

A  
LETTER

TO

VISCOUNT PALMERSTON, K.G.

FROM

LADY FRANKLIN.

WITH AN APPENDIX.

---

*SECOND EDITION.—WITH A CHART.*

---

LONDON:  
JAMES RIDGWAY, PICCADILLY,  
1857.

---

*Price One Shilling.*

Sketch  
of the Shores of  
Arctic America,  
shewing the Track

TO KING WILLIAM ISLAND  
by Behring Strait & by Baffin Bay.

The Track by Behring Strait

The Track by Baffin Bay



Area to  
be Searched

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THE following Letter, not originally intended for circulation, is now published at a critical moment (by permission of Lord Palmerston), in the hope of engaging such a degree of sympathy in the subject of it, as may come in aid of favourable dispositions in Her Majesty's Government.

January 28, 1857.

60, Pall Mall,  
December 2, 1856.

MY LORD,

I TRUST I may be permitted, as the widow of Sir John Franklin, to draw the attention of Her Majesty's Government to the unsettled state of a question which a few months ago was under their consideration, and to express a well-grounded hope that a final effort may be made to ascertain the fate and recover the remains of my husband's expedition.

Your Lordship will allow me to remind you that a Memorial\* with this object in view (of which I enclose a printed copy) was early in June last presented to, and kindly received by you. It had been signed within forty-eight hours by all the leading men of science then in London who had an opportunity of seeing it, and might have received an indefinite augmentation of worthy names had not the urgency of the question forbidden delay. To the above names were appended those of all the Arctic officers who had been personally engaged in the search, and who, though absent, were known to be favourable to another effort for its completion. And though that united application obtained no immediate result, it was felt, and by no one more strongly than myself, that it never could be utterly wasted.

\* See Appendix I.

I venture also to allude to a letter of my own addressed to the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty in April last,\* and a copy of which accompanied, I believe, the Memorial to your Lordship, wherein I earnestly deprecated any premature adjudication of the reward claimed by Dr. Rae, on the ground that the fate of my husband's expedition was not yet ascertained, and that it was due both to the living and the dead to complete a search which had been hitherto pursued under the greatest disadvantage, for want of the clue which was now for the first time in our hands.

The Memorial above alluded to, and my own letter of earlier date, had not yet received any reply, when, in the month of July, the Lords of the Admiralty caused prompt inquiries to be made as to the possibility of equipping a ship at that advanced season, in time for effective operations in the field of search. The result was that it was pronounced to be too late, and the subject was dismissed for that season.

Upon this I addressed a letter to the Board (of which I take the liberty to enclose a copy),† respectfully shewing that by this unfortunate delay the opportunity had also been taken from me of sending out a vessel at my own cost, a measure which I had previously felt myself obliged to state to their Lordships would be the alternative of any adverse decision on their part. I pleaded therefore, as the only remedy for the loss of an entire summer season, that the route by Behring Straits was by some of the most competent Arctic officers considered preferable

\* See Appendix II.

† See Appendix III.

to the eastern route, and that the equipment of a vessel for this direction need not take place before the close of the year.

In reply, their Lordships caused me to be informed that "they had come to the decision not to send any expedition to the Arctic regions in the present year."

This communication, however, was in answer merely to my own letter. The Memorialists had as yet received no reply, and accordingly the President of the Royal Society put a question respecting the Memorial in the House of Lords at the close of the session, which drew from one of Her Majesty's Ministers (Lord Stanley), after some preliminary observations, the assurance that Her Majesty's Government would give the subject their serious consideration during the recess. I may be permitted to add, that in the conversation which followed, Lord Stanley expressed himself as very favourably disposed towards a proposition made to him by Lord Wrottesley, that, in the event of there being no Government expedition, I should be assisted in fitting out my own expedition; an assurance which Lord Wrottesley had the kindness to communicate to me by letter.

But, my Lord, as nothing has occurred within the last few months to weaken the reasons which induced the Admiralty, early in July last, to contemplate another final effort, and as they put it aside at that time on the sole ground that it was too late to equip a vessel for that season, I trust it will be felt that I am not endeavouring to re-open a closed question,

but merely to obtain the settlement of one which has not ceased to be, and is even now under favourable consideration. The time has arrived, however, when I trust I may be pardoned for pressing your Lordship, with whom I believe the question rests, for a decision, since by further delay even my own efforts may be paralysed.

I have cherished the hope, in common with others, that we are not waiting in vain. Should, however, that decision unfortunately throw upon me the responsibility and the cost of sending out a vessel myself, I beg to assure your Lordship that I shall not shrink, either from that weighty responsibility, or from the sacrifice of my entire available fortune for the purpose, supported as I am in my convictions by such high authorities as those whose opinions are on record in your Lordship's hands, and by the hearty sympathy of many more.

But before I take upon myself so heavy an obligation, it is my bounden duty to entreat Her Majesty's Government not to disregard the arguments which have led so many competent and honourable men to feel that our country's honour is not satisfied, whilst a mystery which has excited the sympathy of the civilised world remains uncleared. Nor less would I entreat you to consider what must be the unsatisfactory consequences, if any endeavours should be made to quench all further efforts for this object.

It cannot be that this long-vexed question would thereby be set at rest, for it would still be true that in a certain circumscribed area within the Arctic circle, approachable alike from the east and from the



west, and sure to be attained by a combination of both movements, lies the solution of our unhappy countrymen's fate. While such is the case, the question will never die. I believe that again and again would efforts be made to reach that spot, and that the Government could not look on as unconcerned spectators, nor be relieved in public opinion of the responsibility they had prematurely cast off.

But I refrain from pursuing this argument, though, if any illustration were wanting of its truth, I think it might be found in the events that are passing before our eyes.

It is now about two years ago that one of Her Majesty's Arctic ships was abandoned in the ice. In due time this ship floated away, was picked up by an American whaler, carried into an American port, and (all property in her having been relinquished by the Admiralty) was purchased of her rescuers by the American Government, by whom she has been lavishly re-equipped, and is now on her passage to England, a free gift to the Queen. The "Resolute" is about to be delivered up in Portsmouth harbour, not merely in evidence of the cordial relation existing between the two countries, but as a lively token of the deep interest and sympathy of the Americans in that great cause of humanity in which they have so nobly borne their part. The resolution of Congress expressly states this motive, and indeed there could be no other, as it is well known that for any purpose but the Arctic service those expensive equipments would be perfectly useless and require removal.

