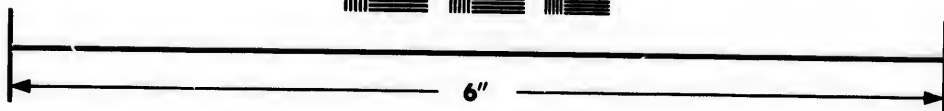
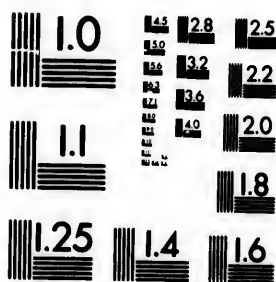


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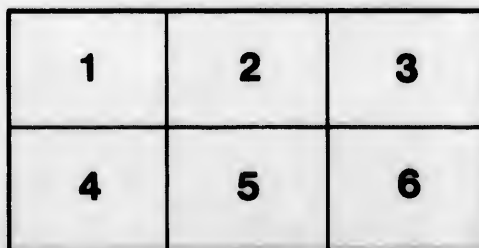
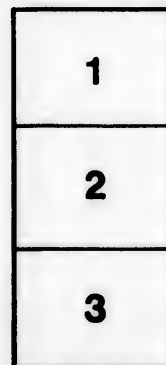
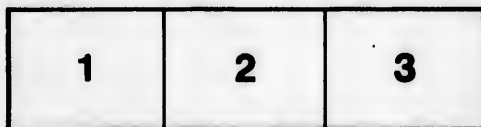
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REFLECTIONS
ON
THE MYSTERIOUS FATE
OF
SIR JOHN FRANKLIN.

BY
JAMES PARSONS.

LONDON:
J. F. HOPE, 16 GREAT MARLBOROUGH STREET.
1857.

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INTRODUCTION.

It must be a subject of great interest to all classes, when in this enlightened age an expedition like that under Sir John Franklin, leaves the shores of Great Britain and is lost in a manner so complete as to frustrate every attempt to dispel the darkness that enshrouds its fate, and to hold at defiance the combined talents of the civilized world. In the records of past ages we find but two expeditions lost while on Arctic discovery, one commanded by Sir Hugh Willoughby in 1554, on the northern coast of Lapland, and the other under Messrs Knight and Barlow in 1719, on Marble Island, Hudson's Bay. Yet in the absence of a search the fate of Willoughby was made known two years after he sailed, that of Messrs. Knight and Barlow before ten years had expired. In what form can be compared either of those expeditions to that now absent twelve years? They may be instanced to show that history does not furnish a parallel, but they will bear no comparison with Sir John Franklin's. For what expedition ever sailed with so large a number of expe-

rienced men, so many scientific acquirements, and with such sanguine hopes, as that of 1845? What search was ever so great or so barren as the search for it has been? Expectations have sprung up concerning it but to vanish as suddenly as they were formed. An extensive capital has been expended for a purpose still to be revealed. When the force of science with the benefit of experience could not prevail, the inexperienced placed their views of the mystery beside those of navigators, and met alike the same degree of disappointment. Such has been the fact, and such the forlorn results attained throughout a period of the past ten years.

JAMES PARSONS.

27, *Duke Street,*
North Shields, Northumberland.
February 19, 1857.

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THE

MYSTERIOUS FATE

OF

SIR JOHN FRANKLIN.

As it is not generally known, whether Sir John Franklin had with him on leaving Whale Fish Islands in July, 1845, an Esquimaux and dogs, the veil of mystery first appears in this vicinity. With stores and a full allowance of provisions for three years, he sailed for Melville Bay, and a passage through the middle ice into Lancaster Sound; previous to reaching that bay, he threw overboard an Admiralty cylinder, which was found by the Lady Jane, whaler, in 1849—thus showing that he had obeyed an interest-

ing part of his instructions. On the 26th of July, the Prince of Wales, whaler, met the expedition moored to an iceberg in latitude 74-48 north, longitude, 66-13 west, it was then waiting a favourable opening through the middle ice to proceed onwards to Lancaster Sound. This is the last time it was seen by Europeans. Having arrived in Barrow's Strait, Franklin would push direct for Cape Walker. Being unable to reach it for ice, and finding Peel Sound blocked up, he would naturally proceed northward to the entrance of Wellington Channel, and make Erebus and Terror Bay his first winter quarters. Remaining here until the summer of '46, he passed into unknown waters, to discover, if possible, the north west passage. Here an important question presents itself—did Franklin leave a despatch on Beechey Island, previous to his departure in 1846. None such have been found, was he so far lost to the safety of his men, as to neglect leaving a despatch either here or at Cape Walker? It is highly improbable, as in his former voyages he always left despatches where they were deemed necessary. It is contrary to reason to imagine that he attempted the route by Cape Walker without leaving some written document, and after being foiled in that attempt, turned his ships to Beechey Island and Wellington Channel without leaving a notice of his proceedings. Doubtless, he had good reasons for

altering his course from Cape Walker to Beechey Island, though no motive can be shown why, after attempting both routes, he left no despatches at either. Being convinced he left despatches at Beechey Island in 1846, how they have disappeared, is a question to be touched upon in another portion of my views. The caution of Franklin is at once seen in the selection of Erebus and Terror Bay as his winter quarters—the very shape and position of which giving him perfect security from danger, it being much broader within than at its entrance. The ice must break up before the ships could be carried out into Barrow Strait, and when that took place the screws of the missing ships would soon clear them of loose ice. All the heavy ice coming down Wellington Channel and Barrow Strait would pass by the ships, instead of carrying them helplessly away as were the ships of Sir James Ross, and those of the American expedition. In the Autumn of 1846, the missing expedition has cut itself out of Erebus and Terror Bay, a task in which great assistance would be rendered by the screws of the ships, and fixing a trustworthy period in the month of August, it left Beechey Island, and took its way north through Wellington Channel for the western entrance of Jones' Sound, in the hope of proving its connection with that channel. Having discovered its junction, Franklin would naturally explore it,

and by directing a party eastward accomplish his object, after which he would deposit, as an act of prudence, some provisions in caches near the turning point of Wellington Channel, in the event of having to retreat by the way he advanced, and for the information of parties in search, he would leave a despatch stating his intentions and discoveries. It is clear that his first attention after passing up Wellington Channel would be fixed on the western entrance of Jones' Sound, the importance attached to it being so great that a passage by that route was not only conjectured before he sailed, but was named the eastern entrance of the great Polar passage; Franklin, therefore, knowing its importance, would strive to effect its exploration, and by circumstances hereafter to be named he must have done so, now seeing the Victoria Islands beyond him to the north, he would shape his course between them and Parry's Islands.

It is requisite here to mention three circumstances that would materially assist in carrying him onwards in his adventurous path. First throughout the season of '46 there prevailed strong north easterly gales, which rendered it a disastrous season to the whalers; the second is the existence of a current running westward to the north of Cape Lady Franklin. And again, the missing ships were fitted with the screw propeller, which could if necessary render essential service. They were unlike other ships

sent in search, one towing another. The lost ships could act independently of each other, thus giving them great advantages. With these powerful circumstances in favour of their course, and being in sight of unknown lands, the spirits of the whole expedition would be aroused,—here the bold daring of the gallant Franklin would stimulate them to pursue their course to the lands in view, and to others far beyond. While the route was open they would persevere to the westward until the season of '46 had closed.

The summer of '47 having arrived they may have gone somewhat further in the hope of completing the passage, but have been again stopped by the heavy Polar ice, and the north easterly set of the current through Behring's Strait ; yet as so much progress had been made in '46 those difficulties would appear but trifling compared with the success. Franklin would then with parties explore the lands around his ships, and looking upon his position (debarring its isolated nature) in the same light as that of Captain Mc Clure in 1850—51, I conclude he ran the full length of his discoveries with the ships in the extraordinary season of '46. Captain Mc Clure effected his achievements in the favourable seasons of '50—51, and though he had remained near his first winter quarters three years, he made no progress eastward with his ship, and finally had to abandon her to her fate. As the open season

of '51 allowed her to visit Mercy Bay, it will require another such season for her release, lying as she does on the north coast of a land wedged in by the pressure of the heavy northern ice. Such a season may prevail several years running, or it may appear once in twenty years.

Conceiving the missing ships to be ice-locked in a Strait or Harbour to the north and west of Parry's Islands, we leave Franklin to push forward his discoveries, and turn anxiously towards that part of his instructions bearing on his route, and as it is said by going up Wellington Channel he attached greater importance to his own opinions than to the experience and views of others, it will be well (previous to reviewing his instructions) to speak of the motives which led that great man to prefer the northern course to that by Cape Walker and Peel Sound; they were the hope of finding a clear passage through Wellington Channel, and from it the western entrance of Jones' Sound, the expectation of an open Polar Sea northward of Parry's Island, and the discovery of the north west passage as was conjectured before he sailed. He knew when Wellington Channel was discovered it was ice free, and he must have reasonably anticipated by going north that a large field lay open for discovery. These then are the motives that led him to choose the northern route before that by Cape Walker:

nor shall we varnish his character by saying it every way suited his well known zeal for discovery. Whereas, by Cape Walker, the difficulties appeared both great and numerous ; there was a belief that a group of islands existed south west of that Cape, together with the ice drifting towards Coronation Gulf, an absence of open water, and the presence of a small but dangerous field for discovery. He was well aware of the voyage of Sir Edward Parry in 1819 to Melville Island, and that gallant officer's long and hopeless detention at Winter Harbour. By the unfavourable prospects presented in 1819 south and west of that island, he beheld at once the impossibility of pushing vessels in that direction. How far this prediction of difficulties has been verified, we have unmistakable evidence in the voyages of Captains Mc Clure and Collinson from the west, and in those of Captains Austin and Kellet from the east. Two ships were lost in the attempt from the east, and one in that from the west, nor were they proved by the experience of a season or by one route, but through several seasons and by different routes, leaving us, in fine, nothing to record but the fatal results of attempting to push ships through a path which Franklin was desirous of avoiding.

From the motives that led him to prefer the northern route, we pass to the instructions given him by the Admiralty, the most interesting part

of which runs thus: "Lancaster Sound and its continuation through Barrow Strait having been four times navigated by Sir Edward Parry, and since by whaling ships, will probably be found without any obstacles from ice or islands, and Sir Edward Parry having also proceeded from the latter in a straight course to Melville Island, it is hoped that the remaining portion of the passage, about 900 miles to Behring's Strait, may also be found equally free from obstructions, and in proceeding to the westward, therefore, you will not stop to examine any openings either to the northward or southward in that Strait, but continue to push to the westward without loss of time in the latitude of about seventy-four and a quarter till you have reached the longitude of that portion of land on which Cape Walker is situated. From that point we desire that every effort be used to endeavour to penetrate to the southward and westward, in a course as direct towards Behring's Strait as the position and extent of the ice or the existence of land may admit; but should your progress be arrested by ice of a permanent appearance, and that when passing the mouth of the strait between Devon and Cornwallis Islands you had observed that it was open, and clear of ice, we desire that you will duly consider whether that channel might not offer a more practicable outlet from the Archipelago, and a more ready access to the open sea."

This concluding passage, although so clear and powerful, seems to have escaped the attention of those fully aware of its existence. No impartial mind can dwell thereon without concluding Franklin would have disobeyed his instructions by going south west of Cape Walker. Because he then would have been running into the difficulties of which they particularly warned him. The anticipation of meeting ice of a permanent appearance whilst entangled amidst a group of islands, must act with marvellous effect upon the mind of a man having two routes to choose from. If the Lords of the Admiralty wished Franklin to pay attention to the route by Cape Walker, why depict in his instructions the probability of meeting ice of a permanent appearance, and likewise an Archipelago in that direction? While, had they been desirous that he should abolish the idea of going up Wellington Channel, why did they say, if in passing its entrance you observe it open and clear of ice, we desire that you will duly consider, whether it might not offer a more practicable outlet from the Archipelago, and a more ready access to the open sea. The probability of finding Wellington Channel clear of ice and the temptation of an open sea northward, should not have been held out to Franklin, if their Lordships did not wish him to attempt that route. Is the scene not one of horror, in beholding a man running his

ships amidst an Archipelago to be ensnared with ice of a permanent appearance. What navigator would make the attempt? Where is the man who would not use every exertion to avoid such a difficult and dangerous path as Franklin's instructions portrayed in the route by Cape Walker? Had he declared his intention of struggling for the passage south-west of that cape, and the Admiralty wished him to abandon the attempt, they could not have figured greater difficulties and dangers to lead him from his determination than they did in the instructions under which he sailed. Therefore, in pushing south-west of Cape Walker, he would not only be running into the dangers of which Dr. King especially forewarned him, but into those very difficulties which his instructions clearly revealed to his notice. By following the northern course he acted in every way up to the tenor of his orders; where then arose the sanguine opinion (and unlimited confidence attached thereto) reposed in the minds of the many, that according to his instructions, Franklin must have gone south-west of Cape Walker with his ships in the season of '46. It is in vain we search for its foundation. If others are cognizant of its source I assuredly confess my ignorance of its existence. It is no pleasant task to add that the majority of those officers who gave their opinions on the position of the missing ships, remained firm towards the route by Cape Walker in opposition

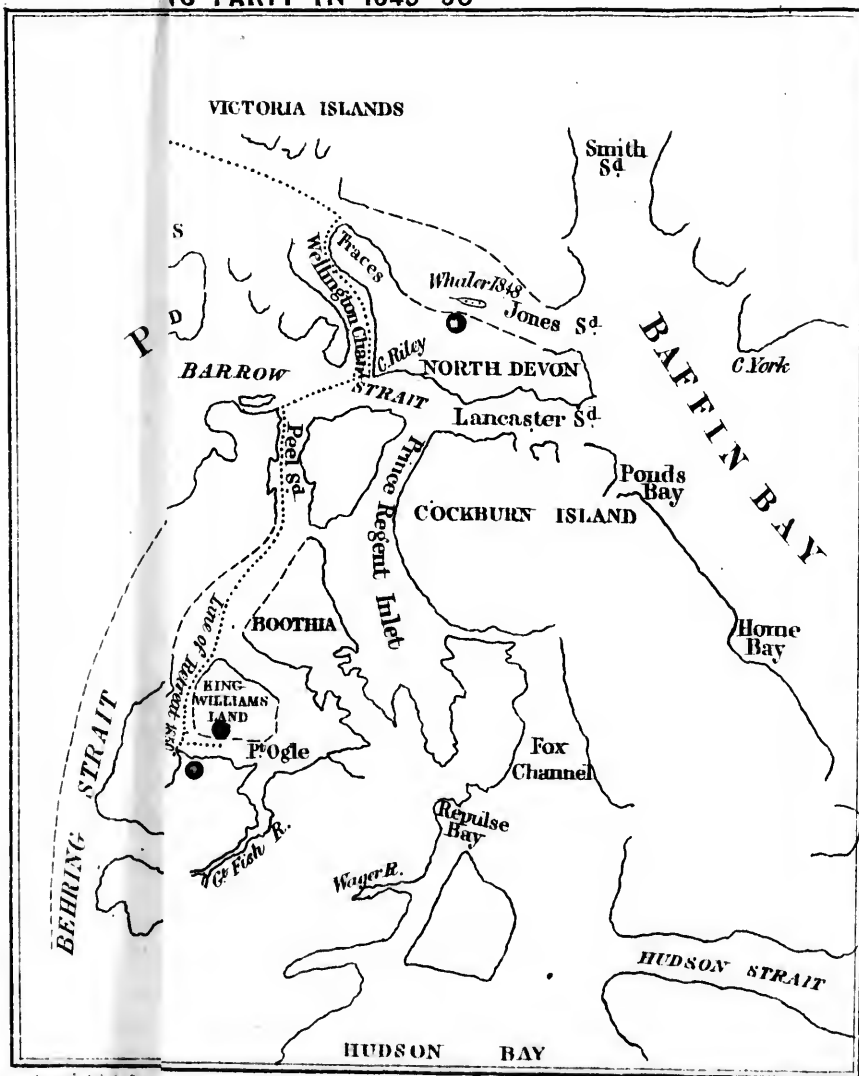
and directly in the face of the orders Franklin received to the contrary. That brief passage deserved the attention of all who felt interested in his behalf, instead of receiving, as it did, the insulting silence of the whole community. Its importance was as great as it proved fatal, because it was the index to a route offering (at the time the lost expedition sailed) the least difficulties to its progress. Here the want of consideration is painfully felt, nor can its absence be more plainly observed, than in the present clouded and forlorn state of the mystery. Little credit is due to the experienced, when one who disowns he ever crossed the Arctic Circle is, through the helpless state of the subject, compelled to draw public attention to facts connected therewith, as clear as noon-day, and as simple as they are clear. After they have been so long neglected, and still receive nothing from the world but an ignominious silence, I cannot but exclaim, we live in a wonderful age, when the most vital parts of a question of such great importance are treated with a strict and scornful silence, while subjects bordering on the confines of folly, rivet the attention of all not only when in dispute but long after they have been placed beyond doubt.

