

Dedicated, by Special Permission,

TO

HER MOST GRACIOUS MAJESTY THE QUEEN,

A SERIES OF

**EIGHT SKETCHES IN COLOUR**

(TOGETHER WITH A CHART OF THE ROUTE)

By LIEUT. S. GURNEY CRESSWELL,

OF THE VOYAGE OF H.M.S. INVESTIGATOR (CAPTAIN M'CLURE),

DURING THE DISCOVERY OF

**THE NORTH-WEST PASSAGE.**

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LONDON:

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## DESCRIPTION OF THE PLATES.

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### I.

#### FIRST DISCOVERY OF LAND BY H.M.S. INVESTIGATOR.

"At four A.M., upon the morning of the 6th of September, 1850, we were off the small islands, near Cape Parry, bearing N.E. by N. ten miles, with a fine westerly breeze, and loose sailing ice, interspersed with many heavy floe pieces; the main pack was about three miles to the N.W., apparently one solid mass. At 11:30 A.M. high land was observed on the port bow, bearing N.E. by N., distant about fifty miles. On approaching it, the main pack appeared to be resting upon the western shore, which side it was my intention to have coasted, had it been possible; the eastern one being, however, comparatively clear, as far as could be ascertained from the masthead, decided me to follow the water, supposing it an island round which a passage would be found into the Polar Sea. We shortly afterwards hove to, and, with the first whale-boat and cutter, landed and took possession, in the name of Her Most Gracious Majesty, calling it 'Baring's Island,' in honour of the First Lord of the Admiralty. A pole was erected, with a large painted ball upon it, near which a cask was left, containing a notification and other particulars of our having been there. The sights obtained by artificial horizon place the signal staff in latitude  $71^{\circ} 6' N.$ ; longitude  $123^{\circ} 0' W.$ ; and the fall of the tide was ascertained to be six inches during one hour and a half. We observed numerous recent traces of reindeer, hare, and wild fowl; moss and divers species of wild flowers were also in great abundance; many specimens of them, equally, as of other subjects of interest to the naturalist, were selected with much care by Dr. Armstrong. From an elevation obtained of about 500 feet, we had a fine view towards the interior, which was well clothed with moss, giving a verdant appearance to the ranges of hills that rose gradually to between 2000 and 3000 feet, intersected with ravines, which must convey a copious supply of water to a large lake situated in the centre of a wide plain, about fifteen miles distant."

CAPTAIN M'CLURE'S *Despatches*.

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### II.

#### BOLD HEADLAND ON BARING ISLAND.

"We continued working to windward the whole of the night, and by 9:30 A.M. of the 7th of September were off the South Cape, a fine bold headland, the cliffs rising perpendicularly upwards of a thousand feet, which was named 'Lord Nelson's Head,' in memory of the hero whose early career was connected with Arctic adventure."

CAPTAIN M'CLURE'S *Despatches*.

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### III.

#### H.M.S. INVESTIGATOR IN THE PACK,

OCTOBER 8, 1850.

"At six A.M. of the 17th of September, the wind, which had been light from the N.W., gradually died away, when we were almost immediately beset. There were several heavy flocs in the vicinity; one, full six miles in length, passed at the rate of two knots, crushing everything impeding its progress, and grazed our starboard bow. Fortunately there was but young ice upon the opposite side, which yielded to the pressure; had it otherwise occurred, the vessel must inevitably have been cut asunder. In the afternoon we secured to a moderate-sized piece, drawing eight fathoms, which appeared to offer a fair refuge, and from which we never afterwards parted; it conveyed us to our farthest N.E. position, latitude  $73^{\circ} 7' N.$ ; longitude  $117^{\circ} 10' W.$ ; back round the Princess Royal Islands. Passed the largest within 500 yards, in latitude  $72^{\circ} 42' N.$ ; longitude  $118^{\circ} 42' W.$ ; returning along the coast of Prince Albert's Land, and finally freezing in at latitude  $72^{\circ} 50' N.$ ; longitude  $117^{\circ} 55' W.$ ; upon the 30th of September: during which circumnavigation we received many severe nips, and were frequently driven close to the shore, from

which our deep friend kept us off. To avoid separation, we had secured with two stream-cables (one chain), two six and two five-inch hawsers. As our exposed position rendered every precaution necessary, we got upon deck twelve months' provisions, with tents, warm clothing, &c., and issued to each person a pair of carpet boots and blanket bag; so that, in the event of any emergency making it imperative to quit the vessel, we might not be destitute. On the 8th of October our perplexities terminated with a nip, that lifted the vessel a foot, and heeled her thirty degrees to port, in consequence of a large tongue getting beneath her, in which position we quietly remained."

CAPTAIN M'CLURE'S *Despatches*.

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IV.

CRITICAL POSITION OF H.M.S. INVESTIGATOR, ON THE NORTH COAST OF BARING ISLAND,  
AUGUST 20, 1851.

