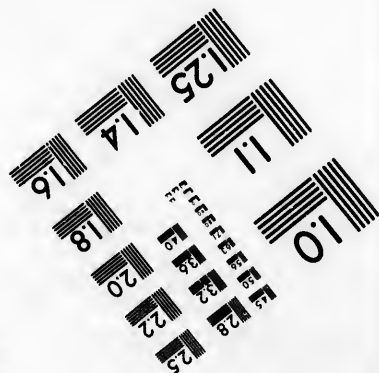
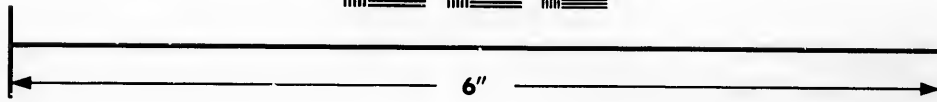
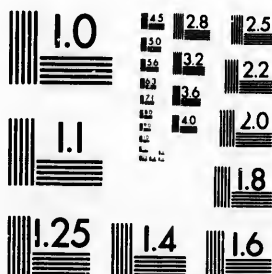


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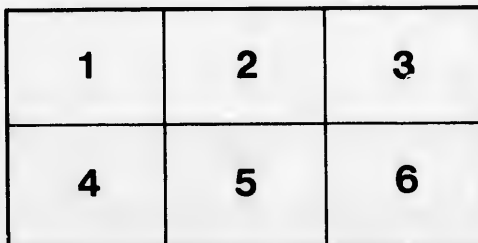
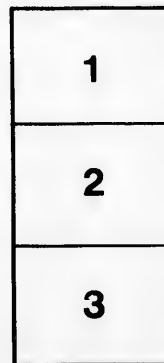
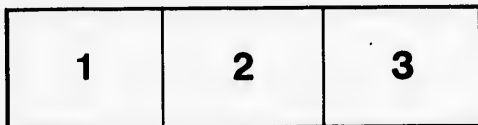
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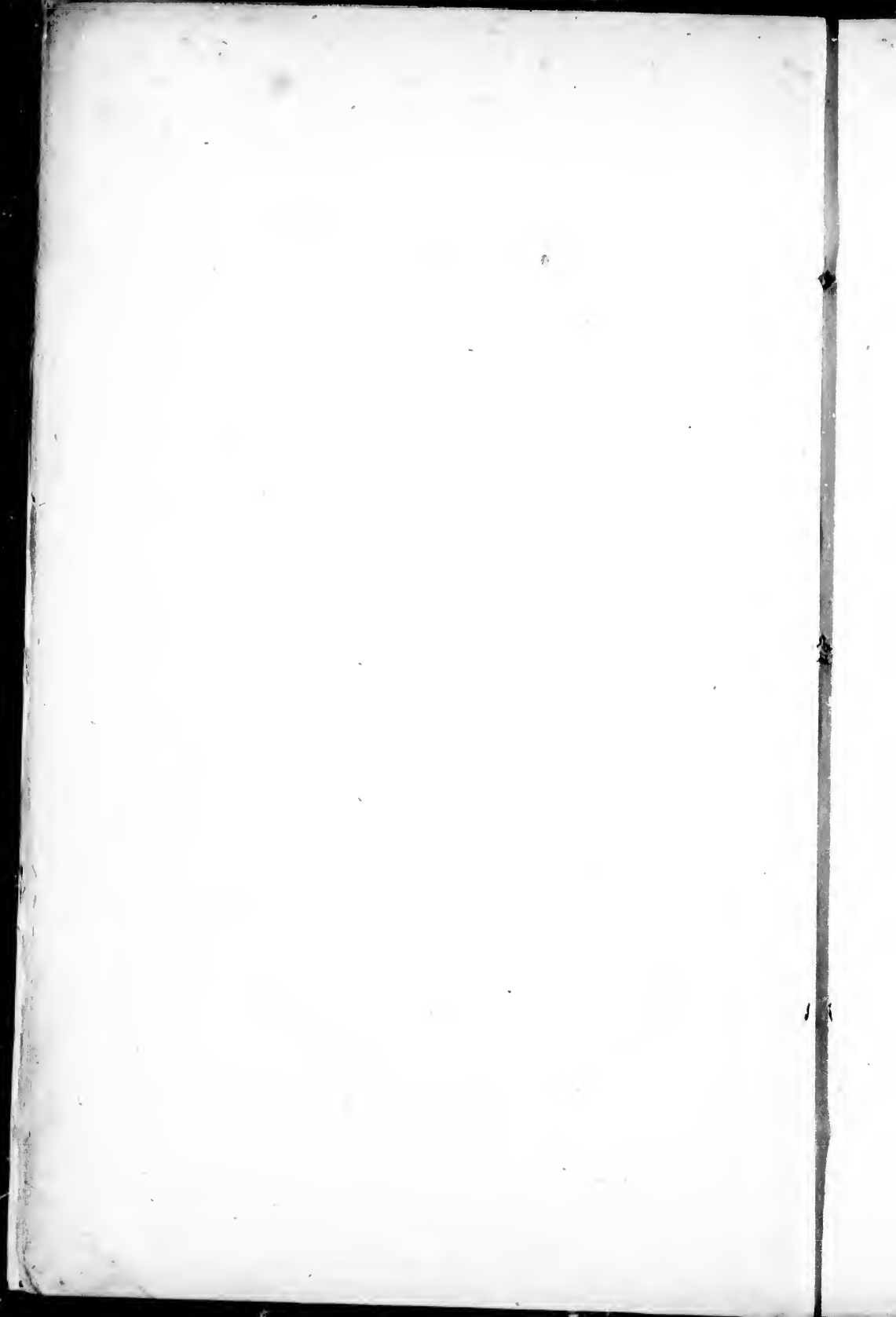
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AN  
**EXPLANATION**  
OF  
**CAPTAIN SABINE'S REMARKS**  
ON THE  
**LATE VOYAGE OF DISCOVERY**  
TO  
**BAFFIN'S BAY.**

---

BY CAPTAIN JOHN ROSS, R. N.

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LONDON:  
JOHN MURRAY, ALBEMARLE-STREET.

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1819.



LONDON: W. CLOWES, NORTHUMBERLAND-COURT.

AN

## EXPLANATION

OF

### *CAPTAIN SABINE'S REMARKS.*

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I HAVE been long aware of the discussions which have been afloat respecting the late Voyage of Discovery, performed under my command. Being unwilling to engage in controversy, I have steadily avoided noticing these, even in my publication; being convinced that my statements stood on a firm foundation, and trusting that they would be verified by the event of the next Expedition. It has now become impossible to maintain this silence any longer; Captain Sabine's pamphlet having excited some doubts, and introduced some obscurities into the subject,

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which it is no less a duty to the Public, than to myself to remove and explain. Unfortunately, it is out of my power to enter into this explanation, without appearing to contradict Captain Sabine; and I can only hope that, as in other cases, his statements, wherever they disagree with mine, will prove to be the result of haste or misapprehension. It would be a cause of regret to me, were it to prove otherwise; as I had conceived a friendship for him, and paid him all the attentions required to make his situation on board comfortable, as long as these were acceptable to him. Whatever differences of opinion had arisen between us during the voyage, I had long buried them in oblivion; and my publication will shew that I intended to do him credit with the Public, even far beyond his claims.

