

No 18.

Sir,

Limerick, 16 April 1852.

I BEG to acquaint you, for the information of the Right Honourable the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty, that, agreeably with their desire, contained in your letter of the 10th instant, I was enabled to proceed direct to Limerick, where I have found Mr. Simpson, late mate of the "Renovation," and Thomas Davis, seaman of the same vessel. Having made every inquiry into the circumstance referred to, the result is herewith submitted to their Lordships.

The statement made to me by Mr. Simpson, in the presence of Commander J. J. Palmer, R.N., Commander Wm. Ellis (a), R.N., and the inspector of police, Captain William Caldwell, is herewith transmitted. That two vessels were seen in the position described there seems to be no shadow of doubt, though it is to be regretted, that, owing to the distance which the "Renovation" passed from the piece of ice with the ships laying on it, no fact can be elicited by which the vessels can be identified, though I have put every question which my experience dictates.

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The evidence of Thomas Davis, seaman, who was at the helm when the ships were first seen, and all the time when they were in sight, confirms the fact of such vessels being seen in the position referred to, as whilst at the wheel he could distinguish them with his naked eye; the rest of his information confirms what has been stated by Mr. Simpson.

The fact of having passed these vessels without examining them must appear strange to many. It has been my earnest desire to obtain some satisfactory reason for this apparent act of supineness, and to extract the feeling which existed in the minds of those on board the "Renovation" at beholding such an extraordinary sight. The duration of the time whilst the vessels were visible appears to be no more than three quarters of an hour; the "Renovation" at the time was making about a W. by N. (true) course, running six or seven knots an hour through the water. Mr. Simpson appears an unassuming person, and, entertaining a very proper deference to the authority of his superior, would not presume to alter the course without the master's sanction, who lay ill in bed at the time, and did not come on deck when the circumstance was reported. He made known the fact to him, and he fully expected to receive orders to bear up, and ascertain what they were, but receiving no instructions, continued on his course. The impression which struck him when looking at the ships was that they were wrecks, but felt an inward desire to overhaul them, which he mentioned to Mr. Lynch, the only passenger on board, who, when the vessels were nearly out of sight astern, expressed an opinion to Mr. Simpson that they were Franklin's ships. He saw Mr. Lynch go down to Mr. Coward, but he does not know the result of the interview on that occasion.

Thomas Davis states that there was no curiosity or interest evinced amongst the crew after seeing the vessels; but there were a great many icebergs seen, and they felt more anxiety for the safety of their own ship. It was his first trip to Quebec, and he had never seen icebergs before. It is his opinion that no one in the ship knew of any reward for the discovery of the missing expedition, and that he never knew anything of Franklin's expedition until last January, when at Plymouth.

The circumstance of a ship's crew being ignorant of the reward held out by Government for the discovery of Franklin's expedition may at first sight appear incredible; in consequence, I have made the most searching inquiry in this town if the reward ever obtained publicity, but even the principal merchants, the chief of police, the postmaster, the editor of the "Limerick Chronicle," the Chamber of Commerce, and tradespeople immediately connected with the mercantile community, brokers and masters of the Quebec traders, they never heard of such reward being offered until the present moment.

I have had lengthened conversations with Mr. Lynch's uncle, Mr. Crielly, ship-chandler; and his sister; they can both certify to the accuracy of the extract from their relative's letter, which was published in the "Limerick Chronicle," and which was purposely inserted for information, by the advice of a friend of Mr. Crielly's, to whom he showed the letter.

Mr. Lynch is a person of intelligence and good education. In his youth he passed three years at sea, and since has been engaged in business and agricul-