

strewn with drift wood. Here communication was held with the natives,—one of whom had a gun with the name of *Barnet*, and the date 1840 on the lock; and tobacco was bartered for salmon and ducks. The thievish propensity of these natives alluded to by other explorers is amply confirmed by Captain McClure.—Struggling on through narrow leads of water, the Pelly Islands, at the mouth of the Mackenzie, were reached on the 21st of August,—and Point Warren, near Cape Bathurst, on the 24th. Here a circumstance occurred which we should be glad to know admitted of satisfactory explanation.

It appears, that on attempting to land at the above point, two natives waved the adventurers off with threatening gestures. It was with much difficulty that they were pacified; and then, they related, that all their tribe but the chief and his sick son had fled on seeing the ship,—alleging as a reason that they feared the Investigator had come to revenge the death of a white man whom they had murdered some time ago. They proceeded to relate (through the medium of the interpreter on board the Investigator), that some white men had come thither in a boat, and that they built themselves a house and lived there. At last the natives murdered one; and the others escaped—they knew not where. The murdered man was, they said, buried in a spot which they pointed out. Capt. McClure adds, that he was prevented from examining this grave in consequence of a thick fog which obliged him to return to his ship. It is matter of most serious regret that the truth of this story was not inquired into. The history of the Adam Beck fabrication of the murder of white men by Esquimaux, and the well known habit of these latter to exaggerate and deceive, render it expedient, no doubt, to receive all accounts from them with much doubt:—but here the means of verification were apparently at hand. *Primi facie*, it is hardly likely that natives would volunteer a statement to the officer so self-criminatory as the above, unless it rested on grounds of truth. And here we may mention, that a correspondent has drawn our attention to an extract of a letter seemingly bearing on the above story, which we published in our columns in 1848, (No. 1094, p. 1029,) and which excited considerable interest at the time. The letter in question was received by the Admiralty from Chief Factor Macpherson. It is dated March 1, 1848, and contains this passage:—"There is a report from Peel's River, that the Esquimaux saw two large boats (*query* ships?) to the east of the Mackenzie River full of white men; and they, the Esquimaux, showed knives, files, &c., to the Peel's River Indians, which they had received from these white men. Could these have been Franklin or Rae?" To the latter query, we may at once answer, that it could not have been Rae; on the other hand, the locality referred to by the Esquimaux is precisely that in which a boat party endeavouring to return by the Mackenzie would have encamped. It agrees, too, exactly with the Esquimaux story told to Captain McClure; and we must hold, that steps should have been taken by him to investigate the matter. We trust, that the Hudson's Bay Company, who always evinced a desire to aid the searching cause, will lead a helping hand towards completing this inquiry.

Continuing his course to the east along the coast, the water being very shallow, but admitting of safe navigation, Cape Perry was reached by Captain McClure on the 6th of September.—From this position high land was observed to the E. N. E. This was taken possession of, and named Baring Island. Two days after this discovery, land was observed to the N. N. E., which was named Prince Albert Land. This is continuous with Wollaston and Victoria Lands, and extends north to $73^{\circ} 21'$ lat. and $112^{\circ} 48'$ west long. Here, Capt. McClure was very near Rae's discoveries in 1851. The Investigator was now navigated through a channel, called Prince of Wales Strait, dividing Baring Island from Prince Albert Land. This strait runs to the north-east, and was a most promising course for reaching the sea south

of Melville Island. In the centre of the strait a number of islands were discovered,—to which the name of the *Princess Royal* was given; and a depot was made on one of them of three months' provisions for sixty-six men, with a boat and ammunition. Sailing up the strait, the Expedition progressed very favorably until the 11th of September,—when the ship was beset and drifted with the ice, narrowly escaping destruction several times, until the 8th of October. On that day she became firmly fixed. The position at this time, as will be seen by the accompanying chart, was not far from the northern extremity of the strait. Here she was frozen in,—and remained stationary during the winter.—Parties were sent out to explore; and it was soon ascertained that the channel opened into Barrow Strait. This established the existence of a North-West passage! Had the sea remained open a few days more, the Expedition would have made the passage,—not only in one season, but in the short space of little more than two months and a half.

The summer of 1851 was now anxiously awaited; but meanwhile advantage was taken of the spring to explore the coasts to the north-east and south-east in the direction of Bank's Land, and Wollaston Land. In the course of their exploration, tribes of Esquimaux were met with who had evidently never seen white men before. They were quiet and inoffensive. Several musk oxen were shot on Prince Albert Land,—and proved a welcome addition to the supplies of the party.

On the 14th of July (1851) the ice opened without any pressure and the Investigator was again fairly afloat. Great exertions were made to pass through the strait; but, after many attempts, the progress of the Expedition was completely arrested on the 16th of August by strong north-east winds driving large masses of ice to the southward. At this date the party were in latitude $73^{\circ} 32'$ and longitude $115^{\circ} 32'$. Thus baffled, Capt. McClure boldly resolved on running to the southward of Baring Island, and sailing up northward along its western side. This, after many delays, and after surmounting formidable obstacles, he accomplished. Eventually he succeeded in reaching the north side of Baring Island on the 24th of September. Had open water existed to the east, the rest of the passage might have been easily performed this way; for Barrow's Strait lay before them,—the navigation of which from their position to Lancaster Sound, was known to be practicable. Unhappily, however, on the night of the above day the Investigator was frozen up; and to the date of Capt. McClure's last despatch, (April 10, 1853,) she had not been liberated. Her position is $74^{\circ} 6'$ north lat. and $117^{\circ} 54'$ west long. Captain McClure describes the locality as being excellent:—well protected from ice by the projection of a reef which throws it clear of the ship 600 yards.

In April, (1852) a party crossed the ice to Melville Island,—and deposited a document there giving an account of their proceedings and of the position of the Investigator. This was, happily discovered by Captain Kellett's officers—only a few days before Captain McClure had made arrangements for deserting his frozen-up ship. Immediate steps were taken to communicate with the party in their ice-prison!—and the excitement of the meeting between Lieut. Pim, who was appointed for the service by Captain Kellett, and the officers of the Investigator, they only will understand who can imagine the horrors of such a prison, and the long, dreary and dreadful paths by which the prisoners were about to make their desperate attempt at escape from it.—It would, we hope, be precipitate to predict that the Investigator will not be liberated from her icy bonds this year; but we have high Arctic authority for stating, that, looking to the enormous quantity of ice this summer in Barrow's Strait, and in the seas south and west of Melville Island, it is not likely that the ship has yet been moved. The perils of Arctic navigation in the vicinity