I shall attempt, as strictly as possible, to follow the order of the statements in the pamphlet.

The Public cannot be concerned respecting the arrangement of my work; but it is necessary to rectify Captain Sabine's assertion, that I had informed him that

Government was to order me to draw up an official account. I acquainted him, on the contrary, that the Government would not do this, and that I had therefore some thoughts of doing it myself. It is possible that Captain Sabine may have misunderstood me; whether he did or not, he kindly offered me his assistance, which I accepted, and acknowledged; but this offer he very naturally retracted, when he afterwards formed the resolution of publishing himself. Having, in the month of February last, relinquished his idea of a *complete publication*, he again offered to correct his papers, which he supposed were in my possession. This offer I accepted, informing him that they had been returned to the Admiralty on the day after I received them. It appears, however, by the following passage in the pamphlet, that Captain Sabine imagined I was printing his observations without his consent, having received them from the Admiralty.

“ A few days after I had written the above letter, it came to my knowledge accidentally, that Captain Ross designed to publish, and had already printed, observations, which,

I knew, could only have been mine. I immediately wrote him, stating what I had heard, and remarking, that if he had got any papers of mine from the Admiralty Office, their contents were not complete, or in a state to meet the public eye; but that if the Admiralty had given him any of my papers, I had no objection to prepare them for publication, and return them."

The subjoined note from Mr. Barrow will shew that Captain Sabine was here under a misapprehension :—

"I certainly did tell Captain Sabine that I had given the papers in question to Captain Ross, to make use of them for his publication, conceiving that, as Commanding Officer of the Expedition, and about to give the Public an account of it, he was entitled to every thing the Admiralty could give him; but I did not tell Captain Sabine that they were in the press, because I well knew that they *were not*, Captain Ross having taken them away, only, as far as I recollect, the preceding evening. But as Captain Sabine laid great stress on his papers, I told him that I would get them back from Captain Ross, who, I had not the smallest doubt would send them without hesitation. I immediately wrote Captain Ross, desiring to see him, and he actually returned them the following day. Since that time I have not seen Captain Sabine at the Admiralty, but caused copies of the papers in question to be taken, and the *originals sent officially* to the Royal Society, who had recommended Captain Sabine.

" J. B."

On inquiry, however, I found that a book containing an abstract of latitudes and longitudes, &c., which was supposed to be a duplicate, had been detained at the Admiralty; and I caused it to be sent to Captain Sabine, informing him that the rest were at the Royal Society, of which he was a member. After one of these papers had been some days in the press, I wrote Captain Sabine a letter requesting his report on Natural History; and having received for answer—

“That he had no pretensions to more than a very ordinary knowledge of any branch of it, excepting ornithology,”

and having also been disappointed in a report on that subject, which I was entitled by the tenor of my Instructions to expect, I wrote the letter which he has printed in pages 8 and 9.

In Captain Sabine's reply to this (which (page 9) he gives me permission to publish) written under the impression that they ought to be published in the Philosophical Transactions, he says:—

“ Had I any voice in the matter, it would certainly be more agreeable to me that they should appear there, if they are deserving that honour, than in any temporary publication of yours or mine. Had my papers been returned to my disposal, I should have published them myself before this time.”

Being unwilling to deprive Captain Sabine of the honour of having any part of his papers published in the *Philosophical Transactions*, which, according to the regulations of the *Royal Society*, could not take place if printed by me, I wrote him the following note which put an end to our correspondence :—

“ DEAR SIR,—I am sorry you should have given yourself the trouble of explaining your reasons for not sending me more of your papers for publication ; for since it appears to have been your wish to publish them yourself, I cannot think of receiving any part of them, and shall therefore immediately give directions for the suppression of that which has been already printed. You must be fully aware that your papers have been all along at the *Royal Society*, and, as a member of that learned body, you can always have access to them. I have, therefore, only to request you will be pleased to return the proof sheets to Mr. Murray, to be destroyed.

“ Yours, &c

JOHN ROSS.”

Thus I have explained the reasons why I could not publish "any part" of Captain Sabine's papers, and rendered it at the same time plain, that I could not have made any improper use of them, even had I been so inclined. I shall now show that there were no observations of that officer of which I could stand in need, and proceed to state what the nature of these observations was, on which so much stress is laid, and to whom they were properly due.

Captain Sabine proceeds to state, that certain observations published by me, as furnished by my nephew were exclusively his; to establish which, he relates the examination of Mr. Ross, midshipman, on board the Hecla, before his commander, Lieutenant Parry, and two other officers mentioned in his pamphlet. I shall not animadvert on the very doubtful propriety of this proceeding; Mr. Ross was unprepared to answer the questions put to him, and, as may be supposed, was easily led into mistake by the similarity of the documents to those he had formerly copied from Captain Sabine;



but, as soon as he had discovered his mistake, and was informed that Captain Sabine intended to publish his answers, he wrote to me, and also to Captain Sabine, acquainting him with his mistake. Captain Sabine, however, came to no explanation with him, after receiving this letter; and his answer to Mr. Ross enclosed the pamphlet, which was published without noticing the correction of his evidence thus made.

It therefore became necessary to remove all doubt on the subject, and Mr. Ross consequently made a voluntary deposition, that the observations on the magnetic dip and magnetic force, were copied from my manuscript memorandum-book, in my presence; that he assisted me in making observations on the magnetic dip, and magnetic force, in the month of August last; that the meteorological tables, he now believed, were not the same which he copied from Captain Sabine; that he was present and assisted at the observations made in Baffin's Bay on the pendulum; that, on the 31st of August, about three

o'clock (when relieved by Mr. Lewis the master) he came into the gun-room, where Captain Ross, Captain Sabine, and the officers were at dinner, and reported publicly, that there was an appearance of clear weather, in consequence of which Captain Ross went immediately on deck, but no other person; and that he saw the land at the bottom of the bay, with the exception of about three points.

