

once more illustrated the power possessed by courage and enthusiasm combined in conquering difficulties. In the case of Hall, fortune seems to have smiled graciously on the man who, with such insufficient means at command, dared to grapple with difficulties that had proved too much for some of the most heroic explorers.

The annals of Arctic exploration fail to present a record of success so quickly and easily attained, as that which followed the efforts of Captain Hall. After coaling and filling up with provisions at Disco, in Greenland, he pushed northward; got through the dreaded Melville Bay without difficulty, and the "North Water;" ran through Smith's Sound, Kennedy Channel; and five days after passing Cape Shackleton, on the 30th of August, he had reached a higher latitude than had ever before been obtained by any ship, being in $82^{\circ} 16'$, or within thirty miles of the most northern point reached by Parry in his celebrated sledge journey over the ice north of Spitzbergen. Almost without check or serious obstacle the little vessel reached this high latitude, throwing into the shade the achievements of Ross, Inglefield, Kane and Hayes. But at this point the tide of fortune turned, and mishaps began to multiply. The evidence adduced on the investigation at Washington, before Secretary Robeson, clearly proves that the "Polaris" might have pushed on still farther north, and that she was stopped merely by loose floes, which a more powerful steamer could easily have penetrated. A seam of ice of no very serious character arrested her progress, but there was a lead through into open water, and a fine water sky to the northward which seemed inviting them on. It was one of those golden moments on which depend the destinies of an enterprise. Had the "Polaris" held on her course she might have reached 84° or 85° , and the three hundred miles from that point to the Pole might easily have been traversed by sledges. But the critical opportunity was lost; Hall hesitated, not being a nautical man himself; and influenced chiefly by the advice of Captain Buddington—who feared if they persevered they might be unable to retrace their course—he first tried to push for the western coast, his vessel was beset and carried South, and the splendid chance of reaching the Pole was lost to him forever. With a more powerful steamer or a more courageous sailing master the victory might have been won.

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