

the report of the medical officers afforded no hope of recovery, even if he lived many hours.

May 24.—Her Majesty's birthday was kept by the sole means I had at command, viz. increase of rations; for the rest, our loyalty is not a whit the less, and must support us unsuspected.

The second interval of ten days on the thermometers buried in snow affords similar proof of the protecting power it affords; in this case—

1 foot beneath = + 8°; min. -11° + 8° = 19°; max. +28·5°.

3 feet „ = +16°; min. -11° + 16° = 27°.

The general temperature improves on the ten days,—max. +28·50°; min. -11·00°; mean, +11·194°.

Our first attempts with powder to remove the upper ice in the dock were tried today; the results precisely what I anticipated. The holes were nine feet in depth, vertical, and the charges 12 lbs. They failed to force the bottom downwards, as some had contemplated, although they were tamped with close sludge and long fuse for seven feet. The cracks, owing to present pressure, will instantly reunite; the only rational mode is by digging down, and driving horizontal or oblique holes. I then tried charges of 20 lbs. each, passed *through* nine feet ice, without any proportionate disturbance of ship or ice; but on passing through the ice in seventeen feet, and resting the charge on the *bottom*, the ship received a very severe shock from stem to stern, extending even to one hundred yards between the ship and 'Pioneer,' but the ice was not started upwards satisfactorily! This result forcibly reminded me of particular occasions between the 30th of August and 4th of September last,

when the charges for important purposes were placed between layers of ice, affording the *point d'appui*; the action on those occasions only seemed to warrant such heavy expenditure. Water is easily displaced by air; and from a depth of twenty-one feet, where there was no solid matter to resist, it was thrown well above our mastheads without beneficial displacement of the floe. Its result in critical positions, and placed with judgment, I have before noticed.

May 28.—Our day of rest. I cannot yet see much beneficial effect resulting from the free use of gunpowder. The heavy floe has not yielded in any sensible masses; indeed, my own conviction is adverse,—that it hinders more important cuttings with the saw. Our work is confined to heavy quarrying and clearing out the loose pieces resulting from small *two* or *four* pound charges.

June 1 is ushered in with sleety, snowy weather, and a temperature of $40\cdot5^{\circ}$, without sun. A dog-sledge, with Mr. Dean, Carpenter, of the 'Resolute,' and one man, reached, bringing intelligence of the arrival of Captain Kellett at Beechey Island, but suffering from illness. This journey was effected with seven dogs in twenty-four hours.

June 3.—I shall continue our report of blasting operations because I feel satisfied that the results may afford information even to those engaged in more stubborn materials, and possibly may be useful in ice-bound harbours, as affording some test of the available powers of man, if judiciously directed.

Our saw cuts had at length been completed on three

sides of a square, affording a surface of forty feet in width by thirty ahead, or twelve hundred square feet; mean depth, twenty-one feet. I contended against heavy charges, and in this instance prepared three of 10 and three of 4 lbs. The first ten-pound charge, placed near the bottom, at the cut in eighteen feet next the bow, effectually displaced this entire mass, and two, of four pounds each, effectually brought up the bow cradling. I have of late calculated minutely the working powers of the men engaged.* The result proves that, with numbers varying from ten to sixteen, and not of full power, they have broken up and thrown to the dock wall, from whence others remove it, six hundred tons of ice (by shovels and picks), affording a mean rate of one ton per hour for each man during the working intervals. Some of our strong hands have indeed far exceeded, I might say, even doubled, this; but the mean labour amounts to that which I have stated. During this labour, which, in cold climates, induces great thirst, I at first ordered an issue of lemonade; but this was found to disagree with their constitutions, and variations from time to time were made, in consultation with the medical officer, until it at length reached pretty strong brandy punch. This not only improved their spirits and working condition, but materially conduced to their general health.

The assembled crews here and at Beechey Island having, by special order, been surveyed by the surgeons and reported on in three classes,—fit for any duty, fit for light duty, and unfit for any exposure,—drafts were for-

* These result from the masses of ice removed in six days of ten working hours.

warded hither from the first class, and our weakly men, who might be unable to move on any sudden emergency, together with a change for every man in the ship, forwarded to Beechey Island. We were thus prepared to devote the combined energies of the Squadron to extricate these vessels, nor did I dream of eventual failure.

June 3.—Ten-day temperatures afford, max. $+40\cdot50^{\circ}$; min. $-9\cdot00^{\circ}$; mean, $+24\cdot26^{\circ}$.

About the 9th of June, birds, principally brent-geese, eider-duck, and gulls, began to make their appearance on their northern flight, and three ptarmigan and one hare were forwarded by the Sergeant from Baring Rendezvous. The 'Pioneer's' screw having been reported as in danger, the necessary measures were adopted to release it from ice, when it was found to be uninjured. We were now advancing steadily with our dock, and commenced reeving our heavy purchases to start the ship. Direct force I doubted, and, to aid in effecting my object, laid out a second at right angles on the port bow. The Small Bower (Rodgers'), on heaving a good strain, came home clear, underneath the ice, and eventually reached our bows again; both cable and anchor were well polished. The Best Bower cable was still frozen in with the floe, and, until the ship was free, that could not be recovered, for in blasting and cutting over it they had broken the buoy rope.

At noon of the 13th a dog-sledge was reported, and I went out to receive the visitor, which proved to be Monsieur De Bray. My salutation was, "Well, you bring me news of Collinson's safety?" "Yes, Sir, he is safe! and I have documents here for you," pointing to

his knapsack ; of which presently. The ten-day interval of this, the 13th of June, affords,—max. 33.5° ; min. 15.00° ; mean, 24.154° : still unnaturally cold for this season.

On the 15th Monsieur De Bray returned to Beechey Island, and on the day following the 'Dove' whaler, on a new sledge constructed for her, followed. Another boat will be forwarded to Baring Rendezvous, and the 'Hamilton' and my own gig, to bear my pendant, will eventually go to Beechey Island. Before proceeding to the report of the proceedings of the western search by Lieutenant Mechem and Mr. Krabbé, I will place the ship afloat, and briefly observe on the difficulties attending such labours, where excavation to such an extent had to be pursued.

On the 16th the purchase ahead was tried, but it straightened the flukes of the ice and stream anchors, and displaced the pin of the purchase-block, splitting it to pieces! The effort proposed was to tear the ship from her starboard adhesion to the ice, the saw cuts being free along the entire port side and one on the starboard (*which froze as cut*). A heavy purchase from the mast-head, to induce a heel on this *crank ship*, was also brought in aid, but without success. Verily this ice work is a puzzling bit of engineering, and demands more thought to meet its caprices than any other operation in which I have been engaged. Under water we cannot *see*, but we know that we have more depth to float her than we require. By the powers applied, under ordinary presumptions, she should move ahead or yield to the force applied to incline her from the upright position.

Further measures, for powers *little short of dangerous*, were prepared, and on the morning of the 9th I had made my mind up for a result before I retired to rest. Before six we had succeeded, by saws and by using a seventy-two feet hand-mast as a vertical battering ram, in dislodging the ice along the port side up to the bend of the counter; powder was also used to an alarming extent, as far as crockery and pier-glasses were concerned.

The matter now resolved itself into one of power by purchases. We had built a new purchase-block capable of resistance. The direct ahead purchase was composed of two threefold and one leading block, or three by four, brought to Phillips's capstan with the full power, and double runner luff on the standing parts. Yet she moved not; *and the falls would bear no more*. My rectangular purchase of similar power, direct through the bow port, and secured to the grounded ice by iron necklaces, was now brought into action; this was also led to the capstan, and when well taut I paused, shifting my position to the starboard cathead, and there watching the effect on the parallel saw-cuts along that side. In all such operations the principal actor is in a degree on the stage; he calculates that he is intently watched by every eye, and he knows when to be silent, when to order, and when to cheer, or ask for that power which none but excited hearts can afford.

I saw the influence; I saw she moved. "Silence!" "Heave taut!" "Off she goes!" One rallying cheer, and with such an impetus did she leap out of her cradle, that in her headlong career she tore out the slip ring-bolt of

the best bower cable drawing from *abast the cathead*. To describe what my feelings were I will not undertake. The ship was again afloat on her own element, and my cares for a time were superseded by the ordinary course of service.

Having thus far explained myself, I cannot but thank officers as well as men for their exertions in their several stations. True it is that, invalid as I am, I worked possibly beyond what a Captain ought in other cases; but I had my object to fulfil, and notwithstanding some of the hardest failed, excitement compelled me to stick to my post. To Commander Richards, Mr. Loney, Mr. Allard, Mr. Nares, the Boatswain, Mates, and crew, I feel that great praise is due. But for the entire *modus operandi* I am responsible, and I again repeat my regret that after the initial proceedings and finding water at the bow, I was persuaded to have recourse to gunpowder; but when once used there is no limit. Concussion and radiating cracks have been made; eventually these caused very disheartening slips of the dock sides, entailing double labour.

Physicians prescribe, but not unfrequently swerve from their practice by some persuasion that it may do the patient *no harm*; not immediate, it is true, but when it eventuates he thinks not the less of the result.

On the other hand, gunpowder has its importance. A *coup* is to be made, an effect produced on your sub-agents; then, having satisfied yourself that it will cause the desired effect, much as it may upset some of your petted schemes, yield to caprice, make a noise, shiver the mountain of ice, and seek for the moment of making

the most of the wills which the spectacle has arrayed in your favour, or possibly softened the under-current which has steadily, though unseen, been working against you. Of such materials are British seamen composed. He who knows how to lead, how to humour them, what can he not execute?

In order fully to comprehend my feelings at this instant, I extract from my letter by Monsieur De Bray to Captain Kellett, June 15, 1854 :—" You will perceive, by my general correspondence, that I expected Collinson to return with Meham, and I asked the question of De Bray before he made known to me this second piece of luck or misfortune, as it may eventuate, on your part. Success sharpens the arrow-points of our adversaries; and I see too much of the world around me, not to fear that which reaches my ears now will be made in the hands of designing men a source of annoyance hereafter. Collinson, by my former suspicions, could not convey more than one officer and five men *unprepared* to any of the Hudson's Bay settlements; and even then not without some preparation to meet and aid him. I do not think, having so far succeeded, he would desert his crew and leave them to find their way hither; he would lead them himself; and if I am not wofully mistaken, he is now coming fast on the traces of Meham, or following up Peel's Channel by the southern coast of Albert Land.