By this it is proved, that Mr. Ross furnished the observations on the dip and magnetic force, inasmuch as he had copied them from my papers, (which, indeed, he did in my presence;) that he made one of the most important observations, and that he assisted in others. It is here proper to observe, that, in the manuscript given to the engraver, it was written "*partly* furnished," and that the word "*partly*" was left out in the engraving by mistake. It does not, however, follow, that although only one of these observations was taken by Mr. Ross, the rest are exclusively Captain Sabine's. The papers from which the observations were

copied are the same in which they were entered and worked. These observations are also noticed as taken by myself, in my diary, written at the time; and in the ship's original log it is mentioned, that I went several times on shore for the purpose of observing the dip. These documents, which have been produced at the Admiralty for examination, are ready for the inspection of any one who chooses to inquire more particularly. It will be found that, eight times out of twelve in which the observations were made, I was present, and made the observations, having gone on shore or upon the ice for that purpose. As the veracity of these observations depend materially on exactness in reading off a graduated arc, in which I had more experience than any other person, I wished to satisfy myself that the dip was correctly read off, and the instrument adjusted. Besides myself, Captain Sabine, Mr. Ross, Mr. Bushnan, and other officers, were generally present and assisting; and the results, which were often taken down by different persons, were those which were most

approved by me ; but as we generally agreed to the nearest second, there can be but little difference, especially when the means of the observations were taken. That Captain Sabine was present in every instance but one, may be true ; but he has not thus acquired a right to publish that they are exclusively his. In one instance Mr. Bushnan and he had finished their set of observations before I went on the iceberg ; but that being the place of most importance, I thought it necessary to take a set myself, which are still standing in my book as they were originally inserted. In this instance Captain Sabine's observations and mine agreed to the nearest second. In two other instances I was not present, and the observations given are the results of those taken by the whole party. Captain Sabine often had my book in his possession, that he might copy out of it various observations, and for the purpose of comparing his own with mine.

In page 12, Captain Sabine says, " For instance, an account is given of the pendulum," for the purpose of proving that I must have copied from his book, because I could

have obtained this account in no other way. Now the fact is, that this very account was transmitted by Mr. Browne to me, and delivered officially by Captain Sabine, as a ground-work for our future observations: I was entitled to receive it from the person (Mr. Browne) who undertook these necessary and preliminary experiments. This paper was given to Mr. Ross, who was ordered to take a part in those operations, and whose report on the subjects on which he has been employed, was the same which he inserted in my observation book at the time, and which he re-copied for publication. Whether they were originally Captain Sabine's, I know not; but I know that he was actually employed in making them. If they are of no use in their present state, it cannot be my fault: it is the duty of those who now have the instrument and the observations, to make them of use to the Public.

With respect to the magnetic observations, I have only to observe, that although they may differ from Captain Sabine's, they are clear of the imputations bestowed upon

them ; and it will hereafter be made to appear, whether Captain Sabine's observations or mine are most likely to be "incomplete, imperfect, or incorrect."

Mr. Bushnan's letter\* on the subject, as well as Mr. Ross's deposition, will fully prove that the meteorological register given in my work was not the production of Captain Sabine ; and, in justice to the merit of Mr. Bushnan, I must beg leave to pay him the compliment which Captain Sabine has appropriated to himself.

It is of very little consequence whether Captain Sabine or myself are best acquainted with the Eskimaux language, as neither of us can pretend to any great acquirements on that subject ; but I must be allowed to state, that the words which are printed in the vocabulary, were collected by myself from the people. Having thus collected them, I read them to him, that he might copy them into his own journal. In doing this, from misconceiving the words, and from other causes, he has mis-spelt nearly the whole. The principal errors appear to have arisen from

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\* Mr. Bushnan's Letter, Appendix.

confounding the Humooke dialect, as spoken by the Southern Eskimaux, with the pure Eskimaux, a language to which it was never my intention to allude. Pages 121, 122, 123, and 132 of my work, which he refers to, and appropriates to himself he has no title to, since they were originally taken from my papers. As I wished to give him the credit of this part of the communication with this interesting people, I desired him to add any observations he could collect ; but after a lapse of two months, I at last received my own observations, in his hand-writing, but so perverted, that I was obliged to send for Sacheuse ; and with his assistance, and that of my memorandum-book, to turn them back into their original and proper form. His instance of the animal, which he says I have mis-printed *Ancarok*, is an unfortunate error, which I must attribute to his not having attended to the subject, *Ancarok* being the true Humooke name for the animal, which I have mentioned as not noticed by the writers on Greenland. The *Amarok* mentioned by Egede, is treated by that historian as fabulous, and was not alluded to in my work.

I need only add, that the lists of words which I have given, are exactly as Sacheuse pronounced and *wrote* them in my presence, both before and after our return to England. Captain Sabine will, doubtless, on reading this statement, yield that palm to a native, to which neither he nor I can have any pretensions. With respect to the comparison of the Humooke language, as spoken in the Northern and Southern countries, I am sorry that he has misunderstood my illustrations; but as they have been perfectly understood by every one else with whom I have communicated, it is unnecessary to enter further on this trifling subject.

I need not follow the diffuse statements in the pamphlet, but the two next subjects requiring comment are the following: I am, in the first place, accused of making use of his account, and of having published it as my own; and to prove that I have done so, he inserts a quotation, which he says I could only have borrowed from his paper. That quotation is indeed from his paper, because he gave it to me officially, soon after my return; I having a right to it, as Commander of the



Expedition. If I had not received it from him, I should have applied to the watch-maker for it. It is not therefore proved, (page 15) "that although" I "would not publish the account" Captain Sabine "had sent me," "because I had not all his observations," I "still would and did use it to make up one which should appear my own." Captain Sabine must surely have forgotten what my situation and his own were in the Expedition.

It is next said, that I have "introduced mistakes and contradictions, which have destroyed the whole." It will be obvious to every one, that the whole of this charge rests on two errors of the press, and on one mistake made by Mr. Ross. The former consist in the interchange of the terms, "new" and "old" rates, and in printing the marks of minutes in place of that for seconds; errors easily arising from the rapidity with which this part of the work was hurried on. Mr. Ross's error consists in taking the sum instead of the difference; a very venial mistake, particularly as it makes no difference in the ship's reckoning, since I used my *own* observations, in which that mistake did not exist.

In page 15, Captain Sabine says, "As I am known to have had the regulation of the chronometers, not only by the officers of the Expedition, but also at the Admiralty;"— I can only say, that neither the Admiralty, nor any officer of the Expedition, was ever told so by me; and Captain Sabine must recollect, that the rates of the chronometers were corrected by means of the lunar observations, of which I always took the greatest number, and the new rates were fixed for each by myself. The only positive charge I did actually give Captain Sabine was, to wind the watches up regularly at 9, A.M.; and in this respect he obliges me to say that he did not perform his duty to my satisfaction; for instead of winding them up regularly at the hour of nine, when every person who does not keep watch is supposed to be out of his bed, they were wound up at ten, or eleven, or at any time between 9, A.M. and noon; an irregularity which I was to blame in having suffered.

I have next to remark, that the chronometer, No. 2151, which I mentioned to have been forgotten to be wound up, a few days

after it was received, had never been worn by me before it was let down ; and he knows that the reason I gave for wearing it afterwards was, that in case the box chronometers should at a future period be forgotten, I might have the other still going.

I do not imagine that the observations I have published are perfectly correct ; they have never been revised by any person more competent than myself, but were merely extracted from my rough calculation book, by myself and Mr. James Ross ; but I must repeat, that I have published none of the observations made by Captain Sabine, to my knowledge ; that he was never held by me answerable for the regulation, but only for the winding up of the chronometers, and the mistakes which may occur in my work cannot be attributed to Captain Sabine. In a future edition, I shall take care to rectify any mistakes I may be able to find, either in the press or the calculation, and shall be thankful to any one who may (as Captain Sabine has done) be kind enough to point them out.

