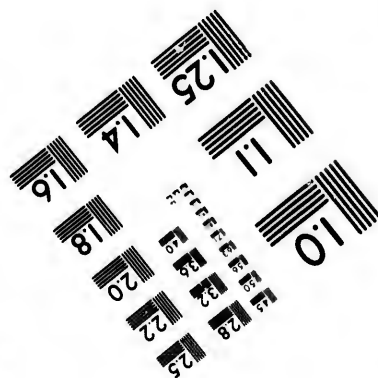
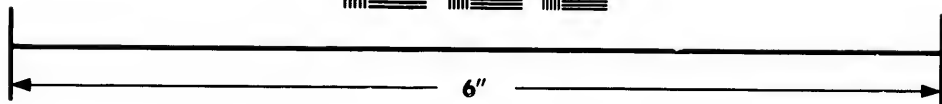
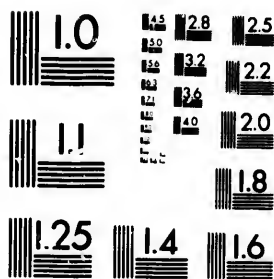


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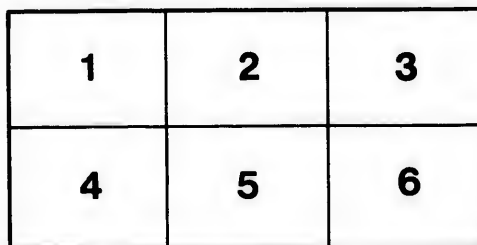
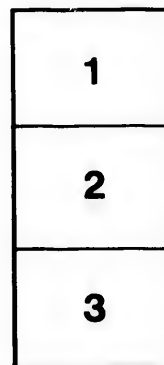
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ARCTIC MISCELLANIES.

A

SOUVENIR OF THE LATE POLAR SEARCH.



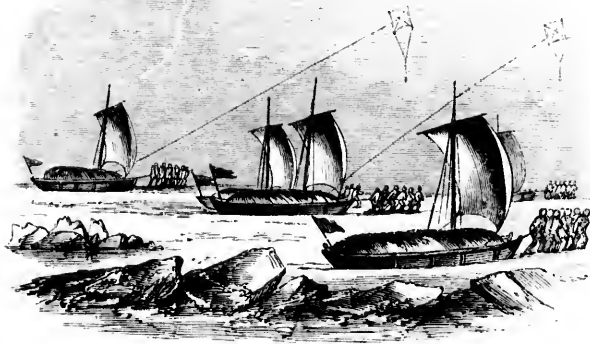
ARCTIC MISCELLANIES.

A

SOUVENIR OF THE LATE POLAR SEARCH.

BY THE

OFFICERS AND SEAMEN OF THE EXPEDITION.



LONDON:
COLBURN AND CO., PUBLISHERS,
GREAT MARLBOROUGH STREET.

1852.

21. 10. 1850

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1850

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LONDON:
Printed by Schulze and Co., 13, Poland Street.

72425

D E D I C A T E D ,

BY PERMISSION,

TO

THE LORDS OF THE ADMIRALTY.

The names of the authors of the articles in this book have been taken from J. W. Wardie's ^{of another copy} copy, ^{as Wardie's plates} and the property of Caroline Doumet.

There is no doubt that the names pencilled in that copy were written by Dr. J. F. L. Doumet, Surgeon, H.M.S. "Assistance", 1850-51, editor of the "Austral Bohealis", issued on board the "Assistance". The present book is composed of articles selected from the "Austral Bohealis".

I have added a few notes myself, so that the details given are not in every case confined to those given in J. W. Wardie's copy.

"J. D." are Doumet's initials. C.R. Warham used at least two pseudonyms. "Examinis" identity is not mentioned by Doumet.

The original copy, belonging to a Mr. Gule & once belonging to Caroline Doumet, is in the Scott Polar Research Institute, Cambridge. She was Dr. Doumet's sister.

Richard F. Cyriax

P R E F A C E.

ON the 4th of May, 1850, an expedition, under the command of Captain Austin, C.B., sailed from the Thames in search of Sir John Franklin and his missing companions. The ships composing this expedition were the 'Resolute,' commanded by Captain Austin, and the 'Assistance,' by Captain Ommanney, together with two steamers, the 'Pioneer' and 'Intrepid,' under the commands of Lieutenants Osburn and Cator. On the 24th of September, the little squadron was locked in the ice between the islands of Cornwallis and Griffiths in which position it remained till the 11th of August, 1851; and on the 7th of October, the ships arrived off Woolwich, after an absence from England of about eighteen months, having passed more than two thirds of that time in the Arctic Ocean. The

following work is not a narrative of the expedition, nor is it a journal in the usual acceptation of the term. It is simply a collection of articles on different subjects, extracted from a newspaper, which was edited by one of the officers of the 'Assistance.' These articles were contributed by the commanders, officers and men, of the expedition. Some of the papers are from the pen of the venerable Admiral Sir John Ross, and others, and not the least interesting, are from rough and weather-beaten tars before the mast. This little newspaper was called the "*Aurora Borealis*," and was published on the 15th of every month. It was in manuscript, each number being arranged, and the different articles copied into it, in a legible hand, by the editor himself.

It is not for us, who only assist in bringing the work before the public, to speak of its literary merits, or of the interest which it ought to excite, but we shall be pardoned in calling the attention of the reader to the fact, that the subjoined pages are a faithful record of the thoughts and sentiments of a body of our countrymen, whilst exposed to extraordinary hardships and danger. They will also serve to show that an intellectual revolution has, to a great extent, taken place amongst our seamen, of which the general public appear to have no concep-

tion. The popular opinion seems to be, that the literary attainments of British sailors seldom exceed the acquisition of some boisterous song, and that only the very erudite amongst them can succeed in scrawling a letter to their friends at home.

In the "*Aurora Borealis*," however, we find articles written by veteran tars, whose home since boyhood has been upon the sea, that would not disgrace the pages of some of our magazines. These men with frames of iron, with a courage and a stern endurance that nothing can subdue, show themselves possessed of a delicacy of imagination and a power of perception that one has great difficulty in reconciling with the honest roughness of their appearance. Some years ago an officer, high in command, gave it as his opinion, that men entirely uneducated made the best soldiers and sailors. Here, however, we find, that the men from before the mast, who contributed to the "*Aurora Borealis*," are amongst the most exemplary in Her Majesty's service.

During the long Arctic night of more than three months, the resources of the expedition were successfully used in procuring both employment and amusement for the officers and men. The time for every duty was set apart, as though day and night continued to be of the same duration as in our own climate. The Admiralty had furnished the squadron

with good libraries, to which the officers added their own collection of books. Reading-rooms were established on the lower deck of each ship, as were also schools on the Lancasterian system. Here the ships' companies assembled; and whilst some read, others formed themselves into classes, under the direction of teachers. The officers took an active part in these exercises, sometimes as teachers, sometimes as learners. Navigation, steam, seamanship, arithmetic, and even modern languages and music, were the chief objects of study. In most of these branches of education the seamen showed themselves apt and docile learners.

A theatre was also tastefully fitted up on board the 'Assistance,' and a corps of actors formed, under the management of Captain Ommanney. And on board the 'Resolute' and 'Intrepid' saloons were opened for masquerade balls, several of which took place with great success during the long Arctic night. A printing-press was given to the expedition by the Admiralty for printing balloon-papers. There were no printers in the squadron, but some of the officers soon learned the art; and beside balloon-papers, play-bills, and announcements of fancy dress balls, were regularly sent to press. Several of the men, too, became adepts in the art of printing, and set up in type, songs and other trifles, chiefly of their own

composition. So great a passion, indeed, did printing become amongst them, that when at length their stock of paper was run out, they printed on chamois-leather, on shirts, and in one instance on a blanket.

The scenery of the theatre, and the decorations of the "saloons," were painted by the officers. The materials for painting were rude and insufficient, yet some of the scenery was admirably executed. This will be easily understood, when we state that the principle artist was Lieutenant Browne, whose Panorama of the Arctic Regions has given him a distinguished place amongst scenic painters. One of the officers also carved in snow, with great taste and correctness, two life-size figures, one of His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales, the other of the Princess Royal. These statues were placed in niches at either side of the drop-curtain.

For four hours out of each of the twenty-four, the officers and men exercised under the lee of the different ships; and before the night period came on, skating, foot-ball, shooting, and other amusements, took place upon the floe. Finger-posts were set up for the guidance of those who went any distance on the ice, and houses formed of snow were erected in different places. Some of these

latter were intended for observatories, but the floe was found to be too unsteady for such purposes.

In the month of February, when day again returned, an order was issued to discontinue shaving. The beard, it was thought, would be some protection from the rays of the sun, so fiercely reflected from the ice and snow; and the officers and men, as a further precaution, rubbed their faces with grease before going into the open air.

Night had lasted for more than three months, and not the least remarkable of the effects produced by the absence of the sun was, that every one in the squadron became very pale. After a month or two of sunlight, however, they were all successfully re-bronzed.

On the return of day, the travelling parties were organized. Men and officers wore dresses suited to the rigours of the climate. Each had on great boots, large enough to allow the feet to be comfortably wrapped in flannel; and the generality had a suit of chamois-leather under their dress, and heavy coats warmly lined. Each party took with them, besides arms and ammunition, cooking utensils, tents, and provisions. Sails were set in the sledges, to which large kites were also attached. When the wind was high, the sails and kites propelled the

sledges very rapidly, and the whole of the party then rode ; but when the wind fell, the sledges were dragged along by the men."

After eight or ten hours' march, the party halted ; the tents were pitched, and attempts were made to light fires, which attempts very often proved successful. On such occasions, the dinner was carefully thawed. A Macintosh floor-cloth was laid down ; and after the uneasy meal had been devoured, each retired into a long flannel bag, which he cautiously tied with a running string above his head ; and then dropping on the Indian-rubber carpet, slept as best he could.

Dining within the Arctic Circle, when such a thing as a dinner is to be had, is a much more serious matter than when one undergoes that pleasing ceremony at the Travellers, or the United Service Club ; and yet we have known men to dine at both the latter places under very adverse circumstances. In Arctic banquets, the cheerful glass is often frozen to the lip, or the too ardent reveller splinters a tooth in attempting to gnaw through a lump of soup. When Boileau said, that

"Qu'un dîner réchauffé ne valut jamais rien."

he wrote for that charming little world, whose Arctic

Circle at present is the *Moulin Rouge*, and its Tropic of Cancer *Vachette's*; with whom ice is one of the sweets of existence, and whose idea of a floe is gathered from the silver vase that soothes the petulance of their champagne. Boileau, it is evident, had never eaten ship's rum, or chewed brandy and water.

The exploring party, under Lieut., now Commander, M'Clintock, was one of the last to return. They did not reach the ship till the month of July. The thaw had already commenced; and for more than two hundred miles on the way back, he and his men had to endure sufferings, and to struggle with obstacles, of which it is difficult for any but an Arctic traveller to form an idea. They dragged their cumbrous sledges over the now yielding hummocks, and through slushy pools; and when the hours for sleep came, the Macintosh floor-cloth and the blanket bags were but poor protection against the wet of the dissolving floe. Yet not a single complaint was heard amongst the party; and the men, during these trials, never lost their good humour, nor did their courage desert them for an instant.

During their four months' absence, they had been round Byam Martin Island, had tracked the desolate shores of Liddon's Gulf, and penetrated through a

wilderness of ice as far as the 114° of west longitude, having gone over in all at least eight hundred miles !

When Captain Austin's Expedition left the Thames in the month of May, 1850, the plan of the Great Exhibition had been already laid down. No one at that time dreamt of the glorious success which ultimately crowned Prince Albert's project. The grandeur of the undertaking, however, and the noble philanthropy in which it originated had already created a sensation throughout the civilized world; and his Royal Highness, the Prince consort, began even then to receive the first of that tribute of admiration and applause, which has since been so largely heaped upon him by the unanimous voice of assembled nations.

We see by the pages of the "*Aurora Borealis*," that whilst locked in the ice, and cut off from all communication with the rest of the world, those on board Captain Austin's squadron numbered the fear of not seeing the Great Exhibition amongst their other regrets of home and country. Fate, however, favoured them, and they arrived in London during the last week of the Exhibition. Sir William Reid, with a thoughtfulness which does him the greatest credit, at once sent free admissions for the remaining

days of the season to all the officers of the Expedition. When they left England, the Great Exhibition was not yet in existence, when they returned it had already formed an epoch in the history of the world, and had given undying lustre to the name of its Royal founder. Those sentiments of devotion to their Queen, pride in their country, and admiration for its Government and institutions, which we find in almost every page of the 'Aurora,' were confirmed and increased by the Arctic travellers' visits to the Exhibition. In the peaceful contest which took place within those crystal walls, England had not always borne away the palm from her rivals in arts and manufactures, but in one point her pre-eminence was acknowledged. Sublime in the strength of her free institutions, she stood calm and unmoved amidst the tempest of revolutions which swept over half the countries of Europe.

Not one of Her Majesty's subjects but must have felt at heart a glow of pride at reading the eloquent speech made by Lord Palmerston at Tiverton a few months past, in which that great statesman described the happiness and prosperity of this empire as contrasted with the condition of other nations. Never, indeed, has a country been more singularly favoured by Heaven. Never was a Sovereign more beloved or more deserving the love

of a people, than is our Gracious Queen, and never has a Prince gained his fame in a more holy cause than has the Royal founder of the Great Exhibition, nor has England been ever more respected abroad or been blessed internally with greater tranquillity and happiness.

In introducing this little Arctic newspaper to the public, we cannot abstain from saying a word on journalism in general. The press is now put down throughout the greater part of Europe. But if public opinion has been illegally silenced in other countries, it is heard the louder in England. The influence which the stern morality, the talent, and the wealth of our leading papers gave them over the civilized world has been immeasurably increased by the disasters which have fallen upon their cotemporaries on the Continent. The tribunal of public opinion has only been transferred from less-favoured capitals to London: its power is still the same. A great paper like the "Times" no longer addresses itself to one empire or to a single people. The telegraph and the railroad have destroyed space, and a truth now uttered in London in a few minutes later vibrates through the heart of France, or is heard on the shores of the Adriatic. It was remarked in the "Times" not long since, in one of the most eloquent articles that ever adorned the press of

any country, that the profession of a journalist in England is that which is making the surest progress towards continued power and distinction, and the events of every day prove the gifted writer of that article to have been correct.

The "Aurora Borealis" was the public organ of the little world on board Captain Austin's squadron in the Arctic Seas, and its pages are a reflection of the harmony and good-fellowship, the order and the Christian union, which prevailed in the Expedition. We fear that the time is far distant before "the peoples" of Europe will feel any of the brotherly spirit which animated "the Austin Happy Family."

LONDON, DECEMBER, 1851.

ARCTIC MISCELLANIES.

I.

Baffin's Bay, June, 1850.

It is pleasing for the human mind, after the troubles, revolutions and disturbances which have of late years convulsed Europe, to dwell upon and contemplate the workings of humanity, and more especially where evinced in favour of Sir John Franklin and his daring band of companions.

It is gratifying to find that—amid the many occurrences that daily interest and carry away the public mind—the voice of England has been raised for their rescue; and money, capital and other resources placed readily at the disposal of those in authority. Our Expedition has been fitted out under the most favourable and most glowing

auspices; few have ever left England with so many and such ardent blessings; the great, the good, the generous have blessed us, and a nation has cast forth its wishes for our success and happiness.

We cannot but prosper; each man, buoyed up by the lamp of Faith and Anticipation, assisted by the guiding hand of Providence, will do his best: the star of Hope will light us onwards, and, with energy and resignation on our part, will unfold to us the banner of success. Our hardships may be many; but, with feelings such as now exist, these will be overcome; and in those regions

“Where the North Pole, in moody solitude
Spreads her huge tracts and frozen wastes around,”

happiness, with a continual smile, will hover over and protect us.

The Journal we have undertaken, has been for the amusement of the officers and ship's company of H.M.S. ‘Assistance,’ during the dark and dreary hours when

“Mingling day and night
(Sweet interchange which makes our labours light)
Will be unknown,”

and our sacred mission will not demand our ser-

VICES. It will amuse and instruct, and we hope it will be a bond to unite and keep up a spirit which will, we trust, reign triumphant throughout, and cause our ship, in after years, to be fondly and dearly remembered by the name of

THE HAPPY AND JOLLY 'ASSISTANCE.'

J.D.

THE SUNKEN LAND OF BUS.

On the 25th of May, 1850, Her Majesty's ship 'Assistance' passed over that portion of the Atlantic beneath which the mysterious and sunken land of Bus lies. Little did the sailor think, as his ship ploughed the mighty waves, that here, above these waters, a land full of happiness, of life and vitality once existed, rich in the feelings of the heart, and prolific in the preciousness of its metals.

This land, now no more, is mentioned by one of the two brothers Zeni (celebrated Venetian navigators), who, carried by a storm into the Deucalionian Sea, and after many hardships and troubles, was, in 1380, wrecked upon a large and beautiful island, covered with a hundred towns and villages, and peopled by a race of Christians, primitive in

the extreme, and enjoying a state of civilization far beyond expectation. He was hospitably and kindly received by Ziehmi, the Prince of this fair land, who welcomed him, and advanced him in his favour and friendship. Here he lived for some time in honour, accompanying this Prince in many of his expeditions.

It was in this happy Atlantis, that the wild and speculative minds of the Norsemen planted their land of Colchis, a land abounding in gold, in silver and precious stones, and from whence, in spite of the opposition offered by the evil genii of the land, an armament, in the time of King Olaus, brought away cargoes of these valuable objects.

Over this sunken land, it was, that the famous navigator, Magnus Henningsen—sent by Frederick the Second, in 1578—was arrested in his expedition to Greenland. For days he tried to push on, but his ships remained stationary in one spot, unable to move. Finding his endeavours of progressing fruitless, he was under the necessity of shifting his course homewards; and on his return, his excuse for his want of success was, that stopped by the magnetic powers of the Sunken Rock—which had for days held him spell-bound to one spot—he considered it wrong to dare further the power of the deep.

Mystery hangs over this spot; whalers have wound around it a charm, pleasing to the imagination, and seductive to the fancy; over it, the waters unceasingly and constantly wash; and few seamen are hardy enough to trust themselves to the hidden dangers and perils that surround it. Some old mariners will tell you that, on a fine night, with a fresh breeze blowing, a kind of light may be seen in the skies, resembling distant smoke, arising from the waters, which, like the *ignis-fatuus*, precedes the ship in her course, vanishing, as distance decreases, into thin and empty air. The decks of these ships, the next day, will be found strewed with fine sparkling sand, impalpable to the touch, and possessing qualities differing from sand generally.

As the ship dashed from its bows the mighty waves that rushed against it in its passage over this land of mystery, the mind was lost in wondrous speculation as to the cause or convulsion in nature which could have swept away from the surface of the earth a land so large, so thickly populated, and so flourishing, whether it once a floating island, such as is mentioned by old travellers, and fondly dwelt upon by their imaginative minds, or whether, as the Island of Sabrina, or, in later years, Hotham Island—a volcano raised by some submarine force, and

returning to its original position on the abstraction of this power—a column uplifted by the genii of the deep, exhibiting its capital above the waste of waters for a time, to the wandering eyes of mortal man!

RUIN OF A GREENLAND COLONY.

There is, perhaps, nothing that arrests the attention of the traveller sooner than the ruins of an ancient city, or the crumbling remains of an old castle or temple. The mind unconsciously flies back to those times when the city or castle, which is now deserted, was once thronged with men, who have been long since dead, and when the lofty walls and towers echoed with the stirring noise of the crowds beneath.

Most of us who are now leaving the civilized world far behind, and entering the regions of eternal snow and solitude, have but lately returned either from where the marble temples and palaces of Greece and Italy throw their shadows over the blue waters of the Mediterranean, or from some other region equally interesting from its antiquities; and we have all, perhaps, in whatever station our

sojourn may have been, indulged our minds in many a delightful reverie, as we gazed on the ruined temples and monuments of by-gone ages, which are to be met with in every part of the world.

The land which we have now entered upon is not entirely destitute of such interesting remains; and the broken pillars, bells and urns attest the former magnificence of the Cathedral of Garda.

The flourishing colony of Eireksfjord, situated not far from Cape Farewell, was, in the beginning of the fifteenth century, the seat of a bishopric and a Cathedral. Founded by the Norwegian Eirek, it had gradually increased in size and opulence, until it had arrived, in A.D. 1400, at a high state of prosperity.

It was about this time, that the impious Kajah Tahmasp, grandson of Shiehani Khan, the conqueror of Siberia, and descendant of the famous Genghiz Khan, was obliged, with a chosen band of followers, to fly his country, and seek new fortunes in the frozen lands of Kamtschatka. After defeating several tribes on the banks of the Obi and Yenesei, they crossed Behring's Straits, and being joined by several thousand Esquimaux, and after suffering incredible hardships, arrived on the coast of Labrador, A.D. 1399.

Here they received tidings of the rich colony of

Eireksfjord; and the blood-thirsty Kajah Tahmasp determined on its destruction.

At that time, the venerable Henry, Bishop of Gardo, had ruled the destinies of the colony for more than thirty years. He had lived to see all his friends die around him; and his only grand-child, the lovely Ingeborga, was the solace of his old age. The old man received the news of the intended invasion with Christian resignation: he prepared for the defence of the town, and sent his grand-child, in a small vessel, to Denmark, in charge of her lover, the youthful Frithiof. They had hardly, however, left the harbour, when the hostile fleet rounded Cape Desolation, and commenced the chase: the little vessel was soon overtaken, and the ferocious Kajah Tahmasp murdered the lovers in each other's arms. The town was soon afterwards taken, every soul put to death, and the venerable Henry fell dead, under the blows of the infidels, at the foot of the altar. The conquerors, however, soon quarrelled concerning the sharing of the spoil; and the blood of Henry was avenged by the murder of Kajah Tahmasp.

Not a vestige is now to be discovered, beyond a few broken pillars, bells and jars, of the once flourishing city of Gardo. Like Babylon and Memphis, it has disappeared from the face of the earth,

and left only its name, and a few scattered facts,
to be collected by the indefatigable perseverance of
Danish antiquaries.

*C. M. (presumably
Clements Matheson)
Midshipman, "Arctique"*

SONG.

Air: SAILOR'S HORNSPIPE.

Jog her out, jog her out,
Come, what are you about?
Jog her out, jog her out,
For our spell is nearly out.
If old Rice were only here,
He'd help us with a cheer;
Or what would still be better,
He'd treat us all to beer.

We've jogged her each morning,
And we've jogged her each night,
And now we're jogging her
With all our main and might.
The leak it is increasing,
Our work it is unceasing,
And I'm sure before she's dry
We shall all be fagged out.

Vast heaving! vast heaving!
For the pumps begin to suck,
Vast heaving! vast heaving!
We've jogged her out enough.

She'll run another day,
 Only give to her fair play.
 So at the work don't grunt,
 For we're getting double pay.

"Mecham": presumably G.F.

Mecham

Lieut. "Assistant

THE MULLEMUKKE.

The sea bird which we have most frequently seen around the ship in her passage across the Atlantic has been the Fulmar—the *Procellaria glacialis* of Linnæus; the Havest of the Norwegians, and Mullemukke of the Greenlanders, which in their language signifies the *stupid fly*, from its motions being quiet and heavy, and flying, as some have compared it, like a large moth, stupidly and noiselessly. It is said to be so voracious, that where food is plentiful, it will gorge itself until obliged to vomit what it has taken, when it will again return and glut itself. So greedy are the Mullemukkes, that whilst a whale is 'flensing' alongside, they may be knocked down with sticks, rather than move from their prey. On the banks of Newfoundland, where this bird is known by the name of 'John Down,' it attends the fishing vessels for the offal of the cod fish. Whalers tell you that you can trace the Finner

(*Balæna physalus*) by the hoverings of this bird, which pounces upon the leviathan of the deep as he rises to blow.

At St. Kilda, one of the western islands of Scotland, they are found in great numbers; they deposit their eggs on ledges of rock inaccessible to the foot of man. "These birds," says Pennant, "are of much use to these islanders; they supply them with oil for their lamps, down for their beds, a delicacy for their tables, a balm for their wounds, and a medicine for their distempers."

They are eaten by the whalers, and by the inhabitants of Hudson's and Baffin's Bay, who salt them for winter provisions.

From the listlessness of their flight, they have been considered to be the birds of Diomedes; for a melancholy hovers about them as they progress through the air.

Their feathers make good down pillows.

J. B.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE AURORA BOREALIS.

Sir,

Having heard from an Arctic Voyager, that he has seen crows' nests in those icy regions, I beg to inquire, through your columns, if they are

built by the crow (*Corvus tintinnabulus*), which, Goodsir, states, "to utter a bell-like croak." My fast friend begs me to inquire when rook shooting commences in those diggings.

A NATURALIST.

"Ede". (Chas. Ede, Arist.
Surgeon, Assistance)

We would recommend to 'A Naturalist' a visit to these crows' nests, which do exist in the Arctic regions; we would also advise his fast friend to investigate these said nests more thoroughly, he would then find them tenanted by very old birds (Ice Quarter-Masters). who would not only inform him as to the species of *Corvus* and the sporting season, but would give them a fair chance of showing him how a pigeon may be plucked.

J.D.

II.

Wellington Channel, September, 1850.

It has been considered advisable to have a Newspaper published regularly on board H.M.S. 'Assistance,' for the object chiefly, as has already been said in the first number, of whiling away the dreary winter hours, of stimulating inquiry, and of affording amusement and instruction. As an experiment, the first number appeared in June; it took well, and generally pleased; it was as a pioneer in the van of the numbers that will follow, and so universal was the satisfaction, that the second was impatiently called for.

The Editor promises himself to carry out, as much as lays in his power, this laudable object, but

without 'Assistance' he feels that nothing can be done; he looks to his kind contributors for support, from them he expects matter wherewith to deck and adorn the columns of the 'Aurora.' The fable tells us that Pandora was made perfect, not by any quality inherent to herself, but by the gifts with which the gods endowed her. The sheets of the 'Aurora' are but the *Tabulæ rasæ* of the philosophers, the impressions upon them can only be made by the contributors.

The Editor, therefore, recommends exertion and perseverance; without his contributors he is inefficient and powerless as a workman without tools; he is well aware of the many calls our present service have upon their time, nor would he wish a single moment to be taken from the furtherance of our mission; but he still encourages and hopes that the 'Aurora' will not be permitted to sink and die of inanition, when they can so well and so easily supply her from their rich and well-hoarded stores of thought and observation.

J D.

CROSSING THE ARCTIC CIRCLE.

How many persons are to be found who will complain and lament the downfall and abolition of old customs, regretting that innovation and new-fangled ideas have superseded the good old fashions of former days. Men become bigoted to one idea; as years increase upon them, time mellows down all asperities, and the brightest spots of their youth's existence stand forth in high relief; they love to dwell upon them, and comparing their past with the present, talk of the rising generation as slow, and wanting in the spirit of the olden times.

Among the hardy race who frequent the Arctic Seas in pursuit of the whale fishery, many there are who regret that the old custom of initiating the tyro into the mysteries on entering the Arctic circle, is fast falling into decay and disuse. It was a day of merriment, of fun, of enjoyment, and they looked back upon it with affection, and the youthful reminiscences associated with the custom, warmed their old hearts, and caused them to live their youth over again.

They looked back upon, and recalled the time

when his most aqueous, crystalline, and profound Majesty vested in the garments of submarine royalty, presented himself on board to claim the tribute due to him as emperor of these realms. *Algæ*, of all beauties; *Fuci*, of all colours; *Medusæ*, of all transparency, flowing with cowries, ear-shells, oysters, and winkles, bedecked the person of his oceanic and hyperborean Majesty, and scented with the essence of whales, narwhals, and seals, he spread around the perfume so grateful to the olfactories of the epicurean Greenlander. Seated in his car* of arctic diamonds, studded with emeralds, sapphires, and opal, and surrounded by his suite: *Monodons*, *Cetaceæ*, sea-serpents, and krakens, he was a king, indeed.

The trembling neophyte was brought into the imperial presence, and after being subjected to the searching examination, and judgment passed, he was handed over to the mercies of the hyperborean officials, who attended to perform rigidly and conscientiously the onerous duties imposed upon them.

And dreadful indeed was the ordeal: trembling with fear and cold, the unfortunate shaker was shaved with razors made by the cooper, and

* An iceberg.

lathered over with slush and oil from the coppers, and then plunged into the icy waters; he was dragged forth regenerated, and a child of these seas.

All this pleased these weather-beaten old Polars; and as they thought of the abolition of their cherished custom, a shade of sadness came over them. Some murmurings may have been vented as H.M.S. 'Assistance' crossed the Circle, but if heard, they were not heeded or cared for; the greenhorn decrying the ordeal strenuously, when he thought that he would have been the victim to their fun.

It is a custom become now almost obsolete in the Polar Seas, and not many years will elapse ere it will be remembered only as a subject chronicled side by side with stories that excite and please the fancy of youth.

4.D

FRANKLIN'S VISION.

SLEEP o'er my wasted form cast the sense-annihilating mantle of oblivion, and fancy lent her aid to paint in hues of happy by-gone days the imperfect associations of memory.

The huge blank front of ice that reared around, a limit insurmountable, seemed rent in twain; and through the gaping walls of congealed water came a pleasant sunny light, soft with the tints of morn. A gentle zephyr, whose pure breath was laden with warmth and fragrant perfume, melts with its soft caress the yielding mass. Now brighter shines the glorious colour-giving sun, and through the heavy air the musical sounds of woman's long-lost voice steals o'er my soul with thousand crowds of overwhelming recollections. Tears, hot tears of love, from well-tried friends form a clear passage through the treacherous elements, as flowing in unison they mingle in the ecstasy of joy. Nearer and nearer still the air-borne sounds and home-like fragrance come; while in the dim and lowering distance the dreaded region fades. Lo! gentle spring has decked the barren spot with flowers that we in childhood laughing plucked. Here, in gay garments clad, the light, the hope of life's bright dawn approaches; her step, firm with humanity, scarce leaves its print behind, so lightly buoyed with long deferred hope: she, bending, stretches toward my exhausted form her soothing hands, when that sweet touch my happiness dispels.

What strange rough forms are these? More men with faces strange? Oh! let me dream again.

Whence that shout, that makes the stillness seem more void. Ah! can it be the well-known accents of my almost forgotten native tongue? Sweet dream, thou hast foreshadowed the future. No beauteous form tends her fair helping hand: yet, in what shape soever thou comest, ASSISTANCE, thou art welcome, for wearied hope had almost vanished in the boundless ocean of despair.

C. Ede

The Arctic day grows weary; and already the sun hides its flattened sphere beneath the ice-bound horizon. Winter is rapidly approaching; the end of this month most probably will be the latest possible period for advance. Yet we look forward with confidence to the dreary months of darkness, knowing that both officers and men are actuated by a right and proper feeling. To men of action, these months of night are far more trying than to those whose custom it is to hold sweet commune with the world through those monuments of men's ideas—books. There are many who deem amusement useless; but let them mingle with the busy crowds, when freed from their usual labour, and

see amidst the most trifling pastime how the purer and holier feelings spring fresh from their dormant state, and drop o'er the care-worn working-day face the smile of love and friendship, and hear in their simple expression of pleasure, the voice of gratitude for such short respite from toil, then would they learn that we live but by contrast, that the bow, always bent, loses its elasticity. With us, still more do we require diversion to counteract the unusual depressing circumstances in which we are necessarily placed. It is the duty of one and all to contribute to each other's enjoyment. Let, then, any *suggestion* as it arises be made known for the benefit of the community. In amusement, we require thoughts to select that which will combine the greatest interest with some instruction. The eye and head of the unaccustomed grows weary by long leaning over books, and the song and dance supply their places; the mimic keeps his little circle in a rear; the spinner of old yarns has his group of listeners, and men naturally take their places where their tastes lead them. So that in endeavouring to encourage good-fellowship, the characters of those to be directed must be studied. The suggestions of the men will spring from their wishes, and by their modifications the best means of diversion will soon be found. The object of

these few words is to excite a train of thought upon the subject; if it has this effect, the end will be gained of a

DRY IDLER.

C. Ede

ARGONAUTA ARCTICA.

In lat. 65° , long. $55^{\circ} 46'$, were procured, by means of a surface-net, some crustaceous and molluscous animals. Of the former, the *Argonauta arctica* was very abundant. This little creature belongs to the second class of *Mollusca*, the *Pteropodes*; they swim like *Cephalapodes* in the sea, but cannot fix themselves there, nor creep for want of feet. Their organs of locomotion consist of fins, only placed at each side of their mouths. The species known are of small size, and few in number. They are all hermaphrodites. Cuvier calls it a *Limacina*, (*Clio helicæna* of Phipps and Gmel.; *Argonauta arctica* of Fabricius; Faun. Grœnl. 387.) It is not less abundant in the Arctic Seas than the *Clio borealis*, and forms an aliment for the whale. The body is terminated by a spiral tail, and is lodged in a shell of one whirl and a half, not umbilicated on both sides, as stated by Sowerby,

but one side only, as says Fabricius. When placed in a basin of water, they raise their boat-like shells to the surface by moving briskly their clear pearly-looking fins; when at rest these overlap the shell at the sides, nearly meeting in front. When lying at the bottom of the basin, they occasionally erected their fins. In colour they are of a deep olive-brown; on placing a piece of the fin under the microscope, it was found to consist of a clear membrane with parallel lines, appearing to be a thickening of the substance, like the rays in the fins of fish. The shell is transparent and carinated.

E.

C. Gode.

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III.

Winter Quarters, October, 1850.

WHEN one of the French writers of the day was told the story of St. Denis having walked after decapitation, with his head under his arm, she wittily exclaimed: "Ce n'est que le premier pas qui coûte." So has it proved with the contributions to the 'Aurora.' The first steps taken, the rest were comparatively easy; articles at first came in tardily, but their followers have poured in measuredly and constantly, and an abundant harvest has been supplied to feed the flame of thought.

The Editor takes this opportunity of thanking his contributors for the zeal and readiness with which they have responded to his call.

J.D.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE AURORA BOREALIS.

Sir,

I am an old bear, a reflective old bear, tooth-worn, rough-coated and fierce. Hearing that you are connected with one of the bright objects that solace us in these regions, I offer you these my (bear) bare thoughts to make known amongst my race. You are aware my deeds are too frequently *seal*-ed with blood wherever my *ice*-olated track is found. I prefer the *bear*-ded walrus to a *tender* turkey. The awful *paw*-city of our race had better be believed than felt.

A young acquaintance, wandering over the floe, was attracted by some strange forms upon the ice. "Why not be contented with your seal?" thought I. On he went, when a noise like the splitting of an iceberg attracted my attention, and to my horror, he fell dead!

"Your curiosity," thought I, "hath cost you dear."

Feeling chilly at his fate, I walked towards a pool of water, where seal were sporting in numbers. A dashing friend of mine set off at a smart pace in the direction of what appeared to be a seal double the usual size. He had approached

within a short distance, when, startled, I beheld him limping away on three legs; at the same moment, my eyes were dazzled by a flash of fire, and my ear was saluted by a sharp sound. Had he contented himself with a moderate allowance instead of desiring one double the usual size, he would not have been crippled for life.

Again instructed by my fellow's misfortunes and follies, I watched with some curiosity two bears, moving quietly along the floe, in search of food; an unusual appearance caused them to stop, sniff the air, and strain their eyes. The more prudent one remained at a distance, but the other, who had been striving to gain a name amongst us, boldly advanced, alas! too far—he was killed! It is true, he is to this day called the *Great Bear*, and is placed among the stars. "But a very poor compensation," thought I. After seeing these melancholy results of curiosity, avarice and ambition, I am determined to content myself with my own seal and bare subsistence.

E. Edw.

CRADLE OF ODIN.

The Tauric Chersonese, situated on the borders of Seythia, yet enjoying an even and delightful climate, and producing in abundance the olive and the vine, has shared the civilisation of the ancients, and bordering on the confines of the known world, formed one of the most remote of the Grecian colonies.

When Sesostris had conquered the whole of Asia, he was at length checked by the warlike tribes that dwelt on the shores of the Euxine, and returning to Egypt, he left a colony in Colchis, which communicated to the people of Taurica the arts and civilisation that flourished on the banks of the Nile; and the Chersonese was alike famous for the fabulous exploits of Orestes and Pylades, and the philosophy and learning of Anacharsis, the great inventor of anchors.

This region was the cradle of the Norman race, and the birth-place of the renowned Odin, who in giving laws and religion to his subjects, probably derived benefit from his intercourse with the Greeks, and a knowledge of their governments and traditions.

After the conquests of Pompey and the fall of Mithridates, the famous Odin—the chief of a people that inhabited the Crimea—collected his tribe, and crossing the Baltic, migrated to the shores of Scandinavia, where he founded a kingdom and a system of mythology which was only superseded by the advance of Christianity, and which has given names to many of the familiar words in our own language.

Odin died, after a long and prosperous reign, by cutting nine wounds in his body, in the shape of a circle, and rising to heaven, became the Father of Gods and Men. From his warriors were descended the valiant Norman knights who conquered Neustria, England and Naples, and who made the Emperors of the East and West tremble on their thrones; and from them also were descended the first discoverers of Greenland.

In the mythology of the Norsemen, Odin was their Jupiter, and Friga their Venus; Thor was the god of thunder, and Tyr of champions. Besides these, Loke was the evil spirit who was chained in hell, and who at the twilight of the gods will burst his bonds and destroy both heaven and earth. He had by the fury, Angerbode, three children, Fenris and Midgard, the wolf and dragon, who devour the bodies of the dead, and Hela,

the goddess of death. Managarmar was a hell-hound that devoured the lives of such as were fated to die.

CLIO.

CR. Washburn

SCENES FROM THE LIFE OF AN UNPROTECTED
ARCTIC OFFICER.



Mr. Muff being away on a shooting excursion, takes his dinner, and his day's allowance of rum, after which he feels inclined to slaughter a few bears.



After a little innocent recreation by killing an innumerable number of imaginary bears, he discovers a native of a rough exterior, who on approaching, extends his arms, as a sign of amity, and welcomes the stranger.



Mr. Muff being aware of the great difficulty of obtaining provisions, and anticipating the pressing entreaties of the native, declines the proffered hospitality and warm embrace ; and being of a retiring disposition, feels a great desire to make himself scarce. The native playfully follows him on all fours.



Mr. Muff feeling warm, and being unable to bear his cap, bares his head, and leaves it for the native, who now bears a strong resemblance to a bear. The native having inspected the cap with savage curiosity, appears greatly annoyed at not having found a head in it. Mr. Muff is now convinced his follower is a bear, but is not consoled thereby—bruin steps out. Mr. Muff (after divesting

himself of his coat and inexpressibles) does the same: he recollects having heard of a stern chase being a long one, begins to doubt the truth of the assertion.



Mr. Muff feeling the distance decreasing and his fears increasing, leaves all his clothing (save his shirt), hoping thereby to ease his mind as well as his body, but fails in doing so. He is inclined to think it must be very cold when the thermometer is as low as his spirits: does not stop to register the same.

Feeling it to be his last chance, he faces about, and levels his gun, which being a bargain does not go off; Mr. Muff drops the weapon, and goes off instead. The reflection that the bear's appetite

must be increased by his exercise does not prove consoling. Hears a report, and on turning round finds the bear mortally wounded, having fallen a victim to an ill-timed piece of curiosity. Mr. Muff returns, as does also his peace of mind.

G. F. "Mc Dougall" (Second
 ----- Master,
 "Resolute")

ENIGMA.

Sir,

I have for some time past taken an interest in an unfortunate individual, on whom the world appears to have set its veto. His life is one tissue of misfortune; and that he is also the victim of malice, a perusal of the following accounts of the predicaments in which I have seen him placed, will, I think, fully prove.

As far as I know, his principal duty consists in watching the premises of his master, and some suppose he has frequently important secrets intrusted to his care. One dark night, whilst performing his chief duty, he was attacked by a ruffian, and a knife thrust in his inside, which considerably damaged his inward functions, and being thereby incapacitated, the scoundrel of course succeeded in entering the premises. He has recovered, but it

is with serious disfigurement to his face, which also suffered in this affair. I have seen him hanging by the neck, and, more than once, nailed to the door! because his inhuman master pretended he would not perform his duty properly, unless he was secured to the place.

On another occasion, I have seen him choked in a canal (that he had been forced there on purpose, I fully believe), and had swallowed so much water as to be considerably distended; and it was only by applying the usual remedy he could be brought to his original size.

It is more than probable most of your readers and yourself have seen this "unfortunate," and if you or any of you can let me know who he is, that I may endeavour to give him some relief, you will greatly oblige*

Yours to command,

PHILANTHROPIC.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE AURORA BOREALIS.

* "Lock" appears to be the word, which has furnished our correspondent with the materials for his letter.—ED. A. B.

F. J. Kneble,

*(Second master,
"Ceresborea")*
D

ROYAL ARCTIC THEATRE.

We are creditably informed, that the grand building now in process of erection in the Valley of Snowdrop, will be opened as the Royal Arctic Theatre in the ensuing month, under the auspices of so good a manager, we defy the Polar Seas to produce a better : the *corps dramatique* are diamonds of the first water ; the dresses are surpassed by none in the vale, and the scenery is such as might astonish the inhabitants of the civilized world.

The pieces about to be produced are among the most select ; and mirth, fun, and wit of European boards tremble at the thought of finding their superiors in these regions.

November 1st, 1850.

OPENING OF THE ROYAL ARCTIC THEATRE.

H.M.S. ASSISTANCE.

IN HONOUR OF THE BIRTHDAY OF H.R.H. THE PRINCE OF WALES.

Manager, CAPTAIN OMMANNEY.

UNDER THE PATRONAGE OF CAPTAIN HORATIO AUSTIN, C.B.

On Saturday, Nov. 9th, 1850,

Will be performed by the Captain and Officers, the popular laughable
Farce of

MARRIED LIFE;

or,

DID YOU EVER SEND YOUR WIFE TO CAMBERWELL?

AFTER WHICH, SEVERAL COMIC SONGS,

And the Orchestra will perform some of the most Select Pieces.

THE WHOLE TO CONCLUDE WITH THE MUCH ADMIRERD FARCE OF

THE LOTTERY TICKET.

Which will be performed by the Ship's Company, and embraces
scenes of great interest.

The Scenery has been prepared by the most eminent artists, and is,
together with the dresses, on a scale of unrivalled magnificence.

A SPLENDID DROP SCENE, BY LIEUT. BROWNE.

Doors open at six o'clock. Performance to commence at half-past six.

*The Police are directed to take in charge all disorderly women
and dogs.*

VIVAT REGINA!

GRAND ANNOUNCEMENT.