"UPON the morning of the 19th of August, 1851, we passed between two small islands, lying at the entrance of what appeared a deep inlet, running E.S.E., and then turning sharp to the N.E. It had a barrier of ice extending across, which prevented any examination. Wishing to keep between the northernmost of these islands and the mainland, to avoid the pack which was very near it, we narrowly escaped getting on shore, as a reef extended from the latter to within half a mile of the island. Fortunately, the wind being light, we rounded to, with all the studding sails set, and let go the anchor in two and a half fathoms, having about four inches to spare under the keel, and warped into four fathoms, while Mr. Court was sent to find a channel; in which he succeeded, carrying three fathoms, through which we ran for one mile, and then continued our course in eight, having from three to five miles between the ice and land. At eight P.M. we neared two other islands, the ice resting upon the westernmost, upon which the pressure must have been excessive, as large masses were forced nearly over its summit, which was upwards of forty feet. Between these and the main we ran through a channel in from nine to fifteen fathoms, when an immediate and marked change took place in the general appearance and formation of the land; it became high, precipitous, sterile, and rugged, intersected with deep ravines and water-courses, having sixty-five fathoms at a quarter of a mile, and fifteen fathoms one hundred yards from the cliffs, which proved exceedingly fortunate, as the whole pack, which had apparently only just broken from the shore, was within half a mile, and in many places so close to it, that, to avoid being beset, we had nearly to touch the land. Indeed, upon several occasions the lower studding-sail boom was compelled to be topped up, and poles used to keep the vessel off the grounded ice, which extends all along this coast; nor could we round to, fearful of carrying the jib-boom away against its cliffs, which here run nearly east and west. The cape forming its western extreme I have called Prince Alfred, in honour of His Royal Highness. There were two apparently good harbours about twenty miles to the eastward of the cape; the westernmost had a breakwater half a mile in length, twenty feet high, facing the north, with entrances on its east and west sides sixty yards in breadth; the other was circular, about three-quarters of a mile in diameter, with its entrance on the west side. Our critical position would not admit of any detention, otherwise they would have been sounded, being very anxious to find a secure retreat in the event of having to winter on this coast. The weather had been fine, with a S.E. wind, which veered to the W.S.W., bringing fog and rain; so that on the morning of the 20th our farther progress was impeded, by finding the ice resting upon a point which formed a slight indentation of the shore, and was the only place where water could be seen. To prevent being carried away with the pack, which was filling up its space, we secured to the inshore side of a small but heavy piece of ice, grounded in twelve fathoms, seventy-four yards from the beach; the only protection against the tremendous polar ice (setting a knot per hour to the eastward before a fresh westerly wind), which at nine P.M. placed us in a very critical position, by a large floe striking the piece we were fast to, and causing it to oscillate so considerably that a tongue, which happened to be under our bottom, lifted the vessel six feet; but, by great attention to the anchors and warps, we succeeded in holding on during the conflict, which was continued several minutes, terminating by the floe being rent in pieces, and our being driven nearer the beach. From this until the 29th we lay perfectly secure."

CAPTAIN M'CLURE'S *Despatches*.

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V.

H.M.S. INVESTIGATOR RUNNING THROUGH A NARROW CHANNEL IN A SNOW-STORM,  
BETWEEN GROUNDED AND PACKED ICE,  
SEPTEMBER 23, 1851.

"AT 3:30 A.M. of the 23d of September, although not daylight, open water was ascertained to be at hand, from the dark appearance of the horizon to seaward. The vessel was cast off, and, standing in that direction, we found we were not deceived. The wind during the forenoon coming from the westward, enabled us to run close along the shore, on which still rested a line of thin ice, rendering the entrance of what appeared three good harbours inaccessible. The land was much

less rugged, having small hills gradually sloping to the beach, and large valleys well calculated for the pasture lands of animals; but no particles of driftwood could be observed, which article has not been seen, excepting the small chips near the ligneous hills, since rounding Point Kellett, on the western shore. At 5:30 P.M. our course was nearly obstructed from the ice resting upon a point about two miles distant; the studding sails were taken in, but almost immediately reset, as it gradually opened, allowing just sufficient space for our passage by topping up the lower booms. The shore shortly trending more to the southward increased our water; but snow and thick weather, with night coming on, rendered the land, not 200 yards distant, barely discernible. Most anxious, however, at the close of the season, to embrace every opportunity of getting to some place of security, our course was continued with easy canvass, when, under other circumstances, we should have most assuredly secured for the night, and at 7:30 P.M., with the lead going, went from fifteen fathoms upon a mud bank, having only six feet under the bow, and at the distance of ten feet from the stern only eighteen inches, while the stern was in five fathoms. The stream-anchor and cable were laid out, which service was well performed by Messrs. Wynniett, Sainsbury, and Court, it requiring four boats, in consequence of the freshening N.W. gale, and pieces of loose ice with snow, which, caking as it reached the water, formed so thick a coating over its surface, and offered such resistance, that it was scarcely possible to pull through. However, with clearing the forehold and warrant officers' store-rooms, and bringing all the weight abaft the mizen mast, at 10 P.M. we were enabled to heave off, and brought up with both bowers in six fathoms and a half. The remainder of the night was occupied in restowing the hold, weighing the stream-anchor, &c., so that by daylight of the 24th we were in perfect readiness to move. On a view of our position, we found that we were on the N.W. side of a large bay, the eastern limit of which bore N.E. eight miles (which we subsequently found formed the western point of Banks' Land), and running to the S.S.W. about seven, which was rapidly filling up with ice flowing in before a fresh gale from the Polar Sea. Still wishing to see if any possibility remained of getting down Barrow's Strait, we weighed, and stood as far as the ice would allow to the N.E.; when, observing from the crow's-nest no water in that direction, I determined to make this our winter quarters; and having remarked on the south side of the bank on which we had grounded a well-protected bay, Mr. Court was despatched to sound it; and, shortly making the signal that there was sufficient water, we bore up, and at 7:45 A.M. we anchored in four and a half fathoms, and that night were firmly frozen in, in what has since proved a most safe and excellent harbour, which, in grateful remembrance of the many perils that we had escaped during the passage of that terrible Polar Sea, we have named the 'Bay of Mercy.'

CAPTAIN M'CLURE'S *Despatches*.

VI.

MELVILLE ISLAND, FROM BANKS' LAND,  
MAY 1852.