I think I have thus proved that I did not "avail myself" of Captain Sabine's "papers

and observations," nor have I any where spoken otherwise than "well" of him. It was for the pure purpose of speaking "well" of him, that I have so often introduced his name where it was unnecessary. In a future edition, I will with pleasure omit his name altogether, as the use I have made of it has been disagreeable to him.

I must now say that I have not "gone out of my way" to make him a "Naturalist," as my Instructions will shew.

"And have also, at the recommendation of the President and Council of the Royal Society, ordered to be received on board the *Isabella*, Captain Sabine, of the Royal Artillery, *who is represented to us as a gentleman well skilled in astronomy, natural history, and various branches of knowledge, to assist you in making such observations as may tend to the improvement of geography and navigation, and the advancement of science in general.*"

Having no other information but that, on which I was to ground my opinion, and being no Naturalist myself, I took it for granted that he was one, in obedience to my orders, until by his note he disclaimed any knowledge of this nature, except in the de-

partment of ornithology. It now appears, however, by the Royal Society's letter, which I had never seen until it was printed in the pamphlet, that he was *not* recommended as such by that learned body. If there has been any misconception on that head, it cannot be attributed to me; the mistake, such as it is, however, was maintained by Captain Sabine's anxiety for the collection of specimens; and it is still evident, by his pamphlet, that he is desirous of proving himself the possessor of that knowledge which he is offended with me for believing him to possess. I am willing to admit his claims to a science of which I am ignorant, and must believe, if he asserts it, that he has established them with those who are competent judges; I have, therefore, the same reason now to express the regret which I did at first in my work, that he had not the kindness to furnish me with observations that would have been an ornament to it, and which, I presume, those who read the Instructions were, as well as myself, prepared to expect.

Claiming no credit myself for the observations in natural history, I, however, as Com-

mander of the Expedition, owe a justice to the officers under my orders, which, as they expect it, I must now execute, although no less disagreeable to myself than it must be to Captain Sabine, wherever it may interfere with his statements. I trust, however, that a re-consideration on his part, will put this misunderstanding in such a light as to detract nothing from his merits; and that the little warmth of feeling which he has expressed will not be construed to his disadvantage, if he has in any instance done less than he has imagined. I have no doubt, from his zeal, and from the increase of knowledge which he has acquired by his perseverance, that he will, on a future occasion, succeed even to the warmest of his wishes.

Captain Sabine says, "I might call on the officers of the Expedition at large to prove my indefatigable pursuit in that branch of natural history in which I am most interested," (ornithology) and he refers to the "Memoir" which he "presented to the Linnæan Society," "which will be printed in their transactions," as "the best testimony of its result." If Captain Sabine means,

that he, in his own person, was indefatigable, I fear this statement cannot be borne out. I have made it my business to inquire of the officers of the Expedition, and cannot find that Captain Sabine himself procured any specimens, having been only once, and unsuccessfully, on that service. It is my duty to those officers who actually did bring them on board, to say, that they are the results of their joint labours. I also beg leave here to correct a statement which has appeared in Thomson's *Annals of Philosophy*, under Captain Sabine's name, and by which I was led into a mistake. The *Larus Sabini* has been found by Dr. Leach to have been already described as *Larus Collaris*, by *Schreibers*, and was probably discovered by Geisiecke. Respecting the various specimens of botany, I must also say, that these were collected by the different officers of the Expedition, and were given to Captain Sabine to put into paper; it was certainly never meant that they should be reported in his name, nor has he any claim to the discovery of all the specimens to which Mr. Brown has, in the paper on that article,

attached the letter S. Captain Sabine also claims the marine animals, ("insects,") although these were brought from the bottom of the sea by an instrument of my invention, because he was employed to put them into the spirit of wine. In like manner the specimens of mineralogy sent by me to the British Museum, labelled by myself, have been claimed by him (page 21). It is impossible any specimens could be in his possession of which I also had not duplicates, as he gave his word of honor to the Secretary of the Admiralty, as well as to myself, that I had duplicates of every thing, and his boxes were therefore given up unopened. I requested Dr. Leach, in his public capacity, to correct Mr. Edwards's report, by which it appeared that some of the specimens were wanting\*; but these, I suppose, have been since sent to the British Museum, to which they belong. As I did not understand that Mr. König was a geologist, I could not apply to him. I was glad to procure any assistance on this subject, and I had the permission of the Admiralty to take that which I made use of.

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\* See Dr. Leach's Letter, p. 27.



The set of minerals which was examined is now in the Geological Society's collection, with the same permission, and is equal to that which was sent to the British Museum ; if Captain Sabine had any observations which could serve to elucidate that branch of natural history, he ought to have delivered them to me, when called upon at the arrival of the ship. But it must be evident that he had made none, as he signed a declaration that he had delivered up all memoranda, except the description of the birds. It must not, therefore, be imagined that there is any deficiency in this catalogue, as it would be injurious to Captain Sabine to suppose that he had suppressed any information, or had sent to the Museum any specimens, which were not the duplicates of those that were described in my catalogue.

It is now, therefore, evident that Captain Sabine is under an error in saying, that "my collection of plants united that of all the officers and seamen under my command, while his was his own alone," (page 20,) as our specimens were both alike selected from the collections made by every one who went on shore. If Captain Sabine did add seven

of the nine new species, he ought not, after his declaration above referred to, to have done this. The objects of the voyage were of a public nature, and no individual was, at any rate, to have had a distinct interest; a circumstance thoroughly understood by the Admiralty, as well as by myself, and fully explained to Captain Sabine.

The charge at page 21, namely, that "I forbade any person to collect but myself," having a harsh appearance, this is the order, on a misrepresentation of which it is founded.

"It is my direction that every specimen of the animal, vegetable, and mineral kingdoms, which may be found or procured by any person employed in the ships under my command and orders, shall immediately be brought to me, that I may give such directions respecting their disposal as I may think fit; and all officers going on any service to the shore or ice, or having communication with the natives, are to use their utmost endeavours to collect and procure every thing which may contribute to the advancement of natural knowledge; and of larger animals, and other objects which cannot be removed, sketches and descriptions are to be taken; and all such reports, descriptions, &c., are to be signed by the officer, and sent to me, for *His Majesty's Service*."

I am sorry to perceive, in that misrepresentation, a direct, and apparently a wilful assertion, which is contradicted by the very

terms, " All officers going on any service to the shore or ice, or having communication with the natives, are to use their utmost endeavours to collect and procure every thing." I can only hope that Captain Sabine did not read the order before he printed that pamphlet, and that his warmth of disposition has led him to make a charge, which a moment's reflection would have shewn him to be utterly unfounded.