" We are not yet afloat—every blast does mischief—and if we go on at the present rate, we shall blast a canal towards Beechey Island before we get her a foot ahead! I am against powder; but it is so frequently intimated

‘that nothing but a blast will do,’ that I am occasionally persuaded: very nearly on every occasion it has been followed by a prodigious slip, filling up a week’s labour.” That very night, after the departure of De Bray, she was afloat!

I will return to the intelligence brought by Monsieur De Bray. On the 3rd of April, 1854, Her Majesty’s Ship *Resolute* and tender being at that time in their Winter Quarters, twenty-eight miles south-west by south of Cape Cockburn, or in latitude $74^{\circ} 42' N.$, longitude $101^{\circ} 22' W.$, Captain Kellett despatched Lieutenant Mecham, of the ‘*Resolute*,’ and Mr. Krabbé, of the ‘*Intrepid*,’ with instructions to visit and examine the depôt at Dealy Island, and then to prosecute their respective journeys; the former to the Princess Royal Islands and Strait, the latter to the ‘*Investigator*,’ and ascertain if any of Captain Collinson’s parties had visited any of the stations in the rear of Commander M’Clure.

Lieutenant Mecham, with Mr. Krabbé under his command, reached the Sailors’ Home at Dealy Island on the 12th, somewhat touched by snow blindness and sore feet at this early period of the season. .

The “Home” was found in perfect condition, well banked up with snow on the outside, but the interior perfectly free from drift. Captain Kellett speaks in high terms of his Carpenter, Mr. Deans, who was the architect, and, by the judicious pitch given to the roof, ascribes its freedom from snow. A portion of bread in one of the tanks was found to be slightly damaged, and one rum cask about a quarter short of contents.

They experienced some difficulty in effecting an entry,

owing to the door being barricaded by wet sods and the necessary implements secured *inside*, a caution not lost upon them. After provisioning and securing "the Home," they proceeded on the 13th, deposited a record on "the Sandstone" in Winter Harbour, crossed over Point Hearne, and travelled about three miles off the land towards Cape Providence.

On the 18th they shaped their course for Cape Russell the north-east point of Baring or Banks' Land, and changed their hours of travel from day to night.

About eight miles south of Cape Providence they encountered the first range of heavy hummocks, composed of young ice; having passed through this, which was estimated at five miles in breadth, they entered on the old floes, generally girt by ridges of pressed-up young ice.

About the centre of the Strait, dividing Melville Island from Banks' Land, they found the floes "old, and of greater extent;" and as they approached the southern land, being visited by dense fogs, they frequently found themselves entangled among hummocks and deep snow, which rendered travelling very laborious and harassing.

On the 24th of April the land was indistinctly seen, by telescope, about six miles distant; and shortly after, on the atmosphere clearing, they found that they had passed through the belt of old ice, and before them a large extent of young pressed-up ice presented.

On the 25th they reached a low point at the entrance of an inlet, where they encamped, believing it to be Cape Russell, as the high land near Cape Providence on Melville Island was distinctly perceptible, bearing about north three-quarters east.

At this position Lieutenant Mecham deposited eleven days' provisions, and Mr. Krabbé parted company in the prosecution of his orders to seek the 'Investigator' in the Bay of Mercy, and on his return to the Sailors' Home to re-examine and separate the good from the damaged bread.

Quitting this *cachette*, Lieutenant Mecham proceeded to the south-south-west, following the trend of the land; but on the 26th meeting with very old ice, deeply covered with snow, totally disagreeing in character with that described as occurring in Prince of Wales Strait, moreover the high land on either side terminating abruptly, beyond which the coast appeared to be low and sweeping across the distance, satisfied him that he had not hit upon the intended landfall. He therefore retraced his steps, reduced the allowance to one-half, recovered his *cachette*, and in two journeys was more successful in reaching the entrance of Prince of Wales Straits. The bearings obtained of Melville Island and other observations satisfied him that the land was laid down too far to the eastward.

Having reached a position south of Cape Russell, he deposited his *cache*, and proceeded to the south-westward, keeping about two miles off the land.

Notwithstanding the ice was considerably pressed up, the snow which filled the irregularities was tolerably hard, and travelling good.

On several low points, on which he landed to obtain fuel, he found drift-wood in great abundance.

On the 7th of May, at midnight, he landed on the Princess Royal Islands, where, on examining the cairn,

he was rewarded for his exertions by the discovery of the records left by H.M.S. *Enterprise*, which, having entered this Strait on 30th of August, 1851, wintered in the pack off in 1851-52; and the document, re-signed 29th of May, 1852, further stated that he passed up to Point Peel, returned, and, after following the west coast of Baring Island as high as latitude $72^{\circ} 55'$ north, had returned, and wintered 1851-52 in latitude $71^{\circ} 35'$ north, longitude $117^{\circ} 40'$ west.

The record also intimated, "that further information of his movements would be found upon an islet in $71^{\circ} 36'$ north, and longitude $119^{\circ} 0'$ west."

Taking provision for ten days, Lieutenant Mechem started that night (morning in travelling time) to the southward, in quest of further information.

After passing Point Gordon the beach was found to be thickly marked by the remains of Esquimaux encampments, and on the 9th of May they succeeded in reaching the islet alluded to, and after several hours' search found records, ten feet magnetic north of a small cairn built upon its summit.

By these documents it appears that a party from the '*Enterprise*' (in the sledge *Resolution*) had visited Point Hearne on Melville Island in the summer of 1852 (Point Hearne is the north-western extreme of Parry's Winter Harbour), and that the other parties had examined the north and south coasts of Prince Albert's Land.

Upon quitting this position on the 27th of August, 1852, Captain Collinson contemplated tracing the Channel between Wollaston and Prince Albert's Land, as set forth in his documents.

After rebuilding the cairn, depositing charts, and full information concerning our movements, as well as complete notices of all the depôts lodged on the Beechey Island route, Lieutenant Meham commenced his return to Melville Island, reached the Princess Royal Islands on the 13th, examined the whale-boat left there, and found her in good condition; deposited the requisite records, provisioned, and having removed some articles found damaged to a higher and less exposed position, he despatched his sledge along the southern coast of the Straits, and, accompanied by one man with his Satellite (a small sledge or tender), pursued his examination along the northern coast, deposited records at Cape Russell, rejoining his party on the 17th, ready to start. Having built a cairn, deposited records, and collected sufficient fuel (of which they had none) to last them to Melville Island, they moved forward.

On the 19th of May they cleared the Straits, steering direct for Cape Providence.

The ice, extending ten miles off Cape Russell, they found to be that of last year's formation, without a crack. They then crossed a barrier of very heavy old hummocks, reached a lead of old floe, over which they travelled fifteen miles, entered a mixture of heavy hummocks of young pressed-up ice, and small floe-pieces of heavy old ice extending thirty miles. On the 23rd these were cleared about seven miles south by east of Cape Providence.

On the 27th they reached the depôt at Dealy Island, and found orders to return to Beechey Island. They had suffered much from heavy falls of snow, attended by

strong easterly winds, causing snow blindness throughout the party.

At Dealy Island they found that Mr. Krabbé had returned, and gone forward on the 26th, and Lieutenant Hamilton on the 21st.

Lieutenant Mecham observes that they were gratified by the receipt of letters, newspapers, and news of all kinds contributed by their shipmates, which, although it added to their pleasure, did not at all facilitate their rest.

Anxious, we can all understand him to be, to communicate this, his second piece of great success; first the document of Commander M'Clure, and now those from Captain Collinson. Onward he rushed, overtook Mr. Krabbé on the 30th near Point Griffiths, travelled in company to the Dépôt at Cape Cockburn, but, finding that he was able to move faster alone, left him to proceed at a more moderate pace, overtaking Lieutenant Hamilton with the dog-sledge off Cape Capel, distressed for food for the animals. They were recruited by some damaged pemmican, in the hope of advancing him with the news to Beechey Island; but, aided by canvas, he managed to keep up, and shortly after reaching Cape Hotham he transferred his sledge to Lieutenant Hamilton, and made the best of his way with the dogs to Beechey Island, reaching it at 4.30 A.M. of the 12th; 152 travelling hours from Dealy Island, and averaging on $61\frac{1}{2}$ journeys in an absence of 70 days, 18.8 geographical, or 21.7 statute miles at the *drag rope*!—a feat, as far as the human constitution and the courage and spirit of the British seaman is concerned, I think without a parallel.

I must now turn to Mr. Krabbé. Parting company

with Lieutenant Mecham (under special orders from Captain Kellett), on the 25th of April, he skirted the beach westerly, and reached the 'Investigator,' in the Bay of Mercy, at 10.30 P.M. on the 5th of May.

The tattered remains of the ensign and pendant were still flying; and such had been the accumulation of drift snow on the northern side of the ship, that they were enabled to walk in over her gunwale. There was also a great quantity on her decks, but not sufficient to prevent them from easily obtaining an entrance by the fore hatchway.

The ship's head was N. 30° W. true, the cable hanging slack under her bow; heeled about 10° to starboard and slightly by the head. No signs of pressure around were perceptible, although the oakum was hanging very loosely out of many of her seams. Her position was S. 12° E., 1400 yards from the cairn, and 426 yards from the nearest point of the beach, her stern being in eleven fathoms water.

On visiting between-decks everything appeared in good order and the lower deck pretty free from frost, but overhead, on the orlop beams, there were great accumulations of ice.

The water had leaked so much into the holds during the preceding summer, that they were now full up to the orlop beams forward, and within ten inches of them abaft, then solid ice. He commenced, in compliance with his Instructions, to clear the ship of all useful stores, and, in order to execute it more comfortably, repair defects of equipment, etc., brought his crew on board.

For the detail of his operations and the stores landed,

I must beg to refer to his written report. The duty being complete on the 11th of May, hatches secured, and the ship nearly as when visited, he commenced his return to Melville Island.

He observes :—" Both in entering and leaving the bay I paid marked attention to the state of the ice in it, and I am confident that there was no water made inside a line from Point Providence (Banks' Land) to Point Back during 1853, but that there was open water during that season for two or three miles in width along the whole line, and which finally met and arrested pieces from the pack around the neighbourhood of Cape Hamilton. Along the cliffs of Banks' Land also there was a belt of new ice from two to four miles wide, terminating in heavy pressure on Point Parker. The pack, from five miles north of Cape Hamilton to within ten miles of Melville Island, was somewhat heavier and older than found in crossing further eastward."

He reached Melville Island on the 26th of May, shortly after midnight, where his orders, left by Lieutenant Hamilton, awaited him. Very little game was seen ; Captain Kellett remarks, " Too early to see much." Three deer and four musk-oxen were seen near Cape Hamilton, and three deer at Cape Providence.

