

## VESSELS IN THE NORTH ATLANTIC.

---

RETURN to an Address of the Honourable The House of Commons,  
dated 4 June 1852 ;—for,

“COPIES of COMMUNICATIONS between the ADMIRALTY and any PUBLIC AUTHORITIES at Home and Abroad, in reference to certain VESSELS observed on an Iceberg in the *North Atlantic* in 1851, and supposed to have been Abandoned.”

(*Sir R. H. Inglis.*)

---

*Ordered, by The House of Commons, to be Printed, 22 June 1852.*

---

COPIES of COMMUNICATIONS between the ADMIRALTY and any PUBLIC AUTHORITIES at Home and Abroad, in reference to certain VESSELS observed on an Iceberg in the *North Atlantic* in 1851, and supposed to have been Abandoned.

Sir,

Admiralty, 19 June 1852.

WITH reference to your letter of the 8th instant, transmitting copy of a Resolution of the House of Commons, dated the 4th instant, respecting the laying before The House copies of any communications between the Admiralty and any public authorities at home and abroad, in reference to certain vessels observed on an iceberg in the North Atlantic in 1851, and supposed to have been abandoned, I am commanded by my Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty to transmit to you a Return, which has been prepared in conformity with the terms of the said Resolution, and the request conveyed in your letter.

Papers numbered  
from 1 to 49.

I am, &c.

Sir William G. H. Jolliffe, Bart., M. P.  
&c. &c. &c.

(signed) *J. H. Hay,*  
Pro Secretary.

---

No. 1.

Her Majesty's Ship "Sampson," Portsmouth,  
20 March 1852.

Sir,

AFTER mature deliberation, I am of opinion that it is my duty to acquaint their Lordships with the following particulars in reference to Sir J. Franklin's ships.

About the beginning of the present month, I was in company with a merchant captain, of the name of Story, who is a native of Tynemouth, and at present residing there; we were talking about ice, &c., when he made the following statement, which I give in his own words:

"In reference to icebergs, I know a captain, at present in Shields Harbour, who told me that when proceeding to North America in the spring of 1851, the mate, who had the morning watch, reported an iceberg in sight ahead of the ship.

"On a nearer approach, the ice, under the water, could be observed shelving out to a considerable distance at the lee side, thus acting like a vane in keeping that part to leeward. On passing as close as prudence would allow, two three-masted vessels were observed close to the berg, but out of the water; they were regularly housed in, with their topsail yards and topgallant masts down. No human beings could be seen."

## 2 COMMUNICATIONS IN REFERENCE TO VESSELS OBSERVED

I inquired why all this had not been made public long since; he gave me to understand that the captain alluded to had contented himself with speaking to his friends about it, but was now afraid of the shame which would attend its publicity after so long a time having elapsed.

I earnestly requested him to seek an interview with him, for the purpose of ascertaining if I could be allowed to take down his deposition in writing.

On seeing Captain Story next day, he informed me that the captain had sailed, but I am privately of opinion that the captain hesitated to risk the exposure which he feared might await him, although I told Captain Story to inform him that I would take care to explain away his long silence on the subject.

The Honourable  
the Secretary of the Admiralty.

I have, &c.  
(signed) *James M. Shore,*  
Second Master.

*P.S.*—Supposing them to be Sir J. Franklin's ships, the fact of no human beings being seen may, I think, easily be accounted for.

The catastrophe of an iceberg breaking away from the place where it had formed, would no doubt be sufficient to cause the crews to rush on foot to the nearest safe point; the ships drifting away with the berg in the interval, would have no means of rejoining them.

*J. M. S.*

*P.P.S.*—The name of the captain and other particulars no doubt will be supplied by Captain Story, Tynemouth, Northumberland, should an official letter be written to him on the subject, provided he has not sailed.

No. 2.

Sir,

Admiralty, 22 March 1852.

I AM commanded by my Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty to transmit to you the enclosed letter from Mr. James M. Shore, second master of Her Majesty's ship "Sampson," respecting two three-masted ships having been seen drifting with an iceberg, and to signify their direction to you to forward the same to Captain Jones of the "Sampson," desiring that officer, first, to inform Mr. Shore that my Lords would have expected that he knew enough of the rules of the service not to address a letter to the Admiralty excepting through his commanding officer; and, secondly, Captain Jones is to be guided by his opinion and judgment as to the truth and merits of such a statement, in returning it with his report, through you, to the Secretary of the Admiralty.

*See No. 1.*

I am, &c.  
Admiral Sir Thomas Briggs, &c. &c. (signed) *W. A. B. Hamilton.*  
Portsmouth.

No. 3.

Her Majesty's Ship "Sampson," Portsmouth,  
24 March 1852.

Sir,

I HAVE herewith the honour of returning you the letter of Mr. James M. Shore, second master of Her Majesty's ship under my command, on the subject of the ships beset with icebergs in March 1851, and, in compliance with your memorandum of the 23d instant, I have endeavoured to ascertain the degree of dependence to be placed on the report in that letter, for which purpose the queries, as follows, were put to Mr. Shore, and his answers subjoined; viz.

How long has Mr. Shore been acquainted with Mr. Storey, the merchant captain alluded to in his letter of the 20th instant?

For five or six years.

Have they been in the habit of frequently meeting?

Not often; but generally spoke when they met.

Is Mr. Shore connected with the north of England?

Belongs to North Shields and Tynemouth.

What

What age is Mr. Storey?

About 40.

Whose employ is he in?

Don't know; but sails a ship belonging to North Shields.

Is he owner or part owner of any ship?

May possess part of a ship, but does not know.

Where did Mr. Shore meet Mr. Storey when the communication relating to the icebergs took place?

In a walk between Tynemouth and North Shields.

Does Mr. Shore know to what part of America the vessel was bound that fell in with the icebergs?

Thinks to the St. Lawrence.

Was the approximate latitude or longitude intimated?

In the neighbourhood of the banks of Newfoundland.

Did Mr. Shore hear the name of the master or of the ship?

Did not hear; Mr. Storey avoided mentioning it to him.

Am I to understand that the two three-masted vessels were resting on the ice, and quite out of the water?

Quite out of the water, but particulars of position not mentioned.

From what Mr. Shore knows of Mr. Storey, would he (Mr. Shore) think it probable that Mr. Storey would invent those particulars?

Thinks not; he is a plain, clear-spoken man; thinks Mr. Storey's name is Thomas, and that he lives in Back-street, Tynemouth.

Does Mr. Shore think it possible that the master of any British ship could have fallen in with icebergs and ships lifted on them, as reported, without endeavouring to communicate and ascertain more particularly what they were?

Yes, he does think it possible, from his knowledge of the indifference with which the master and crew of merchant vessels view things which do not immediately concern them.

Does Mr. Shore conceive it possible that such an event occurring on the voyage would not be reported on arriving at the first port?

For the reason above, he thinks it might not be reported.

Would it not be the subject of conversation, and thus become public?

Perhaps not.

Admiral Sir Thomas Briggs, &c. &c.,  
Portsmouth.

I have, &c.  
(signed) *Lewis T. Jones,*  
Captain.

No. 4.

(Confidential.)

Sir,

Admiralty, 26 March 1852.

I AM commanded by my Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty to transmit to you copies of a correspondence which has taken place respecting two ships having been seen drifting with an iceberg off North America, and to desire that you will make minute inquiries into the subject, ascertaining for your own information the character of Mr. Storey (if there be such a person), and otherwise examining into the truth of this statement, reporting thereon for their Lordships' information.

*Nos. 1, 2, 3.*

Commander H. C. Hawkins, R.N.  
Inspecting Commander of the Coast Guard,  
Sunderland.

I am, &c.  
(signed) *A. Stafford.*

Sir,

Sunderland, 28 March 1852.

IN reply to your confidential letter of the 26th instant, directing me to make minute inquiries respecting two ships having been seen in the spring of 1851, drifting with an iceberg off North America, ascertaining as far as possible the credibility of Mr. Storey's statement on the subject, and to report thereon for their Lordships' information;

I beg leave to inform you, that I immediately proceeded to Tynemouth, and saw Mr. Storey, who states that he left Bristol for Quebec, as master of the brig "Agnes," on 5th April 1851; crossed the banks of Newfoundland about the 20th, arriving at Quebec on the 5th May. Here he met Mr. Edward Coward, the master of the brig "Renovation;" and as both their vessels belonged to the same owners, the Youngs of Shields, and were both ready at the same time for their voyage home, they frequently met at the custom-house, when they entered into conversation respecting their outward-bound passage, and were of opinion that they had crossed the banks about the same time, namely, the 20th of April. Mr. Storey then proceeded to state, "He (Captain Coward) also related as follows, as near as I can recollect:—

"When near the east edge of the bank, in latitude 45° 30' N., wind N.E., fresh breezes and clear weather, as much as I could carry fore-topmast studding sail, fell in with icebergs; one of which was very large, with field-ice attached to it, in which were two three-masted ships, having their masts struck, and yards down, and all made snug; to all appearance they had passed the winter together on the ice. At about five o'clock in the morning, when within one mile of them, the mate called me to see the berg and ships. By the time I got up and dressed and on deck, my ship was abreast of them; took spying-glass, and carefully examined them, to see if there was any one on board, but could see no one; at the time I did not think of Sir John Franklin's missing ships; anxiety to get ahead out of the danger whilst the weather was clear from fogs, and being too far passed before I could make up my mind, caused me not to reduce sail, and examine them more accurately. I am since of opinion they might possibly be the missing ships."

The above can be depended on as a faithful report of Mr. Storey's statement to me, of what (so far as his recollection serves him) Captain Coward related to him: and in answer to a query of mine, whether any one was present besides himself when this conversation took place; he replied, "Yes, a Mr. Cleugh, the master of a ship I do not now recollect the name of; but he is now with the same ship, either at Portland or Weymouth, having gone there with a cargo of Canada timber on Government account, for the breakwater constructing at the island," and who he thinks might corroborate the main facts of his own statement.

In concluding what Mr. Storey knows on this subject, I beg to remark, from what I understand, and from my own observations respecting him, that he appears a straightforward, plain-spoken seaman, and a most unlikely sort of person to circulate an untruth.

Having further ascertained that the wife and a brother of Captain Coward's were now residing at Shields, I then proceeded there, and called on Mrs. Coward, an intelligent young person, and on my asking if she had ever heard her husband relate anything about meeting ships beset in the ice, she replied, "Yes; that within the last two or three months he had mentioned, in the course of conversation with her, that he had passed two ships embedded in a very large iceberg, near each other, the one upright in the ice, the other with a slight inclination, and with the general appearance of having been a considerable time there, though not much damaged, and not a living soul on or near them." She further informed me that her husband still commands the "Renovation," and sailed from Shields last Thursday fortnight (the 11th instant), for Venice, and that he had left his address, which I forward, as per margin.

Capt. E. Coward,  
brig "Renovation,"  
Marco Trevisanato,  
Esq., merchant,  
Venice.

On my asking if any of the officers and crew of the "Renovation" who were with him at the time of seeing the ships in the ice were at present in Shields, she replied, That the same crew were with him now, but that the mate, a Mr. Robert Simpson, is now master of the "British Queen," and that he sailed from Shields last Monday (the 22d instant), for Limerick, to take emigrants to America,  
and

and where in a few days he will probably arrive. I beg, therefore, permission to suggest that Mr. Simpson may possibly be the mate spoken of in Captain Coward's account of the ships, and he probably may be enabled to confirm, or otherwise, the statement of his late captain, or, at all events, he must have heard of the circumstance, or known what was entered in the ship's log-book on the occasion. His address I have ascertained, which I transmit, as per margin.

The brother of Captain Coward, now residing at Shields, I did not see, as he was at Newcastle when I called. He is a surgeon in respectable practice.

I have thus endeavoured to trace out connecting links, which may lead to other chains of evidence respecting ships having been seen drifting on an iceberg off the banks of Newfoundland in April last year, which I hope may prove satisfactory.