The remarks on the preserving powder, and the preparation of the birds, are of so little consequence, that it would have been unnecessary to mention them, were it not incumbent on me to point out the incorrectness which marks all these statements. Instead of Captain Sabine having furnished every preparation for preserving at his own expense, the most expensive article, *viz.*, spirit of wine, was furnished by the College of Surgeons; the Expedition was supplied plentifully with every kind of preparation, and the specimens now at the British Museum were not preserved by Captain Sabine's preparations, as will be seen by the deposition of James Clark,\* who ac-

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\* See Appendix.

tually preserved them. I have already stated that Captain Sabine had no right to any specimens of birds until after duplicates had been sent to the British Museum. I trust that those which had been sent to Captain Sabine's brother by mistake, have been since delivered to Dr. Leach.\*

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\* " *British Museum, 6th Jan. 1819.*

" DEAR SIR,—On looking over your list of the birds collected in the Northern Expedition, I find mention made of the following species, that have not been sent to the Museum. If you can cause them to be found, you will very much oblige,

" Your obedient Servant,

" W. ELFORD LEACH.

" The birds not received are—

- " 1. *Anas Spectabilis* (King Duck), a pair killed about  
Lat. 72.
  - " 2. — *Glacialis* (long-tailed Duck).
  - " 3. *Colymbus Septentrionalis* (red-throated Diver).
  - " 4. *Tetrao Lagopus* (Ptarmigan), male and female."
- " *Captain Ross, R.N.*"

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" 9th Jan. 1819.

" SIR,—I have received your letter, desiring to be informed what became of the undermentioned birds, described in Mr. Edwards's official report, but not received at the

I have now before me, in page 25, an "Extract of the minutes of the Royal Society," in which Captain Sabine is praised for his diligence, &c., and recommended for the New Expedition. Not knowing what were the observations and experiments which were required by the Royal Society, or the reports which Captain Sabine made to that learned body, I cannot hazard an opinion on this subject; but if Captain Sabine wishes

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British Museum; and, in answer, I have to acquaint you, that those preserved must be in possession of Captain Edward Sabine, of the Royal Artillery, who was appointed to assist me in that particular duty.

"I am, Sir,

"Your obedient humble Servant,

"JOHN ROSS, CAPT. R.N.

- "1. *Anas Spectabilis* (King Duck), one killed by Mr. Skene, and in possession of Capt. Sabine—others mutilated, and not preserved.
- "2. — *Glacialis* (long-tailed Duck), killed by Mr. Beverly, and in Captain Sabine's possession.
- "3. — *Colymbus Septentrionalis* (red-throated Diver), not preserved.
- "4. — *Tetrao Lagopus* (Ptarmigan), male and female, two pair in possession of Captain Sabine."

*Dr. W. E. Leach.*"

J. R.

by this to make it appear that the ship was navigated by his observations, and that no one but himself was capable of making the necessary observations, it is my duty to explain whether or not such was the fact, what reason I had for placing confidence in my own rather than in his observations, and how far he is justified in calling the observations exclusively his own, by which the ships were navigated. But I must first remark, that the second paragraph in the Committee's Report seems to throw some reflection on the insufficiency of the time allowed for experiments on the pendulum. I am not aware of any complaint having been made, but the fact is, that we were only at one station where these observations could be made, and from that we were driven by the ice. It is plain that the Royal Society was labouring under a want of information, as no arrangement could be adopted capable of preventing the motion of the ice, nor could any situation be found fit for performing that service, which in my Instructions was certainly a secondary one, without interfering with the chief objects of the Expedition.

Having said all that seems to be called for by the Royal Society's letter, I shall now shew the reasons why I did not place confidence in Captain Sabine. The 10th of May was the first day on which the sun and moon were seen in distance, when every officer was summoned to observe. Captain Sabine modestly declared, *that he had never taken a lunar observation in his life*, meaning, of course, at sea; and I must here do him the justice to say, that he was very zealous and anxious to learn the method of steadying the sextant, which he had never before tried; and, he actually succeeded in taking a lunar distance, which gave a satisfactory result, on the 12th of June. Every one conversant with the subject will be aware, that practice is absolutely necessary to obtain perfection in taking observations of this nature. I trust I shall, therefore, be justified in depending on my own experience of thirty years, rather than on the observations of a person who had never before observed on board of a ship. My lunar distances on the 10th, 12th, 13th, 14th, and 27th of May, and subsequently on the 9th of June, were furnished to Captain

Sabine, but, as we differed on the method of applying the refraction *minus* parallax, I made no use of his observations—he judging it proper to correct the observed altitude of the sun’s limb for the semi-diameter, before he took out the refraction; and, I being accustomed to apply that correction to the altitude of the sun’s limb before the semi-diameter was applied. In the Alexander, printed forms were found according to the former method\*, which having confirmed Captain Sabine in his first opinion, he continued in this error during the voyage, and therefore neither his latitudes, longitudes, or variation, were correct; and, whenever I had occasion to make use of his altitudes, I took them as corrected only for the index error and the dip of the horizon. That I constantly worked my own observations both for the chronometers and the lunar distances, and that I scarcely ever missed observing the latitude at noon or midnight when the sun was visible, can be testified by all the officers, and the

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\* The printed forms for the present Expedition have been since altered in consequence.



work itself is in full length in my book, having been produced at the Admiralty, and being ready for the inspection of any person who wishes to be better assured of the fact. I confess that had Captain Sabine been a person who had been in practice as an observer, I should have depended on him, and saved myself much trouble; but that was not the case; and, as I, and not Captain Sabine, was held responsible to the Admiralty for determining the geography of Baffin's Bay, it became my duty to make those observations on which alone I could depend. He must also admit, that it is to the person who actually observes a lunar distance, or makes any observation, not to him who notes down and works the observations, that they properly belong. As it was, I went on the ice whenever the ship's situation was such that I thought myself justified in leaving her, and made the observations I have published, except a few which are the joint observations of the officers employed, and which I have a perfect right to publish.

With respect to the regulation of the chronometers, it is impossible that they could have been

regulated from Captain Sabine's observations, as he knows that he never succeeded in obtaining a lunar distance when the sun or star was to the westward of the moon; the difficulty of taking that observation being increased by the necessity of inverting the instrument, and requiring very considerable practice in the observer. That Captain Sabine was employed in comparing the rates of the chronometers, which were kept in a different form by Mr. Bushnan and myself, I have already stated; but, that the rates were fixed by any one but myself, I must declare to be without foundation. Captain Sabine ought not to find fault with me for copying his observations, for he ought to recollect, that he has copied from me the observations on the deviation of the magnetic needle, which were made entirely on my plan, and executed by myself on board the *Isabella* and *Alexander*; the diagram which he has published in the *Philosophical Transactions*, of the experiments made in the *Isabella*, when he was on shore at *Sheeland*, was also copied from me, as well as the diagram of the *Alexander's* deviation; they were both taken from

my book, which Captain Sabine used always to refer to when he corrected the bearings of any object for the deviation.

