

No. 12.
Letter from Mr.
W. P. Snow to
Captain Hamilton,
R. N.

Captain Ommaney was on his way to Capes Hotham and Walker, and evidently following up that part of Captain Austin's instructions to him, referring to this. He had the knowledge of everything that is as yet known concerning the Franklin Expedition. He knew where Penny was, and where at least one of the Americans (the "Rescue") was; and he was aware that Captain Austin would soon be following upon his heels. He would probably (unless something very important was found at Cape Hotham to alter such intention) leave his full particulars on Griffith's Island, about the end of August.

Captain Austin was last heard of as having gone to Pond's Bay on the 17th of August, where it is possible he may have gained some intelligence from those natives whose forsaken encampment I noticed when examining there. He, in all probability, was up at Port Leopold on the 24th, and on his way with the "Pioneer," towards Cape Riley, on the night of the 25th, passing us in the thick weather. He would at once make for Cape Hotham, and follow up the "Assistance," getting to Griffith's Island very likely about the same time, or soon after.

Mr. Penny was well in Wellington Channel, midway; he knew where the other vessels were, had spoken the "North Star," and, no doubt, from his proximity to the "Assistance," had communicated with and received intelligence from Captain Ommaney; but, while any uncertainty of Sir John Franklin's after-course existed, was pursuing his instructions, and making for the north-west to examine.

The American, "Advance," was also acquainted with everything that is known. The "Rescue" was far up Wellington Channel on its eastern side, making (as Captain de Haven told me) northerly for the western regions, and he himself southerly; both rejoining, as I believe, in the neighbourhood of Griffith's Island, where an examination would be made. The northerly and the southerly I speak of is, as I understood from him, the northern and the southern sides of the main channel leading to Melville Island.

Thus the "Rescue" would examine Wellington Channel as far as necessary, and then proceed, as in Captain de Haven's notice, to Cape Hotham; and thence, by Griffith's Island, Byam Martin Island, &c.; while the "Advance" stood along by Cape Walker, and to the westward, uniting with her consort again in the neighbourhood of Banks Land.

Sir John Ross was last off Admiralty Inlet, standing over to the northward, with the intention (as I cannot help suspecting) of examining some of the more northerly parts at the head of and around Baffin's Bay.

The probable position of the Arctic squadron I would venture to suggest may be as follows:—

1. Captain Austin, in the "Resolute" and "Pioneer" say, somewhere west-south-westerly, between Cape Walker and Banks Land, probably near the latter.
2. Captain Ommaney, in the "Assistance" and "Intrepid," say, Winter Harbour, Melville Island.
3. Mr. Penny, perhaps in unknown parts, north of or about Bathurst Island.
4. The Americans, without wintering in a harbour, about Banks Land, either east or west.
5. Sir John Ross, either through Jones' or Smith's Sound.

Parties thrown out to examine in the spring, say—

From Captain Austin,

1. To communicate with or see if "Assistance" at Winter Harbour.
2. To go due south from winter position.
3. To go from Banks Land, probably under Lieutenant Osborn, according to his plan.

From Captain Ommaney,

1. To communicate with "Resolute."
2. To examine northerly, and around Melville Island.
3. To proceed south-westerly from Melville Island.

From

See his letter to
Mr. Barclay,
the Secretary of
the Admiralty,
No. 9 (B).

Vide his instructions to Captain
Ommaney.