Capt. R. Simpson,  
"British Queen,"  
Mr. Crilly, Quay,  
Limerick.

I have, &c.  
(signed) *Henry C. Hawkins*,  
Inspecting-commander of Coast Guard.

To the Secretary of the Admiralty,  
Whitehall, London.

No. 6.

Sir,

Admiralty, 29 March 1852.

I HAVE received and laid before my Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty your letter of the 28th inst., reporting the result of the inquiries you have made respecting two ships having been seen in the spring of 1851 drifting with an iceberg off the banks of Newfoundland, by the brig "Renovation."

My Lords are well satisfied with the course you have so promptly pursued in this matter, and would wish you to follow it up by such further inquiry and investigation as you may be of opinion would tend to throw further light on the subject; and if convenient, you are to communicate with Messrs. Young, the owners of the "Renovation," at Shields, and ascertain from them whether Mr. Howard, the master, ever mentioned the circumstance to them.

I am, &c.  
(signed) *W. A. B. Hamilton*.

Commander H. C. Hawkins, R.N.,  
Coast Guard, Sunderland.

No. 7.

(Confidential.)

Sir,

Admiralty, 29 March 1852.

I AM commanded by my Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty to send you herewith for your information copies of papers respecting two ships having been seen in the spring of 1851 drifting with an iceberg off the coast of Newfoundland by the brig "Renovation;" and with reference to the statement in Commander Hawkins' letter, that Mr. Robert Simpson, the mate of the "Renovation," has proceeded to Limerick, in command of the "British Queen," to embark emigrants for America, their Lordships require that the papers may be immediately forwarded to the inspecting commander of the coast guard of the Limerick district, and that you will instruct him to proceed on board the "British Queen," and make the most minute inquiries respecting the ships in question.

*Nos. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6.*

I am, &c.  
(signed) *W. A. B. Hamilton*.

To the Comptroller-general of Coast Guard.

No. 8.

Sir,

Admiralty, 29 March 1852.

I AM commanded by my Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty to send you herewith, for the information of the Earl of Malmesbury, copies of papers respecting two ships having been seen in the spring of 1851 drifting with an iceberg off the banks of Newfoundland by the brig "Renovation;" and with reference to the statement of Commander Hawkins that the "Renovation" sailed

*Nos. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6.*

## 6 COMMUNICATIONS IN REFERENCE TO VESSELS OBSERVED

for Venice on the 11th instant, with the same officers and crew as were on board her at the time of seeing the ships on the ice, their Lordships require that instructions may be sent to Her Majesty's consul-general at Venice to go on board the "Renovation," and to make the most strict and searching inquiry into all the circumstances of the case, examining Mr. Coward, the master, on oath, and such other of the officers and crew as the consul-general may deem expedient.

I am, &c.  
(signed) *W. A. B. Hamilton.*

H. U. Addington, Esq.,  
Foreign Office.

---

No. 9.

Sir,

Admiralty, 29 March 1852.

Nos. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6.

I AM commanded by my Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty to send you herewith, for your information, copies of papers respecting two ships having been seen in the spring of 1851, drifting with an iceberg off the coast of Newfoundland, by the brig "Renovation;" and with reference to the statement in Commander Hawkins' letter, that a Mr. Cleugh was present when the conversation on the subject of these ships took place at Quebec between Mr. Howard, the master of the "Renovation," and Mr. Storey, the master of the brig "Agnes," and that the said Mr. Cleugh is now either at Portland or Weymouth, having gone there with a cargo of Canadian timber on Government account for the breakwater, their Lordships desire that you will immediately endeavour to find out Mr. Cleugh, and ascertain from him all the particulars you possibly can respecting the conversation alluded to.

I am, &c.  
(signed) *W. A. B. Hamilton.*

Commander Pasco, R. N.,  
Coast Guard, Weymouth.

---

No. 10.

Sir,

Weymouth, 30 March 1852.

I HAVE the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 29th inst., directing me to communicate with Mr. Cleugh relative to a conversation he had with a Mr. Coward (not Howard), master of the brig "Renovation," about two vessels having been seen on an iceberg in the spring of 1851.

Mr. Cleugh states, that at Quebec he had several meetings with Mr. Coward, master of the brig "Renovation," of Shields, who, with a passenger (name unknown), stated that they both saw the two vessels in position as stated in the report, distant about one mile, fixed in the ice, with no appearance of any one on board. Mr. Coward was then very ill, and called up from his bed to see them. Mr. Cleugh feels convinced Mr. Coward is a person of strict integrity, and that he fully relies upon his having made a truthful statement.

He thinks a record of the circumstance is in the log-book of the "Renovation." Mrs. Cleugh corroborates the whole statement.

It was generally spoken of at Quebec; and that when it was talked over, Mrs. Cleugh said to Mr. Coward, "If you had only boarded them and brought a vestige of the vessels, you would have made your fortune if it proved to have been part of the missing ships."

Mr. Cleugh commands the bark "Pearl," and will sail on Saturday for Quebec; and promises to make inquiries at the Custom-house (Quebec) for verification of the report.

Mr. Coward stated that the parents of the passenger were respectable people in Limerick.

I enclose Mr. Cleugh's written report.

I have, &c.  
(signed) *Montague Pasco,*  
Inspecting Commander, Weymouth.

The Secretary of the Admiralty,  
&c. &c. &c.

Encl. in No. 10.

## Enclosure in No. 10.

Weymouth, 30 March 1852.

BEING requested by Captain Pasco to give an account of what I heard Mr. Coward state at Quebec, concerning two vessels he passed in an iceberg, to the best of my recollection it was as follows:

While running with studding sails set, about the edge of soundings, they passed a large iceberg, in which were two vessels, the one a ship sitting upright, the other with a list; he could not say whether a ship or barque, her mizen-mast being gone. He also stated to me that he mentioned it at the custom-house, upon arrival at Quebec, and expressed his regret to me at not being able to board them, being ill at the time; but there were other vessels in his track, but not in sight at the time.

I left Shields April 8th, 1851, arrived at Quebec May 18th, and left June 19th, 1851.

(signed) *George Cleugh,*  
Master Barque "Pearl."

## No. 11.

(Confidential.)

Sir,

Coast Guard Office, 30 March 1852.

I BEG to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 29th instant, immediate and confidential, with copies of papers respecting two ships having been seen in the spring of 1851, drifting with an iceberg off the coast of Newfoundland, by the brig "Renovation," and to acquaint you that I have transmitted them to Commander Palmer, the inspecting commander within the port of Limerick, with directions to make the most minute inquiry, agreeably to your request.

Captain Hamilton, R. N.  
&c. &c. &c.  
Secretary, Admiralty.

I am, &c.  
(signed) *E. Ommanney.*

## No. 12.

Electric Telegraph, 31 March 1852.

To Captain *Hawkins*, Sunderland. From Admiralty.

PROCEED to Mr. Young's, at Shields, and ascertain if the circumstance of the ships and iceberg is noted in the "Renovation's" log of April last.

## No. 13.

Sir,

Sunderland, 31 March 1852.

RELATIVE to your telegraphic message of this morning, directing me to proceed to Mr. Young, at Shields, and ascertain if the circumstances of the ships and icebergs is noted in the log-book of the "Renovation" of April last;

I beg leave to inform you, that I immediately proceeded thither, and had an interview with Mr. Young on the subject, but find there is no log-book of the "Renovation" at Mr. Young's office of a later date than April 1850, and consequently that the log-book of 1851 is still on board that vessel. I further beg to remark, that on looking over the "Renovation's" log-books of previous years, kept by Mr. Robert Simpson, chief mate, it is mentioned, the same person whom I have stated, in my letter of the 28th instant, is at present master of the ship "British Queen," and who (as he sailed from Shields on the 22d instant for Limerick) is either now at that port, or on his passage there.

I beg therefore to submit, that, as he probably continued to keep the log-book of the "Renovation" until he left her, he is likely to know the exact words entered on the occasion; and moreover, as he is probably the mate mentioned who had charge of the watch when first the iceberg and ships were seen, must have had a longer and as correct a view of their state and circumstances as Mr. Coward, the master of the "Renovation."

I further beg to state, that Mr. Young, the owner of the "Renovation," informs me that Mr. Coward never mentioned to him the circumstance of having met them; but the brother of the master (a surgeon at Shields), whom I have

## 8 COMMUNICATIONS IN REFERENCE TO VESSELS OBSERVED

seen to-day, states, that within the last two months his brother had mentioned to him, "that he had met ships drifting with an iceberg, on his voyage to Quebec last year," but did not enter into further details.

I have, &c.

(signed) *Henry C. Hawkins,*

Inspecting Commander of Coast Guard.

To the Secretary of the Admiralty, London.

---

No. 14.

(Confidential, 70.)

Sir,

Coast Guard Office, 6 April 1852.

REFERRING to your letter of the 29th ultimo, and mine of the 30th, relative to the brig "Renovation;"

I beg leave to transmit herewith copy of a letter this day received from Commander Palmer, and to acquaint you that the further particulars shall be forwarded when received.

*Encl. in No. 14.*

Captain Hamilton, R.N., &c. &c.  
Admiralty.

I have, &c.

(signed) *A. Ellice.*

---

Enclosure in No. 14.

(Confidential.)

Sir,

Kilbec, County Clare, 4 April 1852.

IMMEDIATELY on the receipt of your letter, marked confidential, of the 30th March 1852, finding the "British Queen" had not yet arrived in the Shannon, I proceeded to Limerick, and called on Mr. Crilly, to whom the "British Queen" is consigned. He informed me that his nephew went out in the "Renovation" in April last year as passenger to Quebec, and that he wrote to him from Quebec, word for word, the statement Captain Coward (not Howard) made to Captain Storey of the brig "Agnes," relative to his passing two ships on the ice out of the water off the banks of Newfoundland on his passage to Quebec. This letter Mr. Crilly has written to a friend, to whom he afterwards sent the letter, to return it him, and will then forward it to me. Directly the "British Queen" arrives, I will forward the papers with Captain Simpson's statement.

I am, &c.

(signed) *John Jervis Palmer,*  
Inspecting Commander.

The Comptroller-General Coast Guard,  
Custom-House, London.

---

No. 15.

(Confidential.)

Sir,

Coast Guard Office, 7 April 1852.

ADVERTING to my letter of yesterday's date, confidential, 70, I beg to enclose copy of a further report this day received from Commander Palmer, also a copy of the "statement of Mr. Simpson" therein alluded to. Any further information that may be sent here on the subject shall be duly forwarded to you without delay.

*Encl. in No. 15.*

Captain Hamilton, &c. &c.,  
Admiralty.

I am, &c.

(signed) *A. Ellice.*

---

Enclosure in No. 15.

Kilbec, 5 April 1852.

THE "British Queen" having just entered the Shannon, I beg to send you the statement of Mr. Simpson, master of her, formerly mate of the "Renovation," made to Mr. Chown, chief officer at Tarbert, and I hope to forward the letter (written by Mr. Lynch, a nephew of Mr. Creilly, of Limerick, who was a passenger on board) in a day or two.

I would most respectfully beg to suggest it would be desirable to procure the log of the "Renovation," which I have no doubt the owner, Mr. Emanuel Young, of North Shields, is in possession of.

*Sub-Enclosure in  
No. 15.*

*John Jervis Palmer,*  
Inspecting Commander.



## Sub-Enclosure in No. 15.

6.30 P. M., 4 April 1852.

ABOUT the 20th April 1851, Mr. Simpson, then mate of the "Renovation," saw two full-rigged ships (about 6 A. M.), one larger than the other, on an iceberg about 10 or 12 feet high, about five miles long; the largest vessel was on her beam ends, head to the westward, the smaller one head south, and upright, with topmast an end, and no topgallant mast. The "Renovation" was then about 30 miles west of Cape Race, and the iceberg about five miles north-west.