My Lord, you will not let this rescued and restored ship, emblematic of so many enlightened and generous sentiments, fail, even partially, in her significant mission. I venture to hope that she will be accepted in the spirit in which she is sent. I humbly trust that the American people, and especially that philanthropic citizen who has spent so largely of his private fortune in the search for the lost ships, and to whom was committed by his Government the entire charge of the equipment of the "Resolute," will be rewarded for this signal act of sympathy, by seeing her restored to her original vocation, so that she may bring back from the Arctic seas, if not some living remnant of our long-lost countrymen, yet at least the *proofs* that they have nobly perished.

I need not add that we have as yet no proofs, whatever may be our melancholy forebodings. That such is the fact, in a legal point of view, is shewn by a case now or lately pending in the Scotch Courts, in which the right of succession to a considerable property is not admitted, on account of the absence of all but conjectural testimony. In this aspect of the question, I have no personal interest, but it is one that may not be deemed unworthy of your Lordship's attention, combined as it must be with the fact that our most experienced Arctic officers are willing to stake their reputation upon the feasibility of reaching the spot where so many secrets lie buried, if only they are supplied with the adequate means.

It would be a waste of words to attempt to refute

again the main objections that have been urged against a renewed search, as involving extraordinary danger and risking life. The safe return of our officers and men cannot be denied, neither will it be disputed that each succeeding year diminishes the risk of casualty, and indeed, I feel it would be especially superfluous and unseasonable to argue against this particular objection, or against the financial one which generally accompanies it, at a moment when new expeditions for the glorious interests of science, and which every true lover of science and of his country must rejoice in, are contemplated for the interior of Africa and other parts, which are far less favourable to human life than the icy regions of the north.

But with respect to expenditure, I may perhaps be allowed, as I have alluded to that topic, again to call to your Lordship's attention that the "Resolute" is ready equipped for Arctic service by the munificence of another nation, and to add that other Arctic ships, equally well fitted for the purpose, are lying useless in Her Majesty's dockyards, along with accumulated Arctic stores brought back by the late expeditions, and therefore long since included in the navy estimates; and which, besides, are available only for Arctic service, and if sold, would be bought at only nominal prices. In addition to the above sources of supply are those already existing on the Arctic shores, which are now studded with depots of provisions and fuel, left from the last and former expeditions, and fit as ever for use, because of the conservative properties of the climate.

But even were the expenditure greater than can thus reasonably be expected, I submit to your Lordship that this is a case of no ordinary exigency. These 135 men of the "Erebus" and "Terror," (or perhaps I should rather say the greater part of them, since we do not yet know that there are no survivors) have laid down their lives after sufferings doubtless of unexampled severity, in the service of their country, as truly as if they had perished by the rifle, the cannon ball, or the bayonet. Nay more,—by attaining the northern and already-surveyed coast of America, it is clear that they solved the problem which was the object of their labours, or, in the beautiful words of Sir John Richardson, that "they forged the last link of the North West passage with their lives."

Surely then, I may plead for such men, that a careful search be made for any possible survivor, that the bones of the dead be sought for and gathered together, that their buried records be unearthed, or recovered from the hands of the Esquimaux, and above all, that their last written words, so precious to their bereaved families and friends, be saved from destruction. A mission so sacred, is worthy of a Government which has grudged and spared nothing for its heroic soldiers and sailors in other fields of warfare, and will surely be approved by our gracious Queen, who overlooks none of Her loyal subjects suffering and dying for their country's honour.

This final and exhausting search is all I seek in behalf of the first and only martyrs to Arctic discovery in modern times, and it is all I ever intend to ask.

But if, notwithstanding all I have presumed to urge, Her Majesty's Government decline to complete the work they have carried on up to this critical moment, but leave it to private hands to finish, I must then respectfully request that measure of assistance in behalf of my own expedition which I have been led to expect on the authority of Lord Stanley, as communicated to me by Lord Wrottesley, and on that of the First Lord of the Admiralty, as communicated to Colonel Phipps in a letter in my possession.

It is with no desire to avert from myself the sacrifice of my own funds, which I devote without reserve to the object in view, that I plead for a liberal interpretation of those communications, but I owe it to the conscientious and high-minded Arctic officers who have generously offered me their services, that my expedition should be made as efficient as possible, however restricted it may be in extent. The Admiralty, I feel sure, will not deny me what may be necessary for this purpose, since if I do all I can with my own means, any deficiencies and shortcomings of a private expedition cannot I think be justly laid to my charge.

In conclusion, I would earnestly entreat of Her Majesty's Government, while this subject is still under deliberation, that they would be pleased to obtain the opinions of those persons who, in consequence of their practical knowledge and vast experience, may be considered best qualified to express them in the present emergency. And as it must be in the ranks of those officers who would naturally be selected for command of any final expedition that

these qualifications will most assuredly be found, I trust I may be pardoned for directing your Lordship's attention to the names (which I put down in the order of their seniority) of Captains Collinson, Richards, McClintock, Maguire, and Osborn. All these officers have passed winter after winter in Arctic service, have carried out those skilful sledge operations which have added so much to our knowledge of Arctic Geography, and have ever, in the exercise of combined courage and discretion, avoided disaster, and brought home their crews in health and safety.

I commit the prayer of this letter, for the length of which I beg much to apologize, to your Lordship's patient and kind consideration, feeling assured that however the burden of it may pall upon the ear of some, who apparently judge of it neither by the heart nor by the head, you will not on that, or on any light ground, hastily dismiss it. Rather may you be impelled to feel that the shortest and surest way to set the importunate question at rest, is to submit it to that final investigation which will satisfy the yearnings of surviving relatives and friends, and, what is justly of higher import to your Lordship, the credit and honour of the country.

I have the honour to be, &c.,

JANE FRANKLIN.

The Right Hon. Viscount PALMERSTON, K.G.

## APPENDIX.

No. I.

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MEMORIALTO THE RIGHT HON. VISCOUNT PALMERSTON, M.P., G.C.B.

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*“London, June 5th, 1856.*

“IMPRESSED with the belief that her Majesty’s missing ships, the ‘Erebus’ and ‘Terror,’ or their remains, are still frozen up at no great distance from the spot whence certain relics of Sir John Franklin and his crews were obtained by Dr. Rae,—we whose names are undersigned, whether men of science and others who have taken a deep interest in Arctic discovery, or explorers who have been employed in the search for our lost countrymen, beg earnestly to impress upon your Lordship the desirableness of sending out an Expedition to satisfy the honour of our country, and clear up a mystery which has excited the sympathy of the civilised world.

“This request is supported by many persons well versed in Arctic surveys, who, seeing that the proposed Expedition is to be directed *to one limited area only*, are of opinion that the object is attainable, and with little risk.