The remainder of his journey is comprised in that of Lieutenant Mecham. He reached Beechey Island, in company with Lieutenant Hamilton, on the 13th of June. He notices that about the 31st of May the thaw had commenced with drizzling rain, yet, notwithstanding very low temperatures, sore feet, etc. etc., not a single casualty was experienced by any of the travellers.

Lieutenant Hamilton, with the dog-sledge, was despatched by Captain Kellett to Dealy Island on the 8th of May, charged with orders for Lieutenant Mechem and Mr. Krabbé, to return from thence direct, *viâ* Cape Cockburn, to Beechey Island.

Reaching Dealy Island on the 18th, overland, from Port Griffiths, in the hope of finding musk-oxen or deer for his dogs, but in which he was unsuccessful, he deposited his despatches and commenced his return. He contrived, however, at Cape Bounty to kill two musk-oxen, and twenty-two ptarmigan supplied their own wants.

On the 21st he quitted Dealy Island, and reached the dépôt on Byam Martin Island on the 27th. Two dogs out of his five became useless; and the thaw, and other difficulties attending dog-sledges in wet weather, retarded him much, so that he was overtaken by the heavy sledges.

At Cape Cockburn one dog rejoined, but the other was lost. He returned, as before stated, with Mr. Krabbé, on the 12th. Four bears only were seen in his journey, and none came within shot, and he observes:—"Notwithstanding my local knowledge of the hunting grounds of Melville Island, and the time I was enabled to devote to shooting, not more than 300 lbs. of meat was procured, and I should have found great difficulty in supporting my small party of one man and five dogs on the much-talked-of 'resources of the country.'"

That these three officers, with their fine crews, did their duty, must be apparent to the simplest mind; but that they will receive all the weight due to such exertions they have only to look to their Lordships and their

superiors here for the true estimate of the endurance exhibited. The only gap apparent to me is the examination of Point Hearne; but Captain Kellett observes:—

“ You will see, by Collinson’s record on the 27th of August, 1852, that he was waiting for a start before I left Lowther Island; so that even had I picked up a record of his in the autumn of that year, it would have availed him nothing; news of his whereabouts would certainly have gone home last year by Inglefield, which would have been a great thing.

“ That Collinson’s officers left a cairn at Point Hearne is next to impossible, for I had eight parties backwards and forwards over that Point, some of them shooting there, others encamped there; it was also one of my positions for a *depôt*! It has on it plenty of materials for building a cairn. It has been gone over at all seasons, with and without snow.

“ Mr. Pim, on his autumn trip in 1852, for the purpose of placing his *depôt*, reached as far as Cape Providence, where he found a cairn (on its summit); in this cairn he found a pint bottle, with a leaf of a book on algebra in it, but on which there was nothing written. He describes the cairn as very old and moss-grown, so that I suppose it to have been one left by one of Parry’s shooting parties. M’Clure did not leave it.

“ Collinson in his record says, he will endeavour to go along the south coast of Prince Albert’s Land, and then up the strait (by the Esquimaux’ drawing, an inlet) between Wollaston and it, that one of his Lieutenants had explored for 130 miles.

“ Were he able to penetrate in that direction, and found

it actually a strait, he would reach the north coast of the island, in the deep bight west of Cape Walker, where his progress (his ship) would most certainly be arrested both by heavy ice and probably shoal water (as by Ommanney's report).

"Failing to get through, he would return, and endeavour to get easterly through Dolphin and Union Strait, near which he may have wintered.

"If he wintered there or in its neighbourhood, which is most probable, as you will see how late his season was before he could make any advance, he most certainly will have sent letters home, by way of America, in the spring of 1853, which could not have reached in time for Inglefield. But this time I am convinced that we shall hear of him; and *I think he is clear of Behring's Straits, for he would assuredly have time to get back last autumn.* Should he even have failed in getting back last year, and decided on leaving his ship this spring—were he indeed obliged to come this way—he would make for Port Leopold, the only place he knows of. Austin's departure he knew of, but not his return.

"You may depend upon it Collinson will never reach this strait *except by way of Port Leopold*, where information has been deposited by Pullen."

These are matters of *opinion*, founded on facilities not evident to my senses and on my measures *already adopted* for the relief of Captain Collinson; but although all Captain Kellett's observations are good *pro tanto*, yet I cannot lose sight of the difficulty he would have to encounter if he attempted to reach any of the Hudson's Bay posts.

With the proceeding of Captain Collinson's expedition I have but an indirect connection, viz. that of his relief. But if Commander M'Clure had raised an independent cairn, instead of depositing his notice in that of M'Clin-tock's, and Captain Collinson's officer had left sufficient notice at Cape Hearne or Cape Providence, then my instructions, or those of Captain Kellett, would have met the case. I understand that Lieutenant Pim's orders permitted of his searching southerly; and I cannot imagine why neither he nor Commander M'Clure did not take steps for informing Captain Collinson, as we have now done in 1854, of the facility of his return to England by the new *North-east Passage*. Had I obtained intelligence of Captain Collinson last year, I certainly would have directed the main force of this Squadron to search and travel round the entire distance of Peel's Strait, meeting them, by relief from my own division, by Cape Batty, Cape Walker, and down Peel's Strait.

With such information as I possess, all my measures have, to my conception, been satisfactorily taken. I fully agree with Captain Kellett on the one great point, and that must depend entirely on the safety of Captain Collinson's *ship* and on *his view* of the retrogressive movement. Unless therefore Captain Collinson's parties reach Beechey Island *before the 22nd of August*, I shall consider that he is retracing his steps, and cannot be expected by this route. Indeed, on very mature reflection, I think after his visit in 1852, *and failing to repeat it in 1853*, that he would not injudiciously waste time in such a pursuit late in this season.

On the 18th of June, Mr. Jenkins (Mate) of the

'North Star' reached the ship, bringing a reinforcement of six new hands. On the 19th, Lieutenant Hamilton, appointed to command the 'Pioneer,' arrived in the dog sledge, and on the 22nd Mr. M'Dougal, Master of 'Resolute.' Commander Osborn returned by dog-sledge to the 'North Star.'

June 23.—Our ten-day interval affords, maximum $44^{\circ}00'$; minimum, $18^{\circ}50'$; mean, $28^{\circ}06'2''$. Today the first true run of water was detected on the land. I caused a hole to be dug and a tin inserted, which very soon filled, affording us a luxury as compared with our vapid tank water.

June 25.—We have noticed that the weather here is more influenced at the actual moments of the moon's quartering than at the spring tides, which is opposed to my experience in other parts of the world. Today however the moon changed at noon, but the wind, which has prevailed strong, still continues in heavy gusts; about eight p.m. it abated, and at midnight ceased. But the tide does not appear to coincide today with its natural movements,—not rising at noon by six feet to its natural height, at midnight it flowed six feet above! Can this be due to an easterly gale affecting the tide in Lancaster Sound, as well as in the Queen's Channel, in contrary degrees; in one case preventing the flow, in the other aiding the ebb?

June 26.—The available force being now diverted to the extrication of the 'Pioneer,' Commander Richards and Messrs. Herbert and Toms started on a shooting excursion in the vicinity of the first tent. The season appears to be rapidly advancing; the well dug on Satur-

day, the 24th, has overflowed, and the water now runs rapidly, from the snow above; in addition to which, several tufts of saxifrage, which have been barely denuded of snow, have appeared in full bloom.

Several brent-geese flew over our heads on their northern migration; a pair alighted, but were too wary to permit any of our sportsmen to gain within range.

During the process of clearing the dock for the 'Pioneer,' I repeated my experiments on the powers of the men. Three men were engaged,—one with a pick to break up, and two with shovels to throw out. The ice was received in a tarpaulin, and thrown aside as weighed. In twenty minutes they turned out 1756 lbs., which is at the rate of 2·3 tons for three men per hour, or 1756 lbs. per man. These were indifferent men, taken without regard to strength.

July 2.—During the last week it has continued to blow with considerable force from east to south-south-east, but as yet we have not been able to detect the slightest movement of the ice; indeed our first intimation of any move in our favour must be from Beechey Island. I strolled over the heights overlooking the channel yesterday, and obtained a very clear view of the distant land near Cape Phillips, as well as the hill-tops of Hamilton Island. My elevation was about eight hundred feet above the sea, and Cape Phillips distant forty-five miles.

The thaw has set in so vigorously, and the rapidity of the inland torrents is so troublesome, that it is not safe to cross many of the ravines. Even the passage from the ship to the shore is becoming very troublesome, by reason of the deep sludge and water retained within the

ice-ridge thrown up in October. In some places it exceeds four feet, and brought adventurers into very awkward dilemmas. The main floe is also covered by very extensive surfaces of water, which the fissures are not sufficiently open yet to carry off. Commander Richards and party returned this evening without success. The few brent-geese and eider-duck are very shy; indeed, after passing the neck of this channel abreast of Cape Bowden, game appears to forsake the land. The experience of two seasons negatives any confidence as to subsisting travellers by the aid of the gun. It is here, as I have found in my visits to other parts of the world, one lucky day may afford full occupation and furnish a heavy supply of game, but that may not be repeated; nor have we any right, from such single events, to delude travellers with prospects of being sustained by a continuance of similar good fortune.

On the 4th Mr. Roche arrived with a dog-sledge from Beechey Island. I gather from Captain Kellett's letter that travelling has now become troublesome; he observes, under date of 3rd of July:—"It was, and is at this moment, *more swimming than walking* on the floe. A good deal of caution is necessary. Mr. Haswell had a narrow escape the other day; he fell in, and could not possibly have got out but by the assistance of another person.

"We have today twenty-one men on the sick list; some few standards that will not be off before we reach England. Out of this number three only are 'Investigator's' men, who have been ill nearly the last three years. The remainder of her men are looking right well,

much better than ours. The difference in health in these crews plainly shows it is not the climate, or description of provision, does the mischief, but the hard work in travelling. In 1852-53-54 'Investigators' had no travelling, and only sufficient exercise to keep them in health, whereas our crews made enormous journeys; and depend upon it, the constant dragging and pressure of the belt on a man's chest, for such long periods, is more injurious than any other work a man can be given to perform.

"What to give Jack, in recompense for his hard work, —whether a mark of distinction, situations for the old and worthy, or more money,—I cannot say, but I hope you will place their merits before their Lordships and the country, and not allow their doings to die on being paid off. This will be, at least, some pleasure to the poor fellows, for Arctic Jacks all read. I feel that I may safely say, that their labour cannot be exaggerated, and I fear an idea of it cannot be exaggerated."