And now returning to Franklin's position in the distant north, where, after pushing his explorations to their utmost limits in the season of '47, he passes the winter and awaits the turn of

'48 in the expectation of a more favourable season. The autumn of that year having arrived without releasing the ships, it has made their position critical, he would now see there was no time to be lost ; the vast resources of his memory would be called into action for the relief of his men, and at this period, that truly unfortunate but heroic navigator's efforts have been centred in a retreat unsurpassed in the annals of discovery. In a bold attempt so illustrative of his daring character, it is evident he would after '48 trust to the good fortune of the seasons no longer, as the treachery of the previous seasons showed there could be no reliance placed on them, he would thereby adopt such means as he thought requisite for getting communication or retreating to where succour was to be found, consequently, he would despatch a powerful boat party, as soon as the spring of '49 set in, to communicate with searching parties at Wellington Channel, or at Beechey Island, where he would certainly expect either ships or parties to be found. In making a retreat at the stated period, he did not heedlessly endanger the lives of his men by delay ; the danger arose from obstacles and not altogether from a long imprisonment, as when he reached his second winter quarters (say October '46,) two years had but expired when he determined on a retreat ; he could persevere those two years for the passage ; when on half allowance his provisions would serve until the autumn of

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Smith & Jones

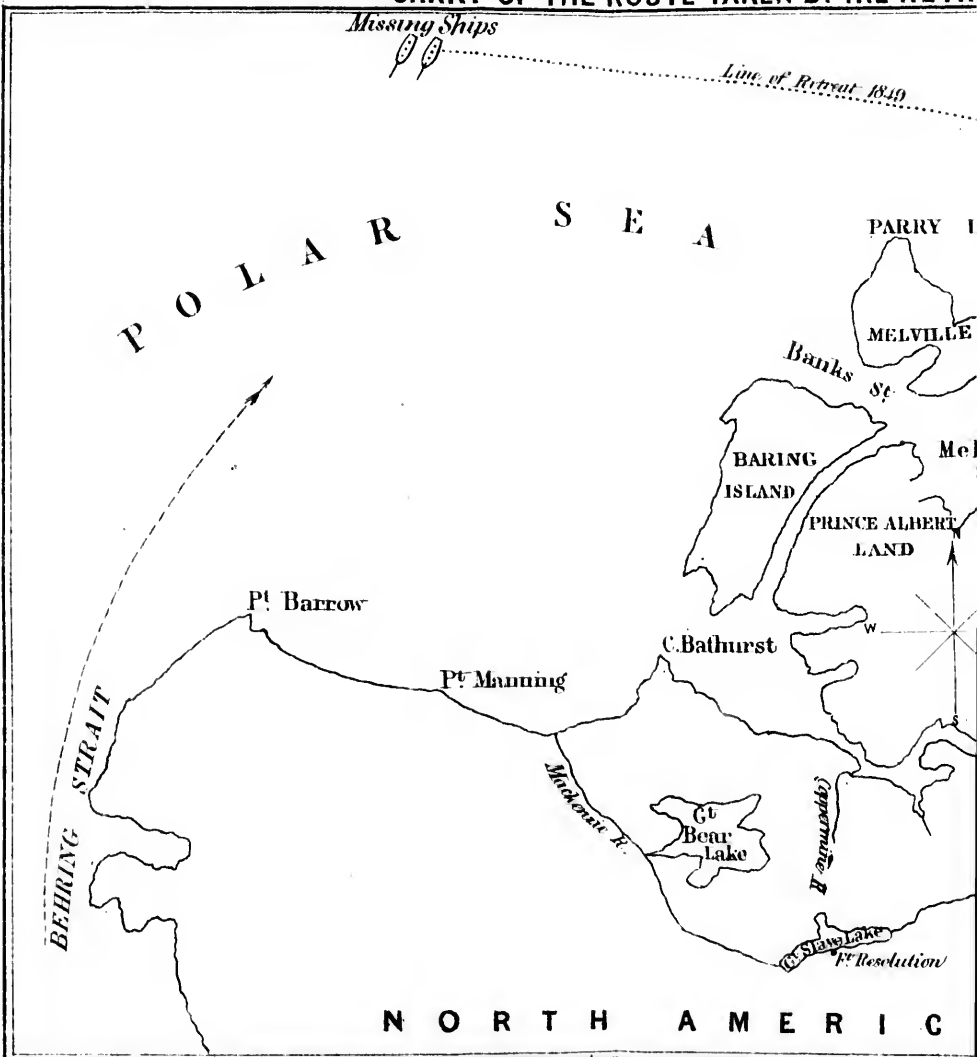
'50. When the retreating party left, he calculated on having eighteen or twenty months provisions to serve on half allowance, until relief was sent by that party, therefore he cannot be charged with any reckless hazard of his men. The loss of the ships must be attributed to the treachery of the seasons, but the loss of life to the absence of relief at Beechey Island and Cape Walker in '49-50. The favourable season to them of '46, and the assisting circumstances already named, betrayed those brave men. The aid of their zeal was not wanted to carry them onwards to their doom. But in the warmth of success they gave way to an impulse natural to their race, and in a daring attempt to retrieve their misfortune, like martyrs suffered, and like heroes died. When the spring of '49 arrived, Franklin having previously organized a party, would despatch it first to retreat on the stores left in '46 (while on his way north) near the junction of Jones' Sound with Wellington Channel, and if no ships or intelligence were there, it could push down Wellington Channel to Beechey Island, where ships or searching parties were sure to be found. It is beyond the power of my pen to describe the farewell accompanying the outset of the retreating party. But the cheer, the last adieu, the prayer of hope, and the anxious lingering gaze of the remaining men as the gallant band took its desolate way across the distant horizon, come vividly before us. To



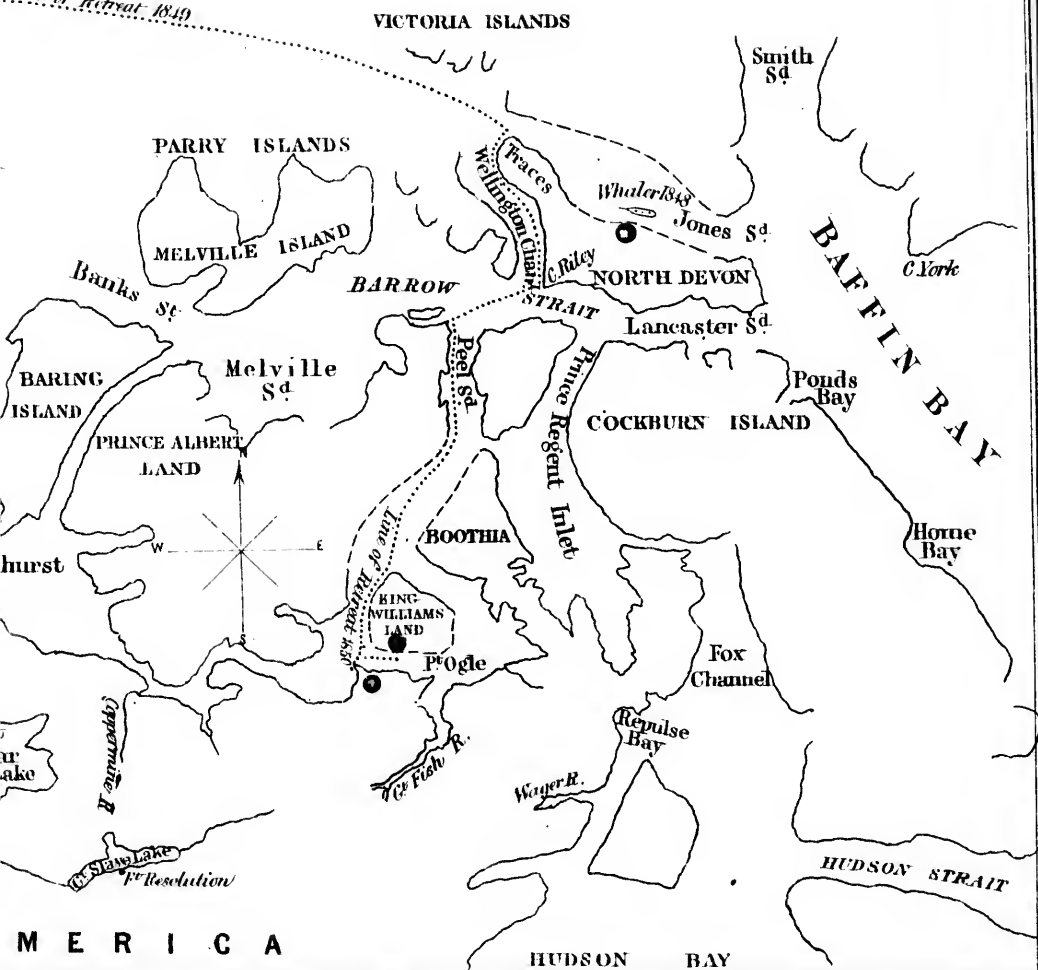
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Missing Ships

Line of Retreat 1849



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follow its footsteps after leaving the ships is a task by no means difficult. It would make the best possible use of the season of '49, yet having a great distance to travel, with the ice and current to contend against, the season would be severely diminished when it made the western entrance of Jones' Sound. Having arrived at the stores, they would set watch for ships coming up Wellington Channel, and if disappointed in seeing any, they would remove the despatch left near the stores in '46, finding it untouched and no trace whatever of a searching party, they would conclude that a search had not been made in that direction. Their strongest hopes now fix on Beechey Island, and after emptying the caches of their contents have made all haste down Wellington Channel to that island, expecting every hour to meet ships or searching parties, but they have reached it and found none.

A fact may now be related that will account for no trace of them being found on the shores of Wellington Channel by the searching parties, in '50. It is well known that on the 1st of September '49, large bodies of ice came down Barrow Strait and Wellington Channel, and in its impetuous course carried the expedition under Sir James Ross away from the entrance of the latter eastward through Lancaster Sound, and as far south as Pond's Bay before it escaped from its perilous position. As some of those masses came down Wellington Channel with the wes-

terly gales at that time prevalent, that channel must have been left ice free. And this remarkable incident happening at the very time Franklin's men were near its northern entrance would allow them to retreat southward in clear water. Hence the absence of traces on the shores of Wellington Channel in 1850. It is a very doubtful question whether they could have reached the western entrance of Jones' Sound, in the season of '49, had they not been favoured by this eruption of the ice caused by the westerly gales, which proved to them more fatal than otherwise, for although they wonderfully assisted their journey eastward, they were extremely fatal in carrying the relief expedition under Sir James Ross from the south entrance of Wellington Channel, when those unfortunate men were so near and so much required assistance. After reaching Beechey Island they must have been woefully disappointed in not finding ships, and as the season was past for the whalers, escape by them was hopeless, they would scan the adjoining headlands for marks or signals. But, ill-fated men, it was in vain they looked in every direction for some object to reward them, but desolation everywhere met their view. Little suspecting such negligence possible, they would search the whole neighbourhood for cairns, or traces of a searching party. But to their horror, and to England's eternal shame, they found not a trace or mark of any description left. Not even a stone

was there to show those gallant men they had ever once been searched for; and to be fully convinced of the painful truth, they have gone to the despatches left by themselves in '46, and which are now missing. Here they have found them alone and untouched. Where then lay their hopes of succour? What indeed was their thoughts of the country that sent them? As any attempt to describe their feelings when seeing themselves thus forsaken, will meet with certain failure, I refrain from the attempt. But while this simple view justly answers the absence of despatches from Beechey Island, it may be asked, why after removing them they did not leave others, to which reason answers the fact of men returning and finding despatches untouched that were deposited by them four years previous to retreat is, in the absence of further hope, a substantial reason for not leaving others in their place. When despatches are left at places those who deposit them expect they will be found, but when that belief is destroyed, how can we hope to find others. After Franklin's party had been five years on a dangerous voyage and had visited places in retreat, where ships ought to have been two years and a half previous to that time, what hope could they entertain of succour from ships? When such interesting places as Jones' Sound and the south entrance of Wellington Channel remained throughout a space of five years unvisited.—I should be delighted to

learn the advantages they could expect by leaving another despatch at Beechey Island. It is evident that if the least ray of hope possessed the party after its arrival at that island, it would concentrate on Cape Walker, as it was the first place Franklin's instructions led him to visit. Closing here on the mystery of the absent despatches, we are attracted towards the critical position of the party while at Beechey Island; the officers (as Franklin was not there,) had urgent matters to decide upon, the past was dreadful, yet the future appeared worse. The main question for their consideration was the course they were to pursue. From their present position two routes appeared, that by Cape Walker and Peel Sound for the continent of America, and the Hudson's Bay Company's settlements, and eastward through Barrow Strait in search of whalers.

Let us give this question strict attention, for it stands boldly to view; why did they prefer retreat by Cape Walker and Peel Sound to that by Barrow Strait? In favour of the former was a faint hope of ships or intelligence at that cape; an expectation of meeting Esquimaux near the continent, from whom assistance in travelling might be obtained; a strong belief that information could be derived from those tribes regarding any searching parties; and by reaching the continent it was possible to send intelligence of their position and wants to the Hudson's Bay Company's settlements; a good prospect of

reaching the hunting grounds in summer to kill deer, and by making them the half-way post between Cape Walker and the settlements on Great Slave Lake, communication, that great object, would be established; when they found no search had been made for them in Barrow Strait, they would naturally expect it was going on from the continent; could they imagine England sent them on that desperate undertaking and left them destitute in the hour of need? Here is a weighty combination of reasons why the officers of the party gave preference to the route by Peel Sound instead of Barrow Strait. Glancing at the latter we observe many obstacles therein presented, which in attempting to push eastward were impossible to surmount. There was no hope of meeting whalers, and as little chance of finding Esquimaux; no settlements appeared without travelling seven or eight hundred miles, and that also across the heavy ice in Baffin's Bay: no hunting grounds were in view, nor any prospect of getting communication. The only point short of impossibility was the chance of meeting whalers, and when the season of 1850 had commenced the long period they had to survive and the risk attending that journey were too great to sacrifice. The lives of the remaining men depended on their success; therefore they could not wait till the month of August on the mere chance of meeting a whaler. By self experience they knew that Lancaster

Sound could not be entered by those ships until that period of the season, and was not by themselves (though assisted by steam) until that month, and then arose the reflection that Lancaster Sound in those years as at present was seldom visited by whalers at any part of the season. The number of ships fishing in those seas being so few that many years pass over without their effecting an entrance into that passage; Franklin while on his way to the North in '45 had a powerful instance of this, when throughout the whole passage he met but two whalers and those near the east coast of Baffin's Bay on the 26th of July; again H. M. S. Phoenix in 1854, under Captain Inglefield, navigated Baffin's Bay, east west, north and south, meeting after all but five whalers near Home Bay, three hundred miles south-east of Lancaster Sound. The same vessel left Disco Island, latitude 70 north, longitude 55 west, August 7th, '54, and running up Baffin's Bay passed through the middle ice into Lancaster Sound, after visiting Beechey Island returned and put into Pond's Bay, the seat of the whale fishery, crossing again to Disco Island, she steamed southward and doubled Cape Farewell, making a run of near two thousand miles through the heart of the fishery without meeting a whaler. Still further, Dr. Kane traversed the northern shores of Baffin's Bay two seasons '54—55, and could not find a whaler to relieve him. Should conviction.

still remain stubborn, another instance is seen in the escape of Sir John Ross, who visited the south shore of Barrow Strait twice in search of whalers (once in 1832, and again in August '33) when he fortunately met the *Isabella* of Hull, in which vessel he returned to England; this event be it remembered occurred at a period when hundreds of ships navigated those seas and penetrated into parts unseen at the present time, yet withal it was termed a miraculous escape. The chances of success in 1850 were therefore too slender to warrant Franklin's party making an attempt, while to reach Uppernavic (the nearest Danish settlement) by crossing the packed ice in Baffin's and Melville Bays would be a task beyond conception; such an attempt would not only meet death, but would do so without the slightest hope of discovering its unfortunate victims. They were kept in ignorance of any depôt being in Barrow Strait, and had they effected a retreat to the eastward along its northern shore, they would have found no depot, as they were all made on that of its southern. In reviewing the difficulties against a retreat by Barrow Strait and the advantages to be derived by an attempt through Peel Sound, what course appeared so favourable as that of the latter. Between the difficulties and dangers on one hand, and the benefits likely to arise on the other, could they have selected a route better adapted for the emergency than the one they

have followed; with so many advantages in its favour and being the only direct road from Barrow Strait to the continent? We may place every confidence that Peel Sound was the channel Franklin's party took to seek communication after quitting Beechey Island.

But in the dawn of 1850 calamities of an awful description await that brave band of men; after meeting naught but disappointment and neglect where they expected succour, they are compelled through want and in faith to their companions to leave Beechey Island. Early in the season of '50 they left it, and directed their steps towards Cape Walker, to ascertain whether ships or intelligence had arrived there. Having approached it, and seen no marks or signals left by searching parties, they may have landed, but as at Beechey Island, found no trace of any to reward them; then convinced that no ships had been on search, they, with scarcely a stoppage, as time was important, and having their country's cruelty at heart, are driven as a last resource to attempt a passage to the Hudson's Bay Company's settlements. The struggle now becomes one of life and death. They know that they must not only suffer themselves, but the lives of their companions depend on their success. They would therefore use every exertion, strain every nerve to arrive at a speedy communication with the settlements, and to effect this object, have selected the

passage by Peel Sound in preference to the route by Barrow Strait, the absence of ships or intelligence from Beechey Island and Cape Walker, between the seasons of '49-'50, having reduced them to the melancholy extreme of selling their lives as dearly as possible by attempting the settlements, or to miserably perish in the forlorn attempt. From Cape Walker they would make a retreat south, through Peel Sound, travelling near its western shore, and finding that passage blocked with hummocky field ice, as Sir James Ross found it in June, '49, their progress would become slow and difficult, their enfeebled condition greatly prolonging their journey to the continent. Keeping these circumstances, therefore, in mind, it is but reasonable to conclude that it would be in the spring of '50 when they arrived at the north coast of King William's Land. That this was the case may be inferred from the Esquimaux narrative brought to England in '54 by Dr. Rae, namely, "That in the spring of '50, while some Esquimaux were killing seals near the northern coast of King William's Land, a party of about forty white men appeared, dragging a boat over the ice from the north. They stated their ships had been crushed in the ice, and they were now going to the hunting grounds to shoot deer; the men looked thin (as well they might), and purchased a seal from the natives. At a later date of the same season, but previous to the breaking up of the ice, the dead bodies of thirty were

found on the mainland and five on an island near it, about a long day's journey to the north west of a large stream, said to be the Great Fish River. After this statement the mind is impressed by the reflection that during the interval of twelve months which elapsed from September 1st, 1849, when Sir James Ross was driven out of Barrow's Strait, until August 23rd, 1850, when Captain Austin's expedition arrived at Beechey Island, no ship or party was on search in Barrow Strait. Within this period the faithful companions of Sir John Franklin were seeking that help so long denied them by their country, a remnant of the gallant crew was then in retreat for life and liberty, a retreat which gives to their mysterious fate the semblance of a tragedy; and when comparing that fatal interval with the absence of despatches from Beechey Island, and with the period at which the Esquimaux saw the party on the north coast of King William's Land, we are drawn away helplessly into the workings of the mystery.