THE peculiar interest of this sketch is derived from the fact of the land represented having been reached by Parry, in his attempt to discover the North-West Passage, in the Hecla and Griper, in the year 1821. It is the south-western shore of Melville Island, about sixty miles from the position of the Investigator, in Mercy Bay. This sketch was taken from high land in the vicinity.

VII.

SLEDGE-PARTY LEAVING H.M.S. INVESTIGATOR, IN MERCY BAY, UNDER COMMAND OF  
LIEUTENANT GURNEY CRESSWELL,

APRIL 15, 1853.

WHEN Captain M'Clure left the Investigator for Melville Island, on the 6th April, 1853, he gave orders that he should be followed on the 15th by a party, to be commanded by Lieutenant Gurney Cresswell. Between the condition of the Investigator, only ten days before, and the scene here presented, a greater contrast could scarcely have existed. Eighteen months of protracted hunger, wearisome monotony, and utter disappointment, from having found no succour at Melville Island, when Captain M'Clure visited it the preceding spring, had rendered the most resolute down-hearted, whilst the future offered only desperate chances of escape. Captain M'Clure had determined, before the close of April, to despatch Lieutenant Haswell, with about six-and-twenty men, in the direction of Melville Island, hoping to reach Beechy Island, and thence to make his way, should no other succour offer, to Pond's Bay, in search of the whalers; and, at the same time, for Lieutenant Cresswell to leave the ship with Mr. Mertsching, the interpreter, and six of the crew, to make for the mouth of the Mackenzie, and thence up that river, to the nearest Hudson's Bay Company settlement, a journey of above 1000 miles, to Fort Good Hope. But a merciful Providence was watching over them, and ordering for their speedy deliverance. A few days before

the intended dispersion of the ship's company, the unlooked-for arrival of Lieutenant Pim, with the welcome tidings of succour and supplies at Melville Island, changed the aspect of affairs. The party under command of Lieutenant Gurney Cresswell consisted of Lieutenant Wynniatt, invalided home; Mr. Mertsching, the interpreter; Mr. Piers, the surgeon's assistant; and twenty-six men, all of whom were suffering more or less from scurvy.

The sketch is taken at the instant of the sledge leaving the ship, when three hearty cheers were given by officers and men on board, for the travellers' departing on this arduous journey.

## VIII.

## SLEDGING OVER HUMMOCKY ICE.

APRIL 1853.

In the one hundred and seventy miles traversed by the party under Lieutenant Gurney Cresswell, between the Investigator, in Mercy Bay, and the Resolute and Intrepid, Captain Kellett, at Dealy Island, Melville Island, the ice varied much in character. From the time the party left the ship one man was always on the sledge, and, shortly after beginning their journey, two more broke down, and were obliged to fall out of the drag-ropes. The travelling proved very heavy, with men weakened by scurvy, and the protracted hardships they had undergone. On the 17th they rounded Cape Hamilton. The ice had been thrown up by tremendous external pressure, between which and the land they had to drag the sledges. To accomplish this, they were obliged to double-man the sledges, taking two over at a time. As soon as they found a chance of pushing their way through the hummocky barrier that lined the shore, they struck off on to the sea-ice, and encamped about two miles from the land.

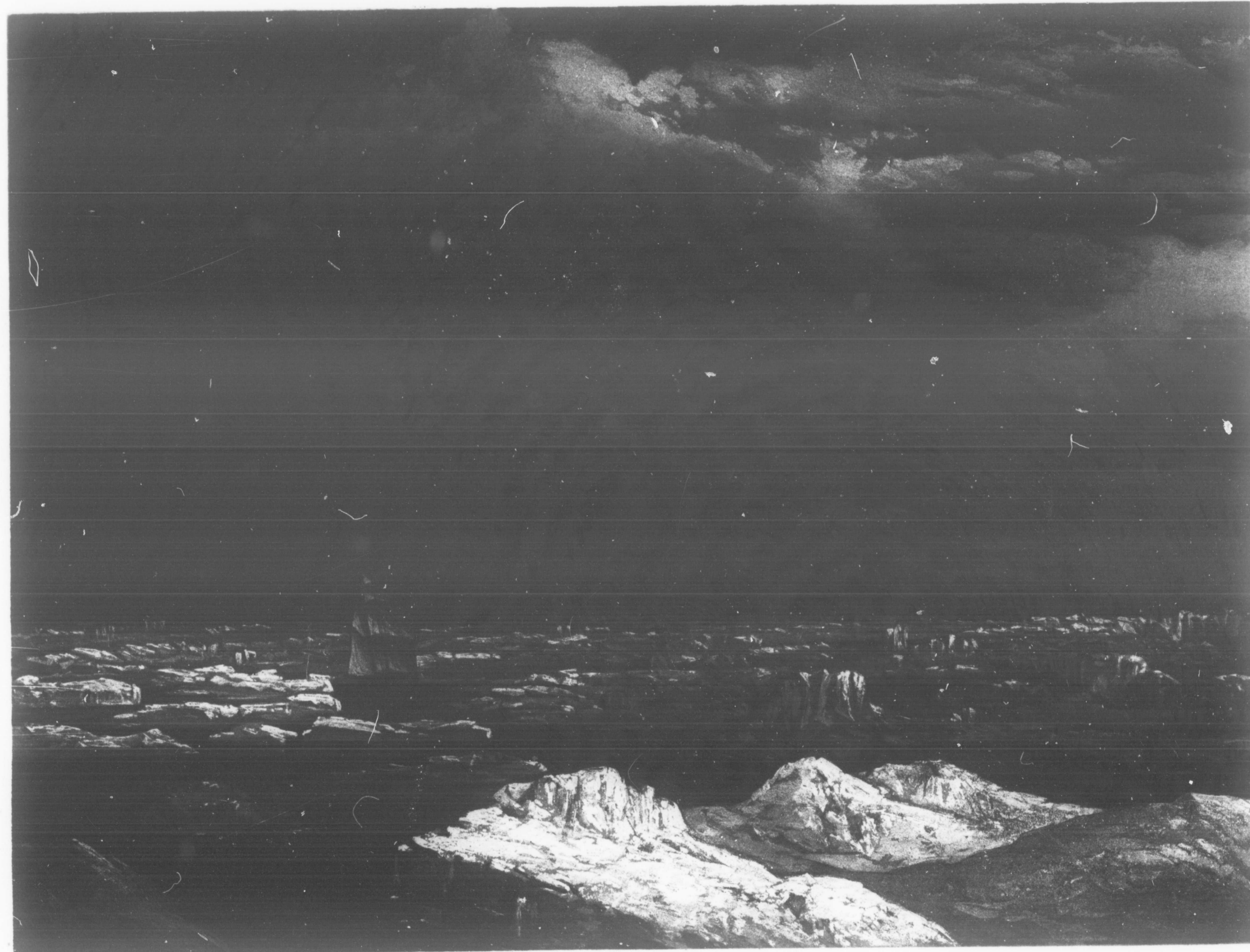
April 22d, they sighted Melville Island. Their daily journeys varied; sometimes the sun gave them a look to cheer them on their way, but, generally speaking, the weather was gloomy; the men suffering from weakness and fatigue, and the difficulty of drawing the sledges increasing from day to day. The ice was generally extremely rough and hummocky. One day they came upon a large field of ice, from which the wind had blown away the snow, and the weight of the sledges appeared comparatively nothing. They were passing rapidly along, when one man was found to be missing. It was a poor fellow who had showed symptoms of mental imbecility, but until then had travelled with the rest. The detention was grievous, but unavoidable. They sent back to search for him, and found him in a pond of melted snow. From that time great difficulty was experienced in getting him along; he was always throwing himself on the snow to lie down; they dared not put him in one of the sledges, as already the weight was great enough for their enfeebled party, with one man totally unable to walk, and their needful baggage.

