

Captain Phipps, subsequently Lord Mulgrave, and in which expedition Lord Nelson served as a midshipman. But this, like all other expeditions sent *viâ* Spitzbergen, failed in its purpose of penetrating within the 80th parallel; and although Mackenzie and Hearn, on the American continent, just traced the two rivers which bear their names into the Arctic Sea, nothing in the last century was added to geographical knowledge within the Arctic zone to the rough outline of Baffin's Bay, as discovered by that great navigator in 1616; and, apart from that mere outline of Baffin's Bay and Spitzbergen, the entire area of the Arctic zone was a blank, so far as all human knowledge was concerned.

In the year 1818 the Royal Society, prompted by Sir Joseph Banks and Sir John Barrow, then Secretary to the Admiralty, took up actively the subject of Arctic exploration, and between that period and 1833 the successive expeditions of Franklin, Parry, Back, John and James Ross, Sabine, Buchan, Beechey, and Lyons added much to our geographical knowledge, and threw new light on the meteorology, botany, hydrography, terrestrial magnetism, zoology, and ethnology of a previously unknown portion of the earth's surface.

After the discovery of the exact position of the magnetic pole by Sir James Ross in 1831-33 Arctic exploration may be said to have paused; but it is worthy of remark that, during the fifteen years it had thus been actively pursued by seamen and travellers with the then imperfect means at command, no loss of life had occurred, although there had been occasionally more than two hundred men at a time employed upon these expeditions.

In 1845 the subject of Arctic research in various branches of natural science was again taken up by the Royal Society, and that year a fresh Arctic expedition was despatched by our Government, in which there were various persons eminent in science, under the command of Sir John Franklin.

It consisted of two sailing ships, with auxiliary steam-power of a very imperfect nature, and both in that respect, as well as in their general equipment, stores, and provisioning, they fell far short of what an Arctic expedition of the present day would have at command; but subsequent events reveal to us that this expedition succeeded in making one of the most remarkable Arctic voyages on record, and that they perished, after abandoning their ships, at a position near the entrance of the Great

Majesty's sanction for an expedition to be fitted out to explore the North Polar area. In a letter, dated January 19th, 1773, the subject was recommended to Lord Sandwich, and it was urged that such discovery would be of service to the promotion of natural knowledge.

The wishes of the Council of the Royal Society were immediately complied with, and it was ordered that an expedition should be undertaken, "with every encouragement that could countenance such an enterprise, and every assistance that could contribute to its success." The command was given to Captain Phipps, afterwards Lord Mulgrave. The instructions were drawn up by Mr. N. Maskelyne, the Rev. H. Horsley, Mr. Cavendish, and Dr. Maty.

The comparative failure of Captain Phipps did not damp the ardour of the Royal Society. Early in 1774 the Council Minutes show that another expedition was frequently the subject of debate; and in February 1774 a memorial was presented by the Royal Society to the Admiralty. This led to Captain Cook's attempt on the Pacific side; the expedition sailing in June 1776.

In 1817 the Council of the Royal Society resumed the consideration of the best means of prosecuting Arctic discovery, and a letter was addressed by Sir Joseph Banks to Lord Melville, dated November 20th, 1817. A favourable reply was received on the 10th of December, in which it was announced that His Majesty's Government had deemed it their duty, in conformity with the suggestion of the Royal Society, to give orders for the fitting out of four suitable vessels, with a view of the important objects of Arctic discovery; two to proceed up Davis's Strait, and the other two along the east coast of Greenland to the northward. In a scientific point of view these expeditions were fruitful of results, including Sabine's magnetic observations.

On the return of Ross, another expedition was despatched in May 1819, commanded by Parry; when Sabine again made valuable magnetic and pendulum observations.

In 1826 the Council of the Royal Society again turned its attention to Arctic discovery, and Captain Parry proposed a plan to attempt to reach the North Pole by means of travelling with sledge-boats over the ice. Sir Humphry Davy, the President, wrote to Lord Melville, expressing the conviction of the Council that Parry's expedition could not fail to afford several valuable scientific results, and to settle many important matters of scientific inquiry. Lord Melville replied, "that, the Council having no doubt balanced all the difficulties against the probable advantages, and having declared in favour of the expedition, I do not feel myself at liberty to withhold my assent to Captain Parry's earnest request." In a letter to the Council, Captain Parry says, "that the liberal and enlightened views of the Council mainly led to the adoption of the enterprise by the Admiralty."

In 1839 the despatch of the Antarctic expedition commanded by Sir James Ross, though originally suggested by a Committee appointed by the British Association, was urgently advocated by the President and Council of the Royal Society, who threw themselves unreservedly and with their whole weight into the scale, with immediate and decisive effect. The Council of the Royal Society then drew up a Report containing a detailed account of every object of inquiry which should receive attention from the explorers.

In 1845 the Council of the Royal Society again urged the importance of Arctic research, and their representations led to the despatch of the Franklin Expedition; since which time no Government scientific expedition has been fitted out for the exploration of the unknown area round the North Pole.