

object in leaving behind him such distinct traces of his future movements, as seems to have been expected and assumed by the various expeditions in search of him. The total destruction of the ships and crews by the Esquimaux is too improbable even to command a passing thought. Masses of ice might, it is true, have destroyed the vessels, but then where are the crews? In such a region it is not likely that they would have been annihilated by the same cause. Starvation and disease may have overtaken them; but then some traces, like those of the Patagonian mission, would in all probability have been found. On the whole, when the facts that are known are viewed simply and calmly in connection with probabilities, and as mere matter of evidence, it is neither rash, wanton, nor ill-judged, to foster hopes which, however doomed to be disappointed, are still fairly within the bounds of reasonable probability.

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