

Nares, when, in command of Her Majesty's ships *Alert* and *Discovery*, he was commissioned to add one more to the already long list of attempts to reach the North Pole.

By the twenty-ninth of May all preparations were complete, and that afternoon the ships—duly provisioned for two years, and further supplied with all manner of gifts and comforts contributed privately by all sorts and conditions of men—cast off from their moorings in Portsmouth Harbour, and steamed down the Spithead amid the cheers and good wishes of thousands of spectators.

During the northward voyage, the weather left much to be desired; but the Atlantic was crossed without mishap, and in the early days of July the ships were steaming peacefully along the west coast of Greenland, calling at Disco and other more northern settlements to take on board a few sledge-teams of Eskimo dogs, and also one or two Greenlanders who might probably be useful in various capacities. This occupied about a fortnight, and then, having left the last vestige of civilization astern, the explorers found themselves in Melville Bay, whose particularly aggressive ice has won a most evil reputation among Arctic voyagers. Unusually good luck, however, attended the *Alert* and *Discovery*. At first the ice was conspicuous by its absence, and when at last the pack was reached, they managed to pick their way through it without much difficulty, and reached Cape York