Having now explained the course taken by Franklin in '46 and the retreat of his party in '49—'50 we proceed to more fully confirm those views by a chain of circumstances which for breadth, simplicity, and power is seldom surpassed. The main points of retreat are seen by the traces found in the autumn of 1850 on Beechey Island and Cape Riley, as well as by those discovered in 1853 near the western entrance of Jones' Sound.

The former traces were discovered but a few months after the retreating party had left, and consisted of two tame Esquimaux dogs, part of a trisail of one of the missing ships, several remnants of clothing, patched and worn threadbare in every direction, a few strips of paper laying quite exposed, one bearing the handwriting of Commander Fitzjames, and another the name of Mr. McDonald, assistant surgeon of the Terror. And on Cape Riley were seen marks of five tents having been pitched, the stones being left that had kept down the canvass.

We commence first with the dogs found by the American Expedition, and as there is no Esquimaux within several hundred miles of Beechey Island, to whom had they belonged, and how long could they have been on that island when found? Being tame, is a sufficient proof that they had been with Esquimaux or white men. The absence of the former from Barrow Strait proves that the dogs did not belong to them, and had they been a lengthy period on Beechey Island they would not have been tame. Franklin would not leave dogs on that island in 1846, knowing too well their value in travelling, and if he did, would they not be wild in the autumn of 1850? I conclude, therefore, that the retreating party carried them down Wellington Channel in '49, and being too weak to proceed further have left them when quitting Beechey Island for Cape Walker, to exist on the bones and remains near

the place where they were found. Their identity could have been proved if Franklin had purchased dogs at Whale Fish Islands in '45, as by taking them back to the parties from whom he bought them, they would immediately have recognized them if they were the same.

What decision can we form in finding part of a trisail of either of the ships cut into the shape of a tent-top—could this have been done in '46? To cut up any of the sails of his ships, would be an experiment too hazardous for Franklin to adopt at the very time he required all their assistance. Besides, he had plenty of good tents in '46, and at Beechey Island he had met with no casualty that could reduce him to that great necessity; a party in retreat four years afterwards would probably have tents made of the ship's sails, as those taken with them from England, would, if much in use, be worn out. When compelled by necessity to cut up the sails of his ships for tents, Franklin must have thought more of hunting, or a retreat by his boats, than an escape by his ships.

The *Illustrated London News*, October 4th, 1851, when reviewing the traces found in '50, thus speaks of the clothing:—"A few remnants of clothing brought over denote the situation of the wearer to have been deplorable. They consist of a pair of seaman's trousers, which must have been worn long after the buttons had ceased to be of use. They are

mended in all possible directions, and evidently patched with what had once been thick flannel, but worn until not a vestige of nap remained, and even in many places worn completely through. A pair of drawers and a few stockings were found much in the same condition. A portion of a shirt, forming the back part of the neck, collar, and back, from the fineness of the linen had most likely belonged to one of the officers." From whence springs this state of wretchedness? Did this period overtake them while at Beechey Island in '46, and before they had been fifteen months from England? And would Franklin have pushed his adventurous way into the unknown world after his crews had reached this high stage of destitution. It is needless to question, when the presence of the retreating party in '50 already replies. In rotation we follow the strips of paper bearing the handwriting of Commander Fitzjames, and the name of McDonald. There is a power in this trace which does not appear at first sight. It is—Could they have lain from the summer of '46, when the expedition departed, until the autumn of '50, when they were found.

Without a despatch-tin or a shelter of any description to preserve them from the weather, is it possible they could exist after four years' exposure to all the rigours of that fearful climate, when such durable articles as coal-sacks, rope, canvass, &c., are bleached and rotted in a

season or two? How could the frail material of paper exist after four years' exposure, and still distinctly show the handwriting of him who had written thereon? It seems utterly impossible. From the handwriting of Commander Fitzjames being found, coupled with his daring character, nothing is more likely than that he had either accompanied or commanded the retreating party, he being such an officer as Franklin would select for such a duty. The last, but most important trace connected with the vicinity of Beechey Island, is the five tent marks on Cape Riley, which proves that a large party had been there. Now for what object was it sent there? It could not have been for a sporting purpose while the ships lay at that island in '45-'46, as a party leaving the ships for sport on Cape Riley would not require five tents, the distance to and from the vessels being so short, that the object in view would not have repaid the labour of carrying them up to its summit. Moreover, had it been a party sent in pursuit of any scientific purpose, what use could it have for five tents? If Franklin sent a party upon Cape Riley previous to his departure in '46, it would be to watch the ice moving down Barrow Strait, a duty which two men from the ships, relieved every watch, could easily have accomplished. Taking all these things into consideration, our verdict, therefore, is that those tent marks were

left by the retreating party in '49—'50. The Esquimaux narrative says that some of their bodies were found in tents. Now would not the five tents pitched on Cape Riley just accommodate such a party as that seen by the Esquimaux? Their object by encamping thereon was to watch for any searching parties traversing the ice to the south-east, while its prominent position enabled them to explore the headlands eastward, for marks or cairns that may have been left.

When the opening meeting of the Royal Geographical Society in 1855 took place, Sir John Ross stated that an empty despatch-tin was found on or near Beechey Island by the searching parties of '50, a circumstance needless of further explanation, as it simply confirms the views already passed on the missing despatches and retreat of a party, although I was surprised to hear the late gallant veteran attribute the reason of Franklin leaving it empty as a proof that he did not go up Wellington Channel. Terminating our inquiry as to the origin of the traces found in 1850 at Beechey Island, our attention is drawn to those found near the junction of Jones' Sound with Wellington Channel. We speedily obtain our object by a reference to the despatch of Sir Edward Belcher, as it appeared in the *Morning Chronicle*, October 7th, 1854, wherein is given the following description of the traces found

by that officer:—"On the 20th of May, 1853 the open sea prevailed. The horizon was streaked with open sailing ice, and all communication cut off for sledges. The bluff, distant sixteen miles, was clearly the turning point into Jones' Channel; no land was visible beyond it. Our progress was tantalizing and attended with deep interest and excitement. In the first place I discovered on the brow of a mountain about 800 feet above the sea, what appeared to be a recent and a very workman-like structure of a dome (or rather a double cone or ice-house), built of very heavy and tabular slabs, which no single person could carry. It consisted of about forty courses, eight feet in diameter, and eight feet in depth when cleared, but only five in height from the base of the upper cone. As we opened it, most carefully was every stone removed, every atom of moss or earth scrutinized; the stones at the bottom also taken up, but without a trace of any record, or of having been used by any human being. It was filled by drift snow, but did not in any respect bear the appearance of having been built more than a season. This was named Mount Discovery. Our anxiety certainly was not abated as we moved southerly, with every appearance of a *cul de sac*, the channel opened suddenly in a fresh direction, until at last, having reached the bottom of a lake or bay, we found that any further progress must be

confined to frozen streams or ravines, which connected with a series of great lakes leading into another sea. Leaving the crew to pitch the tent, I ascended the mountain above us, and discovered that we were really not far from our old position last year on Cape Hogarth. My surprise, however, was suddenly checked by two structures in European form, and apparently graves. Each was similarly constructed, and, like the dome, of large selected slabs, having at each end three separate stones laid as we would place head and feet stones; so thoroughly satisfied was I that there was no delusion, I desisted from disturbing a stone until it should be formally done by the party assembled. The evening following we ascended the hill and removed the stones. Not a trace of human beings. If this had been a cache, and the carcase removed, I cannot understand why the stones should have been so carefully and systematically replaced. Eventually, on digging to the hard quarry from which the cache had been clearly formed by art, we discovered a quantity of minute black dust, which, on examination by a powerful lens I found to be the chrysalis shells of minute flies, which might possibly have been generated by the remains of meal left here at a former date. At various places we have found apparent marks, and had fancied that some of the explorers from the North Star (a ship lying at Beechey Island) had sought

Jones' Strait by this channel, but invariably every such mark had been placed where it could not serve the purpose of a geographical pile; one in particular found by Mr. Grove on Pitch Mount, which he kept untouched until I examined it, was so methodically constructed of five stones that on the disturbance of any one the others would tumble; and yet if Esquimaux had been concerned in its original structure how many years had it stood? my own opinion is strongly in favour of a late visit, or within the last ten years." These then are the words of Sir Edward Belcher on the traces found in 1853, and it will be seen at a momentary glance they are full of interest; because no European had visited that distant part before him. Experience has taught us that Esquimaux do not inhabit Jones' Sound or the shores of Wellington Channel, nor are they acquainted with the science of building by courses. Sir Edward was struck with the European form of the traces, and by their position was led to fancy that other explorers had previously sought Jones' Sound by the same channel he was in. They were not fixed to serve the purpose of a geographical pile, which with the replacing of the stones around the caches alone deceived him. That caches should be erected for that purpose far exceeds our expectations; but that a building eight feet diameter and the same in height was erected on the brow of a

mountain eight hundred feet above the sea for any other purpose than that of geography is not to be doubted. After solving a difficult problem by the lens, it appears surprising how the systematical placing of the stones could prove a masterpiece; he knew they were caches and that they had been emptied, therefore, a reconstruction was a true index to one great and important point, namely, those who emptied them expected to use them again; and as the retreating party of '49—50 consumed their contents they would leave them entire for their journey northward (after the remaining men,) should they find searching parties at Beechey Island, when they could again use them as before. Now as Franklin took the route north in '46 and paused to explore Jones' Sound it is not at all wonderful that others following on his track should find traces of him; and as he no doubt left provisions in caches near its junction with Wellington Channel, and a retreating party in '49 removed them, there can be as little wonder that Sir Edward Belcher in '53 should find them empty. A retreat could not have been made at any other period than in 1849—50, when the difficulties of Franklin's position were no longer doubtful, and when no ships were on search in Barrow Strait; had it been effected after that period the party must have been seen by some of the many searching expeditions as it passed southward. Sir Edward Belcher's

despatch published in '54 had a wide circulation, but was treated with the same indifference as other features of the mystery, and though thousands must have been aware of the striking resemblance between the traces described in that despatch and those mentioned by a whaler crew in 1849 no one drew attention to the fact. The whalers' report appeared thus:—"In the season of '48 their ship (a Scotch whaler) entered Jones' Sound, and after running a hundred and fifty or two hundred miles up its southern shore, some of her crew landed and discovered a cairn, a fireplace, and footprints of Europeans; not having time to examine the cairn, as the captain finding he had mistaken this for Lancaster Sound, or a fog coming on, had them recalled, and being at a period when little or no anxiety was felt for the missing expedition, they attached no great importance to what they had seen; but when the public excitement arose after the return of Sir James Ross in November '49, they made a statement of the traces found in '48 while they were in Jones' Sound; adhering firmly to its truth they volunteered to pilot a ship back to the same place, and having that intention a few sailed in 1850 with Captain Penny's expedition, which made an attempt to enter that sound, but the heavy nature of the ice within it frustrated the attempt and compelled them to seek the indirect route by Wellington Channel. After their report had created great sensation in the public mind, Sir Edward Parry

in February, '50, spoke of it as follows—"Considerable interest has lately been attached to Jones' Sound, from the fact of its having been recently navigated by at least one enterprising whaler, and found to be of great width, free from ice, with a swell from the westward, and having no land visible from the mast head in that direction, it seems more than probable, therefore, that it may be found to communicate with Wellington Channel; so that if Sir John Franklin's ships have been detained anywhere to the northward of Parry's Islands it would be by Jones' Sound that he would probably endeavour to effect his escape rather than by the less direct route of Barrow Strait." The possibility of his attempting his escape through this fine opening, and the report of a cairn of stones seen by the whaler on a headland within it, seems to me to render it highly expedient to set this question at rest by a search in this direction; withholding all speculation, the whaler's report in seeing European footmarks or traces in '48 on the south shore of Jones' Sound is confirmed by the European form of the traces found by Sir Edward Belcher in the same direction, and at no great distance from the spot assigned to them by the whaler, therefore the last of three interesting facts being clearly established, we arrange them thus: the European form of the traces, the caches being found empty, and the discovery or exploration of Jones' Sound previous

to the visit of Sir Edward Belcher, and in reply to the questions, who first discovered Jones' Sound? who left the caches, and who emptied them? a just and powerful explanation is found in the course taken by Franklin in '46, and by the retreat of his party in '49. On the 20th of March 1848 Lady Franklin offered a reward of £1000 to any whaler finding the lost expedition in distress, and an additional sum of £1000 to any ship which should at an early period make extraordinary exertions for the above object, and if required bring Sir John Franklin and his party to England. These rewards came out too late in the season of '48, as by the 20th of March most of the ships had sailed for the fishery; had a like sum been offered to the whalers (throughout the seasons of '47—48—49) to visit Cape Walker or Beechey Island, their united efforts through successive seasons would have been crowned with success; but as it was the offer was not accepted because it was indefinite: finding the lost expedition in distress was an offer at random. The whalers believed their search would have to be long and far to find it, whereas, had the highly interesting points of Cape Walker and Beechey Island been particularly specified in the offer, they would then have known the exact distance to go to reach either of those places. Of course the value of searching them within any of those seasons will bear no measurement with a money standard.

Having followed the hero of the Polar sea from Beechey Island until the period of his mysterious retreat, and giving therein a clear delineation of the northern route, we continue (reserving to the conclusion of our subject the fate of Franklin and those left with the ships by the retreating party of '49). Meanwhile we should not be doing justice to this mysterious subject by considering the northern route alone, we ought not to be hasty in our conclusions, nor desirous of leading others away by a one sided view of our own, for it is by looking at the impossibilities of one route that we form our views on the probabilities of the other; the impossibilities of that by Cape Walker and Peel Sound far outweigh the probabilities of Wellington Channel. The world is now impressed with the belief that Franklin's ships have been wrecked in Victoria Strait or Peel Sound, this country above all others supports that view with a tenacity which nothing but ignorance can excuse, yet where is the evidence, either real or imaginary, for its foundation; the dark paths of the mystery may be explored in vain for its origin, and were I not certain that further search for its volatile source would end in fatal disappointment, I would again make the attempt with pleasure, but experience teacheth wisdom, after one severe lesson we are taught to know better; let us, therefore, direct our thoughts to the route by Cape Walker and give every question relating to it due consideration.

We commence by presuming, as the world does, that Franklin in 1846, left Beechey Island with his ships, and stood away for Cape Walker, after reaching which he had a direct distance of two hundred and fifty miles southward to go to the north coast of King William's Land, the stated distance with Victoria Strait, making the north west passage, the great problem of centuries, and for which he was in search. From Cape Walker to the continent is just 380 miles. Allowing that contrary to his instructions, he passed that cape without leaving a despatch, he would then lead his ships south through Peel Sound. If we say they ran two hundred miles south of Cape Walker, here we behold them arrive on the scene of the supposed catastrophe at the close of the season of 1846, they would then be distant from King William's Land fifty miles, in the present unknown part of Peel Sound; passing the winter of 1846 here, and the spring of '47 arriving, his party would discover the north west passage by surveying the western shore of Victoria Strait, or by exploring the western coast of King William's Land. Had no passage existed through Peel Sound, supposed by some to be a cul de sac, Franklin's attention would at once be fixed on pushing his ships north again to Barrow Strait, directing every effort in '47 towards that purpose. But if a passage exists, as there is little reason to doubt, his first object after finding it would be to reach

the Great Fish River to communicate with Dr. King, whose proposals to assist him in the search were under consideration of the Admiralty at the time he left England. He would, therefore, expect Dr. King to descend that stream to assist him in the summer of '47, were he not certain of meeting him he knew that there was a great probability of his coming that way. With this expectation, and having but a short distance to travel, he would send a party to meet him, and if necessary conduct him to the ships. Why this was not done in the seasons of '47 and '48, time must explain. In the spring of '47 he must have found the passage. His numerous parties would enable him to explore both shores of Peel Sound and Victoria Strait, with a large portion of the south coasts of Victoria and Wollaston Lands in that season. Unwished to press this further, we grant that he did not move his ships in '47, but patiently waited the turn of '48, with the hope of effecting their release. What detained him all this season, his discoveries in a narrow channel three hundred miles long would be at an end? Having wintered in '48, what great feat had he to accomplish in '49, that he suffered this year also to pass without an effort to escape, or an attempt to seek the Esquimaux? Was it still the empty hope of rescuing his ships that he sacrificed the lives of his men, or was it the difficulty of pushing so large a body of men as his ships' crews then consisted of down to the set-

tlements at one time? In dividing them into parties to make search in different directions for relief, Franklin would have in view the following routes, viz, by the Great Fish River and on to Fort Resolution, — through Ross Strait into Committee and Repulse Bays, and southward to Fort Churchill,—by Hood's or the Coppermine Rivers to Fort Enterprise,—a journey up Peel Sound to Cape Walker and Barrow Strait,—and finally by pushing into Prince Regent's Inlet, they could visit Port Leopold and Barrow Strait and thus intercept ships on search. Here are five openings for communication or retreat. And here are five questions apparently beyond the powers of mankind to answer. We may be told those attempts have been made and had failed, but how has every attempt to escape by these five routes been alike unsuccessful? Here the absence of the expedition is palpable to all. Oh! say some, a catastrophe will account for all; but in what form could a catastrophe so totally annihilate that large and firm body of men as not to leave a trace of them behind? The mind cannot depict, nor the pencil of imagination paint a calamity that could in the suddenness of a moment sweep those one hundred and thirty-five men from the surface of the earth without leaving a mark sufficient to show that they had once existed. If the ships were in Peel Sound, and Franklin found the attempt to reach the settlements impracticable, what deterred him from sending

a party to Cape Walker, and Bunny to place a despatch on both promontories stating the position of his ships, and the state of his crews. Cylinders containing this information could with ease have been put into Barrow Strait, and why was not another party sent up Prince Regent's Inlet to intercept ships on search going up the Strait? Fury Beach could be made the centre of that movement. Retreat back to the ships would not be difficult; despatches might have been left at Whaler Point; ships passing and finding them would know directly where to seek their position; yet forceable as all these may appear, they are weak when compared with the absence of Franklin's men from King William's Land and the continent until the spring of 1850, four years after they had left Beechey Island. Here is a fact that defies contradiction. This is the weapon that delivers the death stroke to the supposition of Franklin's ships being detained or wrecked in Peel Sound or Victoria Strait, and, when speaking of either passages, it carries us not only beyond imagination but to absolute conviction. I shall, therefore, continue to hold it as my unanswerable doctrine against the route by Peel Sound.