The master was very sick at the time, and the mate could not take it upon himself to bear up for the iceberg. A Mr. Joseph Lynch also saw the vessels, besides all the mates. The "Renovation" at that time was under double-reefed fore and main topsails and fore course, blowing very strong; the morning was very clear; and the mate cannot recollect any further particulars, and cannot tell whether the log is on board the "Renovation," or whether the owners have it. The owner is Emanuel Young, a large shipowner in North Shields, Northumberland-square.

P. S.—Mr. Joseph Lynch, nephew to Mr. Crilley, at Limerick, a ship-chandler.

I send this from the "British Queen" to save time, not being able to get any more particulars.

I am, &c.  
(signed) P. Chown,  
Coast Guard, Tarbert.

## No. 15 a.

Sir,

Admiralty, 10 April 1852.

I AM commanded by my Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty to acquaint you, that, understanding you are about to proceed to Ireland on an official tour of inspection, and being cognizant as you are with the circumstances, so far as they have been related to their Lordships, respecting the report of two ships having been seen on the ice in April last, off the south-east end of the island of Newfoundland, by the "Renovation" brig, my Lords would be glad if the service you are employed on would admit of your proceeding in the first instance to Limerick, where it is probable you will find Mr. Simpson, who was mate of the "Renovation," at present in command of the "British Queen," and that you would put such questions to Mr. Simpson, in order to elicit further facts relating to this story as your own judgment and acquaintance with such matters would suggest.

I am, &c.  
(signed) W. A. B. Hamilton.

Captain E. Ommanney, R. N.,  
Charing Cross.

## No. 16.

Sir,

Coast Guard Office, 10 April 1852.

HEREWITH I have the honour to transmit, for the information of the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty, the accompanying letter and its enclosure from the inspecting commander of the coast guard, Kilrush district, this morning received.

*Encl. in No. 16.*

I have, &c.  
(signed) E. Ommanney,  
Deputy Comptroller-General.

The Secretary of the Admiralty,  
&c. &c. &c.

## Enclosure in No. 16.

Sir,

Kilbec, County Clare, 7 April 1852.

I BEG to forward a true copy of an extract written by a passenger on board the "Renovation," on her passage to Quebec last year, and which was published in the "Limerick Chronicle" of the 28th May 1851.

The editor having only one paper remaining, is unwilling to part with it. Mr. Creilly hopes to have the original letter in a few days.

*Sub-Enclosure in No. 16.*

I am, &c.  
(signed) John Jervis Palmer,  
Inspecting Commander.

The Comptroller-General Coast Guard,  
Custom-house, London.

# 10 COMMUNICATIONS IN REFERENCE TO VESSELS OBSERVED

Sub-Enclosure in No. 16.

"Limerick Chronicle," 28 May 1851.

EXTRACT from a Letter of a Passenger who sailed from this Port for *Quebec*, in the "*Renovation*," on the 6th April last, to a Friend in Limerick.

Quebec, 9 May 1851.

WE arrived here on yesterday, after a passage which for the first 13 days promised to be one of the speediest almost on record, having been two miles to the West of the Bird Island, in the Gulf, at the time we met the ice, and having been for 16 days coasting along it, with a fair wind ever since. It has been very heavy, and a number of ships have suffered severely. Indeed, to attempt to give any description of the ice would be useless; we have sailed for 60 miles of a stretch seeking an opening without being able to effect, which was most vexatious, as had we not met with it we should have the passage in 15½ days. The icebergs we met with were frightful in size, as the basis of some of them would cover three times over the area of Limerick; and I do not at all exaggerate when I say that the steeple of the cathedral would have appeared but a small pinnacle, and a dark one, compared to the lofty and gorgeously-tinted spires that were on some of them; and more to be regretted is that we met, or rather saw at a distance, one with two ships on it, which I am almost sure belonged to Franklin's exploring squadron, as from the latitude and longitude we met them in they were drifting from the direction of Davis's Straits. Was there but a single one, it might have been a deserted whaler, but two so near each other, they must have been consorts; they were to windward of us, and a heavy sea running at the time, with thick weather coming on, we could not board them.

No. 17.

Sir

Coast Guard Office, 12 April 1852.

Encl. in No. 17.

WITH reference to my letter of the 7th instant, I have now the honour to transmit, for the information of the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty, copy of the further report of the inspecting commander, Kilrush, forwarding the statement made to him by Mr. Simpson, of the "*British Queen*," respecting the two ships seen in the spring of 1851, with an iceberg, off the coast of Newfoundland, &c.

Sub-Enclosure in No. 17.

Vide Sub-Enclosure in No. 16.

I transmit a sketch of the position of the vessels as furnished by Mr. Simpson, and also the copy of the "*Limerick Chronicle*," alluded to.

I have, &c.

(signed) *A. Ellice*,  
Comptroller-General.

The Secretary of the Admiralty,  
&c. &c. &c.

Enclosure 1, in No. 17.

Limerick, 9 April 1852.

THE instant I received your letter this morning, I proceeded to Limerick, and went on board the "*British Queen*," where I found Mr. Simpson, late mate of the "*Renovation*." He states as follows:

"On the 20th of April 1851, at 6 A.M., I saw two full-rigged ships (one about 500 tons, the other 350) on an iceberg, high and dry; the larger one on her beam ends, head to the westward; three ships lower masts only standing, with bowsprit; masts painted white; apparently not housed over; the smaller one was about 350 tons, head to the southward, with lower and topsail yards across, sails unbent, topmast an end, yards very square and black, not housed over, nearly upright, both vessels apparently abandoned."

The "*Renovation*," was then about 30 miles to the eastward of Cape Race, and the iceberg about five miles north-west. The master was sick in bed, and when Mr. Simpson called him, and stated that two vessels were in sight, on an iceberg, he was too unwell to take any notice, and answered "Very well." Mr. Simpson therefore did not like to take the responsibility of bearing up to examine the vessels. The log on board the "*Renovation*" was kept by the mate (Mr. Simpson), and these circumstances were entered by him on the log. He thinks it is still in possession of Mr. Emanuel Young (the owner), at North Shields.

Sub-Enclosure in No. 17.

I beg to enclose a sketch made by Mr. Simpson of the position of the two vessels, both of which appeared to be painted black.

I have also examined Thomas Davis, now a seaman on board the "*British Queen*," and who was at the wheel on board the "*Renovation*" when the vessels were observed, who entirely corroborates, word for word, the statement made by Mr. Simpson; but with regard to the other questions in your letter, both are unable to answer them.

I close this in great haste, to save this evening's post, with a "*Limerick Chronicle*," with an extract of Mr. Lynch's letter to Mr. Creilly in it. The original letter, I fear, is lost.

*John Jervis Palmer*,  
Inspecting Commander.

(To face page 10.)

Sub-Enclosure in N°17.





No 18.

Sir,

Limerick, 16 April 1852.

I BEG to acquaint you, for the information of the Right Honourable the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty, that, agreeably with their desire, contained in your letter of the 10th instant, I was enabled to proceed direct to Limerick, where I have found Mr. Simpson, late mate of the "Renovation," and Thomas Davis, seaman of the same vessel. Having made every inquiry into the circumstance referred to, the result is herewith submitted to their Lordships.

The statement made to me by Mr. Simpson, in the presence of Commander J. J. Palmer, R.N., Commander Wm. Ellis (a), R.N., and the inspector of police, Captain William Caldwell, is herewith transmitted. That two vessels were seen in the position described there seems to be no shadow of doubt, though it is to be regretted, that, owing to the distance which the "Renovation" passed from the piece of ice with the ships laying on it, no fact can be elicited by which the vessels can be identified, though I have put every question which my experience dictates.

*Encl. 1, in No. 18*

The evidence of Thomas Davis, seaman, who was at the helm when the ships were first seen, and all the time when they were in sight, confirms the fact of such vessels being seen in the position referred to, as whilst at the wheel he could distinguish them with his naked eye; the rest of his information confirms what has been stated by Mr. Simpson.

The fact of having passed these vessels without examining them must appear strange to many. It has been my earnest desire to obtain some satisfactory reason for this apparent act of supineness, and to extract the feeling which existed in the minds of those on board the "Renovation" at beholding such an extraordinary sight. The duration of the time whilst the vessels were visible appears to be no more than three quarters of an hour; the "Renovation" at the time was making about a W. by N. (true) course, running six or seven knots an hour through the water. Mr. Simpson appears an unassuming person, and, entertaining a very proper deference to the authority of his superior, would not presume to alter the course without the master's sanction, who lay ill in bed at the time, and did not come on deck when the circumstance was reported. He made known the fact to him, and he fully expected to receive orders to bear up, and ascertain what they were, but receiving no instructions, continued on his course. The impression which struck him when looking at the ships was that they were wrecks, but felt an inward desire to overhaul them, which he mentioned to Mr. Lynch, the only passenger on board, who, when the vessels were nearly out of sight astern, expressed an opinion to Mr. Simpson that they were Franklin's ships. He saw Mr. Lynch go down to Mr. Coward, but he does not know the result of the interview on that occasion.

Thomas Davis states that there was no curiosity or interest evinced amongst the crew after seeing the vessels; but there were a great many icebergs seen, and they felt more anxiety for the safety of their own ship. It was his first trip to Quebec, and he had never seen icebergs before. It is his opinion that no one in the ship knew of any reward for the discovery of the missing expedition, and that he never knew anything of Franklin's expedition until last January, when at Plymouth.

The circumstance of a ship's crew being ignorant of the reward held out by Government for the discovery of Franklin's expedition may at first sight appear incredible; in consequence, I have made the most searching inquiry in this town if the reward ever obtained publicity, but even the principal merchants, the chief of police, the postmaster, the editor of the "Limerick Chronicle," the Chamber of Commerce, and tradespeople immediately connected with the mercantile community, brokers and masters of the Quebec traders, they never heard of such reward being offered until the present moment.

I have had lengthened conversations with Mr. Lynch's uncle, Mr. Crielly, ship-chandler, and his sister; they can both certify to the accuracy of the extract from their relative's letter, which was published in the "Limerick Chronicle," and which was purposely inserted for information, by the advice of a friend of Mr. Crielly's, to whom he showed the letter.

Mr. Lynch is a person of intelligence and good education. In his youth he passed three years at sea, and since has been engaged in business and agricultural

tural pursuits. Whilst employed under the Board of Public Works, as a pay clerk, he received a reward for his gallant conduct in defending himself against a party who attacked him for the purpose of robbing him of about 1,200*l.* of Government money under his charge, which he was instrumental in saving. This gentleman appears to have manifested more curiosity and interest respecting the two ships than any other person on board the "Renovation," for during the remainder of the voyage he had frequent discussions with Mr. Coward on the subject, which vexed him, feeling that he ought to have searched the vessels.

On arriving at Quebec he remained two or three days on board the "Renovation," during which time he asked Mr. Simpson to accompany him and return to the search of the two ships.

I submit that this gentleman may be communicated with, as his information will probably be very useful in stating all which transpired. He is now residing at Prescott, in Upper Canada; his name is John Supple Lynch.

It is a matter of some importance to know that the position of the "Renovation" as first reported appears incorrect, and that she was considerably to the northward of her reckoning (about 80 miles), which will bring the ice on which the ships lay nearly on the 47th parallel; this fact is clear from the circumstance that the "Renovation" was nearly run on shore owing to this error, about 10 P.M. of the same day when the ships were passed. Mr. Simpson was called up suddenly by the second mate reporting a light; on reaching the deck, a lighthouse (which must have been St. John's) was only three or four miles distant; they immediately hauled to the wind, and put about on the starboard tack. The following day they were set right by a French brig as to their position; they bore up, the wind having changed to the N. E.; after running along the coast, they rounded Cape Race at 2 P.M. Mr. Simpson states that the course steered from the ships was about W. by N. (true), and running at the rate of six or seven knots for 14 hours; with this date the position of the ships when seen is assumed to be E. by S., off St. John's, about 90 miles. Soundings had been tried for on the previous day with 60 fathoms of line. A tracing of the assumed position of the ships is herewith transmitted.

