

further expeditions (in other parts)—a praiseworthy object, perhaps, but one widely different from that for which the reward was offered. It is but due, however, to Dr. Rae to add that, when the Fish River expedition was resolved upon, he gave his ready advice for its organization, though he declined the command, which was proposed to him; and he also declares himself favourable at this moment to further search, were it only, as he has assured me, that his own statements might receive the verification he anticipates.

Much more gladly would I plead, did I not feel that it is beyond my province, that Dr. Rae should receive an adequate reward for his late and former services, than oppose his right to that which is put forth in the third clause of the "Gazette" notice, to which it appears to me he has not made good his title.

3. For the sake of those who may yet advance a stronger claim to it, I am again compelled respectfully to protest against the premature adjudication contemplated in the "Gazette" notice, when in the early part of the Session of 1849 the House of Commons unanimously voted 20,000*l.* for the encouragement of private enterprise, and for private enterprise alone, in the search for the lost objects of national solicitude, they placed no restrictions as to the period during which the reward was to be held out. It could never have been contemplated that, while the community was divided in opinion as to the evidence of the facts, and while a great majority of those best informed on the subject, and others the most deeply interested in it, were dissatisfied with that evidence, and demanded better, an arbitrary edict, such as that involved in the premature adjudication of the reward, should, in favour of any one candidate of doubtful pretensions, shut out all future ones. I would fain submit to your Lordships that so long as private funds are embarked in the same cause, and that active measures are in progress or contemplation to clear up the mystery as to the fate of the crews of the "Erebus" and "Terror," it would be unjust to place an arbitrary limit to the operation of an act designed expressly for that object, and so proclaimed at the time by Her Majesty's Government; and here I feel compelled to state that, though it is my humble hope and fervent prayer that the Government of my country will themselves complete the work they have begun, and not leave it to a weak and helpless woman to attempt the doing that imperfectly which they would do themselves so easily and well, yet if need be, such is my firm resolve, God helping me.

In the name, then, of those brave men who will devote themselves to this labour of love and duty, I feel called upon to claim that they should not be shut out by a premature adjudication from the reward which may become their due. It may yet fall to their lot to ascertain all, or much, of what we want to know, to bring back some journal, or some precious fragment, otherwise lost to us for ever.

Should these last of the explorers accomplish any of these things, will you ignore their services and claims, because in the spring of 1856 you had deemed that the fate of the expedition was ascertained, and had given away the reward? I have a right to use this argument, though, in carrying it into its consequences, I feel it may be an injustice to your Lordships, as well as to the devoted volunteers who will undertake what they have to do in a higher spirit than any hope of pecuniary recompense can put into them.

But I may illustrate the argument by a more immediate example, that of the zealous and enterprising Captain Penny. It may not be known to your Lordships that Captain Penny, before his departure from England last year, in command of two whaling-ships, informed me that the reports brought home by Dr. Rae reminded him of some vague rumours of a fight between whites and Esquimaux which had reached him in Northumberland Sound the previous season, from a great distance, travelling through successive tribes of natives; and Captain Penny added that, in spite of all the difficulties he foresaw in the execution of his project, it was his intention to engage some of the most intelligent and trustworthy natives, domesticated at his whaling-station, to trace back these rumours to their source, whether that source were the catastrophe at the Great Fish River or any other which may have overtaken a separate portion of the crews of the "Erebus" and "Terror" in some other locality. Now, though I have no great hope (considering the distance to be traversed, and other obstacles), that much success will attend Captain Penny's laudable efforts, and am sure that no thought of qualifying himself for the Government reward entered into his speculations, yet would it be fair to adjudicate that reward, at this moment, in the face of such a fact?

I have spoken reluctantly of a private expedition at my own cost, which, in