As the Esquimaux tribes hunt every season on the north of King William's Land, how singular it is that they did not see any of Franklin's parties (whose ships were so near) before the spring

of 1850, and no less marvellous does it appear, that those parties did not visit that coast in search of the passage and of Esquimaux. Was Franklin restrained four years within fifty miles of that coast without a chance of once reaching it? Are we to believe that with his ships and crews, he lay from the season of '46 until that of '50, within easy reach of Esquimaux, within fifty miles of the object of his search, and still did not accomplish it? Can we for a moment entertain the monstrous improbability that he remained in a useless position until the health and strength of his crews were exhausted, until his provisions were gone, and that when death appeared before him in the spring of 1850 he despatched a starving party towards the continent, and gave it so little food that they were compelled to purchase a seal from the natives on the north coast of King William's Land, a distance of fifty miles from the ships? Had they been in Peel Sound would Dr. Rae in 1851 have searched the whole south coast of Victoria Land without finding a mark of their numerous parties? would he have pushed up Victoria Strait, the scene of the supposed catastrophe itself, without finding trace? It is these and such as these that form the impossibilities by Cape Walker and Peel Sound; they are the facts as clear as noon-day and as simple as they are clear. We may compare Franklin's position between the seasons of '46—'50 to that of Sir John Ross in those from '29 to '33, as in geogra-

phy they would be nearly similar. Sir John Ross had one ship and twenty-eight men, and that ship was not fitted up with anything like the scientific perfections that the missing ships were, nor had he half the number of experienced officers as had Franklin, yet let us speak of the labours of those few men. They fixed their winter quarters in Felix Harbour September 1829, and on January 9th, 1830, received a visit from a large tribe of Esquimaux. In May '30 they explored the north coast of King William's Land, completing a journey altogether of 400 miles; in the following season they crossed Boothia and discovered the magnetic pole. They made journeys around lakes and inlets, surveying a considerable extent of coast, receiving while travelling valuable assistance from the Esquimaux; and when in the spring of '32 a retreat became necessary, they made first to Fury Beach, a distance by the coast line of at least 200 miles, from that point to Barrow Strait, where they remained full three weeks struggling for a passage eastward. Being foiled in that attempt they ran back to Fury Beach, and in the season of '33 again ascended Prince Regent's Inlet, where, after pushing eastward through Barrow Strait to Navy Board Inlet they were found by a whaler. The single boat journeys of Ross extended from the north coast of King William's Land to the entrance of Navy Board Inlet, a distance of seven or eight hundred miles. His party

twice crossed Boothia, and traversed the shores of Prince Regent's Inlet thrice in attempting to escape, and still he was saved. Whereas it is affirmed that between M. Bellot's position in 1852 on the western shore of Peel Sound and the north coast of King William's Land, a distance of one hundred and fifteen miles, is concealed the whole mystery of the Franklin expedition. Franklin with two ships and one hundred and thirty-five men must be five years absent, within a space of one hundred and fifteen miles, and have nothing to show for his labours but the loss of his ships and crews in a manner so complete as to resist all detection. By Dr. Rae's discoveries on the shores of Victoria Strait in '51 it was proved that Franklin had not found the passage in that direction ; and by the Esquimaux narrative his party did not reach the north coast of King William's Land, or complete the survey of one hundred and fifteen miles until four years had passed from leaving Beechey Island. Did this trifle master the whole science and experience of that famous expedition ? Is this what it has been twelve years absent upon ? The more we think of this subject the greater appears the public deception. It is difficult to close on the route by Peel Sound without alluding to the search already made upon its shores and the open water known to exist in Victoria Strait. In May 1849 Sir James Ross led his party from Port Leopold, and traced the coast of north

Somerset as far west as Cape Bunny, after which he turned to the southward and followed its western coast to a position in latitude 72—38 north, or a distance of one hundred and forty miles south of that cape. Arrived at his furthest point he thus describes the scene before him. "The state of the atmosphere being peculiarly favourable for the distinctness of vision, land of any great elevation might have been seen at a distance of one hundred miles, the highest cape of the coast was not more than fifty miles distant, bearing nearly due south." This observation leaves no doubt whatever as to Peel Sound being a channel; Ross must have all but sighted the northern coast of King William's Land, as it was within one hundred and forty miles of his position. He then returned to his ships without a mark or trace of the lost expedition, and in May 1851 Commander Osborne visited Cape Walker and carried his explorations down the western shore of Peel Sound to a situation ninety miles south of that cape, returning also without a trace. In 1852 M. Bellot traversed both shores of Peel Sound, carrying his survey on its western to a distance of one hundred and fifty miles south of Cape Walker, and on that of its eastern to nearly the same distance. His search, like the rest, proved unsuccessful. In the season of 1851 Dr. Rae crossed from the continent of America north to Victoria Land, and after following sixteen degrees of longitude from west

to east pushed his party up Victoria Strait to a position in latitude 70—20 north, longitude 101 west, or within one hundred miles of that attained by M. Bellet on the western shore of Peel Sound; he likewise retraced his steps without anything to reward his search. We may extend the above search by adding the explorations of Dr. Rae in '53—'54 on the western coast of Boothia, when he traced that coast from Castor and Pollux River northward to Cape Porter. Here then we behold an extent of search truly astonishing, and here is a search all conducted on foot. There can be no mistake of lands, of cairns, or traces, as there might if ships had been engaged. And as this is certain evidence, we cannot but dwell on the reflection that in all that long and barren search not a mark or trace was found sufficient to show how those lands had ever been trodden by the foot of man. It may be said of its results, had one individual perished in attempting the passage through Peel Sound, less marks of him could not have been found than there have been of the missing navigators.

Concerning the open water known to exist in the passage between Cape Walker and the continent, it is generally found turning the south-east point of Victoria Land, and connecting itself with the waters of the great bay which Messrs. Dease and Simpson navigated with their boats in 1839. Upon examination of a chart of those regions, we must expect

to find open water in Victoria Strait, and in the large space to the south-west, as it is the only part that has freedom. Peel Sound is seldom, if ever, disturbed, because King William's Land acts as a shield against the passage of the ice southward. Victoria Strait seems too narrow to admit of the large bodies of ice in Peel Sound passing through it into the great bay; nor is there a current possessed of sufficient strength to force it through. If, therefore, open water exists annually in this strait, the difficulties Franklin would have to encounter in passing to the southward would be small indeed. Had he pushed through Peel Sound in '46, his escape by Victoria Sound would become an easy task; surprising, indeed, it would be if he could pass through the ice-locked portion of Peel Sound, with all its attending difficulties, into that strait in one season, and that the open water therein should not only detain him four years, but eventually prove his ruin.

From the position of the lands around Peel Sound, and in the absence of a strong current, the ice to be found within it is not berg or packed ice, but heavy floes or hummocky field ice, formed therein through successive seasons. Its undisturbed nature entitles it to the name of one of the most impenetrable channels in the Arctic regions. As the main features of both routes have now been clearly brought to notice it is

needless to go further into detail regarding them; and without indulging in the belief that both have been dealt with as they ought—we press forward to consider the result of some of the most important searching expeditions. In June, 1848, Sir James Ross, with two ships proceeded in search of Franklin; commencing his search in Pond's Bay, he followed it up to Port Leopold, which he entered September 11th, 1848, and here he passed the winter, little, if anything, further being done by him that season. Were it not for a timely declaration made by Sir John Ross, we could not have learned why Sir James Ross paid no heed to the most interesting points in the line of search, namely, Cape Walker and Beechey Island; had a few men been sent to that Cape immediately after reaching Port Leopold, they would have learnt by no despatch being left there, that Franklin had not pursued the south-west course, having erected a cairn recording the position of their ships, they could have then returned to Port Leopold. This must have produced two effects—first, it would alter the line of search from south to north, while the cairn on Cape Walker would show to any retreating party the presence of a relief expedition. Had the season of '48 been too far advanced to admit of such a step, why was it shamelessly neglected in 1849. The erection of

a cairn on Cape Walker in either seasons must have saved the lives of at least the retreating party, if not the whole expedition. That party passing early in the season of 1850, would have seen the cairn, and have learnt by the despatch where to find assistance. The parties under Sir James Ross searched the south shore of Barrow Strait as far west as Cape Bunny, they visited Fury Beach, and both shores of Prince Regent's Inlet, but without finding a trace of the missing expedition. If the discovery of the north west passage had not been the object of his intentions, why did he follow the western coast of North Somerset, one hundred and forty miles south of Cape Bunny instead of making direct for Cape Walker? What else but the passage induced him to attach more importance to a barren journey of one hundred and forty miles, than to that cape distant but forty miles? His intention of finding the passage and neglecting Franklin is observed throughout his search in a light too painful to be passed unnoticed. The work was well done by his parties, but it was quite in the wrong direction, and the entire absence of marks or traces surely must have told him so. It will scarcely receive credence that the expedition of '48 lay in sight of and within eighty miles of Beechey Island for twelve months, without making one effort to reach either it or Cape Walker. By the subtle means adopted the first winter quarters of Franklin at

that island remained undiscovered until the autumn of '50, and through treachery Cape Walker lay unvisited until the spring of '51, and what was the result of this culpable conduct? why, that the retreating party had passed unobserved. Had that expedition been properly conducted, Franklin's winter quarters at Beechey Island and the now missing despatches would have been found in '49, while, had another despatch and a supply of provisions been left close by, they would have afforded the means of placing the party in comparative security. How simply now appears the remedy that could have arrested those few fatal months, and instead of carrying those brave men to destruction, have led them to where relief was to be found. It is painful in the extreme to reflect on the proceedings of the expedition of '48, especially as its barren effects arose from self-aggrandizement; with amazement we beheld its sudden termination, and when the mind strikes into the depths of the mystery it recoils, stricken and appalled at the consequences which have followed its disastrous results. Time must and will reveal it; when the dark curtain which now covers the melancholy fate of our countrymen is but once lifted, these disclosures will tell home with painful effect.

In the narrative of Sir John Ross, published in 1855, p. 32, he is found thus addressing Lord Auckland (first Lord of the Admiralty) on the eve

of the departure of Sir James Ross in 1848. "He can have no intention of searching for Sir John Franklin: his object is the passage by surveying the western coast of North Somerset." It might be imagined this singular address arose from a feeling we ought to pass in silence, but as the search made by Sir James faithfully confirmed its truth, it becomes a subject worthy of our attention. Universal pity will ever plead for the man who, after a life of usefulness to his country, hazards all for the knowledge of mankind, but that man who hazards all the honours acquired during an active life, and will make every sacrifice for the mere gratification of a selfish purpose must ever be held in detestation. Such an audacious parade of selfishness should have been upheld to receive from the world that chastisement which was its due; never did a base action better merit that well known term—the vilest of the vile; it then was a matter of total indifference to Sir James Ross where Franklin had gone, or under what privations his gallant companions were suffering. In due time the public will find double cause to bitterly denounce the inhuman motives that led to the disasters of the expedition of 1848, it will then learn that a more heartless and deliberate instance of wanton sacrifice, shrouded by selfishness and hypocrisy, never stained the annals of this country. Its author should reflect on the past even though

he possess but the slightest shade of conscience, for he smothered the soul-stirring cries of his ill-fated countrymen, he consigned to eternal imprisonment, woe, and oblivion the lives of those who for the benefit of science suffered as martyrs, and who truly deserved a nobler fate. It was to meet this reward that noble band of gallant Englishmen struggled on against famine, perils, and misfortunes, cherishing again and again, as in vain and in vain, some fond but forlorn hope of succour; it was this treatment which forced them to lay down their weary lives on a barren land, to which the human foot was a stranger, and where ~~is~~ their unburied remains. Their sufferings and the whole mystery of their fate might be undiscovered for years, for ages, or perhaps for ever. It was to such men as these they willingly resigned the sweets of liberty and all that was dear to them in this world; into the hands of these individuals they entrusted their valuable lives. Had Franklin and his companions laid down their bones on a bleak Arctic waste as a repast for the wild and ferocious bears of the north, or have sought in the desolate wilderness of their woes for a solitary living object upon which to fix their affection, they would have had it returned with tenfold more effect than by some of their own selfish and disgraceful countrymen. The results of all the searching expeditions that have been engaged since the return of Sir James Ross in 1849, are

as nothing when compared with the results of his expedition, and although we cannot but conclude on its proceedings, still they remain the centre upon which works the mystery.

CHAPTER II.

IN the spring of '50, Captain Austin, Sir John Ross, and Captain Penny, left England for Barrow Strait, and in the month of August arrived at Beechey Island. They discovered Franklin's winter quarters and the traces hitherto spoken of. On Captain Penny's parties exploring Wellington Channel and finding open water in and around its northern entrance, Penny exclaimed, 'through this channel Franklin has gone in clear water,' soliciting at the same time the loan of a steamer to push through it, but as every one knows without success. On Beechey Island Penny's men found three graves left by Franklin, the date of the latest death being April 3rd, 1846. On Cape Spencer in Wellington Channel they

found a look out or watch tent, which doubtless had been pitched on that promontory to watch the movements of the ice in that channel, previous to the departure of Franklin in 1846, This trace is interesting as regards the course taken by Franklin from Beechey Island, it clearly proving that he expected open water in Wellington Channel, and was attentively watching for an opening to proceed northward. A trace found on a hill near the graves likewise deserves our notice, as it strongly indicates the caution used by him while at Beechey Island: this was a hand board nailed to a boarding pike eight feet long, with the hand painted black.

When it was brought to England near the close of 1851, the general opinion was, that it had formed one of many, fixed to direct parties back to the ships; a view which does not appear very intelligible, as the ships lying in a cove or small bay, their crews must have known exactly where to seek them; a conclusion more to the purpose is, that the black hand was set up as an emblem of death, near the graves, to direct searching parties to them. As lying in the valley beneath, Franklin would know that without some mark as a guide, searching parties might not find them. He therefore had set it up on the hill close by for that object; it was found broken and lying on its face, the back of the board was perforated with swan shot, a circumstance which accounts for its being found as above. Here the English expe-

ditions were joined by an American one (under Com. De Haven,) which in Barrow Strait was caught with the ice and carried eastward through Lancaster Sound in the same manner as was Sir James Ross in 1849, leaving our expeditions to continue the search. The season of '51 having arrived, Sir John Ross and Captain Austin directed their parties towards Melville Island. An extensive coastline was explored, but no trace found of the missing ships. Captains Austin and Penny made an attempt to reach Cape Walker with their ships, and though the former was aided by steam it was impossible to overcome the obstacles presented by the ice in that direction. That Cape was at length visited in '51 by Commander Osborne's party, thus leaving us to place on record a flagrant instance of gross injustice to the lost heroes, for Franklin being instructed to go first to Cape Walker, would necessarily expect that it would be the first place visited by searching parties. Did England send those daring seamen on such a perilous mission with three years' provisions only, and suffer them to be absent six long years without once causing to be searched the first place which they were ordered to visit? Yes, such was the fact, and however strange it may appear, is nevertheless true. There had they been throughout that period exploring distant lands for the glory of their country, undergoing trials and sufferings which no pen can describe, and England, dear England, had not searched Cape Walker,

the very place to which the missing expedition was directed first to proceed. It is a very deep reflection that had Franklin sent a party from Beechey Island in '46 to place a despatch on that cape (with the belief that it would soon be found,) we must have beheld the consequences of neglect in the loss of the expedition, whereas had he gone south through Peel Sound in '46 and had left a despatch on Cape Walker, or after being three years fixed in that sound had sent up to that cape expressing in another despatch the alarming nature of his position, it would have been found too late to save a living being. This nation would then have been confounded by its own cold and careless actions ; it may derive a little satisfaction in finding no despatch on Cape Walker in '51, yet the neglect in not searching it before that period was no less cruel than it is unpardonable. Parties from the expedition of '50 traced the shores of Melville and Peel Sound, the south coast of Parry's Islands, and the shores of Lancaster Sound, but beyond the traces found in the vicinity of Beechey Island, nothing important rewarded their search. They remained in Barrow Strait until August '51, and then returned home, leaving in Wellington Channel fifteen miles of ice. Captain Penny's opinion afterwards on this ice was, that it probably cleared out a few days after they left it ; he had seen greater changes in forty-eight hours. No sooner

had they returned than two reports at once attracted public attention, a ridiculous story of Franklin's ships having been burnt and their crews murdered near Cape Duddley Diggs (in Baffin's Bay), and a vague report made by the captain of a merchant vessel who, while crossing the banks of Newfoundland in April 1850 saw two ships in some heavy field ice. Upon the first it would be a waste of time to dwell, and Captain Coward's report merely connects the missing expedition by a slight comparison between the time he saw the ships and the time Franklin's party was seen approaching King William's Land.

Let us now glance at the opinions of several eminent Arctic navigators on the position of the missing ships.

In February 1847, Sir John Ross believed them to be frozen up somewhere to the westward of Melville Island.

A dread hung over Sir John Barrow (the founder of the expedition), when in July '47, he says, the only chance of bringing them upon the American coast, is the possibility of some obstruction having tempted them to explore an immense inlet on the northern shore of Barrow Strait short of Melville Island called Wellington Channel, which Parry felt an inclination to explore, and more than one of the present party betrayed to me a similar inclination, which I discouraged, no one venturing to conjecture even to what extent it might go, or into what difficulties it might lead.

