

P R E F A C E.

BEFORE this book passes from the writer's hands into those of the reader, the author will be once more among the ice of the arctic regions. Though the last page of manuscript was written on the morning of my embarkation, the book itself has been no hasty work. I returned nearly two years ago from the expedition which I have endeavored to describe. Almost every hour since then, which could be spared from the arrangements for my second expedition, has been devoted to the preparation of this volume from my voluminous journal and notes taken on the spot.

Before dismissing the book, however, from my hands, I wish to say a few words by way of explanation of certain matters connected with my explorations. The reader will perhaps wonder why so much importance was given to the discovery of the Frobisher relics. I answer, partly because of the interest which attached itself to the remains of men so long ago left in that waste land; but partly, too, because the discovery of these remains, and the tracing of their history among the Esquimaux, confirmed, in a remarkable manner, my belief that these people retain among them, with great positiveness, the memory of important and strange incidents; and as their traditions of Frobisher, when I was able to get at them, were so clear, I am persuaded that among them may be sought, by one competent, with every chance of complete success, the sad history of Sir John Franklin's men.

To make myself competent for this more interesting and important research, I patiently acquired the language and familiarized myself with the habits of the Esquimaux. I return now to