April 30th, at 6:30 A.M., as they were beginning their day's march, two men were seen coming towards the tents from the eastward. They proved to be Mr. Pim and a seaman, with a sledge and dogs; he had been sent out by Captain Kellett to assist them in, and land some stores in Winter Harbour. He was surprised to find the party so far advanced in their journey. At this time another man, being unable to walk any farther, was taken on to the sledge, and at four A.M., May 3d, they arrived on board the Resolute. Captain Kellett and Captain M'Clure met them on the floe, from whom they received the heartiest welcome. Little did Captain Kellett and Lieutenant Cresswell think, when they parted at Behring's Strait, nearly three years before, that they should meet again at Melville Island! The journey from the Investigator was made in sixteen days.

This scene is intended as a specimen of the peculiar difficulties incident to Arctic travelling.

## IX.

## COLOURED CHART.



FIRST DISCOVERY OF LAND BY H.M.S. INVESTIGATOR

September 6<sup>th</sup> 1820



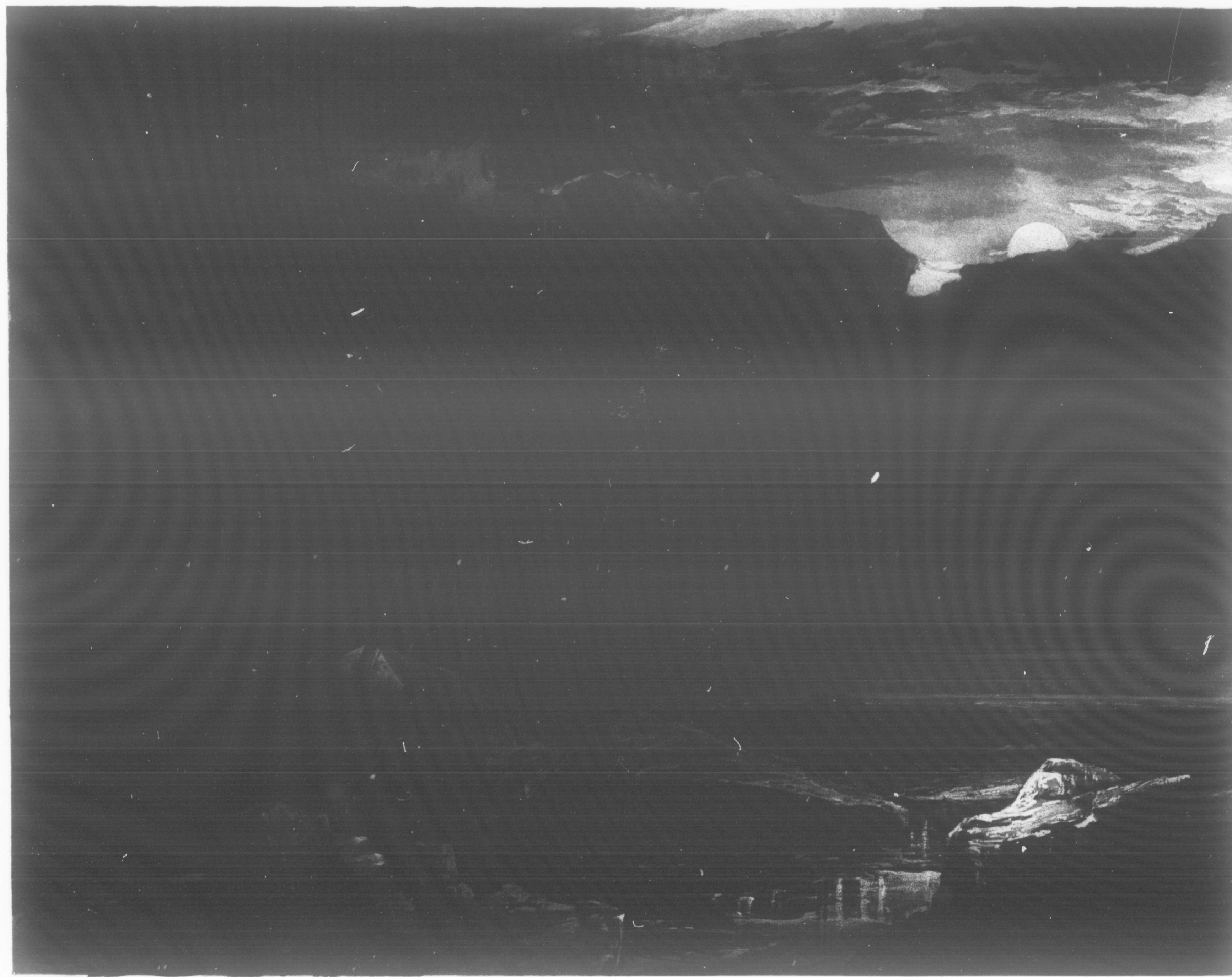
THE GREAT BRITISH PHOTOGRAPHIC COMPANY, LTD.