*Lancaster Sound.*

Page 26, and those which follow it in the pamphlet, are (except the two last) occupied respecting Lancaster Sound, a subject which has already been a very general and fruitful source of conversation and dispute. Captain Sabine's name is not introduced for the purpose of adding any weight to my own opinions, but to shew that he thought differently, when he thought for himself at the time, than when he had afterwards an opportunity of discussing these questions with his friends. I must here acknowledge the compliment he has paid to my knowledge of my duty, by saying, that "I was accustomed to act solely from my own judgement, and that I formed and executed my plans without reference to any person." This conduct was in fact the more necessary, as it was evident to me that there was a wish to establish the doctrine, that I was not to act without consulting the second in command

and himself! I was thus called on to put an end to notions so subversive of discipline, and a correspondence accordingly took place, of which Captain Sabine gives an extract; thereby acknowledging himself a principal in that transaction. It was fortunate I did possess this confidence in my own opinion, as it will be seen by perusing the letters from Lieutenant Robertson and Mr. Thom, which are printed in the Appendix\*, that had I followed the avowed opinion of Captain Sabine, which he does not deny having given, I should have passed the entrance of Lancaster Sound on my way to Cumberland Strait, at a greater distance than Baffin, without even seeing this "magnificent inlet."

To answer pages 27 and 28, would be merely to repeat what I have already said, that I held Captain Sabine's opinion in no estimation. That I should not value the opinion of a landsman in a question of navigation, will not probably be reckoned very extraordinary by my brother officers.

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\* See Appendix:

There is, however, a sentence in the last page which requires to be balanced against my statement. The passage is as follows :—

“ The first knowledge which I had of Captain Ross’s intention of quitting Lancaster’s Sound was from the officer of the watch, who came down to the gun-room where I was sitting, about seven P. M., and said the ships were making all sail out of the inlet; I asked the reason, and was answered ‘The Captain says he saw the land while we were at dinner.’”

Captain Sabine seems to have forgotten that, after I hauled to the eastward, I came into the gunroom myself about four o’clock, where he was still present, and said, “ that I was now satisfied, for I had seen the land all round.” Mr. Thom, who was also present, heard me say this, and went on deck in consequence, but Captain Sabine kept his seat, appearing not to think it worth his while to go upon deck. Captain Sabine was therefore called, and by myself, at the very time I saw the land; and I cannot, therefore, allow him to say, that he was not called “ till four hours afterwards.” p. 29. I recommend him, as a friend, to revise his memorandums, or recall his recollections, as Mr. Ross’ document will also prove, that he received the same no-

tice of "clear weather," at three o'clock, as did all the officers present at that time in the gunroom; in consequence of which notice it was that I myself went on deck.

I need not pursue this subject through the two pages that follow, as I do not wish to diminish any pleasure he may derive from the contemplation of his own opinions respecting Lancaster Sound.

It is now proper, for illustrating the cause of this warmth on Captain Sabine's part, to state what the real facts were respecting the whole of the progress into and out of Lancaster Sound, as far as he had any share in it. It is attested, by the letters of Lieutenant Robertson and Mr. Thom, that, during the 29th and 30th of August, Captain Sabine ridiculed the idea of a passage in the direction of Lancaster Sound, and it was for that reason that he did not come on deck on the 31st, while the ship was still running up the inlet. Captain Sabine knows nothing of what happened on that day, or he would have seen that the current was *particularly* tried, not by a boat, but by the more approved method of the transit bearing of two objects on the land. The assertion, that I was the

only person who saw the land in the bottom of Lancaster Sound, will be contradicted by Mr. Lewis's letter, which was written to me in answer to my request, that he would inform me if what I had mentioned in my work was true\*.

Captain Sabine says, p. 32, that there are some material points of difference between the statement Captain Ross made out at "the period when my opinion was formed; and that which he has since published." That is not true in general, because it is not true in the particulars.

The distance which he alludes to in his "first," was that of mountains in the interior, the distance of the nearest land being always laid down by *projection* from the bearings taken.

Secondly, Captain Sabine relates a conversation at a friend's table; a circumstance which I perfectly recollect. The fact is simply this: one of the party having asked one of the officers if he had seen the land in Lancaster Sound, and a negative being given, I said, I believed I was the only one *present* who had seen it; but the important word

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\* See Appendix.

*present* is omitted, both in this anecdote, and in Lieutenant Parry's note. Mr. Lewis's letter will shew it impossible that I could have made the unqualified assertion as it is stated. Again, instead of saying, as it is quoted, that Mr. Lewis had not seen the land, contrary to my hopes, my expression was, that I did not think he had seen the land all round *at one time*.

Thirdly, "Captain Ross referred me to the log." Captain Sabine does not seem to understand the method of making projections from bearings, for if the deviation had been properly allowed, the land would be found continuous. The deficiency of  $30^{\circ}$  is therefore the consequence of Captain Sabine's blunder. Lastly, he unluckily refers to my private log, and those of the two midshipmen, as seen by him at the Admiralty: but the first of these documents is now in my possession, and *never was* at the Admiralty, neither did either of the midshipmen keep one; Captain Sabine must have mistaken my remark book, which contains only a few of the bearings of the land, and it is very probable these may have been omitted. I can



only repeat in answer to pages 34 and 35, that Captain Sabine had no one but himself to blame, for losing the sight of the *decisive proofs* he mentions, for he was positively called, on their appearance, both by Mr. Ross and myself, as I have already stated. In a note it is said, that the temperature of the water had averaged  $31^{\circ}$  and  $32^{\circ}$ , and became  $36^{\circ}$ , continuing so generally while we were in Lancaster Sound. It was  $36\frac{1}{2}^{\circ}$  in the mouth of the Sound, but had *decreased* to  $34^{\circ}$  when we tacked to stand out; a piece of knowledge which Captain Sabine must hereafter make use of, in any statements on this subject he may find it necessary to make. In page 34, Captain Sabine says he never heard that I made a drawing of the land; that is very possible, as it was not my custom to tell him when I made these sketches; as a navigator, I did not want his advice, and my friendship he had ceased to value. Captain Sabine has endeavoured to prove, that he wanted to take on shore the dipping-needle, and says, that I prevented him because the boats were only ordered to stay "for a few minutes." The fact was that the boats had

orders to stay six hours, as can be testified by the officers who commanded them; and Lieutenant Parry, who was subsequently sent, was ordered to return exactly at six o'clock, having embarked at noon. I refer to the affidavit of the person\* whom I ordered to bring up the dipping-needle, to disprove this assertion; and I can also refer to Lieutenant Robertson and others who were present when Captain Sabine made the objections I have stated, notwithstanding the ingenious manner Captain Sabine took after his return; to lay the blame on me.

I have now to thank Captain Sabine for setting me right as to a date on the 8th of August, on which day, instead of the 9th, he was twelve hours on shore. He says that they returned by signal of recall; yet no signal of recall was made that night, nor does it appear, either by the testimony of those who were with Captain Sabine, or by the log-book, where all such signals are inserted, that any such signal was made. The ship was not got under weigh until the party was seen returning on the ice, when I concluded,

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\* See Appendix, affidavit of James Clark.

as usual, that their operations were finished ; nor did I tell them that the ship had been detained for them. As far, therefore, as any interference on my part prevented the party from proceeding further, they might have found the mountain and the iron also.

