

proves that he would greatly depend on such food, it inevitably leads us to the conviction that he would be greatly disposed to direct his movements with reference to those places where animals and birds could be had in most abundance. This leads our beliefs towards the Polynya; and it is a consolation to think of the many authorities which give us the assurance of its capacity of furnishing food. Capt. Penny mentioned before the Geographical Society of London, a few months ago, as something encouraging, that twelve American seamen, who wintered last year in an inlet discovered by him in Davis' Straits, had killed twelve whales—an amount of food he says "on which Franklin and his crews might have subsisted during the time they were absent!" And Dr. Kane is equally hopeful of the safety of Sir John with respect to the supply of food. "The resources"—he says in one of his lectures—"which that region evidently possesses for the support of human life, are surprisingly greater than the public are generally aware. Narwhal, white whales, and seals—the latter in extreme abundance—crowd the waters of Wellington Channel; indeed it is a region teeming with animal life. The migrations of the eider duck, the brent goose, and the auk—a bird about the size of our teal, were absolutely wonderful. The fatty envelope of marine animals, known as blubber, supplies light and heat, their furs warm and well-adapted clothing, their flesh wholesome and antiscorbutic food. The reindeer, the bear, and the fox, also abound in great numbers even in the highest latitude attained."

Still, though every feeling of our nature, independently of reasons advanced, inclines us to hope Franklin is still alive—no one can deny that the absence of any memorial of his movements is most astonishing and unaccountable. The greater portion of the mystery is in *this*! Allowing there may be something in what Sir John Richardson says of the cunning voracity of bears and wolverines; still, that no direct notice should be found on Beechy Island or Cape Riley, is most extraordinary. Even if Franklin were to proceed to the West, towards Cape Walker, it would be strange he should leave no memorial in the place where he had wintered. If he had gone towards Regent's Inlet or Banks' Land, it would be expected he would deposit some token of his presence on some of the prominent points, where the explorers of 1850 must have found them. The result of their re-

searches, in fact, shows that, in all human probability, Franklin never went westward from Wellington Channel. With respect to Beechy Island, Capt. Kennedy and others believe that, after all, some memorials of the intrepid navigator lie buried in the ground, though they cannot be come at. But, then, it is scarcely probable that Franklin would bury his intimations in a manner to baffle those who may come after him. Conjecture is bewildered by the facts, arguments, and conclusions that may be gathered from this mysterious question. All that can be said, apparently, is that the balance of probabilities points to the way, north-west from Wellington Channel, as that pursued in 1846, by the *Erebus* and *Terror*.

As we have said—the enterprise of Sir Edward Belcher excites the strongest interest, and the world is in daily expectation of hearing some news from North Channel, Queen's Channel, or other waterways into the Polynya. It will be a dreary and disheartening thing if Belcher comes down without tidings or token of the lost mariners. He is more likely to meet a memorial of the ships than the ships themselves; for, if they enter that region, they should be far to the westward by this time, and above that outlying circle of ice which resisted the efforts of the *Plover*, *Enterprise* and *Investigator* to pierce it. Altogether, the fate of Franklin is covered with uncertainty as with a thick cloud. No doubt, there are those who dream of the day when he may come down from the cold Polynya, to send a thrill of joy and congratulation through the length and breadth of the civilized world. But others, with Ommaney and Stewart (Penny's captain) dread the worst, and think that British-born crews could not survive six winters in the arctic circle. Still, hope is not killed. Sir John Ross spent four winters in the ice, and came out safe; though he was forced to quit his single ship, the *Victory*. Sir John Franklin's expedition was well equipped and furnished; his ships were stout, and his determination to make some decisive westing was very strong. His case does not yet seem desperate; and we wait with anxiety, the result of efforts at present made in the Polar wilderness—efforts that will still be repeated till the fate of the lost navigator and his companions shall be discovered, or all reasonable hope of ever bringing it to light shall be extinguished.