“We can scarcely believe that the British Government, which to its great credit has made so many efforts in various directions to discover even the route pursued by Franklin, should cease to prosecute research, now that the locality has been clearly indicated where the vessels or their remains must lie,—including, as we hope, records which will throw fresh light on Arctic geography,

and dispel the obscurity in which the voyage and fate of our countrymen are still involved.

“Although most persons have arrived at the conclusion that there can now be no survivors of Franklin’s Expedition, yet there are eminent men in our own country and in America who hold a contrary opinion. Dr. Kane, of the United States, for example, who has distinguished himself by pushing farther to the north in search of Franklin than any other individual, and to whom the Royal Geographical Society has recently awarded its Founders’ Gold Medal, thus speaks (in a letter to the benevolent Mr. Grinnell):—‘I am really in doubt as to the preservation of human life. I well know how glad I would have been, had my duty to others permitted me, to have taken refuge among the Esquimaux of Smith Strait and Etah Bay. Strange as it may seem to you, we regarded the coarse life of these people with eyes of envy, and did not doubt but that we could have lived in comfort upon their resources. It required all my powers, moral and physical, to prevent my men from deserting to the Walrus Settlements, and it was my final intention to have taken to Esquimaux life had Providence not carried us through in our hazardous escape.’

“But passing from speculation, and confining ourselves alone to the question of finding the missing ships or their records, we would observe that no land Expedition down the Back River, like that which, with great difficulty, recently reached Montreal Island, can satisfactorily accomplish the end we have in view. The frail birch-bark canoes in which Mr. Anderson conducted his search with so much ability, the dangers of the river, the sterile nature of the tract near its embouchure, and the necessary failure of provisions, prevented the commencement, even, of such a search as can alone be satisfactorily and thoroughly accomplished by the crew of a man-of-war,—to say nothing of the moral influence of a strong armed party remaining in the vicinity of the spot until the confidence of the natives be obtained.

“Many Arctic explorers, independent of those whose names are appended, and who are absent on service, have expressed their belief that there are several routes by which a *screw*-vessel could so closely approach the area in question as to clear up all doubt.

“In respect to one of these courses, or that by Behring Strait, along the coast of North America, we know that a single sailing-



vessel passed to Cambridge Bay, within 150 miles of the mouth of the Back River, and returned home unscathed,—its commander having expressed his conviction that the passage in question is so constantly open that ships can navigate it without difficulty in one season. Other routes, whether by Regent Inlet, Peel Sound, or across from Repulse Bay, are preferred by officers whose experience in Arctic matters entitle them to every consideration; whilst in reference to two of these routes it is right to state that vast quantities of provisions have been left in their vicinity.

“Without venturing to suggest which of these plans should be adopted, we earnestly beg your Lordship to sanction without delay such an expedition as, in the judgment of a Committee of Arctic Voyagers and Geographers, may be considered best adapted to secure the object.

“We would ask your Lordship to reflect upon the great difference between a clearly-defined voyage to a narrow and circumscribed area, within which the missing vessels or their remains must lie, and those formerly necessarily tentative explorations in various directions, the frequent allusions to the difficulty of which, in regions far to the north of the voyage now contemplated, have led persons unacquainted with geography to suppose that such a modified and limited attempt as that which we propose involves farther risk and may call for future researches. The very nature of the former expeditions exposed them, it is true, to risk; since regions had to be traversed which were totally unknown; while the search we ask for is to be directed to a circumscribed area, the confines of which have already been reached without difficulty by one of Her Majesty's vessels.

“Now, inasmuch as France, after repeated fruitless efforts to ascertain the fate of La Perouse, no sooner heard of the discovery of some relics of that eminent navigator, than she sent out a Searching Expedition to collect every fragment pertaining to his vessels, so we trust that those Arctic researches which have reflected much honour upon our country, may not be abandoned at the very moment when an explanation of the wanderings and fate of our lost navigators seems to be within our grasp.

“In conclusion, we further earnestly pray that it may not be left to the efforts of individuals of another and kindred nation already so distinguished in this cause, nor yet to the noble-minded

widow of our lamented friend, to make an endeavour which can be so much more effectively carried out by the British Government.

“ We have the honour to be, &c.,

“ F. BEAUFORT,  
R. I. MURCHISON,  
F. W. BEECHEY,  
WROTTESELEY,  
E. SABINE,  
EGERTON ELLESMERE,  
W. WHEWELL,  
R. COLLINSON,  
W. H. SYKES,  
C. DAUBENY,  
J. FERGUS,  
P. E. DE STZRELECKI,  
W. H. SMYTH,  
A. MAJENDIE,  
R. FITZROY,  
E. GARDINER FISHBOURNE,  
R. BROWN,  
G. MACARTNEY,

“ L. HORNER,  
W. H. FITTON,  
LYON PLAYFAIR,  
T. THORP,  
C. WHEATSTONE,  
W. J. HOOKER,  
J. D. HOOKER,  
J. ARROWSMITH,  
P. LATROBE,  
W. A. B. HAMILTON,  
R. STEPHENSON,  
J. E. PORTLOCK,  
C. PIAZZI SMYTH,  
C. W. PASLEY,  
G. RENNIE,  
J. P. GASSIOT,  
G. B. AIRY,  
J. F. BURGOYNE.”

“ The following officers of the Royal Navy who have been employed in the search after Franklin, and who are now absent from London, have previously expressed themselves to be favourable to the final expedition above recommended :—

Captains Sir J. ROSS and  
Sir EDWARD BELCHER,  
Commodore KELLETT,  
Captains AUSTIN,  
BIRD,  
OMMANNEY,  
Sir ROBERT M'CLURE,  
SHERRARD OSBORN,  
INGLEFIELD,

Captains MAGUIRE,  
M'CLINTOCK, and  
RICHARDS ;  
Commanders ALDRICH,  
MECHAM,  
TROLLOPE, and  
CRESSWELL ; and  
Lieutenants HAMILTON and  
PIM.

## No. II.

(Enclosure).

From the *Gazette* of January 22, 1856.

The Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty having, by a Proclamation of the 7th March, 1850, offered—

1st. A reward of £20,000 to any party or parties who, in the judgment of the Board of Admiralty, should discover and effectually relieve the crews of Her Majesty's ships Erebus and Terror; and

2nd. The sum of £10,000 to any party or parties who, in the judgment of the Board of Admiralty, should discover and effectually relieve any of the crews of her Majesty's ships Erebus and Terror; or should convey such intelligence as should lead to the relief of such crews or any of them; and

3rd. The sum of £10,000 to any party or parties who, in the judgment of the Board of Admiralty, should, by virtue of his or their efforts, first succeed in ascertaining their fate—

Hereby give notice that Dr. Rae having claimed to be entitled to the reward of £10,000, under the terms of the third paragraph of such Proclamation, they will proceed within three months from the date hereof to adjudicate on such claim; and that all such persons who, by virtue of such proclamation, deem themselves entitled to the whole or any part of the reward in question, must prefer their claims within such time, after the expiration of which no claim will be entertained.

