

"PANDORA,"

Davis Strait,

September 25th, 1876.

Dear Sir,

In compliance with your request I have the honour to make the following report of my visit to Cape Isabella on the 6th of August last.

After leaving the ship at 6 a.m. I first landed on a little cove on the S.E. side of the northern promontory of the cape, and having hauled the boat up on to some ice which was still fast to the rocks, started with Lieutenant Becker, intending to visit the cairn which we had seen on the upper part of the cape. However, on arriving at the top of the first ridge, which was about 200 feet above the level of the sea, we observed a small cairn on another low promontory about half-a-mile to the southward, and, thinking that we might probably find some record there which would render it unnecessary for us to go up to the other, I determined to visit it first. On arriving at it we carefully examined the ground 20 feet (magnetic) north of it, from which we had to remove about 2 feet of snow with our hands and knives, but could find no trace of a record. We also looked in the cairn itself, but there was no indication of anything having been placed there. Lieutenant Becker, however, on looking by chance behind some rocks about 20 yards off, in a north-easterly (magnetic) direction, discovered four wooden cases which lay in a crevice and were nearly covered with snow. These I at once examined, and found under them a cask, which he suggested might contain the letters from the expedition. But as the cases were marked "New Zealand Preserved Meat," and as I did not think it likely that the letters would be deposited in such an obscure place without some record being left at the cairn to say they were there, I concluded it to be a depôt of provisions, and, in accordance with the instructions which you had given me not to disturb any such depôt, did not further examine it. We then climbed to the cairn on top of the cape, and, on searching 20 feet (magnetic) north of it, soon discovered the record, a copy of which I handed to you on my return on board. I regret to say that just after I had made one copy of this, and had written a notice of our visit on the back of it, a strong gust of wind took the original record from under a stone where I had placed it, and that although I followed it a long way down the hill, it eventually got amongst the cliffs, and I was unable to recover it. I therefore left the copy which I had made, in its place, and wrote out another one which I brought on board. The lower cairn I found to bear W. by N. (mag.) from this one, so thought the letters—if there were any—would probably be found on the same point but lower down, as the cairn lies at least 200 feet above the level of the sea. We therefore returned to the boat, and getting everything into her, proceeded to a little bay just below the cairn where we managed to effect a landing. We then separated and searched all round the point, but could find no signs of a cask; so going again up to the cairn, I removed with a shovel all the snow in a direction magnetic north of it, in case I might on the former occasion have missed the record; but there was nothing. I also again examined the cases, but from their weight and appearance felt sure that they contained nothing but "preserved meat." The recall had now been flying on board the ship for some time, so depositing our cask of letters with the supposed depôt, and placing our record 20 feet magnetic north of the cairn, I hurried back to the boat, and reached the ship about 3.30 p.m. Had we delayed much longer, we should probably have been unable to launch the boat, as the wind had increased considerably from the northward, bringing down large quantities of loose ice, which was so packed in against the shore that even then it was with great difficulty we got the boat out through it.

Before concluding I beg to remark that this account has been almost entirely copied from that in my journal which was written at the time, and is therefore uninfluenced by events which have occurred subsequently.

I have the honour to be, dear Sir,

Your obedient servant,

CHARLES R. ARBUTHNOT,

Lieutenant R.N.

Captain Allen Young,
"Pandora."