THE FIRST GRAND

BAL MASQUÉ

FOR THE SEASON WILL BE HELD ON BOARD

H.M.S. RESOLUTE,

During the month of December next, when a fashionable and crowded attendance *en costume* is fully anticipated.

A FURTHER ANNOUNCEMENT

as to particulars, will be given as soon as the Manager shall have completed his arrangements with all the able Professors he intends calling to his aid on this festive occasion.

N.B.—The Manager has had much experience in catering for public amusement.

ADVERTISEMENT.

To be sold or let, with immediate possession. Two new cottages, called Marble Villa and Cerulean Cottage, situated a short distance to the southward of 'Assistance,' in a very picturesque neighbourhood; they both face to the south, having extensive undulating grounds in front, over which fine healthy exercise may be taken; the climate is so well known, that it does not require the flowery language of a Robins to say anything in its praise.

The situation is very convenient for families fond of theatricals. The Royal Arctic Theatre, and well known 'Intrepid' Saloon are within a few minutes' walk. The Walhalla, or Gallery of Statues; the skating grounds; the tennis court and skittle gardens are easily accessible from them.

A part of the purchase money may, if required, be left on security; the premises may be viewed at any hour. For further particulars apply at Marble Villa.

If disposed of by private contract, due notice will be given.

N.B.—There are good quarries of building material close to the cottages, and any quantity of water can be obtained by sinking wells of a few feet.

WM. KNOCKEMDOWN,

"Elliot" (presumably J.E. AUCTIONEER.
Elliot, Lieut. "Assistance".)

WANTED.—By an Executive Officer, whenever the thermometer is below zero, a berth between decks. To attend gun-room fires would be preferred. No objection to take charge of port-wine mulls.

TO ASSURANCE COMPANIES IN GENERAL.

WANTED.—By a gentleman lately returned from abroad, a share in one of the above companies, the advertiser having a large stock on hand.

WANTED for the forthcoming Masquerade, a Nose, with the following requisites: a good inclination, fitted for its position, without an inquisitive turn, not susceptible of cold; as it is expected to take a prominent part, stability and firmness of

character cannot be dispensed with; if of a ruddy, healthy complexion, it would be preferred. For further particulars, inquire at the Intrepid Saloon.

WANTED IMMEDIATELY.—Lights for the breakfast table. Applications to be sent in without delay, as some persons cannot tell whether they require butter or mustard.

A PAINTER WANTED.—He must possess the highest qualifications, be a good and ready designer, effective colourist, and well acquainted with scene painting. He will be required to assist in scene-shifting, lamp-trimming, watering and sweeping the boards: in his leisure hours he will lend a hand in making dresses, or in taking an active part as a musician—the violoncello, serpent, or cornopean would be preferred: he will occasionally have to brush the actors' boots, and run their messages; if porter or ale can be got, he must have some ready when demanded. The ample salary of £10 per annum will be given. None need apply who have the least propensity to growling.

IV.

Winter Quarters, Nov. 1850.

THE spirit of the old Asiatic warriors has revisited the Arctic regions ; civilization is making gigantic strides, and within a short period of time, has advanced to a pitch unparalleled in the history of the world.

Not many months have elapsed since a colony of Anglo-Saxons landed on these shores ; and in spite of the drear desolation and extreme coldness of the clime, they have, by the energy, perseverance and genius inherent to that race, overthrown all obstacles, and have made even inhospitality hospitable. And great and sublime was the Mission that caused them to seek these regions, not to

conquer and acquire territory, not to devastate nor to plunder, but to snatch from a death, fearful to contemplate, a band of their brave and adventurous countrymen, and to restore to happiness and cheerfulness many a desolate and despairing heart.

May that Mission be crowned with success ! Although a drear land of dismay spreads its mighty expanse, and as far as human vision extends, ice follows ice, the spirit of a temperate zone holds its sceptre dominant. The arts of a more genial clime have stepped forth from their warm dwellings, and have dared to put foot within the precincts of the Northern Pole. Daily upon the altars of the Muses is the incense burnt, and into the censer of each a votary is found to cast his mite. Guided by humane laws, they prosper ; and within their halls specimens of painting, sculpture and architecture, that would do credit to Europe, are found. A Walhalla has been opened, and several competitors have entered the lists ; already have statues of their Royal Highnesses the Prince and Princess of Wales burst their marble cerements and started into existence ; other statues are in progress, and the grand and gigantic forms of Egyptian art, hewn from blocks of the purest white, will be transferred to these regions and lands of ice.

Now that the sun, "that earliest minister of the

Almighty," hath left us for other and happier lands, amusements have been created to stand in lieu of that

" Prime cheerer, light !
Of all material beings first, and best !
Efflux divine ! Nature's resplendent robe !
Without whose vesting beauty all were wrapt
In inessential gloom."

The Intrepid Saloon ; the Royal Arctic Theatre ; the Bal Masqué ; Soirées ; Concerts ; will prove sources of much happiness.

The wings of old Time have been gilded by these colonists, and the bright 'Aurora' hath assisted in enhancing the colouring, furnishing quills to his pinions to facilitate and increase his flight.

Amongst the vast advances we hail with delight the birth of a new comforter, which under the name of the "Illustrated Arctic News" has come among us an interpreter of joys and hopes. The new colony anticipated its arrival with eagerness, and its advent was hailed with feelings approaching to enthusiasm.

Who would not welcome, amid the sternness of these seas, a new, instructive, and happy companion ? Smiles and laughter are our treasures ; they are the mines from whence a good inconceivable can

be obtained, and the speculator who boldly thrusts his pickaxe beneath the surface, is deserving of much credit and thanks: and such, we offer our able cotemporary: his sheets have fallen happily among us; they have delighted, instructed, and amused; they have recalled to many, reminiscences of by-gone days, and have raised in all the gentle hopes that stir mankind.

Sincerely do we trust that this pioneer will march with a 'Resolute' and 'Intrepid' step, and with the 'Assistance' of the rising colony, shower among us wit, fun, merriment and happiness, enhanced by its graphic and humorous illustrations.

ORIGIN OF THE ARCTIC HIGHLANDERS.

The Mongolian tribes are apparently more capable of being operated upon by the effects of climate and the nature of the country they inhabit, than any of the other races of mankind.

In a vast, level, and fertile territory, we find them settling down and improving in all the arts of civilization; building magnificent temples and stately palaces, and establishing a system of religion and ethics which has lasted for nearly two thousand

years; while at the same time they have become effeminate and unwarlike, and are brought to depend on foreigners and conquerors for protection and defence.

On the other hand, where the same race has peopled the arid regions in the vicinity of the vast desert of Cobi, and the boundless steppes of Tartary, we find them simple in their manners, and leading for the most part the lives of shepherds, but at the same time warlike and adventurous, and occasionally collecting together in one enormous army, and spreading their conquests from the Pacific Ocean to the boundaries of Christendom, from the snowy wastes of Siberia to the plains of Bengal.

Again, where the Mongolians have penetrated beyond the Arctic Circle, and spread themselves along the frozen shores of the American continent, they have lost both the civilization of the Chinese and the warlike bravery of the Tartar. Stunted in growth, and deficient in intellect, the Esquimaux (of course, with all due deference to the feelings of Erasmus York) has no thought, but for the gratification of his passions, no wish but to save himself from starvation.

The tribes of Mongolian extraction, which first peopled the regions watered by the Obi and the Lena, and afterwards the whole of Siberia, were

probably urged by the scarcity of food, and the oppression of the more powerful Tartars to seek homes on the opposite shores of Behring's Strait, and finding the more southern portions of North America already tenanted by the warlike and vindictive Red Indians, they were driven to take up their permanent abodes in the regions of everlasting snow, and gradually spread themselves from Kotzebue Sound to the shores of Greenland.

At a subsequent period (near the commencement of the fourteenth century), the overwhelming hordes of Mongols, which under the command of Zengis Khan issued from the centre of Asia, and overran China, Persia, Syria, Russia, and afterwards Siberia, probably drove fresh tribes to the north-east extremity of Asia, who in their turn compelled the original inhabitants of Kamschatka to migrate to the shores of America.

The new-comers finding even these frigid wastes occupied by the wretched Esquimaux, were forced to seek still farther north for subsistence and a home.

Passing the unknown portions of the Arctic regions, and the Parry Archipelago, these ill-fated emigrants at length found a resting-place on the shores around Wolstenholme Sound, where sickness and starvation have thinned their numbers,

weakened their minds, and reduced them to the state in which we found them.

Vestiges of their resting-places are still to be found at Melville and Byam Martin Islands, near Capes Martyr and Hotham, on Cornwallis Island, and at the harbour discovered by Captain Ommanney. These remains, which are now near four hundred years old, have been objects of interest to us in our voyage to the westward, and have much relieved the monotonous sameness of the shore; hoping therefore that this short attempt at an explanation of their origin has not been entirely unacceptable,

I remain,

Very sincerely,

CLIO.

C.R. Munkham

TO THE EDITOR OF THE AURORA BOREALIS.

Sir,

Should you consider the following extract from my journal worthy a place in your neatly "got up" and exceedingly well-conducted paper, it is at your service.

I am, &c.

A. B.

"Murray.

Quartermaster"

(Probably George Murray, Ex-Quartermaster, "Intercept")

PASSING THROUGH AN ICEBERG.

Sunday, June 30th, 1850.—Weather beautifully clear and calm When we got to the entrance of the arch, the transparency of the sea, which was of a fine ultramarine, enabled us to see that there was a sufficiency of water for us to pass through. We therefore pulled slowly under, when there burst upon our sight one of the most magnificent and splendid specimens of nature's handiwork ever exhibited to mortal eyes; the sublimity and grandeur of which no language can describe, no imagination conceive.

Fancy an immense arch of eighty feet span, about fifty feet high, and upwards of a hundred in breadth, as correct in its conformation as if it had been constructed by the most scientific artist: formed of solid ice of a beautiful emerald-green, and its surface of a shining smoothness, surpassing the most polished alabaster, and you may form some slight idea of the architectural beauties of this icy temple, the wonderful workmanship of time and the elements.

When we had rowed about half way through, I observed that the berg was rent directly over our heads, the fracture extending the whole breadth of the arch, and in a perpendicular direction to its

ur Ar.

summit, exhibiting two vertical sections of irregular surfaces, "darkly, deeply, beautifully blue," here and there illumined by an Arctic sun, which darted its golden rays between, constituting a picture of ethereal grandeur, which no poet can conceive, no painter portray. I was so enraptured with the view, that for a moment I fancied the blue vault of heaven had opened, and that I actually gazed on the celestial splendour of a world beyond. While my eyes were thus riveted on the glorious scene, I observed the fracture gently close, then slowly open.

An involuntary shudder ran through me; I awoke, as it were, from a delightful dream, to all the horrors of a terrible reality. This immense body of ice, thousands, probably millions of tons in weight (in the centre of which we were), was afloat, consequently in motion, and about to lose its equilibrium, capsize, or burst into fragments. Our position was awful, and my feelings at the moment may be conceived, but cannot be described. I looked downwards and around me, the sight was equally appalling; I fancied the very sea was agitated. At last I shut my eyes from a scene so terrible: the men at the oars, as if by instinct, "gave way," and our little punt swiftly glided beyond the reach of danger.

We then pulled round the berg, keeping at a respectful distance from it, in order to form some idea of its magnitude. We supposed it to be about three-quarters of mile in circumference, and its highest peak about two hundred feet.

Thus ended an excursion, the remembrance of which at this moment produces a feeling of horror. At ten P.M. that same evening, the berg halved with a noise resembling thunder. I was the only one of my companions, as I subsequently found out, who had observed the rent when within the arch.

ARCTIC NOTES, BY A. B.

[The Editor thanks the writer of the above, and hopes that this may be followed by many other extracts from his interesting journal].

TO THE EDITOR OF THE AURORA BOREALIS.

Mr. Editor,

I come to you not for pity, not for commiseration—I ask no remedy for my woes. Abandoned, I wander hungered and avoided; and you have it not in your power to assist, except in my ruin.

E

When your gallant expedition sailed for the Polar Seas, I joined it with the anticipation of reaping a golden harvest ere many months had passed over your heads. During the passage out, I kept quiet; and though lonely, my fainting heart was buoyed and supported by the prospect. Winter would come, when I might walk forth, and claim the power I felt belonged to me. I revelled in the idea: as a miser looks forward to the moment of counting his hordes, my dreams were centered on those dark months. Days passed heavily, but still the ray that supported was bright.

The time had come, the sun had vanished from these seas, and with a heart elated, my reign was about to commence; but, alas! for hope—alas! for my brilliant dreams: as when a majestic tower is toppled by the earthquake, so were those visions crushed. Picture to yourself my disappointment; when expecting to reign a queen in these realms, I find myself expelled from all places—admitted nowhere: grim Death hourly stares me in the face. From ship to ship I have wandered, but upon all faces, and over all doors, inhospitality has set his seal. Amid the gay throngs that frequent the Comodore's *soirées*, the Royal Arctic Theatre and the Intrepid Saloon, I have found none to care for me—I alone have stood unhappy.

Cast thus away, despair has seized upon me, and, miserable and wretched, I know not where to fly. I have implored, I have begged, I have entreated; but entreaties and prayers are vain: your hearts are stone: a dire conspiracy has been framed, and its ringleaders, Mirth, Cheerfulness, Laughter, and Fun, are my perfidious enemies.

Fool! fool! to have abandoned the lap of luxury—to have quitted the haunts of wealth, where gentle breaths fanned my satiated heart.

I feel that life is ebbing fast—my sand is almost run—the world fades before me. I leave you to my enemies, Hope and Industry; and to your Expedition I bid an eternal adieu.

A dying and despairing wretch,

EXXVI.

GRAND SOIRÉE OF THE 2ND OF NOVEMBER.*

An evening—a jovial, lively evening—full of good fellowship and warm-heartedness, is the very thing we would desire in these regions; ay, with laughter, English laughter, full-toned and natural, that would make the floe shake, and the icebergs nod to one another in the plenitude of good spirits.

* Given by Captain Austin, C.B.

Such an evening we have had, and in the right quarter too ; not a room full of dry, scientific detail, but songs, toasts, and delicately-pointed sentiments, backed by liberal cheer.

Right glad were we to hear that this was the first of many Resolute bursts of merriment. Night—dark, grim Night—under such influence, will hurry through his round of duty, growing gradually paler.

Health and long life, say I, to all promoters of each other's amusement. Let the cynic say what he will, give me your laughter-mover, who dispels the gloom from the face as the sun lifts the Polar shade of night ; for, in truth, I do believe a right merry meeting maketh friends, and turneth away the green-eyed monster, jealousy.

Fare thee well ! May this first gleam, that stands so brightly forward from the dark approaching night, be but the dawn of coming festivities.

RISUS.

C. E. de

OBITUARY.

Departed this life, on Friday night, between the hours of twelve and one, Laura Glaucus.* She had been for some time ailing. Her death was supposed to have been caused from a want of her natural food; but, on examination, it was found she had received an injury in the neck, supposed to have been inflicted by Mr. Renard, who has a natural propensity for dead bodies; and therefore, no doubt, did it to hasten her death, that he might save his own life by having a feast on her remains. She was regretted by all except Mr. Renard.