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1895

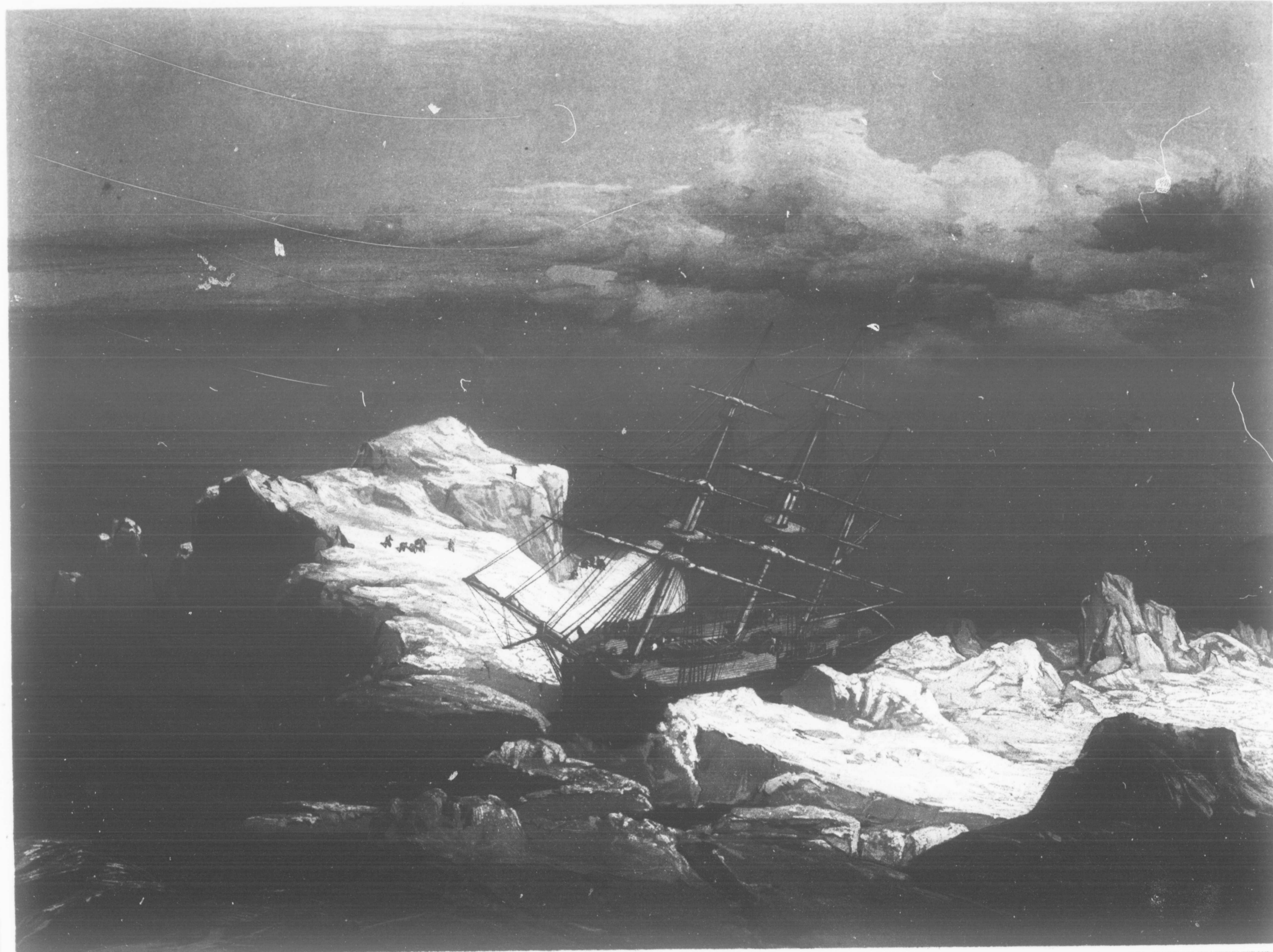
BOLD HEADLAND ON BERING ISLAND





H. M. S. INVESTIGATOR IN THE PACK

October 1890



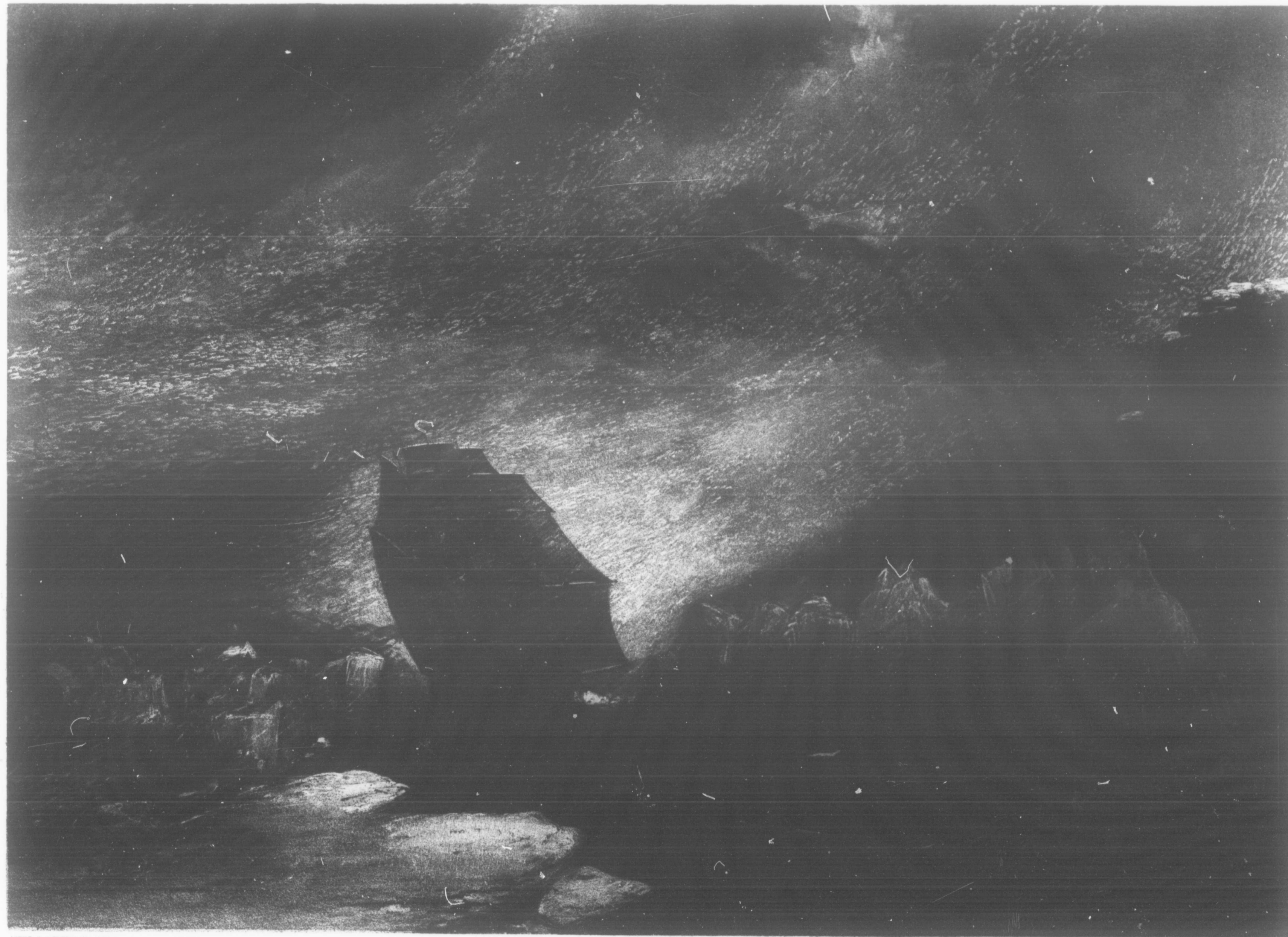
1841 J. GIBNEY DEL. W. SIMPSON LITH

LONDON PUBLISHED BY W. HAY & SON, 104, ST. MARK'S PLACE, ST. MARK'S CHURCH, ST. MARK'S

PRINTED BY COLLETT, BAKER & CO. LONDON

IV  
CRITICAL POSITION OF H.M.S. INVESTIGATOR ON THE NORTH COAST OF BARING ISLAND.