Captain Sabine quotes the passage from my work, page 148, apparently for the purpose of showing that the ship was lying-to during the time he was absent, and that therefore he had a better view of Whale Sound from the iceberg than I could have from the ship. To prove this, he gives an extract from my log, lodged at the Admiralty, in which the ship is marked as lying-to between half past ten and half past eleven, at which time a boat was sent away. The fact is, that the boat in which Captain Sabine and Mr. Bushnan were, left the ship at half past eight, A.M. instead of half past ten, when she tacked and stood, as per log,  $7\frac{1}{2}$  miles, making a north course in his absence, and consequently so much nearer to Whale Sound. The reason why no courses are marked on the ship's return, between half past ten and half past eleven, was because the ship returned to the spot she had left at

half past eight, so that a reckoning became unnecessary. It was, moreover, my constant practice in navigating among the ice, to avoid marking intermediate courses and distances in the log, where I returned to the same place; as by taking a fresh departure from that place, I prevented the errors that arise from working too long by a dead reckoning. During the time Captain Sabine was absent he visited two icebergs; the first was found afloat, and, being unfit for their purpose, was abandoned; the other was a very large one, and they landed on the S.W. side of it; but being unable to ascend to the top, Whale Sound was totally obscured from them, if I am to believe Mr. Bushnan's report made to me at the time. While Captain Sabine was absent, a second boat was sent to an iceberg, to make observations on the current. This is the boat mentioned in the extract, and not the one in which Captain Sabine was. I have the bearings of Carey's Islands and the land north of them, which Captain Sabine gave me, but no bearings of Whale Sound are given. As we were directly between the iceberg which Captain Sabine was on, and Whale Sound, we could have seen the

observers on the berg had they seen Whale Sound ; but I well remember remarking to the officers of the watch, that I could not see them with my glass : as we ran back we passed to the northward, being also to windward of the berg, to lie-to for the boat, and we then saw them on the south-west part of the iceberg. It is therefore quite impossible that Mr. Bushman and Captain Sabine should have had the best view of Whale Sound, when it is proved that we were nearer to it by at least  $7\frac{1}{2}$  miles, a fact that would have been apparent, had Captain Sabine printed the extract of the log from eight to twelve on that day.

Respecting the instruments, Captain Sabine is under a mistake,—I gave a receipt for the whole of them, and was made answerable to the Admiralty for them by my Instructions, not only for their care, but for their use ; and Captain Sabine was sent *to assist me* in “ making such observations as may tend to the improvement of geography and navigation, and science in general.” These observations are particularly enumerated in my Instructions,—page 10.

In concluding this disagreeable subject, I

shall make one remark, that will surpersede the necessity of answering any statements through which it appeared unnecessary to follow the pamphlet in all its numerous repetitions. I am sorry that Captain Sabine should feel any soreness on the subject; nor would he feel any, if he had taken a correct view of his own situation in the ship. He was sent out as my assistant in taking those philosophical observations which might be expected to arise in this peculiar situation; not nautical ones, be it especially remembered. On subjects of navigation, let him recollect, that the Commander of a British Ship neither requires nor asks the advice which he, or any one in his situation, might imagine himself capable of giving. If he required it, he would be unworthy of his trust; if he asked it, he would deserve reprobation, for introducing into the British Navy a practice that must ultimately be subversive of discipline, and would, in the mean time, introduce discussion and dissensions, perhaps mutiny, where the wise policy of the Government has properly judged that one opinion alone should rule. I will venture to

say still further, that if the officers of His Majesty's Navy shall be subject to have their conduct canvassed before the Public in this very improper manner, by those who may be placed with them for similar purposes, it will no longer be in their power to feel as they have done when they were conscious that they were amenable to no power but that honourable and just one to which they are always ready to bow, and whose investigations they are ever anxious to court. That Commander who may hereafter be placed in the same situation as myself, will have reason to exert a kind of circumspection which may lead to hesitation and timidity, since he will consider himself under an inspection, from the effects of which he can never guard himself, if he, who thus presumes to judge of his conduct, is unacquainted with nautical affairs, and is at liberty to bring before a Public, equally unable to judge of such questions, that which belongs only to his brother officers to investigate.

## APPENDIX.

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No. I.

*Bloomfield Place, Lower Road, Deptford,  
22d December, 1818.*

SIR,

Agreeably to your request, I beg leave to state to you, that Captain Edward Sabine did on several occasions publicly express his belief that no passage existed in Lancaster Sound, and that it was useless to look for one before reaching Cumberland Straits; in regard to his very earnest request to Lieutenant Parry, to use all his influence to prevail on you to enter Cumberland Strait, notwithstanding the season was too far advanced, Lieutenant Parry gave a decided negative to his proposition. The conversation was public enough to be distinctly heard, but as I did not attach much importance to it at the time, I do not recollect the date. It is, however, a notorious fact, that the officers, with few exceptions, (if any) had given up all idea of a passage existing in Lancaster Sound, on the day previous to the one



we stood further into the Bay; and so convinced were they to the contrary, that all interest in the voyage, as far as regarded a passage in that direction, had entirely subsided.

I have the honour to be, Sir,

Your most obedient humble Servant,

WM. THOM,

*Late Purser of the Isabella.*

*To Captain Ross, R.N.*

No. II.

17, *Devereux Court, Strand,*

*December 22d.*

SIR,

Agreeably to your request, I beg leave to state to you, that I frequently heard Captain Sabine publicly express his opinion that no passage existed in Lancaster Sound, or any other Sound in Baffin's Bay, and that the whole attention of the voyage should be directed to Cumberland Straits. It was not until some time after leaving Lancaster Sound that I heard Captain Sabine express a regret that we had not pushed further up that Sound; not, as I understood him, from any idea he had of a passage existing there, but from the near approach we could have made to the Magnetic Pole, and not until the ship was near Shetland did I ever hear him express his opinion of a passage existing in Lancaster Sound.

I have the honour to be,

Your most obedient Servant,

W. ROBERTSON.

*To Captain John Ross, R.N.*

## No. III.

*Hull, 18th April, 1819.*

CAPTAIN ROSS,—SIR,

I received your valuable book, for which I return you my sincere thanks. Should have answered your letter sooner, and thanked you for your favour, but was from home. I have carefully read your book from the beginning to page 174, and find nothing in it but what is correct; and concerning Lancaster Sound I am fully satisfied it is correct; and I am confident that no officer in the *Isabella* knew any thing about the bottom of Lancaster Bay but yourself, as they were not on deck for a long time both before and after the time you hauled out to the eastward; and the *Alexander*, I believe, was the distance of eight miles, as you have remarked. I have not had any letters from any of the officers which were under your command, and I think neither Captain Sabine nor any of them will write me on the subject, as they have heard me say repeatedly, that I had seen the land round the bottom of the Sound. I expect to sail the latter end of the week to St. Petersburg, but I am only engaged for one voyage.

Sir, your obliged and humble Servant,

BENJAMIN LEWIS.

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 No. IV.