Three opinions are found given by Captain Beechey, December 1st, 1849. I entirely agree with Sir Francis Beaufort and Sir Edward Parry, that the expedition is probably hampered among the ice somewhere to the south westward of Melville Island.

Time having revealed to Sir Edward Parry the inconsistency of that view, in 1852 he declared his belief that Franklin had gone so far up Wellington Channel in the favourable season of 1846 as to be unable to return.

February 7th, 1850, Sir John Richardson was of opinion that Franklin had pushed on to Cape Walker without stopping, and in attempting to penetrate to the south-west, he became involved in the drift ice which at that time was supposed to exist, and was carried in that direction towards Coronation Gulf. At the same period, Dr. McCormic speaks thus :—"Wellington Channel of all the probable openings into the Polar Sea possesses the highest degree of interest, and the exploration of it is of such paramount importance that I should have comprised it within my plan of search, had not the *Enterprise* and *Investigator*, (ships of Sir James Ross in '48), had orders to examine this inlet and Cape Walker." After tendering his services he concludes in these terms, "I see no reason for changing the opinion I entertained last spring, ('49) subsequent events have only tended to confirm them. I then believed, and I do so still, after a long and mature consideration of the subject, that Sir John Franklin's

ships have been arrested in a high latitude, and beset in the heavy Polar ice northward of Parry's Islands." This appears to me to be the only view of the case that can in any way account for the entire absence of all tidings of them throughout so protracted a period of time, unless all have perished by some sudden and overwhelming catastrophe. Isolated as their position would be under such circumstances, any attempt to reach the continent of America at such a distance would be hopeless in the extreme, and the mere chance of any party from the ships reaching the top of Baffin's Bay at the very moment of a whaler's brief and uncertain visit would be attended with by far too great a risk to justify the attempt, for failure would ensure inevitable destruction to the whole party, therefore, their only alternative would be, to keep together in their ships should no disaster have happened to them, and by husbanding their remaining resources, eke them out with whatever wild animals may come within their reach.

The decision of Captain Austin is seen by his despatch dated August 12th, '51, wherein he says, "I have arrived at the conclusion that the expedition under Sir John Franklin did not prosecute the object of its mission to the southward and westward of Wellington Channel, and having considered the search of that channel by the expedition under Captain Penny, I do not feel authorised to prosecute (even if practicable) a

further search in those directions." Out of this arose the unwarrantable view that Franklin, unable to accomplish his object in '45—'46, had turned his ships homeward and was lost while on his return.

Few just men attached any importance to that view, and as it more seriously affected his character it will meet a refutation when we speak of that subject. Opinions were given by many other celebrated Arctic voyagers, but as it is needless to bring them all to notice, we conclude by rehearsing the opinions of Dr. King in 1848, which became doubly interesting in 1854, when the Esquimaux narrative was published by Dr. Rae. The views of Dr. King were, that Franklin was able so far to obey his orders as to push his ships between Melville Island and Banks' Land ; assuming therefore that he has been arrested between those lands, where Sir Edward Parry was arrested by difficulties which he considered insurmountable, and he has followed the advice of that gallant officer, and made for the continuity of America, he will have turned the prows of his vessels south and west according as Banks' Land tends for Victoria and Wollaston Lands. It is here, therefore, that we may expect to find the expedition wrecked ; whence they will make in their boats for the western land of North Somerset, if that land be not too far distant. The position I assign to the expedition is that coast midway between the settlements of the

Hudson's Bay Company on the Mackenzie River and the fishing ground of the whalers in Pond's Bay. They would make that coast for the double purpose of reaching Barrow Strait in search of whalers, as Sir John Ross did successfully, and the great Fish River in search of Esquimaux for provisions or for letter conveyance to the copper Indians with whom the Esquimaux are now on friendly terms

Dr. King nobly volunteered to conduct an expedition overland down the Great Fish River as early as 1847, and as late as 1856 in search of Franklin; but instead of a favourable reception, he met from the Admiralty a fierce opposition. When that board in '47—'48 believed, as it really did, that Franklin was able to obey the first part of his instructions by passing south-west of Cape Walker, in what direction did it hope to prosecute a successful search with land parties than by descending the Great Fish River and proceeding north-west, or by going down the Coppermine River and striking off north-east. Within that period the justice of Dr. King's views must have appeared plain to the Admiralty or to the Arctic council, but originating with an independent yet highly distinguished Polar traveller, they were opposed by those who, unfortunately, had the fatal power to display a spirit of rejection.

When their Lordships felt convinced that

Franklin had passed Cape Walker no time should have been lost in ascertaining the fact. Then if they felt a pleasure in neglecting this important place, they should have relinquished the search to others, who would have taken as great delight in its prosecution. Had Dr. King been allowed to descend the Great Fish River, as he proposed in '50, he would probably have saved the lives of the retreating party: he required the pompous title of R. N. to his name—because it was unattached Franklin must suffer. We are not surprised that great difference of opinion should exist concerning his mysterious fate, but that such difference of opinion should lead to the sacrifice of one hundred and thirty-five fellow creatures, says but little for the times in which we live. How many interesting events would be 'hushed up, and important subjects entirely neglected if the power of control was lodged in the hands of a few. If one man claims the right of forming his own opinions, another claims the power of rejecting them. Man may reduce to slavery his fellow man. The elevated position of one in this life may give him power to cut the small thread that confines the existence of another to this world; but to the Supreme Being alone belongs the right to control the mind. Too often men holding responsible situations in the government of a country are so self-conceited that they will not receive advice from others, though they possess greater abilities, and are independent of them. Nor is

it uncommon for them to look on the working classes as beings unfit to exist in the same atmosphere with themselves. Dr. King, as an experienced voyager, proposed to the Lords of the Admiralty a plan of search for Franklin, and because he maintained his opinions was considered presumptuous. Did the very high positions of their Lordships give them power to see through the mystery? Was great wealth and a great name to accomplish all? In so thinking they purchased a frail imagination by a dreadful sacrifice.

With due order in our progress we arrive at the Esquimaux narrative and traces found in 1848 by Dr. Rae, the report attending the discovery of which is thus briefly told by that enterprising traveller.—“During my journey over the ice and snows this spring, with the view of completing the survey of the west coast of Boothia, I met with Esquimaux in Pelly Bay, from one of whom I learnt that a party of white men had perished from want of food some distance to the westward, and not far beyond a large river containing many falls and rapids. Subsequently further particulars were received, and a number of articles purchased, which places the fate of a portion, if not all of the then survivors of Sir John Franklin’s long lost party, beyond a doubt—a fate as terrible as the imagination can conceive.”

The substance of the information obtained at various times and from various sources, was as follows:—"In the spring, four winters past,—spring of '50—a party of white men, amounting to about forty, were seen travelling southward over the ice and dragging a boat with them, by some Esquimaux, who were killing seals near the north coast of King William's Land which is a large island. None of the party could speak the Esquimaux language intelligibly, but by signs the natives were made to understand that their ship or ships had been crushed in the ice, and that they were now going where they expected to find deer to shoot. From the appearance of the men, all of whom, except one officer, looked thin, they were then supposed to be getting short of provisions, and they purchased a small seal from the natives. At a later date the same season, but previous to the breaking up of the ice, the bodies of some thirty persons were discovered on the continent, and five on an island near it, about a long day's journey to the north-west of a large stream, (which can be no other than the Great Fish River,) some of the bodies had been buried, somewhere in a tent or tents, others under the boat, which had been turned up to form a shelter, and several lay scattered about in different directions. Of those found on the island, one was supposed to have been an

officer, as he had a telescope strapped over his shoulder, and his double-barrelled gun lay beneath him. From the mutilated state of many of the corpses, and the contents of the kettles, it is evident that our wretched countrymen had been driven to the last resource, cannibalism, as a means of prolonging existence. There must have been a number of watches, compasses, telescopes, guns, several double-barrelled, &c., all of which appear to have been broken up, as I saw pieces of these different articles with the Esquimaux, and together with some silver spoons and forks, purchased as many as I could get. None of the Esquimaux with whom I conversed had seen the whites, nor had they ever been at the place where the bodies were found, but had their information from those who had been there and who had seen the party when travelling.

The relics found by Dr. Rae consisted of silver spoons, and forks, Franklin's Guelphic badge or star, a piece of plate marked "Sir John Franklin, K. C. H.," the remains of a boat compass, pieces of hatbands, guns, watches, knives, buttons, and clothing, together with part of a book called the "Student's Manual." Let us pay no attention to hearsay evidence, but give this report an impartial consideration.

They say first that the white men purchased a seal, though we are not told what they gave for it, and by the contents of their kettles the

party had resorted to cannibalism, which is a very grave charge, but is reasonably maintained, not so much by the mutilated state of the bodies, as by the absence of five men after the party had been several months in a state of starvation. On the other hand, five may have died on the journey from the north coast of King William's Land to the continent, or the Esquimaux may not have seen forty men on that coast as first represented. Taking into view the difficulties of that journey and their feeble condition, it is possible that five may have died therein. But the chance of those five being still alive among the Esquimaux is almost too faint to sustain hope. If they are, it is surprising they could not reach the settlements, or at least send intelligence of their position before this protracted period. There is an extraordinary simplicity and truthful bearing in the Esquimaux statement of seeing forty men straitened for provisions, to such an extent as to compel them to purchase a seal, (no doubt for food), near the north coast of King William's Land, and in finding a few months afterwards on the continent but thirty-five bodies and the party resorting to cannibalism: the purchasing of a seal accords faithfully with their starving appearance, and if their journey proved unsuccessful in shooting or fishing after having seen the Esquimaux, a few weeks, not months, would reduce them to that condition represented by those tribes. Had they said there were forty

white men when first seen and found forty dead, the falsehood of resorting to cannibalism would be instantly detected; they based their report on the mutilated state of the bodies and the contents of their kettles, and not from the absence of five bodies, which goes far to prove the truth of their statements. Being ignorant of the real evidence, and as we cannot fully rely on the Esquimaux statements, we can, however, test their truth by circumstances.

That the party perished a long day's journey to the north west of a large stream seems nearly correct, but as there is doubtless a mistake in the interpretation of that position, we defer the subject until we notice the voyage of Mr. Anderson in '55 down the Great Fish River. The Esquimaux seen by Dr. Rae, say they did not see the white men while living, nor had they been to the place where their bodies were found, but received their information from those who had been there. In this they represent a falsehood, for if they had seen the white men but a few days previous to meeting Dr. Rae, they could not have given a more minute description of the melancholy scene. In that statement we are told of their starving appearance when first seen; that they were going to the hunting grounds to shoot deer; their ships had been crushed in the ice; their getting short of provisions, their purchasing a seal; and of finding afterwards but thirty-five bodies; the contents of the kettles; the exact position of an officer with a

telescope strapped on his shoulders and a gun beneath him ; that five bodies were found on an island — doubtless an advance party ; the boat turned up to form a shelter ; the time accurately fixed between the spring when first seen and the breaking up of the ice when found dead ; all of which statements are so firmly allied with reason, as to leave but little doubt as to their truth. Had the story been communicated through other tribes to those seen by Dr. Rae, would they have been able to spin so fine a thread as this ? Could they have given every particular of the retreating party while living, and every conceivable position of their bodies after their death ? There must have been a vivid impression left on their minds, and such an impression as could not be left by the language of others. It is clearly evident that they had been eye witnesses of the scene itself, or they could not have produced such instantaneous and correct colourings. The propensity of the Esquimaux tribes for pilfering and falsehood is too well known for us to put trust in all they say, but like the statement of a criminal when it is borne out by circumstances and by reason, we are bound to believe in its truth. Is it at all likely that another tribe would deliver to the one seen by Dr. Rae, the articles of ornament enumerated by him and upon which they set so great a value ? But granting that they heard such a story from others, would they not on hearing it immediately make off to the scene of plunder ? It is but

reasonable to suppose that those who arrived first at the scene of death would select those articles most attractive to the eye, and leave the weighty or unsightly ones to a future period. Among the traces found by Dr. Rae we have the star of Franklin, pieces of plate, hatbands, watches, buttons, clothing, all of them relics so closely connected with the remains of our countrymen, that we are perfectly convinced that those Esquimaux who possessed them not only saw them while living but were first on the desolate scene of plunder after they were dead. It is a very interesting fact, that in the list of relics there are no traces connecting them with the missing ships, and a no less remarkable circumstance, that in that list there is a piece of plate belonging to nearly every officer in the lost expedition, and but one piece. Why this clear distinction? Had we required the crests or initials of every officer missing, it would have been difficult to get a better selection than those inscribed on the plate found by Dr. Rae. Both Franklin and Crozier had much plate with them, yet singular it is that but one piece was found belonging to either, and that conspicuously marked with their initials and crests. Now there being but one piece of plate belonging to each of those officers they may have sent it with the retreating party to barter with the Esquimaux for provision or as tokens of their affection for home. Had they been sent to exchange for provisions, it shows

that the party was prepared against any difficulty which might arise in its journey, and able to purchase therewith succour from the Esquimaux ; at the same time it is clear that nothing but a long distance from the continent could have induced Franklin to send his star and plate for that object. Having sent them to barter for provisions, and knowing they would be conspicuously worn by the Esquimaux and seen by searching parties, we imagine he would have marked thereon the latitude and longitude with the date of his position, so that any party finding them would seek his position and render him assistance.

The discovery of Franklin's star leads to the conviction that having parted with his honours, the circumstances under which he did so were extraordinary ; in this there is something intensely interesting and sublime, as why should he part with his star, the reward of his sufferings, the bright symbol of the glories for which he had struggled through life ? He has bid it adieu with the thoughts of the grave, or with the sad reflection of being consigned to all the horrors of a Polar dungeon. Being unable to accomplish the passage at the period when the retreating party left him, his isolated position so far north and at such a distance from the civilized world, might cause him to doubt whether he would ever again behold the shores of his own native land.

On the Esquimaux Dr. Rae saw the remains of many watches. What necessity was there for the white men to have so many watches? They did not require the use of them all to keep time when they had chronometers for that purpose. Unable to see their utility it is probable they were sent with the star and plate that was marked as tokens of remembrance from the lost navigators to their families or friends, who would at once recognize in them every tie of earthly sympathy. Dr. Rae's arrival in '54 created a great sensation; the narrative and traces, when made known were looked upon by some as the last tidings that could be obtained of the missing expedition. The story was hastily handled by the press, and the public assured itself nothing more was to be done but to visit Point Ogle or Montreal Island, and there unveil the whole mystery.

The clamour of that time forms a strong contrast to the silence that ensued in 1855, when the results of Mr. Anderson's voyage down the Great Fish River became known, the vaunted confidence at first displayed baffles all description, and without making a source of pleasure of a subject that should be one of sorrow, we proceed in the following chapter to arrange the results of the last named undertaking.

CHAPTER III.

The expedition under Mr. Anderson left Fort Resolution on Great Slave Lake, June 20th, 1855, and descending the Great Fish River, found near its mouth traces enough to confirm the leading feature of the Esquimaux narrative given to Dr. Rae, namely, that a party from the missing ships had suffered in the direction indicated. The traces found, consisted of kettles and tent poles, pieces of oars, part of a blue flag, a piece of wood supposed to be the remains of a boat marked Terror, another piece of wood said to be part of a snow shoe, upon which was cut Mr. Stanley (surgeon of the Erebus), a shovel, and chisels, pieces of instruments, a letter nip, a bar of unwrought iron three feet long, one and a half inch broad, and a quarter of an inch thick, together with a few other articles comprised the whole; they were found on Montreal Island, and on the Esquimaux residing near the entrance of the Great Fish River no trace was found at Point

Ogle nor on the north-east coast of Adelaide Peninsula; not even a scrap of paper could be discovered, and though a minute search was made not a vestige of the remains of the retreating party was found. The relics described appear to have been carried some distance by the Esquimaux, as from their peculiar nature it is evident that Franklin's party neither reached Point Ogle nor Montreal Island. On a strict examination we fail to find the least trace connecting their remains with either places. The difference between those found by Dr. Rae and the traces found by Mr. Anderson is too wide to escape notice. The former relics all connect the remains of the lost party, there being in the list not only knives, plate, and watches, but also hatbands, buttons, and remains of clothing, which undoubtedly must have been taken from their bodies, whereas we behold the entire absence of such articles in those found by Mr. Anderson. All he discovered were traces of a boat; there can be no doubt as to their having belonged to Franklin's men, but the absence of papers and bodies, as of traces connecting them with the Great Fish River, is a never failing proof that they have not been detained nor have they perished on its shores. An Esquimaux woman informed Mr. Anderson that when her tribe arrived only one white man was living, and he it was too late to save. If her statement be true they must have been plundered long before the

last man ceased to exist ; the star, the plate, and watches, with the other valuables had gone before this tribe arrived, otherwise they would have selected those things before tent poles, oars, kettles, and such like cumbersome articles. That forty Englishmen suffered themselves to be plundered of everything so long as one of them could stand is not to be credited. When Franklin with sixteen men beat off nearly three hundred Esquimaux in July 1826 at the entrance of the Mackenzie River, it may well be believed that he was not with the forty in 1850. The Esquimaux narrative says their remains were found at a long day's journey to the north-west of a large stream, said to be the Great Fish River ; the position was interpreted as Point Ogle and Montreal Island, and if the stream spoken of is that river those places are not a long day's journey to the north-west of it as they are within that stream. When hearing of a shipwreck at a point a long day's journey north of the Thames, we naturally begin our calculation from its northern boundary. The width of the Great Fish River has been taken for the long day's journey instead of that distance from its western entrance. To the north-west of any object of course means in that direction from it. Dr. Rae was further informed that the white men perished from want, some distance to the westward, and not far beyond a large river, thus clearly showing the position to be without and

not within the stream. In directing our eyes to a chart to follow the retreating party on its journey southward from the north coast of King William's Land, we behold them pushing down its western coast towards the continent, which to reach would compel them to cross Simpson Strait, but if desirous of making direct towards the Great Fish River they would continue on the south coast of King William's Land, attempting their object by travelling eastward through Simpson Strait until they arrived off the mouth of that stream.