1841



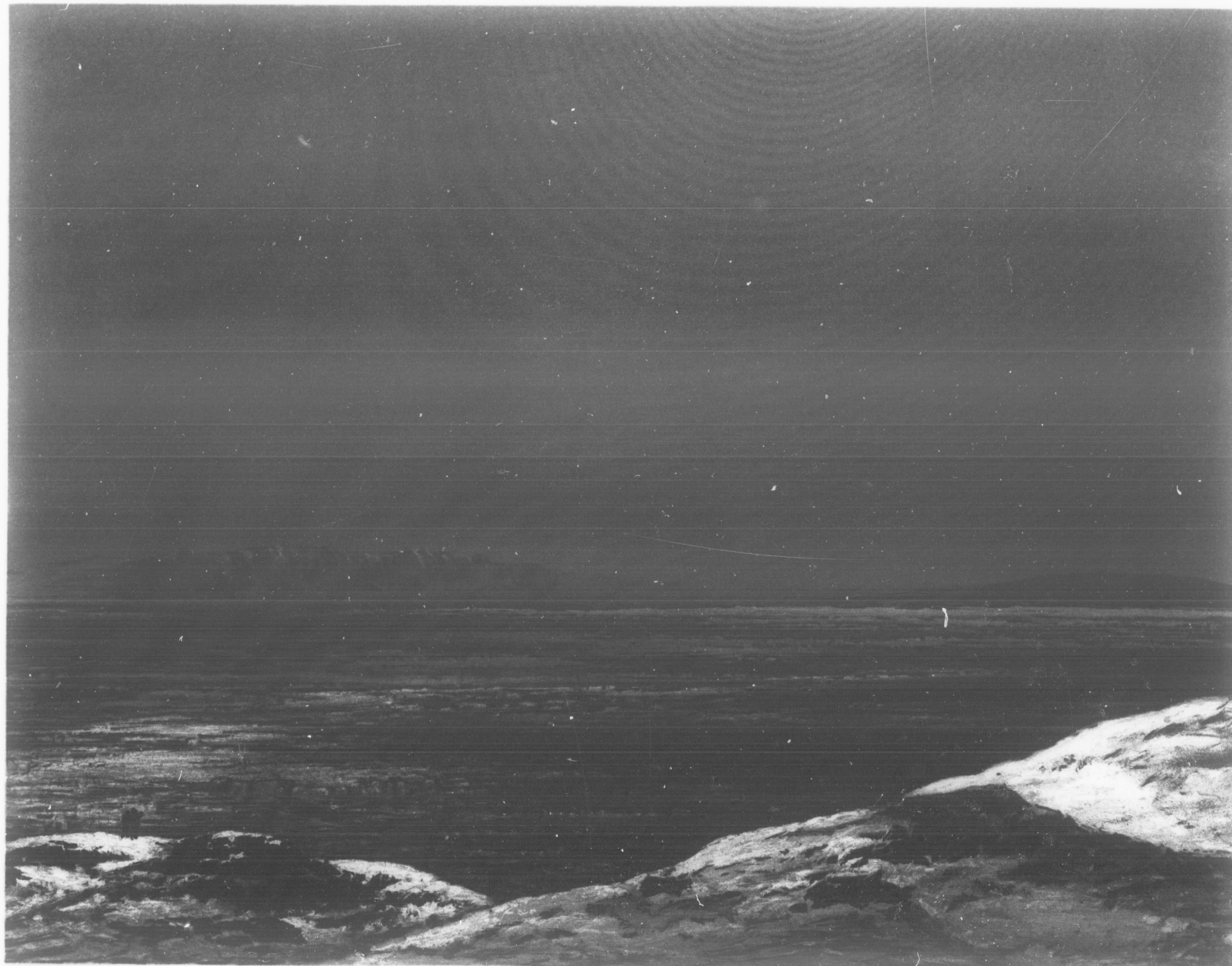
LEWIS & CLARKE PHOTOGRAPHY, INC. ... E. WALKER, LITH.

LONDON: PUBLISHED 15th MAY 1854, BY DAY & SON, 64, ST. MARK'S PLACE, ST. MARK'S PLACE, ST. MARK'S PLACE.

PRINTED IN GREAT BRITAIN BY DAY & SON, 64, ST. MARK'S PLACE, ST. MARK'S PLACE, ST. MARK'S PLACE.

H. M. S. INVESTIGATOR BURNING THROUGH A NARROW CHANNEL IN A SNOW STORM, BETWEEN GROUNDING AND PACKED ICE.