OMEGA.

~~~~~  
DEPARTURE OF THE SUN.

Departed these regions, on the 7th instant, universally regretted, that material influence of our worldly attributes—that glorious “orb of orbs,” whose presence is light. His disappearance had long been foretold by certain Arctic seers, and the hour having arrived, the precipitous steeps of

\* *Larus glaucus* (burgomaster). One of these birds was killed by a fox kept on board the ‘Assistance.’



Griffith's Island proved no barrier to obtain "one last fond, lingering look;" but, alas! of no avail: a dense mist enshrouded the object of our desires, and from our snow-clad eminence, in silence, each instinctively reviewed the past; in fancy, wandered back to other climes—to homes, and all most dear—each moment recalling some bright oasis of days gone by. Time was, time is, time shall be—the past, the present, the future; and he (the lost companion of our toils) the eternal regulator of it all.

Why seeketh he a path 'mid other spheres?  
Are we, then, so unjust as to wish him to remain longer here? Why deprive the miserable south of that genial influence creation acknowledges? Hope, cheering hope, 'mid our own dreary desolation, sank into despondency, when suddenly we were aroused from our reverie; a bright halo directed us, and, skirting the dim and distant horizon, we beheld, in characters of surpassing splendour,

## RESURGAM.

Our melancholy forebodings vanished at the sight. Hope, smiling "like an angel of light," again inspired us; and we descended the hill-side, wending "homeward way," each fondly anticipating the realization of our vision, when bidding the final good-

bye at our respective ships, thought, with reference  
both to ourselves and the departed sun,

"We yet might meet again."

"Ryder." (presumably J.N. Ryder,  
ARCTIC RECEIPT. *Angwick*  
"Luthepid.")

HOW TO PREPARE ONESELF TO ENJOY THE WINTER.

Join an autumn travelling party, walk thirteen or fourteen miles through deep snow, in as many hours, you are unable to get through the luncheon of frozen pork; your feet becoming too cold to stand still, and fingers so numbed as to be unable to hold a knife; endure sundry frost-bites throughout the day, sufficient to keep you in a constant state of alarm about your nose; just before encamping, tumble into a crack in the ice, and wet both legs; wait two hours for your pemmican supper, by which time you will be cool all over; devour it in two minutes, and lay down in a blanket-bag, to shiver all night—at least, as much as the confined space allotted to each person in the tent will permit. In the morning, when you protrude your head without the bag, like a tortoise from beneath its shell, a shower of frost, dislodged from the covering, falls thickly over

your face, and down your neck. With feet cold, almost without sensation, you hurry through your breakfast of luke-warm watery chocolate, and get your fingers benumbed in vainly endeavouring to draw on your frozen boots. At length, the united efforts of the party get them *nearly* on; and you are able to limp along dispirited, unrefreshed, hungry, and miserably cold, and with a thorough conviction that the skin will be chafed off both ancles long before night again requires you to exchange your boots for a blanket-bag. Repeat this process, until it is scarcely possible to continue it any longer, then in all probability you will enjoy the remainder of even an Arctic winter.

F. L. McClintock. Lieut.  
"Assistance".

#### THE ROYAL ARCTIC THEATRE.

The night of the 9th of November will be forever celebrated in the annals of these regions, for it was on that night that the Royal Arctic Theatre was opened.

At six o'clock the house began to fill, and in a quarter of an hour every seat, from the whale lines in the roof to the dress circle, was occupied by an admiring spectator; and there indeed was food for

admiration. The tasteful decorations of the stage-front, the magnificent chandelier, and the seat of honour, were above all praise ; and two exquisite snow statues, placed in conspicuous situations, also attracted attention. "Had Phidias, Praxiteles, or Canova, been restored to life?" it was asked ; or "had Gibson been transported by an invisible agency from "the Eternal City" to the Polar Seas?" No ! —but one, inspired with the genius of these great Masters, had produced from a lump of snow these speaking statues of their Royal Highnesses the Prince of Wales and the Princess Royal.

The curtain rose at half-past six, and the astonished audience scarcely had time to feast their eyes on the splendid drop scene, which was indeed a master-piece of artistic talent, when the performance was commenced by the much-admired farce of "Married Life ; or, did you ever send your Wife to Camberwell?" which was performed throughout with a degree of spirit and appreciation of character, which would have done honour to any boards ; and after three-quarters of an hour of infinite enjoyment, we saw the drop scene slowly fall with a regret, which however was amply made up for, by the inspection of so splendid a work of art.

A masterly duet, by Messrs. Ryder and Ricord ; some songs, by Lieutenant Aldrich, and Messrs.

Osborne and Tullet, and the highly-diverting Clown, afforded great amusement, previous to the rising of the drop scene a second time; when the well-known farce of "The Lottery Ticket" was performed.

It would be needless, in this place, to descant on the inimitable acting of Mr. Capias, the quiet feminine dignity of Mrs. Corset, the exquisite humour of Wormwood, the artistie talents of Charles, or the sprightly cheerfulness of Susan; for they are too deeply impressed on the memory of the audience to require farther comment in this place: so we will merely observe, that if the theatre is again to be honoured by such first-rate *artistes*, it will ensure another crowded audience.

The performance concluded by a well-timed extemporaneous epilogue, and "God save the Queen," which was sung by the whole force of the company.

The talented band, the well-painted scenery, the unheard, though first-rate prompting, and the admirable attendance of the stage footman, cannot be too highly lauded; and the whole performance reflected the greatest credit on those concerned.

The falling of the curtain was greeted by three enthusiastic cheers in honour of the birth-day of His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales, which were led by the master of the ceremonies, and heartily responded

to by the gallant Commodore and all present; and the whole audience returned to their respective vessels, with—we feel justified in stating—a heartfelt satisfaction, and a regret for their philanthropic companions in Assistance Bay, who, separated by an ice barrier from the Arctic Theatre, were not enabled to share their enjoyment; and for our part, in after years, the pleasure afforded us by the magnificent spectacle will be

“In our flowing bowls freshly remembered.”

*C.R. Mankham*

## POLICE NEWS.

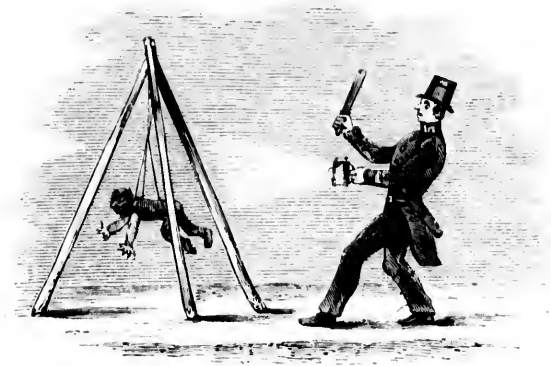
Yesterday the principal inhabitants of the Arctic Regions were thrown into a state of great alarm, by a report having been spread that a most horrible, cruel and diabolical murder had been perpetrated on the day previous.



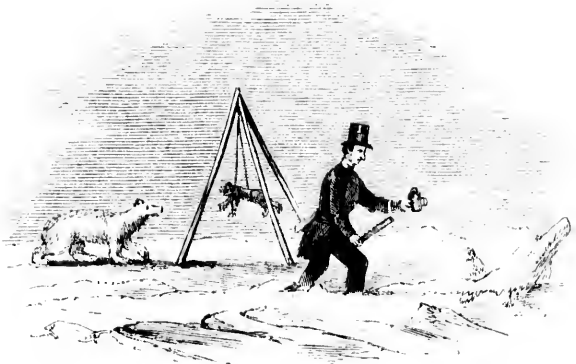
One of our reporters immediately rushed to the spot.

The following are a few particulars. It appears that police-constable B, on going his rounds, about two A.M., his attention was suddenly called to an

object dangling in the air, suspended by a rope from some poles.



Police-constable B immediately proceeded to obtain further assistance ;





and instantly repaired to the spot, accompanied by the populace.



The body was quickly cut down, and upon examination it turned out to be a Guy Fawkes, which had been hung up to dry; it having, as usual, turned out very wet on the 5th. Police-constable B slunk away, ashamed, and hooted by the mob for raising a false report.

"Ward." (Possibly John Ward)  
 Asst. Surgeon, "Intrepid")

## HUNTING INTELLIGENCE.



On Tuesday, Nov. 5th, the Royal Arctic bear-hounds again met in the vicinity of the squadron, when, after a little beating, two fine bears were started; the hounds immediately took the scent, and followed up in fine style; but the Bruin having a good start, succeeded in running for cover. Nevertheless, the boys had a good run.

This is the second meeting this season, and we hope, weather permitting, to have many such. The bears had good coats, and appeared in fine condition.

## THE FIFTH OF NOVEMBER.

The 5th of November has come and passed again, and indeed it was the same old day, and no mistake, fully as gay as we remember it in our younger days. The morning opened with several processions, with their Guys as pioneers; but strange to say, we saw a number wandering about on the floe during the day who had not been taken in custody. Though all were prepared with great pains, and decorated with great skill; it was evident to everybody that one "Intrepid Guy" was not only the most daring, but the most barefaced, and he had a right to be so too; for he had a face of which nobody might be ashamed, and his clothes not only became him, but were handsome in the extreme, and he became them.

A few Fawkes' had been taken before, and that no doubt was a salutary lesson to the others; but we were less in number, in consequence of one having retired from the "busy scenes of public life" the previous day. The most magnificent fireworks again brought them in the evening before the public eye, previous to their conflagration; and we could not but notice the extreme fear and

whiteness of countenance exhibited by two Fawkes', on seeing the different torments in preparation for their fellows.

One Guy evidently laboured under an eruption of the head, and considerably suffered by it, particularly on the disease extending to his intestines, which finally caused his dissolution. Altogether it was as jolly a day as could have been wished for, and all good royalists must have been extremely gratified to see the devil have one of the gentlemen in his charge. But even to the last, the 'Intrepid' Guy before mentioned went out of the world bearing the palm from all competitors.

*" F. J. Reuben "*

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WANTED, for the approaching Bal Masqué, a partner who can dance the polka, mazurka, cracovienne, bolero, fandango, waltz, galope, sailor's hornpipe, and Irish jig: she must also possess a ready flow of wit and repartee, in order to answer the attacks that may be made on her partner, who is a distinguished foreigner, collecting materials for a work on Arctic voyagers, and who much wishes to witness the amusements.

No one from the west need apply, as a pretty foot and ankle are necessary. Black eyes would be preferred. Apply, No. 2, Ruff Row.

#### ROYAL ARCTIC THEATRE.

The manager avails himself through the medium of these columns, to return his grateful acknowledgments to Captain H. Austin, C.B., the officers, and the members of the Expedition in general, who so kindly contributed towards the success which attended the opening of this theatre on the 9th instant.

The drop scene, which was painted by Lieutenant Browne, justly deserved the applause it received on being disclosed to view. The effect it produced reflects the greatest credit, especially when the difficulties under which he laboured are taken into consideration, as it may not be generally known that the beautiful tints blended together so successfully, were procured by the aid of three primitive colours only.

Great praise is also due to those officers, who laboured so zealously in getting up other detailed parts of the scenery and decorations.

To those also who contributed so materially towards the evening's entertainment by their musical talent, both vocally and instrumentally, the manager is equally desirous of testifying his gratitude for their disinterested exertions, nor can he sufficiently express his sense of obligation to all who aided in completing their successful effort at a theatrical performance, with the limited means available in this country.

There was but one regret amidst such a merry assemblage and display of loyalty, viz.: that the distance deprived us of the pleasure of seeing those gallant friends and sharers in our noble enterprize, composing Captain Penny's and the veteran Sir John Ross's Expeditions, partake in the hilarity of the evening.

In consequence of the unbounded applause manifested by a generous public, the manager will again endeavour to provide for another evening's entertainment at the earliest opportunity. He is at present in treaty for a company possessing high dramatic powers, but he hopes soon to solicit a renewal of former favours.

H.M.S. 'Assistance,' Nov. 11th, 1850.

*Capt. Ommaney.*

## THE INTREPID SALOON.

We were much gratified on the 14th instant by a visit to the Royal Intrepid Saloon. The performance commenced at about half-past six P.M., with some very talented "*tableaux vivans*," in which all the passions which rend the breast of an imperfect man, were admirably depicted, and drew forth the loud plaudits of an admiring audience.

The touching and pathetic song of 'Rattle his Bones,' was received with deep feeling by the spectators, and the comic songs of 'Sam Slack,' and others which followed, were sung with infinite humour, and much applauded.

An admirable recitation, which recalled to the mind the notorious deeds of the famous "Cid," or "Bernardo del Carpio;" together with a most amusing song by 'a cobbler,' and a medley of wit finished the entertainment. We can only say in conclusion, that a visit to the Intrepid Saloon will well repay a walk—head to wind—over the floe, and that the greatest credit is due to all who are concerned in the management.

C. R. Mackham.

## V.

Winter Quarters, Dec. 1850.

THE shortest day in the year is at hand, and winter travels apace; the sable mantle of an eternal night spreads over us, and desolation and dismay stalk with the strides of giants.

With minds otherwise constituted, and where hope burned not, the gloom of these regions would tend to rouse a superstitious feeling; the rocks and mountains crested with snow, and the rugged pinnacles of everlasting ice which surround, would help to elevate the fancy to the interpretation of signs and wonders, daily witnessed, as portents prognosticating evil. But no; not so—the Aurora overarches our squadron, a crescent of



beauty ; the noonday stars shed their light, rivalling in brilliancy the vivid colours of the solar rainbow ; the luminous meteors that shoot through the clear heavens, and the strange and unearthly sounds which arise from the crackling of the vast floe, are matters only for speculation, or for our mutual admiration.

Surrounded by icy chains, and rendered powerless by natural causes, we live in anticipation and in hope of prosecuting—when liberated—the duties of our holy mission. To preserve that hope alive, it has been the duty of all to assist in furnishing food for a gentle excitement of the mind ; yet though the pursuit of pleasure has been the presiding genius—our chief aim is never forgotten.

And now merry Christmas comes upon us, jovial, romping, glorious, happy Christmas, with all his fun and merriment, with his glowing cheek, happy with hospitality, his cordial laugh, and his benevolent smile, enlivening by his warmth, and subverting by his cheerfulness, all feuds and bitterness. At this time he gathers his subjects together, and sends in amongst them his beauteous messenger

“ Meek-eyed Peace, crowned with olive-green,”

and amid a thousand acclamations and hearty

shouts, he is proclaimed the sovereign of good cheer and jollity. And now that he is near, though no advocate for such droll and destructive sports, as the ancient privileged ones of that madcap potentate, the lord of misrule, who turned all lawful authority into ridicule, nor for the abuses of the once-famed wassail-bowl, we long to see the milder ones of olden times revived; to hear the sweet carols of the season sung, and to have that glory of our boyish days, pantomime, with his laugh-rousing attendants among us.

As we approach our glorious old friend, we do so with a sincere hope that his merry influence will take possession of every breast, that joy and happiness will stand in lieu of our English holly, and be the garlands to bedeck and hang around every heart that throbs in our happy squadron.

There is not one among us at this season who does not dwell with delight upon his happy home, and the many friends he sees assembled around its cheering fireside—where burns the Yule-log—friends, with whom his happiest joys are linked, and upon the meeting with whom anticipation lingers fondly. Though an icy barrier and the wide Atlantic separate us, our warmest wishes are for them, and in the height of our happiness we

shall not, we cannot forget them. As their names will be handed round our festive boards, we know that ours too, will find an echo at theirs; and as the bowl goes round, the crowning toast by all, will be, "Success, and a speedy return to our humane Expedition." Would that we had with us the brave band of our missing countrymen! then indeed our happiness, amid these seas, would be complete.

But to these gallant men, to all here, and to our good friends at home, we sincerely and most cordially wish

A MERRY CHRISTMAS AND A HAPPY NEW YEAR.

THE HISTORY OF GRIFFITH AND CORNWALLIS  
ISLANDS.

NO. I.

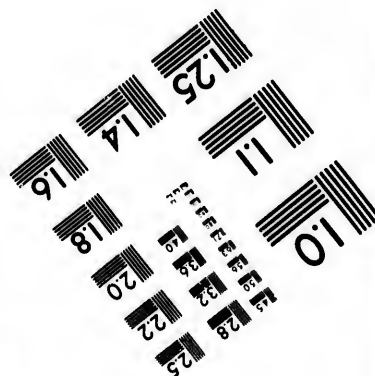
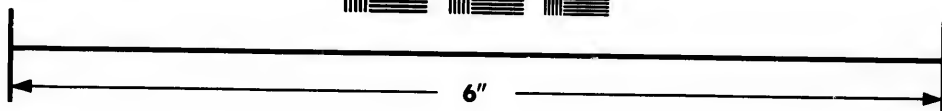
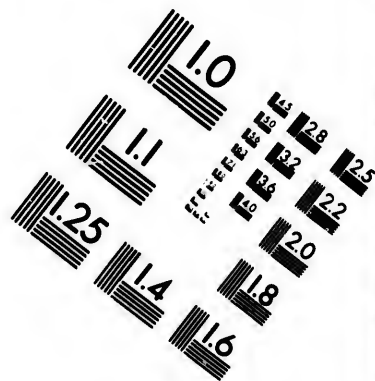
In writing a history of any country, it is, in the first place, necessary to inform the reader upon what authorities that history is founded. Now the very limited knowledge we have of those two islands which bound our view on either flank,

renders it impossible to make their history interesting, without attempting to penetrate the thick mist of uncertainty which hangs around the events of former ages.

Griffith and Cornwallis Islands (as far as has yet been ascertained) are composed entirely of limestone, and the organic remains consisting principally of shells, coral, and bones of fish, prove that the rocks which compose them were formed in a deep and expansive ocean; and in this condition, these regions remained during a long series of ages, until the commencement of the carboniferous era. Then it was that the two islands first emerged from the waters, and the surface of the earth began to teem with animal and vegetable life.

The climate of these regions at that remote period was much warmer than at present, huge fields of ice then never wearied the eye, and those barren islands which now scarce offer the means of subsistence for the poorest mosses, were then clothed in luxuriant verdure; tree-ferns forty and fifty feet high, and huge endogenous plants covered the land with rank vegetation; shell-fish annelides, and corallines, peopled the waves; and the voracious trilobite preyed on the more peaceful tenants of these pristine Polar Seas.





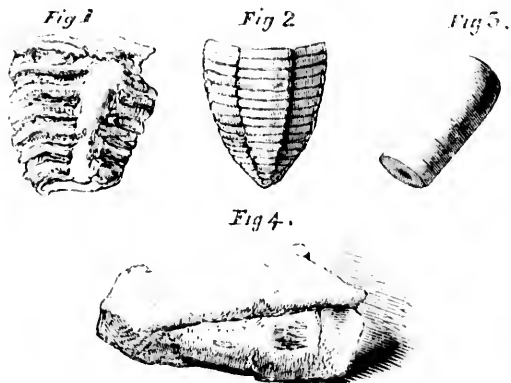
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10

The history of this period is handed down to us by those fossil remains which strew the shores, and serve to record the existence of animals which lived many ages before the creation of man

Of the fossils belonging to the carboniferous period which have been found in these islands, the principle are the trilobites, a species of crustacean, whose mouths are adapted for preying on annelida, acrita, and naked mollusces. Their bodies were defended by hard rings, divided longitudinally into three lobes (hence the name), none, however,



FIGS. 1. AND 2. PORTIONS OF TRILOBITE. FIG. 3. PORTION OF  
ORTHOCERAS.



have as yet been found provided with feet, and they evidently resided in the water. The extinct animal may be supposed to be the parent, from which, during a series of ages, the more perfect lobster and crab have been derived.

It entirely disappeared at the end of the carboniferous period.



A PART OF AN ENDOGENOUS TREE,\* 8 INCHES LONG, FOUND NEAR  
CAPE HATHAM, CORNWALLIS ISLAND.

The next important remains of animals are the shell-fish, which have been found in great abundance both on Cornwallis and Griffith Isles. They are mostly bivalves; but several very large orthoceras are to be found on Griffith Island. This was a sephuncled and chambered shell, like a nautilus uncoiled and straightened. That island

\* This specimen was picked up by Mr. Hamilton, on a hill, near Cape Hatham.

also abounds in encrinites, a species of radiated animals in a fossil state, commonly called "stone lilies," they found nourishment by moving their



bodies through a limited space from a fixed position at the bottom of the sea, and were probably in a fossil state before the commencement of the carboniferous period. Corallines, and impressions of annelides on the limestone are common in both islands: but the most important fossils would have been the remains of those huge ferns and endogenous plants which formerly covered these islands; and here again, independently of the coal in considerable quantities found in Melville and Byam Martin Islands, which consist of sandstone rocks: a branch of a fossil endogenous plant has been found in the limestone on Cornwallis Island, ten inches long, and six and a half in circumference; probably a part of those vast forests which formerly flourished on the island.

Such then was the state of these islands during

many ages previous to the termination of the carboniferous era, at which time violent and extensive concussions took place over a vast tract of Europe and America, and the fractured and contorted strata in these islands serve to show that they did not escape the general destruction of organic life.

TO BE CONTINUED.

*C. R. Markham.*

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#### MIDNIGHT SCENE.

BESET IN THE SKIRTS OF MELVILLE BAY.

It was midnight—calm; the sky cloudless, and beautifully blue; illuminated by an Arctic sun, shining in full splendour. Our weary tars had retired to rest, and all nature seemed hushed in one universal repose; affording me, at the mast-head, a glorious opportunity of contemplating the stillness of nature, together with a magnificent and correct view of Arctic scenery, in all its peculiar features.

I looked down and around me, on a splendid panorama—a world of ice, of unsullied and dazzling whiteness, not the smallest speck of water visible to

denote the element on which we rode. That section of the panorama to the north, exhibited a chain of bergs, transformed by refraction into a formidable line of fortification, surmounted by towers, castles, &c. of imposing and gigantic dimensions.

To the west, the prospect was bounded by the middle pack, its irregular surface metamorphosed into magnificent domes, tall spires, slender minarets, graceful columns, Gothic arches. splendid aqueducts, suspension bridges, and a thousand other airy and fantastic forms, which can neither be named nor described; the whole assuming the appearance of a vast city, such as we have read of in fairy tale; even the far-famed Stamboul, with her magnificent mosques, illumined by the golden beams of a rising eastern sun, never looked half so splendid as did this phantom city of the realms of ice.

I gazed with wonder and delight on the beauteous scene, until I observed the objects begin to vary in form and shade, and some of them vanish in air. I then directed my eye to the north and east, to contemplate a less glowing, but more tangible picture—the gloomy, rugged, ice-bound coast that encircles Melville Bay. Nor tree, nor flower, nor shrub, nor work of art, adorns the forlorn prospect; while mountains, precipices, and glaciers, piled together in one heterogeneous mass, presents to the eye such

a scene of savage grandeur, that I almost doubt whether nature had a benevolent design in the formation of this portion of our planet. Then, far in the distance,

"Towers sublime  
Winter's eternal palace, built by time,"

the mighty glacier, which extends itself, "amidst regions of unmelting snows," along the whole coast of West Greenland, imparting an air of awful sublimity and grandeur to a landscape unparalleled in the works of creation.

Such are the faint outlines of a picture, which the gloomy imagination of a Childe Harold might have filled up; but his descriptive powers, graphic as they were, would have failed in conveying an adequate idea of it to those who have never visited Baffin's Bay.

ARCTIC NOTES, BY A. B.  
"Nunnaq" (presumably George  
Nunnaq)

#### THE MOUNTAIN OF MERU.

Having, in a former paper, traced the origin of that old Scandinavian mythology, which at one time extended its influence from the banks of the Danube to the Arctic Circle, and from the confines of Tar-

tary to the shores of Britain, it may not be wholly uninteresting in this place to examine the opinions which were entertained by the ancient Hindoos and Greeks, concerning the Arctic regions.

In the Hindoo religion, which probably boasts of greater antiquity than any other recorded in profane history, we find a high veneration for the north, which impressed itself on all the poetical creations of that extraordinary people.

Indora, who was the god of the invisible heavens, and regent of the winds and showers, dwelt on Meru, or the North Pole, which was represented as a mountain of gold and gems; and a stream descended from under the throne of Vishnu, in the north star, on to its summit, and dividing itself into four rivers, formed the Ganges, Oxus, Sita, and Bahrampootra. Here also dwelt Kuvera, the god of riches.

The doctrine thus promulgated concerning the majesty and glory of the northern regions, induced large tribes to migrate from the plains of Bengal, along the Gihon, to the shores of the Caspian and Black Seas, and from thence, spreading over Central Europe, became the ancestors of the present Teutonic nations.

The close and undisputed affinity between the languages of Germanic origin and the Hindoo, tends in no small degree to give weight to this theory.

Thus we find a race of men quitting the fertile plains of Asia to migrate into the extremest Scandinavian north, and buoying themselves with a hope of discovering the golden mountains of Meru. They followed the wild chimera through everlasting fields of ice, and braved the vigorous climate of an Arctic shore.

The poetical ideas of the Greeks and Romans concerning the North, appear to have been taken from these Arctic doctrines of the Hindoos; and accordingly we find the isles of the Hyperboreans always described as the abodes of the happy and the virtuous; and even the gardens of the Hesperides, the Isle of Calypso, and the Elysian Fields, placed in juxta-position with Ultima Thule.

No wonder, then, that numerous tribes, leaving behind them the tempting shores of the Mediterranean, and the rich pastures on the banks of the Dnieper and the Don, to search for these mysterious regions in the Arctic North, should eventually extend themselves over the frozen plains of Iceland and Lapland, and even to the inhospitable and barren shores of Greenland; and that in latter times, among the old navigators of the reign of Elizabeth, the true motives for their expeditions should have been not so much to discover a shorter route to Cathay, as to search in the snowy glaciers of the north for

mountains of gold and precious stones; the belief in which had outlived the mythologies which had given rise to them.

In these later times, when the light of Christianity has dispelled the beautiful, though anxious creations of poetic imagination, this mountain of Meru, of which the poet says,

“Earth seems that pinnacle to rear  
Sublime, above this earthly sphere,  
Its cradle, and its altar, and its throne,”

is changed into the desire of performing a sacred duty, which will ever be far more valuable than any mountains of gold or precious stones.

I remain,

Yours sincerely,

CLIO.

*C. R. Washburn*

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#### QUERIES FOR CHEMISTS AND MATHEMATICIANS.

“Sic omnia fati in pejus ruere.”

The following philosophical queries are proposed, believing that the opportunity afforded by this climate, and presence of all the necessary elements of calculation, will greatly facilitate their solution.



No. 1. Assuming the maximum temperature of the sacred flame of Love at  $212^{\circ}$  Fahr., and the age of the combustible body—vulgo, seven-beller—between  $22^{\circ}$  and  $44^{\circ}$ ; what will be its temperature at the expiration of six months, that of the surrounding medium having diminished from  $+70^{\circ}$  in a drawing-room to  $-20^{\circ}$  on the floor?

No. 2. Ditto, except that the temperature has fallen to  $-50^{\circ}$ , and distance increased from the exciting cause—that is, the supporter of combustion—to four thousand miles?

No. 3. Whether the most ardent flame could survive a second winter in these desperately romantic regions?

No. 4. If so, what would be its general appearance—bright, pale, or ghastly—constant, dwindling, or flickering?

No. 5. The effect of the sun's absence—whether it acts as an extinguisher, or merely as a wet blanket?

No. 6. If the ratio of decreasing intensity between combustible bodies, respectively of  $22^{\circ}$  and  $44^{\circ}$ , is constant? In this retrograde movement, we fear that youth will outstrip maturity.

No. 7. At what period they may each be expected to arrive at zero?

No. 8. The effect of time and space, without regard to any other chilling influences?

N.B. We insert this query, as it is said, that latterly fewer indications of overflowing affection, on the part of some seven-bellers, have been observed.

No. 9. Same as No. 2, but, taking into account the effect of disturbing forces upon the exciting cause, as variation and decrease in magnetic intensity—return of comets (alias resuscitated beaux), with increased splendour—appearances of new ones, with dazzling brilliancy—visits of foreign ships of war, and other imagined evil influences at home; our opinion is, that these causes will create certain fluctuations which may continue for a period (governed by our absence) as an ebb and flow. Hence our thermal lines will be reduced to mere zigzags. But we trust that, on our return, it will be found, that if our stars now shine with unsteady light, 'tis purely owing to the deceptive atmosphere of an overwrought imagination, through which they are seen.

No. 10. Whether the air of these regions contains such a reduced proportion of oxygen, as to diminish the circulation through that part of the cerebellum supposed to be the seat of love, and thereby account for the less vigorous combustion noticed in No. 8?

Now, we propose, upon the result of this winter's experiments, to construct a new instrument to measure the temperature of the sacred flame. It shall be

called a "Sigh-o-meter," and be graduated to sighs, so many going to a gush of the purest and most uncontrollable affection, and so many gushes between love-heat and total indifference—the boiling-point and zero of our scale; the various stages of self-devotion, constancy, fickleness, lukewarmness, and coolness, to be carefully noticed.

N.B. All below zero on this scale must result from jealousy, rivalry, or slight disappointment—disturbing forces—and therefore cannot be estimated until subsequent to our return.

PYTHEAS.

*F. L. Mc Clintock*

#### THE FIRST SIGHT OF GREENLAND.

It was on the morning of the 28th of May, and by our reckoning, we had calculated upon sighting Greenland.

Every one was on deck, to catch the first glimpse of that land, considered as the portal that was to usher us within the threshold of our sacred mission, and a spot upon which was erected the first finger-post of humanity, pointing the way to our missing countrymen. At the cry from the mast-head of "land on the starboard bow," all eyes were strained, all telescopes directed, to that quarter; the ship,

gliding along, lessened the distance, and the peaks of those snow-capped hills gently rising above the horizon.

The sight of these hoary heads aroused within us thoughts of varied import. Some there were who recalled the beautiful country we had left, and contrasted it with the one now before us; others hailed it with the same enthusiasm as did that noble convert to Christianity, the venerable Thorgils, who, flying from the persecution which the bloody priesthood of Thor and Odin had threatened him with, sought here a haven and protection far from their inhospitable shores.

Thirteen days had we ploughed the waters of the North Atlantic. That voyage had been varied by gales and calms; but although we had expected to have fallen in with ice, none was seen until the day we rounded Cape Farewell. To those unacquainted with the appearance, the scene was novel, and imagination was at work to give names to the eccentric and fantastic shapes that floated past us. Towards that evening, a dense fog suddenly came upon and overshadowed us. As the evening progressed, the mist, which at times attempted to clear away, thickened; and fearing a collision with the ships forming our squadron, maroons and guns were fired, and the bell was rung, to indicate

them, if any were near, our position. It was strange was the sound of that bell—something unearthly—as it oscillated through the gloom, and reminded us of the legend of the Bell-rock, and its doleful boom, as it came to the tempest-tossed mariner, warning him from the danger that was at hand.

The day that broke upon us after this was beautiful indeed; there was not a soul on board who was not made happy by its influence. Fields of stream-ice were seen on all sides, and the waters and the heavens bore a blue tinge, that, had the weather been warmer, would have stirred fancy to place the ship in the seas bounded by the tropics.

After a tedious passage through Davis's Straits, 'mid fogs and clear weather, we crossed the Arctic circle on the 12th, and on the 15th of June came to an anchor in the Whalefish Islands.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE AURORA BOREALIS.

Sir,

A very erudite article appeared in your last number, attempting to explain the origin of the Arctic highlanders, but I must give it as my impartial opinion that it has wholly and entirely

failed; in the first place, no proofs are brought forward; no! not even a fact tending to show the probability of any one of the numerous statements which fill the whole composition. In the second place his unfounded hypothesis is improbable in the extreme. But however, as it has already become apparent to most of your readers, that Clio was quite incompetent to the performance of the task he has given himself, I would not trespass farther on your valuable time and space, if it was not for his statements concerning the Mongolian race, which are liable perhaps to mislead some of his readers (if any there be). After bringing forward the difference in habits, &c., between the Tartars, Chinese and Esquimaux, he goes on to state, or at least implies, that such contrasts do not exist in any of the other races into which Cuvier has divided his bimana. Now I would ask Clio, if among the Caucasians he never heard of the Arabs, Hindoos, and Laplanders; among the Africans, the Kaffirs, Nubians and Australians, or finally among the Americans, of the Red Indians, the Peruvians, and the Terra del Fuegians. The fact is, that quite as great changes have taken place in every other race, wherever they have been exposed to similar circumstances; and the mistaken deductions of Clio were probably drawn either to

set off his—in my opinion—valueless article, or to mislead his too credulous readers.

I must now conclude by informing Clio that he may expect to hear from me again as an impartial analyser of his next production.

I remain,

Sir,

Your humble servant,

EXAMINER.

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FROM ERASMUS YORK, OF THE ARCTIC HIGHLANDS,
TO THE EDITOR OF THE AURORA BOREALIS.

My dear Mr. Editor,

Bred amid the icy wildernesses of the Arctic highlands, and never having had the benefit of a civilized education, I am sure you will pardon the want of knowledge evinced in the matters I am about to treat—for I am as much puzzled with them, as was our good old King Talua (may his spirit revel in the land of blubber and pussis!*) when the white men first came among us.

I have been several months with you—I have

* Seal.

eaten of the same biscuit; drank of the same drink; slept under the same roof, and acted the part allotted to me, with yourselves: but yet I cannot understand you, and the more I rack my brains, the less can I find a solution for the many inexplicable things that come to my notice hourly.

You speak of a country, which you always call "our beautiful England;" you say it abounds in pussis, narwhals, tuktuk,* and in everything a man wants; notwithstanding its beauty and abundance, you leave that country for these bleak, and, as you are pleased to term them, desolate regions; (I think politeness might have spared this insult to my native land). Again, you say that a lofty motive has brought you out, that you have come to save a great chief, who, with his companions, has been wandering about these terrific seas for the last six winters; this, I admit, is a high and praiseworthy motive; but what could have induced them to come to our land of snows and everlasting ice?

I find that over the movements of the four oomiaks,† which are now together, and which appear to carry you wherever you please, two different genii preside; the two large ones—as

* Deer.

† Ships.

birds are propelled by wings, the smaller ones by a power, I have never before witnessed, one which more than anything else has perplexed me. A greater Augerkok must this power be than the genius of the wings, for when the former tires, the latter pulls him along with a leading string, as our dogs do our sleighs.

You never hunt pussi or narwhal, and yet you always have nice flesh to eat, skins in which to dress, oil for your lamps, and wood for building and other wants. You cook your victuals with fire produced by scraping a little bit of wood over a rough surface; this you place beneath a pile of black stones, which soon become red and hot, and give out an agreeable heat.

You used at one time to line the heavens with fire, and to multiply the many stars that pave the heavens;* and beautiful stars they were, much brighter than those above us: are these the stars of your country?

What are those extraordinary round skins† which you inflate over casks, and to which you attach long strips of pretty coloured paper, and lighting the match to which you tie them, send

* Rockets.

† Balloons with despatches to Sir John Franklin.

them to travel to different lands to spread your news? Can these papers speak your thoughts at the other end of the world? if so, you must be an extraordinary people.

I see many of the men looking for hours into a series of leaves* bound up together; they tell me, that through these leaves good and bad Augerkoks talk. Some of these men prefer the tongue of the bad Augerkoks to that of the good—when they speak to me I shall always talk with the good ones.

Only a few nights ago we all assembled in the big ship; before going, my clothes were taken from me, and a strange suit substituted. On arriving on board what I considered the 'Resolute,' to my astonishment I found a different ship, decorated with flags, and lighted up with thousands of candles: the people assembled whom I had never seen before, were dressed in most fantastic costume, with very funny faces, some were black, others white, some pale, others fiery-red—such noses! such bellies! Where did this ship spring from? What was the great festival they were celebrating? At one time I thought them all mad, for the music no sooner began, than up

* Books.

they started, jumping and hopping. I liked this species of madness, especially when the pretty Koonahs made me jump about with them.*

Where do your pretty Koonahs come from? Are they like the bright Auroras, which flit through the heavens with splendour, and then retire for weeks together from our longing sight, or are you like that jealous people who immure their wives, and never let them see the light; or are they spirits evoked by your Augerkoks for such occasions?

All these things have puzzled me strangely; much of my curiosity has been satisfied by my friend the serjeant, who has been very kind to me, and who is now teaching me how to talk through leaves with the good Augerkoks, but much there is I cannot understand; then teach me, and with a wish that pussi may never fail you.

I remain,

Your obedient servant,

CALANIERNA, *alias* ERASMUS YORK.

* York here makes allusion to the masquerade given on board H.M.S. 'Resolute,' Dec. 5th.

J D.

THE ARCTIC HAPPY FAMILY.

In wandering through the streets of our great metropolis, few of us there are whose attention has not been arrested, from time to time, with itinerant groups of birds and animals, their natural characteristics totally dissimilar, but living together in perfect harmony; exciting in the minds of the benevolent a kindly sympathy on their behalf, and offering to the heedless passer-by a lesson worthy of admiration. Perchance it will be remembered that as far back as 1834—5, an extensive collection of this kind was exhibited under the title of "Austen's Happy Family;" and so complete was the unity of feeling pervading the whole, that a lively curiosity was felt, to ascertain the means by which this apparent anomaly had been accomplished. These means were simple. Yet there is, towards the close of 1850, far removed from scenes of other happiness, a family still more wonderful for its harmony; a family for whose welfare the civilized world feels an anxious solicitude, and whose present state of existence is unknown, save only to its own immediate members. Time has again nearly effaced from his tablet

another unit of our earthly pilgrimage ; once more have we arrived at a season, realizing in our own imagination

“Those groups of happy faces.”

But, oh ! would not they be more joyous still, were some kind ministering angel to whisper an assurance of that happiness upon which their own so materially depends. Yet such is the reality. A number of beings congregated together, whose worldly pursuits, dispositions, yea, even their very thoughts the converse of each other, uninfluenced by the humanizing society of the fair daughters of the earth, and surrounded by scenes, o'er the desolation of which the Almighty for a time has kindly thrown a veil of darkness, undaunted by the past, with glowing expectations from the future, all seem imbued with a determination to defy care, and render an Arctic winter not quite so unbearable as might otherwise be supposed. Yet, reader, there is a cause for all this : that same principle which taught a poor defenceless little creature to regard with satisfaction the presence of its once mortal enemy, has been at work here, silently, though not unnoticed. Our leaders seem fully to understand this principle, and upon the threshold of a coming year, with whatever success our labours be attended,

by the aid of a Merciful Providence we may yet look back with pleasure upon the days when individually we constituted a member of

CAPTAIN AUSTIN'S HAPPY ARCTIC FAMILY.

"Ryder"
(J. N. Ryder)

TO THE EDITOR OF THE AURORA BOREALIS.

It is with much regret that we announce the departure of our old friend, November, for the more genial climate of the south.

The regret we feel at his departure is greatly lessened by the recollections of the many pleasant hours we have spent in his society, as well as by the arrival of our jolly old friend, December, who has always hitherto been the harbinger of mirth and jollity. The old gentleman was only attended by Mirth and Cheerfulness, his usual attendants, not being appreciated in these desolate regions, were left behind. As the old fellow wended his way along these icy wastes, with thoughts anything but pleasant, he suddenly ran against a dark mass, and before he had time to recover from his surprise, his ears were astounded with a vehement cheering, mingled with rattling of

glasses and other sounds of fun and mirth, to which for upwards of thirty years he had been a stranger in these regions. From his brother, November, whom truth compels us to record was not to be found till midnight, he learnt, on inquiring of him what these unwonted noises meant, that they proceeded from the cabin of the gallant Commodore, who that evening had given one of his jolly and pleasant *soirées* in honour of the approaching departure of our friend, who was so loath to leave us, that he offered to take December's duty for the month. The old gentleman, delighted at the news, flatly refused, saying he was determined to spend one jolly season out here; nor did he confine himself to mere words, a dispatch was immediately sent to summon Cheerfulness and Mirth, who although surprised at the unwonted order, immediately obeyed, and next morning we had the pleasure of seeing their smiling faces, and we now anticipate another month as rife in fun and good fellowship as the last. A dispatch was also sent for Father Christmas, requesting him to show his jolly old phiz in this part of the world, an invitation which, from his well-known good heart, we are sure will be accepted, but as he is in a distant part of the world, we do not expect him till the end of the month. We

hope that he will be accompanied by his usual satellites, Good Cheer, and his cousins, Good Fellowship, Mince-pie, Snap-dragon, and that diverting vagabond, Pantomime. The next day, December and his companion, manifested their exuberance of spirits by sundry particular jokes, such as tweaking people's noses, biting their cheeks, and preventing the removal of that impudent fellow, Frost. As neither threats or persuasion could keep him away formerly, we are afraid that with such allies he will become incorrigible. The good example set by our old friend has been followed, and a constant fire of puns and repartee has been maintained since his arrival.

Looking forward to a merry day with old Father Christmas, and a still merrier one next year in dear old England,

I am yours truly,

A LOVER OF FUN IN ANY SHAPE.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE AURORA BOREALIS.

Many of us have gazed with delight upon the brilliant skies of the Tropics while listlessly watching the rising or setting sun, and all of us have been filled with admiration at the beauty, softness and variety they present in these regions. One appearance has frequently been remarked, probably from its being peculiar to these icy seas; I allude to the purple tints, in beautiful gradation, seen opposite the sun. It is the custom of most painters to deny the existence of this colour in any sky; but here there can be no room for doubt, nor can its depth, variety and intensity remain unnoticed. May not this arise from the rich orange, almost red, passing into pale yellow, and that portion of the atmosphere when illumined by the sun being reflected on to the deep blue of the air in shade. Hence, by the union of the orange and blue in different proportions, we have the graduated hues of purple, lilac, and even bluish-green. This, although strange to those who have never visited the Arctic Circle, forms one of the most pleasing subjects for the eye-wearied sojourner to admire. The appearance was noticed some days after the sun ceased to be visible above the horizon.

Should my short attempt at explanation call forth the latent powers of the scientific to elucidate more clearly the phenomena, the writer's end will be attained.

PURPURA.

C. Edel

NORMAN ARCTIC DISCOVERIES.

Issuing from the barren regions of Norway, the Norman race, which may be said to have had a separate existence from the eighth to the fourteenth century, spread the glorious light of its genius over the countries which it conquered and settled in.

In 911 the province of Neustria was ceded to Rollo and his thirty thousand Norman warriors; and here, after administering the laws so severely and successfully, that bracelets of gold hanging on trees were left untouched, he voluntarily abdicated in favour of his son William in 927; and the Normans of Neustria, without laying aside that dauntless valour which had been the terror of every land from the Elbe to the Pyrenees, rapidly acquired all, and more than all, the knowledge and refinement which they found in the country where they settled. The rude dialect then common in France became in their

hands a regular and written language, embodied in their judicial codes, and in the poetry and romance which formed part of their literature. They renounced the brutal intemperance to which all the other branches of the great German family were too much inclined. Their buildings, sacred and domestic, were substantial and elegant; they possessed that polish of courteous and chivalrous manners, and that taste for refinement which elevates a people above savage rudeness. That chivalric spirit, which has exercised so powerful an influence on the politics, morals, and manners of Europe, was found in its highest exaltation among the Norman nobles; and every country from the Atlantic Ocean to the Dead Sea witnessed the prodigies of their valour.

From Normandy went forth the valiant sons of Tancred de Hauteville, who conquered the provinces of Calabria and Apulia, defeated Henry III. and Leo IX. at Civitella, took that warlike Pope prisoner and generously liberated him; defeated the Emperor Alexis in Greece, in one month, and the Emperor Henry IV. before Rome in another, and restored the far-famed Pope, Gregory VII. Their youngest brother defeated the armies of the Saracens in the Battle of Miselmiri, expelled them from Palermo, and conquered Sicily, defeated the armies of Pope

Adrian IV., and the Emperor of the East and West combined ; while Boemond, the Norman—the Ulysses of the first crusade—became Count of Antioch ; Robert of Normandy was among the first to plant his banner on the walls of Jerusalem ; and Tancred, the Norman, was celebrated throughout Christendom as the bravest and most generous of the champions of the Holy Sepulchre.

No people were so much addicted to robbery and riotous frays as the Saxons, and the polite refinement of the Normans presented a striking contrast to their coarse voracity and drunkenness ; and they were fast sinking under the despotic thralldom of their Earls, when the current of events was altered by one of those catastrophes which seem destined by God to arrest the cause of human degradation—that event was the Norman Conquest. The valiant William, with his Norman Barons, crossed the Channel, routed the unfortunate Harold in the great Battle of Hastings, and conquered England ; where they preserved that bold, energetic spirit which, as they extended their influence, stamped its impress so deeply on the general chivalry of Europe. In England William the Conqueror entirely repressed the lawlessness of robbery and rapine ; and there at a later period the Norman Barons, in enforcing the Magna Charta, in a just solicitude for the people

and a moderation which infringed on no essential prerogative of the Crown, displayed an enlightened and liberal patriotism. Even the beautiful Norman architecture embellishes our native land.

The Norman achievements in the Arctic Seas have been equally glorious, and have equally conduced to the good of mankind.

A noble Norman, named Other, whose voyage was translated by Alfred the Great, sailed from Norway, and rounding Cape North, passed the shores of Lapland, and reached the White Sea and the country of the Lanroyeds. In 964, the Normans conquered the Orkney and Shetland Isles, and the north of Scotland; in 861, they discovered and settled the Feroe Isles; and in 874, Ingulf and Hiorlief led a Norman colony to the barren shores of Iceland. For sixty years, numerous emigrants continued to arrive; and in 1001, they were converted to Christianity. A national assembly, or Thingvalla, was instituted; a chief magistrate of the republic elected every ten years, with prefects of the four provinces and inferior judges under him; and under this enlightened government, a Norman republic, situated on the Arctic Circle, continued to improve in literature; while the rest of Europe was buried in the darkness of the middle ages, and her writers have handed down to posterity an authentic

history of the glorious deeds of their countrymen.

From Iceland the Normans sailed, when they discovered and settled both East and West Greenland, where two flourishing colonies existed for several centuries, which kept up a constant trade with their mother country, and became the residences of bishops. In 1266, West Greenland sent forth expeditions to the northern parts of Baffin's Bay, where they had the sun all the twenty-four hours, and, from the account given of its altitude, must have been in the latitude of Cape Dudley Digges. But the colony on the western side was at the same time, about A.D. 1400, decimated by the black death, and destroyed by locust-like swarms of Esquimaux; while that on the eastern shore became so blocked up with ice, that communication was impossible; and in 1736, it was the opinion of Hans Egede that it still existed.

From Greenland, Lief, the son of its discoverer, and his friend, Biorne, sailed S.W., and discovered a beautiful and fertile country, which they called Vinland, in about 46° north lat., or near the present town of New York, and with this colony an intercourse was kept up till 1349, but its ultimate fate is unknown. Such have been the vast discoveries of the Normans in the Arctic Seas. Pe-

netrating to the northern extremity of Baffin's Bay, two hundred and fifty years before that navigator was born; and going forth in their frail barks over the stormy waters of the Atlantic, and discovering the shores of America three centuries before Columbus (who was unquestionably acquainted with their glorious history), sailed to that mighty continent. Undaunted by the perils and dangers they had to encounter, unchecked either by the barriers of ice and the extreme rigour of the climate which opposed them in one quarter of the globe, or by the countless hosts of French, Germans, Saxons and infidels which they conquered in another, the Normans spread the fame of their arms, and the blessings of their enlightened genius from North America to the banks of the Euphrates, and from the genial island of Sicily to the freezing plains of Greenland, from the shores of an unknown continent to the cradle of the human race, and from the blue waters of the Mediterranean to the everlasting mountains of ice which encumber the Arctic Ocean.

If these have been the deeds of our ancestors while unacquainted with the compass, and unaided by modern science and modern discoveries, what may not be achieved by their descendants, who, issuing forth from the strait between Griffith and

Cornwallis Islands, are about to penetrate to the inhospitable plains of Melville Island, and to unveil the hidden mysteries beyond Cape Walker, in search of their gallant and long-lost countrymen?

Then let every voice be raised in one unanimous prayer of

"Success to the Travelling Parties."

PACIFICUS.

C.R. Wankham

A NIP OFF CAPE DUNGENESS.

Amid the many gay and noble company that look upon the glassy surface of the frozen Serpentine, to witness the manly feats of the thousand skaters, whirling in joyous circles, or gliding with railway speed, few there are who would suspect that so beautiful a mirror can, under certain circumstances, become a formidable antagonist, against which the power of man is futile and vain.

Experience has taught those who navigate these seas the treachery that lies hid beneath that smooth exterior; and as we look upon these immense masses, we associate them with the dangers we have already run. Among these associations, the Nip off Cape Dungeness will ever be remembered by the crew of H.M.S. 'Assistance.'

Having succeeded in establishing a depôt of provisions on Cape Hotham, for the benefit of some future Arctic wanderer, and perhaps—may God avert the cause!—for our own selves; and having rounded and gained the westward of this Cape, we found before us vast moving floes, stretched as far as the eye could reach—barriers to our future progress.

By means of that extraordinary power—steam—which has served us faithfully and well, we pushed through the openings left by the shifting of these huge masses, the steamer forcing away the smaller blocks, and making circuitous bends around the larger ones; but even steam could not effect much where masses such as these were packing, and prudence loudly called for a refuge in some secure spot.

A few days before, every arrangement had been made to abandon our ship, in the event of her being crushed by this moving sea of ice; and, as in all preparations attended with danger, a solemn feeling possessed each breast. Our gallant chief addressed us on this occasion, and recommended obedience, coolness, and readiness, and as he spoke, each eye hung greedily on his lip, each ear drew in the words uttered.

Unable to proceed, from the causes mentioned above, we made fast to the land ice on the 5th of

September last, in what subsequently proved to be the safest spot. During this and the following day, our position was one full of danger. Vast floes, several feet in thickness, and thousands of tons in weight, passed rapidly by, with the ebb and flow of the tide, each crushing and piling in heaps against the land-ice, with a noise like to thunder, threatening our ship with immediate destruction. As the blocks were pressed up by an invisible power, they fell again with a fearful crash, assuming large massy forms. Astern, a mountain had risen near forty feet in height; whilst a pile of hummocks frowned upon us ahead. Aware of our danger, and every moment expecting the terrific onset of our ruthless tyrant, we felt it a duty to be in all things prepared; but forethought and apprehension were at work in our breasts.

Lest the floes coming down should drag us away with them, and thus defeat the object of our expedition, precautions were taken to secure the ship as firmly as possible by anchors, ice-claws, cables, and hawsers. To have been encircled and carried away in the embrace of these despots of the Polar Ocean, would have been ruin indeed; far better the being crushed amid the fearful glacier.

It was on the morning of the 6th that we were aroused by a rapid succession of sounds, as if a broadside of heavy metal were pouring into the

ship's sides. The ship quivered from stem to stern under it, like one in the throes of death's agony. A pause of some hours followed, when another and a more severe shock was experienced; the timbers writhed, and seemed about to wrench the bolts from their fastenings; and the anchors which held the ship to the floe were twisted into various shapes, the fluke of one being torn entirely off. After shaking like an aspen-leaf, the dark mass rose to the pressure, and heeling over, lay powerless in the grasp of the ice. Seen in this position, propped in air by huge blocks, white as Parian marble, one almost felt the 'Assistance' had taken up her resting-place for ever. But that all-seeing Providence, which has, with a fatherly hand, guided us happily through these terrific seas, still protected us.

On the evening of the 7th, the fog, which had hung the heavens in gloom, cleared away; and the ice drifting, left a clear passage of open water. With the barometer, our spirits rose to a splendid pitch of anticipation; and making sail, we cheerfully persevered to the westward, where, in the bright heavens of these boreal climes, the pass-word of our humane expedition,

SPES SEMPER LUCENS,

in letters of gold, shone like an angel of light, urging

us onwards; and as the beauteous vision revealed to us Hope glowing as ever, our hearts swelled with joy, and every breast filled with inexpressible delight.

17

METEOROLOGY.

The state of the wind and the weather may be considered a very matter-of-fact subject, and one which is proverbially uppermost on an Englishman's tongue when conversation flags. But after all, our happiness and comfort, especially in a naval life, are very dependent on caprices. Here the subject of Meteorology possesses greater interest than is generally the case in other portions of the globe, particularly to us at this season, when nature withdraws animation from the face of the earth.

Let us now take a retrospective glance over the period since our entry within the Arctic Circle, and compare it with that of other navigators, who have preceded us; nor is it so dreary a subject to the admirer of nature, when he analyzes the various phenomena which call forth our admiration, at the same time that they exact our tribute of gratitude

due to the Creator, "who saw everything that He had made, and behold it was very good."

At home we are apt to associate everything that is miserable with an Arctic climate, but so far we have been agreeably surprised with the enjoyment of a large proportion of serene and beautiful days; we cannot forget those bright sunny ones at the Whalefish Islands, in Melville Bay, and during the period of navigation. In prosecuting the north passage, southerly winds prevailed to greater extent than usual, which had its influence in checking the annual progress of the ice to the south. We have no cause to complain of fogs this season, there were few occasions when they caused any inconvenience or delay in pursuing our voyage. As to gales of wind we can draw a favourable contrast with our experience in other regions. The gale of the 20th of August in Barrow's Straits is the only severe one we have to record: since we have been secured in winter quarters we can only recollect *one* day when we were deprived of taking exercise outside the ship with any degree of comfort.

With reference to the temperature the general opinion appears to be, that the sensation of cold has not been felt with that severity which our conceptions had led us to anticipate; the ample supply of everything requisite to comfort, together with

the internal accommodation of the ships, has no doubt contributed vastly towards mitigating the severity of the climate experienced by our predecessors. The following table will show the comparative temperatures registered during different voyages, together with our own for the last three months, by which it appears our temperature for the month of September was below that of the same month at Melville Island in 1819.

	MELVILLE ISLAND. 1819.			IGLOOLIK. 1822.			PORT ROWEN. 1824.			PORT LEOPOLD. 1848.			GRIFFITH'S ISLAND. 1850.		
	Max.	Min.	Mean.	Max.	Min.	Mean.	Max.	Min.	Mean.	Max.	Min.	Mean.	Max.	Min.	Mean.
September	+37	-1	22.51	+37	+11	24.45	+34	+16	25.88	+37.6	+6	23.2	+40	+3	20.2
October	+17.5	-28	3.46	+29	-9	12.79	+31	-12	10.85	+32	-12.3	+10	+17	-13.5	0.3
November	+6	-17	-20.60	+8	-22	10.37	+17	-26	-4.99	+16	-33.7	-12.8	+14	-30	-6.9

Thermometer taken on the floe, at a distance from the ships, stands 2° lower than that taken on board, free from the influence of heat.

It has been asserted by various authors that there is no thunder and lightning within the Arctic Circle; this we are able to disprove, from the fact of a vivid flash being seen, accompanied with a loud report, on the night of the 28th of August, when in Wellington Channel.

We have seen no heavy falls of snow. Occasionally, when blowing hard, a snowdrift has been carried along the surface of the ice with the wind, but seldom extending above the height of the mast-head. On these occasions, looking to the zenith, the sky is clear. The particles of snow cannot escape the observation of the most casual observer, which in the process of crystallization assume symmetrical stellar forms in every variety of shape; scarcely any two in fact are found similar. In most Arctic voyages the absence of snow during winter is generally remarked.

The Aurora Borealis, which has hitherto afforded other voyagers so much interest, and which some writers allege to be almost constant in these regions, has not yet presented itself with any striking effect to our notice, except on the night of the 1st of December. A very complete arch in a N.N.W. and S.S.E. (true) direction passing through the zenith, divided the celestial concave into two equal parts; it measured about 5° in width, it lasted about half an hour, and was of a whitish colour. Towards the north it became tinged with red before it disappeared, the stars were seen through it with great brilliancy, they assumed for the time the same colour as the Aurora. Some bright coruscations were seen

RIFEITH'S ISLAND. 1850.			
	Min.	Mean.	
0	3	+	20.2
7	13.5	—	0.3
1	30	—	6.9

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on the morning of the 5th shooting from the S.E. towards the zenith.

During October, and as the sun's altitude declined, several very beautiful parhelia were seen; they generally appeared in a semi-circle of prismatic hues, measuring about 30° diameter, with a mock sun at the extremities; sometimes accompanied by a rich golden ray shooting up from the sun towards the zenith, and down to the horizon; on one or two occasions they demonstrated their proximity by appearing between the ships and the land, their base resting on the surface of the floe, producing a singularly beautiful effect, and contrasting with the surrounding wintry scene.

With the low altitude of the sun the sky was tinged with most delicate and lovely hues, surpassing admiration, particularly that portion in opposition to the sun, composed of rose and violet colour blending harmoniously until lost in the deep cerulean vault above: it would require the pencil of a Claude or a Wilson to delineate these incomparable tints.

Falling stars have excited the attention of scientific men and the students of nature, and from the result of repeated observations, about the 12th of November has been assigned for the period when the greatest concourse are to be seen, as though the earth, at a particular passage of its orbit, passed

through a dense cloud of them. It is recorded that Humboldt saw some thousands fall between two and three o'clock on the morning of the 12th of November, 1800, at Caraccas. On the night of the 10th of August, 1839, there fell at Breslau before three in the morning, one thousand and eight meteors: here they have not attracted our notice this season.

A very brilliant meteor was seen on the 2nd of December, at half-past nine, A.M., bearing S.S.E., which excited the admiration of all who saw it. It shot through an arc of about 25° with great velocity, and on bursting, a globe of intensely bright pale-green, detached itself from a red nucleus; it was visible only a very few seconds, and quite eclipsed the dawning light for the time.

The barometer appears to retain its reputation in these latitudes as a monitor to the seaman. In Melville Bay it indicated the approach of southerly winds, on several occasions with great fidelity. One of the most remarkable instances was on the 12th of July, when the mercury fell from 29.25 to 28.88 in the space of six hours. During the last three months its range has been very limited.

The prevailing winds have been N.W. Comparing this period with other voyages we have been exempt from the storms experienced in other

localities: Parry mentions some instances at Melville Island, being confined to the ship for some days in consequence of strong winds.

The distinctness by which distant objects are seen is a remarkable feature in this climate. Cape Hotham was clearly seen from Griffiths' Island with the naked eye, at two o'clock, P.M., on the 11th of November,—a distance of more than thirty miles: the stars were shining at the time.

TO BE CONTINUED.

Capt. Ommaney.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE AURORA BOREALIS.

Mr. Editor,

As many among your readers have had the happiness of basking amid smiles on the sunny shores of South America, I have thought that "An Evening's Amusement among the Señoritas of Chili" would not be unacceptable.

G. C.

The port of Coquimbo being seldom visited by vessels of war, the arrival of so large a ship as ours

caused considerable excitement among the inhabitants, particularly the fair sex, who anticipated dances and *soirées* as a certain accompaniment.

As the port of Coquimbo is only a small place for the convenience of the merchant vessels collecting their several cargoes, Serano, a little town, about nine miles from it, was the principal scene of our amusements.

The time having approached for our leaving, to resume our station at Valparaiso, my companion and myself went the evening before to escort some of our favourites home along the dreary beach to Serano. Having procured horses, we all started, I need hardly say, at a full gallop, which is the peculiar vanity of Chilian ladies, at which pace we were soon brought to the foot of the Almeida, then crowded with the beauty and fashion of the place. We dismounted, and leaving our horses at the Tivoli Gardens, after a little refreshment, joined in with the crowd, and were soon introduced by our *amigas* to all the first people of the place, and as soon after loaded with invitations for an evening's amusement. It being impossible to accept all, we could with difficulty find excuses to suit their pressing invitations. A general "breezo" was decided upon, but the question arose, "Who was to be the hostess for the evening?"

After much chatting and laughing, one was selected, and to her house we proceeded in procession.

The plan of proceedings being drawn up, the first on the list was a dance, and then by no means a small allowance of *dulces* to be got through. The Opera came next. No close carriages, umbrellas, and cloaks, were required; but off we started, arm-in-arm, as if all old acquaintances with our fair partners, whose sole protection from the night air was a handkerchief thrown over their heads. On these occasions, it is sometimes more convenient to stray out of the general thoroughfare, and seek the way by quieter and less frequented routes; but of course this precaution is taken merely for the sake of preventing a chance of being jostled off the pavement, or interrupted in the streets. However, such was the whim of some of the party that night, who were found missing at the *Entrada*. But here *mamitas* are not so anxious as in England, and know their daughters are under "la proteccion de los oficiales Ingleses," and therefore no harm can happen to them.

The performance, I am afraid, neither of us attended to, as I then was and still am in some doubt what it really was, our time being so completely taken up with the many pretty speeches we

had to receive and answer, and in securing the several bouquets presented to us.

The drop-scene being down, we retraced our steps to the house of our hostess, where we were in a few minutes whirling round in the giddy waltz; and though neither of us were proficient, we both talked Spanish in a manner that even we ourselves were astonished at.

Reader, should you ever wish to excel in that sweet language, do not throw your money or time away upon useless books or grammars, but take to the fair sex for instruction; and should your heart be in the right place, as no doubt it is, the brightness of their eyes will light you through all difficulties, and the harmony of their voices be the encouragement to persevere.

Dance after dance followed, occasionally interrupted by some romance of olden time. Forgetful of everything but the scenes around us, we allowed the hours unconsciously to fly by, and were only at last aroused from our dreams of delight by the rough and discordant sound of the Sereno calling, "*Las dos y media.*" No time was to be lost. Our last boat was at three A.M., and we were nine miles from our spot of embarkation. A hasty, though affectionate, farewell was taken with our friends, accompanied by numerous "memoriacitas" and promises of

another visit; under a salute of good wishes for a pleasant voyage and a speedy return, we started in a good hard gallop, which brought us down in time to reach the ship. In a few minutes afterwards we were standing out of the bay, under all sail, to the southward; many regretting so short a stay at a place known to us by numberless pleasant incidents, which will be for years stamped deeply upon our memories.

"Melcham". (Presumably
G.F. Melcham.)

ROYAL ARCTIC THEATRE.

H.M.S. 'ASSISTANCE.'

The Royal Arctic Theatre, crowded to excess, has again (November 27th, 1850,) excited the wonder and admiration of the public.

The improvements observed in the general arrangements could not have failed to meet with universal approbation. The temperature and ventilation of the body of the house, and the new inner box entrance added greatly to its comfort. The decorations of the proscenium were slightly altered, the beautiful crown being placed in front of the stage-box, and two original classical figures,

a Hercules and a Venus, tastefully designed, but unfinished, occupied the places of the Prince and Princess.

On the rising of the drop scene the stage fittings elicited great applause from the audience. The farce, entitled "Done on Both Sides," was most amusing, and the characters (which were difficult to sustain) were done great justice to by all the actors. Brownjohn and Phibbs, the principal parts, were carried out in excellent style, and the acting showed how perfectly they were appreciated by the talented individuals who had undertaken them. The other characters, Mr. and Mrs. Whiffles and Lydia, were also performed by persons who thoroughly understood them; and this highly diverting piece was concluded in a way which drew forth the most clamorous applause from the audience, and was followed by songs by the gallant Commander of the 'Intrepid,' and other celebrated vocalists of the squadron. A well danced hornpipe also added to the numerous attractions of the evening. Then followed the laughable farce of "High Life Below Stairs," admirably and spiritedly performed. Here we have to announce the *début* of many promising actors. It would be vain to attempt to do justice to their merits, they must be seen to be appreciated.

We must however make especial mention of the musical talent,—not only was the evening enlivened by their instrumental performance, but the well-known and effectively sung glee, “Hail smiling morn,” brought down thunders of applause from the delighted listeners. We are delighted to find that the *corps dramatique* of the Royal Arctic had received such additional strength as must insure its success.

At the end of the evening the calls for the various actors were numerous, and readily responded to. Before leaving, three hearty cheers were given for Captain Austin.

BAL MASQUE.

H.M.S. ‘RESOLUTE.’

We crossed the dark, deceptive floe with a bundle under our arm, and as we emerged from the obscurity into the bright circle of inviting light, surrounding the ship, beheld the piratical looking guardians at the entrance, cross their staves. They questioned our right to pass, pointing significantly to the bundle: the obstruction was removed. A chandelier, quite a bijou, illumined the upper deck.

We dined and reached our dressing-place undetected, thanks to the well-arranged flags. Attired by a clown we stalked forth to see and be seen.

Presenting a card to that prince of jollity, Punch, we received a hearty welcome. Sir Greasyhide Walrus, the Mayor of Griffiths Kitterwak, was then announced in a loud voice. He came in a splendid carriage, drawn by eight fine horses, and as he entered the ball-room, preceded by officials—bearing the insignia of office—the brilliancy of his suite called forth universal praise. In a neat and eloquent speech he gracefully touched upon the topics of the day, and concluded with a well-turned compliment to his gallant entertainers. Right nobly did the master of ceremonies greet all comers, and, thanks to his exertions, the most diffident representative of the tender sex was soon at ease.

Pictures of various kinds added grace to the admirably executed transparencies and other tasteful decorations. Mingling in motley groups, the varied multitude, swayed by the ancient baton of Punch, entered with spirit and fine feeling into the jokes and laughter of the evening. Wandering through the crowd, we beheld every variety of costume, from the *vivandière* to the Queen of the Iceni; from the humble sweep to the Grand Turk; devils and ghosts; nondescripts and legitimate clowns, *cum*

multis aliis. One fact struck us most forcibly, scarcely were there two dresses alike in the room and when we say that the assumed characters were cleverly adapted and well sustained, some slight idea may be formed of the effect produced.

The unworthy representatives of our dear countrywomen used the privileges of a petticoat, and many a gay cavalier got well abused, but deservedly, let it be said, for gallantry did not abound. Passing forward amidst dreaded pirates, bold smugglers and niggers, each of a different nation, and generally well mated, we were at length brought to the bar by the red devil, and here the good taste everywhere to be met with became positively sublime.

Cake and punch to all comers. The neatness and respectability of the landlady who presided could not pass unnoticed. We were forced to indulge in some refreshment, pronouncing the cake excellent, and again we became lost in the gay multitude. Often during the evening we had passed an odd figure uttering the cry of "old chairs to mend!" the busy crowd seemed right curious to detect the well-arranged disguise, but for some time he retained his incognito. Again we caught a glimpse of him, leaning against a pillar, and from the respect shown we became

curious to discover the real bearer of the rushes. We entered into conversation, and something ludicrous occurring in the neighbourhood, the well-known laugh spoke to us more clearly than the voice of our ever cheerful Commodore.

The time flew, and the whirling figures and bursts of merriment told how all enjoyed the ball. Silence! a song! An excellent glee was sung by the bandsmen, followed at intervals by various other performances.

The music was played *con amore*, and they had need, for short were the respites allowed them. "God save the Queen!" the well-known signal of dismissal, came upon us before we thought of being weary. All left, boisterous and excited, satisfied and delighted. A *petit souper* with the Commodore prolonged the evening's mirth, and the hours of the clock became small ere the Mayor of Griffiths Kitterwak withdrew.

We hope to enjoy another evening in like manner, encircled by merry faces and warm hearts.

C. C.

NOTICE.

Whereas some evil-disposed person or persons have, under the cover of darkness, feloniously entered this vessel, and abstracted from the quartermaster's lanthorn, a candle, commonly known by the appellation of "purser's dip." Notice is hereby given, that from the date hereof a better look-out will be kept; and should any such person or persons be seen prowling round the ship during the hours of darkness without carrying a light, they may be mistaken for either foxes or be and will be fired at accordingly.

N.B.—Tame animals will stand the best chance of being killed.

PIRATO.

"Elliott." (presumably J.E. Elliott)

SPORTING INTELLIGENCE.

For the special information of sporting travellers, we have inserted the following copy of Sir James Ross's game-book during his land journey in 1849.

It embraces a period of thirty-nine days, between the 15th of May and the 23rd of June. Shot

seven eider and king ducks; eight ptarmigan, in winter plumage; one glaucus gull; two silver gulls; one kittiwake; three dovebies; two brown boat-swains; one red-throated diver, and one snow bunting; a lemming was caught, three bears were seen, two of which were wounded; tracks of bears, hares, foxes, lemmings, wolverines, and of a few reindeer were seen.

The gulls arrived in May. Early in June a flock of sandpipers, and the first ducks were seen; by the 15th the latter had become numerous, and frequently flew past us along the coast in large flocks. The temperature varied between zero and + 50°—Mean + 23° Fahr.

F. L. Mc Clintock

ROYAL ARCTIC THEATRE.

On Thursday, Jan. 9th, 1851,

The favourite Actors of the Ships' Companies present, will perform
the Farce of

THE TURNED HEAD,

AND THE PANTOMIME OF

ZERO;

OR, HARLEQUIN LIGHT.

WRITTEN EXPRESSLY FOR THE OCCASION.

And the Officers will perform the Serio-comic Play of

BOMBASTES FURIOSO.

FOR FURTHER PARTICULARS, SEE BILLS OF THE DAY.

NOTICE TO BANKERS AND OTHERS.

Whereas a Bank of England £5 note, No. 2462, was obtained from the advertiser under false pretences during the last performance at the Royal Arctic Theatre.—Notice is hereby given, that persons retaining the same are guilty of felony.

WANTED for the Royal Arctic Theatre, a person who will undertake to sing all encore songs; as the vocalists hitherto engaged find it too much for the remuneration they receive.

SPORTING NEWS.

During the last month little has been done, the increased severity of the weather having driven most of the game south. We have to record however the shooting of two bears; one by the veteran sportsmen of the 'Resolute' within a short distance of the ship, the other by two of the officers of the 'Assistance' some miles from the vessel; both animals

of large size. We regret that the thick weather which followed the shooting of the latter, rendered it impossible to bring it on board. We trust that Captain Penny has been equally fortunate with ourselves, the lives of his valuable dogs being entirely dependent on his success with the gun.

WANTED IMMEDIATELY.—A supply of gas for the Royal Arctic Theatre: the large quantity in the playbills, being found to be insufficient.

On Wednesday the 11th instant, the committee for the arrangement of the spring travelling parties met on board H.M.S. 'Resolute.' Captain Horatio T. Austin, C.B., in the Chair.

The subject of the general equipment was brought forward, during the discussion of which many ingenious propositions were started, and freely canvassed. Every minute point tending to the safety and comfort of the men was ably inquired into, the opinions of some of the most experienced were heard, more especially as to the kind of food and

clothing necessary: specimens from the best artizans of the squadron were placed on the table, and compared carefully with those of previous travellers. The various questions that arose were attentively listened to, and satisfactorily arranged. After a lengthened consideration, which the importance of the subject demanded, the arrangements were completed, and are at once to be carried out in all their detail.

The committee sat from half-past ten, A.M., until half-past one, P.M.

C. Cde

It was with a sense of great gratification that we were summoned to the convivial board of our gallant Captain on the 9th of December, to celebrate the anniversary of the birthday of his amiable and accomplished lady.

As faithful chevaliers, wheresoever a lady is concerned—her health, proposed by the gallant Commodore, was drank with all honours, and the sound that rang through that company, was one of cordial feeling.

Would that some Peri had wafted to her breast the heartfelt wishes, which, although frozen without, we showered upon her from our warm hearts

within. Let us hope that her gallant husband may, ere twelve months elapse, return in health, crowned with the bright laurels of success, and meet her surrounded by every happiness the world can give!

C. D.

NUTS FOR THE ARCTIC PUBLIC.

Will shortly be published, under the above title, a very amusing and laughable little work, containing the original *bon mots*, puns, enigmas, charades, riddles, facetiæ, and racy jokes of the well-known and amusing punster of the Expedition. A chapter will be also given on the most approved method of pulling a leg, or what is generally known and called getting it on a stretch. We feel convinced this little work will be very popular with the public generally, and the Arctic public in particular.

STOLEN GOODS RETURNED.

It appears by the police report that a dip has been feloniously abstracted from a lanthorn of one

of H.M.S. ships present. The undersigned begs to say the same will be returned, on application to him personally.

F. H.

ELOPEMENT.—It is with harrowing feelings that we announce the sudden and unexpected flight from her once happy home of Lady Tobina. She was suddenly missed; it is thought that she has fled into the arms of that seducer, Liberty. No traces have been found of the fugitive. Her unfortunate husband, who used every means to recal her by watching and fretting, now lies in a state of almost hopeless recovery—a lamentable example of misplaced confidence.

Should this meet the eye of the lady who left her home on the 23rd ultimo., she is entreated to return to her disconsolate husband without delay; who takes no rest at night, and is misanthropic and miserable during the day, and all will be forgotten, all will be forgiven.

A. C.—If little Tommy Crank, who disappeared on the night of the opening of the Royal Arctic Theatre, will return to his heart-broken parents at Stoke Pogis, he will be allowed to take his port wine after dinner; although little Tommy *nose* that portwine is bad for children's complexions.

HUE AND CRY.—£5 Reward! As the well-known vagabonds

“SLASHER AND CRASHER”

have been “going a begging” in this neighbourhood for the last few days, the above sum will be given to any person who will take them up.*