Encl. 2, in No. 18.

In the absence of the log, Mr. Simpson is unable to furnish any dates. A considerable number of icebergs were passed the day previous to seeing the ships, and there were many in sight at the time. I have also ascertained that the "Jessy," of Limerick, passed through a chain of bergs on the 16th April 1851, about the same meridian as the "Renovation," but further to the southward.

I have endeavoured to ascertain from Mr. Daniel Gorman, the most experienced seaman in this port, who has been employed in the American trade since 1809, and employed under the same owners here in command of vessels since 1829, such information as may bear on the point, to show the drift of the current and icebergs near the bank of Newfoundland. I beg to enclose it.

Encl. 3, in No. 18.

On reaching the Gulf of St. Lawrence, the "Renovation" was detained by the ice for several days, with the other ships bound to Quebec at that time, which is mentioned in Mr. Lynch's letter. The second mate and several of the crew ran from the vessel at Quebec.

Although Mr. Simpson is satisfied that each vessel had three masts, but, owing to the distance, he cannot affirm whether they were ships or barques; from the same circumstance, he can give no satisfactory answer to the other details respecting their fittings, except he is very clear that the vessel with her yards up had no sails bent, and respecting the boats, there were none suspended to davits, or to be seen outside the ships.

Whatever ships they may have been, whether Franklin's or not, the fate of the crews must be a subject of public sympathy, and many surmises will result. My firm conviction is that those vessels drifted a considerable distance on that piece of ice: from the description given, I cannot denominate it a berg, the most elevated part being no more than 30 or 40 feet high, whilst it was five miles long, which appears very like a portion of a heavy floe with a hummock upon it. From the fact of being found drifting with the current which sets along the coast of Labrador from Davis' Straits, I infer they came from a high northern latitude; the removal of the spars and absence of the boats, indicate that the abandonment of the ships had been a work of time and deliberation; the fact of the ships being close together has the appearance of being consorts.

If the hulls were in a floating condition when released from the ice, there is yet

yet a chance they may be fallen in with some day, as timber ships have drifted to the coast of Portugal and the Bay of Biscay.

I have spared no pains to obtain every particle of information on this important circumstance, and it is to be deplored that no measures were taken to examine the vessels; it appears to have been a subject of deep regret on the minds of Mr. Coward and Mr. Simpson ever since; and Mr. Lynch was strongly impressed with the idea that they were Sir John Franklin's ships.

In this investigation I have received the co-operation of Commander J. J. Palmer, Commander Wm. Ellis (*a*), and Captain William Caldwell, Inspector of Police for the county of Limerick, who have rendered me every assistance in their power.

Mr. Simpson has shown every desire to give all the information which he is now enabled to do, and I have every confidence in his candour and integrity.

I have, &c.

(signed) *Erasmus Ommanney*,  
Captain R.N.

To the Secretary of the Admiralty,  
&c. &c. &c.

---

Enclosure 1, in No. 18.

REPLIES made by Mr. *Robert Simpson*, Master of the "British Queen," late Mate of the "Renovation," in answer to Questions put to him by Captain E. Ommanney, R.N., in the presence of Commander J. J. Palmer, R.N., Commander William Ellis (*a*), R.N., and Captain William Caldwell, Inspector of Police.

How long have you been at sea?  
Thirteen years.

Have you ever seen any ice before the last voyage?

Yes; in the Black Sea I was frozen in, but never before off Newfoundland. It was my first voyage to America, and it was Mr. Coward's (the master) also.

At what distance did the "Renovation" pass from the ice on which the vessels lay?  
Five or six miles.

How were the ships painted?  
They appeared to be all black.

Had the upper ship any of her topgallant rigging aloft?  
It was not up, and all the running gear appeared to be unrove; there was nothing but the standing rigging to be seen.

How was the lower rigging set up?  
Did not take notice.

Did you remark anything peculiar about the fitting of the bobstays?  
No.

Could you distinguish any gaffs or other spars in their places, except the masts and yards?  
No; the ships were too far from us.

Were the sails bent?  
No; they were all unbent. It was remarked at the time by Mr. Lynch and myself.

Could you discover any one moving on board the vessels?  
No. The large one looked like a wreck; the smaller one, on the highest part of the ice, was upright, and looked in good condition.

Had any person been on either ship, would they have seen you?  
Yes, no doubt they would.

Were the ships housed over?  
The large one, which lay on her beam ends, with her deck exposed to our view, was not; I am not certain about the other.

What boats could you perceive?  
There were no boats visible.

Could you make out any boats' davits?  
No.

Could you distinguish the ship's rudder, and whether they were suspended across the sterns?  
No; they were too distant.

## 14 COMMUNICATIONS IN REFERENCE TO VESSELS OBSERVED

Had they any topgallant forecastle?

No; the ship on her beam ends was flush, her decks were clear.

Could you see whether the ships were coppered?

I could not see any of the bottom of the ship on her beam ends, owing to her position, and was apparently much embedded in the ice; could see a large portion of the other ship's bottom, which, I think, was not coppered.

Could you perceive whether the ships had any anchors in the bows or elsewhere?

None to be seen.

Can you state how the masts were painted?

I think the largest ship's were white.

Did any one go aloft to obtain a better view of the ships?

No one went aloft; it was not requisite; we could see them plainly.

Could you see any figure-head or cut-water?

I think there was no cut-water.

Could you distinguish the difference of the dimensions between the two ships?

The lower one appeared to be larger than the upper one; but this might arise from the different position in which they lay, the upper one having her bows towards us, and the other with the whole of her deck exposed to our view. They were large ships.

Were the hatchways open?

Could not see; it was too distant.

What do you consider large ships?

Ships about 400 or 500 tons.

From all your experience as a seaman, when looking at these ships, was there anything unusual in their general appearance?

They were too far off to notice particulars: our spy-glass was old, and a very indifferent one.

Could you perceive any aperture in the run for working a screw-propeller?

No: could not see the after-part of the upper ship; and the lower one being on her beam ends, and embedded in the ice, could not obtain any view of her.

Had you any piece of ordnance or signal-gun on board?

We had one, a 2 or 3-pounder.

Did you fire it, or make any signal to attract attention?

No; I doubt whether we had any powder on board.

Was the circumstance of seeing these two ships entered in the log?

It is entered in the log-book of the "Renovation."

How far do you suppose the ships were apart?

20 or 30 yards, apparently; they were very close.

What distance from the water's edge?

The ship on her beam ends, only a few yards; her masts nearly over the water.

What was the height of the ice?

The highest part about 30 feet.

Give a description of the surface and area of the ice on which the ships lay.

I think the ice on which the ships lay was five miles long.

Can you give the position of the "Renovation" when passing the ships?

We must have been out of our reckoning, much further to the northward and westward. I suppose we were to the southward of Cape Race.

How far were you from the nearest land?

When we sighted St. John's light, at 10 p.m., we must have made about a W. by N. course for 14 hours, from the ship's running 6 or 7 knots per hour.

Were you in soundings when the ships were passed?

Yes; we had tried on two occasions the previous day, with 60 fathoms of line, but no bottom. We were 80 miles to the northward and westward of our reckoning. We had no chronometer.

After you lost sight of the vessels, did any conversation arise between yourselves as to what they were?

Mr. Lynch spoke a great deal about the ships, and said it was a great pity we ran past them; and he told the pilot of them when he came on board off Cape Garp. On arrival at Quebec, Mr. Lynch wished to set off again in search of them. He spoke a great deal on the subject to the master, who was frequently much vexed with him for it, also because he had not examined them.

Were



Were you aware of a reward being offered by the Government for the discovery of Sir John Franklin's expedition?

No; I think it was not known to any one on board.

Was any one in the ship aware of such reward?

Perhaps the master might; but I doubt whether the men were aware of such reward, or that they knew of any such expedition as Franklin's.

Are you aware whether the master reported the circumstance on his arrival at Quebec?

He told me he did.

Were any more bergs in sight?

We could see them in all directions; we passed a great many icebergs on the previous day.

What time was it when Mr. Lynch first expressed his opinion that they might be Franklin's ships?

When the ships were nearly out of sight astern.

Did you or Mr. Lynch go down to the master after such opinion was expressed?

Mr. Lynch went down to Mr. Coward, but I do not know what transpired between them.

Were you and Mr. Lynch on friendly terms?

Quite so; like brothers.

May I ask whether there was a perfect understanding between you and the master in the management of the ship on all occasions?

We had perfect confidence in each other; we had been together four years in the "Renovation." His orders were very strict, never to alter the ship's course without his permission.

Why did you not remonstrate with Mr. Coward, with a view to obtain his sanction to close the vessels?

At the time we regarded them as wrecks; when I called him I thought he would have given orders to go down and look at them; but I do not know what he said to Mr. Lynch. Mr. Coward never came on deck to look at the vessels. At the time I said to Mr. Lynch, I would like to go aboard, and rummage the cabins.

When you state that there were no boats, was it because you were satisfied there were none?

Cannot state whether there were any on board at the time; the distance was too great for me to determine these particulars, but saw none hoisted up to davits.

Could you distinguish whether the ships had any iron plates about the bows?

No; too far off.

Will you tell me your decided opinion, that if these vessels had been all "atanto," what rig they could be?

Did not take that particular notice; it was too far to say decidedly whether they may have been ships or barques; I merely took a bird's-eye view of them; the one with her yards aloft might be either a ship or barque.

Would you have incurred any risk to the safety of your ship had you run down to close the ice?

Had I been master of the ship I would have gone down and hove-to, and endeavoured to have gone on board the ships.

(signed) *Robert Simpson,*  
Late Mate of the "Renovation."

Limerick, 16 April 1852.

Witness the foregoing answers have been read and acknowledged by Mr. Robert Simpson, in our presence, to be correct.

*Erasmus Ommanney*, Captain, R.N.  
*William Ellis*, Commander, R.N.  
*John Jervis Palmer*, Commander, R.N.  
*W. Caldwell*, County Inspector Constabulary, Limerick.

# 16 COMMUNICATIONS IN REFERENCE TO VESSELS OBSERVED

Enclosure 3, in No. 18.

REMARKS on the Passage to *Quebec*, furnished by Mr. *Daniel Gorman*, Master of the "Jessy," of Limerick.

"In the spring of the year we generally look out for icebergs in longitude  $42^{\circ}$  W. to  $45^{\circ}$  W. and in latitude  $42^{\circ}$  N. to  $45^{\circ}$  N. On reaching that position we invariably experience a current setting to the S.S.E., at the rate of two miles and a half an hour, along the eastern edge of the bank. When on the Great Bank the current is imperceptible, but is generally influenced by the wind. Between Cape Race and the Great Bank, near the Virgin Rocks, the current sets to the S.W., about two miles an hour in the spring, decreasing in velocity in the fall of the year.

"We generally cross the bank on the parallel of  $44\frac{1}{2}^{\circ}$  N. to avoid the many icebergs. In the Gulf of St. Lawrence, in the spring, we are liable to meet with packed ice, with small bergs amongst it, which have been drifted through the straits of Belle Isle.

"Sailed from Limerick in the 'Jessy' on the 1st April; were beset in the Gulf of St. Lawrence for 11 days; passed through a chain of bergs near the bank, in latitude  $45^{\circ}$ , on 16 April 1851; arrived at Quebec on the 8th May; the 'Renovation' arrived a day or two after; know Mr. Coward, who was then in good health."

Mr. Gorman never heard of the reward offered for the discovery of Franklin's expedition, not even at Quebec, though intimately acquainted with the mercantile community.

*E. Ommanney.*

No. 19.

Sir,

Admiralty, 12 April 1852.

I AM commanded by my Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty to acquaint you, that my Lords would be glad if evidence could be obtained amongst the officers at Woolwich sufficient to prove whether one of Sir John Franklin's ships ("Erebus" or "Terror") was ship-rigged on last quitting England.