The first portion of the continent seen on their route would be the north-west coast of Adelaide Peninsula. Now the question is which course was most practicable to them at that time ; to cross Simpson Strait on to Adelaide Peninsula, or to continue eastward and reach the entrance of the Great Fish River. Had they attempted the former, the position I assign to their remains is the north-west coast of that peninsula, and as there is a large island off that coast this may be the spot indicated by the Esquimaux narrative ; the position named by those tribes may also be applied to the southern coast of King William's Land (which, to them would appear more like a mainland or continent than Adelaide Peninsula of which Point Ogle forms the north-east boundary), and as the party may have attempted to reach the Great Fish River by striking eastward along it, it is quite probable that instead

of pushing for the coast of Adelaide Peninsula, they followed the course described, and being too much exhausted to reach their object have perished. Whether their remains are to be found on either coast, it is obvious they were unable through want to reach the Great Fish River, and have perished. Moreover, it would require no great labour of the Esquimaux near the mouth of that stream to carry the traces found on them from those lands. The obstacles to be met in retreat would arise from the difficult nature of the ice contrasted with their feeble condition; being the spring of the year when they arrived on the north coast of King William's Land, the ice in Victoria as in Simpson Strait would be unbroken thereby, making travelling difficult. At this period may be observed the truth and simplicity of the Esquimaux statement in finding the remains of the party previous to the breaking up of the ice, thus proving distinctly they had great difficulties to encounter after quitting the north coast of King William's Land. Had they made that coast in the autumn they must have been favoured with open water in their retreat, but arriving in the spring or commencement of summer the route towards the continent would abound with difficulties, from the great labour attending travelling over ice covered with snow partly dissolved by the noon-day sun, their journey would be both long and tedious. To

view this question in its true light, we could not expect a starving party to accomplish a retreat from the north coast of King William's Land in the face of the obstacles therein presented. The expedition under Mr. Anderson explored the north-east coast of Adelaide Peninsula, but its search was too confined to produce any beneficial results. Why its parties did not push their search to the western coast of that Peninsula or to the south coast of King William's Land is difficult to say; were that impossible, why did they not proceed eastward to the Esquimaux in Pelly Bay, a visit to those tribes might have been productive of different results to those attained. Retreat to Fort Churchill being open as with Dr. Rae, there was a much greater chance of being rewarded for their labour by following that course than returning destitute of information by the way they advanced. We should have been spared all anxiety, every hope of success, had the Hudson's Bay Company informed us what their expedition of '55 was to do previous to setting out; its barren effects are not attributable to difficulties but to negligence. At a late period of the season and without interpreters it left Fort Resolution. It remained eight days on the seat of search, and this, with all the pride imaginable, was called a search for Franklin. That company pocketed the sum of £2500, for not only deluding this country, but for turning into ridicule the sacred subject of Franklin's fate;

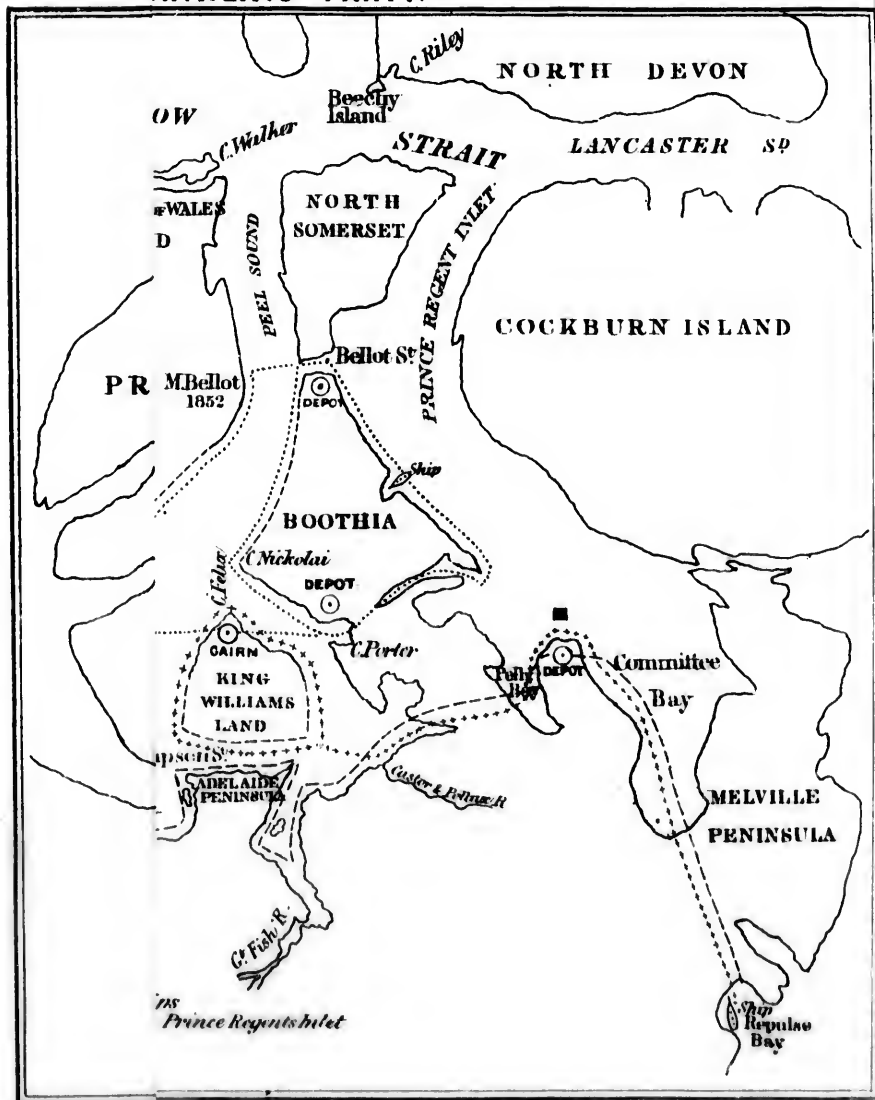
a blot will ever remain on its character in allowing many portions of land within reach of its settlements to remain unsearched for the lost navigators, when without difficulty it could complete all that was desired. Why did it suffer the coast between the Coppermine and Great Fish Rivers to remain unexplored after the seasons of '47—48, and why does it do so to this day? an eight days' search was the least it could give to the man who had previously risked his life for an extension of its territories; yet, rather than give a slight check to its selfish will, it would suffer ten years to pass away and after all make the British public pay dearly in mind and in pocket for that which actually had not the appearance of an intention.

Bringing the Hudson's Bay Company's disgraceful expedition of '55 to its wretched termination, it concludes the past search for Franklin, and giving close attention to a future search for the retreating party, we view the present prospects in the following light. The whole coast line of King William's Land is still unexplored; the lands between the Coppermine and Great Fish Rivers are yet to be searched, while both shores of Peel Sound commencing at Dr. Rae's discoveries and extending northward to those of M. Beil实现 remain to be traversed ere the search is complete. It will be seen by a chart that the line of search is long and irregular; we have a wide spread field before us

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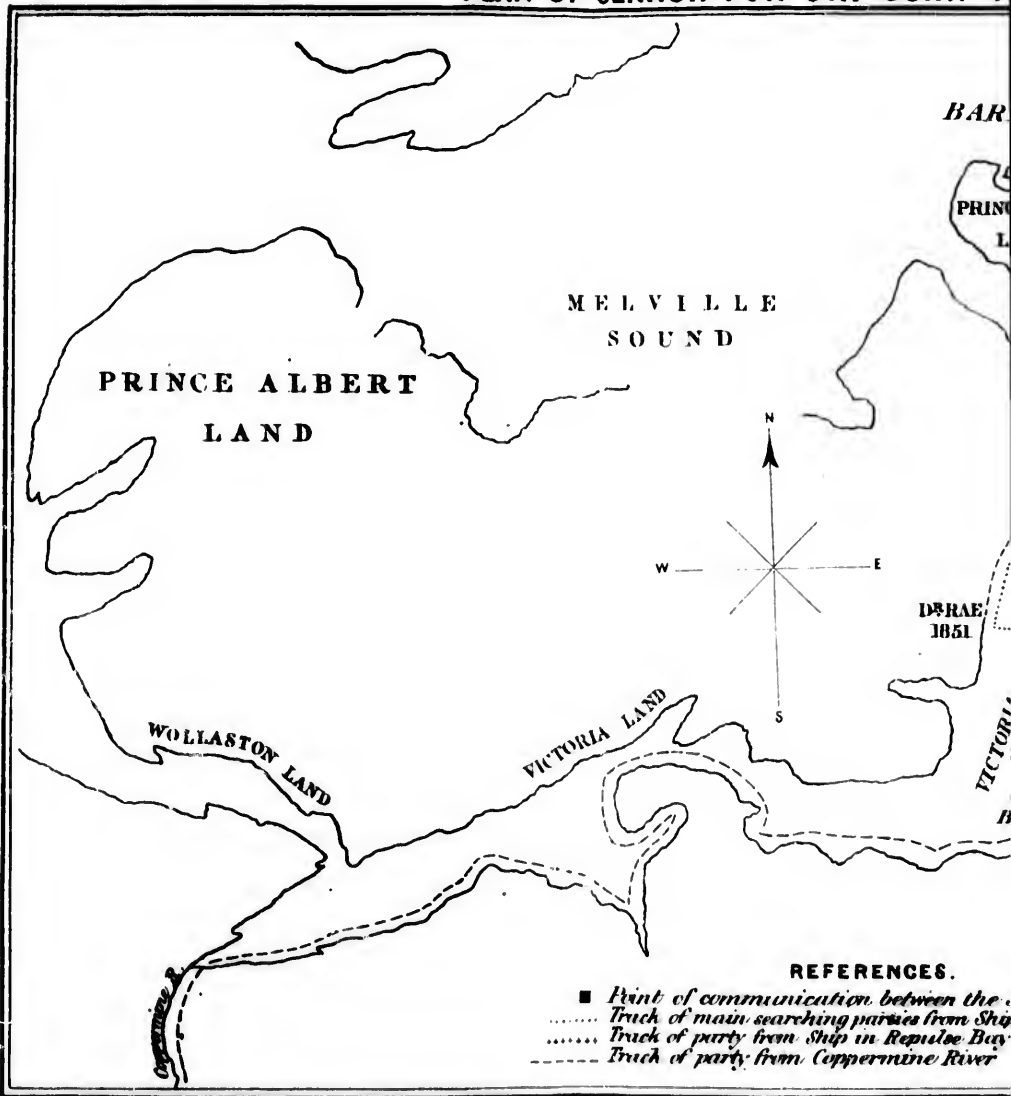


and a difficult route to reach it. In the absence of open water ships become useless, therefore the search must be conducted over the ice attached to those lands by well organised boat parties; one great object is to facilitate those journeys by removing the difficulties and by reducing the labour attending them into as small a compass as possible without any danger, rendering the search withal as complete as can be desired, and planning a search according to the position of those lands upon which our attention is fixed.

I place my views thus.—Let two small screw steamers be prepared by the coming spring, and under able commanders, with crews of about thirty experienced voyagers each, proceed at once, one to Repulse Bay and the other up Lancaster Sound, and down the western shore of Prince Regent's Inlet; first to Bellot Strait, leaving a depot on its southern shore, then continue down the inlet for a central position in the search. At the same time let a small party descend the Coppermine River, to carry the search eastward to the Great Fish River. To make escape certain to all engaged, the ship in Repulse Bay should become the centre of retreat, as when parties are in that bay, retreat to the settlements in Hudson's Bay can be effected without great danger. Two seasons will be required for the work to be done by the ships, but the party

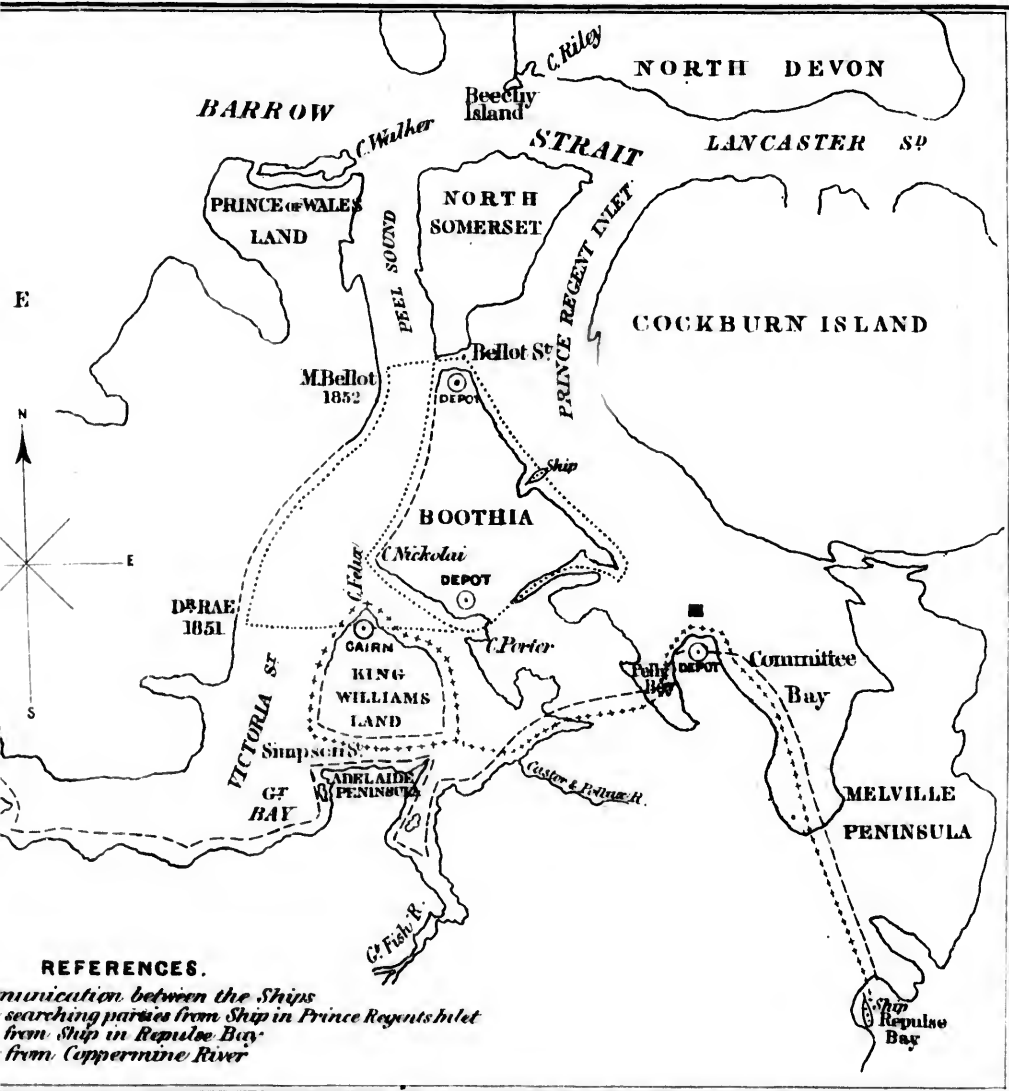


PLAN OF SEARCH FOR SIR JOHN F

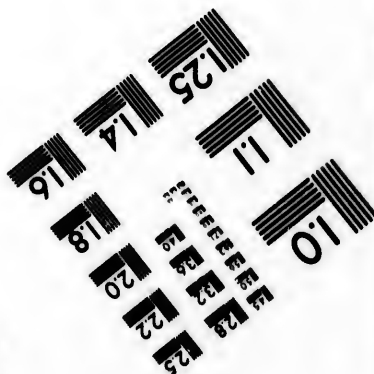
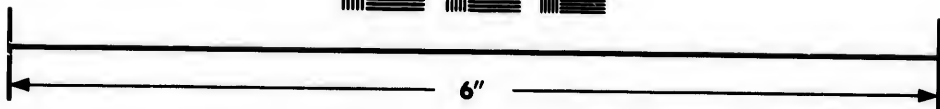
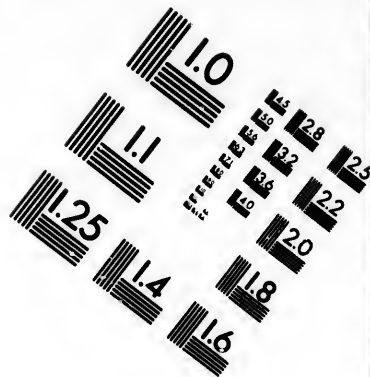


Sumfield & Jones Lith London

FOR SIR JOHN FRANKLIN'S PARTY.