* At this time the farce of “Slasher and Crasher” had been determined on by the manager, for performance on the boards of the Royal Arctic Theatre; but, from various causes, no one could be prevailed upon to take the two principal parts, being those from which the farce derives its title.

SUPPLEMENT.

Christmas Day, 1850.

AMONG the many countless events that crowd the history of the world, and the numberless associations that spring from our existence, none are more pregnant with joys and hopes than those of this happy and cheerful festival.

For the Christian, and more particularly for the Englishman, all things sacred and beautiful, all things pure, and all reminiscences of home, are closely connected with this day; while even by us, separated as we are, by the dreary wastes around, from all we hold dear, the same inspired enthusiasm is felt that prompted the "star-led wizards" of the East to seek in a distant country the real Sovereign of the Universe.

Home and tried friends fill our thoughts, and as we give way to the enjoyments of the season, almost unconsciously our minds revert to the grand object of our Expedition, and the anxious countenances of those who await our return. Shut out by barriers of ice and snow from all commune with the companions of past pleasures, we summon, by the aid of that great magician, Imagination, the festive scenes that gladden our native land; and although on every side gloom, desolation, and eternal silence dwell,

“As if the general pulse of life stood still,”

yet we are sustained by the knowledge that these deprivations are necessary to forward the sacred cause of humanity. Mirth and cheerfulness are to be found at our boards, and in the outpourings of every heart may be traced the same adventurous spirit that filled those who preceded us, strengthened by the noble mission on which we are bound—to save the missing brave.

Who then can forget those associated with us in the search?—the veteran Sir John Ross, our good friends, Captain Penny, Captain Forsyth, the gallant Collinson, and the generous and purely disinterested Expedition from the United States.

We cordially hope that the fine feeling existing with us may dwell with them, and with wishes for their health and safety, we drink

“Long life and prosperity to all.”

With a longing look towards England, we pledge in silence the dearest bonds of life, and overflowing with the joyous revelry of the season, we drink to all the world

“A right merry Christmas, and many of them.”

210.

GOOD OLD ARCTIC CUSTOMS.

My subject, “Christmas fare,” so long a matter of curiosity, has now become of considerable interest to us all. I therefore offer to the Arctic public a bill of fare of one of the former Expeditions, with some comments thereon.

GUN-ROOM MESS.

H.M.S. ‘—,’ DECEMBER 25TH, 18—.

Mock-turtle Soup.

Quarter of Mutton.

Potatoes.

Green Peas.

Mutton Pic.

Ham.

Green Peas.

Potatoes.

Hamburgh Beef.

Plum-pudding.
Cranberry Tart. Mince Pies.
Fruit Pie.
Cheese, Ale and Porter.

English Plum-cake.
Almonds. Raisins.
Nuts.

Arctic fare affords so little variety, that I do not expect even our ingenious caterers can add much to this simple list: they may, however, replace the "spiced Hamburg" by good English roast beef; but the mutton we must retain—it is so nutritious, so well suited to the present delicate state of our stomachs.

With appetites sharpened by old zero, we shall quickly demolish the ordinary routine of hams, potatoes, peas, &c., and thus clear away for the second course. Plum-pudding and mince pies are powerful stimulants to memory, and are therefore indispensable at this festive season. The imagination, thus excited, pictures home as it was, is, or is to be, and dwells on ties too tender to be touched on here; and thus we enjoy a delicious mental repast. But mark! fruit pie, cranberry tart; observe the admirable tact and profound knowledge of human necessities in this rigorous climate, displayed by tempting with such invaluable antiscorbutics!

No doubt the same humane motives encouraged the consumption of ale and porter. Who could refuse their *malt* under similar circumstances, of craving within and pressure without? To do so, would be an unpardonable breach of Polar etiquette, and contrary to the sanitary rules of the Expedition, which requires us to drink beer whenever we can get it; and that we may have it at Christmas, a large quantity has been expressly brewed. Strange to say, the faculty agree in pronouncing it to be an infallible antidote to scurvy, nor are our own experienced members of that learned body amongst the least zealous in maintaining this view of the matter.

I once spent a very jolly Christmas, although in quarantine at Port Royal, and no wonder, since we revelled in antiscorbutics. Canoes were as constantly employed on one side of the ship in smuggling on board bottles of porter and oranges, as the myrmidons of the Board of Health were upon the other in endeavouring to prevent our communication with the shore.

We may, I trust, as of old, look confidently to our much-esteemed friends, Benedicts and Seven-Bellers, for a good supply of first-rate English plum-cake. In all these matters our predecessors were avowedly most discreet men; let us follow their laudable ex-

ample, and then, Father Christmas, we shall give thee a right hearty English welcome; and if thou likest our rude style but half as well as we love thine, both old and new, and fearest not the dreary darkness of the chilling north, thou mayest hospitably linger with us, cheering our mirth, and dispelling our headaches, until the new style becomes the old.

HYPERBOREAN.

F. L. McClintock

CHRISTMAS.

Stand aside, ye care-worn faces; make way, thou cynic, Time; for hither comes Old Christmas; and in his swelling train he brings ancient recollections and merry thoughts of quaint and by-gone revels. Now rich and poor make the palace and the cottage ring with joyous laughter.

This day the world was taught to sacrifice self to the gentler feelings of humanity. Then let the smiles of innocence light up the bonds of friendship; pile the Yule-log of hospitality, and pass, even to your bitterest enemy, the old feud-destroying wassail-bowl.

The wanderer in every region of the world hath goodly thoughts to-day, and looks back with a sigh

to the hours of youth, when round the festive board the ties of homely love made glad the dawn of existence.

The true old English toast is given wherever a vacant seat exists, and amid the mirth-elated circles are those who, sighing, consecrate with the unheeded tear the cup in which they pledge the centre of their hope, and pensive muse o'er the bright past, until aroused by the mirth that surrounds, they smiling yield to the spirit of the time.

The song, the dance, the joke, are there ; but, above all, the loud, rich laugh of contented and happy hearts, that even on the confines of the morn, when the hour grows pale, frightens from country-seat and homestead the demon of ill-will, and that old cannibal, Care.

Here, too, reposing from the dangers of moving miles of ice and splitting mountains of snow, we hail the festive season as the shadow of others to come ; and with that hope, defy the extreme cold, shrouded in dismal night.

Long may such customs live in our thoughts, and may the dull realities of existence be thrown into shade by the bright reminiscences of Christmas and its time-enriched privileges.

C. Ede

TO THE EDITOR OF THE AURORA BOREALIS.

"Come let us, like our jovial sires of old,
With gambols and mince-pies our Christmas hold."

Sir,

The good old English custom of faring well at Christmas has lasted unimpaired to the present day, and I think we have found that it has not been forgotten even in the Arctic regions.

Long after many other time-honoured Christmas usages had been forgotten, that of eating a good dinner was remembered, and has been so deeply implanted on the memory, and handed down with such veneration from father to son, that it exists now with all the vigour that it obtained three hundred years ago.

But there is another old custom, which, next to the dinner, clings nearest to our hearts, and entwines itself around all our associations regarding a merry Christmas. Everybody can recollect gathering round the fireside, with the great Yule-log blazing upon it, and listening with feelings of delight, not unmingled with awe, to some jolly, well-told story about ghosts

or robbers, in which damp vaults, ruined castles, church-yards, and violent tempests, are portrayed in such vivid colours, that it has made everybody feel doubly the warm, glowing comforts with which he is surrounded.

The reason that this most jovial of customs has existed so long, is connected with the belief that none of the demoniacal personages with which those old stories usually abound, are on that day prowling about; which belief was credited by some even in the days of Shakspeare, who tells us that

“Some say that ever ’gainst the season comes
Wherein Our Saviour’s birth is celebrated,
The bird of dawning singeth all day long;
And then, they say, no spirit dares stir abroad.”

In these Arctic regions, where we are keeping our Christmas, the weather outside is twice as cold, and we are surrounded by fifty times the quantity of ice and snow that there is in England; and for that very reason should we make the inside as comfortable as possible, not only by eating fish, fresh beef and mutton, preserved chickens, green peas, mince-pies, plum-pudding, fruit pie, double Gloucester, with the royal standard on the top, and plum-cake; but also by keeping up the other good old Christmas custom of awakening our imagination by relating all the jolly

stories about ghosts and robbers that we ever heard—bearing in mind that a good story is never told too often—and bringing to our minds again the times when, years ago, we used to listen to similar stories around our own happy firesides; and thus shall we make each other as comfortable in the spirit, by recalling the by-gone associations of our childhood, as we do in the gastric receptacles of our economy, by enjoying the best cheer that the season will afford.

I remain, Mr. Editor,

Yours very sincerely,

A VENERATOR OF BY-GONE TIMES.

C.R. Waulsham

OLD FATHER CHRISTMAS.

There are certain events in human affairs sometimes worthy of remembrance, while others we would gladly bury in oblivion; and among the former, we may hope to cherish the recollections of an Arctic Christmas; though perchance, in its minor details, tinged with melancholy and regret. Yes—Christmas has come again. Something there is hallowed in the word.

I remember regarding Old Father Christmas as a venerable gentleman, who paid us an annual visit, but for what purpose I could never thoroughly ascertain; nor do I recollect ever having personally seen him; yet the preparations for his arrival are reminiscences of childhood which neither time nor circumstances can obliterate; for though the boy becomes a man, his worldly character still retains its Christmas impressions.

On those days, roast beef and plum-pudding, with a host of small fry, were subjects of materialism warmly discussed; and when the bowl was handed round the festive board, illumined by the cheerful rays of a burning Yule-log, heartfelt were the responses to the cry of "Wassail," as each dipped deeply into its potent contents, drinking to days gone by, and days that were to come.

Often have we wandered far away to seek the mystic mistletoe and the time-worshipped holly, returning laden with the results of our search; our wished-for reward a sister's welcome, and a mother's love! Long years have wrought changes since then, not only in the scenes of our youth, but within ourselves. Still Christmas steals upon us; and anxiously looking forward for its arrival, we join headlong in its festivities, which seem for the time to unite all in perfect happiness.

Then be it again so. Let our Arctic Christmas rival its predecessors. Although nature here denies us the accustomed decorations for his reception, let us give the good old Father a right jolly welcome, and I'll warrant we shall receive an ample return.

Ryder. (J. N. Ryder)

VI.

Winter Quarters, Jan. 1851.

ANOTHER year has gone. The first half of the nineteenth century has expired, and is now enrolled in the page of history ; a page that will be handed down as one of the brightest, and as one surpassing its predecessors in the immense advance made in civilization, in the arts and sciences.

As the nineteenth century dawned upon the world, it was darkened by the clouds of war, of desolation, and of famine ; but ere 1850 had passed away, peace with her gentleness had breathed over the world a spirit of charity, of love, and of plenty.

Almost the expiring act of the past half century

was the unfolding the broad banner of humanity, and the sending forth of several Expeditions to the rescue of the missing brave:—an act worthily crowning the many deeds which had gone before.

As we look back upon 1850, we dwell with satisfaction upon the incidents which have occurred, and more especially, upon that bright moment of our existence when—prompted by the voice of philanthropy—we tendered our services in furthering the object of these Expeditions. Years will glide away; the snows of many winters will centre on our heads; but as we fall “into the sear and yellow leaf” of age, retrospection will cast a golden light upon 1850.

There is not a soul in our Expedition who does not feel proud of that year; whose bosom does not bound with emotion, as thought gently whispers, “And I, too, form part of the Arctic Happy Family.”

It would be presumption to question the inscrutable decrees of an omniscient Providence. Thirty-one years have now elapsed since the gallant Parry—bursting the tremendous bulwarks of the north—advanced to the 113th degree of west longitude, and unravelling the mysteries of the Frigid Zone, had the glory of planting his country’s flag in lands never visited before. Although less fortunate in

penetrating the Arctic wilds, we ought in gratitude to thank a Divine Providence for what we have already performed, for having run through dangers unscathed, and for having reached a longitude never attained since that successful Arctic navigator. The barrier of ice that now separates us from Melville Island is insurmountable; as well might a line of battle ship attempt to cross the plains of merry England from the German Ocean to St. George's Channel.

A future lies before us in which much is to be done, and much we hope will be done: in a squadron where unity, devotion, and hope, float their broad standards. Our endeavours must rise triumphant, and consequently our happiness be made complete. Who is there among us who would not rally around them, and sacrificing all to the public good, do his utmost to accomplish this honourable mission?

The dark and gloomy Arctic night gives way to the coming sun, and with his appearance, a cheering smile will fill the heart. Health, hope, and happiness have been our attendants during the dreary night, and with such companions we shall commence the duties which 1851 has in store. As a proof of the unity existing on board the 'Assistance,' we may recal to our readers the

creditable proposal of her ship's company, of each man devoting three days' pay to the benefit of the widow, orphans, or friends of any one among them who should—ere the Expedition shall have returned to England—meet his death in the execution of his present duty.

With the opening of the new year, we give our most grateful thanks to the many able and indefatigable contributors, who have so generously lavished their time and talent upon the "Aurora," and who have thus been instrumental in carrying out the grand object with which the journal originally started. We trust that it has been the cause of much good feeling, and that it has conveyed some slight instruction, information, and amusement, through its columns.

If such have been its results, our time has been well spent, and our trouble fully repaid.

L.D.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE AURORA BOREALIS.

Dear Mr. Editor,

The "Clio" articles on the origin of the Esquimaux race, I must plead guilty to having read with considerable interest, and I question much,

notwithstanding the severe criticisms of "Examiner," whether many others in the squadron have not done so likewise.

Neither prepared to argue the question with "Clio," as to the geographical position of the Mountain of Meru, nor to deny him the right to place it in Melville Island, should it so please him, at the same time it is no more my intention to adopt his views on that important subject, than it is to concur with "Examiner" or Cuvier in believing the Red Indian, Peruvian and Fuegian to have sprung from a common stock.

To return to the Esquimaux, I think "Clio" has taken a somewhat hasty view of his subject in adopting the old-fashioned theory, that all the numerous traces of that race about us, are owing to extraordinary visits from the Esquimaux of the American continent. I can find nothing to make me concur in such an opinion; and yet the subject is too interesting to be thrown aside. Why not let us look to the fount whence sprang this and every other race, and endeavour to trace out some route other than the American continent by which it is possible they may have travelled.

Rash and presumptuous!—no doubt, dear "Examiner;" but show me how to reasonably believe, that the southern shores of these islands on our

northern hand were peopled, when immediately opposite to them, the continent of America is an equally untenanted wilderness.

Tell me how the Greenlanders of the present day, the Skraeling of the Scandinavians, preserved traditions of Lancaster Sound, and of beacons existing there, but by having come thence? Why should the Greenlanders of the Danish settlements and Sir John Ross's Arctic Highlanders point northwards to the seat of their race? And if the Greenlanders crossed to Greenland in lat. 66° N., how came they to have traditional description of the land at the top of Baffin's Bay?

I grant the question may be dismissed by the assertion that at some by-gone period this race inhabited the various northern coasts on which their traces have been seen, and that increasing severity of climate, and consequent scarcity of animal life forced them southward. But I object to such an hypothesis; because, in the first place, in Europe we know the winters are decidedly milder than they were; and in the next place, there was no lack of animal life, be it fish, flesh or fowl, up to the time of our passing Wellington Channel.

Your geological correspondent clothes Griffith's Island—the antediluvian one—with waving forests

of palms ; others, again, declare that there is poetry in an Arctic moon :

— b —m. Ther. — 34°.

Very good ! I shall mount my Pegasus, and bring a select party of Asiatics, call them Esquimaux, Innuït, Skraeling, or what you please—by another road along the south shore of the Parry group, the north coast of Barrow's Straits, round the top of Baffin's Bay, and thence to Greenland—Parry has left us nothing else to do ; we, like Dumont d'Urville, when following in Cook's footsteps, may say : "*Ceux qui sont venus après lui n'ont pu prétendre qu'au mérite d'avoir plus ou moins perfectionné ses travaux.*" In like spirit, it therefore behoves us to carefully treasure up the minutest detail of all we see, and to throw an interest around the same, if possible, by the erection of some reasonable theory.

Strange and ruined traces of this people have been found by us and our gallant predecessors of Parry's Expedition, in almost every sheltered nook of this sad and solitary land. When were they constructed ? and where are their inhabitants gone whose home lay in such a clime ? are questions which naturally arise to every inquiring mind. No one, we infer, would be prepared to show

that we are wrong in imputing the remains found to that race known as the Esquimaux, or Innuït, one, to use the words of a talented naval officer, "of the most widely spread nations of the globe," ranging over the majority of the ice-encumbered shores of the continents and islands washed by the Polar Sea.

The seat of this race (arguing from the traditions still extant in Wrangel's time) might be placed in the north-east extreme of Asia, the western boundary being ill defined, for on the banks of the Lena and the Indigirka along the whole extent of the frozen Tundra, and in distant isles rarely visited by even the bold seekers of fossil ivory, the same circle of stones, the same stone axes are to be found, as to this day are used amongst, and only amongst, the Esquimaux of America and Behring's Straits, or the Greenlanders.

The Tchuktkhes, a peculiar race, are still to be seen in Asia, assuming amongst that portion of them living on the sea-coast, habits closely analogous to those of the Esquimaux of our day. The Russian can tell how the tide of Cossack conquest was checked by the unconquerable patriotism of this race; untamed and untameable, they offer another instance of the gradual extinction of an isolated people.

The hunters of Siberia tell how a similar race, the Omoki, "whose hearths were once more numerous on the banks of the Lena than the stars of the Arctic night," are gone, none know whither.

The Tehuktkhes, however, aver that emigration from Asia towards a land—not an island, a continent—had occurred within the memory of their fathers, and quoted, amongst others, a case: a tribe, the Onkillon, occupied the land of Cape Chelagskoi; attacked by the Tehuktkhes, they fled, and headed by one, Krachnoi, took shelter in the land visible northward from Cape Jakan. This land Wrangel believed to exist only in the imagination of the natives. English sailors, Captains Kellett and Moore, have since proved the assertion to be a fact; they saw "an extensive land," but did not lay it down as they could not reach it in their vessels.

Tempting as it may be, I will not enter into the rich field of disquisition upon the causes which brought about the emigration of the "Innuits." Pressure from hostile tribes, and the better necessity of seeking food to support life, not choice, must have carried these fishermen, even in Asia, to localities, which caused Wrangel to exclaim: "What could have led men to forsake more favoured lands for this grave of Nature!"

We see in America, that the Esquimaux has struggled hard to reach southern and more genial climes. In the Aleutian Islands, and on the coast of Labrador, local circumstances favoured the attempt. The Indian hunter would have starved in a land, which was comparatively overflowing with subsistence for the Arctic fisherman.

This human tide, ever striving against the blood-thirsty races of North America, flowed eastward along the American continent; and although vast tracts, such as the "barren grounds"* between the Fish and Coppermine, are untenanted by them at the present day, nevertheless the traces left by the emigrating tribes are evident.

Taking, therefore, as the basis of my argument, the generally acknowledged fact, that no people by preference alone would be induced to seek a home in more inhospitable regions than those they dwelt in; I am inclined to deny that these ruins around us have ever been constructed by either emigrants from the continent south of us, or by hunters, during their hasty summer visits, when, as we all know, lodges of seal-skin, not deep sunk habitations, are their abodes. Why should not those who reached the land off Cape Jakan have

* From 99° W. to 109° West. longitude.

travelled eastward in a parallel direction, to their brethren of the American continent.

The question of land north of Behring's Straits, has been set at rest by Captain Kellett's discovery. Geographers, from the gradual shoaling of the water in that direction, had long inferred it, and they likewise assert that the same causes produce the shoal, yet open sea, extending from the longitude of Cape Bathurst to Cape Barrow. If Captain Collinson's Expedition should prove this to be a fact likewise, the connecting link between the ruined "Yourts" of Cape Jakan and Melville Island will be assured. Under the same degree of latitude, the savage, guided by the length of his seasons, and the periodical arrival of bird and beast, would fearlessly progress along the north shore of the great strait we entered on leaving Baffin's Bay.

This progress, a work doubtless of centuries, was gradual and constant, but imperative. The seal, the reindeer, and the whale, all desert or avoid places where man or beast wages war on them whilst multiplying their species; they must be followed, as is found to be the case by our hunters, sealers, and whalers of the present day. Offshoots from this northern stream of emigration very possibly struck to the southward: for instance, the natives of Boothia, who from tradition gave Sir John Ross a

correct description of the outline of North Somerset, told him, that by passing round it he could get westward, "and spoke of their forefathers having fished and lived in more northern lands." The Expedition of 1848 proved them to be perfectly correct; ruins at least two hundred years old were found at or about Leopold Harbour, and the coast trended after rounding Cape Bunny exactly as they had said.

The ruins seen by the 'Assistance' on the north shore of Lancaster Sound, are by far the best that have yet been fallen in with, and evincing in the construction of the huts and neat finish of the graves, a comparative degree of comfort and civilization. Still following the land round, we reach the top of Baffin's Bay, where, according to native tradition, there are or were beacons as guide-posts on different points.

No one has published any account of the shore between Lancaster Sound and this inlet. For aught we know, on the west as on the east side, "Arctic Highlanders!" may exist still. At any rate, Sir John Ross's belief seems to be implicit that more of his friends lay north of Wolstenholme Sound: some are near there now we know, a great many died the winter previous to our arrival: every whaler who ever sent people on shore about Cape York

reports numerous deserted huts and dead bodies, yet the people are not extinct; whence does this supply of human life come?—there was one woman with the party of natives under Cape York. I should point northward for an answer: southward we know they have not come. At Bushnan Island the natives are still found; the prodigious glaciers of Melville Bay have barred from Europeans the land, which appears as if struggling for life and light through the sea of superincumbent ice; but close to the Devil's Thumb graves have been seen.

We saw those of both women and children on the islets near the Sugar Loaf, and it appears to be a question whether the late visitors to that neighbourhood from Upernavik have been other than Esquimaux seal hunters; in my own opinion, after a careful perusal of both "Graah and Crantz on Greenland," I am fully convinced that the movement of the Esquimaux is towards its southern and more genial localities.

Such, Mr. Editor, is my idea of the origin of the Esquimaux traces around us; neither time nor space will allow me to give your readers all the grounds upon which I base it. He who wishes to seek for proofs, may come to the same conclusion mayhap, by carefully reading Baron Wrangel's

Arctic Journey, and at the same time I do not deny there is abundant field for far more ingenious explanations of the origin or wanderings of "Ross's Arctic Highlanders."

The year 1851 may and will do much to remove the veil from the hidden things of the Arctic world. Four hundred British seamen now wintering within the Frozen Zone will, in the execution of their higher purpose, throw open to the world the geography of the lands from Siberia to Greenland, and on the observations and remarks of the officers sent on the different travelling parties, our characters as an intelligent body will much depend, and the discredit avoided of having "travelled from Dan to Beersheba, and said all was barren."

SCRIBLERUS.

"Osbalen". (Shelburne Osbalen)

TO THE EDITOR OF THE AURORA BOREALIS.

SOCIAL AND INTELLECTUAL ENJOYMENTS OF GRIFFITH'S ISLAND.

Jan. 1st, 1851.

Sir,

The bell has tolled the hour of twelve; eighteen hundred and fifty has breathed its last; and with drum and fife, we welcome in the infant year. May

it treat us as kindly, and part with us as friendly, as its predecessor has done.

Time speeds rapidly on. The Arctic night is on the wane, and that

“Glorious orb, sire of the seasons,
Monarch of the climes,”

hastens to gladden us with his revivifying rays.

There are some, who, when speaking of these regions, continually make use of the epithets, “long, dark, monotonous winter,” “dreary prospects,” “sombre precipices,” and “sunless skies.” I say, away with such unintelligible nonsense—the mere phantom of a gloomy imagination. If we cannot here contemplate nature arrayed in the gorgeous robes of sunny climes, let us not exaggerate her terrors. Others might have found it difficult to make life tolerable during an Arctic winter; but the wild, rattling, careless, but generous and noble-hearted tars of the Expedition of 1850 have succeeded in rendering it delightfully agreeable. How can it be otherwise? ’Tis true, Jack is an odd fish, having an inordinate appetite for fun and frolic; but surely we have got a bellyful of it at Griffith’s Island; to say nothing of bear-hunting, fox-trapping, Christmas festivities, New Year’s-day’s festivities. Then we have theatrical entertainments of every description—operatic, comic,

extravaganzie, and statuesque; in short, from the aristocratic *bal masqué* to the "penny gaff." We have also libraries, suited to all classes of readers, together with newspapers, ably conducted, and beautifully illustrated. It is even whispered that a growling club is to be established, so that the old and garrulous may have an opportunity of indulging in their propensities.

The schoolmaster has likewise found his way to Griffith's Island. Every evening, with the exception of those devoted to the saloon and the theatre, schools are open for persons who wish to better their education, and improve their morals; and it is not a little interesting to see the pupils of all ages, from the spirited youth of twenty to the hoary-headed veteran of threescore, busily engaged at their various tasks, from the making of pot-hooks and hangers to the higher branches of the mathematics. What would old Benbow and Boscawen think, were they to see the tars of 1850 puzzling their brains over binomial theorems and conic sections?

I believe, only that there is rather a scarcity of professors at Griffith's Island, we should have Jack studying the Classics; for the other evening, during school hours, I observed a rather steady-looking tar poring over a volume, when at the moment his messmate addressed him, rather unceremoniously,

in the words, "Why, Old Bill, you've got the book upside down!" The old man, as the best means of atoning for his mistake, shut the book, and quietly lit his pipe. The volume in question turned out to be a Latin copy of "Ovid's Metamorphoses."

Such is life at Griffith's Island. Surely time cannot lag, nor monotony exist, amidst such a combination of social intercourse and intellectual enjoyment. In confirmation of what I have said, I fearlessly assert, that I heard last night one messmate whispering to another the words, "I say, Bill, I hope this winter will last for ever."

Away, then, with that foolish, unmeaning, and often misapplied word, monotony; it is of Greek origin; it has no business in the society of English nouns: let us banish it from our vocabularies, and erase it from our journals, so that it may never again intrude, while we remain in command of these realms.

I remain, Sir,

Your obedient servant,

X. Y. Z.

"mummy?" (presumably Feslege mummy)

TO THE EDITOR OF THE AURORA BOREALIS.

Sir,

Permit me, through the medium of your valuable columns, to answer a few chemical and mathematical queries, signed "Pytheas," which appeared in a late number of your interesting journal.

On reference, you will perceive that they stand simply thus :—Suppose between two bodies a certain sympathetic influence existing, which your querist terms the "sacred flame of love." Now, will those bodies be affected by the action of, firstly, diminished temperature; secondly, absence of light; thirdly, space or distance; fourthly, time; fifthly, magnetic intensity; and, sixthly, increased or diminished supply of oxygen?

Now, Mr. Editor, "Pytheas" seems placed in a most unenviable position. He is apparently "trying it on," or, in other words, under a very specious and plausible disguise, soliciting information directly applicable to his own individual case. Discovering premature symptoms of the "heart's misgivings," he either doubts his own constancy, or the worthiness of the object upon which he once centred his affections. But to the queries.

Firstly. To use his own words, "if Love be a flame," he certainly ought to be aware that a reduced temperature causes slower combustion; and consequently, for a given amount, his "sacred flame" will burn the longer; but not flickering, as he insinuates.

Secondly. Assimilating the animal with the vegetable world, as affected by light, the certainty is, that, during the sun's presence, poor "Pytheas" would always remain perfectly *green*; but I assure him he need not feel alarmed at the absence of that luminary, for as he reappears, evident traces of returning verdure will again be manifested.

Thirdly. Love, according to his own statement, being a "flame," produces light; and the effect of that agent being inversely as the square of its distance, I leave it to your querist's school reminiscences of "Walkinghame" to answer his own questions numerically.

Fourthly. I will reply to him, in the language of Moore:

"The heart that has loved truly, never forgets,
But as truly loves on to the close;
As the sunflower turns to its God when it sets
The same look it turned when he rose."

Fifthly. The magnetism he alludes to must surely be animal, not terrestrial. Now, local attraction of

that kind is often a disturbing cause ; but I should like to know if he has yet found any out here ? Let him calmly rest assured, that when his vessel's head once gets turned the magnetic way, he will again discover positive proofs of its hitherto latent existence.

Sixthly. After repeated and careful analysis of the atmosphere in the neighbourhood, I have been unable to detect the slightest increase or diminution in the relative proportions of its constituent elements. Of oxygen, it is still the old thing about 210 parts in every 1,000 ; his last query, therefore, amounts to nothing. Still, however, there is a possibility of the united action of all the "disturbing forces upon the exciting cause," (very flowery, but decidedly vague and indefinite, unless he means his own fickle mind), tending to reduce him to that miserable state of neutrality midway between love and perfect indifference, just exactly as a chemist applies an acid to an alkali, the resulting compound possessing no characteristics of its primitive elements. Yet what have "foreign vessels of war" and "resuscitated beaux" to do with chemistry and mathematics ? Irrelevant in the extreme, and I confess my utter ignorance.

I have one more subject yet to allude to, and that is, his vile suggestion of an instrument which he

designates a "Sigh-o-meter;" literally equivalent to turning a man inside out, to ascertain his thoughts. Do his sighs come "so few and far between," that he wants them registered?

No, Mr. Editor. If the public press of this country has any influence at all, it cannot too strongly exert that influence against so infamous a proposal.

Poor Pytheas! If he does not shake off this lethargic state into which he is too surely falling, he's a "gone coon." I am truly sorry for him, and shall deem it a duty, at my earliest leisure, to offer him a little tender advice, probably conducive to his future happiness.

Yours, &c.

VERITAS.

P.S. For his want of discernment in introducing *age*, I leave him in the hands of your merciless readers.

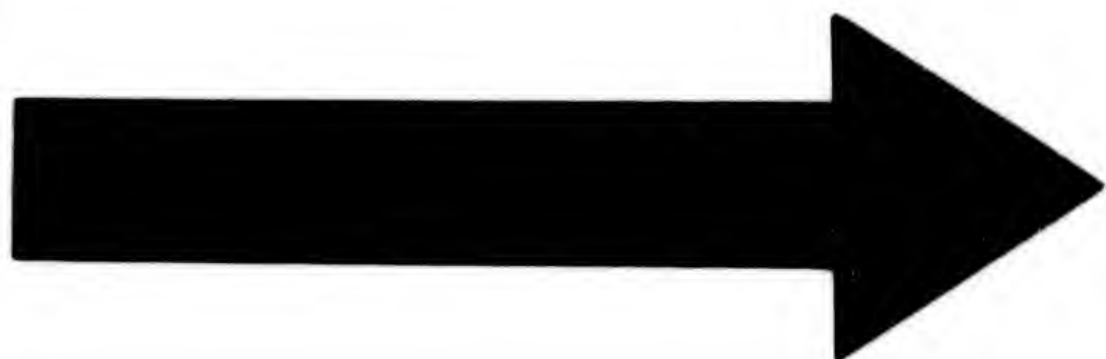
"Ryder".
(J. M. Ryder)

BAFFIN'S BAY.

Although two hundred and thirty-five years have elapsed since the discovery of this great bay by our renowned countryman, whose name it perpetuates, yet the public store of geographical knowledge respecting its northern and most interesting part has not since been increased.

An attempt was made in 1818, but, owing to the state of the ice and other adverse circumstances, its deep inlets could not be examined, and the coast line only sufficiently approached to verify, in a general manner, the accuracy of their discoverer. We cannot, therefore, do better than quote some portions of Baffin's letter, which contains a condensed account of this, his fifth voyage, to that liberal patron of Arctic discovery, Sir John Wostenholme.

Commencing, as he tells us, "without preamble, compliment, or circumstance," he thus proceeds: "and therefore I will only tell you, I am proud of any remembrance which exposes your worth to my conceit; and glad of any good fortune, when I can avoid the imputation of ingratitude, by acknowledging your many favours, &c. And to speak of no other matter than of the hopeful passage to the north-west;



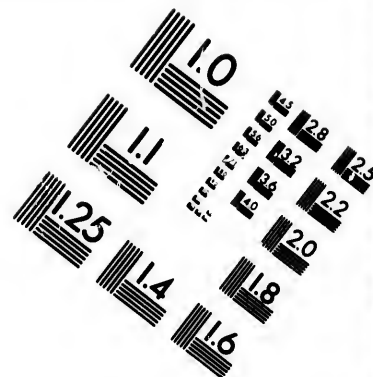
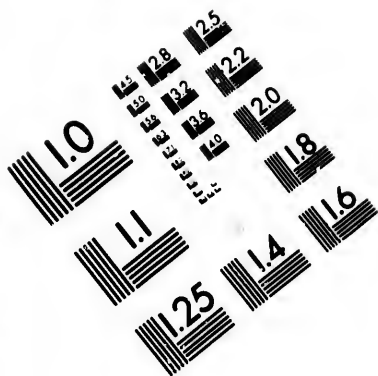
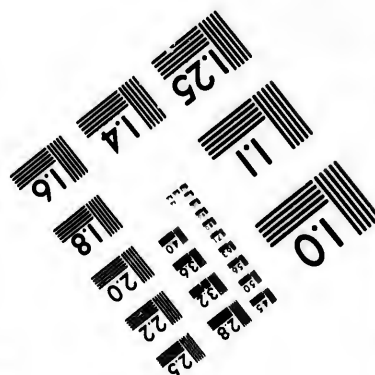
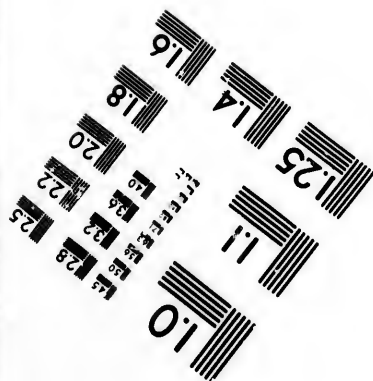
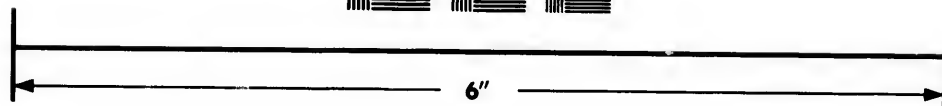
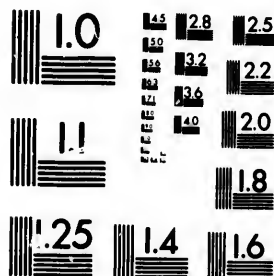


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how many of the best sort of men have set their whole endeavours to prove a passage that wayes; and not only in conference, but also in writing and publishing to the world; yea, what great summes of money hath been spent about that action, as your Worship hath costly experience off; neither would the vaine-glorious Spaniard have scattered abroad so many false maps and journals, if they had not been confident of a passage this way; that if it had pleased God a passage had been found, they might have eclipsed the worthy praise of the adventurers and true discoverers. Neither was Master Davis to be blamed in his report and great hopes, if he had anchored about Hope Sanderson, to have taken notice of the tydes; for to that place, which is in $72^{\circ} 12'$, the sea is open, of an unsearchable depth, and of a good colour; only the tydes keepe no certaine course, nor rise but a small height, as eight or nine foote; and the flood commeth from the southward; and in all the bay, beyond that place, the tyde is so small, and not much to be regarded; yet, by reason of snow melting on the land, the ebbe is stronger than the flood; by means whereof, and the windes holding northerly the fore part of the yeere, the great isles of ice are set to the southward and until this yeere, not well knowne where they were bred."

The accuracy of these observations on the sea, the ice, the wind, and tides, is truly astonishing! Baffin was not a man of theories, but one possessed of a comprehensive mind—who knew how to observe, and who faithfully described the novel scenes he witnessed. He describes the advantages to be derived from his discovery; these advantages were not followed up until 1818, when the correctness of his conclusions was clearly shown, and that he was at least two centuries in advance of his time fully proved.

“And, first, for killing of whales. Certaine it is, that in this bay are great numbers of them, which the Biscainers call the Grand Baye whales, of the same kind which are killed at Greenland, and as it seemeth to me, easie to be strooke, because they are not used to bee chased or beaten; for we, being but one day in Whale’s Sound, so called from the number of whales that we saw there, sleeping and lying aloft on the water, not fearing our ship or ought else, that, if we had beene fitted with men and things necessarie, it had beene no hard matter to have strooke more than would have made these shippes a saving voyage. . . . Neither are they only to be looked for in Whale Sound, but also in Sir Thomas Smith’s Sound, Wostenholme Sound, and divers other places.

“For the killing of sea-morse, I can give no certaintie but only this, that our boat being but once ashore in all the north part of this bay, which was in the entrance of Alderman Jones’ Sound, at the returne our men told us they saw many morses along by the shore, on the ice ; but our shippe being under saile, and the wind comming faire, they presently came on board without further search ; besides the people inhabiting about 74 degrees, told us, by divers signs, that towards the north, were many of those beasts, having two long teeth, and shewed us divers pieces of the same, &c. But here some may object, and aske, ‘why we sought that coast no better?’ To this I answer that while we were thereabout, the weather was so exceeding foule we could not ; for first, we anchored in Wostenholme Sound, where presently our ship drove with two anchors a-head ; then were we forced to stand forth with a low saile.

“The next day in Whale Sound we lost an anchor and cable, and could fetch the place no more ; then we came to an anchor near a small island, lying between Sir Thomas Smith’s Sound and Whale Sound ; but the winde came more outward, that we were forced to weigh again, &c.

“But the chiefe cause we spent so little time to seeke a harbour, was our great desire to performe the

discoverie, having the sea open in all that part, and still likelihood of a passage, but when we had coasted the land so farre to the southward, that hope of passage was none, then the yeere was too farre spent and many of our men very weake, and withall we, having some beliefe that shippes the next yeere would be sent for the killing of whales, which might better doe it than we Yet I am persuaded those Sounds, before named, will all be cleared before the twentieth of July; for we this yeere were in Whale Sound the fourth day among many whales, and might have strooke them without let of ice and above all, the variation of the compasses, whose wonderfull operation is such in this bay. increasing and decreasing so suddenly and swift; being in some part as in Wostenholme Sound and in Sir Thomas Smith's Sound, varied about five points, or 56 degrees; a thing almost incredible, and matchlesse in in all the world beside! So that without great care, and good observation, a true description could not have beene had."

Much loose ice prevented a near approach to Lancaster Sound; he further states:

"From this Sound to the southward we had a ledge of ice between the shoare and us, but clear to the seaward; we kept close by this ledge of ice till the 14th day in the afternoon, by which time we were

in the latitude of $71^{\circ} 16'$, and plainly perceived the land to the southward of $70^{\circ} 30'$; then we having so much sea round about, were forced to stand more eastward."

Although some considerable knowledge of Baffin's Bay exists among whaling seamen, but few additions have been made to the public stock of geographical information; their life is one of constant anxiety, astronomical observations are unnecessary where known headlands are almost constantly in sight, hence positions upon the chart are but rarely assigned to the places of interest they occasionally frequent. The most important of their recent discoveries that we know of is the exploration of an inlet by the 'Prince of Wales,' Lee, master, in 1848; feeling confident that they were off the entrance of Lancaster Sound, although the weather was very thick they sailed as they supposed sufficiently far up it to be off the entrance of Prince Regent's inlet, and there hove to; during this time the wind blew strongly from the southward, with thick hazy weather; at intervals the tops of the cliffs along the north shore were visible above the driving mist.

When the return of clear weather enabled them to distinguish distant objects, they found themselves in a much narrower inlet than Barrow Strait, its width at this part being from twelve to twenty miles; a

fiord or inlet was seen to the southward corresponding in direction to Prince Regent's inlet, but having an island in it; there was much loose ice about, but no land visible to the westward. Many large icebergs were seen, and the southern inlet seemed choked with them; a boat landed near its eastern entrance where a small cairn of stones, probably an Esquimaux mark, was seen.

The northern shore was very lofty, the southern land was lower, and rose gradually from the sea. Mullemukkes (Fulmar Petrel) were breeding in immense numbers upon the cliffs; a dead narwhal was picked up, having an Esquimaux harpoon deeply buried in its side. A rock showing a wash like the back of a dead whale, was seen near the middle of the inlet, and about twenty miles up it. As the 'Prince of Wales' returned into Baffin's Bay (which she did with all speed), the entrance of this inlet was observed to be only six or eight miles in width, the northern cape was bold and lofty, and the southern land terminated in a low point. From subsequent observations, Captain Lee places this inlet between Cape Horsburg and Cape Leopold; possibly it may be Jones' Sound, although from its narrow entrance this does not seem likely.

As it is (somewhat gratuitously) supposed that no human beings exist between Whale Sound and

Pond's Bay, at both which places they are tolerably numerous, we can only account for the dead narwhal's being found by the 'Prince of Wales,' with harpoon and inflated seal-skin bag still attached, by supposing that when wounded it retreated or was drifted thither by winds and currents. We are quite ignorant of the movements of the latter, but that floating bodies are occasionally carried northward, the instance of the 'North Star' proves. Also, when off Jones' Sound, in 1818, Sir John Ross picked up a 'piece of fir wood having nails in it, and the marks of the plane and adze were also evident.'

Baffin's voyage was performed in the 'Discovery,' a vessel of, I believe, 55 tons, and a crew of 17 men; he reached the north water on 1st July, in which he esteemed himself fortunate, for in speaking of the difficulties to be contended with, he states :

"The chiefest and greatest cause is, that same yeere it may happen, by reason of the ice lying between $72\frac{1}{2}$ degrees, and 76 degrees no minutes, that the ships cannot come into those places till towards the middest of July."

It is probable that more favourable seasons than that of 1615 occasionally occur, as our whalers sometimes reach Lancaster Sound by the middle of June. He makes no mention of seeing natives, further north than 74° ; but as the Arctic High-

landers have no kayaks, he did not land. At present none exist between 73° and 76° .

The fate of this great man, than whom our country cannot boast a more skilful navigator, or dauntless seaman, is quaintly related by Purchas :

“Master Baffin told me that he would, if he might get employment, search the passage from Japan, by the coast of Asia ; but in the Indies he dyed, in the late Ormus businesse, slain in fight with a shot, as he was trying his mathematicall projects and conclusions.”

F. L. Mc Clintock.

VENETIAN ARCTIC DISCOVERY.

While the great nations of Europe—engaged either in those crusades which effectually stemmed the advance of a false religion, or amid the disputes between their kings, nobles, and burghers—were preparing the way for a new and more glorious civilization ; the mercantile republic of Italy continued to supply the rest of Christendom with the silks and spices of the Indies, and the furs of the remote north.

Among these, none were richer, none more prosperous, than the Queen of the Adriatic. Ruled by a close aristocracy, and peopled by an enterprising race, the Republic of Venice for a time continued to be all-powerful in the Mediterranean. Trading, through Egypt, with the remote countries of the East, transporting the valiant champions of the Cross to the Holy Land, and proudly mediating between an Emperor of Germany and a Roman Pontiff, she rapidly acquired possession of the Isles of the Archipelago, Cyprus, Candia, and the Morea; and at length her victorious Doge planted the Lion of St. Mark on the walls of Constantinople, while her citizens penetrated to the remotest corners of the earth, received honourable employment from the Emperor of China, and conducted the fleets of the North to the shores of an unknown continent.

Among the noble families of this proud republic, few were more famous for valour and wisdom than that of the Zenos. In 1252, Rainiero Zeno became Doge of Venice, and conducted the first war with the Genoese; in 1377 the brave Carlo Zeno seized upon Tenedos, and in 1830, when Venice was in danger of destruction from the attacks of the Genoese, he drove Doria into the Chiozza, and though receiving a wound in the throat, and falling down the hatchway into the main hold, he defeated the Genoese at Brondolo, and

forced them to capitulate; and his brothers added an important page to the annals of Arctic discovery.

Sailing through the Straits of Gibraltar, Nicolo Zeni arrived at the Feroe Isles in 1380, and was made commander of the fleet by Zichmi, their Earl. In this capacity he visited Greenland and Iceland, described the active volcano and boiling springs of the latter; and on his death his brother Antonio succeeded him in his honours, and being sent on a voyage of discovery to the westward he discovered Newfoundland and the coast of America; found the remains of the Norman colonies, and received information concerning the great empire of the Aztecs. Such were the important discoveries of these Venetian adventurers.

John Cabota, too, a citizen of Venice, led a crew of Englishmen to the re-discovery of Newfoundland, and the coasts of North America, from Florida to Labrador; while his son Sebastian received a pension from Edward VI., and being placed at the head of the merchant adventurers, he extended British commerce, kept alive the spirit of enterprise, and promoted the expeditions of Willoughby, Chancellor, and Frobisher.

But the glory of Venice passed away when Vasco de Gama rounded the Cape of Good Hope. The nations of Europe which formerly confined their

enterprise to the destruction of infidels, or to intestine wars, now found a wider and more profitable field in maritime discovery, and the advancement of their commerce; and while they no longer required the aid of the Italian republics, for the acquisition of the luxuries of the East, the evil effects of a close aristocracy, the loss of her lucrative Indian trade, and the employment of foreign mercenaries, quickly reduced the once powerful Venice to poverty and insignificance. One by one her possessions in the Levant were torn from her grasp by the arms of the Turks; and that Republic whose fleets were once the terror of her enemies, and whose merchants were among the princes of the earth, added one more name to the long list of those states, who, trusting to commerce for their stability and power, "relying on that daughter of fortune—inconstant and deceitful as her mother—who chooses her residence where she is least expected, and shifts it when her continuance is in appearance most firmly seated," have, like Phœnicia, Carthage, Amalfi, Pisa, and Genoa, before her, been conquered by those nations who live by the product of their own land, improved by their own labour.

Sunk in the lap of luxury and effeminacy, the former mistress of the Mediterranean heard with terror the imperious mandate of Napoleon; Manini, her last Doge, vacated his throne, her golden book

was publicly burnt, and the horses of Praxiteles, those proud trophies of the venerable Dandolo, were sent to grace the capital of the despoiler; and on the 18th of January, 1798, the double-headed eagle of Austria proclaimed to the world that the Republic of Venice had ceased to exist.

PACIFICUS.

C.R. Mearns

THE HISTORY OF GRIFFITH'S AND CORNWALLIS'
ISLANDS.

NO. II.

The teeming myriads of animals and rank vegetation of those times, when Cornwallis and Griffith's Islands assumed the appearance of tropical countries, were succeeded, in course of time, by those wondrous, and, to us, distorted beings—those huge Batrachians, distorted Ichthyosauri, and flying Saurians, which peopled the world during the new red sandstone era.

The rocks which compose this system, and which are usually deposited upon and around the broken tracts of the carboniferous strata, have been found in some parts of North Somerset, where gypsum and red sandstone exist in considerable quantities; but

rocks of those periods which succeeded it, up to the tertiary, do not, as far as is yet known, compose any of the land to the westward of Cape Horsburgh.

At or about the time when the new red sandstone strata were accumulating, the two islands seem to have been convulsed by some mighty subterranean agency, and to have forced the carboniferous strata up at different angles, and pointing towards different parts of the horizon; which has caused a development in bold hilly masses, intersected by those precipitous ravines that are formed by the melting snow, in its headlong course towards the frozen sea.

The strata of that lofty cliff which forms the northern point of the entrance to Barlow Inlet, are upheaved at an angle of about fifty degrees, and point towards the E.N.E.; while in one of the deep ravines near Cape Hotham they are inclined at a smaller angle, and point towards the south, and in some parts of Griffith's Island to the N.N.E.

The causes which effected so great an alteration in the climate of the Arctic regions, since the ferns and palm-trees grew in the Parry Archipelago, and elephants roamed over the plains of Siberia, have not yet been fully ascertained; but since that change has taken place, two other forces have altered to a great extent the physical appearance of these two islands.

The melting of those vast masses of snow which cover the land during the winter months, and which would never have accumulated had the climate been milder, now forms deep channels throughout all parts of both islands, the beds of which are dry during the greater portion of the year; thus leaving magnificent ravines, bounded by perpendicular cliffs; and sometimes, where parts of the rock have resisted the force of the torrent, lofty pillars and bridges of limestone, which add to the sublimity of the view.

The pressure of the surrounding ice on their shores have very little altered the shape of the land. On the eastern part of Cornwallis Island, the pebbles of the beach have indeed been forced up into great heaps, extending for a considerable distance from the base of the rocks; and pieces of quartz and gneiss have been transported by the ice from some other distant land, and lodged on these shores; while at the south side of Griffith's Island some large boulders of granite, full of garnets, have been thrown upon the beach.

These two agencies—the melting of the snow, and the action of the ice—are at the present moment of constant recurrence, and will probably, in course of time, alter still more the physical formation of the land; and the former will render the difficulty of travelling in the interior still greater; but subter-

ranean force, which evidently at one time was so powerful in its action as to alter the shape and character of the country to a great extent, has long since ceased to act ; so that nothing remains but to describe those parts of the islands of Griffith and Cornwallis that are now known as they exist at present.

TO BE CONTINUED.

C. R. Mankin

PARALLEL OF RACES LIVING UNDER THE HIGH
NORTHERN LATITUDES.

It is deeply interesting to observe how one race of mankind, labouring under the most disadvantageous circumstances, with regard to climate and an inhospitable and barren country, has struggled against these evils, and to a certain extent overcome them ; while another in the same predicament has sunk into the most degraded state of barbarity. Such has always been the difference between the Caucasian and Mongolian races, a difference which, even if their physical conformation, and especially the shape of their skulls, did not at once stamp them as another race, would alone suffice to distinguish them.

When Ingulf and Hiorlef, with their gallant band of Normans landed on the shores of Iceland, they found a country barren and uninhabited ; desolated by the action of a volcano ; its trees up-rooted frequently by the violence of the tempests, and the intense cold of the winter stunting the vegetation and thinning animal life. Braving, however, the hardships they had to encounter, they in a short time founded an enlightened and independent republic ; which became famous over the civilized world, as much for its successful and daring enterprises, as for its cultivation and improvement of literature ; as much for being the country of Snorro Sturleson and Loemund, the authors of the Edda, and of Arc Frode and Sturle Thordson ; the historians of the Landnamabok ; as for having sent forth Eirek Raude, the discoverer and settler of Greenland ; and Heruulf and Biorne, the discoverers of Newfoundland, Nova Scotia, and Massachussets.

Eirek Raude also in Greenland found a country whose interior was covered with a vast unexplored glacier, and where even on the narrow strip of inhabitable sea-coast, the stunted willow with a few small shrubs, grasses, and mosses, are alone able to survive the vigour of an Arctic climate. Here, however, his followers and descendants established what was for a time a flourishing colony, built a

cathedral, and founded a bishopric, at the same time sending expeditions to the northern extremity of Baffin's Bay; while the combined violence of the most frightful plague that ever scourged the world, and the attacks of immensely superior numbers of Skraelings were alone able to sweep them from the face of the earth.

Such has been the career of those Caucasian nations who have found it necessary to seek for homes under the Arctic Circle; but how different have been that of the Mongolian tribes under like circumstances. Settling in the same or corresponding countries with equal facilities of obtaining food, and an equal proportion of leisure to improve their understandings; they have lost all the pristine virtues of their Tartar ancestors, and living without religion, and without regarding even the common ties of humanity, they have degraded themselves to a rank little higher than that of the bears and seals on which they prey.

To account for this extraordinary difference in two races, some better reason must be sought for than the inhospitality of the country which they inhabit; for this cause worked equally upon the Normans of Iceland and Greenland. To say also that the one was in a higher state of civilization than the other would be equally admissible, for in the ninth century, the

Norman in his frail bark, crossing a vast and stormy ocean, had no greater conveniences than the Esquimaux in his kayak, on the coast of Labrador and Greenland: but the one great advantage which the Norman possessed was the superiority of his mental powers; powers which enabled him as easily to form a republic on the shores of Greenland and Iceland, as to found monarchies in England and Italy, or to plant his banner on the walls of Jerusalem: and this advantage will alone suffice to account for the difference between the Caucasians who inhabited Iceland and Greenland in the fourteenth, and the Mongolians who drag out a miserable existence in Greenland and Labrador in the nineteenth century.

Hoping that this short parallel will not be wholly devoid of interest to some of your readers.

I remain,

Sir,

Your's very sincerely,

CLIO.

C.R. Wankham.

LIST OF ANIMALS KILLED BY H.M.S. 'ASSISTANCE' AND HER TENDER 'INTREPID,'
BETWEEN THE DATE OF THEIR ARRIVAL AT WHALEFISH ISLAND,
JUNE 15TH AND DEC. 31ST, 1850.

COMMON NAMES.	PROPER NAMES.	NO.	LOCALITY.	REMARKS.
Bears	<i>Ursus maritimus.</i>	6	{ Four in Wellington Channel, two near Winter Quarters.	{ Four full-grown males, a dam and female cub. About thirty seen.
Foxes	<i>Canus lagopus.</i>	16	{ One in Barlow's Inlet, the rest at Winter Quarters.	{ Chiefly males, nine were caught in traps. They seemed to be both numerous and well fed.
Hares	<i>Lepus glacialis.</i>	1	Wolsenholme Sound.	{ Weighed only 4 lbs., and was nearly white; have been seen on Cornwallis and Griffith's Islands.
Lemmings	<i>Arvicola Hudsonia.</i>	3	Cornwallis Island.	{ Two were brought on board alive, and soon became quite tame; traces very numerous.
Seals	<i>Phoca vitulina.</i>	1	Barlow's Inlet.	{ Caught on ice, his hole having frozen over whilst he slept. Great numbers seen in Wellington Channel.
Narwhals	<i>Monodon monoceros</i>	2	{ One in Melville Bay, one in Wellington Channel.	{ A male shot, a female harpooned; length of the former, exclusive of the horn, 17 ft.; of the horn, 5 ft. 8 in.; length of the female, 12 ft. 3½ in.
King duck	<i>Anas spectabilis.</i>	1	Cape Hotham.	
Eider duck	<i>Anas mollissima.</i>	39	{ Nearly all at the Whale Islands.	{ Were occasionally seen up to the 10th Oct.
Long-tailed duck	<i>Anas glacialis.</i>	9	Whale Islands.	{ Ditto ditto.
Red-throated divers	{ <i>Columbus septentrionalis.</i>	5	Ditto.	
Looms	<i>Uria lomvia.</i>	385	{ Chiefly at the Rookery, near Kingston Bay.	{ Seen along the Greenland coast and in Lancaster Sound.
Dovekies	<i>Uria grylle.</i>	155	{ Chiefly at the Whale Islands.	{ Common everywhere.
Puffins	<i>Alca arctica.</i>	18	Whale Islands only.	{ They were found only upon one range of cliffs.
Razor-bill auks	<i>Alca torda.</i>	6	Ditto.	{ Not seen north of 72°.
Little auks (Røtges). . . .	<i>Alca alle.</i>	1430	{ Between lat. 74½ and 76½, on the Greenland Coast.	{ Extremely numerous about Cape York.
Burgomasters	<i>Larus glaucus.</i>	7	{ Seen throughout. Two young birds obtained in September.
Silver gulls	<i>Larus argentæus.</i>	4	Wellington Channel.	
Ivory gulls	<i>Larus eburneus.</i>	32	{ Melville Bay and Wellington Channel.	{ Four young birds were shot in September.
Kittiwakes	<i>Larus tridactylus.</i>	16	{ Seen throughout.
Mullenukkes	<i>Procellaria glacialis.</i>	...	A few as specimens.	{ Very numerous, and almost constantly in sight.
Boatswain	<i>Lestris richardsonii.</i>	9	Whale Islands.	{ Occasionally seen throughout.
Arctic terns	<i>Sterna arctica.</i>	41	{ Along the coast of Greenland.	{ Most numerous to the southward of 72°.
Phalaropes	{ <i>Phalaropus hyperboreus.</i>	1	{ Only a few were seen.
Snow buntings	<i>Emberiza nivalis.</i>	7	{ Seen wherever we landed.

F. H. Mc Clintock

TO THE EDITOR OF THE AURORA BOREALIS.

Sir,

My well-meant remarks on Clio's production, which appeared in your last number, do not appear to have been received in the same good part as they were offered; but even this shall not deter me from again requesting you to admit a short review of the Mountain of Meru into your valuable and well-filled columns.

This article appears to have been written for the purpose of relieving the author's brain of an extraordinary idea which found an analogy between the migration of certain supposed tribes from the plains of Bengal, and the present purposes of our Expedition.

This perhaps on the whole is a harmless and laughable conceit, but in its details we are grieved to remark several gross and unpardonable inaccuracies. The first worthy of notice is, that the Hindoo religion is the oldest recorded in profane history; of course Clio entirely forgets, for his own purposes, the religions of Chaldea and ancient Egypt:

secondly, his derivation of the Teutonic nations from India (which, by the bye, is copied from Schlegel), is far fetched in the extreme, and, as he confesses, is only supported by a supposed resemblance of the German and Hindoo languages: thirdly, he states, without a single proof, or even probable reason, that the migrations into Scandinavia were solely for the purpose of discovering a golden mountain.

Several other mistakes might be mentioned in his remarks on the Grecian mythology, but this will suffice to expose the habitual slovenliness and inaccuracy of the author, who only aiming at convincing his readers of the probability of this principal theory, neglects all correctness in his minor details.

Hoping that these few well-intended remarks will prove not quite so unpalatable as my last,

I remain,

Sir,

Your obedient servant,

EXAMINER.

WHALING.

The many exciting and interesting scenes which we witnessed among the large fleet of whalers in crossing Baffin's Bay will doubtless be for ever remembered by us all. Their knowledge in assisting us with their valuable advice, as well as the seaman-like manner they managed their ships, frequently under most trying circumstances, reflects the greatest credit upon these hardy seamen; and although, we fear, their efforts during that season were not crowned with success, we shall always hear with pleasure of any improvements, which may insure to them a more prosperous and certain issue to their labours, known only to those who have watched their slow and toilsome progress amidst dangers which human powers have as yet failed to avert. We regret no opportunity ever occurred, while in their company, by which we might have witnessed the use of many instruments, which seem but frail weapons to attack an animal of such tremendous size, and strength as the whale.

We who have already witnessed the bustle caused by the welcome cry of "There she spouts," can un-

derstand the breathless anxiety with which the hardy whalers approach their prey ; the rapidity with which their lines whirl round their bollard-heads, and the springing of the oar, as each man strains every muscle to regain a position for lancing and renewing their attack. The danger connected with the whole process is immediately evident, and naturally tends to a train of thought as to how they effected the same purpose before experience, and the various improvements in manufacture, put into their hands the means of lessening the danger, and of securing their prey with more certainty.

It has been our good fortune to visit the N.W. coast of America, where the sea abounds with fish of many species. We here saw whaling in its infancy, but carried out with considerable success by the Flattery and Makaw Indians, two savage tribes who inhabit the shores at the entrance of the straits of Juan de Fuca.

These men were unprovided with iron, rope, or any European material for fishing, but the natural resources of their country have supplied their places. The all-seeing Providence has gifted them with extraordinary ingenuity, displayed wonderfully in making articles to serve in the room of those used in our fisheries.

From forests of lofty pine they build canoes,

adapted to the heavy seas they frequently have to encounter; they made their lines of the sinews of wild animals, particularly the deer, and their harpoon is fashioned out of the mussel-shell which abound on the shores of their native land. The lines used (about four fathoms long, and two inches and a half in circumference) are laid up left-handed in three strands, and sewed over with twine made from the fibres of the cedar-tree: to this line their shell harpoon, with its barb of deer-horn, is attached by means of gum and resin; the edge of the former is scraped perfectly sharp, the latter smooth, and extending about three inches on each side of the shell. At the other end of the rope is a seal-skin, blown out, and made perfectly water-tight.

Upon whales being seen in the offing, the Indian encampment immediately becomes all bustle, noise, and confusion, presenting a picturesque scene. The savage features, dark skins, and loose hair of the Indians reaching to their waist, together with the peculiar gloom of the surrounding forest excite in the breasts of civilized people a degree of interest which can scarcely be described. Some are seen launching canoes, others bringing down their paddles and apparatus, while the women are collecting provisions and water. As they are ready the canoes assemble, and lay off until their whole force is mustered, when

their chiefs give peremptory orders respecting the chase, and at a given signal, with a savage yell off they all go, each striving to be first in reaching the object of pursuit.

Upon nearing the fish, as many as are in advance prepare their harpoons, which are thrown by means of a heavy pole pointed between the fangs of the barb, and so loosely as to come out upon the whole sounding. As the fish again rises, the seal-skin denotes its direction, when a fresh volley of harpoons and lances is prepared, and the operation repeated until the fish becomes exhausted. The latter instruments are the same as the harpoons, but without lines or bladders. Not having the means of trying down their blubber they expose it to the sun upon the rocks, and the oil is allowed to drain into vessels for the purpose.

During our stay, we procured great quantities for a trifling amount of barter, but their principal object is to supply the Hudson's Bay factory at Victoria.

G. C.

"Mecham". *presumably*
C. F. Mecham.

TO MY LOYAL SUBJECT

THE EDITOR OF THE AURORA BOREALIS.

Sir,

I am a Queen: my dominions extend from pole to pole; and like the torrid zone, encircle the world. My subjects are to be found in all climes, in all regions. I pervade all things that have life. Man, under every circumstance, may be naturalized as my subject. I except no race—the Caucasian, the Ethiopian, the Mongolian and the American are my children. The vegetable kingdom acknowledges my dominion; trees have bowed to my power, and in my absence have shrunk, as the sensitive plant, within themselves.

From time immemorial I have looked upon my beautiful England as the fairest portion of my dominions, and around her I have strived to cast my most genial and richest influence. She is the brightest gem in the coronet that encircles my brow, and my heart throbs with the heavings of a mother's love as I feel how well and truly che-

rished I am in that bright land. It has been erroneously stated, that I cannot reign without the cheering influence of the sun's golden presence. That luminary is but a source of myself. A faithful and trustworthy servant, he has been deputed as my ambassador on a mission to the Antipodes, with vice-regal powers. In his absence I govern triumphant, beloved and adored by all the good and the virtuous of the world.

Proud do I feel of the late accession made to my sceptre in that land bounded by Cornwallis and Griffith's Islands. Here, indeed, are faithful subjects; my laws by them are readily obeyed and my decrees cheerfully enacted. My children, Contentment, Occupation and Union, are fondled; and my enemies, Idleness, Discontent and Envy, are exiled from these realms. Let these, my faithful subjects, go on as they have commenced, and I must ever remain with them; let them, however, not mistake me for Pleasure, she is a fickle goddess, and places those within my dominions who coquette with her cup in merely skimming its surface, but grants no passport of admission to him who, seizing it greedily, drinks it to the dregs.

I have resolved upon continuing here as long as your Expedition dwells in these regions. I shall return with you to the happiest part of my do-

rainions, and then confiding my trust to others, I shall place upon your laurelled brow the crown which bedecks the glorious front of

Your Imperial Mistress,

and cheerful Sovereign,

HAPPINESS.

J. D.

METEOROLOGY.

NO. II.

During December we experienced some boisterous weather at the commencement, middle and end of the month, accompanied at times by thick gloomy weather, which interrupted the communication between the ships. With only one exception we have enjoyed exercise under the lee of the ship; the greater portion of the days however were clear, and the heavenly bodies shone brightly. The most dreary and the darkest period having past, it must be generally admitted that the sensation at the deprivation of daylight has not produced the gloom anticipated. The daily decrease of light gradually habituates the mind to the unnatural change; but even when the sun reached the winter solstitial

colura the south horizon was illuminated by refraction of the sun's rays, and the colouring thus afforded a relief to the eye amidst the icy wilderness. At this period also a full moon opportunely favoured us with her light for several days. Christmas-day was a specimen of a clear Arctic winter day in its brightest colours, the peculiar brilliancy of the southern horizon contrasted with that of the heavenly bodies, shining from their deep azure vault, excited general admiration, and enhanced the sacred associations of the festive season: "the heavens declared the glory of God, and the firmament showed His handy work."

The prevailing wind has been N.W., and blew from that quarter for twenty-two days of the month; it blew a fresh gale on the 2nd and 3rd, also on the 13th and 14th; the heaviest gale yet experienced in these quarters, and of the longest continuance, set in on the evening of the 30th, and blew with great force constantly until the morning of January 1st, 1851; these gales caused a vast accumulation of snow drift along the northern sides of the ships.

December set in with a rapid fall of temperature to -31° ; the preceding midnight the thermometer having stood at zero. The severest day was the last of the year, when the thermometer showed $-40\frac{1}{2}^{\circ}$, at a distance from the ship. On this occasion mercury

congealed. The following table shows the respective temperatures for December, in six different years :

Position.	Year.	Mean Temperature.	Maximum.	Minimum.
Melville Island . . .	1819	-21.79	+ 6°	-13
Winter Island . . .	1821	-12.94	+ 12°	-29
Iglolik	1822	-27.80	-10°	-43
Port Bowen	1824	-19.05	- 4.5	-35
Port Leopold	1848	-32.5	-12.3	-47.5
Off Griffith's Island*	1850	-22.2	- 4	-39.5

Cloudy weather is generally attended by a rise of the thermometer, a fact observed by other Arctic navigators, but no conclusion has been arrived at respecting the cause.

The mean height of the barometer with its extreme range is here given for the last four months, together with the same for similar periods at Melville Island :

OFF GRIFFITH'S ISLAND, 1850.				MELVILLE'S ISLAND, 1819.			
Month.	Mean.	Max.	Min.	Month.	Mean.	Max.	Min.
September . . .	29.85	30.66	29.02	September . . .	29.90	30.42	29.36
October	29.93	30.55	29.58	October	29.81	30.32	29.10
November . . .	29.91	30.42	29.19	November . . .	29.94	30.32	29.63
December . . .	29.84	30.15	29.24	December . . .	29.24	29.86	29.10

The aurora borealis has been observed eleven times

* The temperature has been observed to range 12° in the space of four hours.

during the month, but generally of a faint tinge; it has appeared in the form of an arch, touching the N.W. and S.E. quarters of the horizon, also in an arc between the S.W. and E.S.E. points, the altitude of the centre being 25° ; coruscations have been seen to cross the sky from various points of the horizon, and diverge in a variety of directions. During its presence the heavenly bodies were always very bright. Many theories are advanced concerning these phenomena, one of which being that they move in columns parallel with the magnetic meridian, which is at variance with its movement in this locality.

Several paraselenæ were observed when the moon was at a low altitude, consisting of a white halo forming the segment of a circle, with a mock moon at the extremities of the horizontal diameter, with occasionally a vertical white ray intersecting the disc of the moon. The mock moons are sometimes tinged with prismatic hues. Remarkable halos have been observed round the moon of an elliptical form, with the major axis vertical, or more nearly approaching the form of an egg, having its base towards the zenith; the proportion of the vertical to the horizontal diameter being about 4 to 3. Occasional shooting stars have been seen.

The thickness of the ice, as found on measurement, on the 22nd November, and on the 22nd

December is here inserted, the dimensions being taken as near to the same spot as possible :

Positions.	November.	December.
	inches.	inches.
On old floe	33	35
In canal	24½	38
Pressed up young ice	31	40
Ice last formed	23	36
Average thickness of snow on young ice	2½	3
Ditto on old ice	7	5

It may be interesting to know that a cubic foot of snow was found to weigh 30 lbs., by a Salter's spring balance, after making corrections. The snow was extracted at a depth of four inches below the surface. On referring to Parry's voyage, precisely the same result is given.

Looking along the horizon extending from Griffith's Island, a vapour may frequently be seen, or what is commonly termed frost smoke, which rises from the surface of the water in extreme cold. This probably may result from the rents in the ice occasioned by the action of the tides.

Capt. Cunningham

THE ROYAL INTREPID SALOON.

When we contemplate the aspect of these bleak realms and dreary regions of cold desolation, which are fatal to life, and all by which it is supported, we naturally look forward to any change or amusement which may relieve the monotony of these long winter nights. Therefore it was with pleasure and delight we hailed the evening of the 19th December last, when the doors of the "Royal Intrepid Saloon" were again thrown open to the public. The arrangements surpassed the most sanguine expectations of all who witnessed them.

On the arrival of our much esteemed leaders, the Royal Arctic Band in attendance struck up their famous overture, and as the last strains of the music died away, the curtain rose amidst loud cheers from the audience, and exhibited to their astonished eyes some most surprising feats of strength. They were feats of strength in the simple acceptation of the word, and when we consider the performers were merely amateurs, unaccustomed to such exercises, too much credit cannot be lavished upon them, and heartily do we thank them for contributing so intrepidly to the amusement of the Arctic public.

Several capital songs were sung by distinguished vocalists, who were ably aided by some of the officers and the band.

To the excellent artistes forming the Royal Arctic Band we feel much indebted. Many were the beautiful airs played between the performances, and well were their sounds suited to the many eager listeners.

"God save the Queen" preceded the falling of the curtain. Our worthy chiefs then joined the hospitable board of the officers of the ship, where a good show of merry faces were to be seen, and the evening was kept up with mirth and jollity to a late hour, when all retired to their different vessels, well pleased, if we may judge from the cheerfulness exhibited on each countenance, with the last theatrical performance of good old 1850. It is to be hoped that 1851 will see the same merry laughing faces in the gallery of the Royal Saloon; and we trust that the performances on the boards of this theatre will be kept up with the same spirit to the latest period of the season, when theatricals must give place to those duties which will call forth all our energies to devise the best means of searching for the resting-place of our missing countrymen, and also to satisfy our Queen and country, who have entrusted us with these all-absorbing duties.

B.

Bertie Caton.
Lieut. Commandr,
"Intrepid".

THE ILLUSTRATED ARCTIC NEWS.

"The Illustrated Arctic News" for January was placed in our hands, and as we eagerly opened and read its interesting sheets, we were astonished to find a huge picture card, representing faithfully the Carnavalesque enjoyments of the 5th December last.

With a feeling of pleasure not altogether devoid of vanity, each saw, as in a mirror, a true representation of himself, figuring in the joyous crowd.

We thank the artist for his able efforts, and with the hope that other opportunities may present themselves to exercise his faithful pencil we loudly cry

"Success to 'The Illustrated Arctic News.'"

THE ROYAL ARCTIC THEATRE.

On January the 9th, 1851, was produced at the above theatre the farce of "The Turned Head." As usual, the house was crowded, and the audience expressed the greatest satisfaction at the elegant arrangements for their convenience and comfort.

The acting of the difficult farce exceeded anything we have yet witnessed on these boards. The characters of the piece were cleverly sustained, and with pleasure we observed two additions to the strength of the company. "Bombastes Furioso" followed; and here we must declare, that although we have seen it at the London theatres by some of the first comic actors of the day, yet we never saw it done so much justice to as on this occasion. The inimitable swagger of the General, the royal pompousness of the King, the cringing courteousness of Fusbos and the flirtations of Distaffina could not be surpassed. The dresses were splendid, and did honour to the producers. The applause was long and loud, and the laughter so constant that we really were afraid for the audience "that some death they'd die before the morning."

Three talented actors made an effective *début*, the gentle Distaffina, an officer of H.M.S. 'Resolute;' Bombastes and Fusbos, officers of H.M.S. 'Assistance.' The merits of the King are well known, this being the second appearance of this talented and 'Resolute' officer.

Thermometer, on the boards, averaged $+32^{\circ}$ F.; on the floe, stood at -30° F.

ARCTIC PANTOMIME OF ZERO, OR HARLEQUIN LIGHT.

This talented and original piece was composed expressly for this theatre (Royal Arctic); and abounds in wit and humour. Turning all the dangers and inconveniences to which we are exposed in these inhospitable climates into evil spirits that are leagued against us, it supposes them continually watching every opportunity to surprise an unfortunate travelling party, till at length their power is destroyed by the appearance of the more puissant good spirits, Sun and Daylight. Then the metamorphosis takes place: the good spirits become Harlequin and Columbine, and frosty old Zero, who has all along been the leader of the evil spirits, is changed into First Clown; a bear, which had been for some time prowling about, was then fired at, and falling to pieces, discovers Pantaloon and Second Clown. Then commences the pantomime of fun and frolic, which was carried on with great spirit by the two Clowns and Pantaloon, while they were at intervals relieved by the graceful and elegant *pas de deux* of Harlequin and Columbine. Several songs, alluding to the

Expedition, its purposes and position were also introduced.

The scene, which represented one of the Arctic vessels nipped in a most dangerous position between lofty hummocks of ice, was a most excellent work of art, and redounded to the credit of the artist, more particularly when it is generally known that there having been a scarcity of paint on board the 'Assistance,' he was reduced to mixtures of "Day and Martin," black ink, black-lead, whitening, washing blue, glue, and other unusual ingredients, consisting of chimney-soot and lamp-black, to complete his picture.

The conception of the piece, its composition, the way it was brought on the boards, and the contrivances for stage effect, reflect the greatest credit on the author, the artist and the constructor of the bear, sun, &c., and all others concerned in it; and, in conclusion, we are delighted to be enabled to inform our readers that the manager intends its reappearance on the next occasion, with several improvements and alterations, for which reason we refrain from farther criticism for the present.

C.R. Mauleham.

ROYAL ARCTIC THEATRE.

An able critique of the performance of the 9th instant by one of our talented contributors was received at a time when our review had already passed the press. The production is so good, that though we do not insert the whole, we cannot refrain from giving the following few extracts :

“ ‘The Turned Head’ is one of those farces that require more than an ordinary degree of comic talent to render attractive ; nevertheless, it was put on the stage with unexceptionable taste, and carefully played.

“ We now come to the pantomime. The spirit of decorative enterprise which has so liberally presided over the scenic department of this theatre, burst forth on Thursday evening with all its wonted force.

“ But the grandest feature of the spectacle, was a view of H.M.S. ‘ Assistance,’ moored to a land floe, and sustaining a severe pressure from the heavy masses of pack ice, which is rushing past with fearful rapidity. To have an opportunity of admiring this splendid picture—for picture it really

is—is worth a visit, even should the prices of admission exceed those of a Jenny Lind night. The lady who represented Columbine did her work in excellent style: her dress, elegant figure and graceful action would have adorned the boards of Her Majesty's Theatre. We only wish that one of the critics of our respected cotemporary the mighty Thunderer of Printing House Square had been present to glance his eye over the brilliant *ensemble*, he would have penned such a graphic and glowing description of it as would have immortalized the Arctic Theatre, from the manager to the scene-shifter, and generations yet unborn would read in the pages of history of the flourishing state of the drama at Griffith's Island in the winter of 1851. But enough of stage phraseology, let Jack speak a word in his own language.

“‘I have sailed in gilded yachts, flash frigates and magnificent liners; and I have seen their spacious decks fitted up for various purposes in the most brilliant style, even for the reception of Royalty itself, but the upper deck of the ‘Old Assistance’ presented a scene surpassing, in gorgeous splendour, anything that I have ever seen on board o’ ship.’”