In all these remarks I fully concur; and I hope that my efforts may be rendered needless by the *voluntary grant* from Government of an *adequate remuneration*, not only to this Squadron, but to all who have been included, not in *geographic amusement*, but in the more *distressing and continued searches for our missing countrymen*.

"All the healthy portion of 'North Star's' crew are up with you. Of my own crew I find, by medical returns (which I send to you now complete), there are thirty men fit for long service, No. 1's. Of these, *fifteen are officers*, so that I think you will deem it expedient to delay the volunteering until the steamer arrives."

I insert the following, to show that, at all events, the next in command seemed to think with me, that prudent forethought was necessary, and that, circumstanced as we are, *orders should precede the chance of events*; and those I had long contemplated.

"You ought now to write plain instructions for the officer commanding here,—what he is to do on arrival of vessels from England, in case of his breaking out before any can arrive; and what he is to do, suppose there should be open water and no vessel, in case of being carried down with the pack,—whether he is to wait at any particular rendezvous for you, and until what time. *But you know how uncertain everything is in this country, and how necessary it is to have orders to meet all contingencies.*"

It is evident some change of mind must have influenced these remarks, as my intention up to this moment and to the last will be, if such should be the pleasure of the Admiralty and not left to my judgment, to return Captain Kellett, with the necessary volunteers, to the 'Resolute.'

The following order was issued, directed to all Captains and Commanders, etc.:—

By SIR EDWARD BELCHER, K.T., C.B., *Captain of H.M.S. Assistance, and in Command of the Arctic Searching Squadron.*

(General Memorandum.)

As unforeseen events may drive the 'North Star' from her present ice-bound position at Beechey Island, and force her out of the Lancaster Strait,

The Senior Officer who may at that time be on board will repair first to Cape Warrender, then to Port Dundas, and finally back to Beechey Island.

Should the ice and weather unfortunately prevent the *possibility* of return to Beechey Island, the officer in command will *remain* at Port Dundas until the 10th of September.

After that date (10th of September) he will repair to Pond's Bay, and examine it closely (*at the anchorage*) for any vessel, steamer, or sailing vessel waiting there, and, if possible, leave records of such visit.

Failing to meet with any of this Squadron, or the steamer sent out for relief, he will proceed to England, reporting his proceedings to the Secretary of the Admiralty.

Should he meet with any of the steamers on their way hither, he will request to be towed to Port Dundas, there to await my arrival, or until the 10th of September, as above.

Given under my hand on board H.M.S. Assistance,.

*this 6th day of July, 1854, in Wellington
Channel.*

EDWARD BELCHER.

To all Captains and Commanders doing duty at Beechey Island Depot.

And in a letter of the 7th, the day following, thinking that Captain Kellett would inhabit the house on Beechey Island, I write:—"I herewith forward to you a document for the guidance of the person who may find himself in command, should the 'North Star' be driven out of the bay before my arrival, a circumstance not of likely occurrence before the end of August next."

On the 6th of July the 'Pioneer' was again afloat, and we succeeded in getting several revolutions out of the shaft, which was supposed to be materially injured, and eventually she was reported to be "fit for active service."

CHAPTER VII.

Thaw.—Pools of Water.—Cracks.—Final Preparations.—Extracts from Despatch.—Volunteers to proceed to the ‘Assistance.’—Effect of Tides.—State of the Ice.—Thoughts on Flitting.—Evils of Detention.—Withdraw the Crews.—Arrival of the ‘Phoenix’ and ‘Talbott.’—Final Instructions.—Tablet to M. Bellot.—Beechey Island.—Navy Board Inlet.—Lieveley.—Arrive at Cork.

THE ‘Assistance’ and ‘Pioneer’ were now in all respects ready for sea at any moment the ice may afford opportunity. The thaw has worked so rapidly during the last ten days, that the Crystal Palace has not only vanished, but all the ground about it is entirely denuded of snow. My duties here being complete, preparations were made for my journey to Beechey Island, and full instructions, in the spirit of the preceding memorandum, drawn up for the guidance of Commander Richards, under every imaginable difficulty.

On the 12th of July, shortly after eight A.M., with a fresh breeze from east-south-east, and drizzling rain, our party, consisting of four sledges and two boats, accompanied by Mr. Loney, Messrs. Nares, Jenkins, Grove, and Pim, left the ship for Beechey Island. The chronometers, under the special charge of Mr. Loney, were

placed in the 'Hamilton,' but the jarring over the rough ice induced me to transfer them to the gig, which was secured on one of our newly-constructed sledges, adapted for this special service.

With reference to the travelling, and state of the ice travelled over, I find the following rough notes. First, as to the chances of the break-up this season. The frequency of very extensive cracks, transverse to the Channel, or running east and west, seem to offer hopes of a general disruption, as soon as the ice about Beechey Island affords a space for southerly motion. Next, these cracks, which in some instances had opened to widths of fifteen and sixteen feet, rendered sledge travel very precarious. Vast quantities of water, resulting from extensive thaws, overlaid the ice, presenting almost the appearance of lakes. In many instances very deep holes occurred, but the general depth of the worst that we travelled over did not exceed fourteen inches. This depth, to those marching and dragging the sledges, was *assumed* as "hip-high," to which limit they certainly wetted; but the criterion, from which my opinion is deduced, is founded on the *fact* that the bottoms of the largest sledges were not more than fourteen inches in height, and the cargoes were not wet. One fact is worth a dozen assertions. Knee-deep would be eighteen inches, and hip-deep heavy wading. I know full well the depressing effect of ten inches' water, and to overcome that, during several hours' heavy drag, is killing. Once wet, the greater part of a man's courage is damped; and for that day, or until he can obtain a change on reaching his tent at night, his value at the drag-belt is to a considerable

extent damaged. Yet for weeks this has been the condition of those engaged in the long journeys of the latter part of the season.

Such are the ills, the difficulties, the wearing miseries entailed on those engaged on this Arctic search. Far from their ship, they feel that life can only be preserved by such continuous labour, such endurance, as we should hesitate to inflict on the horse, *if he could sustain it* (?). Let any of the hardiest of my readers try the effect of this on his own person for one day, under a temperature even of 24° , or 8° below freezing, and say, does double pay compensate for *ninety-five or a hundred continuous days of such fatigue*?

In some instances this surface water was seen to rush with considerable velocity to escape by the fissures; but in others, where a seal-hole only offered its funnel shape, the vortex was highly dangerous to man or beast, and at times attended with considerable noise.

The floe itself, at the fissures, appeared to maintain off shore a mean thickness of four feet, but seldom reached six or seven feet.

Between our two first tents, a distance of twenty geographical miles, the open cracks, exciting hopes of relief this season, occurred at intervals of nearly each mile. These were fortunately bridged by ice at narrow points, selected by the officers in advance, or occasionally floating masses of sufficient bulk were brought up to bear the weight, and with our accumulated force each sledge was separately passed over at railway speed.^x But for such chances we should have been compelled to unload and reload, ferrying our cargoes across, which would have

entailed considerable delay. Fortunately we were thus aided throughout our journey.

On reaching the Sergeant's command at Baring Rendezvous (Cape Bowden), I found that he and his aid had shot 108 dovebies, which, added to others shot by my worthy companions, Nares and Jenkins, *en route*, afforded our crews a comfortable addition to their rations, and also a supply for the ship. Two sledges having deposited their cargoes here, returned to the 'Assistance.'

At this depôt we had now accumulated sufficient rations, fuel, etc., to aid our entire crews, should necessity impel them to seek this route. About midnight on the 16th we entered Union Bay, where we were immediately discovered from the Island Station, and a party of twenty men, forwarded by Captain Kellett to aid our men, joined most opportunely, for they had not been applied more than ten minutes to the drag-ropes of the gig when her sledge broke down, and it was found necessary to drag her on her keel the remainder of the journey.

Whilst engaged on this duty, Mr. Jenkins, ever alive to his duty, and encouraging his men, received a very severe squeeze between the boat and a piece of ice, completely crippling him for many days.

About two A.M., on entering the floe of Erebus and Terror Bay, I was met by Captain Kellett, M'Clure, Pullen, and M'Clintock, and very shortly after safely lodged in the depôt enjoying the appellation of 'Northumberland House.' Indeed, from the care and attention manifest in all the preparations for my comfort by Captain Kellett and Pullen, I feel satisfied that I enjoyed myself infinitely more, and in my own way, than if I had been at

that instant near Charing Cross. A hot bath and rest relieved me. Of sleep I will say nothing ; but at my usual hour I found myself at breakfast beside a very comfortable fire.

Having now established my head-quarters at Northumberland House, or, more strictly speaking, with my pendant in my gig, for which purpose I brought with me her own crew, it may not perhaps be amiss to explain that unless the ship to which a Captain belongs is present, or represented by one of her boats, a question may arise as to the power of command ; and notwithstanding all precedents in Arctic service indicate this power to be carried from ship to ship in the event of accident, it does not unmistakably render it a law of the service, to which persons inclined to stir up discord may have recourse.

Measures were now adopted for meeting every emergency, in the event of the sudden appearance of vessels from England ; either for reoccupying or abandoning the vessels, as well as completing this depôt, to afford relief to any parties advancing, or even to subsist part of our own crews, should I find it necessary to despatch the 'North Star' to England at the earliest open water, remaining behind myself to await the extrication of the 'Assistance.' At present such was my intention, as may be gathered from my public despatch of the 15th of August, 1854, written at a moment when I had determined to send Captain Kellett home in command of the 'North Star.'

Having in the previous part of my narrative given the greater portion, I shall merely add such extracts as relate to my views up to that date.

"I have thought fit to erect here, on a commanding terrace in rear of this house, a substantial pillar, on which, stamped on leaden plates, the names and particulars relative to all who have died in the execution of their duty in this Expedition are recorded."

"At this present date no sign of open water cheers us, but I have the satisfaction of knowing that on the 6th H.M.S. Assistance and Pioneer were blown out. The latter grounded, and the engines could not be worked. She was soon got afloat, and my communication, dated three A.M. on the 10th, from Commander Richards, places the ship near Cape Grinnell, not far from the spot where the gallant Bellot met his untimely end."

"Considering that our northern and western searches have now terminated, I cannot but revert to the matters involved in this service entrusted to my direction. Although it was clearly explained, indeed most emphatically enjoined on me, that the discovery of new land had no part in my proposed duties, but the most rigorous and extended search for traces of the missing Expedition was alone to occupy my mind: still, the one object, in the region more particularly visited by me, could not be satisfactorily executed without the label of truth impressed on its every feature."

