

DISCOVERY OF THE REMAINS OF SIR JOHN FRANKLIN AND PARTY.

(From the Montreal Herald of Dec. 24.)

We have been favored by E. M. Hopkins Esq., (in the absence of Sir George Simpson,) with the following outline of the proceedings of the Arctic Expedition, which, by instructions from her Majesty's Government, was employed by the Hudson's Bay Company to follow up the clue discovered by Dr. Rae, while engaged on another exploring expedition, also fitted out by the Hudson's Bay Company, of the fate of Sir John Franklin's party.

It will be in the recollection of our readers, that it is scarcely a year ago that we published to the world the first authentic information which had been received of the lamentable fate of the gallant Franklin and his brave comrades. The intelligence which was conveyed to Dr. Rae in the Winter of 1853-54 by the Esquimaux, and in the accuracy of which that distinguished Arctic traveller placed perfect reliance, was received by the public in England with great hesitation, arising, probably, from an unwillingness to believe the mournful facts.

That intelligence was in substance that in the Winter of 1850, the Esquimaux saw a party of whites travelling from the northward toward the Arctic coast, dragging a boat over the ice, intending to use it as soon as they reached open water; that the party, about forty in all, made the land near the mouth of a large river (the Great Fish River of Back) and there perished of starvation, to which were added a number of frightful details of their sufferings, which we will not again inflict on our readers. In proof of the truth of these reports, the Esquimaux exhibited and sold to Dr. Rae a great variety of relics, principally silver forks and spoons, marked with the crests and initials of various officers of the ships Erebus and Terror (Franklin's), and among other articles, a small order, or star, with Sir John Franklin's name engraved on it. These were the tangible proofs conveyed to England by Dr. Rae in confirmation of the tale he collected from the Esquimaux; but his proceedings and conclusions have been frequently called in question, and therefore it will be the more gratifying to him now, that they are fully corroborated, even to minute details of locality, &c., in which he might possibly have been mistaken.

As soon as Dr. Rae had laid his report before Her Majesty's Government, it was decided, that an attempt should be made to follow up the trace he had obtained, commencing at the point indicated by the Esquimaux as the scene of the last sufferings of the party of whites seen by them in 1850.

The organization and management of this new expedition were wisely intrusted to the Hudson's Bay Company. On the 27th of October, 1854, the instructions of Her Majesty's Government and the Company were forwarded from London to Sir George Simpson at Lachine, where he received them in the middle of November. His great experience and well known ability in affairs of that nature enabled him to decide with promptitude on the mode of carrying out the expedition, the men to be employed as leaders and in subordinate capacities, the amount of supplies, craft, and all other requisites for the undertaking; and on the 29th of November, last year, his instructions were dispatched by special messenger to the Hudson's Bay Territories, all parts of which were put under requisition to furnish materiel, the whole to be collected at the rendezvous, Fort Resolution, in Great Slave Lake, by the 1st of June following; and so complete were the plans, and so carefully had all contingencies been provided against, that in no point was there a failure in carrying out his arrangements.

The officers selected to lead the party were Mr. Anderson, a chief factor of the Company, and Mr. J. G. Stewart, a chief trader—both well qualified by experience, courage, physical strength, &c., for the arduous duty. The party consisted of these two officers and fourteen men, and left Fort Resolution, a port of the H. B. Company on Great Slave Lake, on the 23d of June last in two bark canoes, in which they performed the perilous voyage down Great

Fish River—a river known to the world for its dangers and horrors by Sir George Back's narrative. From Mr. Stewart, we learn that he doubts that the party ever could have got safely down that stream to the coast, had it not been for the wonderful dexterity of the three Iroquois voyageurs whom Sir George Simpson had prudently forwarded from Lachine to join the expedition—the three best men of his own canoe.

The party reached the outlet or estuary of the river on the 30th of July, and skirted along its eastern shore as far as Point Beaufort, but found no traces to reward their search. Thence they crossed over to Montreal Island, twelve miles distant, lying near the western shore of the estuary; probably, in that crossing, incurring as great peril as any in the gloomy record of Arctic travels, pushing their bark canoes boldly out into the Arctic Ocean, and forcing their way through drifting masses of Arctic ice seven or eight feet thick. But they were prepared to make any effort to reach the island, which, as well as Point Aigle, near it, had been the places Dr. Rae understood the Esquimaux to mean, when describing where the white party perished in 1850; and they had the melancholy satisfaction of procuring, on that very spot, the fullest possible confirmation of Dr. Rae's report. They also met Esquimaux in that vicinity who had seen the whites, and gave much valuable information. Suffice it to say, that on the island were discovered the remains of a boat, which had been partially destroyed by the natives for the sake of the wood and the metal fastenings.