The Senior Officer  
of Her Majesty's Ships and Vessels  
at Woolwich.

I am, &c.  
(signed) *W. A. B. Hamilton.*

No. 20.

Sir,

"Assistance," at Woolwich,  
13 April 1852.

IN obedience to the directions contained in your letter of the 12th instant, I have made inquiry as to the rig of Her Majesty's discovery ships "Erebus" and "Terror" on their last quitting England, and Captain Kellett informs me that he was on board them at Greenhithe, and that he also saw them pass Sheerness, and that they were then both barque-rigged.

The Secretary of the Admiralty,  
London.

I have, &c.  
(signed) *Edward Belcher,*  
Captain and Senior Officer in the Thames.

No. 21.

Sir,

Admiralty, 12 April 1852.

I AM commanded by my Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty to request, that you will report to me, for their Lordships' information, whether any whalers from Peterhead were lost in the years 1850 or 1851, and if so, that you will state the name and description of vessel, how rigged, and under what circumstances wrecked, also the known extent of such wreck, whether complete, or merely abandoned by the crew.

The Collector of  
Her Majesty's Customs at Peterhead.

I am, &c.  
(signed) *W. A. B. Hamilton.*

Similar

Similar letters addressed to—

The Collector of Customs at Aberdeen.  
 The Collector of Customs at Dundee.  
 The Collector of Customs at Kirkaldy.  
 The Collector of Customs at Whitby.  
 The Collector of Customs at Hull, and  
 The Collector of Customs at Leith.

No. 22.

Sir, Custom-house, Peterhead, 14 April 1852.  
 IN obedience to the request communicated in your letter of the 12th instant, I beg to report that no whalers from Peterhead were lost in the years 1850 or 1851.

Captain W. A. B. Hamilton, R.N., &c. &c. I am, &c.  
 Admiralty. (signed) *P. Hayton*,  
 Collector.

No. 23.

Sir, Custom-house, Aberdeen, 14 April 1852.  
 WITH reference to your letter of the 12th instant, I beg to acquaint you that no whalers from this port have been lost in the years 1850 or 1851.

Captain W. A. B. Hamilton, R.N., I am, &c.  
 Admiralty. (signed) *Wm. Lawryers*,  
 Collector.

No. 24.

Sir, Custom-house, Dundee, 14 April 1852.  
 IN reply to your letter of the 12th instant, I have to report, for the information of the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty, that no whalers from this port were lost in the years 1850 or 1851.

Captain W. A. B. Hamilton, R.N., &c. &c. I have, &c.  
 Admiralty. (signed) *James Trevenen*.

No. 25.

Sir, Custom-house, Kirkaldy, 14 April 1852.  
 IN compliance with your request of the 12th instant, I beg to report that no whalers from Kirkaldy were lost in the years 1850 and 1851.

Captain W. A. B. Hamilton, R.N., &c. &c. I am, &c.  
 Admiralty. (signed) *R. Willingate*,  
 Collector

No. 26.

Sir, Customs, Whitby, 13 April 1852.  
 IN obedience to your letter of the 12th instant, I beg leave to report that no whalers from Whitby were lost in the years 1850 or 1851.

Captain W. A. B. Hamilton, R.N., I am, &c.  
 Admiralty, London. (signed) *Pat. Black*,  
 Collector of Customs.

# 18 COMMUNICATIONS IN REFERENCE TO VESSELS OBSERVED

No. 27.

Sir,  
IN attention to the request of the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty, conveyed in your letter of yesterday's date, I beg to report, for their Lordships' information, that no whalers from Hull were lost in the years 1850 and 1851; this I have ascertained to be the case from the best sources of information on the subject here.

Captain W. A. B. Hamilton, R.N.,  
Secretary, Admiralty.

Custom-house, Hull, 13 April 1852.  
I am, &c.  
(signed) *M. C. Cotton*,  
Collector.

No. 28.

Sir,  
IN reply to your letter of yesterday's date, requesting to be informed, for the information of the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty, whether any whalers from Leith were lost in the years 1850 or 1851;

I beg to acquaint you that there has not been any whalers from this port during the last twenty-three years, consequently none lost in the years 1850 or 1851.

The Secretary of the Admiralty.

Custom-house, Leith, 13 April 1851.  
I am, &c.  
(signed) *C. Henderson*,  
pro Collector.

No. 29.

Sir,  
WITH reference to your letter of the 14th instant, I beg to state, for the information of the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty, that there were no whalers from this port lost in the years 1850 or 1851.

The Secretary of the Admiralty.

Custom-house, Arbroath, 19 April 1852.  
I have, &c.  
(signed) *Thomas Jones*,  
Collector.

No. 30.

Sir,  
I AM commanded by my Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty to desire you to call upon the officers of the yard under your superintendence to report how Sir John Franklin's ships, the "Erebus" and "Terror," were painted when they sailed.

Commodore Superintendent Eden,  
Woolwich.

Admiralty, 17 April 1852.  
I am, &c.  
(signed) *J. H. Hay*,  
pro Secretary.

No. 31.

Sir,  
WITH reference to their Lordships' letter of this day's date, we beg to acquaint you, that Sir John Franklin's ships, the "Erebus" and "Terror," were painted when they sailed, black on the outside, and weather works inside yellow.

The Commodore Superintendent.

Submitted for the information of their Lordships.

The Secretary of the Admiralty.

Woolwich Yard, 17 April 1852.  
We are, &c.  
(signed) *O. Lang*,  
Master Shipwright.

(signed) *John M'Donald*,  
for Commodore Superintendent.

No. 32.

Sir,

Admiralty, 19 April 1852.

WITH reference to the report of two ships abandoned having been seen on the ice off Newfoundland in April 1851, and to the loss of the "Prince of Wales," of Hull, in 1849; I am commanded by my Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty to acquaint you, that my Lords would be glad to be informed of the particulars of the loss of that ship; the circumstances under which she was abandoned, and whether any other vessel was wrecked or abandoned in the neighbourhood of her, and any other circumstances you may be able to state likely to aid the identification of such vessel if fallen in with at a future time.

I am, &c.

To the Collector of Customs at Hull. (signed) *W. A. B. Hamilton.*

Similar letter relative to the loss of the "Lady Jane" of Newcastle.

The Collector of Customs, Newcastle-on-Tyne.

Similar letter relative to the loss of the "Superior" of Peterhead.

The Collector of Customs, Peterhead.

No. 33.

Sir,

Custom-house, Hull, 22 April 1852.

IN reply to your letter of the 19th instant, only received the 21st, in reference to the report of two ships, abandoned, having been seen on the ice off Newfoundland in April 1851, and to the loss of the "Prince of Wales," of Hull, in 1849, requesting to be informed of the particulars of the loss of that ship, the circumstances under which she was abandoned, and whether any other vessel was wrecked or abandoned in the neighbourhood of her, and any other circumstances I may be able to state likely to aid the identification of such vessel, if fallen in with at a future time; I beg to say, having seen the late owners and master of the "Prince of Wales," I have obtained a copy of the vessel's log for the three days preceding her abandonment, which I transmit enclosed; also a note of the master's answers to other points connected with your inquiry, being the only tangible information I can obtain on the subject, and which I hope my Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty may deem satisfactory.

I am, &c.

Captain Hamilton, R.N., &c. &c.  
Admiralty.

(signed) *M. C. Cotton.*

*Encl. 1 and 2, in  
No. 33.*

Enclosure 1, in No. 33.

EXTRACT from the Log of the "Prince of Wales."

1849: Tuesday, 10 July. Wind N.N.E.

Fore part,—moderate breezes, with thick weather; ship made fast to a floe. Middle part,—moderate breezes, with clear weather. At 3 P.M., called all hands, and cast the ship loose, and tracked her between two floes to the eastward. 6 P.M., made the ship fast, set the watch. Latter part,—strong breezes, with thick weather. At 11 P.M., the ship received a heavy nip between the floes.

Wednesday, 11 July. Wind N.E.

Fore part,—light breezes, with thick weather; ship beset amongst floes, at times tracking to the northward, at other times the ice very tight. Middle part,—fresh breezes, with hazy weather; ship made fast to a large floe. Latter part,—fresh breezes from the W.S.W.; the ice begun to run.

Thursday, 12 July. W.S.W.

Fore part,—strong breezes, with hazy weather; ship close beset. At 4 A.M., the ice took the ship, and began to nip up. At 6 A.M., the ice gave heavy press, and remained so. At 8 A.M., it went through the ship with the masts. Masts carried away; the Thumb bearing S. by E., distance 45 miles. The men on the ice, with the boats.

The "Prince of Wales," burthen 351 $\frac{40}{100}$  tons, built at Rotherhithe, in the county of Surrey, in the year 1793; two decks, three masts, square rigged, square stern; no galleries, no figure-head.

## Enclosure 2, in No. 33.

Captain Lee, master of the "Prince of Wales," informs me, that before leaving the spot where the "Prince of Wales" was lost, that vessel was completely doubled up, and the masts and every spar carried away, the only part of her left visible being a portion of the bowsprit, two or three feet in length; all the rest was completely buried in the packed ice. He informs me a vessel was lost about a month previously, called the "Caledonia." Her wreck, however, occurred much further north; but he assures me no vessel would ever be abandoned so long as her masts stood in those parts; the loss of the masts necessarily follows the crush of the vessel.

Hull, 22 April 1852.

## No. 34.

Sir,

Custom-house, Newcastle, 22 April 1852.

IN reply to your letter of the 19th instant, referring to the report of two ships, abandoned, having been seen on the ice off Newfoundland, in April 1851, and desiring to be informed of the particulars of the loss of the "Lady Jane," of this port, in 1849, the circumstances under which she was abandoned, whether any other vessel was wrecked or abandoned in the neighbourhood of her, and any other circumstances I might be enabled to state, likely to aid the identification of such vessel, if fallen in with at a future time;

Encl. in No. 34.

I have the honour to transmit a statement furnished by the owners of the "Lady Jane," accompanied by copy of the protest of the master, made on his return home, which show that the "Lady Jane" was crushed, and disappeared under the ice, and that the "Superior," of Peterhead, one of the other ships in company, was also totally lost.

Since the loss of the "Lady Jane," the fishery from this port has been wholly discontinued. The trade from hence had been confined for many years to three ships belonging to Newcastle, viz., the "Lady Jane," the "Grenville Bay," and the "Lord Gambier." The two latter, as I am assured, are still in existence.

I have, &c.

(signed) *W. J. Williams*, Collector.

Captain Hamilton, R.N., &c. &c.,  
Admiralty.

## Enclosure in No. 34.

Dear Sir,

Newcastle, 21 April 1852.

Sub-Enclosure in  
No. 34.

IN reply to your inquiry for information respecting the loss of our whaler the "Lady Jane," we beg to enclose you an extract from the master's protest, made on his arrival home in the early part of October 1849.

The "Lady Jane" was totally lost, as was the "Superior," wrecked at the same time; but the American vessel named in the protest was, though seriously injured, enabled to prosecute the fishery.

It was reported that parts of the wrecks of the "Superior" and "Lady Jane" were afterwards seen, and also in the year 1850.

The "Superior" belonged to Peterhead, and we may state, for the information of the Lords of the Admiralty, that the crews of both vessels were in communication with the "North Star" after they were wrecked, and before they took their departure homewards.

You will perceive the longitude is not stated in the protest; the vessels were lost near to Duck Islands.

We are, &c.

To *W. J. Williams*, Esq.,  
Collector of Customs, Newcastle.

(signed) *Matthew Plummer & Co.*

## Sub-Enclosure in No. 34.

EXTRACT from the Protest of Captain *John Patterson*, of the late Ship "Lady Jane," of Newcastle, Whaler; dated Newcastle-on-Tyne, 5th day of October 1849.