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descending the Coppermine River will complete its task in one. It would at the earliest period of the season be near the close of August when the ship passing through Lancaster Sound could secure a position on the western shore of Prince Regent's Inlet, while it may be doubted whether the vessel destined to Repulse Bay could reach her quarters before that period of the year. The party from the Coppermine River, after closely searching the lands between it and the Great Fish River, should pause at the entrance to the latter stream, to examine the Esquimaux tribes around for traces or information, and instead of retreating by the way it advanced, must push eastward and complete its journey to the ship in Repulse Bay. And that vessel arriving too late in the season to search the coast line of King William's Land, should first direct a party up to the head of Committee Bay, to open communication with the men from Prince Regent's Inlet, and render, if necessary, assistance to that returning from the Coppermine River. Pending these proceedings, and if time would permit, a select few should be sent up the eastern coast of Melville Peninsula, in search of Esquimaux, from whom important intelligence might be received. The ship would then winter, and make every preparation for the ensuing spring. When April arrived a well organised party should leave to search the whole coast line of King

William's Land. After reaching the entrance to Castor and Pollux River, it should strike westward for the south-east point of that land. Arriving there, it divides itself thus:—One half go up its eastern coast, and the other along that of its southern, meeting together at Cape Felix, its north-west boundary, they erect a cairn, and then retreat to the depot fixed to the northward of Cape Porter; from that point to the depot at the head of Committee Bay, and southward to their ship. While this party was absent, another small one may be despatched from the ship up the west and northern coasts of Melville Peninsula in quest of Esquimaux. Another, similarly equipped, should be sent up the shores of Committee and Pelly Bays for the same object. Allowing three months and a half to complete the work by this ship, and if afloat or released from the ice, the return to England could be accomplished without delay. But if escape to the ship is impossible, let the crew retreat to the settlements in Hudson's Bay in time to secure a passage to England by that Company's ships. And now turning our attention to the ship in Prince Regent's Inlet. Immediately after reaching her destination a party must be despatched to form a depot at the head of Committee Bay, a distance of one hundred miles, and to open communication with the men from Repulse Bay. Having accomplished

this, and the lands around the ship being explored for Esquimaux, they pass the winter and make every preparation for the following spring. April arriving, two parties should leave the ship, the smallest going north and the largest south, and across the lakes to the westward to form a depot above Cape Porter. If that position be too far from the ship, let it be fixed at the head of the middle lake, as at either point it must prove of great value to the parties returning from King William's Land and the western shore of Peel Sound. After leaving the depot, the party must divide. Let one half go up the western coast of Boothia, to Cape Nickolai, and follow that coast northward to Bellot Strait, where it would find relief from the depot left in that Strait by the ship. The return journey could then be made at leisure, while the other half should trace the south-west coast of Boothia, from Cape Porter southward to Castor and Pollux River, after reaching which it must turn, and taking a north-east track, arrive at the head of Pelly Bay, and search the coast northward for Esquimaux, returning to the ship by the lake district. The smallest or northern party leaving the ship in the spring, must push up Prince Regent's Inlet, and if needful touch at the depot in Bellot Strait. It should then cross Peel Sound, and make its western shore near M. Bellot's position in '52, after which

it can follow that coast southward to Dr. Rae's position in '51 on the western shore of Victoria Strait; turning to the eastward from that point, it should make for Cape Felix, and then on finding the cairn built by the Repulse Bay party retreat direct to the depot northward of Cape Porter, and thus to their ship; this duty might be performed in three months and a half, at the expiration of which they could return to England. But should the release of the ship appear hopeless, (as with Sir John Ross in 1832) then, after a proportionate rest, her crew should retreat south to the depot at the head of Committee Bay, from thence to the ship or depot left in Repulse Bay, and thus to the settlements in time to secure with the others a passage to England.

The precautionary measures to be adopted are as follows. No searching party to leave the ships unaccompanied by interpreters. The ship for Repulse Bay shall first visit the settlements in Hudson's Bay and take therefrom the necessary number of interpreters for both ships. Those for Prince Regent's Inlet ought to proceed with the first communicating party from Repulse Bay, and on meeting the men from Prince Regent's Inlet go with them northward to their ship. Should the crew in Prince Regent's Inlet be compelled to retreat, the hope of meeting whalers by pushing north to Barrow Strait must not be entertained, and if the ships are

icebound for a season, it may be prudent to leave a sufficient crew aboard them with the hope of resuming them in the following season. Communication ought to be strictly attended to, and above all let there be sealed orders given; each officer should clearly understand the points at which relief or information may be obtained, so that if his party require either he may know where it is to be found. In a word the whole plan of search should be settled previous to quitting England.

Attention must also be given to the Esquimaux tribes, as dogs and sledges and other valuable assistance may be purchased from them. The above plan will be found to contain all that is necessary for an effectual search without great danger to those engaged, and without enormous expense, the cost of maintaining a government vessel with a crew of sixty men, divided thus, thirty for the ship in Prince Regent's Inlet, twenty for that in Repulse Bay, and ten for the party descending the Coppermine River, would complete the search to the satisfaction of Great Britain and the world in general; whereas to despatch one ship or party to explore that long and difficult line of coast, and to thoroughly examine the Esquimaux tribes, would fall far short of obtaining the great object in view. A partial search might find traces and yet leave us still in doubt, but if the lands named be explored as

recommended, the search will then, and not till then, be complete. Success, that much desired object, must reward us one way or other, for if the combined searching parties failed to discover the documents or remains of the party that have perished, their explorations would clearly prove whether Franklin's ships had been wrecked or detained either in Victoria Strait or Peel Sound. No attempt to push ships on search through Peel Sound should be made, as from the impenetrable nature of the ice within it every such attempt must end in disappointment. That it will be attempted is probable, but that it will succeed is utterly impossible; and as it is certain that the missing ships have been wrecked and their crews have perished by the difficulties and dangers of Peel Sound, why send a vessel on search through the same channel, if they could overcome the skill of Franklin and his officers with a crew of one hundred and thirty-five men, how indeed are others on search to escape them? I advocate a future search for documents, by which the position of the remaining men may be known, but the public insists on a search of Peel Sound for the ships of Franklin. I consider another search well rewarded by finding the papers and remains of the party that have perished, yet the world will be sadly disappointed if the missing ships are not found and the whole mystery revealed. It is therefore against this immeasurable confidence

that we ought to be guarded; England has already been too far misled in this difficult and deeply interesting subject, and if either its learned or labouring classes still maintain the belief that the lost ships were wrecked in Peel Sound, they are supporting a view without the slightest foundation, and cherishing a hope which by the balance of reason can never be realized. Let the public therefore be on its guard against the results of a future search, lest while indulging too much confidence, its powers of penetration are hurled with irresistible force into the lowest depths of obscurity, for should the search of Victoria Strait and Peel Sound be accomplished, and no traces of the missing ships be discovered, not only will a fearful justice overtake its frail speculations, but the curtain about to be so suddenly lifted will fall again with tenfold darkness over the mysterious fate of our countrymen, sealing all further hope in a gloom only to be rivalled by the horrors of their dungeon.

It is truly lamentable to think that all the learning, talent, and science of this country were unable to rescue the lives of those brave men, but what a profound silence will reign over the land respecting their fate, when the world can no longer speculate on their woes, their death, nor even the scenes of their sufferings, when the mind is placed beyond the limits of calculation and all its inventive powers are brought to a stand, time alone that

waits for no man, then must reveal the Franklin mystery.

A review of the past brings to our notice another report seriously engaging public attention; in the spring of 1855, a statement appeared from one Thomas Mistigan, or Mastitukwin, who accompanied Dr. Rae on his interesting voyage in '54, the purport of which was, that Sir John Franklin and his party are dead, but perhaps one or two of the men may be still alive and with the Esquimaux. Sir John's watch, all in pieces, with his silver spoons, knives and forks, were found. The ship was a great godsend to these people; they now all having good sledges, spears, canoes, &c., of oak wood. I should not have deemed this report worthy of notice, had it not been commented upon in the following terms by the press. "Such are the words of Mastitukwin's narrative as detailed to the Revd. Thomas Hurlbert, of Rossville Mission, Hudson's Bay. They are entitled to credence because the narrator is a native of the country, acquainted with the language, and could have no object in making a false statement. The various implements made of oak, which were seen in the Esquimaux encampment, prove that they must have had access to at least one of the ships of the missing expedition.

Why not, scorning to affect a greater insight into this question than others, I ask were the services of Thomas Mistigan, if he possessed a better knowledge of the Esqui-

maux language than did Ooligbuck, (Dr. Rae's interpreter,) not accepted as interpreter to that expedition, and if his report was entitled to credence because he is a native of the country, acquainted with the language, and could have no object in making a false statement, surely the statements of Ooligbuck, also a native of the country, possessing as good a knowledge of the language, are equally worthy of credence. What motive had the interpreter who accompanied Sir John Ross in 1850 in sustaining the vile report of the murder of Franklin's crews near the top of Baffin's Bay by a tribe of savage Esquimaux? I have no desire to accuse Mistigan of falsehood, yet in dwelling on the remarks made on his statement by the press, we cannot help feeling a little annoyed at their inconsistency; Franklin's watch being found broken into various pieces, how did the Esquimaux know that it belonged to him? Could its maker much less any of those tribes have identified those mutilated fragments? and when Mistigan did not see the good sledges, spears, and canoes in the hands of Esquimaux, how was the nature of the wood identified? Are we to understand from the press, that boats and sledges are called implements, or must we remain in ignorance of what was seen by Mistigan? It is possible he may have been endowed with the gift of second sight.

But of the wood work seen with the Esquimaux by Dr. Rae's party in '54, the following report made by that traveller and published by him

in the *Times* of December 15th, 1856, gives a striking description. "In 1854 the Esquimaux I met with in the same localities as in 1846 and '47 had very few wood sledges, and those were extremely old and much worn, some of the sledges were made of bone, but the majority were of musk ox skin folded up on a little wet moss or mud in the form of a sledge runner, and then frozen. These last are never used when the Esquimaux can get wood, as in the spring, (at which season the natives travel most) they are thawed and put out of shape by the heat of the midday sun. In 1847 wood was not in great demand by the natives because they had an ample supply for all their wants, from the wreck of the *Victory* left by Sir John Ross in 1832 in Felix Harbour. But in 1854 a small piece sufficient for a spear handle was valued more highly than a large dagger. The conclusion I came to was that if Franklin's ships or one of them had been found by the Esquimaux, they would have been equally well supplied in 1854 as they were in 1847." I quote Dr. Rae's report not as from one of high authority, but merely to show what was seen of wood kind by his party in the possession of the Esquimaux; yet, assuming experience to be authority, it comes from one of the highest standing. My remarks on the second Esquimaux narrative being brought to a close, I shall now add a few words touching the

advantages which experience has been to this very interesting subject. Few venture an opinion upon it without producing the view of some eminent man as their authority; and then they are led away by the impression that he must be correct, in fact we are told he cannot be wrong, and in return deserve the lash for daring to presume. Let science wage its own great course like the glorious orb of heaven, or the lustre of experience secure for man the worship of his race, but let neither assume that garb of deceit which was never intended to adorn such noble qualifications. Why are the opinions of one experienced officer or the scientific authority of another, cited as affecting the mysterious fate of Franklin, when it has for the past ten years held at naught the powers of them all? If a thorough knowledge of the Esquimaux or a long experience in the Arctic regions can benefit in any way this melancholy chapter, let the wondrous line of ethnologists, with the most celebrated Arctic navigators, advance, and as a splendid phalanx prove their right to supremacy over other classes. With due respect to science as to experience, I humbly admit their claims on all but every subject. Yet that either is entitled to authority in this painful question, I am prepared to deny, if necessary, with my last breath; though we are not confounded we may well be surprised that the talent of the press should be so far misled as to trumpet Mistigan's report throughout the king-

dom as the awful fate of Sir John Franklin, holding it up to public gaze as if it alone had exposed the whole mystery: had it revealed the fact of a ship being previously wrecked in the locality where that report arose, the people would have been enlightened as to its truth, instead of being led blindfolded by that which received no attention from those who thought fit to give it publication. It was really so much like the blind leading the blind that a celebrated picture no longer shrinks from view.

After its very active campaign against the missing expedition it ill becomes us to remain in sullen silence. The influence of the press is an acknowledged truth by all the world, and, moreover, is considered by foreign powers to be the strong unfettered arm of the British people. As its enchanting pen, therefore, renders important services to the eminent statesmen or distinguished parties in the political strife of this country, it certainly does seem more than strange that it has not been employed in clearing up this national mystery. If through want of foresight it was unable to do so it should not have deterred others from making the attempt, nor have placed such unbounded confidence in that which was doubtful. When the Esquimaux narrative became known in 1854, it plied its pen with unusual vigour, though not to disclose its real nature, but to add horror to horror, dark-

ness to darkness, by giving colour to every unjust surmise, and deadening all further affection of the public towards the long lost navigators.

On the 27th of November 1856 the *Times* sent forth a leading article against a further search in language that betrays a burning desire to conceal the want of knowledge, while it makes manifest the troubles of a mind unable at all times to withstand the inroads of despondency. The subjoined is its contents. "Another expedition in search of Sir John Franklin is now meditated, and while it is yet time we would invoke the aid of public opinion to put a stop at once to so outrageous a proceeding ; we cannot of course prevent individuals from doing whatever they may please. If a party of gentlemen choose to sail a brig to the centre of the Atlantic and there agree to scuttle her and go down in a friendly manner together, who shall stop them ? We do, however, most vehemently protest against the extension of any assistance from the public funds or from the public establishments to so preposterous a scheme as another expedition in search of Sir John Franklin's relics. The proposition was again brought forward on Monday evening at a meeting of the Geographical Society. Lieutenant Pim on that occasion read his outline of a plan for a further search after the missing expedition under Sir John Franklin. Nothing of course can be made to appear more simple on paper or more easy of accomplishment

than such a design. If we had lost all recollection of former years and former expeditions of the like kind we might almost be tempted to add faith to the words of the speaker or of the writer ; we cannot, however, but remember that just the same kind of thing was said or written years ago, as each fresh expedition was planned, and in due course was despatched to the frost region. Nothing was more easy than to sail to the extreme eastern point of that great inlet in which Franklin had disappeared ; or up this sound to the northward, or that arm of the sea to the southward, or round by Behring's Straits, or in any of half a dozen directions ; most of these suggestions were followed, and we know what came of it. Some of the expeditionary ships were seized in fields of ice and hurled back on the rocky coast, others for a long time were lost to human knowledge. Ship was despatched after ship and expedition after expedition, until finally, by a miracle almost, the crews of the vessels were withdrawn ; the vessels themselves being abandoned, jammed hard and firm in the ice. It is not our business in the course of these few remarks to discuss any results that have arisen from these exertions and sacrifices save two ; in the first place Franklin and his unfortunate companions are dead long since (human frailty), that much we know from the relics which Dr. Rae brought home ; and secondly, bitter experience

has told us that these ice expeditions, however speciously they may be introduced to public notice, invariably terminate in the most terrible anxieties and in disappointment which may well be looked on as complete when we compare the results realized with the expeditions formed and the promises held out. We are really so sick of the subject that we do not care to follow Lieutenant Pim and Sir Roderick Murchison into their discussions as to the best method of reaching the spot where some of Franklin's relics may still be found.

"It is gratifying to find from Sir Roderick Murchison's observations that the government have not yet committed themselves to this frantic scheme. Sir Roderick is reported to have said if the government would not send out an expedition, he was authorized to state that that noble-minded woman, Lady Franklin, although there might be no chance of saving any one living man, had determined to send out another expedition on her own account to those regions. We trust Lady Franklin may be better advised, but of course it is not within our province to make any remark upon the proceedings of private persons. If the scientific gentlemen wish for another expedition let them man the ships in their own proper persons, and prove that they do not shrink from the perils to which they would expose others. The present government or any government will be most deeply to blame if they

give any kind of encouragement to so hazardous and useless a proceeding." Leaving posterity to judge on the wisdom of that production, I also append the most interesting part of a second article, dated December 2nd, '56, called forth by the cry of indignation, which greeted the advent of the first. "It is with great reluctance that we call public opinion to the aid of the government in opposition to the views of so many gentlemen of high character and great ability. We for our part are perfectly convinced that Sir John Franklin, who on the 26th of May 1845 sailed from Sheerness with the *Erebus* and *Terror*, has long since gone to his account, he, Captain Crozier, and all the officers and men under their command. The last that was known of them previous to the discoveries of the relics by Dr. Rae, was that they spent the winter of 1845—46 at a particular spot. Yes, the only certain fact known about Franklin and his friends is that precisely eleven years ago, reckoning from the present month of December, they were moving about and living in a small cove between Cape Riley and Beechy Island facing Lancaster Sound. But eleven years have elapsed since then, and if the length of time, the inhospitable character of the regions in which they were cast away, and the recent discovery of their relics be not sufficient to satisfy any dispassionate enquirer that our unfortunate fellow countrymen have long since ceased to be num-

bered among the living, his mind must be very differently constituted from our own. Upon this point we have nothing more to say, but that if any one really still holds to the opinion that Franklin is alive, or of course one of his followers, we can well understand that he should advocate the propriety of further re-search. We who are absolutely of the other opinion say, that such further re-search would be perilous to the living, and useless to the dead."