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60, *Pall Mall*, April 12, 1856.

MY LORDS,

I have the honour of laying before your Lordships a copy of the notice published by your orders in the *Gazette* of the 22nd of January last, and of soliciting your consideration of the motives which compel me respectfully to enter a protest against the early

adjudication therein proposed. I should not have delayed until this late moment the execution of an intention formed soon after the publication of the notice, and communicated many weeks since to Dr. Rae, but that I have been incapacitated from writing by serious illness, from which I am indeed but partially recovered.

The grounds upon which I venture to appeal to you against the present adjudication of the reward are the following :—

1. Because it cannot truly be affirmed of the crews of the Erebus and Terror that their fate has been ascertained, and therefore to adjudicate on such an assumption seems to be premature.

2. Because Dr. Rae has not by his efforts ascertained their fate:

3. Because it may yet happen that their fate will be positively and fully ascertained, and if so, those who by their efforts succeed in ascertaining it, will, should a premature adjudication take place, be deprived of their legitimate reward.

4. Because the adjudication, by affirming that there is nothing more to be disclosed, opposes a check to any further efforts for ascertaining the fate of the expedition, and appears to counteract the humane intentions of the House of Commons in voting a large sum of money for that purpose.

I trust that in making some observations in explanation of these points, I shall not fail in the respect due to your Lordships, and that you will accord me that indulgence which the subject and my own deep personal interest in it may appear to claim.

1. It is not my intention, under the first of these heads, to throw doubt upon the reports brought home by Dr. Rae, confirmed as they are, in some points, by the indisputable relics procured from the Esquimaux, but only to point out that they are convincing within certain limits only; and that much that has hitherto been considered as established, is only conjectural, and should lead to a suspension of judgment, rather than to a hasty enunciation of it.

It is not proved, by any facts we are in possession of, that the party of white men who arrived with their large boat (the remains of which, with many articles belonging to it have been found) within the estuary of the Great Fish River, and who are said to have perished there, were the only survivors of the crews of the Erebus and Terror, and that no other remnant of the original

ships' companies, amounting to about 135 men, took a different route.

And even as to this (known) boat party, it has not been traced back to the ships or to the wrecks from which it was equipped; nor have the ships been sought for at all, though there is much reason to conclude from the nature of the objects brought home by Dr. Rae, and of others seen by Mr. Anderson on Montreal Island and the adjacent shore, that they had been pillaged by the Esquimaux and were not far distant. What secrets may be hidden within those wrecked or stranded ships we know not—what may be buried in the graves of our unhappy countrymen or in caches not yet discovered, we have yet to learn. The bodies and the graves which we were told of, have not been found; the books (journals) said to be in the hands of the Esquimaux have not been recovered, and thus left in ignorance and darkness, with so little obtained and so much yet to learn, can it be said and is it fitting to pronounce that the fate of the expedition is ascertained?

That your Lordships did not consider that this question was resolved by Dr. Rae's reports at the close of 1854, and by the relics which to a certain extent authenticated them, is shewn by your own proceedings when that tragic intelligence arrived, for it was immediately decided that steps must be taken to verify the truth of these reports, which could not be accepted as conclusive, and that further intelligence must be sought for. There was but one feeling in the country on this sad occasion. No amount of expense would have been grudged to make a final expedition of search complete, for it was felt that after six long years of failure and disappointment, the clue which we had asked and prayed for was now in our hands, and that England's honour and credit were concerned in holding it fast and following it up till it led to the solution of the mystery.

My Lords, I shrink from recalling the pain and woful disappointment I felt, and which many others felt with me, when the response to this generous excitement in the public mind, and the sole result of your deliberations, was no more than a birch bark canoe expedition down the Great Fish River, confided to the Hudson's Bay Company, but unsustained by any naval resources. In vain was it pleaded that a vessel might be sent to co-operate with this river party, who, if they ever reached the sea, could not

venture to embark upon it in their frail canoes ; and, if this were not granted, that at least a naval officer might accompany and direct the expedition, since it was well known that the Hudson's Bay Company, with all their zeal to accomplish the objects required of them in the most effectual manner, would not be able to supply to it an officer competent to make the indispensable observations for latitude and longitude. To the credit of Dr. Rae and of the Hudson's Bay Company's officers about to be employed, I may observe that he made a similar recommendation, being persuaded that those brave and right-minded servants of the Company would not hesitate to place themselves under the leadership of an officer in Her Majesty's Navy, provided he were one already tried and distinguished in Arctic service. To add to the original deficiencies of this over-land or river expedition, it failed to secure an interpreter, so that all the information it has brought back from the Esquimaux, and that derived chiefly from a few women, was transmitted only by signs.

Every praise is due to the exertions of the two zealous officers who, under all these disadvantages, were able to accomplish anything : but it is scarcely to be wondered at if, after a rapid survey of nine days only, within a very limited district, which did not extend even to King William Island where our fugitive countrymen were first seen, they were compelled by the state of the damaged boats hastily to return, and have thrown no new light upon the history of those whose fate they went to ascertain. Mr. Anderson has been able to confirm the evidences of a large party from the Erebus and Terror having arrived from the sea within the estuary of the Great Fish River ; but his negative testimony on other matters, such as the bodies and the graves which were not to be found, tends rather to throw doubt upon than to confirm them.

I may here, perhaps, be allowed to add, without prejudice to that excellent servant of the Hudson's Bay Company, Mr. Anderson, that *he* is so far from considering the fate of the expedition has been fully ascertained by the results of his late survey, or that there is nothing more to be done, that he has felt it to be a duty to express to me since his return, as he had done before he started, his decided opinion that a vessel should be sent out to the vicinity of King William's Land to pursue the search. With about

twenty men, well armed, and two interpreters, he considers that two parties might be despatched from it to explore the east and west sides of Victoria Strait, as well as the lower part of Regent Inlet, his own opinion being that the wrecks of the vessels are to be found in Victoria Strait, on the west coast of Boothia, between Bellot Strait and King William's Land. On the 15th of September last, Mr. A. writes to me, that he had himself made preparations for a second season of search; but, I presume that, having no instructions on this head, they have not been turned to any account. It is evident he considers, that the Esquimaux tribes on the shores of the strait hold the secret we are in search of, and that something more than a flying visit of a few days must be effected, before their, perhaps guilty, fears can be allayed, and their confidence won.

