

are of opinion that a high northern latitude may be reached through the open water seen by Wrangel, and that subsequently an eastern passage may be forced by a screw steamer. I may, however, be permitted to mention that this is no hasty idea of mine, but one which I have had in contemplation for above two years. On my arrival from Africa at the close of 1849, after the return of Sir James Ross, I began to think seriously of the probable causes of Sir John Franklin's detention; and while in Russia last winter, in speaking upon the subject with some officers of the imperial navy who had been in the Arctic seas, I found that their opinions were exactly the same as mine; namely, that Sir John would pass to the northward of Parry Islands and never think of returning back till in the meridian of Behring's Straits. They were also of opinion that when he arrived thus far, he would be prevented from getting to the southward by a chain of islands extending far to the westward, a continuation, in fact, of the Parry Islands. Supposing now, Franklin to have succeeded in getting so far to the westward, and being stopped there, it cannot be imagined that he would relinquish the attempt to get through this last barrier to all his hopes, and the realization of the passage into the Pacific,—to retrace his steps from a point which may have taken four years to reach. What would a brave man do in such a case? Certainly not to retreat in two or even three years, particularly if, as we hope, they have met with sufficient animal food to support them. I believe Sir John Franklin to be somewhere to the north of Behring's Straits, and certainly not far to the eastward; and in that belief I wrote to Lady Franklin in October last, stating my plan and soliciting her assistance, which, I am happy to say, was immediately given. I have since then exerted myself in selecting a suitable vessel, which I have purchased, and which is now in dock undergoing the necessary alterations. She is a schooner of nearly 200 tons, but capable of carrying a much larger quantity. I intend fitting her with three separate engines of eight horse-power each, with separate boilers, by which arrangement I can effect an immense saving of fuel by only working one or more engine as circumstances may require. In addition to this, I take a steam launch with an engine of five horse power. My crew will consist of only fifteen men and myself. I shall, by a careful selection of provisions, be enabled to take enough for five years. The whole of these arrangements I expect to have completed, and be able to leave England by the end of next month, and to proceed direct to the Sandwich Islands, whence, having filled up with coal, &c., to push on for the Straits, which I hope to be able to enter by the middle or latter end of July. When there, of course I must be guided by the condition of the ice. If there is a possibility of getting to the north, on or about the meridian of the Straits, I shall do so; otherwise, I intend pushing my way to the north-west till I arrive at the open water seen by Wrangel, when perhaps I may be able to get to the north and then to the east. Should I not succeed in getting so far along the coast this year, I might employ the spring (before the breaking up of the ice) in an attempt to reach that land seen by Captain Kellett from Herald Island, and thus be enabled to perform one part of the scheme proposed by Lieutenant Pim. I would next in the spring push away to the north and east, in which direction I believe I shall eventually find some traces of our missing ships. I consider it would have been desirable (and in fact, it was my first intention,) to have had another smaller screw steamer as a tender, and of far greater power. I am sorry to say that I am not able to accomplish this, but am, nevertheless, determined to go in the best way I can.

I have, &c.

DONALD BEATSON.

Sir R. Murchison,
President of the Royal Geographical Society.