*His Majesty's Ship Hecla, Deptford,*  
*21st April, 1819.*

MY DEAR UNCLE,

Understanding that Captain Edward Sabine is to publish, after our departure, some conversations

in which I was concerned, which took place in the Gun-room of the *Isabella*, concerning your conduct during the late voyage, I feel it my duty to assure you, that whatever I said was not intended to have been repeated out of the mess, and being uttered at the moment I had received a reprimand from you, any thing I might have said to your prejudice was the impulse of passion; but as I was not upon deck at the time when you saw the land at the bottom of the bay in Lancaster Sound, what I said on that subject could not have been from my own observation; and the bearings of the land, which I entered in the log at your desire, are the same which were taken by Mr. Lewis and written in his presence. I also feel it my duty to acquaint you, I was much misled, as well as other officers, by Captain Sabine, which I have already acknowledged, and which I hope you have forgiven, and believe me to remain,

Your affectionate Nephew,

JAMES CLARK ROSS.

P.S. When Captain Sabine asked me where I got the dip which I gave to you, I told him I had got it from him, not recollecting at the time that it was from your book I copied it.

J. C. ROSS.

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No. V.

*London, 22d April.*

DEAR SIR,

Understanding it is your wish I should certify my having formed the meteorological plates from the original logs of the *Isabella*, and that the charts were also formed from a correct copy of the originals deposited in the Hydrographic Office, (Admiralty), I am most ready to

assure you, in obedience to your directions, they were extracted from the aforesaid original documents.

I am Sir,

Your most obedient, humble servant,

T. BUSHNAN.

*To Captain Ross, R. N.*

## NO. VI.

MY DEAR UNCLE,

I beg of you to publish the few following remarks, in explanation to the Questions and Answers published by Captain Sabine.

In the set of observations made on the pendulum in Baffin's Bay, I was present and assisting. There was only one other set made during our voyage—at them I was not present.

I did copy Captain Sabine's Meteorological Register for you, and was ignorant, when your work was published, of the existence of any other. It was not until you explained this to me, and until I had conversed with, and learned from, Mr. Bushnan, that he had framed a new one from the ship's log, in consequence of my copy being found incorrect, that I have been conscious of having laboured under a mistake on this subject.

It was from the same source, during the same conversation, and by referring to the originals, that I am now satisfied that the table published by you on the magnetic dip, and intensity of the magnetic force, was taken from your book, and not from the copy which I had previously taken for myself from Captain Sabine's papers, by his permission, as I had reason to believe, when conversing with him in Downing-street, on the 28th of March last. This I notified

to Captain Sabine a few days before he published his book. The conversation in Downing-street took place a few days after your publication appeared.—I had not then read it; but Captain Sabine shewed me the tables, which, having every appearance of agreeing with the copies I had given you, I then felt no hesitation in believing, and stating my belief, that they were the same.—Wherein I have been incorrect, I have sufficiently explained.

Ever, my dear Uncle,  
Your affectionate Nephew,  
JAMES CLARK ROSS.

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### No. VII.

This deponent James Clarke, late one of the crew of His Majesty's ship *Isabella*, on the late Voyage of Discovery to Baffin's Bay, maketh oath, and saith :

“That on the first September 1818, being the day on which possession was taken of the coast near Lancaster Sound, at the time the boats were preparing to leave the ship, Captain Ross before Captain Sabine came on deck, ordered me to bring up the dipping-needle, and put it into the boat; but, when I was in the act of carrying up that instrument, a person called to me that it was not wanted, at which time I believe Captain Sabine had gone up to the Captain; and, this deponent further maketh oath, that all the specimens of rocks and birds and other animals were landed and brought by him to the Admiralty, from thence to Sir Joseph Banks, where some of them were left; that he then gave charge of the remainder to the Admiralty messenger, who had directions to conduct them to the British Museum. That this deponent has since been at the British

Museum, where he saw part of the said specimens, which were all collected by the officers and crew of the ship, and was informed that the part which he had not seen, were received. This deponent maketh oath that all the specimens of birds were skinned and preserved by him, and that the powder used for that purpose belonged to Captain Ross, and had been sent to him from Bullock's Museum; and, that a quantity of this remained after the expiration of the voyage; and this deponent was on deck several times on the 31st of August, but never saw Captain Sabine on deck during that day. This deponent further maketh oath, that all the latitudes and longitudes of the specimens of rocks, and the remarks which accompanied (affixed to each parcel,) the chests and packages conducted in the manner above stated to the Museum, were made by Captain Ross in his hand-writing, and that he assisted in packing them, and was present when the chests were nailed down.

" JAMES CLARKE."

Sworn before me, }  
 April 30th, 1819. } JOHN ATKINS, Mayor.

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### No. VIII.

Captain Sabine having published, both in the QUARTERLY JOURNAL OF SCIENCE AND THE ARTS, and in his "REMARKS," that the *Isabella* sailed up Lancaster Sound for about thirty miles, when the fact was, she was up that inlet above eighty miles; to prove this by Captain Sabine's own document, I have thought it proper to annex an extract from the Report, containing his day's work, which was calculated, signed, and delivered officially to me by him.—Possession Bay, where the ship was at noon, 1st Sept., is within the entrance of Lancaster Sound.

On the 1st September I had a meridian altitude, which gave the Latitude  $73^{\circ} 37' 18''$  N., and altitudes for time, whereby the Longitude at noon was deduced by means of the six chronometers,  $77^{\circ} 24' 59''$  W. Wherefore assuming a fresh departure at noon, Sept. 1, I work to the greatest Westing at 6, P.M. Aug. 31.

*From 6, P. M. August 31st, to September 1st.*

	S.W. by S.	124°	East.	16	..	..	16	..	Latitude.
9½	S.W.	125	S. 7¼ pts. E.	22	..	3,2	21,8	..	Noon, 1st Sept. .... 73 37 18 N.
14	S.W. by W.	127	S. 6¼ E.	21,4	..	7,2	20,25	..	Diff. Lat. .... 0 25 42
18	W. by S.	133	S. 4¼ E.	10,4	..	6,3	8,4	..	Lat. 6, P.M. 31st Aug. 74 03 00 N.
20	N.W. by W. dim.	130	S. ½ E.	3,4	..	3,5	0,35	..	
21	N.W.	127	S. ¾ W.	2,4	..	2,5	..	0,35	
22	N.W. by W.	128	S. ¼ E.	3	..	3,	0,1	..	
24									
						25,7	66,9	0,35	
							66,45		

66, 55 = Log. 1,82315  
 75° 50' = Sec. 55328

1,37843 = 5° 59' Diff. of Long. Easterly.

By working forward from the 29th August, .... Latitude,  $74^{\circ} 02' 12''$   
 By working back from the 1st September, .... Latitude,  $74^{\circ} 03' 00''$

Long. 6, P.M. 31st Aug. 81 25 59 W.  
 Longitude,  $81^{\circ} 06' 21''$  N.  
 Longitude, 81 25 59 W.

**EDWARD SABINE.**

*In the Press, and speedily will be published, in Two Volumes 8vo.*

A SECOND EDITION OF  
A VOYAGE OF DISCOVERY,

Made under the Orders of the Admiralty, in His Majesty's Ships  
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Bay, and of inquiring into the probability of a North-West  
Passage.

BY

CAPTAIN JOHN ROSS, K. S., R. N.,  
Commander of the Expedition.

Printing for JOHN MURRAY, Albemarle-Street.

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London : W. Clowes, Northumberland-court.

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