The view I have thus ventured to submit, that there is much more conclusive evidence to be yet obtained as to the fate of the expedition, and that the means of obtaining it have not been used, but are within our reach, is not confined to myself alone, in which case I might, notwithstanding my deep personal interest in the matter, hesitate to advance it. It would be in my power to adduce the most positive evidence that the sentiments and views I have taken the liberty of expressing, are shared by some of the highest authorities to whom your Lordships have been accustomed to refer in Arctic matters, as also by those brave and experienced officers who have most distinguished themselves in Arctic service; and I would entreat of you, before you place an extinguisher upon the light which has arisen in that dark corner of the earth, whither we have been directed as by the finger of God, that you will, as you have done before, call together those Arctic officers, and obtain their individual and collective judgment in this emergency.

2. It seems almost superfluous to observe, if the fate of the crews of the *Erebus* and *Terror* has not been ascertained, that Dr. Rae has not succeeded in ascertaining it. And thus I might be spared the ungrateful task of considering whether or not he made the efforts implied in your Lordships' proclamation as a condition of reward, were it not that, by passing over this clause, I seem to admit an assumption that endangers the main truth I wish to establish. It is with great reluctance that I find myself

obliged to contest Dr. Rae's claim to having, by virtue of his efforts, ascertained the fate of my husband and his companions, for we are indebted to him (short of this) for such valuable information, supported by such tangible proofs of a few facts, as might have enabled us, had ampler means been employed, to set the question at rest, and as enables us still to do so. Had Dr. Rae verified some of the reports he received at second or third hand from the Esquimaux, by personal investigation, and made use of the facts thus attained to get at further truths, or even had he hastened home with no other object than to provoke the organization of a much more complete and effective search than any he could himself accomplish on the spot, his claims would bear a different aspect. But he did not go out of his way to test the startling facts communicated to him, and he returned home, as he expressly tells your Lordships in his official letter, to stop further expeditions (in other parts)—a praiseworthy object, perhaps, but one widely different from that for which the reward was offered. It is but due, however, to Dr. Rae, to add that, when the Fish River Expedition was resolved upon, he gave his ready advice for its organization, though he declined the command of it, which was proposed to him. He also declares himself favourable at this moment, to farther search, were it only, as he has assured me, to secure for his statements that confirmation which he anticipates. Much more gladly would I plead, did I not feel that it is beyond my province, that Dr. Rae should receive an adequate reward for his late and former services, than oppose his right to that which is put forth in the third clause of the *Gazette* notice, to which it appears to me he has not made good his title.

3. For the sake of those who may yet advance a stronger claim to it, I am again compelled respectfully to protest against the premature adjudication contemplated in the *Gazette* notice. When in the early part of the Session of 1849, the House of Commons unanimously voted £20,000 for the encouragement of private enterprise and of private enterprise alone, in the search of the lost objects of national solicitude, they placed no restrictions as to the period during which the reward was to be held out. It could never have been contemplated that while the community was divided in opinion as to the evidence of facts, and while a great majority of those best informed on the subject, and others



the most deeply interested in it, were dissatisfied with that evidence, and demanded better, an arbitrary edict such as that involved in the premature adjudication of the reward, should, in favour of any one candidate of doubtful pretensions, shut out all future ones. I would fain submit to your Lordships that so long as private funds are embarked in the same cause, and that active measures are in progress or in contemplation, to clear up the mystery as to the fate of the crews of the *Erebus* and *Terror*, it would be unjust to place an arbitrary limit to the operation of an act designed expressly for that object, and so proclaimed at the time, "By Her Majesty's Government."

And here I feel compelled to state that, though it is my humble hope and fervent prayer that the Government of my country will themselves complete the work they have begun, and not leave it to a weak and helpless woman to attempt the doing that imperfectly which they themselves can do so easily and well, yet, if need be, such is my painful resolve, God helping me.

In the name then of those brave men who will devote themselves to this labour of love and duty, I feel called upon to claim that they should not be shut out by a premature adjudication from the reward which may become their due. It may yet fall to their lot to ascertain all or much of what we want to know, and to bring back some journal, or some precious fragment, otherwise lost to us for ever.

Should these last of the explorers accomplish any of these things, will you ignore their services and claims, because, in the spring of 1856, you had deemed that the fate of the expedition was ascertained, and had given away the reward? I have a right to use this argument, though in carrying it into its consequences I feel it may be doing injustice to your Lordships, as well as to the devoted volunteers who will undertake what they have to do in a higher spirit than any hope of pecuniary recompense can put into them.

But I may illustrate the argument by a more immediate example—that of the zealous and enterprising Captain Penny. It may not be known to your Lordships that Captain Penny, before his departure from England last year in command of two whaling ships, informed me that the reports brought home by Dr. Rae reminded him of some vague rumours of a fight between whites and

Esquimaux which had reached him in Northumberland Sound the preceding season, from a great distance, travelling through successive tribes of natives. And Captain Penny added, that in spite of all the difficulties he foresaw in the execution of his project, was his intention to engage some of the most intelligent and trustworthy natives, domesticated at his whaling station, to trace back these rumours to their source, whether that source were the catastrophe at the Great Fish River, or any other which may have overtaken a separate portion of the crews of the Erebus and Terror, in some other locality. Now, though I have no great hope (considering the distance to be traversed and other obstacles), that much success will attend Captain Penny's laudable efforts, and am sure that no thought of qualifying himself for the Government reward entered into his speculations, yet, would it be fair to adjudicate that reward, at this moment, in the face of such a fact?

I have spoken reluctantly of a private expedition, at my own cost, which, in despair of your Lordships completing the work you have begun, and not till then, I may be forced to undertake. And it may not be superfluous, though I trust it is so, that I should state I can have no personal interest in desiring that the adjudication of the reward should be delayed till the result of that expedition or of any other be known. Even in the event of the reward being adjudged in whole or in part to those engaged in my private expedition, this could in no degree relieve me from any portion of my own pecuniary obligations to them, or from any expenditure whatever. My funds, since the settlement of my late husband's affairs, are equal to the ample equipment of the Isabel schooner, which is now lying in dock, waiting, at a considerable current expense to me, her possible destination; and unless these my independent funds should become exhausted, which I do not foresee, I shall not even ask your Lordships for the ordinary pension of a Rear-admiral's widow, to which I presume I am entitled. My request to your Lordships will be limited to such assistance as is entirely independent of money, and indeed, to such as I have been assured, on the highest authority, will not be denied.