~~~~~  
 "Murray".  
 presumably George  
 Murray.



## NOTICE.

Whereas the Squadron has been kept in a continual state of excitement by certain bravos, whose 'Resolute' and 'Intrepid' conduct has long disturbed the quieter inhabitants (probably from the strenuous 'Assistance' of pioneers;) we hereby give notice that any person or persons forwarding such information as to lead to their suppression will be handsomely rewarded. They are chiefly to be found at places of public amusement, occasionally intruding at private *soirées*.

SIR GREASY HIDE WALRUS, KT.

MAYOR OF GRIFFITH'S KITTERWAK.

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WANTED, for the next performance in the Royal Arctic Theatre, a person to take the part of "Dampley," who must be the possessor of a temperament of body so warm as to prevent the water which will be thrown over him from freezing.

January 6th, 1851.

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It is with the earnestness of parental love that the London Boards request the return of their loved son, "Bravo,"\* who quitted them on or about the 9th of November last, leaving the said boards in utter desolation at his loss, and the actors in a state of despair at his absence. He will be allowed the use of the boxes, pit or gallery, and to have as many companions in his fun as he wishes. He is strongly warned against the riotous company he is now keeping.

## NOTICES TO CORRESPONDENTS.

The intelligence received from the police office of Griffith's Kitterwak is not inserted, for reasons obvious to the reporters.

Several "Wants," wanted no longer, have been laid aside.

The "New Year's Song to the Seven Bellers," not having a sufficiently explicit meaning attached to it, has been omitted.

\* "Bravo," a word frequently lavished on the Arctic stage.

## VII.

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Winter Quarters, February, 1851.

THE first golden hues that fringed the clouds in the heavens to the southward, were hailed as harbingers of the coming sun, and all felt pleasure at the prospect of having once again among us an old and a tried friend ; but when that glorious orb appeared above the horizon, and gladdened nature by his presence, each heart throbbed with joy at the animating sight.

With his presence the shadows of an eternal Arctic night have been dispelled, and a new impetus given to everything. Life and daylight have ushered into our world a new action, and have raised from us the thick mantle of desolate gloom which has lain upon us, an incubus, during the terrible winter.

When we contrast the feelings which the returning sun has generated in our bosoms, with those we experienced as it vanished from our longing sight, and as we acknowledge the benefits of its cheering influence, we can readily understand the veneration that actuated the votaries of the Magian Philosophy; and, in the absence of the sublimest philosophy ever granted to man, we can almost excuse the idolatry of the sun-worshipper.

Great indeed must have been his veneration for this majestic orb of fire—the throne, as he believed, of the Ruler of the Universe; for as the traveller on the vast continents of Asia and America finds their plains studded with magnificent ruins—remains of temples erected to this luminary—he stands amazed when such vast structures as Baalbec, Palmyra, Persepolis, and Pachacamac, raise their ruined, though stupendous heads, amid solitary and immense deserts. The Persians, grander in their ideas, and more deeply imbued with the feeling of adoration, have chosen the summits of those mighty monarchs of the earth—the mountains—to celebrate the rites in honour of the visible object of their idolatry. To this day, it is said, the sacred fire burns unquenched on the heights of the Guebre's mountain.

With the glorious light in the heavens a new era

has opened to us—one full of hope and trust. We look back with feelings of gratitude to that great and incomprehensible Being, who has brought our Expedition safe through many dangers, and has watched over us through the solid gloom of a cheerless winter.

With hearts full of healthful anticipation, and bounding with a desire to accomplish our mission, we look forward to those happy days, when, bursting the fearful mystery that hangs over the fate of our missing countrymen, we may succeed in striking off their fetters, and releasing them from elements more despotic in their sway than the worst of tyrants, we may carry them to friends and a nation who will welcome them back with open arms.

L. D.

## WORSHIP OF THE SUN.

The sun has returned!—the author of light, the ruler of the seasons, the vivifier of vegetable life, the restorer of colour to the Arctic wanderer, after an absence of thirteen weeks, has again come among us!

The object of millions of prostrate adorers, this glorious luminary was alike the principal emanation of Ormuz, the good spirit of the Persians, and the great visible god of the Peruvians; alike the “phæbæa lampas” of the Greeks, and the glorious orb

“Which gladdened on the mountain-tops, the hearts  
Of the Chaldean shepherds, till they poured  
Themselves in orisons.”

All heathen nations, whatever has been their creed, have mingled in their mythology an adoration of the sun. Thousands of Magian priests, on the hill-tops of Iran, watched its rising with faces turned towards the east; and when, at length, bright Mithras, in a flood of brilliant light, rose upon their view, all the proud hierarchy of Persia, attired in

gorgeous silken robes, fell on their faces to the ground, in speechless adoration.

Believing in an Omnipotent Being, Creator of all things, and in two emanations from Him, Ormuz and Ahriman, the good and evil spirits, whose contentions filled the world. Ormuz, the author of light, was worshipped under the symbol of fire and the sun; and this religion, whose origin is lost in the mists of ancient history, was reformed by the famous Zoroaster, in the reign of Gushtasp, and restored by Ardshir with redoubled splendour, flourished for four hundred years; and the three days' carnage of Cadesia, the desperate conflicts of Jalula and Nevahend, and the storming of Ctesiphon, were insufficient to break the spirit of its supporters, who, while the crescents of the Arabian impostor rose above their ruined temples, worshipped their God in the recesses of the mountains; and, even at the present day, the opulent Parsees of Bombay and Gujerat, and the persecuted Guebres of Persia, retain the much-loved religion of their ancestors.

The Peruvians, whose religion has been probably derived from the Persians or Hindoos, worshipped the sun as the great author of their happiness. They believed that the sun was but the instrument of good in the hands of Pachacamac, or the Supreme Being. One-third of the revenue was appropriated to his use, and

his temples, filled with gold, were to be found in every village of the empire. The Feast of Raymi was celebrated when the sun, having touched the southern extremity of its course, returned, as if to gladden the hearts of his chosen people; and the avarice of Pizarro, the bigotry of Valverde, and the cruel massacres perpetrated by their followers and successors, with difficulty rooted this religion from the land, and replaced it with slavery and extortion.

The Greeks believed it to be the chariot of Apollo, and their philosophers disputed whether it were a flat piece of iron, a fiery mass, a humid exhalation, or a hollow boat; while a Roman Emperor became a high priest of the Sun of Emesa, and forced the Senate and people to prostrate themselves before a conical black stone, which had fallen from the mighty deity.

Such has been the adoration paid by the calm and thoughtful Persian, the simple Peruvian, the subtle Greek, and the haughty Roman, to this great dispenser of blessings to mankind. But how much more did those northern nations, who lost it for so many weeks, feel the reviving influence of its return; and accordingly the greatest festival of the ancient Scandinavians was instituted to celebrate the return of the sun.



We also had lost sight of its radiant beams for ninety-six days;\* and with us, though the winter has flown past with mirth and conviviality, the sun's return has been hailed with as great satisfaction as that expressed by the worshippers of Odin; for now the gloomy floe is lighted up with pleasant sunbeams, the colour returns to our faces, and the mercury will rise in the thermometer.

I remain,

Sir,

Yours very sincerely,

CLIO.

\* Ninety-two days below the horizon.

*C.R. Wanklyn.*

## TO THE EDITOR OF THE AURORA BOREALIS.

STEAM IN THE ARCTIC REGIONS—THE ICE DESTROYER.

Extract, 1850.

There was no time for thinking ; action, and not consideration, was necessary. The ice was closing around us, and the squadron still several miles in advance : rejoin it we must. Through, or over, this neck the 'Intrepid' must go. Sawing was useless, a mere waste of time, there was no alternative but give it the "stem." . . . . . "Go a-head, full speed," was the word of command ; "stem on," she goes, the concussion is terrific ; the vessel trembles from head to taffrail. The stubborn element bends and cracks, but does not break. "Stop her !" "Turn astern !" let us try it again. "Go a-head with all speed you can give her ;" the greater portion of the crew is now on the ice, with parties sent from the 'Assistance' and 'Resolute,' to assist in clearing away. She comes—she comes with additional force—stand clear—the ice breaks—hurrah ! A piece thirty feet square is adrift, other heavy masses spout from

underneath the main floes making a wonderful clearance, grappels over the bow, hook on the pieces, take a turn inboard—turn astern—stop her—unhook the grappels; this manœuvre was repeated over and over again with similar success, until the noble craft seemed no longer a piece of mechanism, but a thing of life; some ferocious beast bounding on, and crushing the barrier that opposed it.