September 25th 1851.



1110. S. DENNY CROSSWELL. DEL. W. SIMPSON. LITH.

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VI

MELVILLE ISLAND FROM BANKS' LAND.



LIEUTENANT GURNEY CRESSWELL. DEL. J. WALKER. SCULPT.

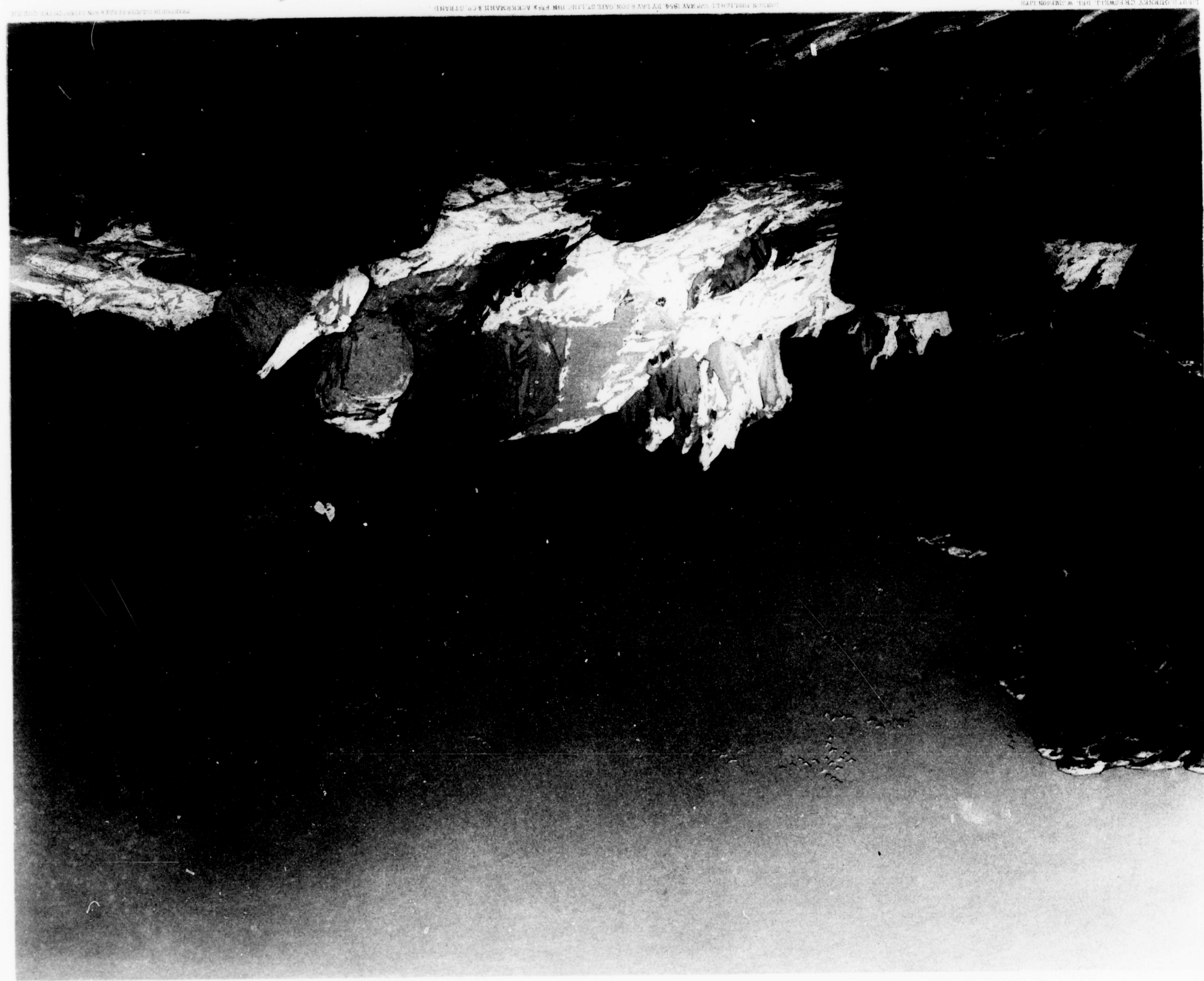
LONDON PUBLISHED JULY 20 1854, BY DODD & SON, 25, NASSAU ST. W. & A. ACKERMANN & CO. STRAND.

