships were detained or wrecked in a locality infested by tribes of wandering Esqui-