"With both views before me, the commanders of parties were directed to make straight courses to the utmost extent of travel from point to point, so far as provision would sustain them forward and back."

"On the homeward journey, they, with lighter loads, had time to review eligible lines of re-search, and the orders given to the return commissariat sledges filled up

all minor gaps, until the whole bore the appearance, at least, of a strict survey."

"But secondary to these main instructions was the effort to trace any communication with the ships under Captain Collinson's command, and to deposit adequate supplies to aid them, in retreat, at the most eligible positions."

"That our efforts have entirely failed in our first and most exciting search rests mainly, I believe, on the *conviction* that the 'Erebus' and 'Terror' did not advance westerly, or northerly, beyond Beechey Island; and it is a matter of no common importance to my mind, and adverse to any *intention* of a northern movement, that not one single *reliable* trace of detached sporting parties has been met with *northerly*. But, on the other hand, *easterly*, at points where we should naturally expect explorers would be averse to proceed, numerous traces of temporary sojourn abound, fatal, in my mind, to any idea of further western discovery, and specially in the direction of Wellington Channel."

"I admit, now that we *know* that navigable channels exist on either sides of Baillie Hamilton and Dundas Islands, that it was not unnatural to suppose that the ships might have escaped westerly by that route; but, speaking as a surveyor, or as a simple navigator, had I travelled from hence to the heights of Cape Osborn, or, further north, to Cape Hogarth, and beheld from thence, as I have done on the latter, and near the former, the clear panoramic view of Wellington Channel, I would not have deemed the Queen's Channel of sufficient importance to risk my *vessels for exploration*, nor of equal

value to the Byam Martin Strait, easier of approach, and, for every object *attainable*, more secure than the course by the Wellington Channel."

"I saw no features *from the eastern shores* to warrant any passage, nor is it fair to judge, from the very extraordinary season of 1852, that successive years would afford similar facility. *When* H.M.S. Assistance escapes out of Wellington Channel, then I may be able to make further remarks; but this I know, that 1853 and 1854 offered no invitations to the *judicious navigator* to try his chance late in the season, merely perhaps to enter the great bay where the 'Assistance' spent her dreary winter."

"My impression still clings to the escape out of Lancaster Sound, or to a fatal issue off Cape Riley, and that traces, if ever discovered, must be sought from the Esquimaux of the southern land (Cape Cockburn)."

"Having thus dismissed our disappointed hopes of traces where we have sought in vain, I arrive at the discovery of the position of H.M.S. Investigator and the present safety of her Captain and crew."

"However anxious I may be for a similar result to Captain Collinson and party, still I am thankful that the records place him in a region free from the perils of Arctic ice, in which Captain M'Clure considers no ship could endure. He had, at the latest account, two modes of escape, one by the road he came, the other—on which I place but little reliance, on account of its difficulties—by the land journey to some of the Hudson Bay posts; unless indeed he met Dr. Rae, in which case competent guides would materially alter the face of his difficulties."

“But I have not been unmindful of every course which he might adopt: the Melville Island chain is complete and adequately stored; at Cape Bunny, should he take up the Peel Strait, he will find supplies, and notices where to find more; at Port Leopold the house is not fit to shelter his people, but I think the materials for sustaining life are not wanting.”

“Here, the house, the position of the provisions, fuel, and stores, offer the home provided for Sir John Franklin, and where possibly I may yet have to prove that another winter can be endured.”

“Until the month of September is half expended I shall, if detained here, still cling to the hope of his joining us, and of the arrival of steamers adequate to our need in conveying so many persons to our country without the risk of one bottom.”

“*August 21, 1854.*—Open water in every direction. The non-appearance of H.M.S. Assistance, and the opinion here, that I ought to decide on the spot as to her future fate, compels me to close. If Captain Kellett should be blown out in H.M.S. North Star and reach England, I must refer to him for my latest intentions.”

Such were then my feelings on the 21st of August, and, unless pressed at that date by that screw—general opinion, I did not intend to have quitted my post until the 26th, intending first to learn the nature of my new Instructions, and then decide. It is immaterial to notice what were the arguments or opinions advanced, as the decision at which I arrived would render me alone responsible.

I made up my mind to proceed to the ship, taking

with me a suite of officers, of constitutions competent to withstand the possibility of being detained another winter, but not to be left unless it appeared probable that, in the ordinary course of nature, the 'Assistance' might drift out of Lancaster Sound. I had not the most remote intention of altering my design of securing the return of the entire crews to England this season, unless something in my expected orders should change this determination.

At the latest moment I believed that the ice was fast breaking up in Wellington Channel, and for the last few days I had been hourly expecting the report from the summit of Beechey Island, where a constant watch was maintained, that the 'Assistance' was in sight; but the result satisfies me that no reliable judgment can be formed, by any persons at Beechey Island, of what goes on beyond fifteen miles from it, and therefore I reject the admissibility of any opinions formed by those who did not accompany me.

In justice to the officers who volunteered I will name them:—Commander M'Clintock; Mr. Robert C. Scott, Assistant-Surgeon; Mr. Court, Acting-Master (Investigator); and Mr. Jenkins, Mate (North Star). These gentlemen volunteered for any service which I might direct. Dr. Domville also volunteered, but I considered his duties required that he should accompany the crew of the 'Resolute.'

Every precaution having been adopted to meet the chances of the 'North Star' being blown out, and Dr. Lyall having accompanied me for medical surveys, our party embarked in my gig at eleven A.M. on the 23rd of

August, and after a very heavy pull, reached Point Innes in four hours, and as the boat, so heavily encumbered, made indifferent progress, the supernumeraries volunteered to march forward to Cape Bowden.

Moving forward with the gig, accompanied by Dr. Lyall, we reached the floe edge about eight miles to the southward of Baring Rendezvous, and with five hands, the Surgeon, and myself, we commenced dragging the gig over the floe. We were ultimately assisted by Mr. Court, the Sergeant, and one man; but the work was attended with great labour, and we did not reach the Rendezvous until eight P.M. Notice had been previously forwarded by express courier to the 'Assistance,' directing a party to be advanced to meet me, and intelligence of their approach reaching me at eight A.M. the following morning, I sent to stop them until we came up, by which means much labour was saved. After a total interval of thirty-seven hours, I was again in command on board the 'Assistance.'

During this journey I saw clearly, that without a heavy gale, and probably a fatal result to the vessels, not the remotest chance of their extrication offered this season in time to reach England.

But my reasons probably had a sounder foundation; indeed I do not imagine were even thought of by those around me. The question, in my mind, was dependent on the tides; and I had well proved, by experiments conducted at Beechey Island, Cape Bowden, and the late Winter Quarters, that the flood course did not run from Lancaster Sound *through* Wellington and the Queen's Channel, but that the northern flood from the Arctic

Ocean *met* that from Lancaster Sound, as nearly as I could determine, at Cape Bowden, and much in the same manner as the Channel and North Sea tides meet about Dover. Hence it was clear, to my mind, that without a great effort of Nature to clear away the ice *northerly* as well as *southerly* of that *parallel*, antagonistic forces must continue to *compress* any loose floes together, and *perfect* a solid barrier in that, the narrowest, portion of Wellington Channel.

Such had been clearly Nature's operation during the interval which had elapsed since I travelled over this floe; every crack had been *pressed home*—*cemented afresh*, and so far had winter commenced, that the pools, resulting from late thaws, were covered with ice of such thickness as to bear the weight of men and boat.

In my notes I observe:—"Over an expanse of twenty-four miles these cracks had occurred in as many intervals; but now one solid barrier, cemented in many places by young ice, and where pools occurred on the floe, so hardly frozen as to bear both men and sledge, left but little hope of release until too late in the season to afford any prospect of reaching Beechey Island this year. And it was still a doubtful question, if this barrier should be shivered by any competent effort of Nature (such as that which overwhelmed poor Bellot last year), if our vessels could survive the inevitable pressure to which they would be subjected.

Looking to the present positions of the 'Assistance' and 'Pioneer,' on the upper portion of the channel, now completely barred to the southward, I found that the motions of the northern tides allowed of a play of forty

feet on the fissure into which they had been warped ; but the direction of this fissure was rather inclined to the chord of the bay off which they were fixed, and it terminated as it approached the southern point. This motion subjected the vessels to nips, which had already fractured the docks cut for them, and caused them to heel occasionally, at one time not without danger ; but the most troublesome piece eventually slipped under, and the abutting floes left them, until some new disturbance, temporarily secure ; such however was the thickness of the surrounding ice (seven feet), that any *decided nip* left no hope of saving the vessels : it was too stubborn to bend or break.

I had fully discussed all these subjects with those qualified to aid me, and no adverse opinion to my own was in the remotest degree offered ; there were none present who sought to become martyrs, nor were any inclined to make show of feelings by which they were not actuated. Indeed I feel it almost needless to remark, that whatever opinions might have been tendered, they would never have been advanced by me to shield me from that responsibility which belonged alone to the Commander of this Expedition.

Weighing fully the chances, and the apparent impossibility of any disruption of the ice, without a similar gale to that of the 18th of August last year—that period also having passed ; the danger if it did recur ; the lateness of the season, with unmistakable symptoms of early winter ; and the difficulties which further hesitation might entail,—I decided that I should best fulfil my pledge to their Lordships, and my duty to my country,

as well as to the crews under my command (for none volunteered to remain out), by withdrawing them, and proceeding to the 'North Star.' Confident I am that those vessels would cease to float before the autumn gales conclude; and from what I saw, and with the habit of judging on all such matters, as this narrative will evince, much more sanguinely than those associated with me, no hope of their southern drift can be entertained,—and for these reasons:—we know of no southern drift; we have never experienced northern gales; we do possess *facts* to prove the reverse; portions of the 'Breadalbane' reached our Winter Quarters, and that *without a gale*: that disaster, bearing date the 21st of August, occurring three days after the gale which disturbed the ice of this Channel.

By those only who have devoted their time and interest even to the merest tub that swims, and has been constituted a home, can our feelings be appreciated. It becomes the child of our adoption, the only object in these remote regions on which we lavish all our affections! After the excited hopes formed by our puny experience at Beechey Island of the then deemed certain rescue of the craft that would carry us home in comparative luxury, how dreadfully were we disappointed! and prepared as we were by months of anticipation, the preparation for parting was not effected so rapidly as imagined. Indeed, when the order issued "to prepare to flit," the efforts to save property only then appeared to have awakened us to the reality of the losses we were doomed to suffer. Notwithstanding the repeated sledge journeys, mainly, it is true, laden with instruments and

other public property, much that could not now be carried must remain to be sacrificed.