To the spectator the scene was novel and interesting, the “gallows” men-o’-war’s men hurrah’d and laughed at the sport, while “hoary-headed experience”—those veterans who had grown grey in Arctic service, stood gaping with astonishment at the “ice-destroyer,” smashing a floe six feet thick as if it had been a sheet of glass.

She now makes a desperate and final effort, the barrier is broken, she is through—she is free, and the silent shores of Melville Bay echo the astounding cheers of a hundred seamen, as she dashes with lightning speed towards her consort the ‘Old Assistance’ . . . . . ’tis true, the ‘Intrepid’ was adrift three days from the squadron, but during that period she performed feats unparalleled in the annals of Arctic navigation. No human perseverance, no degree of physical energy, no known mechanical power save the “strong arm of steam,” could have enabled us to regain our position; and the day is not

far distant, when that mighty power (I speak of steam), which is gradually revolutionizing the civilized world, will establish a new era in the history of the Arctic regions. I remember the first steamer that ever floated on British waters, I saw her make her maiden effort in 1812 on the glassy waters of the Clyde; and I have lived long enough to see a steam-ship of war navigate the Polar Seas.

How gratifying must it be to the shades of Fulton and Henry Bell, should they be permitted from their empyreal abodes to survey the innumerable offspring of their genius, bearing the flag of every nation, crowding every harbour, and traversing the sea from the Indus to the Poles.\*

I remain,

Sir,

A. B.

"*Norway?*"

*presumably George  
Norway.*

\* I might have been eleven or thirteen, as I quote from memory, and was then very young; although I still recollect the dress, figure and features of the person pointed out to me as Henry Bell, as he stood alone and apart from the assembled hundreds that crowded Greenock quays, awaiting the arrival of the little 'Comet' from her first trip to Glasgow.

As she approached the quay, the old town of Greenock rung with the cheers of the crowd, with the exception of the watermen and others who get their living on the water, who assailed Bell with hisses and groans.

## HISTORY OF CORNWALLIS AND GRIFFITH ISLANDS.

## NO. III.

Situated between the seventy-fourth and seventy-sixth parallels of latitude, and bounded by Wellington Channel on the east, and the Polar Sea on the south, Cornwallis Island is perhaps one of the most dreary and desolate spots that can well be conceived.

Its seventy or eighty miles of known coast line present an unbroken ridge of monotonous limestone hills, where the action of a vigorous frost has rent large masses of the rock to pieces, and rolled them in extensive landslips on the beach. This is more especially the case on the eastern coast to the northward of Barlow Harbour, which has been explored for the distance of about ten miles ; and beyond, as far as the eye can reach, the forbidding hills were seen to tread away to the northward far—far perhaps into the great Polar Basin towards regions never seen by mortal man, and forming the western shore of Wellington Channel.

On this coast, two streams—one of them a

hundred feet across at its mouth, and the other forming a splendid cascade, which, falling over a cliff three hundred feet high, presents a picturesque and beautiful appearance—are the only things which break the dreary sameness of the coast.

Barlow Harbour, which, with a narrow entrance for a distance of about half a mile, opens out into a large basin, is bounded by the same limestone hills rising abruptly from a broad shingly plain; and on their summits an extensive table land stretches far around with an apparently unbroken level, but which is probably intersected by those precipitous ravines which are not detected until the observer is on the brink. The sides of one of these indeed, which runs up from the south corner of Barlow Harbour, are almost perpendicular, and so steep that the crossing over it would be attended with much danger.

Cape Hotham, at a distance of about six miles from Barlow Harbour, and forming the south-eastern extreme of the island, is a bold and lofty rock running up into a peak with an appearance which resembles the well-known Corcovado at Rio de Janeiro. Beyond it the two remarkable table lands described by Parry as "somewhat resembling boats turned bottom upwards," are the most prominent objects in the whole line of coast, and when much refracted assume the shapes of haystacks, boats, and

buttresses. The soundings close to the shore between this point and Barlow Harbour vary between four and sixteen fathoms.

The coast westward of Cape Hotham runs for a distance of nine or ten miles without presenting anything very remarkable in feature, save some rugged though picturesque ravines, which are, however, to be found in most parts of the island. At this distance a deep bay, with a broad entrance, and soundings of from ten to three fathoms in every part of it, would form a commodious harbour of refuge; from the breadth of its entrance it is probable that the ice clears out of it at a very early season of the year; and Assistance Bay will be found to possess more advantages as a winter harbour than any other known in Parry archipelago.

Frequented by hares, foxes, and ptarmigan in the autumn, and by probably all the animals that were found at Melville Island in the spring, and supplied with fresh water by several streams, and a chain of lakes which run up the country in a north-westerly direction, as far as has yet been explored; this bay certainly possesses more attractions than any other object on the coast of this desolate island.

Proceeding along the coast for a distance of thirteen miles we next arrive at a deep inlet which has received the name of Resolute Bay, and the hills at this place

recede for a considerable distance from the beach, which has more gradual ascent than in any other part of the island east of Bruce Bay. Near the bay are two small lagoons.

Cape Martyr—a bold headland—rises from this low beach, and the view from its summit extends on a clear day over a large tract of country, which, with occasional irregularities, on the whole decreases gradually in height until at a distance of thirty miles to the north-west where it approaches very close to Bathurst Island, the coast becomes very low. Cape Martyr forms to a south-east point of a small bay, and beyond it are two or three small islets.

Such is the coast of Cornwallis Island as far as has yet been ascertained. The interior has never been explored, and except over the low land beyond Cape Martyr, and along the chain of lakes at the head of Assistance Bay, it is to be feared that from the frequency and perpendicularity of the ravines, the difficulties of an inland journey would be very great.

Griffith Island, at a distance of about ten miles south of Cape Martyr, and with its south-east extreme bearing west-south-west from Cape Hotham, is about fourteen miles long and seven broad, and with bold limestone cliffs rising to a height of about five



hundred feet, is but a miniature of its more extensive prototype.

Its ravines, though on a smaller scale, are of the same character, as are also its table lands, and shingly beach ; and while it possesses no bay or inlet, yet a deep indentation of the coast at its north-west extremity, where the ice has forced up the shingle into broad terraces, though probably from its position never entirely clear of ice, yet forms a very remarkable feature of the island.

Parry—for what reason it does not appear—thought that the south-east part of this island was composed of sandstone, and remarks that the dip of the strata was at a considerable angle to the south-east. In the ravines, however, on the north side of the island they point in a different direction, and though of a sufficiently gloomy and forbidding appearance, yet possess many of those beauties which would make fitting scenes for some of the creations of a Salvator Rosa or a Gaspar Poussin.

TO BE CONTINUED.

*C.R. Mankham.*

## WOLSTENHOLME SOUND.

WOLSTENHOLME Sound, discovered by Baffin in 1615, was not again visited until 1818, when Captain Sir John Ross, breaking through the darkness that enveloped the geography of the Frozen Ocean, confirmed the discoveries, and brought to light the accurate and truthful statements of that great and energetic navigator.

This Sound, in long.  $69^{\circ} 30' W.$ , and lat.  $76^{\circ} 34' N.$ , extends in a north easterly direction for about thirteen miles from Cape Athol; the large island of Agpen divides its entrance into two, and a tongue of land forms two bays, in one of which the "North Star" wintered.

The shores of the Sound, from Cape Athol, rise suddenly and loftily to the height of one hundred and eighty to two hundred and fifty feet, and are stratified in appearance; as you proceed to the northward these shores gradually slope, until becoming more gentle, they terminate in fertile valleys covered with moss, over which, as we walked we felt as if Persia had sent her softest material to give comfort to the Arctic Highlander. On these green spots might be

seen grasses, the ranunculus, poppy, sorrel, the dwarf willow, and saxifrage in tolerable plenty.

Beyond the tongue of land mentioned above, the settlement of Igloo Umanak stands, more regularly and more solidly built than the habitations on the eastern shores, and beyond this again, we saw an opening, which, according to the Esquimaux, terminated in a large bay.

The animals which frequent these shores are, deer, white bears, seals, walruses, foxes, hares, lemmings, wolverine; and eider ducks, rotges, dovebies, looms, glaucus gulls, kittiwakes, and fulmar petrels, abound.

This Sound has only been visited by Baffin, (who called it after his patron, Sir John Wolstenholme), the "North Star," and ourselves.

Our visit to this Sound was replete with interest.

Jumbled and incoherent reports of two vessels having passed by Cape York; of their having visited some large and open bay to the northward, and of their crews having been murdered by the natives, made it incumbent upon us, ere crossing Baffin's Bay, to search these places and investigate the matter thoroughly.

These reports were obtained from the Arctic Highlanders of Cape York, through Sir John Ross' interpreter, (an Esquimaux, from South Greenland), who but imperfectly understood their dialect. We felt that

there existed in them a solution of the mystery which for several years past had hung over the missing Expedition, and hope, which had burned steadily as the flame on the altar of Vesta, now, for the first time, wavered in our breasts. If these reports proved true, our brave countrymen had met their fate ere they had opened the portal of their discoveries, and the object of their expedition crushed at its birth.

But a second visit to the natives of the Cape, to confirm these reports, became necessary, when Mr. Petersen, the Danish interpreter of Captain Penny's Expedition, accompanied us. He could find no foundation for the report from the Esquimaux, all he could ascertain was that a ship had wintered in a bay to the northward. We determined, however, to allow no doubt to exist concerning this report; the search was determined upon, and Captain Ommanney, who commanded it, took with him one of the natives (Erasmus York), who volunteered to accompany.

We entered on our search on one of those calm and beautiful days only to be seen in these regions, the reality of which dwarfs all description. Shaping a course between Wolstenholme Island and the main, we opened the magnificent Sound which bears the same name, and here our eyes were gladdened by the diversity of curved lines which, in the far distance, limited the powers of vision, though beyond, the

eternal glacier of Greenland was lost in the faint blue of the heavens.

As the "Intrepid"—the first steam-vessel that has ever entered this Sound—ploughed her way through the glassy surface, we passed several large blocks of ice, upon which lay basking in the sunshine the huge walrus, the elephant of these waters, his tusks glistening with each roll of his enormous head.

Every object on these shores became, from the nature of our search, interesting in the extreme; every nook and recess was examined by telescopes, and every means taken to discover traces of those we were in pursuit of.

Upon a gentle slope which, from the high granitic peaks above, came calmly to pay its obeisance to the waters below, several huts were observed. An exclamation of joy was elicited by the discoverers, and preparations were made to explore these footprints of human beings.

Landing on a shingly beach, the first object we stumbled upon was a Goldner's preserved meat tin; in this small article a positive proof existed of one of our Arctic ships having visited the spot; further on another was picked up, and as we proceeded, many small articles with the broad arrow were found. As with the discovery of these objects, and the knowledge that Goldner had supplied Franklin's expedition, the

suspicion we had entertained now tended to a realization ; we approached the huts with feelings of dread, and when we stepped into these dwelling places the scene of desolation that offered itself was one that struck a damp and gloom upon the heart. Huddled together in numbers, lay a heap of human beings, neglected and abandoned, as if the angel of death had taken possession of the land, and by some sudden stroke had extinguished the flame of life in these regions.

Here then had we come upon dead bodies. Apprehension and a fearful anticipation swayed our breasts, the thought that these might be the remains of our unfortunate countrymen made us gloomy and sad ; but anxious to clear up the dreaded doubt, we raised the seal-skin which served them as their winding-sheet, when the long black hair, the copper-coloured skin, the high cheek-bone, revealed them to us as the remains of the unfortunate Esquimaux, victims—as we afterwards learned—to a recent epidemic. It was a sight that struck a chill through the heart, and one that cannot easily be effaced from the memory. Age and youth ; the manly father by his stalwart son ; the tender mother by her cherished babe, lay here without distinction of years, of sex, of relationship.

We have stood on the field, after battle and carnage had done their worst ; we have witnessed

human beings, by hundreds, dug out from beneath the ruins caused by the explosion of a powder magazine, and mangled and torn by the cannon's shot—the sight was indeed a wretched one; but the excitement, the pillage, and plunder, that were doing their deeds of infamy, tended to obliterate all sense of compassion and of fellow-feeling: but here, where a beautiful sky and a scene of placidity reigned above and around, the contrast was too great; and the unfortunate Arctic Highlander, laying dead in his hut, produced an effect more striking, and aroused more piteous and more melancholy feelings.

Saddening as this spectacle was, the having made certain of the bodies not being those of our countrymen, took away the heavy load which had previously oppressed us.

Relieved from our present fears, we urged onwards towards the head of the bay, where stood a magnificent pile of nature's fashioning. Like the huge masses which spot Egypt's sandy deserts, this mound rose a vast truncated pyramid. Anxiously did York point to it as to the key that was to open to us the mystery which as yet remained unexplained.

Onwards we steamed; but ere doubling North Star Mount, we discovered cairns on the south-east shore:

these we left to be examined on our return. We anchored in a small harbour, and landing at the settlement of Igloo Umanak, we discovered that the huts were empty, but in their construction more comfortable than those we had lately examined. Further vestiges of our countrymen's visit were also found about them.

Extending our search beyond this, we discovered several graves—loose stones piled in guise of a covering—in which the bones of an Arctic Highlander lay blanching, the characteristics of the race stamped upon these remains. Several articles were picked up; a tub, a check shirt, hose, a leaf from the "History of England," a sheet from the "London Journal," broken bottles, &c. : still we found nothing that could account for their presence.

The cairns we had seen, ere coming to an anchor off Igloo Umanak, became now our especial search; these, we felt sure, would raise the veil of darkness that as yet hung over us.

At the foot of North Star Mount, the first cairn was examined; and as the stones forming the pile were pulled down, an expression of eager anxiety was depicted on each countenance, which increased as from amidst of its stony covering a tin cylinder was discovered, from whence the following document was extracted :



"This paper is placed here to certify, that H.M.S. 'North Star' was beset, at the east side of Melville Bay, on the 29th of July, last year, and gradually drifted from day to day, until, on the 26th of September, we found ourselves abreast of Wolstenholme Island; when perceiving the ice a little more loose, and the Sound perfectly clear, we made all plain sail, and pressed her through it, anchoring in the lower part of the Sound that evening, and arrived in the Bay on the 1st of October, where she remained throughout the winter.

"It is my intention to leave as soon as the breaking up of the ice will permit, and prosecute my voyage in search of the Arctic ships.

(Signed) " J. SAUNDERS,

" MASTER AND COMMANDER.

" North Star Bay, Wolstenholme Sound,

" April 15th, 1850.

" Lat.  $76^{\circ} 34' N.$ ; long.  $69^{\circ} 30' W.$ "

The two cairns on the opposite shore were also visited: each contained a document similar to the one deposited in the first. At the foot of the largest and most regularly built one, we found four graves, with tombstones, on which the names of seamen, belonging to the 'North Star,' were written;

and in the paper the following list of their names was added :

" William Sharp, A. B., died 1st of November, 1849.

" William Brisley, boatswain's mate, died 31st of January, 1850.

" Richard Baker, A. B., died 7th of April, 1850.

" George Deverell, A. B., died 17th of May, 1850."

On the back of this paper the date, " 3rd July, 1850," was written.

As we contemplated these sad memorials of our departed countrymen, one consolation was felt by us—they had died surrounded by friends, and by all the appliances which a Christian charity could afford ; and their last wishes were confided to those who had been their fellow-sufferers throughout a dreary and wretched Arctic winter. Thus far they had been happy ; but when we recal the glowing anticipation that swelled our breasts, on joining our Expedition ; when we think with what fondness we dwell upon the happiness that will gladden our hearts, as the shores of dear England will again burst upon us ; we may be permitted to let fall a tear, and to pity the lot of those whose remains lay amid the granite monuments of nature, thousands of miles from their native homes.

These papers speak plainly the history of the 'North Star,' which vessel, thwarted in her original design, had been forced into the Sound, and had, unprepared, wintered amid these regions of eternal ice.

Substituting for these documents other details of our proceedings, we rebuilt the cairns; and placing a separate memorial on the heights of Wolstenholme Island, we crossed the Bay of Baffin, with hope newly raised, and ready and anxious to set about the search anew.

J.D.

## TO THE EDITOR OF THE AURORA BOREALIS.

## QUESTION RELATIVE TO THE LINE OF PROPULSION.

Sir,

You are in a boat in a proper position for pulling ; your oar is in a crutch, on the port gunwale : you pull, and the boat will go to starboard, of course.

Suppose, then, from the outside of the starboard gunwale, you erect an outrigger or platform, on which you may sit or stand, removing the oar from the port gunwale to the starboard, placing it in a crutch sufficiently high so as to work clear of the opposite gunwale—then pull ; will the boat still go to starboard ?

I remain, Sir, &c.

A. B.

"Murray", presumably  
George Murray.

## PORTUGUESE ARCTIC DISCOVERIES.

In the desperate struggle between Christianity and Islamism, which raged in Spain for several centuries, a kingdom arose in its western extremity, which was destined to play a conspicuous part in the great revolutions of Europe. Alphonso, Count of Besançon, who, from a simple French knight, became the first King of Portugal, was the ancestor of that illustrious line of monarchs who gave so great an impulse in after-ages to mercantile discovery; and his follower, De Costa, was the ancestor of those gallant adventurers who were destined to throw a passing lustre on Portuguese Arctic discovery.

From the expulsion of the Moors, and the destruction of the pretensions of the Castilians by Nuno Alvares, in the famous battle of Aljubarrota, A.D., 1385, to the conquest of the Ceuta by John in 1415, the power of the Portuguese gradually increased; and under the auspices of his son their geographical discoveries commenced.

Seated in the balcony of his beautiful retreat of Sagres, on the summit of Cape St. Vincent, the

munificent Prince Henry, the navigator, viewed the vast expanse of the Atlantic, and sent forth expeditions from 1418 to 1463, which rounded Cape Nun, discovered Porto Santo and Madeira, peopled the Azores, and doubled Cape Blanco.

In 1463 this noble-minded Prince died, in the 67th year of his age; but the incentive he had given to Portuguese adventure was not destined to die with him, for soon afterwards Bartholomew Diaz sighted the Cape, and Cavilham and Payva, starting from Lisbon in search of the famous Prester John, and descending the Red Sea, the one was murdered, and the other, after visiting Calicut, Goa, and Sofala, died covered with honours in Abyssinia, A.D., 1525.

From this time, the commercial ardour of this nation continued to increase. Vasco de Gama, for the first time, rounded the Cape of Good Hope, and reaching Calicut, returned in safety to Lisbon—Cabral discovered the Brazils—the famous Albuquerque conquered Goa, Calicut, Ormuz, and Malacca, and established settlements in the Spice Isles—while the marvellous adventures of the notorious Mendez Pinto in China and Japan astonished Europe, and tempted Shakespeare to incredulity.

In the meanwhile the Arctic expeditions had proceeded apace. John Cortereal, the descendant of that knight who had accompanied Alphonso of Besançon,

sailed from Lisbon in 1460, and after rediscovering Newfoundland, proceeded for several hundred miles along an unknown coast—probably Labrador—until he was stopped by icebergs, and discovered the entrance of the famous straits of Anian, that chimera which was so long supposed to be the true north-west passage—it might have been the entrance to the Gulf of St. Lawrence? His sons Gaspar and Michael sailed to complete the discoveries of their father, but were never again heard of. The Portuguese fisheries on the banks of Newfoundland, however, flourished until the downfall of the nation, and at one time reckoned three hundred vessels from the ports of Viana and Aveiro alone.

The prosperity of Portugal was destined to be but short lived. For a period of about one hundred and ninety years it blazed forth with unrivalled splendour, creating a complete revolution in the ideas of Europeans, destroying the mercantile power of Venice and Genoa, by her discovery of the Cape, settling both the Brazils and great part of the East Indies, and producing one of the finest epic poems of modern times; but the monarchy had no sound foundation, ordained as it was to play for a time a very important part in the history of the world; the heroic reign of Sebastian was its last transient gleam of glory; the battle of Alcassar was its death knell, it passed under

the yoke of Spain, and its greatest poet truly exclaimed on his death-bed. "I have returned not only to die in my country's bosom, but to die *with* her," for she has now fallen so low in the scale of nations as to have become a bye-word and a reproach.

Camoen sung her earliest glories in describing the battle of Aljubarrota, and says Schlegel, "at the proudest moment of that brief and glorious period, a great national song broke forth like the dying notes of the fabled swan, a dirge for the departed hero-nation."

PACIFICUS.

*C.R. Maackham*

TO THE EDITOR OF THE AURORA BOREALIS.

Sir,

Having, early in life, visited the shores of Denmark, and subsequently her colonies on the coast of Greenland, I venture to give you a brief sketch of those parts of that country which I saw, and of her progress in Arctic discovery.

Copenhagen, the capital of Denmark, is a large and elegant city, about six miles in circumference, and has one hundred thousand inhabitants. Many



of the streets are intersected by canals. The fronts of the buildings are of Norwegian marble, and exceedingly handsome. The most remarkable building is the Royal Observatory, so constructed that carriages may ascend to its very summit.

On the road between Copenhagen and Elsinore there is a noble avenue of elm-trees, of vast size, which bespeak the growth of centuries. There is something about these stately trees, with their huge branches meeting over the centre of the road, which puts one in mind of Gothic architecture, and gives an effect of romantic grandeur.

Elsinore, a place at which ships trading to the Baltic, pay toll, is of great importance as a harbour of refuge. Cronenburg Castle is the only remarkable building in the place, and opposed Nelson, before his attack on Copenhagen, by whom one of the pinnacles on its tower was shot, and has never been replaced.

From Copenhagen, many adventurers have sailed in search of unknown countries in the Arctic seas. Munk's voyage, in 1619, when he entered Hudson's Bay, is well known; and, in addition to this, the Danes sent five or six expeditions in search of the lost colony of Greenland, between that date and 1741, when the famous missionary, Hans Egede, sailed with forty persons from Bergen, to establish

a settlement in Greenland. This great and good man endured terrific hardships, battling with the ingratitude of the Esquimaux and the lukewarmness of his own countrymen, till 1736, when having been relieved by the philanthropic Moravians, he returned to Denmark, and died A.D. 1740.

Meanwhile the Moravians, under their chief missionary, Stack, continued in the laudable and Christian endeavour which Egede had begun; many Esquimaux were converted, the settlements of Leichtenfels, Godhaub, and Leifly, were founded, and the Danish colonies became permanent.

In 1771, Stack died; but still the pious work commenced by Egede, and ably followed out by him, has gradually progressed, and the condition of the natives of Greenland has been greatly ameliorated by their Danish masters, whose colonies still exist on these inhospitable shores.

It now only remains for me to hope that this short narrative of what I have seen and heard will not prove wholly uninteresting to your readers.

I remain, Sir,

Your obedient servant,

W.

"Ward. Seaman"

## RELIGION OF THE ESQUIMAUX.

No people in the world ever existed that had no idea of a God; and though the grossest and most absurd superstitions and the most puerile conceits have disgraced many of the heathen creeds, yet, however numerous their deities have been, however low their idea of a God has sunk, the belief in an Omnipotent and Supreme Being has always remained.

The complicated mythologies of Hindostan, Greece, and Scandinavia, all had their Siva, Jove, or Odin; and whether He appeared under these names, or under those of Jehovah, Pachacamar, Allah, or Buddh, He always retained the same attributes as an Almighty Spirit.

We find that the character of the religion of a country has depended generally on the peculiar temperament of the people. Where they have led a simple and pastoral life, their religion has been equally simple.

Zenghis Khan established a pure theism among the Tartars; Mahomet introduced the worship of One God among the Arabs; the mountaineers of

the Alps, and the Cevennes, embraced the simple doctrines of Paulicius; and the agriculturists and hunters of Peru bowed down before their benefactor, the sun.

On the other hand, when we examine the religions of those countries who have settled in large communities, and early obtained a facility of communication, from their proximity to large navigable rivers or the sea-coast, we find them to be mixed up with the speculative philosophy of one people, and the poetical creations of another, and generally supporting a numerous and powerful hierarchy.

Again, among the Esquimaux of Greenland, whose powers of thought are so small, we find religion made subservient to the grossest superstitions, and used by the angekoks or magicians for their own knavish purposes. No trace is to be found of the religion of their remote ancestors, save two or three traditions concerning the Creation and the Deluge, and most of them go no farther back than the time of their arrival in Greenland. They believed that the first man, named Kallah, came out of the earth, and that a woman was produced from his thumb. She it was that introduced death into the world, by saying, "Let these die, that those who follow may have room to live:" a doctrine which her descendants put to practical utility, by murdering

all aged persons who have no children to provide them with food. She brought forth the Kablunat, or foreigners, who were exterminated by the Innuits. This tradition obviously alludes to the destruction of the Norman colony; but it is possible that it may also point to an older one, concerning the children of Seth and Cain.

They believed also that there was once a great flood, and that every soul perished but one man, who struck the ground, and a woman rose, and they re-peopled the world.

Their religion, properly so called, is a most wretched superstition. Their good spirit is called Torngarsak; and he, of course, is the oracle of the Angekoks. The evil spirit is a woman named Erloersortok, who is very thin, and eats the entrails of departed souls. Lillagiksartok is the spirit of the winds; Tunnersoit, of the mountains; and many others, that it would be useless to mention.

They believed in a future state, and that their souls, after hovering round the body for five days after death, became stars.

The crafty angekokks, who cheat the people by their pretended ability to foretell future events, are initiated by retiring to a desert for some days, where they die, and come to life again; after which, they may call down the good spirit to have an interview

with him, whenever it suits them. They are probably the lazy and cunning part of the population, who wish to live on the toil of their neighbours.

Any superstition so absurd as this can scarcely be conceived, and yet the Moravian missionaries have found great difficulty in converting the Greenlanders to Christianity, from their indifference and obstinacy.

Such is the religion of this wretched people. Their belief in a good spirit is only caused by the knavery of their magicians, and their fears people the elements with innumerable evil demons of fantastic shapes. It is based entirely on selfishness; and the Esquimaux will never feel the passion of love, or the ardour of friendship, until, by the laudable perseverance of the Moravians, these superstitions have been supplanted by the glorious light of Christianity.

I remain,

Sir,

Yours very sincerely,

CLIO.

*C.R. Wankham*

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THE RISE AND PROGRESS OF PRINTING IN THE  
ARCTIC SEARCHING EXPEDITIONS.

The origin of printing in these desolate regions arose out of the desire to acquaint those who have so long been missing, that their relief was at hand. Thus we find, in a manner little to have been expected, printing forwarding, even here, the great cause of humanity. Thousands of slips of paper and silk with the news of our arrival stamped upon them have been scattered in every direction by the means of balloons. Should these tidings by good fortune have reached their destination, they will have raised up at once fresh hopes and fresh endurance.

We next find printing employed as a means of making known the forthcoming amusements of the squadron, by which the tedium of the long night has been wonderfully lessened. Here, let us remark, were first observed the improvements arising from leisure and emulation. In the first of a series of well-executed bills, announcing the various amusements, we meet with the introduction of large capital letters, giving at once the appearance of art to the

work. Then followed the shaded letter, the double-lined letter, and the white letter in black relief. Soon after, to the surprise of most, appeared an illuminated bill, announcing a performance in honour of His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales's birthday, with a neatly-executed heading, consisting of the plume and motto. Then came the bills of the Royal Arctic Casino; and here the tastefully carved coat of arms which graced it called forth the admiration of every one. When, to crown all, the last programme of the Royal Arctic Theatre came forth in great splendour; the coat of arms, the Prince of Wales's plume, the delicately-carved rose, shamrock, and thistle, the border of oak leaves, acorns, and laurel, spoke well for the industry and artistic merit of all concerned.

Having thus traced, up to the present time, the various stages of progress, let us now inquire into the means possessed by those who have produced such gratifying results. The press, and materials belonging to it, were only sufficient for the purpose of printing the papers attached to the balloon; hence a limit was placed to the ambition of the directors.

The eagerness with which all the productions were sought after, requires to be seen to be understood. The applicants for copies were not content with



impressions on paper, but every variety of material went to press in a most ludicrous manner; silk pocket-handkerchiefs, shirts, calico, satin, and even a blanket. Here we fancied the *furor* would have ceased, but, to our surprise, one person brought a monkey-jacket, and another a chamois-leather.

This indeed must have been gratifying to the printers; and, to their credit be it spoken, during the greater part of three days there was a rapid despatch of business. May they, in their future attempts, succeed as well. Should the art of printing at this establishment continue to improve at the same rate as heretofore, we will back our Arctic press against the world.

In years to come, every little *souvenir* of our sojourn here will be prized for the recollections it will give rise to—of the comfort and amity that existed among the members of the ‘Austin happy family.’

C. Edl.

## METEOROLOGY FOR JANUARY 1851.

January was ushered in during a heavy gale from the north-west, and throughout the month the average force of the wind has exceeded that of the preceding months. The temperature also has been considerably lower.

The following table shows the comparative temperatures for January for six different years in Arctic voyages :

| Place.                  | Year. | Max.    | Min.                               | Mean.   | Latitude.  | Longitude.  |
|-------------------------|-------|---------|------------------------------------|---------|------------|-------------|
| Melville Island . .     | 1820  | - 2°    | - 17°                              | - 30.00 | 71° 48' N. | 110° 48' W. |
| Winter Island . .       | 1822  | - 6°    | - 37 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub> ° | - 22.96 | 66° 11' N. | 83° 10' W.  |
| Igloodik . . . .        | 1823  | + 22°   | - 45°                              | - 17.97 | 66° 21' N. | 82° 50' W.  |
| Port Bowen . . . .      | 1825  | - 14.5° | - 42.5°                            | - 28.91 | 73° 14' N. | 88° 54' W.  |
| Port Leopold . . .      | 1849  | - 8.6°  | - 15°                              | - 31.80 | 73° 50' N. | 90° 12' W.  |
| Off Griffith's Island . | 1851  | - 11°   | - 47°                              | - 31.90 | 74° 34' N. | 95° 20' W.  |

From the 13th to the 20th of January inclusive, the weather was unusually severe, the mean temperature of these eight days being  $-42.5$ ; the maximum  $-34$ , and the minimum  $-47$ , showing a range of only  $13^{\circ}$ .

The winds have still prevailed from the north-west quarter, and they may be said to be almost constant from that direction, having continued for twenty-six

days out of the month in the north-west; the remaining days they were variable, changing suddenly in gusts to various points of the compass. At times, an upper current of wind has been perceptible, the heavens having become obscured by a mist carried up from a scutherly direction in opposition to a north-west breeze, a fall in the barometer, with a rise of temperature at the same time, indicating some atmospheric change. On these occasions snow has fallen in very minute particles. On the 23rd, the barometer fell to 29.34, the only apparent cause being a fog-bank then pervading the south horizon, which on the following day, was observed to overspread the sky in opposition to a north-west wind. Snowdrifts have always accompanied strong winds, causing a thick mist, though clear in the zenith.

The Aurora Borealis has been seen more frequently, though never with that brilliancy by which it is often characterized in these regions. The number of observations in the month of any importance amounts to twelve, the coruscations when detached flitted from various points of the horizon in light fleecy clouds towards the zenith, sometimes of a straw colour. When it has appeared in an arch, its direction has been nearly north and south, passing across the zenith. On the evening of the

20th, luminous beams of the Aurora were frequent from the south-west to the north-west points, and continued for several hours; on the following day we had fresh winds from the south-west. It has been observed that when this phenomenon appears unusually intense in any particular quarter, that a strong breeze has succeeded it from that particular direction of the compass.

The first week in January was remarkable for the number of falling stars: on the 2nd of January sixteen were counted by a casual observer in the space of a quarter of an hour. They were visible in all parts of the heavens during this week, but were most numerous to the south-west.

In other countries scientific men have assigned fixed periods for the prevalence of these meteors; it is therefore important to notice the time when they were most prevalent during the winter. One very bright meteor was seen on the 3rd of January at 6 P.M., shooting towards the south-west, leaving a train of pale green light, and making an angle of  $20^{\circ}$  with the horizon.

There has been a larger proportion of falling snow this month than in the foregoing, though in England our definition of the term snow differs so materially with its shape and appearance; it is therefore necessary to state that in this locality it consists

of very minute particles, almost imperceptible until observed to fall on some dark substance, but in the course of an hour or two, the quantity which accumulates is surprising.

It may not have escaped observation during the summer, when looking through the rays of the sun, to perceive minute particles of frozen vapour, sparkling as they descended—though the atmosphere to all appearance was quite clear—like motes in a sunbeam.

Paraselenæ were seen, but mostly imperfect, without any remarkable feature, and an elliptical halo surrounding the moon has been frequent during its first and last quarters.

Some very remarkable cases of refraction occurred when the moon rose in the south-east. As this luminary appeared on the horizon, her shape was so distorted as hardly to be recognized, particularly on the 8th and 9th. The weather at the time was tranquil and clear; light airs from north-west; Bar. 29·85, Ther. — 30°. The edges of the moon, when seen through a glass, were fringed with a light green and crimson border.

An increase of light was perceptible in the first week of January, when the arch to the south daily expanded, showing that the sun was evidently on the return. The 10th was the first day the tinge

of rose colour was observed in the northern part of the sky, such as had been watched during the departure of the sun. From some atmospheric cause these tints were not visible again until the 21st, when a beautiful arch again appeared towards noon extending from north-east to north-west, the centre of arch being  $10^{\circ}$  above the north meridian. It first appeared blue and indigo, changing to violet and rose colour of most delicate hues. As the light at noon increased, these tints became more brilliant. On the 22nd, none but stars of the first magnitude were visible at noon, and on the 26th, the increase of light rendered them altogether invisible.

None but those who have been deprived of the influence of light can appreciate the charm and interest which is excited in the mind on beholding the gradual return of this indispensable agent which produces such important effects on man, and the organized creation in general.

A partial eclipse of the moon was observed on the 17th; the umbra of the earth was cast over nearly one half of her upper disc. It commenced about 8 A.M., and terminated at a quarter before 1 P.M., and occurred during the moon's circuit of the northern part of the heavens, and her passage across the meridian.

The thickness of the ice, as determined by measurement on the 21st of January, is as follows :

|                |   |   | Feet. | Inches. |
|----------------|---|---|-------|---------|
| Old floe       | . | . | 4     | 1       |
| In canal       | . | . | 4     | 4       |
| Pressed up ice | . | . | 4     | 1       |
| Last found ice | . | . | 4     | 0       |

Fog-banks have been frequent along the southern horizon, and in clear weather light vapour or frost smoke has often been seen in the channel.

The strongest winds were experienced whilst the moon was in apposition and conjunction.

*Capt. Ommaney.*

## BAL MASQUÉ.

H.M.S. 'RESOLUTE.'

On Wednesday, the 12th instant, the splendidly-fitted up assembly room of the Royal Arctic Casino was again filled to overflowing by all the rank, fashion, and beauty of Griffith Island.

On the second occasion of a masked ball being held on board of H.M.S. 'Resolute,' we cannot but tender our best thanks to the officers of that ship for having so successfully added to the public amusements of our little colony. Well indeed may the bills of the day have declared there would be "an enormous outlay of time, talent, and material." The two first of these promises, without doubt, were most amply fulfilled; and we were only sorry that the circumscribed means of the last, consequent on our situation, should cause so great an outlay of trouble and time to those engaged in the preparations. Yet, were we to enter into minute details of all the decorations, the galaxy of light, &c., on their



being read by those in our own dear land, they would at once exclaim, "But where have all these come from: in the wilderness you tell us of?"

That everybody might have ample opportunity of arranging their dresses with the greatest degree of secrecy, and in the best manner, a house attached to the ship was, as on the first occasion, decorated, heated, lighted, and rendered comfortable and convenient, far beyond our most sanguine expectations. At the same time, the officers had kindly vacated their cabins, and left them at the disposal of any friends that chose to take them; so that none became aware who passed in or out.

Flags, pictures, transparencies, and chandeliers, formed the staple of the decorations; but one that attracted more attention than the others, if we may judge from the number who paid their devoirs to it, was a supper, prepared both in the Commander's cabin and in the officers' mess, where, it is needless to say, the utmost mirth and good fellowship prevailed, and a hearty welcome was given.

We cannot say there was quite such a variety of masks as on the former occasion, the characters partaking more of the fancy than the masked costume. There were, however, scores of masks still, and the incognitos well preserved. Of course, many of the former costumes were there; but nearly all on dif-

ferent persons. Among the principal of the new ones were the M. C., as King Artaxominous, in "Bombastes Furioso;" a Spanish señorita, who had transferred the star-spangled firmament to her dress, forming, in connection with gold lace, a complete chain over every part of it; a travelling tinker, with an admirably-sustained cry of "Old kettles to mend;" a Jew clothesman; Mr. S——, just sent out in night costume by his wife, to see what the noise was; a man, half white, half black, with a face both at front and back of his body; Sairey Gamp; and last, though not least (being, we must say, an incumbrance to everybody around, and perfectly unfitted for these rooms) a jar of Warren's blacking.

Missing a white and black Carmelite monk for some short time, who hurried off when asked if he was bound for Ostend, we were induced to search for him, but ineffectually, for some hours; at last, as a mendicant friar, we detected this formerly joyous old monk. Some people say, whilst going down in the world, he had even lent himself to puff for Warren's Blacking manufactory, by perambulating the thoroughfares in the aforesaid monster jar.

If it becomes not invidious to distinguish, when all did so admirably, we would certainly give the palm, both in dress and sustainment of character, to

the travelling tinker ; and for effectual disguise, without covering the face, to Mr. S——.

On the whole, we enjoyed ourselves more, if possible, than on the former occasion ; and went away with the rest, gratified throughout.

*"Krabbe"*

(F.J. Krabbe.)

#### ROYAL INTREPID SALOON.

On Friday, the 17th of January, we had again the pleasure of witnessing one of those delightful little entertainments given on board the 'Intrepid.'

The Intrepid Saloon has been several times mentioned in our columns ; therefore, we shall only say, that on this last occasion it, in our opinion, surpassed all that has hitherto been done, and richly deserved the plaudits which were liberally bestowed.

The great attraction of the evening was without doubt the "gallantee" show, consisting of various scenes taken from our outward-bound voyage. They had two good qualities, which strongly recommended them to our notice—originality in the Arctic regions, and for being exceedingly amusing in themselves.

"The Life of a Sailor" was also well got up, and we are persuaded, were this performed on an English stage, would meet with much applause.

Then there were several songs, both sentimental and comic; and the song of a "Little Soldier," showing how he had been enticed from his home, was rapturously encored, when the talented artist gave a short original production, which was also well received.

An individual, familiarly known as "Kate's Young Man," next proceeded, with a little ditty concerning a young lady, named Miss Dobbs. This was his third appearance on the boards, so that his fame is too well established to stand in need of further praise.

The "Standard Bearer" was beautifully sung by another talented artist; and the evening passed off very agreeably; the only inconvenience felt being the confined state of the atmosphere in the saloon, which was as full as it could possibly be.

We hear it rumoured that there is to be another night at the Intrepid Saloon, but we cannot vouch for the truth of the report.

"Shella bear".

s 2

(W.B. Shella bear, Ind., master,  
"Assistance").

## TO CORRESPONDENTS.

ANSWER TO QUESTION RELATIVE TO THE LINE OF PROPULSION.

No: the boat will then go to port, because the force which you applied, in the first case, to the port gunwale, you now apply to the starboard.

An oar is a lever of the second order; the weight  $W$  to be moved (that is, the boat) is between the fulcrum  $E$  and the power  $P$ ; the power is, of course, the force applied; and the point of the blade at which the blade of the oar is resisted by the water, is the fulcrum.

*F. L. McClintock*

TO THE EDITOR OF THE AURORA BOREALIS.

Mr. Editor,

May we not call this "our middle age?" and for these reasons, it is the middle of the month and century, of our preparations for spring travelling, of our beard growing, and here it is also a truly barbarous age. Our season of agriculture is also far

advanced—witness our boxes of mustard and cress. We are midway between the winter night and perpetual day; also, we trust, midway through our sojourn at winter quarters.

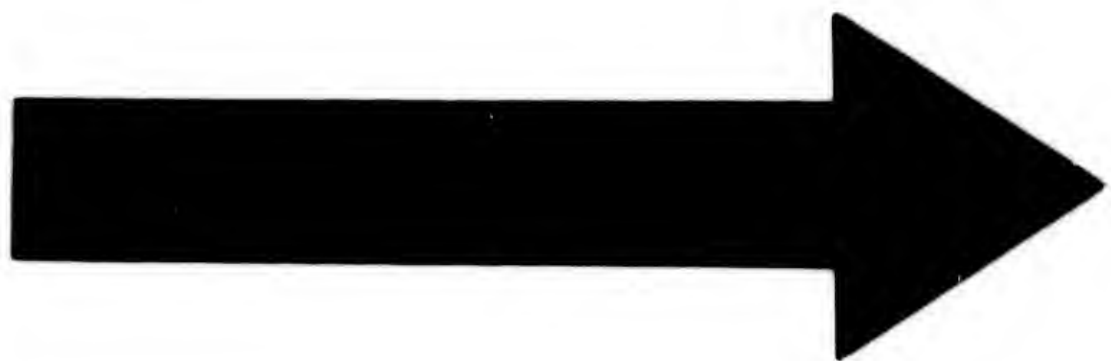
Zero has reached his zenith, the auroras decrease in number and brilliancy; but “our Aurora” now enters upon its second half-dozen numbers. May it flourish, notwithstanding the natural decline of the bright and mysterious phenomenon after which it is named; and may it shed rays of light as interesting and less transient, to stimulate us to meet cheerfully our future trials, and to trace in unfading lines the history of the dark ages, from which we have just emerged.

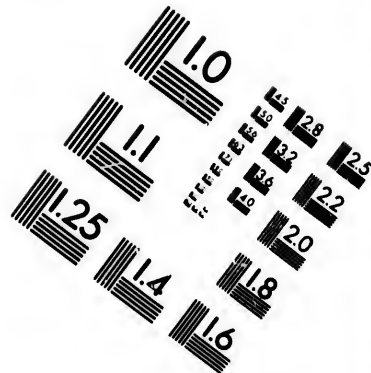
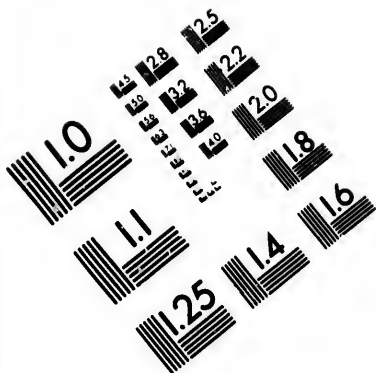
*F. L. McClintock.*

ON SHAVING BEING CONTINUED.

