

The whole formed the roughest line of way imaginable without the slightest prospect of ever improving.

"The journey," resumes the captain, "was consequently an incessant battle to overcome ever-recurring obstacles; each hard-won success stimulating them for the next struggle. A passage-way had always to be cut through the squeezed-up ice with pickaxes (an extra one being carried for the purpose), and an incline picked out of the perpendicular side of the high floes, or roadway built up, before the sledges, generally one at a time, could be brought on. Instead of advancing with a steady walk, the usual means of progression, more than half of each day was expended by the whole party facing the sledge and pulling it forward a few feet at a time. Under these circumstances, the distance attained, short as it may be considered by some, was truly marvellous.

"During this memorable journey to penetrate towards the north over the heavy Polar oceanic ice without the assistance of continuous land along which to travel, in which has been displayed in its highest state the pluck and courageous determination of the British seaman to steadily persevere, day after day, against apparently insurmountable difficulties, their spirits rising as the oppositions increased; Commander Markham and Lieutenant Parr, and their brave associates, succeeded in advancing the national flag to lat. $83^{\circ} 20' 26''$ N., leaving a distance of 400 miles still to be travelled over before the North Pole is reached. In order to attain this position, although a direct distance of only 73 miles from the ship was accomplished, the total distance travelled was 276 miles on the outward, and 245 miles on the homeward journey.

"Their severe labour and exertions, which certainly can never be surpassed, coupled with the experience gained by Sir Edward Parry in the summer of 1827, proves that a lengthened journey over the Polar pack-ice with a sledge party, provided with a navigable beat, is, in consequence of the rough nature of the road over which the party has to travel, impracticable at any season of the year; and further, as the sledges were necessarily advanced each stage singly, we are enabled to estimate the exact rate of progression which may be expected, should any one consider it desirable to push forward with light sledges without any additional means of rearing later in the season, in the event of the ice breaking up in his rear. The maximum rate of advance in this way was at the rate of $2\frac{3}{4}$ miles a day, the mean being at the rate of $1\frac{1}{4}$ miles a day."

Having got home his northern division of sledge travellers with the utmost difficulty, Captain Nares now became very anxious about his western division under Lieutenant Aldrich. He accordingly despatched Lieutenant May (who seems to have led most of the forlorn hopes of this enterprise), with the dog-sledge and three strong men, to meet the returning party.