

12 COMMUNICATIONS IN REFERENCE TO VESSELS OBSERVED

tural pursuits. Whilst employed under the Board of Public Works, as a pay clerk, he received a reward for his gallant conduct in defending himself against a party who attacked him for the purpose of robbing him of about 1,200*l.* of Government money under his charge, which he was instrumental in saving. This gentleman appears to have manifested more curiosity and interest respecting the two ships than any other person on board the "Renovation," for during the remainder of the voyage he had frequent discussions with Mr. Coward on the subject, which vexed him, feeling that he ought to have searched the vessels.

On arriving at Quebec he remained two or three days on board the "Renovation," during which time he asked Mr. Simpson to accompany him and return to the search of the two ships.

I submit that this gentleman may be communicated with, as his information will probably be very useful in stating all which transpired. He is now residing at Prescott, in Upper Canada; his name is John Supple Lynch.

It is a matter of some importance to know that the position of the "Renovation" as first reported appears incorrect, and that she was considerably to the northward of her reckoning (about 80 miles), which will bring the ice on which the ships lay nearly on the 47th parallel; this fact is clear from the circumstance that the "Renovation" was nearly run on shore owing to this error, about 10 P.M. of the same day when the ships were passed. Mr. Simpson was called up suddenly by the second mate reporting a light; on reaching the deck, a lighthouse (which must have been St. John's) was only three or four miles distant; they immediately hauled to the wind, and put about on the starboard tack. The following day they were set right by a French brig as to their position; they bore up, the wind having changed to the N. E.; after running along the coast, they rounded Cape Race at 2 P.M. Mr. Simpson states that the course steered from the ships was about W. by N. (true), and running at the rate of six or seven knots for 14 hours; with this date the position of the ships when seen is assumed to be E. by S., off St. John's, about 90 miles. Soundings had been tried for on the previous day with 60 fathoms of line. A tracing of the assumed position of the ships is herewith transmitted.

Encl. 2, in No. 18.

In the absence of the log, Mr. Simpson is unable to furnish any dates. A considerable number of icebergs were passed the day previous to seeing the ships, and there were many in sight at the time. I have also ascertained that the "Jessy," of Limerick, passed through a chain of bergs on the 16th April 1851, about the same meridian as the "Renovation," but further to the southward.

I have endeavoured to ascertain from Mr. Daniel Gorman, the most experienced seaman in this port, who has been employed in the American trade since 1809, and employed under the same owners here in command of vessels since 1829, such information as may bear on the point, to show the drift of the current and icebergs near the bank of Newfoundland. I beg to enclose it.

Encl. 3, in No. 18.

On reaching the Gulf of St. Lawrence, the "Renovation" was detained by the ice for several days, with the other ships bound to Quebec at that time, which is mentioned in Mr. Lynch's letter. The second mate and several of the crew ran from the vessel at Quebec.

Although Mr. Simpson is satisfied that each vessel had three masts, but, owing to the distance, he cannot affirm whether they were ships or barques; from the same circumstance, he can give no satisfactory answer to the other details respecting their fittings, except he is very clear that the vessel with her yards up had no sails bent, and respecting the boats, there were none suspended to davits, or to be seen outside the ships.

Whatever ships they may have been, whether Franklin's or not, the fate of the crews must be a subject of public sympathy, and many surmises will result. My firm conviction is that those vessels drifted a considerable distance on that piece of ice: from the description given, I cannot denominate it a berg, the most elevated part being no more than 30 or 40 feet high, whilst it was five miles long, which appears very like a portion of a heavy floe with a hummock upon it. From the fact of being found drifting with the current which sets along the coast of Labrador from Davis' Straits, I infer they came from a high northern latitude; the removal of the spars and absence of the boats, indicate that the abandonment of the ships had been a work of time and deliberation; the fact of the ships being close together has the appearance of being consorts.

If the hulls were in a floating condition when released from the ice, there is yet