Many painful thoughts forced themselves upon my attention ; but the duty, severe as it was, must be executed. Nevertheless, on reflection, it was consoling to feel that the specific objects of the Expedition, as far as the powers of our crew were concerned, had been carried to the extreme bounds of *reason*.

I am aware that I have the credit of exacting from those who are associated with me the full amount of labour which my own frame, impelled by the customary excitement of "command," could endure. But, regarding the particular service on which we are engaged, I cannot imagine it possible that any duty would be deemed onerous, even if it hazarded life or limb ; and it affords me great satisfaction here to express that in every instance where selection has been made, I have been fully and ably supported, and most especially by my energetic Second, Commander Richards.

Our mission was not directed to the discovery of new lands, or of the North-west Passage. It was simply to search for traces of our missing countrymen "on reasonable and reliable sources ;" not to push, for selfish ends, on lines of coast where no reasonable hope could exist or seemed to promise, nor by a desire of making a show on paper of extended discovery, to undermine the constitutions of my men, who might yet be doomed to endure another winter in this trying, desolate region.

This latter subject, too, was one which was pregnant with evil ! So long as a fair and exciting object could be entertained, demanding even the most intense exer-

tion as well as privation, the spirits and high courage of our energetic men were easily maintained, and I feared not the chances of disease. But one season had now passed simply in the labour of extricating ourselves. Another, sickened by failure, or even protracted delay, would cast a damp which could only be comprehended by those concerned. The question naturally resulting to the officer in command would be one simply of judgment. Is the sacrifice of life to be weighed against the loss of timber, which, if returned to England, as all previous experience has shown, is of no further value as a sailing-vessel, but simply to be sold "to break up"?

If the vessels had been extricated last season, the 'North Star' alone would have carried to England the crew of the 'Investigator' and invalids of the Squadron. Rumour, to suit some interested purpose, had given out my intention to return to England, but nothing contained in my letters or despatches to Government warranted such an assertion. The measures contemplated would have placed the different vessels in ports along the western side of Baffin's Bay, from whence it was intended to make inland journeys in spring, in order to communicate with the natives, and endeavour to learn from them whether they had seen the vessels *sail out of* Lancaster Sound, or whether any distressed individuals had been encountered on that shore, setting at rest the rumours which were obtained from the Pond's Bay tribe in 1849.

On the full moon of the 25th of August, at six A.M., the crew of the 'Assistance' allotted to the cutters and a life-boat belonging to the 'Pioneer' were assembled in travelling order on the floe. The decks had been cleanly

swept, the cabins put in order, and, accompanied by Commander Richards, the ship fully inspected; the hatchways were already securely caulked down, leaving only the small aperture to my cabin. The colours, pendant, and Jack were so secured that they might be deemed "*nailed to the mast*," and the last tapping of the caulker's mallet at my companion hatch found an echo on many a heart, as if we had encoffined some cherished object. Accompanied by Commander Richards, we silently passed over the side,—no cheers, indeed no sounds escaped, our hearts were too full! Turning our backs upon our ships, we pursued our cheerless route over the floe, leaving behind our home, and seeking, for aught we knew, merely the change to the depôt at Beechey Island.

My own sledge crew carried me rapidly to Cape Bowden, when, after a rest, the gig was immediately pushed forward to the floe-edge, and in twenty-five hours from the period of quitting, I again became the tenant of Northumberland House.

The remainder of the crew, under Commander Richards, experienced heavy labour dragging the boats over the ice, and eventually, having left behind on the floe a great quantity of luggage, reached about twelve hours later, not however without leaving behind a party of eighteen men, which the boats could not carry, and who were compelled to travel to Cape Innes by land.

During my absence matters had been so far expedited by Captain Kellett, that about noon on the 26th of August the house was left, and sealed, complete with every kind of supply for sixty men for one year. Within, in a

powder-case, every necessary document and information was secured. Behind the house, in the pillar erected to the memory of all who had died on this Expedition, further information was deposited.

The crews of the 'Assistance,' 'Resolute,' and 'Investigator' were now embarked together on board the 'North Star,' and some of our boats being yet absent, we slipped our hawsers and made sail westerly to meet them.

It was about this period last year that H.M.S. Phoenix quitted for England. Some doubted her escape from the ice in Lancaster Sound, and the prevailing "pressure from without" was, that we had no time to spare. What my own feelings were can be readily imagined, when I found myself with officers and crews crammed together on the chance of one frail bark.

Some, it is true, had been four winters in the ice; but I consider that the sledge crews of our Squadron were infinitely weaker in constitution. Such then being our preparation to hazard the buffeting of Baffin's Bay, we had fairly taken our departure. The day was cold and gloomy, attended with snow and haze, and I had just taken possession of my cabin, when "a steamer towing a barque" was reported in the direction of Cape Riley. They proved to be the 'Phoenix' and 'Talbot,' with further supplies, and Instructions from the Admiralty. Most fortunately they reached at this moment, as a few hours later we should probably have missed them, my determination, then taken, being to make for Port Leopold and the southern shore, and hauling across from Admiralty Inlet, to visit Port Dundas.

It will now be necessary for me to allude specifically to the Instructions sent to me by the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty, No. III., Vol. I., page 9.

In the second paragraph their Lordships direct my special attention to the withdrawal *at once* of the whole force now employed in the search of Sir J. Franklin; they refrain from issuing any positive Instructions of how I am to act, or what steps to take, as they must depend on the knowledge I possessed.

The third paragraph:—(1.) “The crews of the ‘Enterprise’ and ‘Investigator,’ if at Banks’ Land, to be withdrawn.” I read those orders as explicit, had I not taken that step (at this late period of the season impossible), to abandon the ‘Resolute.’ “If any trace has been discovered, or any *further search* should be deemed feasible, then I may consult the Seniors of Her Majesty’s Ships on the question of *further search*.” No such case arose. Their Lordships anticipated the *impossibility* of abandoning the ‘Resolute’ this season; but *that* I had remedied by my decision, and it was only under the *impossibility* that she was to remain.

The paragraph relating to Captain Collinson I had clearly met by all my arrangements, and I deemed it, under the information I possessed, injudicious to leave a vessel at Beechey Island.

Their Lordships finally acquaint me, that their *great object* is to recall, with the *least possible delay*, the whole of the *ships or crews* so employed, *if it can be done; if not possible to do so*, they leave it to my judgment to do that which appears to me necessary, adding, “All their Lordships can do is to confide in your judgment; and

they authorize you to take such steps, and give such orders, and to make such exchanges of officers and men, as you may deem necessary for carrying their wishes into effect."

Thus it will be manifest to my readers that the most full and complete powers here assigned to me had been contemplated and carried out before their arrival, simply because my communications, from the moment of nomination to this command, all indicated *a precise duty*,—first, to command and prosecute whilst *sensible hope* remained; next, not to drive on helter-skelter to pursue discovery; next, to determine when, or where, further search was to cease; and, finally, not to hesitate in abandoning the vessels, when I considered that step was prudent.

But, upon the matter of *abandonment*, my orders are explicit, merely the withdrawal of crews ('Investigator' excepted), leaving the vessels in a condition to be *re-occupied*, should any part of my Instructions warrant such an injudicious step. For myself, foreseeing difficulty as to *command*, if I *abandoned*, I brought my gig with my pendant, dating all orders from her, and considering myself simply "on duty until the further pleasure of my Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty should be made known."

By the arrival of these vessels, I was enabled to land a few more provisions, clothing, and four boats, which, with the 'Mary' yacht, left by Sir John Ross, would aid any party arriving to reach Pond's Bay.

In my despatch to their Lordships I observe:—"I trust, from the contents of my previous despatches, that

it will be manifest to their Lordships that I could not entertain any idea of leaving behind any vessel, officer, or crew here, to prosecute a duty, I trust, complete, but on which our united force and well-trained officers had prosecuted their researches to the extreme to which human endurance could be carried; nor could I possibly frame orders, or, in my then condition, select any officer to carry them into effect, without some definite Instruction as to the service *for which* he was to be employed, inasmuch as the only objects to which my attention was directed were, "search for Sir John Franklin, and relief to Captain Collinson, *if not heard of.*"

"But I trust the ~~latter~~ has already reached a place of safety, and that relief from England, taking into consideration the *caches* laid out, will, under a very mature consideration of the whole circumstances, be better arranged by a steamer direct from England, under a proper officer, fully in time to meet any exigency, and unshackled by towing transports."

In the discussion of these matters in England it reads very simple, that particular provision is to be made, that stores have been forwarded, and that officers and men are to be left out to carry forward any service which may appear to me to be called for; indeed confidential letters, which were but mere traps on which I was to wreck myself, boldly urged the prosecution of rash unconsidered adventures adverse to my Instructions.

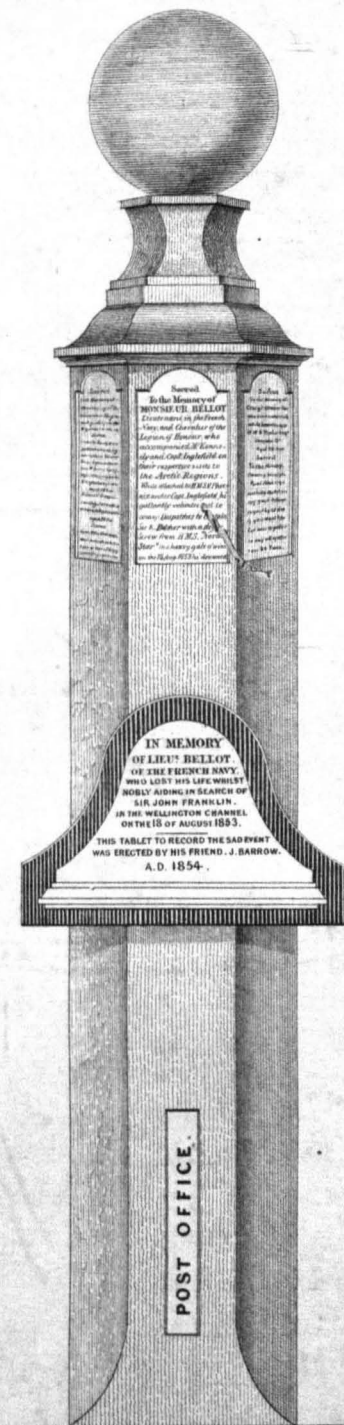
All these matters might have perplexed, but certainly did not change, my mind; moreover, I was unable to trace amongst any of my qualified associates any inclination for Quixotism. By the first intention of my In-

structions, a steamer and one sailing vessel might remain behind. This clearly indicated one of the tenders, and possibly the 'Talbot,' but, if taken literally, then the 'Phoenix' and 'Talbot,' reducing the conveyance of the assembled crews again to the 'North Star.' This was clearly injudicious, and not to be entertained. The *three* vessels were not adequate to properly accommodate and provide water for the crews.