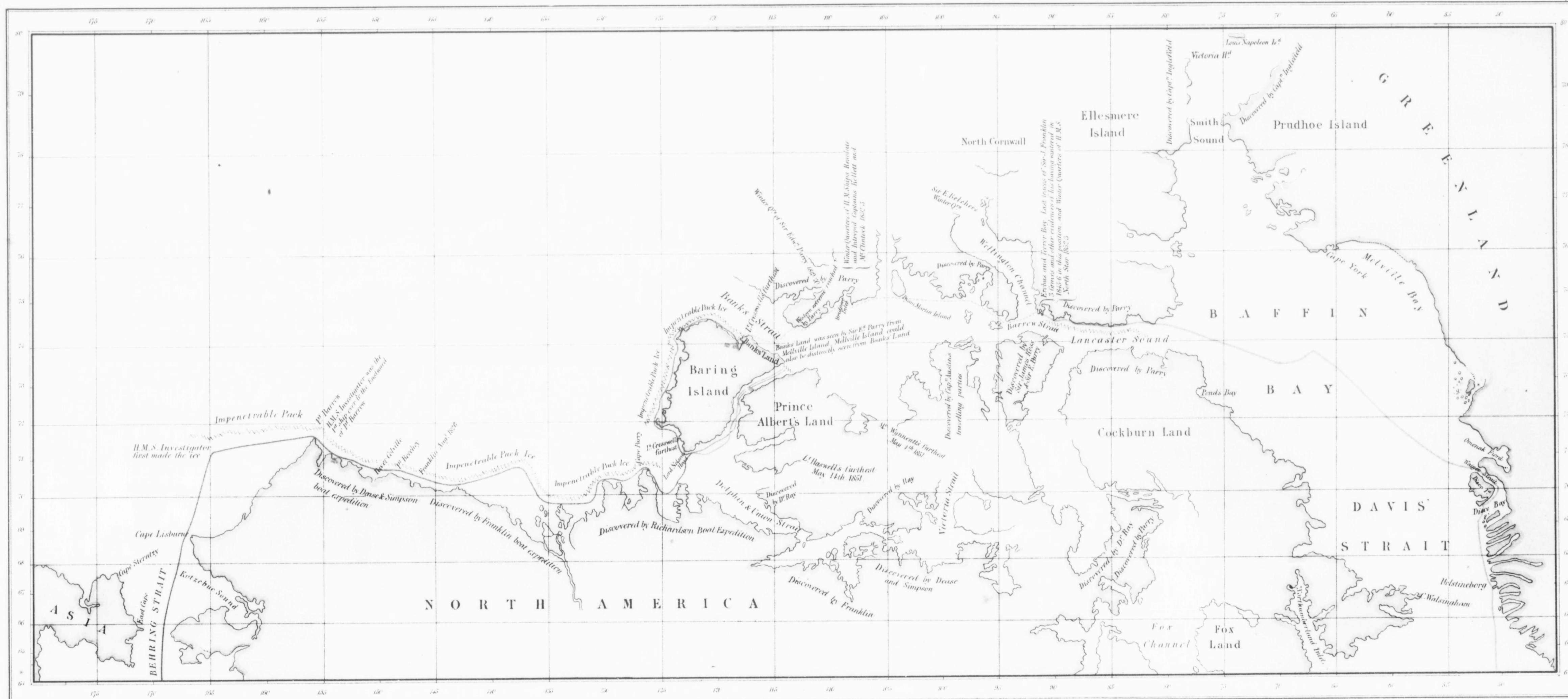
PRINTED IN SCOTLAND BY JAMES BOWEN & CO. DUNDEE.

VII  
SLEDGE PARTY LEAVING H.M.S. INVESTIGATOR IN MERCY BAY, UNDER COMMAND OF LIEUTENANT GURNEY CRESSWELL.

15 April 1853

APRIL 1883.  
SLEDGING OVER HUMMOCKY ICE.





Lieut. G. G. COXWELL, R.N.

EXPLANATION OF CHART.

The land tinted Red is that discovered by Capt. W. C. E. in the Investigator.  
 All parts of the Chart left White are either unexplored or were frozen over.  
 The sea where coloured Blue was more or less navigable.  
 The spotted Red line the Sledge party's Journey under E. Crosswell.  
 The Yellow line shows the track of the Phoenix Capt. Ingham by which vessel E. Crosswell returned to England.