THAT they made the best of their way, and on or about the 20th day of April, being then in or about latitude 63, and well in with the ice, they made the necessary preparations for commencing the fishing, and on or about the 6th day of May secured a bottle-nosed whale, being their first fish: That they continued to prosecute the fishing in or about the same district until the latter end of the said month of May, when they proceeded with the said

said vessel to the northward (having then the produce of nine bottle-nosed whales on board), and on the morning of the 11th day of June they entered Melville Bay, in company with about eleven other vessels, the wind then fresh from south-west, and the atmosphere thick: That towards evening the wind became very light, and the ice closing in so as to prevent their further progress, they made their said vessel fast to a land floe, in company with about seven other vessels; latitude about 75 north: That at about 4 A.M. on the 12th the ice was observed to ease off a little, and all hands were promptly called to warp the said vessel along the land floe, which service was vigorously prosecuted until about 6 o'clock, when the ice set upon the floe, and encumbered the vessel in such a manner as to render it necessary to unship her rudder, and at about 7 o'clock it suddenly came on to blow a gale from south-west, forcing the ice in such overwhelming masses, and so rapidly, upon the floe, as to render the condition of their vessel most perilous, there being no possibility of cutting a dock: That at this time there were seven vessels in company, several of which being a little ahead of the "Lady Jane," were enabled to pass through an opening into free water, (or as it is termed, to "clear the nip,") before the ice closed; but one other vessel, the "Superior," of Peterhead, which was immediately ahead of the "Lady Jane," could not succeed in doing so, and was crushed to pieces by the ice, it being then about 1 P.M. of the 13th: That, notwithstanding every effort which the circumstances admitted of, to extricate the "Lady Jane," in about half an hour after the time last mentioned the ice closed upon her with such violence, as completely to crush her, compelling these appearers and the remainder of the crew promptly to betake themselves to the floe for the preservation of their lives, and at about 3 P.M. their said vessel had become entirely covered with the ice, and consequently, with her stores and materials, totally lost, together with the portion of the cargo on board, consisting of about 10 tons of blubber: That the boats had previously been removed to the floe as a precautionary measure, and they had fortunately succeeded in saving a small quantity of provisions and some small stores, as also the ship's register; but the log-book being unfortunately lost, on that account difficulty has been experienced in stating accurately the several dates herebefore mentioned: That they remained for several days upon the ice near the same spot, for the purpose of rendering some assistance to an American vessel then beset, and afterwards made their way to Operniwick, from whence they, these appearers, pursued their course to Lively, a Danish settlement or station; other portions of the crew proceeding to other stations.

---

No. 35.

Sir,

Custom-house, Peterhead, 22 April 1852.

IN reply to your letter of the 19th instant, requesting to be informed of the particulars of the loss of the "Superior," of Peterhead, and the circumstances under which she was abandoned, I have called upon Mr. David Mitchell, of this place, who was the managing owner; he states that she was lost on the 12th June 1849, in Melville Bay, having become fixed by the ice closing upon her on each side, was literally crushed to pieces. That the "Lady Jane," of Newcastle, owned by Matthew Plumer & Co., of that place, was in company, and shared the same fate. That the crews of the two wrecked vessels were received on board an American whaler which was in the neighbourhood, and that they saw the vessels go down immediately afterwards.

I am, &c.

To Captain W. A. B. Hamilton, &c. &c.,  
Admiralty.

(signed) P. Hayton,  
Collector.

---

No. 36.

Sir,

Admiralty, 30 April 1852.

I AM commanded by my Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty to send you herewith copies of the "Times" newspaper of the 14th and 22d instant,\* and to call your attention to the correspondence published in those papers relative to two wrecks or abandoned ships being seen on a field of ice, off Newfoundland, by the brig "Renovation," of North Shields, in 1851.

These two newspapers contained all the correspondence from No. 1 to No. 18 inclusive.

You will see from that correspondence how much importance attaches to the evidence to be obtained from Mr. Lynch, who was a passenger in the "Renovation" at the time, and my Lords would wish, if it be in your power, that you should immediately communicate with that gentleman.

The questions put to Mr. Robert Simpson, as detailed in the printed correspondence, will serve as a general index of those which might with advantage be put to Mr. Lynch; but there are, doubtless, many others which it may occur to

you to ask, and which would bear still more emphatically on the question at issue.

For instance, it does not appear, from anything already elicited, whether the weather was clear at the time of the wrecks being observed; it is not even stated by the evidence of the eye-witnesses hitherto examined what the weather was at all whilst the wrecks were in sight.

It is also important to ascertain, if it can be done, without the question being too leading, when or how soon, after seeing the vessels, Mr. Lynch formed the notion, or was impressed with the idea, that they were Captain Franklin's ships, and if he himself was the first to adopt that belief, or if he communicated, and when, to Mr. Simpson, or any other person.

Mr. Lynch should be closely examined touching the possibility of optical delusion, and as to the undoubted fact of the objects seen being really ships.

If Mr. Lynch could be induced to make a sketch of what he saw, it would be of material importance.

But in all this matter my Lords would desire to leave much to you, who, they are persuaded, will undertake the task with a thorough sense of the necessity of getting at the real truth of the story, and that no point will be omitted by you that might lead to confirmation, or otherwise, of the testimony already received.

You will observe, that it is stated in the printed evidence that Mr. Lynch, whose name is John Supple Lynch, is supposed to be resident at Prescott, Upper Canada, and my Lords request you will furnish them with an account of whatever expenses you may be at in prosecuting this inquiry, informing them at the same time where or to whom you wish the same to be repaid.

To Captain Boxer, R. N., Quebec.

I am, &c.  
(signed) *A. Stafford.*

No. 37.

Sir,

Sligo, Ireland, 1 May 1852.

KNOWING the great anxiety that is felt as to the fate of the two vessels seen on the ice on the 20th April 1851 by the "Renovation," on her passage to Quebec, and feeling at the same time that it is the duty of every person (but more particularly naval officers) when any information is received which by any possibility could be supposed to have reference to the above-mentioned vessels conjectured by some to be Sir John Franklin's, that the same should be made known as soon as possible to the authorities, for the purpose of enabling them to investigate the truth or otherwise of the reports received, I trust I may be excused in bringing under your notice the following circumstances which have come to my knowledge, so that the same, if considered by you deserving of it, may be brought before my Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty.

There is at present in this port a brig, named the "Henderson," of Whitehaven, William Hill, master, fitting out for the purpose of carrying emigrants to Quebec: in conversation with the master, I found out that he was employed in the same way last year, but that on that occasion he sailed from the port of Galway on the 3d April 1851, bound to New York. That on the very day he left, a brig, named the "Doctor Kneip," belonging to Wimar, Duchy of Mecklenburg, the master and owner of which was Edward Lorentz, also sailed for the same destination with emigrants, but that from her superior sailing she soon left the "Henderson" far astern. That on the 20th April 1851 the "Henderson" was in latitude  $43^{\circ} 14'$ , longitude  $53^{\circ} 22'$  D. R., and struck soundings on the edge of the bank in 30 fathoms, sand and black specks, and arrived at New York on the 3d May, having never seen any ice during her passage, though from the coldness of the weather and other causes the master thought it was not far off. That on his arrival at New York, to his surprise he found that the "Doctor Kneip" had not arrived, but that on the following day she did so; and that in a conversation with the said master of the Mecklenburg vessel, he mentioned that he had met with a great deal of ice on the banks, and had also seen "two vessels abandoned and water-logged"; where those two vessels were seen, whether after the 20th April or not, the master of the "Henderson" did not inquire, nor did he give any further information respecting them, his attention having been suddenly called away to his own vessel; but  
seeing



seeing the accounts of the two vessels fallen in with by the "Renovation," the whole circumstances of his conversation alluded to as above recurred to him most vividly, and suggested to him the possibility that these two vessels fallen in with by the "Doctor Kneip" might be the same seen by "Renovation," and which from the melting of the ice had slipt off, and got clear of it. I immediately wrote off to Galway for the names of any parties connected with this vessel, or any other information that could be obtained, and in addition to what has already been stated to be the name of the vessel, her port, and owner. I would further beg to add that she was consigned in New York to Messrs. Logan & Collins, 69, South-street, but that the charter parties at Galway have never heard further concerning her.

Before concluding, I trust I may be excused for venturing to suggest for your and their Lordships' consideration, that it is not improbable that some further information might be obtained respecting these two vessels, if not quite in the track of vessels bound to Quebec and New York, yet drifting past into it, were the different Government emigration officers and authorities of the Custom-house at the outports directed to consult their returns of vessels sailing at the commencement of April last year, whether with emigrants or for timber; and at once, if still in the kingdom, or as soon after as they may arrive from their spring voyage, to interrogate the masters and mates, &c. of the different vessels whether last year anything was seen of the vessels in question; for it does appear to me strange, considering the season of the year, and the large number of vessels which at that time are pushing in for the St. Lawrence, that no other vessel should have fallen in with them. Trusting that the motives that have influenced me in this case are such as will receive your approval,

I have, &c.  
(signed) *Robert Kerr*,  
Captain R.N.

The Secretary of the Admiralty,  
&c. &c. &c.

No. 38.

Sir,

Admiralty, 6 May 1852.

I AM commanded by my Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty to request you will acquaint the Emigration Commissioners that my Lords would be glad if the emigration officers at the different outports might be directed to consult their returns of vessels sailing at the commencement of April last year (whether with emigrants or with timber), and if such vessels should be in port at this present time, to make immediate inquiry of the masters and mates, whether in the outward voyage last year anything was seen in the neighbourhood of Newfoundland of two dismantled vessels, either on the ice or water-logged, such as are reported to have been seen by the "Renovation" on the 20th April 1851, in about latitude 47° 30' north, and longitude 50° 20' west; and further, to make such inquiry from time to time of the masters and mates of vessels as they arrive in port, who are not at present in this country, but which sailed for American ports in April last year.

I am, &c.  
(signed) *A. Stafford*.

Stephen Walcott, Esq.  
Emigration Office, Park-street, Westminster.

No. 39.

(Immediate.)

Sir,

Admiralty, 6 May 1852.

I AM commanded by my Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty to request that you will state to the Earl of Malmesbury that my Lords would be glad if it could be ascertained for them immediately, through Her Majesty's consuls or others, where a brig named the "Doctor Kneip," belonging to the port of Wimar, duchy of Mecklenburg, Ed. Lorentz, master and owner, now is.

I am, &c.  
(signed) *J. H. Hay*, pro Sec.

H. U. Addington, Esq., &c. &c.  
Foreign Office.

24 COMMUNICATIONS IN REFERENCE TO VESSELS OBSERVED

No. 40.

Sir,  
I HAVE the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of yesterday's date, and to acquaint you, in reply, for the information of the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty, that the "Doctor Kneip," Lorentz, arrived at Antwerp, from Taganrog, the 2d February, and sailed again the 6th of April for Berdiouski.

Lloyd's, 7 May 1852.

I have, &c.  
(signed) *Geo. A. Halsted*, Secretary.

Captain W. A. B. Hamilton, R.N., &c. &c.  
Admiralty.

No. 41.

Sir,  
WITH reference to your letter of the 29th March, I am directed by the Earl of Malmesbury to transmit to you, for the information of the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty, a copy of a despatch from Mr. Dawkins, Her Majesty's consul-general at Venice, enclosing the depositions of the master of the British brig "Renovation," and of two apprentices belonging to that vessel, in regard to two ships which were seen from the "Renovation," embedded in an iceberg off the coast of Newfoundland, in the month of April of last year.

Foreign Office, 7 May 1852.

The enclosures being sent in original, I am to request that they may be returned to this office when done with.

I am, &c.  
(signed) *H. U. Addington*.  
Augustus Stafford, Esq., &c. &c.  
Admiralty.

Encl. in No. 41.

Enclosure in No. 41.

My Lord,  
THE brig "Renovation" entered this port yesterday morning, and the moment I had notice of her arrival, I proceeded on board, in order to carry out the instructions contained in your Lordship's despatch, No. 2, Consular, of the 1st instant.