The forwarding of stores, excepting for deposit at Beechey Island, it has already been observed, could not relieve any parties detained to the westward of that position, except by a steamer advancing this *autumn*, if the ice should open, or by a *competent* sledge force next spring. If I left a small crew behind, no such *competent* force would be available.

Again, as to the selection of officers. Those who had been fully tested, and were known to be capable of carrying out my views in their true intent and in conformity with my confidential Instructions, must be sought amongst the volunteers of my own particular set. Here again I must be guided by the opinions of medical men; and, as I have mentioned in my despatches, the selection would have fallen on Commander M'Clintock. He, by conference in March, had been made fully acquainted with all that was necessary; he was the oldest practical Arctic officer; and I had full confidence that his appointment would be most satisfactory, not only to those around me, but also to their Lordships.

Such then being the condition in which we were found by the 'Phoenix,' I have not, even in my public despatches, in the remotest manner alluded to matters



Scale. One inch to a foot.

which seemed to have made more impression on the minds of those around than they did on me.

This was the report of Captain Inglefield and his Ice-master on the state of the ice in Baffin's Bay and mouth of Lancaster Sound, or, in plain terms, the doubt of the vessels passing out of Lancaster Sound and clearing the ice of Baffin's Bay without encountering very heavy difficulties; indeed, it appeared to be mere matter of chance, from the various dangers into which the 'Phoenix' and 'Talbot' had been driven (by Captain Inglefield's public letter), that they had been rescued from disasters from which we could not have relieved them, and that their mission to us would, in such case, have proved entirely abortive.

It required no argument with me to determine what my duty was; unfortunately time was not available to carry out what the service prescribed. I had but one steamer, and that vessel must accompany and aid the sailing vessels until clear of the ice of Baffin's Bay, otherwise I should have sent an officer and crew into the 'Talbot' to take home direct the crew of the 'Investigator'; as in the event of accident to them, I had heard enough from those around me to feel that such a topic would not fail to be worked with powerful effect to my annoyance.

The landing of boats and further additions to the depôt entailing some delay, the vessels were made fast to the floe; I therefore took advantage of this detention to affix to our cenotaph a marble tablet to the memory of Monsieur Bellot, brought out by the 'Phoenix.' This tablet had been executed for Mr. Barrow, of the Admi-

rally, in token of his esteem for this gallant volunteer, and was finished barely in time to go out by the 'Phoenix;' his wish was to have it placed as near the spot of the fatal disaster as convenient; but I trust that the position, in the company of our other deceased members of the Expedition, may not be deemed inappropriate. Having assembled the officers in command, and drawn up the Marines of the 'Phoenix' in front of the pillar, the customary compliment of three volleys, due to an officer of his rank, was paid at the moment of completion.

I will conclude this piece of service by the extract from my public despatch.

"These matters arranged, fresh notices added to those in the Dépôt House (well secured in a powder case), fifteen tons of coal placed ready at the house (brought from Cape Riley, where it had been landed with provisions from 'Breadalbane'), one excellent patent cooking-range, adapted for seventy or one hundred men, in complete order under a temporary kitchen, a good stove within, and indeed every comfort which I could expect for myself had I *wintered* at this island, all of which had occupied the constant attention of Captain Kellett and myself for the last three months, I directed Captain Inglefield to receive Captain Kellett and myself, with my gig-crew and retinue, on board H.M.S. Phoenix; and portions of the crews of the other vessels of my Squadron having been distributed on board the 'North Star' and 'Talbot,' we again cast off from the floe, shaping a course for Port Leopold."

At that position I intended, if possible, to land, make good the deficiencies, and leave a boat and records; but

in this I was disappointed, the floe barring a nearer approach than fifteen or twenty miles from the nearest part of the island.

This forcibly brought to my mind the utter fallacy of any opinions formed on ice matters, and more especially as to the distance of open water, so constantly asserted to be viewed from elevated positions. Some had ventured to see up Barrow Strait, and that open water extended from Beechey Island to the southern coast.

But leaving opinion to its fate, what was the *fact*? Until we reached one hour's run with vessels in tow, the floe-edge was not discovered from the crow's-nest,—and how distant? *Certainly not five miles!* That ice would not permit Barrow Strait to be relieved until it drifted away. Are we entitled, after such a glaring fact before us, to attach any credit to imagination, or that Barrow's Strait, at the time we left, exhibited any ground for hope that the ice would rush out and deliver to us the vessels on which our thoughts were so anxiously bent?

Giving up all further idea here, and impressed with the probability of another severe and early winter, my thoughts led me to seek Port Dundas; not indeed to risk the remains of our Squadron, but to communicate by boat with the natives, and ascertain, if possible, whether they had ever seen the 'Erebus' or 'Terror' sail up or down. Further, I had been given to understand that some one on board the 'Phoenix' had recognized the natives as belonging to the Pond's Bay tribe, and, under my original interest in the story raised by them in 1849, I was most anxious to probe this matter more deeply; and as they had found a purchaser for one of the records

stolen from Cape Warrender, it occurred to me that if they possessed other papers, I might, by the expenditure of some trivial stores, particularly of timber, obtain all that they possessed, and amongst them possibly find some clue to the fate of our missing countrymen. Most certainly I was prepared to go further, and, should their information lead to any inference of unfair measures on the southern coast, adopt, perhaps, very strong measures to completely carry out my duty.

On entering Croker Bay, all these matters received a serious check by the ice having closed in upon the land; and taking into consideration the reports of the ice besetting the mouth of Lancaster Sound, I determined to seek the only outlet which the experience of former Arctic navigators pointed out as likely to be available. Each had experienced a strong current setting easterly along the southern side of the Strait, and the 'Enterprise' had, during an adverse gale blowing up the Strait, been drifted forty miles to windward in twenty-four hours. This fact clearly indicated to my mind the cause of the ice now pressing on the northern coast. It was simply the eddy of that great current, caused, in all probability, by ice abutting about Cape Warrender and extending thence into Baffin's Bay.

I immediately decided on following up the tail of this ice and rounding it. In this decision the Ice-master and others did not coincide with me, it is true; but they had not studied these matters, and had no reasons to give. As we reached the southern edge, I clearly saw indications of an opening; and the Ice-master, at length wavering, hailed from the crow's-nest, "If you intend, Sir,

to take the ice, we may as well try it at once." Such was my decision : I felt certain of success ; I even offered a nominal bet that before night we should be clear of ice. So it proved.

I then determined on visiting the dépôt at Navy Board Inlet, and running in between the Wollaston Islands, anchored off the place, rather in scant water. The provisions had been plundered by the natives. The scene of mischief and wanton spoliation could only be appreciated by those who witnessed the remnants of an immense supply of human food, cask-staves, hoops, bags, preserved meat tins, tobacco, flour, boots, and every imaginable necessary for Arctic service. But what appeared to me most extraordinary was the peculiar mode of destruction,—such as preserved meat tins cut longitudinally, and the coal bags even, as they were detached separately from their ice-bound cementation, also treated in a similar manner. It occurred to more than one spectator that there was great *method* in this general destruction, and that each bag must have been cut at the moment it was deposited, or how could the *underlying* bags be so treated ? The 'Phoenix' had previously taken on board nearly all the serviceable provision and tobacco ; the coal, therefore, being useless to others and important to the service, was embarked, and measures adopted for completing water.

Our detention here, all the vessels having anchored too near the shore, had nearly proved disastrous. A strong breeze set in, they drove, and but for the aid of steam, I much doubt if they would now exist. But the only matter of interest occurred in the attempt to assist

the 'North Star:' she had, on her former visit in 1850, parted her cable, leaving an anchor behind; during the process of aiding her, on parting a second time, on this visit, her warps fouled the *lost anchor*, which was *recovered* and substituted.

Eventually, we succeeded in extricating the vessels, and steered for Pond's Bay, off which, not choosing to incur further risk, I left the sailing vessels, and steamed in to search for natives. After a very diligent inspection, without finding natives or any traces of recent visitors, I examined the watercourse and valley, where the remains of an old village stood. In one of the huts, similar in every respect to those examined by me at Village Point (referred to in page 96, Vol. I.), and evidently constructed by a tribe of similar habits, I found a skull, an English knife, and an iron-tinned spoon, rolled up in a fur and bird-skin dress. These were brought to England; but the skull having been declared by Professor Owen to be that of a female, destroyed any possible connection with our countrymen, notwithstanding appearances about the teeth and gums would otherwise have indicated disease to which civilized beings are more disposed.

The watercourse was unfrozen, and at this period ran in a full clear stream, very convenient for watering, and had moreover at its mouth an artificial dock where a boat could safely lie. One cask-stave with the broad arrow, and several preserved meat tins, denoted either the visit of a vessel of war or the plunder from Navy Board Inlet, with which this creek doubtless communicates by inland navigation.

Steaming out, we rejoined our consorts, and, taking

them in tow, pursued our course southerly, intending, if possible, to make further search about the Clyde and Cape Walsingham; but many powerful reasons prevented. In the first instance, the ice rendered it dangerous whilst hampered by our consorts; their safety was of more importance than any chances where no reasonable hope of success could be advanced. Next, unless I altered the arrangements, removed the officers, and took the separate command of the 'Phœnix,' sending the remainder home, I could not satisfactorily pursue the course I contemplated. Eventually, the 'Phœnix' met with an accident, which destroyed all further confidence in her powers, by uncoupling her screw-shaft, bending it, and rendering her further services for a time doubtful. In addition to this, her supply of coal had not yet been removed from the 'Talbot,' and could only be effected in some safe harbour. A dog driver from Upernavik was yet on board, and forty-five tons of coal were also deposited at Lievely; but for these latter points, nothing would have induced me to visit Lievely, but that port I now decided to seek.

We were fortunate enough to thread the middle ice without difficulty, even with our consorts in tow; which fact clearly proves, to my mind, that the visit to Beechey Island can be made safely, and more expeditiously, by adopting our homeward track, in the latter part of August, than by the doubtful, dangerous, and troublesome mode of proceeding by Melville Bay. No vessel, to my knowledge, has yet failed to reach England from Lancaster Sound in September, but we know the very doubtful success attending the course by Melville Bay.

