

Taking a party from the "Discovery," "Alert" will then continue her way northward leaving depôts as convenient.

The "Discovery's" party will be sent back to her in the autumn of 1875, with news either of the position of our winter quarters or of our having good prospects of gaining a long step in advance.

It is quite impossible to state how far north I shall endeavour to take the "Alert," the surest way to reach the North Pole is not to risk failure by pushing forward away from the land.

If the "Alert" can winter even in  $84^{\circ}$  N. latitude and there is land ahead of us, we are not only certain to attain a high northern latitude, but also to explore all the neighbouring coasts, and thus be prepared to advance the ship along known shores, to any required position during the following summer.

This will oblige the expedition to remain in the Arctic Seas for a second season, but I consider that preferable to our pushing off away from the land, and thereby to risk wintering in the drifting pack, from which all chance of travelling, and therefore of exploring, is at an end. Therefore should the land north of Cape Union trend to the westward, with a navigable sea but no land in sight to the northward, I shall think twice before I leave the shore.

At present I have made up my mind to remain by the land for the first winter, then with our increased knowledge of the trend of the land, the direction of the prevailing winds and currents, and having insured certain communication with the "Discovery," I can make a push north during the summer of 1876 if there is any object to be gained and the ice enables me to do so.

Should there be continuous land to the northward, I need scarcely say, that the "Alert" will be taken this summer to as high a northern latitude as possible.

During the spring of 1876 my object will be with the combined forces of the two ships to reach the Pole. On the return of the supporting sledges much will be done in the way of exploring in the neighbourhood of the ships.

One party from the "Discovery" will certainly communicate with Littleton Island or the cairn near Cape Isabella. They will arrive there early in the season, probably about 1st May, with information concerning the position of the "Discovery's" winter quarters and the probable position of the "Alert."

I shall not communicate with any position south of us by sledge during the summer or autumn of 1876, unless we have been unsuccessful in attaining a high latitude. In the autumn of this year, or early in the spring of 1876, a party will visit Hall's Rest and leave a notice there. Should the provisions left by the "Polaris" be in good condition, they will be used by the sledge party which explores the Coast of Greenland.

Should the two ships winter apart I have arranged with Captain Stephenson for a meeting at a certain rendezvous next spring.

In the event of the "Alert" not keeping this appointment, Captain Stephenson will know that I have been successful in attaining a very high latitude.

In such case I shall endeavour to return south nearer to him in the "Alert" during the summer of 1876.

In the extreme improbability of my again failing to meet his party at the same position during the spring of 1877, he has received orders to land all the provisions that can be spared; and on the 1st August in the "Discovery" to proceed to the entrance of Smith's Sound, where he will communicate with the relief ship coming from England that season.

Should he receive no news of us by that vessel he is to arrange for one of the two vessels to remain for the winter of 1877-78, and for the other to proceed to England.

Should the relief ship fail to arrive before the 25th August [1877], the "Discovery" is to leave full particulars of the Expedition, and make the best of her way to England.

Should the "Discovery" fail to get south that season Captain Stephenson is ordered to communicate, if possible, with the relief ship at the entrance of Smith's Sound in the autumn of 1877; and to abandon the "Discovery" early in May 1878, should he think proper to do so.