

parallel. Along this coast one would have to work one's way, in spring, with dog-sledges.

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"I consider it a wild undertaking to penetrate towards the Pole by ship, between Spitzbergen and Nova Zembla."

Comment on this honest seaman's opinion is unnecessary, and no amount of specious reasoning, spread over any amount of pages, by any mere theorist, be he German or English, can undo the effect of evidence so strong and conclusive.

Before touching on the voyage undertaken last year by Lieut. Payer, I must refer to the results of the Swedish expeditions to Spitzbergen; and it is the more incumbent upon me to do so, because the Duke of Somerset rested his decision (to delay further action with respect to the representation that was made to him) upon the importance of first being furnished with the conclusions arrived at by the Swedish explorers.

Nordenskiöld, Von Otter, and other intrepid Scandinavian men of science, have led no less than four expeditions to the verge of the unknown Polar Region, on the Spitzbergen meridian, between the years 1858 and 1868, with the object of making researches into natural history, and achieving such discoveries as might prove to be feasible.

The opinions of Nordenskiöld and Von Otter are most valuable, and they fully confirm the experience of centuries, that in the summer or actual sailing season in the Polar Seas, it is not possible to penetrate through the pack. They observe, however, that at the season when, in consequence of the heat of the summer and the influence of ocean waves and streams, the ice-masses have been reduced to their minimum—that is to say, in the autumn—theorists had thought it possible to advance further than in summer.

They therefore made the attempt, and are most emphatic in its condemnation. Their conclusion is, that during the autumn a vessel might possibly reach a latitude considerably higher than that which has been obtained by the early summer expeditions. But they further point out that progress would soon be rendered impossible by the cold and darkness, the winds accompanied by snow-storms, the heavy seas covered with drifting floes, and the young ice. They also record their opinion that an open Polar Sea is a mere hypothesis, destitute of all foundation in the experience which has been gained, and that the only way to approach the Pole, which can be attempted with any probability of succeeding, is that proposed by English authorities of exploring on sledges in the spring. Here, then, are