As we neared Greenland the increasing breeze rendered it necessary to cast off the tow-lines and proceed independently. The 'Phoenix' reached Lievely on the 6th of September, about four A.M., where we were welcomed by the authorities with the customary attentions so repeatedly noticed by the several officers commanding these Expeditions.

As the provisions withdrawn from Navy Board Inlet were likely to prove a nuisance on any rise of temperature, and would be objected to by our seamen, and learning from the Inspector that many Greenland families at some of the settlements had perished last season from hunger, I directed a portion to be landed for the use of these distressed people, who would deem the provision we should condemn as unfit for consumption a perfect luxury.

On our being rejoined by the 'Talbot,' and shipping her coal, we quitted Lievely, not however without incurring further dangers, which were fortunately avoided by the knowledge we had obtained from our former survey of this port. The dangers, difficulties, and other disagreeables attending these visits, determined me not to incur further responsibility or delay by touching at any other ports of Greenland. I therefore directed the sailing vessels, in the event of parting company, to repair to England and report themselves, according to the practice of the service, on arrival.

The equinoctial gales determined me to seek Cork, in order to replenish coal, and to repair with the utmost expedition to the Admiralty. On the morning of the 28th of September we sighted the port. Here another failure

of the engines tantalized us for a short period; but I had just determined on proceeding in my gig, when they resumed their work, and about nine A.M. I had the satisfaction of paying my respects to Rear-Admiral Sir W. F. Carroll, the Commander-in-Chief, and shortly after noon, accompanied by Captain Kellett and M'Clure, proceeded by rail for London.

I should not have deemed it of sufficient importance to myself, as regards my professional character at the Admiralty, and more particularly in the opinion of those who selected me for command, and are satisfied that I did not err in the true intent of my obligation in the completion of its duties,—but it is due to the unprofessional part of the public, to notice what I perhaps was too careless of making any display of, at the subsequent formal investigation, as to the obedience to my Instructions from my Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty, in the withdrawal of my crews.

It has been imagined by unprofessional readers that I was, in some degree, hampered by some implied order to be guided by those serving under me, and that any difference of opinion was to serve for damage to me, or *quasi*-exaltation of those who might by chance prove to have made a better guess on probabilities.

But no man in his senses, or who knew my professional course over an independent career of twenty-four years, and readily assuming the responsibility of far greater powers, would believe in such absurdity, or that I would have retained command under such degradation.

Nor am I entering now upon any defence, for the judicious termination of my command has never been called

in question ; I mean therefore simply to observe on the early, as well as final resolve, to withdraw the crews,—to use a recorded expression,—“and when you judged you thought all had been done which could be done for the attainment of these objects, you were not to linger out, but to bring your crews home ;” and further, “when you judged you could do no more, would have the courage to act on your judgment, and to return home.”

Simply, then, I stood with a recorded guarantee before the country, that the issue of the search was vested in me, and that with me it was to terminate. Assuredly I was not to linger out, and thus, by accumulating expense, to render it interminable ; nor yet by oscillating conduct as regarded the vessels, for that matter was fully understood before sailing, or further to jeopardize the crews when I formed an opinion they should be withdrawn, merely to serve the feelings of any men, required to desert these purchased masses of timber, when I thought such a step desirable, for really the pendant flew *merely to ensure martial law*,—they were not portions of our Navy beyond this emblem, and the discipline which it entailed.

CHAPTER VIII.

Import of Instructions.—Further Search impossible.—Leaving the ‘Talbot.’—Dr. Rae’s Information.—Finds undeniable Traces.—Dissection of Report.—State of the Bodies.—The Quantity of Relics.—List of Articles found.—Opinion on the Information.—Impressions of 1850–1852.—Official Letter.—Captain Collinson’s Discoveries.—Opinion on the North-west Passage.—Rewards due for Discovery.

I COME therefore simply to the Instructions. What were they founded on? The report of a Committee on the proceedings of my predecessor, and in that document the following occurs (paragraph 16):—“If, on the other hand, Wellington Strait is found open and navigable on the arrival of the Expedition, in the summer of 1852, we think one of the sailing ships, with a steamer, might proceed at once to take advantage of this opportunity, if the officer commanding should judge such a measure safe and prudent, and be thus placed in winter quarters in a more favourable position for commencing the land search in the spring of 1853, but with the most strict injunctions not to advance to such a distance as to endanger their return to the depôt, or their communication with it *that year*; and it should be enjoined with equal strictness, that, in the event of any irreparable disaster to

the ships so proceeding, or *if they should be too firmly fixed in the ice to be extricated during the summer of 1853, they are to be abandoned, and the crews brought down to the dépôt.*"

With this opinion of the Committee, their Lordships determine on the Expedition, which I was appointed to command. About eighty days intervened for explanation, and my Instructions contain the consolidation thereof. (*Vide* Vol. I. p. 1 *et seq.*)

Paragraph 2 does not indicate any reference to secondary opinion, but distinctly defines the confidence entrusted to me.

At paragraph 4 the extract of the report of the Committee is alluded to:—"The plan of future operations there proposed is to be considered as the basis of your operations."

At paragraphs 10 and 11 it is distinctly intimated that my Instructions to the officer despatched to Beechey Island are to be stringent—to be in accordance with my *obligations*, referred to in paragraph 2, and even to admit of his return to England in 1852!

At paragraph 15 the intention conveyed by their Lordships is not, that, in case of my absence, the officer who succeeds may proceed as he pleases; but, in conformity with my *obligations*, he shall carry out faithfully the mission confided to me until I resume the command.

The 20th and final paragraph distinctly commands the return, on the question of provision, in the summer of 1854.

The orders of 1853 do not vary in any manner from

the preceding; but should the question of *further search* be entertained, certain means of sustenance are forwarded.

At paragraph 2 of these second Instructions, it is clearly intimated that having done all that could be done in the matter of *search*, the Expedition was to be abandoned. And if such likewise should be my opinion, after mature consideration with the Senior Officers under my command, I was to abandon.

This simply refers to my opinion formed, *after consultation with all the officers* in whom I placed confidence, as to *further search*. But that decisive opinion had been given *before* I asked for it.

But it is not for me to state on whom I confided, or what were the opinions. It is universally conceded that "all had been done that could be done." As the Commander of that Expedition, I was in communication with all: I knew their secret feelings, and on those feelings I acted, on my own responsibility, without insulting any one for obtrusive advice. I did not leave any one to suffer for my decision; but boldly, and as I had the temerity to believe, generously, putting my neck into the halter, issued my orders in my proper province, as it was expected I would do by those who confided in my courage to face any difficulty which looked me in face. Had I been weak enough to yield, and disaster had ensued, where would my character now be? It requires no prophet to conclude how I should have been dealt with.

At paragraph 3 full confidence is renewed, and to that confidence I have responded by the determined act which,

I trust, has met with the approval of every man of courage or of common sense,—and of which I bear *written evidence from competent authority*, as well as from the highest ornaments of both professions, in language too strong to allow of insertion here.

But as regards any volunteer to remain out, that was my province to decide. I could not so far forget my duty, as the chief, to allow any one to creep between me and danger.

If the ‘Resolute’ and tender remained, it must be clear to professional minds that the chief must also remain at Beechey Island until the next season.

All this I foresaw in October, 1853, and the confusion which would involve any hesitation on my part.

And what is the result of my judgment? The ‘Resolute’ is as safe where she is, as if she had been moored for ever at Melville Island. Would any one dream of her extrication, if she had, in obedience to my original order, been abandoned there?

It is almost unnecessary to revert to my final Instructions, as they reached after I had quitted and had taken my measures; but they incontestably prove *the propriety of my decision*, and that all my grounds for action were *well founded*. As to *further search*, that never could be contemplated by any reasonable individual who had the interest of his country at heart, or who was entrusted with plenary powers, if he thought there was any reasonable direction in which they could be exercised.

As regards the ‘Resolute,’ I knew enough to enable me to decide, and events have proved my decision judicious. I knew the difficulties of 1850 to 1853. I had

certain proof that, after the ice broke up, no man or boat could travel over such an expanse of loose pack as intervened between the 'Resolute' and the land, and therefore, that she must remain to the chances of release in September, or later;—with what probability of success, the ice which bound Leopold Island on the 27th of August will best satisfy Arctic navigators, especially when they *know* that the *first winter warning* had been demonstrated in Wellington Channel, and that to the imaginations of some, who perhaps talk most of these matters, it was endeavoured to excite my apprehension that we should not clear Lancaster Sound or Baffin's Bay that season.

Another yet more important question has not been raised, and for this simple reason,—I required no excuse for obedience to the *known intent* of my Instructions. I did not call for the evidence of the *highest authorities* to raise a doubt before a military tribunal as to their *powers*, and the Investigation was merely what I was instructed to consider as "compliance with the custom of the Service."

But with the public, which may be misled by the assumption that one of the vessels could have been left as a *depôt* at Beechey Island, I will venture to remark,—that officers who have been long accustomed to command independently, know full well all the difficulties they must be prepared to encounter, and they too often discover that men who volunteer *headlong* never give to the world the insuperable difficulties which *they know* must render any accordance to their wishes impossible, and entailing on the Commander of an Expedition alone all the censure of *accordance to their volunteer*.

In the case before us, I will imagine that I had decided on leaving out the 'Talbot' with a *reduced crew*. Such a measure inevitably entailed on *mé delay* until she was cut in, and, *to my judgment*, safely placed for the winter. I set aside the bugbears raised, as to the asserted difficulties in clearing Lancaster Sound; but be it remembered that the safety of the 'North Star,' in 1852 to 1854, in that position, was determined by others, and fully acknowledged by me, *to be doubtful or dangerous*; that in the winter of 1852 this was proved to be fearfully *true*; moreover, that, aided by the Squadron force of 176 men, she only reached the water on the 21st of August!

What opinion, then, would be formed of my judgment, or of the fulfilment of the pledge under which I sailed? That I did not err in its conception, I give the words themselves, expressing full approbation of my views.

"You were sent out in the last hope (if hope it could be called) of saving Sir John Franklin and his companions; to discover some traces of their fate; to meet and aid, so far as possible, the Expeditions of Captains Collinson and M'Clure; and when you thought all had been done which could be done for the attainment of these objects, you were not to linger, but to bring your crews home."

"I selected you because I thought you had energy to do what could be done; next, judgment to come to a proper decision; and, when you judged you could do no more, would have the courage to act on your judgment, and to return home."

"As far as I am informed, I have been satisfied with your conduct on all these important points."