4. And this leads me to add, as my last ground for remonstrating against the immediate decision which Dr. Rae's claims have given you occasion to announce, that its greatest evil, and

that of which I should have the most reason to complain, would be the discouragement it gives to many a noble-minded man, who, in volunteering for this service, desires to do so with the confidence that he has your Lordships' approbation as well as permission. Your present adjudication would be to tell the public and the navy in particular that, in your Lordships' opinion, all has been done that can or need be done; that there is nothing more to learn or nothing worth knowing, or nothing commensurate with the cost and risk incurred (little as that cost and risk would be) to obtain it; and it is to brand with infatuation and obstinacy the feelings and convictions that prompt a different course. But if indeed the object of so many years' labour and anxiety spent, but not wasted, in wrong directions, is to be abandoned at the very moment when we know where and how to grasp it—if that which has hitherto been a nation's duty, be now dwindled to a private concern—at least let me entreat that you will not strive to stifle these last private efforts by any act of yours.

Permit me to add one concluding observation:—

It may be surmised that, at the present moment, I have a new incentive to farther search, inasmuch as justice has hitherto been withheld from my husband and his companions as the first discoverers of a North-west passage, and withheld on the ground that future investigation was necessary, in order to determine the extent to which it might be found that they had carried those discoveries, to which they had sacrificed their lives.

Such was the barren, though kindly-expressed result of an appeal, which, believing my motives must be above suspicion, I took courage to make to a Select Committee of the House of Commons, appointed to inquire into the claims of Sir Robert Maclure to reward, when I found that the right of my husband's expedition—not to *reward*, but—to the distinction of prior discovery was ignored, or not understood, or forgotten. And yet one would have supposed that the full examination of any conflicting claims lay at the very root of a just judgment, and that those who could not plead their own cause because their voices were hushed in the grave, would have found an advocate in every man in that assembly, as they did find, I gratefully acknowledge, in some.

But this painful remembrance does not enter, or enters but

little, into the feelings which prompt my efforts for farther search, which I should not desire the less, even did I anticipate that its consequences might be to dissipate the convictions I now have, instead of to confirm them. Nor, perhaps, should I have touched upon this subject at all, except as leading me with less appearance of presumption to express my opinion, that it is due to a set of men who have solved the problem of centuries by the sacrifice of their lives and in the very act of dying, that their remains should be sought for in the place where they perished, and that as they assuredly devised some means of preserving from destruction the last words they dictated to those they loved and the records of their five long years of adventure and suffering, the recovery of these precious documents should be the aim of persevering exertion and held out as a fitting object for reward.

The best tribute that could be paid to the first and only martyrs to the great Arctic discoverers of the present century, would be a national and final expedition for this holy purpose. The objections against a useless repetition of the attempt will be unanswerable, when once an adequate effort for the attainment of these objects has been made in vain; and then may England feel that she is relieved of her responsibilities, and can close with honour one of the noblest episodes in her naval history.

I have trespassed long on your Lordships' patience, for which I beg to apologise, while renewing my respectful protest against the impending adjudication of the reward, and my earnest request that it may be delayed till such time as the result of the last expedition be known.

I have, &c., &c.,

JANE FRANKLIN.

To the Lords Commissioners  
of the Admiralty.

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## APPENDED TO THE PRECEDING LETTER.

*Extract of a letter from Dr. Kane to Mr. Grinnell.*

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I write with my heart full of my subject to say that I have been studying critically the question of the missing vessels, and the more my judgment matures the facts, the more I incline to the views taken by Osborn in his remarkable letter. I have sympathies with him, which convinces me that he is a rare union of the gentleman and the conscientious man.

In my opinion the vessels cannot have been suddenly destroyed, or at least, so destroyed that provisions and stores could not have been established in a safe and commodious depôt. With this view, which all my experience in ice sustains, comes the collateral question as to the safety of the documents of the expedition. But this, my friend, is not all,—I am really in doubt as to the preservation of human life. I well know how glad I would have been, had my duties to others permitted me, to have taken refuge among the Esquimaux of Smith's Strait and Etah Bay. Strange as it may seem to you, we regarded the coarse life of these people with eyes of envy, and did not doubt but that we could have lived in comfort upon their resources. It required all my powers, moral and physical, to prevent my men from deserting to the Walrus Settlements, and it was my final intention, to have taken to Esquimaux life, had Providence not carried us through in our hazardous escape.

Now, if the natives reached the seat of the missing ships of Franklin, and there became possessed, by pilfer or by barter, of the articles sent home by Rae and Anderson, this very fact would explain the ability of some of the party to sustain life among them. If, on the other hand, the natives have never reached the ships or the seat of their stores, and the relics were obtained from the descending boat, then the central stores or ships are unmolested, and some may have been able by these and the hunt even yet to sustain life. All my men and officers agree with me that even in the desert of Rensalaer Bay we could have descended to the hunting seats, and sustained life by our guns, or

the craft of the natives. Sad, and perhaps useless, as is this reflection, I give it to you as the first conscientious outpouring of my opinions.

Now for the question as to the probable position of the lost ships, or their remains. This question is no longer a vague one. The lines of retreat by boat, as determined by Rae and Anderson, when combined with the information of Collinson at Gateshead Island, in 1852; Osborn, Winniat, and Ommanney, in 1851; and Ross and Kennedy on the North Somerset coasts, seem to point to a narrow and circumscribed area, within which must be the missing vessels or their remains. The thing to a practical mind is not to be mistaken. How else came a party from the northward at Montreal Island? Whence else could they have issued? Their locality is absolutely surrounded by searchers, yet, by some inscrutable fatality, the scene of the tragedy has never been reached.

As to the direct question of how to reach and examine this unsearched centre, I am more in doubt. Peel's Sound is unknown to our actual observation, south of Bellot Strait. Of Rae's incomprehensible journey to Cape Porter, I can learn nothing beyond his report; and of the ice around King William Land nothing is really known. I have written to Osborn for his opinions. I fear that he cannot add to my facts.

By dogs—the great blessing of arctic travel—this whole area could be scoured; and we must remember that Rae had these animals at Repulse Bay, and, but for his return, could, in a single month, have cleared up the mystery.

From the probable point attainable by a steamer through Peel Sound to the seat of Captain Collinson's farthest in lat. 70°, not more than 175 miles of travel would intervene! \* \* \* \*

With true regard,

Your friend,

E. K. KANE.

## No. III.

60, *Pall Mall*, 11th July, 1856.