Venice, 30 April 1852.

I found Mr. Coward, the master of the "Renovation," most ready to afford every information in his power, and to the best of his recollection, as to the ships seen by him embedded in an iceberg off Newfoundland, in the month of April 1851; and I have the honour to enclose herewith a paper containing the answers given by him to a series of questions which I had prepared upon the subject.

Sub-Enclosure 1,  
in No. 41.

Sub Enclosures  
2 and 3, in No. 41.

I likewise enclose the statements made by William Lambden and James Figgis, two apprentices, who are the only persons now on board the "Renovation" who formed part of her crew during her last year's voyage to Quebec.

After having received the above-mentioned statement, the log-book of the "Renovation" for the voyage in question, kept by the mate, Mr. Simpson, was carefully examined by me and by Lieutenant Campbell, R.N., British vice-consul at this port; but, to my surprise, no mention appears therein of having seen the two ships on the iceberg.

Sub-Enclosure 4, in  
No. 41.

I herewith enclose an extract from the log-book from the 16th to the 21st April 1851, both days inclusive.

Mr. Coward seems a very frank, straightforward man. He evidently did not attach importance at the time, nor indeed does he now, to the appearance of the ships on the iceberg, and more than once, while answering my questions, begged me to understand that his answers were given only to the best of his recollection. He expressed some surprise, considering the importance now attached to the circumstance, that no attention should have been paid to it at Quebec, where he states that he mentioned it repeatedly.

The "Renovation" being at some distance from Venice itself, although anchored inside the port, I was not able to return from her in sufficient time to send off this despatch by last night's post.

I have, &c.  
(signed) *Clinton G. Dawkins*.  
The Earl of Malmesbury,  
&c. &c. &c.

## Sub-Enclosure 1, in No. 41.

QUESTIONS and ANSWERS from Mr. *Coward* and others respecting two Ships seen by him and his Crew on an Iceberg, from the Brig "Renovation," while off the Banks of Newfoundland, in the Spring of 1851, before me, Clinton G. Dawkins, Esq., Her Majesty's Consul-General for the Lombardo-Venetian Kingdom, on board the "Renovation," now anchored off Alberoni, in the Port of Venice, this 29th day of April 1852.

IN the spring of 1851, was not an iceberg, with two ships on it, seen from your vessel, the "Renovation"?

Yes.

On what day was the iceberg seen, and at what hour, and by whom was it first observed?

To the best of my recollection, the iceberg was seen on the 17th April 1851—I cannot remember the hour—by the mate, Mr. Simpson, and Mr. Lynch, a passenger. I was sick in bed at the time, and I immediately got up on being called by the mate, and saw two vessels embedded in an iceberg.

Did you see it yourself, and if so, how long after it was reported to you?

I saw the iceberg about five minutes after it was reported to me.

What latitude and longitude were you in at that time?

Latitude  $45^{\circ} 50'$ , by observation, as per log; longitude, by dead reckoning,  $57^{\circ} 47'$ . Found, on making Cape Freel, at the east end of Newfoundland, that we were above five degrees behind our reckoning, which would make our corrected longitude at the time about  $52^{\circ}$ .

Was land then in sight, and if not in sight, what was the bearing and distance of the nearest principal point?

No land in sight, but numerous icebergs. No entry in log to show the bearings of the nearest point.

What course were you steering at the time, and how was the wind?

Steering N. W. by W.; wind N. E. blowing strong.

What sail were you under, and at what rate were you going?

All reefs out of the topsails, and starboard studding sails set; going about eight knots.

Was the weather clear?

The weather was very clear.

Was it threatening to come on to blow or to become foggy?

No appearance of foggy or threatening weather.

How high was the iceberg out of the water?

The iceberg appeared about 200 feet out of the water, with much field ice about it where the two ships were embedded. The iceberg appeared to rise behind the ships to the above-mentioned height.

What might be the length and breadth of the iceberg?

The iceberg appeared to be about two miles or more long; cannot give an opinion as to its breadth.

Were the ships to windward or to leeward of the iceberg?

The ships were on the lee side of the iceberg.

How close did you pass to the iceberg?

We passed about five or six miles from the iceberg.

Were the ships you saw entirely housed in, or only partly so?

Neither of the ships appeared to be housed in; at all events, I could not distinguish whether they were or not, they being covered with ice and snow.

What might be the tonnage of the ships?

They appeared to me to be, one about 600 or 700 tons, the other about 300 or 350 tons.

How were the hulls painted?

The hulls were covered with ice, and I could not distinguish how they were painted.

How many lower masts had they each, and how painted?

Each vessel had three lower masts, but so covered with ice that I could not distinguish how they were painted.

Had they all their lower masts and bowsprits?

The larger vessel had all three lower masts and topmasts up; the smaller vessel had the mizenmast gone about 10 or 12 feet above the deck, but had the foremast and mainmast with topmast up; cannot say whether the bowsprits were there or not.

What state was the lower rigging in?

Cannot say what state the lower rigging was in.

## 26 COMMUNICATIONS IN REFERENCE TO VESSELS OBSERVED

Had the ships their lower yards across, and if so, were they aloft or struck?

Cannot say whether any yards were up or not, but rather think not.

Were their topmasts up?

Already answered.

Any topsail or topgallant yards across?

None.

Any stays to the lower masts?

The larger vessel had fore and aft stays to all lower masts. I could not distinguish whether the smaller vessel had any stays to the lower masts.

Any rigging or stays to the topmast; and if so, in what state?

Cannot say whether there were or not.

Were the ships on their beam ends, or were they upright on the ice?

The larger ship was quite upright, well raised up on the ice. The smaller ship had a great list to starboard.

In what direction were their heads?

The larger vessel had her head about N. W. The smaller had her head about N. The two ships appeared about a cable's length apart.

Did you look, or did you order any one to look attentively to see if there was any living being on board of the ships?

There was no appearance of any living being on board of the ships. The mate, the passenger (Mr. Lynch), and myself, particularly examined them with the glass.

If any person, or any living being, had been on board, could you have distinguished them easily?

If any living being had been moving about the decks we could easily have distinguished them with the glass. When I first saw the ships I believed them to be two Greenlandmen abandoned; and such is my impression to this day. I was ill at the time, and the ship was surrounded by icebergs, and I was anxious to get away while the weather was clear. No mention was made at the time, nor did the idea enter my head, that these ships might be Sir John Franklin's ships. This supposition was first mentioned before me next day, in conversation with Mr. Lynch, and the mate, Mr. Simpson. None of the crew who were with me at the time are now on board the "Renovation," excepting two apprentices. The second mate, Andrew Beale, and the rest of the crew, deserted at Québec.

*Edward Coward, Master of "Renovation."*

Sworn before me, on board the brig "Renovation," anchored off Alberoni, in the port of Venice, this 29th day of April 1852.

*Clinton G. Dawkins,*  
Consul-General.

---

### Sub-Enclosure 2, in No. 41.

#### STATEMENT of *William Lambden*, Apprentice on board the Brig "Renovation."

**WILLIAM LAMBDEN**, apprentice on board the Brig "Renovation," had the middle watch, as far as he remembers, on the night of the 17th and 18th of April 1851, when the middle watch was relieved about 4 o'clock, A.M. As far as he recollects, the mate, Mr. Simpson, who had the morning watch, called the attention of the second mate, Andrew Beale, who had had the middle watch, to two ships which were fast in an iceberg, about three or four miles on the starboard beam.

Thinks, to the best of his recollection, they had no topmasts, but that they had their lower masts standing. They appeared about the same size; one of them appeared upright, the other had a list, but in which direction cannot recollect.

His watch being over, he did not remain on deck to examine them.

*William Lambden.*

Sworn before me, on board the "Renovation," anchored off Alberoni, in the Port of Venice, this 29th day of April 1852.

*Clinton G. Dawkins,*  
Consul-General.

---

### Sub-Enclosure 3, in No. 41.

#### STATEMENT of *James Figgis*, Apprentice on board the Brig "Renovation."

**JAMES FIGGIS**, apprentice on board the brig "Renovation," had the morning watch on the 17th of April 1851, as near as he recollects. Remembers seeing two vessels fast in an iceberg on the starboard beam; was doing cook's duty, the cook being sick, and was busy in the galley, and did not pay much attention to what was passing.

*James Figgis.*

Sworn before me, on board the Brig "Renovation," anchored off Alberoni, in the Port of Venice, this 29th day of April 1852.

*Clinton G. Dawkins,*  
Consul-General.

Sub-Enclosure 4, in No. 41.

EXTRACT from the Log Book of the Brig "Renovation," *Edward Coward*, Master, from the 16th to the 22d of April 1851.

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 16.					REMARKS.			
H.	K.	F.	Winds.	Courses.				
2	10	4	N. E.	N. W. by W. $\frac{3}{4}$ W.	P. M.			
4	10	4			Strong breezes and clear. John Todd still off duty, being sick.			
6	10	4			6.—Increasing breezes and cloudy; furled the topgallant sails, and double reefed the topsails.			
8	9	—			Midnight.—Furled the square mainsail, and stowed the jib.			
10	9	4						
12	8	—						
2	8	—			A. M.			
4	8	—			4.—More moderate; set them again.			
6	8	—			8.—Out first reef of topsails, and set topgallant sails.			
8	8	—						
10	8	—			Noon.—Strong breezes and clear. Passed large icebergs.			
12	8	—						
Course, West.	Dist. 209	D. Lat. 0 0	Dep. 209	Lat. Acct. 45° 20'	Lat. Obsd. 45° 20'	D. Long. 297'	Long. Acct. 53° 8'	
THURSDAY, APRIL 17.					REMARKS.			
H.	K.	F.	Winds.	Courses.				
2	8	—	N. E.	N. W. by W. $\frac{3}{4}$ W.	P. M.			
4	8	—			These 24 hours strong breezes and clear weather.			
6	5	—			4.—Out first reef of maintopsail.			
8	7	—						
10	6	—			Midnight.—Moderate breezes and fine clear weather. Passed several large icebergs.			
12	6	—						
2	6	—			A. M.			
4	6	—			8.—Out all reefs, and set the starboard studding-sails. A very strong current setting to the S. E.			
6	8	—						
8	8	—						
10	9	—			Noon.—Increasing breezes. Latitude observed, 45° 50' N.			
12	10	—						
FRIDAY, APRIL 18.					REMARKS.			
H.	K.	F.	Winds.	Courses.				
2			Easterly -	N. W. by W. $\frac{3}{4}$ W.	P. M.			
4					These 24 hours moderate winds and clear weather.			
6								
8								
10								
12								
2								
4								
6								
8								
10					Noon.—Off Cape Race, east end of Newfoundland. Found the dead reckoning considerably ahead of the ship.			
12								

28 COMMUNICATIONS IN REFERENCE TO VESSELS OBSERVED

SATURDAY, APRIL 19.					REMARKS.	
H.	K.	F.	Winds.	Courses.		
2	-	-	Easterly	W. N. W.	P. M.	
4					Moderate winds and clear weather. All sail set to advantage.	
6					6.—Cape Freels bore east about ten miles.	
8					Midnight.—Steady breezes and cloudy weather. Furl'd the trysail.	
10	7	4			A. M.	
12	8	0			6.—In all studdingsails.	
2	8	0			3.—Strong breezes and thick weather.	
4	8	0	-	N. N. W.	Furled topgallant sails, mainsail, and in second reef of topsails.	
6	8	0			Noon.—Strong breezes and clear weather. Sailing along the coast of Newfoundland.	
8	9	0				
10	9	0	-	North.		
12	9	0	-	N. W.		
SUNDAY, APRIL 20.					REMARKS.	
H.	K.	F.	Winds.	Courses.		
2	8	0	E. S. E.	N. W. by N.	P. M.	
4	10	0			Strong breezes and cloudy.	
6	9	0				
8	8	0	-	N. W. by W.	4.—Out first reef of topsails, and set main topgallant sail.	
10	8	0			Midnight.—Strong breezes and thick weather, with sleet.	
12	8	0				
2	9	0	-	N. W. by N.	Daylight more clear. Two vessels in sight.	
4	9	0	-	N. N. W.	Noon.—The Bird Islands bore W. $\frac{1}{2}$ S., eight miles. Snowy showers at intervals, with thick weather.	
6	8	0				
8	7	0				
10	6	0				
12	6	0				
MONDAY, APRIL 21.					REMARKS.	
H.	K.	F.	Winds.	Courses.		
2	4	4	S. E.	North.	P. M.	
4	4	4	Easterly.		Moderate winds and hazy weather.	
6	4	0	-	N. N. E.	2.—Thick snowy weather. A strong swell from the eastward.	
8	2	0			6.—Got into a large field of ice; immediately tried to get the ship's head round, but could not succeed. Reduced the canvas to the two reefed topsails. Ship occasionally striking the ice very heavily.	
10	3	0			8.—Got clear of the ice, and hauled up on a wind to the N. E.	
12	3	0	-	N. E.	Midnight.—Increasing breezes. Daylight. a number of vessels in company.	
2	3	0			6.—Wore ship to the southward.	
4	3	0			8.—Wore ship to the N. E.	
6	2	4			10.—Wore ship to the S. E.	
8	3	0	-	North.	Noon.—Increasing breezes, and thick snowy showers. Sun obscured.	
10	2	4	-	N. E.		
12	2	4	E. N. E.	S. E.		
D. Lat.		Dep.		Lat. Acct.	D. Long.	Long. Acct.
54'		10'		48° 44'	16'	61° 28'

(A true copy.)  
Clinton G. Dawkins, Consul-General.