Although there was sufficient left to identify it as belonging to the Franklin expedition, one fragment of wood (now, as well as some other small relics, in the possession of the Hudson's Bay Company at Lachine) having the name "Terror" branded on it, while another piece has the name of Mr. Stanley, (surgeon of the Erebus) cut upon it, this latter being part of a snow-shoe, evidently of English manufacture, being made of oak, a species of wood no man accustomed to use snow-shoes would ever select for the purpose. No papers or books, and no human remains were found; nor was it likely, as four years had elapsed, since this tragedy was enacted upon a low sandy beach, exposed to the storms of four Arctic Winters, and there is little doubt, that either the sea has washed off or the sand has buried deep the unfortunates who perished on this spot. The Esquimaux were very friendly, and freely displayed all their treasures obtained from the boat, or found near it, and these consisted principally of the oars, used by them as tent-poles, the boat-kettles, the empty preserved meat-cases, &c., but no papers; and the natives stated, with every evidence of sincerity, that none had ever been seen or found.

Everything portable was secured by Messrs. Anderson and Stewart and brought back, and are now on their way to Canada: it would be useless to recount them all, but we may mention bar iron, rope with the Government mark on it, oars branded with the broad-arrow, piece of bunting, (remains of a flag,) a letterholder, a step of a mast, &c.—all clearly European and all Government supplies. Is anything more wanted?

The weather is described as having been "execrable"—constant storms, with ice, snow, rain, sleet, hail, thunder, and whatever else can be conceived that is disagreeable. It is a part of the coast the natives even consider uninhabitable—merely visiting it for a short time in Summer when the deer pass that way.

On the 14th August, when the expedition commenced its retreat from the coast, the ground was covered with fresh fallen snow, and the ice was forming; in fact, *Winter had set in*. Few further details of the last moments of the lost party have been collected; we may mention one mournful incident reported by an Esquimaux woman, who saw the last man die; he was large and strong, she said, and sat on the sandy beach, his head resting on his hands, and thus the last survivor of Franklin's Expedition yielded up his brave spirit. Messrs. Anderson and Stewart retraced their steps to Great Slave Lake, whence the latter continued his journey onward to Red River settlement, and thence via the Minnesota Territory to Montreal, where he arrived on

Friday evening last, direct from the Arctic Sea, after upward of 5,000 miles travel, in open craft, and through uninhabited regions, without a halt. A few facts taken at random may serve to bring home to our appreciation, what this North-west expedition accomplished as it went through.

In thirteen months, to-day, the Iroquois who were sent from Lachine to form part of the expedition returned thither, thus performing in one year the same service that Sir George Back got through in three. For 60 days and nights, the party saw no fire, there being no timber on the Great Fish River or Arctic coast; and during those 60 days they travelled incessantly in open craft in a wretched climate, never had dry clothes or slept on dry blankets, and never eat cooked victuals (except on rare occasions, when they made a little tea by means of a lamp). This party of sixteen in all travelled in bark canoes down one of the most turbulent rivers known even to North-west voyagers; ventured among the ice on the Arctic sea; and returned to their starting point without meeting a single accident to person or property—and, without performing all that was required of them, and had they gone out four or five years earlier, would no doubt have been instrumental in saving the lives of a portion of Franklin's party.

We think the foregoing narrative is ample corroboration of the wisdom of the recent outcry, to put "the right men in the right places."

One word in conclusion as to the Franklin Expedition. The two vessels, Erebus and Terror—left England in 1843—were last heard of in 1845. They probably tried several passages, but were baffled by the ice, and finally in 1848 were crushed, probably in Victoria Straits. Many of the crews perished, but one or more boats got off with the survivors, who took all the stores they could collect and travelled southward toward the Arctic coast, in the hope of reaching some of Hudson's Bay Company's ports. The season of 1849 was probably spent on this dreary journey, and renewed in 1850, where they reached the coast at the mouth of Fish River, but in so exhausted a state that they could merely run their boat on the beach and crawl ashore to die. This seems all that is certain, and all that we can ever know, of the fate of the Franklin Expedition.

