

ARCTIC EXPEDITION.

RETURN to an Address of the Honourable The House of Commons,
dated 26 May 1848;—for,

A “COPY of the ORDERS from the LORDS COMMISSIONERS of the ADMIRALTY,
under which Captain Sir *James Clark Ross*, R. N., has proceeded on an
Expedition in search of Captain Sir *John Franklin*, R. N.”

By the COMMISSIONERS for executing the Office of LORD HIGH ADMIRAL of the
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, &c.

WHEREAS the period for which Her Majesty's ships “*Erebus*” and “*Terror*” were victualled will terminate at the end of this summer; and whereas no tidings whatever of the proceedings of either of those ships have reached us since their first entry into Lancaster Sound, in the year 1845, and there being, therefore, reason to apprehend that they have been blocked up by immoveable ice, and that they may soon be exposed to suffer great privation; we have deemed it proper to defer no longer the endeavour to afford them adequate relief. Having, therefore, caused to be prepared and duly equipped, with extra stores and provisions, two suitable vessels, and having had them properly fortified, so as to resist the pressure of the ice, and having the fullest confidence in the skill and experience that you have acquired in those inclement seas, we have thought proper to place them under your command; and you are hereby required and directed, so soon as they are in all respects ready for sea, to proceed in the “*Enterprize*,” under your immediate command, and taking the “*Investigator*” (Captain Bird) under your orders, without delay to Lancaster Sound. In your progress through that inlet to the westward, you will carefully search both its shores, as well as those of Barrow Straits, for any notices that may have been deposited there, and for any casual indications of their having been visited by either of Sir John Franklin's ships.

Should your early arrival there, or the fortunately protracted openness of the season, admit of your at once extending a similar examination to the shores of the Wellington Channel, it will leave you at greater liberty to devote yourself more fully afterwards to your researches to the westward. The several intervals of coast that appear in our charts to lie between Capes Clarence and Walker, must next be carefully explored; and as each of your vessels have been furnished with a launch fitted with a small engine and screw, capable of propelling it between four and five knots, we trust by their means, or by the ships' boats, all those preliminary researches may be completed during the present season, and consequently before it may be necessary to secure the ships in safety previous to the approaching winter. As that winter may possibly prove to be so severe as to seal up the western end of that extensive inlet, and as it would be unwise to allow both vessels to be beset there, we consider that it would be prudent to look out for a fit and safe port near Cape Rennell, and in that neighbourhood to secure the “*Investigator*” for the ensuing winter. From that position a considerable extent of coast may be explored on foot, and in the following spring detached parties may be sent across the ice by Captain Bird, in order to look thoroughly into the creeks along the western coast of Bosthia, and even as far as Cape Nicolai; while another party may proceed to the southward, and ascertain whether the blank space shown there in our charts consists of an open sea through which Sir John Franklin may have passed, or, on the contrary, of a continuous chain of Islands, among which he may be still blocked up. As soon as the returning summer shall have opened a
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2 ORDERS UNDER WHICH THE EXPEDITION HAS PROCEEDED

passage between the land and the main body of the ice, this eastern vessel is to detach her steam-launch to Lancaster Sound, in order to meet the whale ships which usually visit the western side of Baffin Bay about that time, and by which we purpose to send out further instructions and communications to you, as well as to receive in return an account of your proceedings.

The "Enterprize" in the meantime will press forward to the westward, and endeavour to reach Winter Harbour in Melville Island, or perhaps, if circumstances should in your judgment render it advisable, to push onward to Banks' Land; but in either case a distinct statement of the measures you are going to adopt, as well as of your future intentions, should be deposited in some spot previously communicated to Captain Bird. From this western station you will be able to spread some active parties, and to make some short and useful excursions before the season altogether closes, and still more effective ones in the ensuing spring. One party should then pursue the coast in whatever direction it may seem likely to have been followed by Sir John Franklin, and thus determine the general shape of the western face of Banks' Land. It is then to proceed direct to Cape Bathurst or to Cape Parry on the main land, at each of which places we have directed Sir J. Richardson to leave provisions for its use; that party will then advance to Fort Good Hope, where they will find directions for continuing their progress up the M'Kenzie River, so as to return to England by the usual route of traders.

Another party will explore the eastern coast of Banks' Land, and from thence make at once for Cape Krusenstern, where, or at Cape Hearne, a *caché* of Pemmican will be placed for Sir John Richardson.

They should communicate immediately with him, according to the agreement which he and you have made, and, placing themselves under his orders, they will assist him in examining the shores of Victoria and Wollaston's Islands, and finally return with him to England, by whatever route he may deem advisable. Unable to foresee the variety of circumstances in which you may be placed, or the difficulties with which you may have to contend, and fully relying on the skilfulness of your measures, as well as by the zeal with which you and those under your command will be animated, we direct you to consider the foregoing orders as the general outline only of our desires, and not as intended too rigidly to control your proceedings, especially whenever, after due deliberation, you have become satisfied that the end we have in view may be more certainly accomplished by the substitution of some other course of operations; and if Providence should not be pleased to crown your efforts with success, we leave it to your own judgment when and from whence to return to England, as soon as you are convinced that every means within your reach have been exhausted.

In case of any irreparable accident happening to the "Enterprize," you are hereby authorized to take the command of the "Investigator," and to make such arrangements for the officers and crews as may be most consonant to the rules of the service, and most conducive to the objects of the expedition.

If you should happily succeed in meeting with the "Erebus" afloat, and Sir John Franklin's pendant be flying, you will of course place yourself under his orders; but if you should find that ship blocked up with ice, or otherwise incapable of proceeding, you are hereby authorized and directed to retain the command of the expedition, and adopt all such measures as may be requisite for the safe removal of her crew, or that of the "Terror."

In the event of Great Britain being involved in hostilities with any foreign power during your absence, you are to abstain from the smallest act of aggression towards any vessel belonging to such nation, it being the practice of all civilized countries to consider vessels engaged on service of this kind as exempt from the rules and operations of war. Both vessels under your orders have been furnished with abundance of stores, and with more than a sufficiency of every thing that can in anywise contribute to the welfare of their crews; and we especially direct you to consider their safety, health and comfort as predominant in every operation that you undertake. Each of them has likewise been supplied with numerous instruments for the purpose of making geographic, hydrographic, magnetic and atmospheric observations in those northern and rarely visited regions of the globe; and we annex hereto a copy of the instructions given to Sir J. Franklin, in order that you may pursue a similar course; and though we estimate any such observations as of inferior importance to the one leading object
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of the expedition, you will, nevertheless, omit no opportunity of rendering it as contributive to scientific acquisition as to the performance of the great duties of national humanity. In carrying out the above orders, you will avail yourself of every practical occasion of acquainting our Secretary with every step of your progress, as well with your future intentions; and on your reaching England you will call on every person in both vessels to deliver up to you all their logs, journals, charts and drawings, but which, they may be informed, shall be returned to them in due time.

Given under our hands this 9th day of May 1848.

(signed)

Auckland.

Sir Jas. C. Ross,
Captain of H. M. Ship "Enterprize,"
Greenhithe.

J. W. D. Dundas.

By command of their Lordships.

(signed)

H. G. Ward.

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A COPY

Of the ORDERS from the LORDS COMMISSIONERS
of the ADMIRALTY, under which Captain Sir
James Clark Ross, R.N., has proceeded on
an Expedition in search of Captain Sir *John*
Franklin, R.N.

(*Sir Robert Harry Inglis.*)

Ordered, by The House of Commons, to be Printed,
7 June 1848.

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Under 1 oz.