MY LORDS,

Three months ago I felt constrained to address a letter to your Lordships, requesting that you would be pleased to delay your adjudication of the reward claimed by Dr. Rae for ascertaining the fate of my husband's expedition until such time as the result of a more complete and final search could be known. I implored your Lordships to adopt such measures as would set this question at rest, and at the same time was compelled to represent that your refusal to do this would force upon me the painful alternative of taking the burden of an expedition upon myself, at whatever cost and under great disadvantage.

To this letter I have not been honoured with any reply ; but notwithstanding, it seemed to me and to others not unreasonable to interpret your silence in a manner not unfavourable to my wishes, inasmuch as your Lordships were well aware that so long as no adverse decision was announced to me, I was precluded from taking any steps for advancing my private expedition, which depended entirely on the non-adoption of the other. Even when I read in the *Gazette*, after two months and more had elapsed, that your Lordships, disregarding my request, had given the reward of £10,000 to Dr. Rae, I was still unwilling to regard this act as an absolute rejection of my petition for further search, since in that light, or with such an object in view, it might have been practicable to announce it at a much earlier period, and thus relieve me from suspense, and set my hands free for action. But besides this, I was aware that a Memorial to the same effect as my own petition, signed by the most eminent scientific men in London, and embracing the opinions of all the chief Arctic officers, had been presented to the head of her Majesty's Government (by whom it was kindly received), and I indulged the hope that it could scarcely fail to receive your Lordships' favourable consideration.

Thus, between doubt and hope, between occasional misgivings and reviving confidence, but withal in constant and harassing anxiety, I have passed three long months (precious months to me,

who required them all for my own expedition, if that great burden were at last to fall upon me), till at last a time has arrived when the equipment of a private expedition is no longer possible, and a season of probably unexampled openness for ice navigation is passing away,

I feel sure that if your Lordships would only do me the favour of considering for a moment the painful position in which I have thus been and am still placed, without a single word vouchsafed to me either to confirm my hopes or to extinguish them, deprived of any means but such as I had a reasonable objection to, of securing public feeling in my behalf, whilst the Arctic papers (including my appeal to your Lordships), which were called for in the House of Commons, continued to be withheld, unable thus to make use of the present or to calculate on the future, you would feel that a great hardship—nay, that a great injustice, for such I feel it to be—has been inflicted on me.

Yet, great as this trial has been, it receives aggravation from the knowledge that I am not alone affected by it. I abstain from obtruding on you details of private matters, however they might serve to illustrate this aspect of my embarrassing position; but I feel sure that you will deem it worthy of your kind and serious attention, when I inform you that the distinguished individual who has generously offered me his gratuitous services for the command of my private expedition, should I be unhappily reduced to this extremity, has done so at the sacrifice of all his own professional and private interests, in the purest spirit of sympathy with my anxieties and of devotion to a holy cause. And I might say much more than this, if I felt permitted to do so. Your Lordships, however, will, I am sure, perceive that I cannot indefinitely prolong the state of uncertainty in which my noble-minded and generous friend is now placed; and that it is my duty either to release him from his promise, as I would so gladly do were I sure that my cause were safe in your hands, or enable him at once to commence independent operations.

Regretting deeply that you have, as I learn, come to a decision adverse to the immediate starting of a vessel by the Eastern route, since I fully recognise the possibility of following my husband's track on that side down Peel Channel, I yet may be permitted to express the opinion I have long entertained, confirmed as it is by



your late eminent hydrographer, Sir Francis Beaufort, and by that of Captains Collinson and Maguire, that the route by Behring Strait, though longer in distance, is of surer and safer accomplishment, and that a vessel despatched this autumn to Behring Strait would probably arrive at the spot to be searched in a shorter time than by the other. Captain Collinson, whose experience is the highest that can be adduced on this point, has no doubt that he could carry even such a heavy sailing ship as the "Enterprise" without the aid of steam, in one season only, to the very locality where the remains of the "Erebus" and "Terror" are probably now lying, and where it is at least certain that the Esquimaux hold the secret of their fate, and of the pillage they have acquired from the catastrophe.

This opinion of Captain Collinson as to the facility of a vessel's reaching the place of its destination in one season by way of Behring Strait, is shared by Captain Maguire, as expressed in a letter which I have permission to enclose. Your Lordships will also perceive therein another reason for the adoption of this route, which has not hitherto received the attention its extreme importance deserves, namely, the facility it gives of bringing the vessel into close contact with the Esquimaux, it being Captain Maguire's opinion (as it is that of Mr. Anderson, the late commander of the boat party down the Great Fish River), that the tranquil presence of a vessel is necessary to extract the whole truth from the natives. These people are not wanting in sagacity, and if they see nothing but a boat or sledge party, they will be sure to calculate on the very limited resources of such a party, that it will soon return whence it came, and rid them of unwelcome investigations. It is also to be recollected that the Esquimaux are in the habit of making spring and autumn migrations, so that time would be required to enable the intelligence that white men were on the coast to permeate throughout the country, and thus reach the ears of any stragglers that may yet remain of the crews of the missing vessels.

I would entreat of your Lordships, should you doubt the accuracy of my statements, to call before you those two able and experienced officers, Captain Collinson and Captain Maguire, one of whom has brought back his ship and crew in perfect safety,

after a navigation in Arctic waters of unexampled length and importance, whilst the other, within a more restricted field of action at Point Barrow, succeeded so well in his endeavours to gain the confidence and co-operation of the natives, as to be an earnest of his success in any other quarter.

I mention these two distinguished officers as being especially qualified to speak of the advantages and disadvantages of the route suggested, not forgetting that Captains Osborn and Richards are also on the spot, equally able to submit to your Lordships, if honoured by your reference, all that might have been said, in or otherwise, of the route which you have pronounced to be impracticable at this advanced season. All are alike ignorant that I am expressing this unbounded confidence in their capacity and zeal, in the humble hope of reminding your Lordships that if you give little weight to anything I can advance, as coming from an incompetent or too interested person, there are those at hand whose qualifications, whose duty towards you, and whose sense of responsibility, remove them widely from such disparaging circumstances.

Whilst this subject is still under deliberation, I commit the prayer of my present appeal to your serious and humane consideration, believing that the honour of my country is no less concerned in the result, than are my own personal interests and those of my fellow sufferers in calamity.

I have the honour to be, my Lords,

Your obedient servant,

(Signed) JANE FRANKLIN.

To the Lords Commissioners  
of the Admiralty.

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## No. IV.

[The following Extract from the Address of the President, to the Royal Society, delivered at the Anniversary Meeting of the 1st December, was enclosed, by Lord Wrottesley's permission, in the letter to Lord Palmerston.]