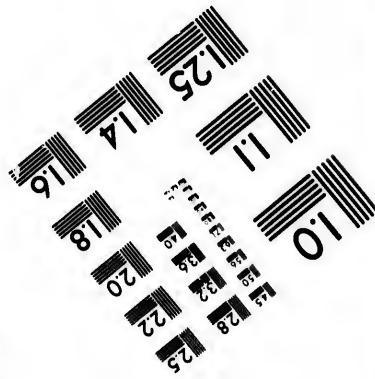
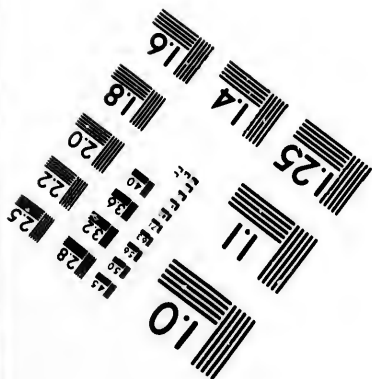
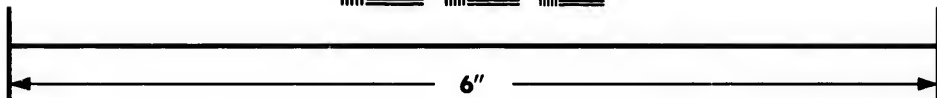
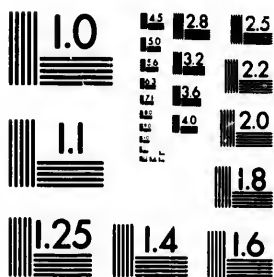
Several iron-hearted old servants, who have sharply attended upon their former masters for the last twenty years, are in want of places.

Address to the Association of Razors.





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## VIII.

Winter Quarters, March, 1851.

WERE a stranger to look down from the heights of Griffith's Island, upon the scene of drear desolation, which, notwithstanding the sun's glorious presence, surrounds our squadron, he would be struck with amazement.

Instead of the variegated verdure of the fields, the grateful odours that issue from the woods, and the melodious notes of birds pouring forth their songs of gladness—scenes to which the mind gently looks forward with the return of the sun—his eye would rest on nothing but an interminable waste of ice and snows, a prospect deeply imprinted with the stamp of dismay.

Little would he, however, consider that within that squadron beat hearts full of bright hopes, eager for action, and ready for their humane work—hopes which have supported them through a dreary Arctic winter, and which have preserved among them the efficiency which health gives to man.

One year have we now been in commission, and a second comes upon us pregnant with duties. With the opening of March the smile and the jovial laugh have given way to matters of deeper import ; to preparation for travel, and to the anxiety for success ; and with a consciousness of being able to do, we humbly pray that our efforts may not be vain.

While these thoughts engage our minds, preparations of a different nature are making in our own dear land. That Grand Exhibition, under the patronage of His Royal Highness Prince Albert, will be an epoch in the annals of British history. From the many nations of the world the inventions of the human mind will find their way to England's metropolis, from thence to the furthestmost corners of the globe, to benefit and civilize mankind, and Britain's name will be as a household word in every mouth, from the refined Asiatic to the terrible cannibal of the Feejees.

And we, although far from dear England, and

from one of the grandest sights which will have gladdened our land since the visit of the Allied Sovereigns, we do most heartily sympathise in her welfare and commercial grandeur; but howsoever anxious to be a witness of these sights, we would not be otherwise engaged than on our present mission, for here is our stand of honour, and we feel convinced that not one single backward mind is to be found among the searching ships which now lie icebound within the Polar Seas.

40.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE AURORA BOREALIS.

RED SNOW.

One of the most novel and interesting subjects in natural history, which was discovered and observed during my voyage of 1818, and which led to more controversy than any other, was the coloured snow seen on the cliffs between Cape York and Cape Dudley Digges. These cliffs were, at the time the 'Isabella' passed within half a mile of them, entirely covered with snow of a bright crimson

colour, as represented in the plate by the narrative of that voyage, which although taken carefully by a cyanometer, was unsparingly handled by some, however, and subsequent navigators, neither of whom had seen it in the same state. It was brought home by me in these conditions: 1st. The snow in which it was found (six feet deep) was dissolved and bottled, when the liquid resembled muddy port wine; 2ndly. The water of the dissolved snow was strained off, but the substance, kept in a moist state, was preserved in a vial bottle; and 3rdly, The same substance was dried by the air and put up as seeds in paper parcels.

On it being examined by me under the powerful microscope I had on board, I saw on each globule a small speck, which I considered to be the "eye of the seed," and which made me conclude it was a vegetable peculiar to that region, which opinion I sealed up and put into the hands of Dr. Leach, of the British Museum, to be opened *after* the following *savans*, Dr. Wollaston, Professors Brande, Thompson, of Glasgow, and Mr. Bauer, the botanist of the Royal Gardens at Kew, to whom a portion in each state was submitted, had given their opinions. Mr. Brande was the first, and being desirous of the merit of the discovery, published (without any intimation to me) in his "Journal of

Science," that it was *animal*, taking great credit to himself that he did not know at the time of his publication, that myriads of the little auk (genus *Mergulus*) were found in that locality, and of which birds he supposed it was the droppings; but this was contradicted by Dr. Leach, who, in opposition, published that the droppings of these and all other birds found in that region, was of a much lighter colour than that in the plate.

Thompson, and some of the foreign *savans*, who had seen the red snow on the Alps, pronounced it to be metallic. Dr. Wollaston was inclined towards the vegetable origin, but not quite decided; but as his account appeared to be most elaborate and satisfactory, I published it in my first edition, *not* having then received the opinion of Mr. Bauer, who it appeared naturally (as a gardener) planted it in snow, where he found it generated; was first colourless, then green, and, finally, when ripe, of the bright crimson colour, exactly as represented in the plate, of which he gave me an unsolicited certificate. He found it to be of the genus *Ureda*, (vulgarly known as the smut in wheat); and in my second edition, I gave it the name of *Ureda nivalis* of Bauer, as he was the first discoverer. He informed me that the ripe globules when put under his powerful microscope, which has a divided object-glass, were

each the 16,000th part of an inch, of which he gave me a coloured drawing, and which most fully proved the truth of the much abused plate !

On this voyage, when we passed in the *Felix*, these cliffs were almost bare of snow, and it was only in some of the ravines that the crimson snow could be observed, but what I did procure was nearly of the same colour, though evidently in a state of decay. Some was since procured at Beechey Island in a more perfect state, and being examined by the microscope completely verifies the conclusions of Mr. Bauer.

JOHN ROSS (ADMIRAL).

*Felix*, Feb. 27th, 1851.

## SPANISH ARCTIC DISCOVERY.

Since the decline of the commercial pre-eminence of the Italian republics, four great nations have successively become supreme upon the seas; namely, Portugal, Spain, Holland, and England; and all in their turn have attempted discoveries in the Arctic regions.

Spain, however, whose empire for a short time was undoubtedly the most splendid that ever existed in the world, has produced, next to England, the greatest navigators.

An expedition fitted out by her, discovered America, another sailed round the world; she possessed all the Portuguese settlements of India: all the silver mines of Mexico, and Peru; all the talent of Cervantes, Ereilla, and Murillo; all the valour of Cortez, Don John, and Cordova; and all the diplomacy of Granvelle. While with one hand she conquered the New World, circumnavigated the globe, and supplied her neighbours with the luxuries of the East, with the other she crushed the growing power of the Turks, and held the balance of power in Europe.

A nation possessed of so much power, and so much wealth; a nation which sent periodical fleets from



Cadiz to Darien, and from Acapulco to Manilla, while Elizabeth was contenting herself with piratical expeditions; a nation whose sons had, with a handful of men, penetrated into the hearts of populous empires; a nation whose ships were the carriers of the civilised world, naturally attempted to discover the North-west Passage, "a shorter route to Cathay," and penetrate the famous Straits of Anian, which had been discovered by the Portuguese, their predecessors in maritime power, in the expedition sent by them, under Gaspar and Michael Cortereal, in 1500—1—2. Accordingly, Estevan Gomez, in 1524, and Mendoza Coronada, in 1542, attempted to discover these Straits, but failed; Gomez only reaching the coast of Labrador, and seeing nothing to satisfy himself respecting their existence; Coronada returned.

But it was on the side of the Pacific, where her rich dependencies stretched from the Straits of Magellan to the Island of Quadra, that Spain was destined to perform with success her great maritime enterprises. From the coast of Mexico it was that the heroic Grixalva sailed, when he discovered California; and the Manilla galleons, when they are supposed to have touched at three of the Sandwich Islands; and from Callao it was that Mandana sailed when he discovered the Marquesas; Quiros, when he sighted Sagittaria (the modern Tahiti); and

Sarmiento, when he fortified the Straits of Magellan.

Juan de Fuca, in 1592, sailed from the coast of Mexico with orders to discover, if possible, the supposed Straits of Anian, the road to the Atlantic. He coasted along the land discovered by Drake and Grixalva, and rounding Cape Mendocino, commenced his perilous voyage. At length he discovered a broad opening, which he sailed up in different directions during twenty days, finding it to be twenty or thirty leagues in breadth; and conceiving that it led into the Atlantic, he considered his mission accomplished, and returned.

In 1640, also, another Spaniard, named Bernarda, affirmed that he sailed through a strait to the northward, when he reached an isthmus, from which he could discern the sea both to the east and west.

The Straits of Juan de Fuca have been usually placed between Vancouver's Island and the Oregon; but Sir John Ross, with some degree of plausibility, suggests that both these navigators passed through Behring's Straits, and reached the Isthmus of Boothia.

This has been the extent of the Arctic discoveries of the Spaniards. Flourishing for a brief space, they were feared and respected by every nation in Europe; and the power of Napoleon, in the height

of his glory, was never equal to that of Philip II. Like a blazing flambeau, they threw all other nations into the shade; but the cause of their greatness was the cause of their decay. They are now fallen. But though Spain no longer stands in the first rank amongst nations, she is yet an important European power, and still possesses in abundance all the resources which, when properly directed, make a people prosperous and happy.

PACIFICUS.

*C. R. Markham.*

## HISTORY OF GRIFFITH AND CORNWALLIS ISLANDS.

## NO. IV.

The extreme cold has rendered organic being in these Arctic isles very precarious; and the mosses, poppies, sorrel, saxifrage, stunted willow, grasses, *stellaria rossii* and *ranunculus* are the only vegetable productions known to exist; and even these are few and far between. The animals almost all migrate to a milder climate during the winter, and while the stronger prey upon the weak, while the bears wage endless war upon the seals, the narwhals

upon the fishes and crustacea, and the foxes upon the leming; the birds enjoy comparative freedom, no birds of prey have as yet been seen, and the small fish which inhabit the fresh-water lakes, are free from the attacks of those voracious enemies which destroy them in other climates.

Man—that wonderful animal, whose traces are to be found from the naked wastes of Terra del Fuego to the granitic cliffs of Spitzbergen—has also left them on these barren shores. Two small circles of mould and moss, almost imperceptible, show that the Esquimaux have penetrated to a stream ten miles to the northward of Barlow Harbour; while at Cape Hotham several huts were found, the most recent being built of stone and about two feet in height, while traces, like a fairy's circle, was all that could be discerned of the most ancient. Near Cape Martyr there appears to have been a very extensive settlement; the outline of some of the huts were very recent and clear, and the number of bones of whales seemed to indicate that the Esquimaux had resided on this spot for some time; and farther inland, there was a grave, neatly built of limestone slabs.

For conjectures whither the original occupiers of these huts have gone, or whence they have come, we refer our readers to the able article of 'Scrib-

lerus'\* on that subject ; but it is at least cheering to meet with some traces of the abodes of man, be they ever so wretched, on this desolate island.

How long an interval elapsed between the departure of the Esquimaux and the year 1819, we have no means of ascertaining ; but when the scourge of Europe had been banished to St. Helena and tranquillity was restored to the world, that mighty nation whose arms and money had produced a general peace, sent forth her sons to explore the unknown Arctic seas ; and in 1819, Parry's two ships passed the hitherto unknown portals of Lancaster Sound, and their crews were the first Europeans who cast their eyes on Cornwallis and Griffith Isles ; and Parry described the shores of the former as "rising with a gradual ascent from a beach that was apparently composed of sand," and passing eagerly in quest of a north-west passage, he left them far astern ; while in 1820, on his unsuccessful return, he again passed close to Griffith Island, but without landing, and returned to England.

From that time to the year 1845, they were never approached ; and how far the long-missing Expedition has explored them, is, alas ! unknown. We eagerly picked up part of an oar, on Cape

\* See page 149.

Hotham, with 'Friendship'\* marked upon it, and with yet deeper interest did another party trace the tracks of a heavily-laden sledge, near Cape Hotham, for thirty yards, till they were lost in the shingle.

Since that, the happiness of our ships has made the winter pass swiftly by, and the frowning ravines of Griffith Island have rung to unaccustomed sounds; while in Assistance Bay our colleagues have emulated our good-fellowship.

In the spring, while searching for a far more important end, our knowledge of the shores of Cornwallis Island will be immensely increased, and on the happy return of the travelling parties, we intend that our narrative shall be resumed; and therefore, with a sincere prayer that the missing may be found, let us all join in the unanimous cry that a happy result may crown the efforts of the travellers.

\* A whaler, lost several years before, in Baffin's Bay.

TO BE CONTINUED.

*C.R. Warham*

We were much gratified at the receipt of the following letter from our friends in Assistance Bay; we insert it, convinced of the deep interest felt by our readers for our brothers in the same mission.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE AURORA BOREALIS.

In this cold region, a line or two from a warm friend may not be unacceptable; as you will no doubt be desirous to know how it fares with the inhabitants of Assistance Bay, one of the most delightful localities, situated between the latitudes of  $74^{\circ}$  and  $75^{\circ}$  north, the fashionable resort of the most splendid yachts that were ever frozen up within the Arctic regions. Foxes, hares, birds and fish (*Salmo aulopus*) abound, if we could only catch them; and from the summits of the gently-rising hills, dear (deer) creatures, who love Arctic scenery, can have a splendid view of Cape Bunny, &c.; while numerous icebergs occupying Barrow Strait, in splendid magnificence, defy all foreign invasion, and afford that kind of security to the peaceful and patient sojourners of Assistance Bay, that is nowhere else to be found. What an enviable situation, when compared to those who are, perhaps, now dreading the powerful armies of France and Russia!

The fact is, people don't know when they are well off. Any one who had seen how rationally, happily, and merrily, we spent the Christmas holidays, would say the Arctic regions is the place to live. No cholera, no yellow fever, and nothing to do but keep yourself warm and comfortable; and those who cannot live upon salmon and venison, both of which are expected, have no business to come here.

On Christmas-day, after Divine service, the three happy crews dined together, drank the Queen's health and that of Sir John, Lady Franklin, the Commodore, officers and crews of Her Majesty's ships. In the evening, we had a visit of the Ethiopian serenaders, whose performance equalled any we have witnessed in the metropolis; and we will venture to affirm, that there was not an inhabitant of Cornwallis Island that was not delighted.

The year ended with a masquerade, and the new year was hailed and enlivened by the arrival of Mr. Shon (John) McNab from the Highlands, who related his wonderful adventures.

He saw the stenoat o'er the burn,  
And syne he ca'd a pig, man;  
He saw a Whig to Tory turn,  
And Tory turn to Whig, man.

Mr. McNab, after many extraordinary adventures,



was put into jail for brewing whisky, but got out no matter how, and came to Glasgow, where he saw many wonders. He says :

Wi' fire they gar the steamboat rin,  
Upon the river Clyde, man ;  
I saw it mysel, as sure's a gun,  
As I stood by the side, man.

But if you'll no believe my word,  
Gang to the Bronielaw, man,  
You'll see a ship wi' twa mill wheels,  
To grind the water sma', man.

During the whole winter, the Royal Cornwallis Theatre was open, as the sailors say, "free gratis for nothing," and was attended and patronised by the *élite*, as well as the mobility; and the performance gave universal satisfaction.

The 4th of February being the day on which our worthy neighbour, Captain Penny, *lost his liberty* by committing *matrimony*, that interesting event was duly celebrated; and on the 17th, our ice couriers arrived from our gallant Commodore, with despatches of importance; which shall be the subject of our next communication, should this be found worthy of your notice.

XEMUS.

Assistance Bay, Cornwallis Island,  
Feb. 21st. 1851.

*Sir John Ross.*

## SNOW BLINDNESS.

## MAL DE NEIGE.

The effects of the rays of the sun, reflected from the snow upon the eyes, has been found to be very painful, and is frequently attended with very distressing circumstances. In Melville Bay, the necessity of defending the eyes was experienced; and accordingly green veils were distributed, and goggles of many fantastic shapes and various colours, made their appearance amongst us.

The same effects are felt, but accompanied with most excruciating pain, and followed by attacks of purulent ophthalmia, from the intense glare of the burning sands of the deserts of Africa. The army of Napoleon in Egypt, and an English regiment afterwards quartered near the sandy beach at Hythe, suffered severely from this disease, while the Belgian army has long been afflicted with it, from which one hundred thousand persons have suffered from it since the year 1830; but its most terrible form is to be found among the Peruvian Andes. In those lofty regions, it produces a disease called by the

inhabitants the "surumpi," which occasions blindness and excruciating torments; the conjunctiva becomes inflamed, and the smallest ray of light being absolutely insupportable, blindness is the consequence. The relief generally used by the Indians is a poultice of snow; but as that melts away, the tortures return.

During the Peruvian War of Independence, the following very remarkable cases of surumpi occurred. As the division of the Patriot army, commanded by General Cordova, was marching from the city of Cusco to Puno, all the men were struck blind, with the exception of the guide, who galloped forward to procure a hundred Indians to assist in leading them. Many of the sufferers, maddened by pain, had in the meanwhile strayed from the columns: many perished on the road, and others fell down precipices, and were never heard of more; while the Indians took charge of files of the poor sightless soldiers, clinging to each other with agonised and desperate grasp. Out of three thousand men, Cordova lost one hundred.

The other case occurred in 1824, when two hundred patriot prisoners, having escaped from their escort, fled to the mountains of Cochabamba. On the very first night, it was necessary to light fires, and mount guard, to preserve themselves from the

jaws of ferocious animals ; and every man who separated himself from the circle, was sure to be carried off and speedily devoured. On the third day they were caught in the snow-storm ; and on the fourth, the surumpi attacked them ; and those who did not perish on the spot, were seized by the fierce wild beasts with which this mountainous and unfrequented country is infested, and torn to pieces. The Indians, however, provide themselves against this calamity by means of a shade round the head ; and when they feel its approach, a snow poultice, constantly renewed, is applied to the eyes.

This infliction, together with an exhausted treasury, and the dissensions of party spirit, were among the principal causes which so long retarded the completion of Peruvian emancipation.

Such have been a few of the distressing circumstances which accompany these several forms of ophthalmia ; and the absence of light having weakened our eyes during the winter, it will be found more necessary to guard against snow-blindness in the ensuing spring, than in Melville Bay last season.

I remain,

Sir,

Yours very sincerely,

CLIO.

*C. R. Mankham*

## ROYAL ARCTIC THEATRE.

The grand historical drama of "Charles the Twelfth" was, on the evening of the 4th inst., selected for the instruction and amusement of the playgoers of the Arctic squadron. It was got up with the usual splendour as to costume, scenery, &c., peculiar to this theatre, and played with all the strength of the talented company of amateurs who have so generously devoted their time and mental energies to the purpose of amusing the sojourners at Griffith's Island during a long Arctic night.

The stage history of this historical drama is well known, its principal characters being generally sustained by "stars of the first magnitude," with such the histrionic abilities of non-professionals will admit of no comparison. No member of the "scenic art" possessing the fire of Macready, the easy delicate satire of Charles James Matthews, or the classic grandeur of a Vandenhoff has yet appeared at Griffith's Island; and we doubt much whether our chilling atmosphere would not "dim the shine" of any such brilliant luminary.

We viewed the performance of "Charles the Twelfth" as an amateur one, and as such we notice it. We have had the honour of witnessing several amateur performances, got up for special purposes, in which some of the most distinguished *literati* and wits of the day have deigned to take "parts," and we do not hesitate to say, that in their greatest efforts to please a fashionable and intelligent audience, they did not in the slightest degree surpass the Griffith's Island performers. The whole of the second act was done in a manner that would have elicited approbation from the most fastidious audience. Amongst the whole, there was a sustained and graceful energy, free from rant or extravagance, and the language in which Shakespeare wrote and Chatham spoke was preserved in all its purity and elegance.

It is not customary with the press to criticise individually amateur performers, but as theatricals "are few and far between" in old Zero's dominions, we presume to make a few remarks on the principal characters. The stern taciturn monarch was carefully played, and would have been considered a creditable performance even before a metropolitan audience; and Gustavus was done in a style that we have seldom seen surpassed; the actor appeared to enter into the spirit of the character, and by his grace-

fulness of attitude and transition of countenance rendered the part highly interesting, and at times, deeply impressive :

“ In every attitude shone grace and lightness,  
A form divine, the maiden's heart to win ;  
His blushing cheeks and eyes' unrivalled brightness,  
Spoke of the treasures nicely stored within.”

The wily, but honest Vauberg, was exceedingly well played ; the gentleman who represented him looked the Firman in picturesque reality.

Adam Brock and Triptolemus Muddlerwerk were well played ; the gentlemen who sustained those two different characters displayed great comic powers, and, had they in early life adopted the stage as a profession, would have assuredly excelled in the higher walks of the drama. Their action, gesture and language were worthy a first-rate professional.

We have now to speak of the ladies ; or rather those gentlemen who assumed the garb of the Swedish maidens. We remember to have seen a late celebrated actress attired in a Highland kilt, bonnet and plume ; we laughed heartily at the costume, while we admired the features of the lovely syren, but not to a greater degree than we did at seeing two British officers arrayed in petticoats. We shall make no invidious comparisons betwixt

the two accomplished fair ones; suffice it to say, they played their "parts" with intelligence, ease and elegance; and had Ellen Tree (Mrs. Charles Kean) seen one of her favourite characters personated by the masculine gender, she would have sighed and exclaimed: "My occupation is gone!"

To do justice to all the actors would be to enumerate the names of all in terms of praise; let us therefore pass to the great event—the grand success of the evening—the pantomime. We have however, to mention that we were entertained between the pieces by the performance of two first-rate vocalists. A song written for the purpose, which does great credit to the author, and sung by an officer, who has once before kindly appeared before the drop-scene, and who has in private *soirées* conduced, in an eminent degree, to the pleasure and happiness with which this Arctic winter has been passed, elicited much applause; and another very clever and amusing performance, by a seaman of the name of Craig, belonging to Captain Penny's ship, in which the transitions from the comic jocularity of Buckstone to the tragic gravity of Charles Kean, were highly diverting, served to occupy the time which was taken up for the necessary arrangements between the two pieces.

The pantomime we have slightly noticed on a



former occasion, and still assert that it is splendid in the extreme. To such a piece we have not the descriptive powers to do justice—to say there never was anything like it before produced within the Arctic Circle, would be but faint and dubious praise; but to say it is equal to anything of the kind we have ever seen, would be but fair and just.

There was on the stage everything that is worth seeing in these frozen regions, independent of Old Zero, who makes his appearance in an appropriate dress, thermometer in hand; there was bear-shooting, fox-trapping; travelling parties with sleigh; tent-pitching, &c.; all which were done to the life; some excellent original songs were also sung during the performance. These songs were all composed by an officer in the Expedition, and do great credit to his lyric powers. We had almost forgot to mention that the pantomime is written by the same officer, which does him honour.

It merely wants a little dressing up by Alfred Crowquill or Albert Smith, then placed in the hands of some of our clever pantomimists for performers, and we are positive that it would not only electrify a cockney audience, but immortalize the author, fill the coffers of the lessee, and have an unprecedented run of a thousand nights. We are, however, sorry on the present occasion to report that

notwithstanding the many alterations made in the piece by the author for the better it was not by any means so well performed as on the first night. Mr. C—— however played the clown as usual, in a manner worthy of Flexmore or a Barry.

Thus ended the pantomime: after which, the gallant manager spoke a neat and appropriate epilogue, at the conclusion of which a unanimous burst of acclamation arose from the whole house, or rather from every soul on board H.M.S. 'Assistance,' at which moment the curtain fell, and the theatre closed for the season.

We have spent many a pleasant hour within the walls of a theatre, but never have we enjoyed ourselves to a greater degree than at the Royal Arctic on the evening of the 4th of March, 1851.

It is true no

"Eyes, as diamonds, sparkling bright,"

illuminated the deep circle, nor beauty of the opera or ballet adorned the stage; we were neither enraptured by the melodious warblings of a Jenny Lind, nor fascinated by the smiles of a Madame Wilson; but we had the novel gratification of looking around on an audience and a company of actors, composed exclusively of British seamen, health glowing on their

cheeks, and determination beaming in their eyes—their country's pride, and the world's terror.

The Arctic Theatre was closed for the season, and its gallant manager has proved a successful caterer to the public amusement during a long winter. We hope he has been equally fortunate in filling his treasury, and should he again deign to open his small, but splendid and commodious theatre during the forthcoming season, we hope that a generous and discerning public will shower down on him that patronage his taste and talents eminently deserve.

"Nunway".  
presumably George  
Nunway.

The manager begs to offer his best thanks to all who have so kindly aided him in carrying out the theatrical entertainments during the past winter, not only to those who have contributed their talents to the performance, but also to those who have by great personal labour exerted themselves in completing the arrangements, scenery, decorations, and material of the house.

The lease having expired, the manager highly appreciates the many favours received from a gene-

rous public by their cordial support ; and if they have derived some amusement during the darkness and privations of an Arctic winter, it will ever be a source of gratification. In taking leave of his friends in this capacity at the conclusion of the season, he trusts that the late happy occasions, where all joined in contributing to the general amusement, may always be remembered with satisfaction.

May success and prosperity attend each through life !

*Capt. Oumay.*

## METEOROLOGY FOR FEBRUARY, 1851.

According to anticipation, and the experience of most previous voyagers, February has proved to be the severest of the winter months. The force of the wind has generally been greater, we have had a greater proportion of obscure days, and more falling snow than any of the preceding months.

In addition to the usual table, the temperature is given for the same months of the three successive years in Boothia Felix.

| Place.                | Year. | Max.    | Min.  | Mean.   |
|-----------------------|-------|---------|-------|---------|
| Melville Island . . . | 1820  | — 17°   | — 50° | — 32·19 |
| Winter Island . . .   | 1822  | — 4°    | — 37° | — 24·97 |
| Igloodik . . . . .    | 1823  | + 20°   | — 43° | — 21·41 |
| Port Bowen . . . . .  | 1825  | — 8°    | — 45° | — 27·32 |
| Boothia Felix . . . . | 1830  | + 1½°   | — 47° | — 29·9  |
| Ditto . . . . .       | 1831  | — 9½°   | — 49° | — 32·46 |
| Ditto . . . . .       | 1832  | — 12°   | — 44° | — 33·69 |
| Port Leopold . . . .  | 1849  | — 15·3° | — 53° | — 31·3  |
| Off Griffith Island*  | 1851  | — 13°   | — 48° | — 32°98 |

In consequence of thick weather the sun could not be seen until three days after the one calculated

\* On several occasions a thermometer placed at a distance of a hundred yards, has indicated 2° lower temperature.

for its appearance on the horizon: on the fourth, about noon, a vertical pink streak near the meridian indicated its position; on the seventh, at eleven, A.M., the glorious orb was seen from the mast-head, and immediately after was visible from the deck, bearing south-south-east. Owing to a fog bank along the south horizon, its upper semi-diameter only appeared. The altitude of its upper limb was about  $1\frac{1}{2}$  degree; for this position, at so low an altitude, its brilliancy was very remarkable, the day was colder than any other of the season; the thermometer showed  $-47^{\circ}$ , bar. 29.75.

It was absent from our sight ninety-five days, every heart gladdened to see it once more, for besides being an important epoch in the Arctic Calendar, it was an occasion which could not but inspire feelings of gratitude to an all merciful Creator.

The influence of the sun's rays was soon perceptible. On the 10th, a thermometer, being placed on a black board, exposed directly towards the sun, showed  $26^{\circ}$ , while in the shade it stood at  $32^{\circ}$ .

As in the two former months, we were visited with gales of wind, at the full and change of the moon, attended with heavy snow-drift, causing great accumulation round the ships; and the month concluded with a strong north-west gale. The winds

have blown twenty days from the north-west, and eight days variable and southerly.

The Aurora has appeared bright on four occasions; generally in the form of an arch, from the south-east quarter, towards the north. On the night of the 25th, it was more brilliant than on any other occasion this season, making an arch, from the south-east to the north, with coruscations shooting off laterally from it, towards the zenith.

Parhelia and haloes have been visible during the day, almost daily, since the return of the sun, more or less brilliant; generally one on each side of the sun, at the extreme of the halo's diameter, which measured about  $40^\circ$ , coloured with the prismatic hues. Sometimes a faint one was seen on the vertical extreme, bisected by a segment of an inverted halo.

The mean height of the barometer for the month was 29.83; extreme range, from 30.60 to 29.17.

*Capt. Owen Murray.*

## IX.

Baffin's Bay, Sept. 1851.

WITH the extended search made by our ships, and more especially by our travelling parties, and nothing having been discovered by them, the hope which buoyed us on leaving England, and made us look forward to being the instruments to our missing countrymen, is now quenched for ever.

Hundreds of miles of coast, hitherto unknown, have been examined, and have been added to the stock we already possess of Arctic geography; but not a vestige of the missing Expedition, beyond what was discovered at Cape Riley and Beechey Island, has been found.



Throughout the search, the most earnest anxiety was manifested; but day followed day, and month succeeded month, without any clue to their whereabouts.

Various and many have been the surmises regarding the fate of the 'Erebus' and 'Terror,' yet the wildest of these may perhaps be the one nearest the truth. A mysterious cloud envelopes their history. No one can doubt that much has been encountered by the missing ships; privations endured, and hardships undergone. Men like Franklin, Crozier, and Fitzjames, do not easily abandon an object.

Without looking over the list of those men who have sought glory amid savage nations, amid pestilential climes, and in countries teeming with obstacles innumerable, we shall limit ourselves to a few instances known in Arctic navigation.

In 1743, a vessel sent by Jeremias Ottamkoff, of Mesen, in Sergovia, for the purpose of fishing, was frozen in off East Spitzbergen. Unprepared for wintering, and anxious to secure to themselves a home on land, four men were sent in search of a hut, or its remains, which they had heard had been left by a ship, that had wintered in the same place, some time before. These men provided themselves with a musket, powder-horn, containing twelve charges of powder, some lead, an axe, a small kettle,

a stove, a piece of touchwood, a knife, a tin box, full of tobacco, and each man a pipe. They succeeded in finding the hut, when the wind, which had been blowing hard, now increased to a gale, and obliged them to take shelter that night within the wretched dwelling. To their horror, on seeking the beach the next morning, they found that ice, ship, and all hands, had disappeared.

Despair at the thought of being thus abandoned, seized upon them; but yielded to the pressing necessity of seeking food. Luckily, reindeer abounded, and the twelve charges produced as many deer. The flesh of these animals was almost consumed, when a portion of wood and a nail were found on the beach, with which they made a lance, and succeeded in killing a bear. Of the tendons, they made strings for a bow, and with arrows they killed all the reindeer, blue and white foxes, which served them for food during the period of their stay on this deserted spot.

After six dreary years had passed over their heads, they lost one of their comrades. The remaining three were taken away in 1749, by a Russian ship, whose attention they had succeeded in attracting; having passed six years and three months in this dreadful seclusion.

Deshnew, the Russian traveller, who first had

the honour of sailing from the Kolyma River, through the Polar into the Pacific Ocean, as far as the Anadyr River, set out on his expedition in June, 1648. News was heard of him up to 1654, when he was completely lost sight of. During these six years, he pursued his object "with unexampled activity and perseverance; overcoming the difficulties which hunger, the climate, and the inhabitants, placed in his way." His fate has never been ascertained.

Hearne, in his "Journey to the Polar Seas," mentions that he frequently was without food for five or six days, in the most inclement weather; but supported the privation, without losing his health and spirits, by smoking tobacco, and by wetting his mouth with a little snow.

And can we, amidst this list of sufferings, omit the privations which were undergone by the gallant leader of the missing ships, Sir John Franklin himself, and his four brave companions, in the overland journey to the shores of the Polar Seas, during the years 1819—20—21, and 22; one of the most perilous on record? and which, as Sir John Barrow remarks, "adds another to the many splendid records of the enterprise, zeal, and energy of British seamen —of that cool and intrepid conduct, which never forsakes them on occasions the most trying—that

unshaken constancy and perseverance, in situations the most arduous, the most distressing, and sometimes the most hopeless, that can befall human beings."

Can we, without feelings of the deepest sympathy, recal to our minds the sufferings they underwent? the hunger, that made them prize food, which, from its putridity and acid nature, excoriated their lips, and which reduced them to so low a state, as to cause one to say, "Dear me! if we are spared to return to England, I wonder if we shall recover our understandings?"

We are astonished how men could have undergone so much, without losing their reason. Great indeed must have been their sufferings.

In terminating his interesting, though mournful narrative, Dr. (now Sir John) Richardson, says: "It is impossible to describe our sensations, when, on attaining the eminence that overlooks it, we beheld the smoke issuing from one of the chimnies. From not having met with any footsteps in the snow, as we drew nigh our once cheerful residence, we had been agitated by many melancholy forebodings.

Upon entering the now desolate building, we had the satisfaction of embracing Captain Franklin; but no words can convey an idea of the filth and wretch-

edness that met our eyes on looking around. Our own misery had stolen upon us by degrees, and we were accustomed to the contemplation of each other's emaciated figures: but the ghastly countenances, dilated eyeballs, and sepulchral voices of Captain Franklin and those with him, were more than we could at first bear."

And with such examples shall we say that England's proud sons have succumbed without a struggle? Causes above the power of man have been at work, and have arrested them in their hopeful expectations.

Our duty is done in these seas, and we now turn homeward, yet in doing so it is with the hope that the missing ships have proceeded westward, and that to Collinson's Expedition is reserved the humane honour of rescuing those brave and so long missing adventurers; and that we may yet have the heartfelt pleasure of welcoming them to England, and congratulating them on their escape through the many dangers and dreary winters they have passed in the Polar regions.

J. D.

## A PARTING WORD TO OUR READERS.

It is with a certain degree of regret that we announce this as the last number of the "Aurora." This paper was established in the first instance for the purpose of creating amusement, arousing inquiry, and eliciting information; and now that its final number is about to appear before the public, we may venture to say, without fearing that the boast will draw upon us the imputation of vanity, that the "Aurora Borealis" hath succeeded in its object.

We here offer our thanks to our kind contributors for the very ready manner in which they have always assisted in ably filling its pages, and to our readers for the leniency exhibited in their criticism.

Another debt of thanks is due to the pioneers who were the first to astonish the Arctic wilds with the "hundred voiced cry of the public press;" to Sir Edward Parry and to Colonel Sabine, the institutors of papers in the Arctic regions, to whom we are indebted for the idea of establishing our own.

As we take our final farewell, we entertain hopes that, when years will have made us older men, the

moments employed in writing for—or reading—the “Aurora,” will not be looked upon as the least bright ones of our existence, and that the after life of our mess, ship, and squadron-mates may ever have for their motto the one chosen by our paper

“Spes semper lucens.”

L D .

#### TRAVELLING PARTIES.

The spring travelling parties of this Expedition have effected infinitely more of the extensive search for Sir John Franklin and his missing crews, than has been achieved by the ships during the navigable season.

Issuing forth from the north-west point of Griffith Island, they have penetrated far into the unknown west, searched and discovered vast tracts of coast, and starting earlier, and travelling longer than any parties that have gone before them, have borne up against the rigorous climate of an Arctic April, and endured hardships of a most trying nature.

From the 4th of April to the end of the month

there was (with the exception of one day) a travelling party constantly away from the ships; and during that time the temperature was seldom up to zero. The cutting wind frequently blowing in their faces, together with the hard uneven ridges of snow, and lines of heavy hummocks over which the sledges were obliged to be dragged, rendered the work of the travellers very laborious. Their faces were constantly frost-bitten, scarcely was one cheek restored when the other would be caught. Their feet were so affected by the cold that in several cases serious accidents were the results. The glare of the sun upon the snow, caused snow-blindness and soreness of the eyes, and on one occasion there were fifteen men attacked with it, out of four sledges' crews, consisting of thirty persons.

When the tent is pitched, and the fire lighted for supper, the miseries of this travelling are far from ended. With the thermometer below  $-10^{\circ}$ , the fat of salt pork becomes hard, and breaks like suet; the rum becomes thick, and to drink out of a pannikin without leaving the skin of the lips attached to it, requires considerable experience and caution. The steam of the cooking, together with the moisture of the breath, condenses in considerable quantity on the inside of the tent, so that each flap of the canvas causes a shower of fine snow to fall over



its inmates, penetrating and wetting their blanket bags.

Besides this, the men experienced great difficulty in getting off their boots, and felt numbness in their legs. On several occasions the cold was so intense that it even penetrated the sleeping bags, fingers were frost-bitten, and sleep prevented. The boots, too, which had contracted during the mild weather of the 16th and 17th from perspiration from the feet, soon froze hard; and the boot with which the Duke of Lauderdale tormented the Scotch Covenanters, was brought to the Arctic traveller's recollection, when forcing his foot into these frozen receptacles of torture.

But let it not be supposed that these hardships and privations were not attended with concomitant comfort—a comfort whose extent can never be felt by those who are accustomed to the luxury of beds, or even to the bare ground in less rigorous climes. Not the tired soldier, when after a long march, he wraps himself in his cloak, and lays him down by the watch-fire: not the South American horsemen, to whom sleep has been a stranger for thirty hours, when overpowered by drowsiness, and with his bridle twisted round his arm, he drops from his saddle and falls into a delightful slumber: not the labourer who after a heavy day's work returns to his humble

dwelling to refresh himself in sleep; none of these can imagine the enchanting dreams and delicious repose experienced by the Arctic traveller, when with one pound of pemican stowed comfortably away, he ensconces himself for the night in his blanket bag. The agreeable passages of the past, and all that imagination can prompt as delightful, for the future pass across the dreamer's mind, and banquetting halls with tables groaning under the profusion of luxuries are laid out before him. This latter image is more vivid, if the day's meal has happened to be more meagre than usual.

Such were the hardships, and such the comforts experienced in the month of April. In May the weather became gradually warmer, and by the end of June the water on the floe had become so deep as to make the sledges float in many places, and to rise above the sea-boots of the travellers, while the ice underneath was so smooth and slippery as scarcely to afford a footing; so that the cold and frost-bites of one month were replaced by the wet and discomfort of another.

The two great divisions of travelling parties left the north-west bluff of Griffith Island on the night of the 15th of April. The Cape Walker division slept on the first day over ice, which was frequently heard to crack and grind under

the tents. On the 21st, after crossing a heavy ridge of hummocks extending to the north-west by lightening and double manning the sledges, they reached the beach, and encamped at midnight.

Cape Walker was the spot on which it was almost universally believed that Sir John Franklin would have left a cairn, if proceeding in that direction, and great was the mortification of the travellers when not a sign or vestige was to be found. It is a range of high cliffs rising 700 or 800 feet perpendicularly above the level of the sea, composed of sandstone conglomerate, the debris of which form slopes that extend from about halfway up its face down to the beach.

The highest part to the south-south-east may be assumed as the Cape itself, and the whole is fissured by deep ravines. Five miles north-north-west of the Cape is a promontory where the cliffs terminate in a rounded point, in lat.  $74^{\circ} 7'$  north, and long.  $97^{\circ} 38'$  west. Huge hummocks are pressed upon the beach, in some places to a height of fifty feet. The coast trends south-west by west with very low land, which was completely covered with snow, and low projecting points extending every five or six miles, where the grounded masses of ice were forcibly pressed up in great profu-

sion. The land is generally of limestone, with boulders of granite.

About nineteen miles westward of Cape Walker, an island was discovered, very low and flat, and about eight miles from the shore. The ice appeared to be of many years formation, and several heavy pieces were grounded at least one mile and a half from the shore. From a low point in long.  $99^{\circ} 25'$  west, the land turns to the south-east, forming a channel about four miles and a half wide; after several miles it turns to east by north and here the land assumes a bolder appearance, and rises to a height of two hundred and fifty feet. From this point the channel turns east by north; the soil here, favoured by a southern aspect, is deep, and well-covered with grass and moss.

On the southern coast was a magnificent range of cliffs intersected by ravines; and at last it turns due south, and the channel opens into a sea between North Somerset and the newly-discovered land, thus making the land on which Cape Walker is situated, an island of about one hundred miles in circumference.

Beyond the northern outlet of this channel the land extends north-west to a very low cape. It then turns west-south-west for twenty-five miles of low dreary coast without any remarkable feature.

A deep gulf reaching to  $72^{\circ} 49'$  north, and about fifty miles in circumference, whose shores consisted of low uninteresting land is bounded by a point from which the land again trends nearly south, and here ended the search in this direction. In lat.  $73^{\circ} 52'$  north, long.  $101^{\circ} 14'$  west, the magnetic needle showed its maximum declination.

The coast to south and east of Cape Walker was also examined as far south as  $72^{\circ} 42'$  north, it consisted of high and barren land.

Along the whole three hundred miles of newly-discovered coast, not a sign or vestige of Europeans was to be found: a few very ancient and scattered Esquimaux remains, a few fossils, and the cliffs near Cape Walker comprehend all that can excite the smallest interest; all else that was seen was a barren coast covered with snow, and bounded by the frozen sea—monotonous, dreary, and inhospitable.

In the meanwhile the north-west division had proceeded along the shores of Cornwallis and Bathurst Islands. On arriving at Cape Cockburn on the 28th, it was found necessary to send several men back to the ships, severely frost-bitten in the feet, several of which ended in mortification, and one unfortunately had a fatal termination. On the 6th of May, Byam Martin Island was reached,

which with a margin of very low land rises in the interior to a height of one hundred to three hundred feet.

This island is of an oblong form, the singular margin by which it is surrounded consists of sandy and muddy flats, resembling the large islands at the mouths of great rivers; this resemblance impressed the recent visitors with the idea of its having an analogous or delta origin; and this view is perhaps favoured by its position at the mouth of a wide strait, or at least a very deep gulf.

On the 11th, the parties landed on Melville Island—that Ultima Thule of modern discovery; and were the first visitors since 1820. One party discovered its eastern coast as far north as  $76^{\circ} 15'$ , and travelled round Byam Martin Island, while the other advanced to the westward. Passing the winter Harbour of Parry, the land near Cape Providence was found to consist of ranges of hills with a narrow belt of low land, containing many well sheltered and fertile spots, with innumerable tracks of deer and musk oxen.

