

a convenient place, and in spring push out as far as possible, and so on, *year after year.*"

This "solemn declaration" of Captain Martin was made before the provost of Peterhead, who has assured me, as have also several other respectable inhabitants of that place, that he is a man of the strictest integrity, truthfulness, and accuracy.

The declaration of Captain Walker, of the whale ship "Union," who, at the time alluded to, was first mate of the "Enterprize," was also made before the provost of Peterhead, and was precisely to the same effect.

Your Lordships are aware that there are letters from the expedition, dated in Baffin's Bay, of like purport; that from Mr. Blenby, icemaster of the "Terror," to his wife, begging her to let no one dishearten her as to the length of their absence, which might be six or seven years, has been published. Mr. Blenby had shared the rude captivity of Sir John Ross in Regent Inlet, and knew how the long absent may be given up for lost, and yet return again to their homes and country.

These last words of men so full of faith and hope, at a moment when they were about to quit the precincts of the known world to plunge into the unknown, seem to me a touching appeal to the long-enduring sympathy and untiring patience of their countrymen.

And even if their hopes may be considered too high, or that they can be convicted of rashness in entering into those unknown seas (were not all the Arctic seas once unknown?) without any harbours of refuge in advance, or any line of depôts in their rear, without assurance of reinforcements or relief from home, or any promise but that which their own heart-trust in their country, and in you, gave them of being looked after; even if this were rashness, is that a reason to abandon them? They went forth, my Lords, at your bidding, and went to those seas which you gave them liberty to explore; you gave them no restrictions such as have abounded in the orders of those who have gone in search of them; they were not told to spare themselves, not enjoined to run no risks, nor restricted in time, though their mission was evidently thought to be a much shorter and much easier matter than it has proved to be. They were themselves prepared, however, to do a work of unknown difficulty and danger, and I well know were not prepared to return till they had spent themselves in its attainment. They have deserved, surely, I may say, they have deserved of their country that she should ascertain their fate.

And I need not tell your Lordships that to follow them whither they have gone is not to encounter the same dangers that they have done; I could not urge it if it were so. But with such vastly superior ships as you have now in the Arctic seas, provided with powerful steam machinery, and other appliances, with the experience in sledge travelling which has been of late years acquired, and with those large precautionary measures as to depôts in advance and in the rear, which you know so well how to devise, it could, I believe, be done with comparative safety. And doubtless it will one day be done. The most northern portion of our globe will not always be a *terra incognita*. When Arctic expeditions for the sake of the missing navigators have long ceased to be familiar to the public ear, and wars and rumours of wars have passed away, the interest in those geographical and other problems which were left unsolved in the year 1854 will again appear worthy of a great national effort for their solution; and then will arise in touching association, the memory of the men who, in pursuit of this knowledge, and in obedience to their country's command, first penetrated into the fastnesses of the north and were left there to their fate. Perhaps it will be the wonder of that future generation that this should have been done, or that any discoveries of great scientific interest and importance should have been abandoned by the Government at the conspicuous moment when it had at its disposal a fleet of invulnerable ships, fit, and fit alone, for Arctic service, and still afloat in Arctic seas, and a host of trained and brave explorers, better disciplined for their work than ever, a combination such as was never seen before, and may never be seen again.

Pardon me, my Lords, that I express myself thus strongly. I would not appear ungrateful for what has been already done. When I look at that fleet of invul-