“ It is not extraordinary that those who are disposed to form a low estimate of the value of scientific research, should also entertain doubts as to the propriety of hazarding human life in its behalf. In the late discussions on the expediency of undertaking another Polar Expedition, it seemed to be assumed by some, that the well-grounded anticipation of valuable contributions to physical and geographical science, would not alone be sufficient to justify the exposing of the lives of gallant men to peril, not even of those who were most willing and anxious to be so employed, emulous of such distinction, and regardless of the risk. However this may be, it is certain that Science has sustained and does still sustain injury from the fear of offending against this popular notion, that it is wrong to hazard human life for such an object. In the case of the Polar Expedition, the risk would be very small, inasmuch as the exploration, instead of being as formerly a tentative one, embracing many thousand miles of unknown coast, would be confined to a fixed and limited locality hitherto unexplored and possessed of great scientific interest. Independently of additions to our geographical and physical knowledge, the possible recovery of the magnetical observations, and the journals of the Franklin Expedition is a consideration of great moment, since the former must have been made by officers well trained to the task, with excellent instruments verified before the sailing of the Expedition, and in localities possessing peculiar interest in reference to the theory of magnetism; and the latter would doubtless contain a narrative of the deepest interest, not only to the cultivators of science, but to the public generally, and especially the relatives of the gallant men who are supposed to have perished. The Expedition is, however, also advocated on the score of humanity, for experienced Arctic navigators still

think it not impossible that some survivors of the crews may be living among the savage tribes, whose lot is cast among those inhospitable and barren regions. But admit that there is danger in these enterprises,—Is it inglorious to perish in promoting human progress? You will not suspect me, I am sure, of being indifferent to the fate of brave men; but in fact it is well nigh impossible to add to our stock of physical knowledge without some risk to life. The Astronomer in his observatory, exposed night after night to the open air at a freezing temperature; the Chemist in his laboratory, among explosive and poisonous substances; the Surgeon who handles the dissecting knife,—all equally with the adventurous traveller expose their lives to peril. We know what was the opinion of the great Athenian moralist and martyr on this question, from that fine passage in which the dangers of military and civil life are so beautifully contrasted:—“I should have acted strangely indeed,” says he, “if, having stood firmly in the post assigned to me by my general at Amphipolis, Potidæa and Delium, and braved every danger, I had turned coward and feared to die, when my God ordered me to be a philosopher and instruct mankind.” Whether men perish in peace or war, if they fall in advancing civilization or arresting the progress of barbarism, what matters it whether their bones rest in a soldier’s grave, or lie scattered, “as when one heweth wood,” on the ice-bound shores of the Polar Sea? All are entitled to the Spartan epitaph, “Go tell our countrymen we lie here, having obeyed their commands,”—for all have alike fulfilled their mission.

“Even the great Poet of the benighted middle ages introduces an adventurous navigator addressing his crew, about to leave the narrow seas and launch out on a great and unexplored ocean, in these animating lines:—

“Fatti non foste a viver come bruti,  
Ma per seguir virtute e conoscenza.”

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LETTER FROM ADMIRAL SIR FRANCIS BEAUFORT, K.C.B.

LATE HYDROGRAPHER TO THE ADMIRALTY.

*Brighton, Dec. 1, 1856.*

DEAR COLLINSON,

I have this moment read your letter in this day's Times, and I like it well, but I should have liked it better if you had not "set aside the question" as to there being or not any survivors. I consider that to be a very material question, and one which would involve the feelings of a host of people in this country, who are more or less indifferent to the record of Franklin's adventures, or to the immediate disaster which wrecked him on that desolate coast, but who would unite as one man in shewing the deep DISGRACE of abandoning the search as long as a probability remained of a single survivor!

But the question should not hang on such a narrow probability as a *single* survivor. Were there not two ships? were there not 135 men? Is it conceivable that all should have crammed themselves into one boat, and followed a single leader; and that too on a part of the country not only notoriously desolate, but well known to Franklin himself from the horror of starvation that he had formerly experienced there?

The remains of another boat must still be sought—and the vestiges of separate parties will I trust yet be found among the Esquimaux, of men who without the means of travelling up the Mackenzie River, or of crossing over to the Russian Settlements, have accepted life and food at the hands of some of the native tribes.

Representations to the public of this sort come with peculiar grace from those who have been already engaged in this great pursuit of *national honour*, and I entreat you to take up this branch of the question, and to give it its full weight the next opportunity you have of appealing to the world against the selfish arguments of the base utilitarian school.

Yours faithfully,

F. BEAUFORT.

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*Letter of Captain Collinson, alluded to in the above.*

Sir,—In your leading article on Thursday, relative to the continuance of the search for Sir John Franklin and his companions, you have most unfairly summed up the results of the expeditions hitherto sent in quest of our missing countrymen.

There is not a doubt that hardships have been undergone and

perils encountered, but the assertion that the crews of the abandoned ships were withdrawn by "a miracle almost" is not warranted by the facts related in the journals now before the public.

So long as no clue was obtained to the route pursued by the missing vessels after leaving Beechey Island there was a necessity that every nook and corner of the Arctic Sea should be examined, entailing what we know now to be much unnecessary hazard and fatigue. The case is now different; we know the exact spot where to go to; we know the confines of the area within which the record of their voyage remains have been reached by a vessel; we know that the travelling parties from the *Enterprise* could have traversed the very route pursued by the crews of the *Erebus* and *Terror* after they abandoned their vessels, and we are aware that that ship returned in safety to England. Yet, in the face of all this, you call upon the British public to discountenance what you are pleased to term "so outrageous a proceeding."

After the labour, the anxiety we have undergone, you call upon us to forbear when the noble object which has occupied the attention of the whole civilized world for the last ten years is fairly within our grasp.

Setting aside the question as to whether there are any survivors or not, we owe to the memory of these 135 Englishmen, whose lives have fallen a sacrifice in the accomplishment of a great geographical problem, to the satisfaction of their friends and relatives, that the mystery attending their fate should be cleared up.

We owe it to our national honour that what we have begun should be accomplished, and that we should not deprive our fellow-countrymen who may hereafter be in difficulty of that firm trust in succour which has hitherto formed a bond of union in distress. Sir, I have been brought up in the persuasion that perseverance in a good and noble cause is one of the attributes of the Anglo-Saxon race; let us not permit the slur of abandoning the fate of our missing countrymen to surmise to be handed down to posterity when we have it in our power without serious risk to place the matter beyond a doubt.

I have trespassed longer upon your columns than was my intention, but I hope what I have said will lead you as well as your readers, to count the cost of permitting the time to pass away without an attempt to recover the records of an expedition which now forms a portion of the history of the world.

Believe me to be yours very truly,

R. COLLINSON.

Boldon, Gateshead, Nov. 28.