Cape Dundas was rounded, and from the summit of a cliff seven hundred feet high, Banks's Land was distinctly visible, where the ravines and some snow patches on the cliffs were plainly made out with a glass; the longitude of  $114^{\circ} 26'$  west was

reached, the farthest yet attained by any European in these regions, and after discovering at least one hundred and twenty miles of coast west of Cape Beechey, and a broad channel to the westward between Melville Island and Banks's land, which from their position subtended an angle of  $57^{\circ}$ , the party proceeded up Liddon's Gulf.

Bushan Cove, on its northern shore, was reached by the 1st of June, and here it was expected that Sir John Franklin, or some of his parties, if they had wintered anywhere to the northward of Melville Island, would have left traces in their attempt to reach the continent of America; but not a vestige was to be found. In this picturesque spot, Parry had left his travelling cart on the 11th of June, 1820, and our party found the wheels, several tin water bottles, one of which contained a mixture of tallow and linseed-oil, used probably to grease the cart-wheels, and some ammunition in a preserved meat tin, but spoiled by wet. The bones of the ptarmigan Parry had dined off were still strewed about the encampment. Parry's record was also found; it was only removed because almost destroyed by wet; it was replaced by another, and a cairn erected.

Leaving Winter Harbour on the 1st of June, Parry had been a fortnight away, and travelled over

one hundred and eighty miles, his party dragging a cart with eight hundred pounds weight on it.

Travelling in the Arctic regions was then in its infancy ; since that time it has gradually improved by experience, and become more extended in its operations ; Franklin, Richardson, Dease, Simpson and Rae have explored the shores of Arctic America ; James Ross has discovered the Magnetic Pole ; Parry himself has attained the highest north latitude ever reached by man ; and at last the travelling party in 1851, leaving the shores of Griffith Island, has attained a distance of three hundred geographical miles direct from the ships, and re-visited the place where the first Arctic travellers had encamped.

Crossing the land from near the head of Liddon's Gulf, the party arrived at Winter Harbour on the 5th, and encamped near the mass of sandstone at its entrance, on which the names of the 'Hecla' and 'Griper' were carved. The foundations of the observatory were found, with pieces of wood, coal, broken glass, nails and a domino lying in and near them ; but the grave of the seaman who died in 1820, could nowhere be discovered.\* The foot

\* These shores were still deeply covered with snow, thawing had not yet commenced, the temperature ranging from  $+17^{\circ}$  to  $35^{\circ}$ , so that it is probable the grave was covered over.



of man had not trod on this interesting spot since Parry's merry crews, the writers in the "North Georgian Gazette" and the actors in a "Miss in her Teens" and "The Mayor of Garrett" had wintered here in 1819—20, and a more convincing proof of this could not be found than the tameness of a hare, which almost allowed the men to touch her.

On the 6th, a cairn of Parry's was found at the entrance of Fife Harbour, containing a record in good preservation, which stated that the land was taken possession of in the name of King George III. on the 5th of September, 1819. This interesting document was replaced, and on the 13th, the party turned their backs on Melville Island, reaching the ships on the 4th of July. They had been eighty days absent, part of the time during the most rigorously cold weather, and had dragged the sledge over seven hundred and seventy-one miles of ice and snow.

Melville Island, as in Parry's time, had been found to abound in musk oxen, reindeer, ptarmigan, hares, brent geese and ducks, which supplied excellent fresh meat to the party, the musk oxen yielding one hundred and fifty to three hundred pounds of beef.

The plentiful supply of game forms a striking

contrast with the almost dearth of it on the newly discovered land to the southward, which must have greatly increased the monotonous sameness met with by the searching parties in that direction. Besides these parties, the west shore of Bathurst Island was discovered, and searched as far north as  $76^{\circ} 11'$ . A deep bay between Bathurst and Cornwallis Islands was found to exist, and with the exception of a narrow inlet in its north-east corner, was examined. Lowther, Garrett, Somerville, Brown and Young Islands have been thoroughly examined, and Penny's Expedition has explored both shores of Wellington Channel for more than a hundred miles.

With very small crews, and using dogs during the first, and a boat during the latter part of the spring, Mr. Penny has penetrated into regions hitherto unknown, discovered several islands, but without attaining the desired object; while Sir John Ross, in hopes of reaching the northern shores of Cornwallis Island, detached a party, which he himself accompanied for several days, and which after penetrating as far inland as  $75^{\circ} 40'$  north, was obliged to return.

During the progress of our parties, when the ice was tolerably smooth, and the wind favourable, sails and kites were used on the sledges with great

advantage, frequently, with a fresh breeze, overtaking the men at the drag-ropes, forcing them to run on either side, and continuing, without aid, their onward course.

Such have been the exertions made during the spring of 1851, to discover and relieve our long-lost countrymen. Five parties have been away from their ships much longer than any that have preceded them, "travelling over fast-frozen seas, presenting scenes of peculiar solitude, and gloom," as one of the travellers describes it, "with nothing but a snowy desert, encircled by the horizon—without a speck for the eye to rest on; so gloomy, that human life seems obtrusive and unwelcome in such a scene of desolation," and braving the hardships of a month, the mean temperature of which was  $-7^{\circ}$ , and the minimum  $30^{\circ}$ , at the ships. They have, although unsuccessful in their main object—the relief of their gallant countrymen—at least done their utmost to effect that noble object; and have surpassed the efforts of every Arctic traveller that has gone before them.

Though it has been positively ascertained that Franklin's ships are neither on the south nor the west shores of the islands of Parry's Archipelago; that they are not within one hundred miles of the entrance of Wellington Channel; and that they

have not proceeded either to the westward or southward of Cape Walker; yet their fate still remains an unsolved mystery.

Little or no hope can now, it is to be feared, be entertained of their ultimate safety; but in their noble and glorious attempt to extend and improve universal knowledge, they have fallen in a higher and a better cause, than if a ball or cutlass-wound had laid them low, on a field covered with the bodies of their fellow-creatures, or on a deck reeking with human blood.

“Humbly glorious, men will weep for them  
When many a guilty martial fame is dim,  
They ploughed the deep to bind no captive's chain,  
Pursued no rapine, strewed no deck with slain,  
And save that in the deep themselves lie low,  
These heroes plucked no wreath from human woe,  
Yet they that led discovery o'er the wave  
Still fill themselves an undiscovered grave.”

*C. R. Warburton.*

THE HISTORY OF GRIFFITH AND CORNWALLIS  
ISLANDS.

## NO. V.

## CONCLUSION.

Since the return of the travelling parties, Cornwallis Island has been found to bend north-west, until it is only bounded from Bathurst by a narrow inlet; and the land north of Barlow Inlet has been explored for a distance of about one hundred and sixty miles. The warm sun of June and July soon thawed the snow, and large lakes were formed in every direction, frequented by brent geese, red-throated divers, eider, king and long-tailed ducks. Numerous phalaropes and sand-pipers appeared in the marshy ground, and ptarmigans on the bleak, inhospitable hills; while the beautiful purple saxifrage, dwarf willows, and other plants, peeped forth as the snow gradually disappeared.

Griffith Island, too, has also appeared in a more cheerful and inviting light. In the south-east point,

which is a perpendicular cliff of about five hundred feet high, with an extensive landslip of huge blocks of limestone, from twenty to thirty feet in height, swarms of dovekies and gulls began to breed during the summer months. This is by far the most picturesque spot in the island. The prodigious masses of rock, strewed about in every direction, with purple saxifrage and mosses growing thickly between them, present a scene of wild confusion, which is increased by a view of the broad, desolate floe, stretching out to the horizon.

On the west coast of the island, there is a broad barren plain, sloping down from the inland hills to the sea; and here was a large boulder of granite; the ground, on one side of it, was covered with moss, and strewed with bones—the last resting-place of an aged bear. The whole plain, indeed, was covered with several patches, and the bones of bears, foxes, birds, &c.; and this wild and desolate spot was apparently the great cemetery of Griffith Island.

In addition to these two interesting scenes, a deep inlet, on the north-west coast, whose shores are encircled by large patches of grass and moss, and pools frequented by the eider-duck, brent goose, and phalarope, is another feature of the island which has been discovered since the arrival of summer.

During the month of March, scattered bodies of men, clothed in white, with banners displayed, might have been seen winding up the frowning ravines, crossing the bleak and snow-clad hills, or advancing along the beach, or on the neighbouring floes of Griffith Isle. Here were the Maltese cross, the arm transfixing a bleeding heart, the severed tree, the Cornish arms, and many others, waving in the breeze; while those who marched under these several colours exercised their power of endurance, previous to starting forth on their sacred mission.

It was on the gloomy and threatening evening of the 15th of April, that they all assembled under the north-west bluff, where the tents were pitched previous to departure.

For no hostile purpose was this large body of men, armed with guns and knives, busily employed in preparations for a long march. Those hearty cheers, which preceded their final departure, were no prelude to a murderous onslaught on an enemy, as an ignorant spectator would naturally have supposed, but the leave-taking of those who were about to brave fearful hardships, for the purpose of saving, not of destroying. And the north-west bluff beheld the return of these parties, one by one, as they dropped in, from their extensive, but fruitless search; and gladly was it hailed by many an anxious tra-

veller, as he pursued his weary way towards the ships.

Meanwhile the heat of the sun had made a sensible difference both on the floe and in the ravines. The splendid snow sculpture had disappeared: Britannia had dwindled into a little hummock, the bear was buried in drift, and the symmetrical vase had fallen from its pedestal; while the Observatory—a Pantheon in miniature—had sunk, and, “like a baseless vision,” left not a trace behind. But these perishable works of art were about to be replaced by more durable monuments of our residence in the Arctic regions.

On the summit of the south-east point of Griffith Island, a broad table-land, strewn with fossil remains, commands a magnificent view of Barrow’s Straits, and the land to the eastward; and this spot was chosen as the site of a superb cairn, thirteen feet high, and about thirty feet in circumference, and surmounted by a lofty pole, to commemorate our wintering in the adjacent floe; while another of similar dimensions was erected on Cape Martyr.

Other cairns, of different sizes, remains of encampments, heaps of preserved meat-tins, and especially a stratagetic wall, commanding a view of two lakes, near the south-west point of Cornwallis Island, and intended to conceal the duck-shooter: all these



will testify to future voyagers, that these islands were once frequented by the jovial crews of the Expedition of 1850—51.

A more melancholy testimony will be found in the presence of a solitary tomb, on the eastern shores of Griffith Isle, with a head and foot-board, neatly carved, and planted around with the moss and saxifrage—the last resting-place of one who fell a martyr to the humane cause in which he was engaged, during the rigorous winter of an Arctic April.

But the time soon arrived for the ice to break up, before the beneficial power of the summer sun; the floes were in motion, broad lanes of water opened, and at length, on the 11th of August, the four vessels bade farewell to their winter quarters; while, on the 12th, the brigs and schooner in Assistance Bay, also departed for England.

Eleven months had we been fixed in our winter home, with nothing to look upon but the broad desolate floe, and the barren, inhospitable islands; yet during that time the frozen plain had almost assumed the appearance of an inhabited country. Finger-posts and snowy architecture marked the roads between the different vessels; crowds of people were constantly to be seen passing and re-passing; while, on particular occasions, a carriage

lighted by torches and blue-lights; the high priest of Japan, clothed in yellow cap, flowered gown, and crimson belt, and other rare specimens of what people can do when they are put to it, might be seen crossing the dreary road towards the Arctic Casino.

The shores of the island, too, were also crowded by the constitutional promenaders of the squadron. During the summer, a noisy party of dovekie destroyers, commanded by the licenced sportsmen of the Expedition, were encamped on the south-east point; and, in short, the years 1850—51 were perfect *anni mirabiles* in the annals of Griffith and Cornwallis Isles.

No human foot will probably, for ages, tread their dreary shores. Our remains will lay unnoticed along the snowy beach; and our proud architectural monuments will rear their lofty heads in solitude, with no admiring eyes to gaze upon them; while with no bright protecting abodes to defy his might, the despotic Zero will exercise his life-destroying power, and spread bleak desolation along the deserted floe. Winter after winter will follow each other, the bears and foxes will roam unmolested over the ground where once the vocal and theatrical arts were brought to such perfection; and as summer returns, the sea-birds, ducks, and ptarmigan, will breed without injury

in the frowning crags, or along the unfrequented lakes; and no better proof can be given that vast tracts of country were never intended as abodes for man, and that the immense uninhabited tracts of Arctic land were set apart solely for the increase and enjoyment of those lower classes of God's created beings, which were never brought into existence only for our use.

When, in after years, the mind looks back upon the jovial hours spent near Griffith's Island, it will be with a more kindly feeling towards that wretched place, as associated with many pleasing and amusing circumstances in the history of our winter quarters; but if those feelings and associations did not exist, it might safely be asserted that more desolate, miserable, uninteresting, and frightful regions do not exist on the surface of the globe, than the two islands of Griffith and Cornwallis.

*C.R. Markham*

SEQUEL TO THE ORIGIN OF THE ARCTIC  
HIGHLANDERS.

Sir,

A description of the very interesting Esquimaux remains discovered by our travelling parties, while searching for the long-lost Expedition will form a natural sequel to an article on the origin of the Arctic Highlanders, which appeared in a former number of your paper.\*

From Cape Dundas to the entrance of Lancaster Sound, the whole coast is strewed with very ancient remains of both the winter and summer habitations of the Esquimaux, which, though of different ages have evidently been several centuries untenanted, they are however strong evidence of extensive emigrations at different periods from the westward towards Baffin Bay, and these emigrations may be accounted for, not only by the irruption of Shiebani Khan into Siberia, as suggested in the former article, but also

\* See p. 43.

by the other great conquests of the Mongols. Four times in the history of the world have the mighty hords which inhabit the southern slopes of the Altai chain, supposed by Cuvier to be the cradle of the Mongolian race—burst forth like a destroying deluge, to spread terror and desolation into every country of the old world.

Attila in the fifth century at the same time overawed the Empire of China, and entered Imperial Rome in triumph. In the ninth, the Hungarians spread desolation to the foot of the Pyrenees and the shores of the Atlantic, and burnt at the same time Ravenna on the Adriatic, and Bremen on the Baltic. Genghis Khan, in the thirteenth boasted that he had slain thirteen million of his fellow creatures, and in the end of the fourteenth Tamerlane aspired to the empire of the world. And these terrible scourges of mankind appear not to have rushed forth in one direction, like a mountain torrent destroying everything that impedes its progress, but to have spread out on all sides as the bursting of some mighty engine.

Not only did the grandsons of Genghis Khan proceed in their career of conquest from Samarcand to the plains of Silesia; but they also penetrated into the frozen wastes of Siberia, and founded a dynasty on the ruins of the Chinese

house of Soong. Not only did Tamerlane defeat the Ottoman on the field of Angora, and conquered the country of the Muscovites, but he also led his army to the conquest of China, and his descendants founded a dynasty in the luxuriant vale of Rohileund. These successive outpourings of the Mongolian tribes, must have been felt even to the remotest parts of Kamtschatka, and driven the wretched inhabitants of these sterile regions to migrate to the shores of another continent. Thus may the different ages of the ruined huts in the Parry Archipelago be accounted for, and their great number will attest the extent of the migrations.

The following is a description of the principal remains from the western parts of Melville Island to Cape Warrender:—

MELVILLE ISLAND.

1. On the south shore of Liddon's Gulf, were the remains of six huts, six feet in diameter, and two feet high.

2. Esquimaux remains, found near Dealy Island, and on the western entrance of Beverly Inlet.

BYAM MARTIN ISLAND.

1. Near Cape Gillman were Esquimaux remains, bones of an oxen, and jaws of a bear.

2. On the eastern shore were five or six Esquimaux huts, some decayed fur, and an antler; supposed to have been the same that were examined by Colonel Sabine in 1819.

## BATHURST ISLAND.

1. To the eastward of Allison's Inlet were the remains of six or seven Esquimaux huts, consisting of circles of stones nearly covered with moss.

2. On a point some miles beyond, there was a hut, and a bear's skull without the canine teeth, which had probably been killed by the Esquimaux, to whom these teeth are useful.

3. On the west point of Bedford Bay, there were six ruins of huts; they were circles of stones, each having a much smaller circle within it, they were all very old, although evidently of different ages.

4. On Cape Capel, were ten ruined winter habitations with bones of bears and seals; some of them had been cut with a sharp instrument; the general form of these huts resembles an oval, with an elongated opening at one end, their size about seven feet by ten. They appear to have

been roofed over with stones and earth, and these supported by bones of whales.

5. A little beyond were the ruins of six summer huts, scattered along the shore.

CORNWALLIS ISLAND.

1. North of the autumn dépôt point on this island were the remains of four or five summer huts, near each of which was a circle of stones, probably the fire places; in one of these charred fragments of bones were still remaining.

2. On an island west of the south-west point were three summer huts.

3. On the south-west point was a hut roofed over, several circles of stones, and a very perfect fox-trap.

4. On an islet, and a point between this place and Cape Martyr, were several summer huts and fox-traps.

5. East of Cape Martyr was an extensive settlement, many bones of whales, and a neat grave of limestone slab.

6. Between Capes Martyr and Hotham the whole coast is strewn with Esquimaux remains, and there are several on Cape Hotham.



## GRIFFITH ISLAND.

1. On the south point were three huts with fire-places.

2. On the west coast was a covered winter habitation, and 3. near the north-west point five summer huts were found, in one of which was part of a runner of an Esquimaux sledge, and a long willow switch.

## CAPE WALKER AND NEWLY-DISCOVERED LAND.

1. The remains of several Esquimaux encampments were found near Cape Walker, but very old.

2. Some miles up the channel, dividing the island upon which Cape Walker is situated from the newly-discovered main land, several old remains of Esquimaux huts were found with bones much decayed in one of them.

3. On the shores of a deep gulf in about 100° west longitude, an old cairn of stones was discovered, which on examination, proved to be an Esquimaux *caché* of provisions. When the stones were removed the bones of seals and bears were found buried.

## CAPE WARRENDER.

1. On a peninsula at the entrance of a harbour, to the westward of Cape Warrender, were several

winter habitations, some of them two feet in height, with an entrance in one part, and a recess opposite. They were evidently of different ages, and the oldest only showed a mark like a fairy's circle. In one of them was a narwhal's horn. About a quarter of a mile from these huts, were twelve tombs, built neatly of limestone slabs, and each containing a human skeleton.

JONES'S SOUND AND CARY ISLES.

In Jones's Sound an Esquimaux skull was picked up, and on one of the Cary Islands were several *cachés* of provisions, evidently left by the Esquimaux, and containing the bones and skins of guillemots and other birds.

From the foregoing remarks, it will be found that the northern shores were infinitely more covered with Esquimaux remains, than the newly-discovered land to the south-west of Cape Walker, in consequence, evidently of their southern aspect; and thus the whole route of the emigrants may be easily traced from Melville Isle to the eastern shores of Baffin's Bay, where their descendants are still living.

Surrounded by mighty glaciers, "those palaces

of death and frost, so sculptured in this their terrible magnificence by the adamantine hand of necessity;" the Arctic Highlanders, the most northern inhabitants of the world, slightly clad, and dependent on the animals who visit their coast for a precarious existence, still lead a wretched, though apparently contented life, and when seen on the 1st of August last, appeared in perfect health and spirits.

One of them has resided amongst us for more than twelve months, and though slow to learn the English language, has yet by his constant cheerfulness and good humour, and willingness to make himself useful, become a general favourite, and the remarkable accuracy of York's chart, which, though differing widely from that supplied by the Admiralty, has invariably proved perfectly correct, is no mean proof of the sagacity of these poor fellows, who depend on their knowledge of the coast, for the means of procuring food.

Whether the Arctic Highlanders in their isolated position are destined to increase, to obtain the blessings of Christianity, and to render their condition as tolerable as the climate will admit; or whether they are fated to die off and disappear from the face of the earth, it is impossible to form a conjecture; therefore hoping that these

details will not prove uninteresting, I have the honour to sign myself, I fear, for the last time,

Ever your's,

Very sincerely,

C.H.O.

*C.R. Meekham*

#### ICE BLASTING.

Probably there are but few arts that have been more called into play during the last half century than that of engineering and mining. Hills have been removed or tunnelled, valleys filled up, and railroads constructed by the genius of the age, aided by gunpowder—an agent whose utility and wonderful power is only equalled by that of steam. Indeed, the exertions of the miner and engineer are closely connected with most of the grand improvements of the age, as also with the movements of armies; nor is their chief auxiliary limited in its operations to the “crust of the earth.” Within the last few years, sanguine hopes have been entertained of lessening the dangers and facilitating the progress of ships through frozen seas by blasting

the ice. To this end various experiments have been made in Canada, France, and on the Danube, some of which have given promise of success.

These suggestions were seriously considered by the Government during the fitting out of the Arctic Searching Expeditions of 1849—50, and resulted in a supply of powder and fuze to those ships as a necessary part of their equipment.

Such a novel application of gunpowder on board o' ship—to save live instead of to destroy—cannot be otherwise than interesting; we therefore purpose attempting a short description of the manner in which it has been used, and the circumstances under which we found it most useful, although we much fear the results have fallen far short of the anticipations of many scientific and practical persons who kindly interested themselves about it previous to our departure from England.

Our slow and tedious progress through the ice-encumbered seas of Baffin and Melville Bays, were frequently arrested altogether by large fields or floes of ice drifting against each other, and obstructing or shutting up our passage, where the obstruction, or "nip," was not more than a few hundred yards in width, we immediately had recourse to our valuable auxiliary, without which much time would frequently have been lost and exposure to pressure

incurred. The custom of the whalers in similar positions is to saw a passage through, or wait until a change of wind or other natural cause clears away the ice.

In such a case, to make a passage for the ships, our plan was to commence working at each extremity of the "nip," boring holes through the ice, and sinking charges of powder beneath it; these usually consisted of from two to five pounds, in proportion to its thickness. The average thickness of the floes met with here was four or five feet; two-pound charges were exploded two feet and a half beneath it, and the ice cracked all round for several yards; the pieces thus detached were easily removed. Where the floes had met with much force, their jagged edges were oftentimes crushed up, overlapped, and finally dovetailed together, and on these occasions four and five-pound charges were used to insure their separation. Where the "nip" was formed by great pressure, large pieces were forced beneath and on the top, forming a barrier of several layers of ice, twenty or twenty-five feet thick; and here we often found that small charges at first, would liberate several masses and considerably diminish the formidable nature of the obstruction. Powder was sometimes used in connection with the ice-saws; in one instance, a cut was sawed

parallel to the nip for two hundred and sixteen feet, and thirty feet from it, with four transverse cuts at equal distances from each other: five two-pound charges were exploded in this space, and the ice, amounting to above five hundred and fifty tons, broken up and cleared away. The ships were always moved close up, ready to take advantage of the opening when made, but it sometimes happened that the ice closed before they got through, holding them fast as in a vice; small charges of one or two pounds were then lodged under the ice along the sides of the ships and exploded at the instant that a heavy strain was hove upon the hawsers. This method was generally successful. Great caution is necessary in exploding charges near the ship when ice-bound; a five-pound charge was once exploded nine feet from the stern, and gave her such a violent shock as to make the bells ring.

To liberate the ships from their winter quarters, blasting was carried on upon a more extensive and varied plan. The ice in the proposed canal was so much eaten away by the gravel and ashes strewed over it, that but few places could be selected where sufficient resistance was given to the explosion to crack the surrounding ice to any distance; two-pound and four-pound charges were exploded seven

or eight feet below the ice, and usually effected its separation along the sides of the canal.

A blasting party was employed for twelve days in detaching the floe from part of the eastern shore of Griffith Island; with two hundred and sixteen pounds of powder and thirty-two yards of the safety-fuze, they cleared away a space twenty thousand yards in length, and averaging four hundred yards in breadth; this ice varied from three to five feet in thickness, with occasional patches of heavy-grounded hummocks. The estimated weight of the ice removed, exclusive of these heavy masses lying aground, was therefore about 216.168 tons.

This seems a very insignificant result, when compared with the assertion, that "ten or fifteen miles of four feet ice might be cleared in one day." Probably the experiments which led to such a conclusion were made in fresh-water ice, which is much more brittle than that formed of salt water, and where strong currents aided the explosions, by removing the fractured ice.

We have found floe ice so elastic, as to undulate and lift at each explosion, for more than fifty yards round, without any part of it being split, except immediately over the charge.

During the foregoing operations at Griffith's Island, we were favoured by a strong wind, which



cleared away the ice after each explosion. The heaviest charge was sixteen pounds, lowered ten feet below five-foot ice: its effect was most satisfactory, breaking up a space of four hundred yards square, besides splitting the ice in several directions. Four-pound charges were sometimes used, lowered seven feet below the ice, and in positions where it offered the greatest resistance.

Where the ice was thinner, and its surface much covered with pools of water, many of which communicated with the sea beneath, two-pound charges were used. As the effects varied so much under circumstances to all appearance precisely similar, we were unable to arrive at any accurate results; but generally found, that where the charge was judiciously placed and lowered so that the whole effect of the explosion was expended upon the under-surface of the ice, no fragments were thrown up, and the sound resembled that of a very distant gun, that then the effect was most satisfactory. Where the ice is much decayed, it becomes almost a matter of chance whether the charge is in a suitable position or not. Our blasting charges were contained in glass bottles, earthenware jars, or preserved meat tins; the cork or bung, through which the fuze is inserted, was rendered water-tight by luting, and the fuze cut to twelve inches in length: the charge was made fast to a

line, and lowered below the ice to the required depth ; previous to lowering it, the fuze was lighted. By this method, much fuze, as well as time, was saved ; the fuze used, burnt about two feet in a minute.

With regard to the use of shells for destroying ice, it appears only necessary to mention a few of the objections to them ; firstly, their weight, to be carried over uneven and slippery ice ; secondly, the great danger attending their use ; and thirdly, their expense. It seems to us that nothing can be more simple than a bottle of gunpowder and a foot of fuze, and that any method not equally simple and speedily executed would be ill adapted to the purpose, seldom available and often fraught with danger ; in fact the scene of bustle and hurry during these active and exciting operations is such as would at once convince the most incredulous of the disadvantage of materials at all intricate, or of combustibles requiring more than an ordinary degree of care.

It frequently becomes necessary to cut a dock in the floe as a refuge for the ship, and this at a time when any delay may involve her destruction ; when performed entirely with ice-saws, it is a labour of several hours ; were the side cuts alone to be made by the saws, and the area of the dock broken up by one or two small charges of powder, certainly

one-half the time and labour, and perhaps the ship would be saved.

This would be a useful hint to the whaling masters surely, the trifling expense of a case of blasting powder, and a few feet of fuze would be more than compensated for, by the many hours of anxious toil saved, and perhaps often induced them to dock their ships at times when the thickness of the ice, or the fatigue of their crews would otherwise oblige them to continue in exposed positions.

*"Mecham" presumably*  
~~~~~  
C. F. Mecham.

CARY ISLANDS.

DURING the passage of the ships across Baffin's Bay they were obliged by the nature of the ice to pass northward of the Cary Islands. On approaching the north-westernmost island of the group, the quarter-master observed a cairn on one of the most conspicuous heights, a boat was sent to examine it, and found it to consist of a pile of stones with an upright piece of spruce deal, a portion of ship's berthing, five feet in length and five inches broad. The letters, I—I M—R D, with the date 1827 on one side, and on the other T M—D K, were nearly obliterated.

Fourteen whalers were to the northward of these islands in 1827, most probably this was left as a record of their visit, by one of the ships whose crew landed. Sir John Ross in the 'Isabella' sighted but did not pass to the northward of the islands, these are the only instances of any vessels having approached them since Baffin's time. They are in lat. $76^{\circ} 45'$ north, and in long. $72^{\circ} 50'$ west. Five of them are from one mile and a half to two and a-half miles in diameter, and three smaller besides detached rocks above water. The weather falling calm, two boats were sent on the morning of the 22nd of August, one to replace the cairn by a more conspicuous mark containing an account of our visit, and the other to preserve birds for the ship's company. For many days past flocks of loom were seen flying in the direction of the land, from which we justly inferred that their breeding place would be found on the sheltered aspect of the islands. With difficulty we forced through the closely-packed ice that surrounds the shores, and the more so as our boats' crew were keen sportsmen, who attracted by the temerity of a stray bird would leave their oars and blaze away most fruitlessly.

We entered a small bay formed by three of the largest islands remarkable for their position and abrupt bold outline, and landed on the ice that still

adhered to the rocks. Thousands of loom were passing to and fro laden with food for their callow young, the noise of their ceaseless wings harmonizing well with the wild towering pinnacles of frost-shattered rock which seemed alive with the social birds. The formation is gneiss rising to the height of about four hundred feet above the level of the sea, the debris sloping from half way up down to the water's edge, and covered with vegetation, chiefly the scurvy-grass (*cochlearia grænlandica*), ranunculus, and poppy. The looms must have resorted here for ages, from the quantity of the tenacious ammoniacal soil which filled the interstices of the fragments forming the slopes and in many places reached above the ancles.

A short distance from our landing-place we found the remains of the once numerous Esquimaux ; they were of extreme age, and consisted of the ruined huts, *cachés* and graves ; in one of the latter a bone of the fore-arm (*ulna*) was picked up. On another point of land one of their fox-traps, in a perfect state, was met with. Where are they now those simple children of the snow, whose footsteps we trace in every sheltered spot along these sterile shores ? Can they be represented by the mere handful that live in the neighbourhood of Whale Sound ? If so, what weary

years of suffering must have thinned them, and how many are yet left to this vestige of their race?

Near to these silent historians we found portions of casks, and a piece of what appeared to be the side of a poop-ladder of a whaler, that seemed to tell of a stout ship wrecked and ground into fragments by the resistless ice. Wherever we landed on or near the shores, bits of wood have been picked up by the floe, all much worn, and apparently of some age.

By different routes we climbed the sides of the Loomery, for so we termed it from its inhabitants; and after some difficulty and danger, for a false step would have set many of us rolling down a steep for two or three hundred feet, we took up our position within shot of the startled birds. The view from this height, although barren and desolate in the extreme, was highly picturesque. The dark irregular cliffs stood out in fine relief against the delicately-tinted sky, while the clear smooth water reflected the hues of the gloomy grandeur of the one, and the varied shapes of the pale masses that seemed to sleep upon its surface, giving a solemn stillness to the scene, broken only from time to time by the reverberating report of the guns, and the rushing of a myriad wings, which, hastened by danger, seemed to vie in speed with the fatal shot that paralysed them.

Necessity, or rather the prospects of a good basin of soup, soon banished all sympathy with the birds and admiration for the scene, and shot after shot sent them tumbling, whirling far below, frequently in their death agony overthrowing the scarcely fledged young. At each discharge the birds fled out to sea, making a few miles, and then returning to be again lessened in number, while their greedy enemy employed the interval in brousing on the scurvy grass. But very few of the young could fly, and many were still in the egg. About nine hundred loom (*Brunnich's guillemot*) were procured by the two ships during the 22nd and 23rd, and numbers must have perished from their wounds. Dovekies and the little auk also breed at these islands, but in small numbers, and each colony is confined to its own species.

The rocks beneath the water are covered with seaweed, on stirring which numerous shrimps swim frantically about. In the passage between two islands we saw a large whale, that rose to the surface very leisurely, blowing its jets of water into a mimic rainbow. After six or seven hours' shooting, we grew weary, and returned to the boat to go on board. As we passed the broken pieces of floe, we saw several large burgomasters feasting on our stray birds, which they managed to clear of their flesh in a most skilful manner. At different parts of the island, sorrel,

tripe de roche, two kinds of willow, a few mosses, and lichens have been found.

The breeze springing up, we bade adieu, with some satisfaction and yet regret, to the Cary Islands, and made the best of our way to Wolstenholme Island.

C. Ede

ARTICLES OF FOOD FOUND IN THE ARCTIC REGIONS.

The Esquimaux, from dire necessity, have been taught the value of a well-filled larder; and these seal-clad residents of the Arctic circle employ the constant light of summer in laying in a store for the long dreary night. But without entering into the question as to the possibility of Europeans maintaining life upon the productions of the country, it will not be uninteresting or uninstrucive to consider what are the varieties that have appeared upon the Arctic refreshment bill. To the feathered tribe we are chiefly indebted, and foremost in the list for flavour and delicacy of fibre stand the ptarmigan (*Ptarmichan tetrao lagopus*), and the willow grouse (*Tetrao salecti*). These may be used in pie, stewed, boiled,

or roast, at pleasure, and are easily shot. Next in gustatory joys the small birds rank, a kind of snipe and a curlew sandpiper, both are however rarely met with, and do not repay the trouble of procuring them.

The brent goose (*Anser torquatus*) is excellent eating, and its flesh is free from fishy taste; then follow the little auk, or rotge (*Mergulus melano-leucus*), the dovekie, or black guillemot (*Uria grylle*), the loom, or thick-billed guillemot (*Uria brunnichii*). The first two are better baked with a crust, and the last makes, with spices and wine, a soup but little inferior to that of English hare. All these are found together in flocks, but the easiest method of obtaining them is either to shoot them at the cliffs, where they breed, or as they fly to and fro from their feeding-ground. The ducks now come upon the table, and are placed in the following order by most Polar epicures. The long-tailed duck (*Fuligula glacialis*), the king duck (*Somateria spectabilis*), and the eider duck (*Somateria mollissima*). They require to be skinned before roasting or boiling, and are then eatable, but are always more or less fishy.

The divers are by some thought superior for the table to the ducks, but the difference is very slight. The red-throated diver (*Colymbus septentrionalis*) was most frequently seen, but few were shot; and

of the great northern diver (*Colymbus glacialis*) none were brought to table, two only having been seen. Some of the gulls were eaten, and pronounced equal to the other sea-birds; they were the kittiwake (*Larus tridactylus*), the tern (*Sterna arctica*), and the herring or silver gull (*Larus argentatus*).

Of the quadrupeds, the reindeer (*Cervus Tanderandus*) is most valuable, its flesh being juicy, nutritious, well flavoured, and easy of digestion. They abound in Greenland, and are tolerably numerous in Melville Island. The musk-ox (*Ovibos moschatus*) is of much importance, from its size and palatable rich meat. The Arctic hare (*Lepus glacialis*) differs considerably from the English in the colour and qualities of its flesh, being less dry, whiter, and more delicately tasted: it may be dressed in any way. The white bear (*Ursus maritimus*) is eaten by the Esquimaux and the Danes of Greenland, and when young, and cooked after the manner of a beef-steak, is by no means to be despised, although rather insipid; the fat, however, ought to be avoided, as unpleasant to the palate.

The denizens of the sea have fallen little under our notice, and they may be dismissed with the remark, that curried narwhal's skin can be tolerated, but not recommended.

Some fresh-water fish were caught, and proved

to be very good; they are said to be a kind of trout.

The vegetable kingdom affords but little for man's support; and as the quantity found by the present Expedition, in the Parry group, was confined to the sorrel (*Oxyria reniformis*), it may be said to have furnished nothing towards our culinary comforts.

At the Cary Islands, however, the scurvy grass (*Cochlearia Grænländica*) provided us with salad for a day or two, and by the majority was relished. This, had the weather permitted, might have been obtained in large quantity; and a visit to these islands, when possible, might be well worthy the consideration of any whaler whose crew were suffering from a want of fresh food.

This short list is given from observations made during the passage of the ships from the Whalefish Islands, and from that time until their leaving Baffin's Bay.

C. Ede.

DUTCH ARCTIC ADVENTURE.

In the height of the pride and power of Philip II., a few little provinces in a corner of his dominions dared to brave his resentment, and after a desperate struggle, during which they eluded the conciliation of Margaret of Parma and the cunning of Perrenot, and withstood the valour of Farnese and the cruel butchery of Alva, they gained their independence, and rapidly became a rich and flourishing republic, which founded at the same time an opulent city in the tropics, and a flourishing settlement far to the northward of the Arctic Circle; drove the Portuguese from the Cape and the East Indies, and pillaged their settlements in the Brazils; held a doubtful contest with Cromwell in the zenith of his power, and with Charles II. when backed by the money of his Commons, and the gallantry of Rupert, Sandwich, and Monk. They sent forth one expedition under Schouten, which first rounded Cape Horn; another under Roggewein, which circumnavigated the globe; another under Tasman, which discovered the extensive continent of Australia, the Friendly Islands, and Van Diemen's Land; and another under Barrentz,

which penetrated to Spitzbergen and Nova Zembla; while the mighty armies of the "Grand Monarque," thundering at the gates of its capital, only added to its glory, by forcing the proudest potentate of Europe to retreat before a people, who rather than bend to the will of a conqueror, would let the waters in upon their own fatherland, and resolve to seek in another continent that liberty which they feared was passing from them in Europe.

In the Arctic regions, also, the republic of Holland has added to the wealth of its people, and the glory of its name. Feeling the utility of discovering a short passage to the Indies by a north-east passage, the enterprising Barrentz was three times sent to accomplish this design.

In his first expedition he crossed the White Sea, sighted Nova Zembla, and returned to the Texel A.D. 1594. In his second, which was sent out by Prince Maurice of Orange, he passed the island of Waigatz, and had intercourse with the Samoyed tribes. Landing on this island, a "great, lean, white bear" tore to pieces and eat two of his men, drove many others into their boats, and was with difficulty killed by the purser; and returning through the Strait of Waigatz, the expedition arrived in Holland in 1595. His third and last expedition sailed in 1596, and discovered in 80° N. the extensive island of Spitzbergen, where, finding some barnacle

geese hatching their young, he succeeded in refuting successfully the prevailing opinion that the eggs of these birds grow on trees. Having reached the coast of Nova Zembla in July, he attempted to return, but was beset by the ice, forced to abandon the ships, wintered in great cold, poverty, misery, and grief on the shore, and died in the spring; while only fifteen men, after having passed for one thousand one hundred miles in two open boats, and being picked up by a Dutch vessel on the coast of Lapland, remained to tell the tale.

In 1614, several joint-stock companies, for the purpose of fishing for whales, were chartered by the States' General in Spitzbergen, they built their factories and other edifices, which being frequented yearly by two or three hundred Dutch whalers with twelve or eighteen thousand men, soon became a large village, and received the name of Smeerenberg. This fishery was in the fulness of its splendour from 1614—41; but in 1770 it began to decline with its mother republic, and in 1795 there were only sixty Dutch whalers. Such has been the short but brilliant career of the commercial eminence of the United Provinces, both in the Arctic Regions and in other parts of the world.

PACIFICUS.

C.R. Mendenhall

LIST OF ANIMALS KILLED BY THE OFFICERS AND SHIPS' COMPANY OF
H.M.S. 'ASSISTANCE' AND 'INTREPID,' 1851.

COMMON NAMES.	PROPER NAMES.	NO.	LOCALITY.	REMARKS.
Bears . . .	<i>Ursus maritimus.</i>	7	{ One at Cape Walker. Six in the Parry group.	{ They were seen in numbers about the Parry group.
Wolves . . .	<i>Canis lupus.</i>	0	Melville Island.	One seen and wounded.
Foxes . . .	<i>Canis lagopus.</i>	6	Parry group.	{ Seen by all the travelling parties.
Musk oxen . . .	<i>Ovibos moschatus.</i>	4	Melville Island.	{ Forty-six were seen on the same island.
Deer . . .	<i>Cervus tarandus.</i>	1	Ditto.	{ They were also seen at the other islands of the group.
Hares . . .	<i>Lepus glacialis.</i>	8	{ Cape Walker, Parry group.	{ They were numerous and in good condition, weighing upwards of ten pounds.
Lemmings . . .	<i>Arvicola Hudsonia.</i>	0	Parry group.	One only seen.
Ptarmigan . . .	<i>Tetrao lagopus.</i>	82	{ Cape Walker, Parry group.	{ Plentiful at Cape Walker and western part of Parry's group.
Willow grouse . . .	<i>Tetrao saxatilis.</i>	6	Ditto ditto.	{ But few seen, and one only shot on the Parry group.
Brent geese . . .	<i>Anser torquatus.</i>	1	Parry group.	{ Seen in large flocks, flying westward.
Long-tailed ducks . . .	<i>Anas glacialis.</i>	11	Ditto.	{ One flock of thirty, seen at Cornwallis Island.
Ring ducks . . .	<i>Anas spectabilis.</i>	14	Ditto.	{ More seen on the Parry group than of Eider.
Eider ducks . . .	<i>Anas motillima.</i>	6	Ditto.	{ None seen to the westward of Griffith Island.
Phalarope . . .	{ <i>Phalaropus hyperboreus.</i> }	3	Ditto.	{ Small flocks met with in early spring.
Ring dotterel . . .	<i>Phalaropus.</i>	1	Ditto.	One pair only seen.
Snow bunting . . .	<i>Emberiza nivalis.</i>	12	Ditto.	Numerous in small flocks.
Curlew sandpiper . . .	<i>Tringa subacquata.</i>	10	Ditto.	Seen in pairs.
Loom . . .	<i>Uria lomvia.</i>	695	{ Carey Island and Parry group.	{ None seen to the westward of Griffith Island.
Dovekie . . .	<i>Uria grylle.</i>	70	{ Griffith Island and Carey Island.	{ They bred at both these places.
Booby . . .	<i>Uria lomvia.</i>	8	Ballin's Bay.	{ None seen to the westward of Ballin's Bay.
Lestris . . .	<i>Lestris parasitica.</i>	1	Griffith Island.	Occasionally seen.
Ivory gulls . . .	<i>Larus eburneus.</i>	42	Ditto.	Seen frequently.
Silver gulls . . .	<i>Larus argentatus.</i>	30	Parry group.	Seen throughout.
Burghmasters . . .	<i>Larus glaucus.</i>	1	Ditto.	Ditto.
Kittiwakes . . .	<i>Larus tridactylus.</i>	20	Griffith Island.	{ None to westward of Griffith Island.
Muller's . . .	<i>Procellaria glacialis.</i>	2	Ditto.	Ditto.
Tern . . .	<i>Sterna arctica.</i>	20	Parry group.	{ One at Byam Martin Island.
Gyr Falcon . . .	<i>Falco islandicus.</i>	0	Ballin's Bay.	{ One wounded but not obtained.
Snowy owl . . .	<i>Strix nyctea.</i>	1	Parry group.	One seen

THE END.

P. L. Mac Clintock

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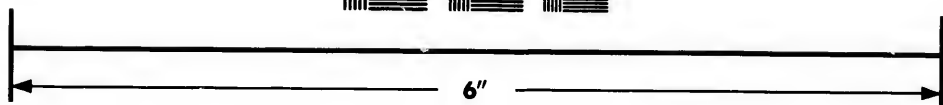
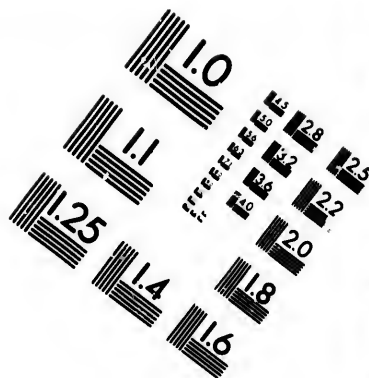
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