In October '54 the *Times*, with an amount of candour rarely visible, acknowledged its inability to penetrate the mystery, but lately it has felt a deep-rooted interest in stopping all further search for those brave men, the reason why is of course better known to its editor than to ourselves; still if we could indulge the hope that he would justly expose the subject, we might without loss of dignity stoop to inform him of its secrets. But as his acknowledgement of 1854 confirms the truth of his inability, and while his late extraordinary conduct mocks the name of justice, we shall better profit by saving pen and paper, and been spared the reflection of having spoken an unknown language. In the event of submission a slight effort would prove the cause of his sickness of the question, and the reason why, those who hold a contrary view have minds differently constituted from his own. Has the *Times* already forgotten the lesson it received on Kossuth's first visit to London? for it

then barely managed to escape the last lash of public vengeance; the executioner, it is true, was alone wanting to complete the interesting ceremony; whether that event arose from a difference of constitution between the public mind and that of the *Times* editor is of course best known to the public; but why does the *Times* lose sight of this very difference by speaking with a morbid certainty on the fate of Franklin? does it wish to stop all further search with the hope of concealing its own ignorance, or has it received a certain sum for so doing. Why not at once disclose the fact, and no longer delude the public. On the 28th of October '54, the *Examiner* began in the following strain. "There is no longer any doubt of the melancholy death of Sir John Franklin and his companions. When we discussed the subject in this journal at the close of 1849, we urged the necessity of then making a final effort, and considering that the chances would not warrant the risk of another expedition, we held that it should have been planned on such a scale, as completely to scour the track, both by land and sea, in which the clearest judgments might see the probabilities of success. More than two years had then passed beyond the time to which the ships were victualled, and we believed it to be our last gleam of rational hope. It is now proved to have been so (delightful prophecy). Again, January 12th, 1856, Dr. Rae had understood the Esquimaux to mean

Montreal Island and Point Ogle near it as the places where the white men perished in 1850. The recent search has determined the locality beyond dispute (a startling revelation). The circulation of a falsehood for the condemnation of the unfortunate, is a crime placed far beyond the pale of redemption: it is notoriously false that more than two years had passed from the time to which the missing ships were victualled, when in '49 the *Examiner* made that statement, and though quite heedless as to the truth of its publications, it remained as careless of their results. In Franklin's despatch dated Whale Fish Island, July 12th, 1845, as in the report made by Lieutenant Griffiths, commander of the transport accompanying the missing ships to those islands, both agree that the ships had on board when leaving those islands July 13th, '45, stores and provisions of every description for three entire years from that date, consequently, on full allowance they would serve until July 13th, '48, so that the *Examiner's* statement was not only false, but as base as it was false, must it urge a final effort in '49, when Franklin's first winter quarters remained undiscovered. Was the last search necessary because Sir James Ross was unsuccessful. If he violated the trust reposed in him by the nation, was the press to do the same? In '49 the chances would not warrant the risk of another expedition, it was our last gleam of rational hope, and in '54, it is now

proved to have been so. Such was the address made to this country at the time when its people were tortured by a story, the horrors of which held them in suspense and awe; those were the impious sentiments teeming with frantic despair which we all had the mortification to hear without a protestation, and why? because they came from the press that must rule us. As a further repetition of its shameless fabrications will but excite a feeling of horror, I will close the criminal list by a short instance well deserving a place in future history. In August 1856 the *United Service Gazette* contained a paragraph entitled 'Another Arctic Expedition,' wherein it says:—

"A report is again current that another expedition, to be placed in command of Captain Inglefield, is to be despatched to the Arctic regions, in the hope of brushing away some of the cobwebs which have of late gathered thickly around the brains of certain savans of the different learned societies! we protest in the name of common sense and common humanity against this contemplated waste of the resources of the country and the risk of the lives of our adventurous tars." The press undoubtedly believes that in giving publicity to these cruel maledictions, it is expressing the opinions of the country, but however much it may control the people they cannot every day applaud such depraved barbarity; it may find before long that it is

much better to remain silent on a subject of which it knows nothing than to expose itself to an eternal disgrace, which a revelation of the Franklin mystery would assuredly entail on it. Throughout its reports we discern a speedy intention of ridding itself of a subject it never strove, to unravel, and which, for want of attention, or through stubborn ignorance, it gave up as hopeless; it tolled their death knell, long ere they entered on the scenes of their sufferings, and without an attempt in 1854 to bring the Esquimaux narrative to a reasonable light, it rushed with headstrong haste to swell the terrors of that awful story; it gloried in the prophecy of their miserable end; and after a visionary glance at the mystery, without indulging to excess its powers of penetration, it joined the vast cataract of despair to plunge the fate of our unfortunate countrymen into the gulf of oblivion. Did it forget that Nero fiddled while Rome was burning, or had it a peculiar desire only to imitate that immortal scene? which of the two is doubtful. But from its conduct we can extract the sorrowful reflection that the country who sent those ill-fated men will from example look on their mysterious fate as a passive spectator, suffering their remains to be undiscovered and unburied, and probably believing the time is come when the whole subject of their untimely end must sink without hope into the silence of everlasting sleep; and as no other doubt can arise

but that the alluring majesty of the press will in future implore the public in the name of common sense and common humanity, to stop all further search for those brave men, we are left merely to bid it adieu with the same disregard it has so long shown to life and to honour.

CHAPTER III.

In the prosecution of our subject I append a few general remarks on the present condition of the mystery; the first is, the entire absence of cylinders, balloons, or papers from balloons belonging to the missing expedition. It is a remarkable circumstance that though nearly twelve years have expired since its departure, but one cylinder has been found, and that in the same waters to which it was consigned in '45, namely, Baffin's Bay; the only just decision to be formed thereon, is, that its position is both difficult and distant; it does not seem probable that Franklin put cylinders into Barrow Strait in '46 when about to quit Beechey Island, as the despatches left at that island would better suit the purpose, while, if he did so when running to the westward of Cape Lady Franklin, the westerly set of the current beyond that cape would prove an effectual bar against their appearance in Barrow Strait or Baffin's Bay.

Of the traces found, supposed to belong to the missing ships, let us speak. In 1853 Captain Collinson found part of a door or door-frame, attached to which was a hasp, bearing the broad arrow, or British Government mark, together with a piece of galvanised iron, in possession of the Esquimaux around Cambridge Bay. In 1851 Dr. Rae, when traversing the western shore of Victoria Strait, found part of a boat's mast, also a piece of wood said to be a part of a ship's stanchion. The iron affording no clue whatever we pass to the other traces, and acknowledge that the hasp found had belonged to this Government, but whether it had been attached to a ship, a boat, or a hut, is as difficult to say, as whether it had belonged to Franklin. The wood, and part of boat's mast, found by Dr. Rae on the track of the retreating party, leave no doubt of their having been left by it; yet as there is no certainty as to this wood being part of a ship's stanchion, we cannot say whether it belonged to a ship, or if it was of any service to the party. These feeble traces, if such they may be called, appear somewhat in the same light as the piece of English elm, found floating in Wellington Channel by the searching parties in '50. But without carrying the same weight as that trace, the wood was burnt at one end, which leads to the opinion that it had been used as a fire by the retreating party, to attract the attention of

searching parties in the dark months while in the neighbourhood of Beechey Island. To follow any of these further would lead to no results, for unless we have a foundation on facts or circumstances, we cannot form a correct view. Declining, therefore, lest I should be in pursuit of a phantom always on the wing, I turn with attention to the absence of traces connecting the lost ships. It is a fact upon which too much stress cannot be laid, that every article found by Dr. Rae and Mr. Anderson goes no further than to show that they had belonged to a boat party, and excepting every trace in one view, a party such as that seen by the Esquimaux in 1850, could, without difficulty, carry all that was found.

It is satisfactory to know that in the statement made by Dr. Rae, in that of Mr. Anderson, as in the report lately brought home by Captain Penny, all are silent on the position of Franklin's ships. The Esquimaux seen on Boothia, Victoria Land, and on the Great Fish River, when asked the direct question if they had seen the ships, answered in the negative, and without placing any reliance on their statement, its truth is powerfully apparent by the absence of traces connecting the ships with them. Had they informed us otherwise, the absence of such traces on them would have proved their assertion false. That two ships were detained or wrecked in a locality infested by tribes of wandering Esqui-

maux, and should remain for ten years without being seen by them, is an idea far too absurd to be true. To allay further doubt upon this subject, one question is necessary. When the Esquimaux first saw the white men on the coast of King William's Land, and hearing they had left their ships in the ice, seeing at the same time the direction from which they were advancing, would they not have set off in quest of them? We are entitled to believe that those tribes have traversed Peel Sound and Victoria Strait in every direction for the missing ships, but their search being unsuccessful, hence the absence of traces of them. That they were in that position was a question to be discussed in '47 and '48, but not afterwards, as the great search that followed those seasons, the long lapse of time and the total absence of tidings, were surely sufficient to convince the world of its bad judgment. Had any consideration been given to those truths, the public would not have remained long in a state of ignorance concerning the mystery. The warning voice of caution called aloud in the results of Mr. Anderson's voyage, still, like Jehu, it drove on, and became at length fixed on the one hundred and fifteen unexplored miles in Peel Sound. The great catastrophe, with a complete history of the discoveries, adventures, and misfortunes of those one hundred and thirty-five men, led by able officers, must and will be found in the narrow confines of that distance.

Careful of order we ask, was the party seen in '50 by the Esquimaux the last survivors of the missing crews? If so, why did they not retreat to Fury Beach, instead of pushing in a starving condition towards the hunting grounds and the settlements? What induced them to face death but the view of getting communication and sending relief to those left behind with the ships? In their journey south, through Peel Sound, Fury Beach lay within easy reach, still it was forsaken. A bare existence awaited them at that place, and a death march presented itself in the route through Peel Sound; had they entertained any hope of finding intelligence of ships after reaching Cape Walker, it would concentrate on Fury Beach, as it was the only place where provisions could be found, which circumstance would render it a position likely to be visited by searching parties. The absence of the retreating party from it exhibits the haste to get communication, while it indicates the absence of all hopes of receiving succour from ships after it had been to Cape Walker. Many will speak of a second party attempting a retreat from the ships, but the objections to that view is but one route being open for retreat, and the first party having consumed the stores left at the junction of Jones' Sound with Wellington Channel. When they were gone Franklin knew that without a depot in the line of retreat, the attempt would be too hazardous, which, with the expect-

tation that the first party would make known his position, would prevent a second attempt being made, while the heavy nature of the ice to the westward of Baring and Melville Islands would render escape to the continent in that direction impossible.

In the contemplation of a future search we are impelled by reason, humanity, and justice to do that which is no more than our duty to the long lost Arctic heroes; therefore I appeal to the civilized world by the strongest dictates of reason, through every humane motive, and by all the ties of friendship pertaining to mankind, to arouse from its present slumber and prosecute the search until it is successful; as for this age, it will risk its reputation by suffering the mystery to die away in its present form; for the great neglect, the mismanaged search, and lastly the cruel silence with which it has been treated, will be handed down to posterity as the degradation of these times. The future historian will record the fate of Franklin as an instance of the imbecility of Great Britain; whilst generations to come will speak of it in amazement; it will pass on to the great period of time and be called the legend of the nineteenth century. Let us then shake off this impending chastisement by a future and proper search, as there is not only miles of traces to be discovered but hundreds of miles, from the time they left Beechey Island in '46 until the retreat in '49—

50 will verify my statement. There is every probability of many of the crew still living; the dark curtain has yet to be lifted; all in fact remains to be known. Should the government of this country turn a deaf ear to their cries, farewell to our national honour, farewell now and for ever to all hopes of ascertaining the fate of our countrymen. The stern and icy feelings of England will then reign triumphant; that cold spirit which distinguishes her from other nations and sacrifices day by day some one of her neglected but talented sons will then rule supreme over the fate of the gallant Sir John Franklin.

An instance of the probability of papers being still in existence amongst the Esquimaux, is seen by Dr. Rae in '54 finding on them part of a book called the "Student's Manual." It is singular that those tribes should preserve this book that was of no value to them. Had they not taken a peculiar interest in its preservation it would not have been found in '54. The only interest they could have in exercising this care is clearly in favour of the white men, who may have given their papers to the Esquimaux to preserve until those tribes met searching parties; however this may be papers were found in '54 and may be in existence to this day, and if diligently sought for amongst the Esquimaux be recovered. In the book found was a leaf marked or doubled, which had evidently fixed the

attention of its reader ; the part most prominent appears to have been studied by one whose worldly position was hopeless. The importance attached bespeaks the sentiments of a mind fully reposed in the works of its Creator ; it reads thus :—

“Are you not afraid to die ? ”

“No.”

“Why does the uncertainty of another state give you no concern ? ”

“Because God has said to me fear not, when thou passest through the waters I will be with thee, and through the rivers they shall not overflow thee.”

This beautiful passage breathes throughout a fervid resignation, its spiritual brightness impresses the mind with emotion, as it calls to our sad recollection that solemn scene when the feeble spirits of the exhausted party sunk in silence from their fragile forms, though not with the grandeur of the sun's bright setting rays, but like the faint shadow of the pale moon sorrowfully setting behind a dark cloud. It reveals the same Christian tenderness as the epithets left by Franklin over the graves of his men at Beechey Island. Here his character stands out in bold relief and wins our admiration ; it appears exceedingly grand when he was about to pass from the known to the unknown world, that he should adorn the last resting places of his bereaved companions

with the finest effusions of his own great soul ; not knowing whether his own remains would find a sepulchre.

The question deferred to this period was that of Franklin having in '46 turned his back to the passage with the intention of returning to England. If that report is worth a refutation, and while his character deserves the highest praise, a few words in his behalf from one ever ready to assist the heroes of his country may not be considered out of place. His character stood all but alone in zeal, bold daring, and in enterprise, for a man to retain at the advanced age of sixty all the boldness and energy of youth, singularly blended with the lofty qualities of religion, is a combination rarely found in one individual ; with a mind that had overcome the greatest of difficulties, was a heart as generous as it was brave. Did the founders of that report forget they were speaking of a hero of Copenhagen and Trafalgar, and one who was brought up from boyhood to discovery ? Is this the man who in 1818 sailed to discover a passage north-east of Spitzbergen, and when his senior's ship was disabled requested to prosecute that perilous path alone. Is this the same Franklin who in 1821—26 led with success under sufferings of an awful description, two of the most daring boat expeditions that ever left this country. And is this he who after a long and useful life strongly chequered by misfortunes left the shores of his

native land to seek the north-west passage; to suffer in consequence or miserably to die. Such were the deeds of Franklin; this is the character of the man now lost to the world, in the wild northern wastes of eternal snow. Is calumny England's reward to a devoted hero, and cold neglect a just tribute to her gallant sons? Is this all they are to receive for seeking their country's glory? Was it for this they traversed lands unknown? We may regret many unfortunate events connected with their fate; but none more than this, that they had not the chance of turning their backs to the passage as the expeditions on search have done; all were favoured with that good fortune but Sir John Franklin. In reference to the number of men left with the ships in '49, if we deduct forty (the number comprising the retreating party) from a hundred and thirty-five Franklin took from Beechey Island in '46, he had ninety-five left, and allowing five deaths a year (which is beyond the average mortality of ordinary Arctic expeditions) in '49 there remained eighty men whose fate must remain a very doubtful question. Having no hope of finding Franklin with the retreating party of '49, my conclusions are drawn: from his advanced age and disposition he would on no consideration leave the remaining and sickly portion of his crews behind, he would not lead them into those distant parts and there

desert them. If ever he is found he will be with the ships or near their position. We shall see him again as in 1821 diffusing around the faint and dying forms of his companions the same sympathy of his own Christian soul. As to the determination he could come to respecting the fate of the retreating party it is beyond the powers of mankind to conceive. He might believe they had perished through want in seeking relief, or that a sad calamity had befallen them before they could give an alarm; but he would be unable to bring himself to the extraordinary conclusion that they had retreated to the continent without being seen living or dead. He would still hold if they had perished their remains would be found and the position of his ships revealed. This is a thought we cannot entertain without repeating it to memory, did the lives of the faithful party pass away with the reflection still lingering over them that they had never once been searched for. After being absent five years they visited places where succour should have been and found none, therefore it must have gone with them to the grave that they had been forsaken in the midst of their distress, as they found not a trace or mark to counteract the bitterness of that sad thought. Here their cruel fate strikes terror to the imagination; they did not succumb without a struggle, but sunk into eternal repose exhausted by excessive toil, by hunger, and privations indescribable, brought on

by a journey unprecedented in the progress of discovery; and which for boldness, disappointments, and unflinching endurance can never be surpassed. How well they laboured in a noble cause; every effort made was worthy of such heroes. Had this country displayed but half the zeal for their rescue that they did for their companions, they would not have been driven to such fatal extremes, but have been spared the belief that they had toiled in vain, and that the only cries of mourning over the lonely graves would be the loud murmurs of the northern blasts.

In returning to the fate of Franklin and the men left in the ships in 1849 we cannot determine the date of their death, as all depends on the produce of those parts in which they are imprisoned. On half allowance, their provisions would serve until the autumn of 1850, and if they were anything like successful in hunting or fishing; we lose all calculation. There is every likelihood of their taking deer, bears, musk-oxen, birds, and fish; when those could not be obtained, the wallruss, seals, and whales, could be made the means of supporting life, and that part of the Arctic regions where those are not found is at present unknown to mankind, consequently, any speculation upon the date of their death would amount to presumption, it being placed far beyond the limits of our understanding. For my own part, I doubt not that if ever their fate

is known the protracted period to which they survived will create more astonishment than any other part of the mystery.

That every stratagem was adopted to prolong existence, the character of Franklin in former voyages is a sufficient guarantee; and when combining his experience with the skill of his officers, we at once discern the material necessary for a long and desperate struggle; as month by month in season past and year rolled over year they would stretch their ever anxious sight across the wild expanse by which they were surrounded. But alas! to meet the dismal prospects of the past, in all their wanderings the same unchangeable horizon appeared to view. Phantom ships no doubt oft-times disturbed their troubled thoughts; visions no sooner formed than as soon would vanish. Thoughts mingling the bright ray of hope with the darkness of despair. I can imagine that forlorn band ascending some lonely height, and aided by the Arctic summer's never setting sun rivet their gaze on the distant horizon in the hope of that succour which was not to reach them—in a vain search for that object they were destined never to behold: and when the sun in autumn set down o'er their trackless path, the joy with which they had welcomed its appearance would give way to the ravings of despair, as the dark winter approached throwing its solitude with awful effect around their icy prison. This would

continue season after season, until misery succeeded misery, and the last ray of hope had expired. Here they find themselves doomed to end their lives on the scenes of their suffering in a wild and dreary waste, ruled by silence long and deep. Leaving our judgment now in repose, and as wisdom forbears a further advance, we must conclude with the last view of a subject forming a painfully interesting chapter in England's history. It is the loss of the whole expedition.

When alluding to death, we touch on the greatest of calamities; and in the grave of Franklin must bury all remembrance of the missing navigators; let us then speak of his death as that of a great man: for in discovery he ranked with the leading navigators. Numerous deeds of daring crowned him with the title of a hero, while long and painful suffering gave to his name the brand of immortality; emboldened by success, he made the fatal north-west passage the pole star of his existence. In bygone days that star arose in brilliant majesty and scarce had climbed to its meridian splendour ere its dazzling progress was arrested by the fatal results of this undertaking.

And when chained on the verge of a lone Arctic grave he beheld it decline in solemn grandeur over the clouded horizon of his fate, the parting shades of life's closing day calmly gives place to the dark night of death: as his

gallant spirit sinks within him he forgets his distant home and country, and lifts his eyes toward the haven of his rest to seek protection in the bosom of His Maker ; the last ebbing wave of life being hushed into silence, the pall of death closes mournfully over a life of perils, sufferings, and misfortunes, and a life once lit up by a conflagration of glory.

THE END.

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E R R A T A.

Page 63, line 15, *for* 1848 *read* 1854.

— 84, line 3, *for* resuming *read* rescuing.

— 84, line 5, *for* sealed orders *read* no sealed orders.

— 102, *for* CHAPTER III. *read* CHAPTER IV.