THE PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE.—The National Intelligencer of Friday says:—

"From the disclosures which took place in the course of last month, of the complicated state of our relations with England, and the critical nature of unadjusted matters between the two governments, there is reason to infer that the present national exposure of the Executive is of far more ordinary importance; and during the inability of Congress to receive the communication and to take such cognizance as may be proper of our foreign affairs, the Executive may by the force of circumstances, or drifting into difficulties which the National Legislature, if made aware of them, might enable him to avoid."

DURABILITY OF IRON SHIPS. The iron ship, Richard Cobden, says the Liverpool Mail, which was built twelve years ago at Liverpool, will repay a visit from any one who is interested in iron ships. She has been twelve years in the East India trade, and has had not the slightest repairs done to her? has never leaked a drop? and will to all appearance, last for an unlimited length of time.

SHIP BUILDING IN MAINE.—Maine, during the last forty years, has built three-eighths of the whole United States tonnage. And though other states have immensely increased their shipbuilding of late, that State still enjoys the same preeminence over them.

THE REALLY GOOD WIFE.—It is a blessed thing for a poor man to have a contented wife; one who will not wish to live in stile beyond her husband's income, just because her next door neighbour does; one who can be happy in the love of her husband, her home, and its beautiful duties, without asking the world for its smiles or its favours.

NEW FOOD.

Attention, as all men know, has of late years been anxiously turned towards the discovery of a plant capable, in whole or in part, of forming a substitute for the precarious potato crop—Many have been suggested. The tuberosus oxalis, the arracacha, the lesser celandine, and many more, have from time to time been brought into notice; but each in turn, when weighed in the balance of practical agriculture, has been found wanting.

The star of hope, the eye of hungry Europe is now directed to an Oriental yam, when the combined labours of the "Allies" have suddenly brought forth from an inglorious obscurity of 6000 years. Like the East and West Indian yams already known, it belongs to the genus *discochoea*; but is very different from these in its specific characters. M. Decaisne's experiments lead to the conclusion that it would speedily become a plant of real agricultural importance in France; and Professor Lindley has no reason—judging from its geographical distribution, and its affinity to our hedge bryony, which it much resembles—why it should not suit our climate.

The plant has large perennial rhizomes or roots, the top ends of which are as thick as the fist, and which taper downwards to the thickness of the finger, descending perpendicularly to the depth of a yard, if the soil is loose enough to allow them. The haulm is annual, as thick as a goose-quill, cylindrical, entwining from right to left, two yards in height, of a violet colour, with small whitish specks; and when not artificially supported, it trails on the ground, rooting freely at the joints. In China, this plant has long been in extensive circulation, under the name of *Sain-In*; and M. Montigny, through whom it was introduced from Shanghai to Paris, reports it to be highly productive, and consumed as largely by the Chinese as the potato is by Europeans.

As yet, the applicability of the plant to Britain has not been practically demonstrated; but the French horticulturists, who have been at much pains to enquire into its merits, have arrived at the following conclusions: 1. That in point of flavour and nutritive properties, it is equal to the potato, and in the opinion of Professor Decaisne, superior. 2. That the yield is greater, whilst its freedom from disease renders the crop more certain. 3. That it will grow upon sandy, and what are usually considered barren soils; and thus affords an excellent means of turning waste-land to profit. 4. That it can be propagated with facility. 5. That it may remain in the ground several years without degenerating, but on the contrary, it increases in size, weight, and nutriment "furnishing at all seasons of the year an aliment within the reach of every one." 6. That when harvested, it may be preserved in cellars or sheds, without vegetating, for many months after the potato has become useless for food. 7. It requires a shorter time in cooking than the potato; ten minutes boiling being sufficient.

M. Decaisne, in detailing his experiments, observes: "If a new plant is to have a chance of becoming useful in rural economy, it must fulfil certain conditions, in the absence of which its cultivation cannot be profitable. Now, the Chinese yam satisfies every one of these conditions. It has been domesticated from time immemorial; it is perfectly hardy in the climate of France; its root is bulky, rich in nutritive matter, eatable when raw, easily cooked either by boiling or roasting, and then having no other taste than that of flour (*secule*). It is as much a ready-made bread as the potato, and is better than the batatas or sweet potato."

The system of cultivation recommended by Professor Lindley for Britain is the following:—For propagation, the smallest roots are set apart, and pitted to keep them from frost.—In the spring, they are taken out and planted in furrows, pretty near each other, in well prepared ground. They soon sprout and form prostrated stems, which are made into cuttings as soon as they are six feet long. As soon as the cuttings are ready, a field is worked into ridges, along each of which is formed a small furrow, in which the pieces of the stem are laid down and covered with a little earth,

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