N.B.—The "Renovation" left Limerick for Quebec on the 6th of April 1851.

No. 42.

Custom-house, Port of Prescott, Canada,  
11 May 1852.

Sir,

I HAD the honour of receiving yesterday the enclosed letter from J. W. Dunscomb, Esq., Collector of Customs, Port of Quebec, Canada, for inquiry and report thereon to your Lordships at as early a day as possible.

*Encl. 1, in No. 42.*

Immediately on the receipt of it I called upon Mr. George S. Lynch, of this place, and submitted the interrogatories contained therein for his report, which he this morning readily furnished me, and which is also enclosed herewith.

*Encl. 2, in No. 42.*

I have, &c.  
(signed) A. Jones,  
Collector.

The Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty,  
&c. &c. &c.

Enclosure 1, in No. 42.

Sir,

Custom-house, Quebec, 6 May 1852.

You will have observed, probably, the correspondence now in course of publication in the newspapers, headed "The Arctic Expedition," respecting two ships seen on the 20th April 1851, from on board the ship "Renovation," from Limerick, on her voyage to Quebec.

It appears that a Mr. Joseph Supple Lynch, who at present resides in Prescott, with Thomas Fraser, Esq., was a passenger by the "Renovation," and that he saw the ships alluded to, examined them attentively through a glass, and was of opinion that they were the ships belonging to Sir John Franklin's expedition, an opinion in the accuracy of which there seems now to be a general concurrent belief, including Her Majesty's Government. In order to settle doubts upon a subject of so much importance, it is desirable to obtain the fullest particulars regarding these ships from intelligent persons on board the "Renovation," who had the opportunity of seeing them, and in the execution of this commission it is thought that you can bear a useful part, and I cannot doubt your readiness to do so.

Will you therefore seek out Mr. Lynch, whom you will find a most intelligent and willing witness, and endeavour to obtain from him full answers to the following interrogatories:—

Were you a passenger on board the "Renovation" in April 1851, when that vessel was on her voyage from Limerick to Quebec, and who were the officers of the "Renovation"?

Please state, to the best of your knowledge and recollection, what occurred during the passage when the ship "Renovation" was in the vicinity of the ice on the banks of Newfoundland?

State whether, in passing near to an iceberg, you saw two vessels high and dry upon the iceberg, on or about the 20th April 1851?

State at what distance you passed them, and if you examined them particularly with the spy-glass, and saw their position; also state what occurred, and whether you expressed any opinion to the mate as to their being the ships of Sir John Franklin, and if the mate expressed any, and what opinion in the matter?

State also if any persons on board expressed any opinion respecting the two vessels, and what these opinions were?

State whether, on examining with a spy-glass, you discovered any objects lying on the ice between the ships, that might have been boats, stores or tents, or anything belonging to the ships, so as to show that there had been intercourse, to and fro, between the two ships after they had got enclosed in the ice?

Please say was there any reason, other than already stated, why you supposed them to be Sir John Franklin's ships, and what prevented the further examination by boats?

State particularly how the hulls and masts of these ships were painted?

State also what might be the tonnage of each of these vessels, and were they full rigged?

I have, &c.  
(signed) J. W. Dunscomb.

P.S.—I beg the favour of your addressing a copy of your reply hereto to Captain Sir James Alexander, A.D.C., for the information of Lieutenant-general Rowan.

To the Collector of Customs at Prescott.

Enclosure 2, in No. 42.

Sir,

Prescott, 11 May 1852.

I WAS a passenger (the only one) on board the brig "Renovation" in April 1851, from Limerick to Quebec, Edward Coward, master, Robert Simpson, chief mate; the second mate's name I do not recollect.

We had a very fine run from the Irish coast, and I do not recollect anything particular occurring

### 30 COMMUNICATIONS IN REFERENCE TO VESSELS OBSERVED

occurring until we fell in with the icebergs on or in the vicinity of the banks of Newfoundland.

We came in view of one iceberg, on which I distinctly saw two vessels, one certainly high and dry, the other might have her keel and bottom in the water, but the ice was a long way outside of her; this was as near as I can recollect on the 18th or 20th of April 1851.

I thought at the time we might have been about three miles from them, but Mr. Simpson said we were five; I examined them particularly with the spy-glass; one, the larger, lay on her beam ends, the other upright; I said to the mate on seeing them that they were part of Sir J. Franklin's squadron; he said very likely, and that it would be a good prize for whoever would fall in with them; the captain did not think it prudent to give orders to attempt to board them.

I do not recollect any one on board making any remark at the time, and, save the captain and mate, I do not believe of the crew one knew anything about Sir John Franklin's expedition.

On examining, which I did closely with the glass, the berg, I could see nothing that I could say were boats or tents, but there were a number of hillocks of different shapes, which might have been boats or stores covered by any of the snow storms which we had at that time; of course I do not take on myself to say such was the case, as similar appearances were to be seen on many other bergs.

My reason for supposing them to belong to Sir John Franklin's squadron was, there being two ships on one iceberg, they appeared to be consorts, and having no appearance of being driven on the berg in distress, as the rigging and spars of the upright one was all as ship-shape as if she had been laid up in harbour; also the one on her beam ends had no more appearance of a wreck than a vessel with her topmasts struck and left by the tide on a beach; no loose ropes hanging from any part of her. My opinion is, that she had been moored to the berg like the other, until coming into contact with field ice, the collision threw her over in the position in which we saw her.

The reason which prevented Captain Coward attempting any communication by boat was, he did not think himself justified in risking the loss of the vessel, when from illness he was not able to give assistance, by commands or otherwise, and two of his best men and a grown apprentice confined to their hammock with dysentery; had a boat been manned, there would not have been hands enough on board to manage the brig, and all appearance of thick bad weather coming on.

The hulls, to the best of my belief, were all black; the masts, I am quite certain, were white.

The vessel on her beam ends seemed, as near as I could judge, to be about 500 tons, the other something smaller; Mr. Simpson said about 350. I did not think there was that difference in their size; so much of the hull of one was to be seen, that I think it made her look larger in proportion to the size of the upright one than she really was; they had been full-rigged ships.

It is but justice for me to say, as far as regards Captain Coward, that nobody could regret more than he did his inability to board the vessel, and to my knowledge it preyed very much on his spirits after. Neither he nor his mate had ever been on the North American coast before; and though I was most urgent at the time to attempt to board them, I was convinced after that it would have been attended with imminent danger, and perhaps loss of vessel, as there was a heavy sea running at the time, and the vessel so short-handed.

It would appear uncalled-for my making those remarks were it my first time at sea; but I had been at sea before for four years, and among the ice on the coast once before. On my arrival in Quebec I gave every publicity I could to the transaction, as I hope the authorities in Quebec have learned before now; as it was, I filled the brig's report on her arrival at Quebec.

To Alfred Jones, Esq.,  
Collector of Customs, Port of Prescott, Canada.

I have, &c.  
(signed) John S. Lynch.

---

No. 43.

Her Majesty's Steam Vessel "Mohawk,"  
Kingston, Canada, 14 May 1852.

Sir,

CAPTAIN BOXER, Resident Agent of Transports at Quebec, having shown me, just before leaving that place, the examination of the cook of the "Renovation," sent by him to their Lordships, and having informed me that he had ascertained that Mr. Lynch, the passenger in that vessel so often referred to, was now resident at Prescott, and that he had forwarded to him, through the custom-house, a set of questions for reply, I thought it would be advisable for me, on my way back to Kingston, to see that gentleman, as in the interim I had read, in the "Evening Mail," the answers of Mr. Simpson to Captain Ommanney, with his remarks.

I yesterday evening and this morning, had long conversations with Mr. Lynch, who furnished me with the above questions by Captain Boxer, and his replies, which he says he has already forwarded to their Lordships, and a copy of which

I have



I have the honour to enclose, as well as a copy of additional questions put by me, with Mr. Lynch's answers, giving, I think, all the information it is in that gentleman's power to impart.

Mr. Lynch, who is a very intelligent person, informs me that he was employed as a clerk, under the Board of Works in Ireland; that at the spring assizes for Clare, in 1847, he was complimented by Baron Richards, and the grand jury, for resisting and prosecuting to conviction some persons who attempted to murder and rob him of public money on the high road, and that he received a letter of thanks from the Treasury for his conduct on that occasion. I think every dependence may be placed on his statements, as he is most careful not to exaggerate, and is prepared to affirm, if necessary, all his answers. He is quite conversant with ships, having been brought up at seaports, besides having been four years at sea.

Mr. Lynch is evidently of opinion that, without in any way risking the safety of the "Renovation," they might have stood much nearer to the iceberg, so as to have ascertained the character of the vessels, and that this ought to have been done; but he is naturally and properly most careful to avoid imputing a dereliction of duty or want of humanity to the master of the "Renovation," of whose moral and physical courage he has a high opinion, but whose energies were prostrated by severe illness, and whose mind he states was afterwards much preyed on by the occurrence. He does not think the cook of the "Renovation" was on deck at all while the vessels were in sight, but he would not positively affirm it. He is quite certain about the boats, as their absence struck him at the time, and he looked for them most carefully. He is positive the one vessel had no topmasts up; they were not even housed.

Mr. Lynch states that, with the exception of the second mate and his brother, who deserted on their arrival at Quebec, the officers and crew of the "Renovation" were on good terms.

The extraordinary apathy in this case is much to be deplored and wondered at. From what Mr. Lynch tells me, it would seem that even on board the "Renovation," after it was settled that her course was not to be altered, little interest was shown by any person but himself; although he modestly explained it to me, by saying "he had more leisure, having nothing else to do." He seems to have watched them most carefully, as he described to me how one was shut in and lost to sight before the other; and I am most strongly impressed with the idea that Mr. Lynch is reluctant to say how "urgent he was to attempt to board;" and it seems most extraordinary how the master should have refused to take any steps without having been on deck at all, or consulted any of the mates, and Mr. Lynch certainly appears to have been the only person who showed the slightest chivalrous feeling on the occasion.

I must beg their Lordships to excuse this letter if it is not as clear and explanatory as it should be; but as I know that as much information as possible will be acceptable, and as the English mail will close within an hour after my arrival at Kingston, I have written this on board the passage steamer, with great vibration and very noisy passengers, in preference to delaying till next mail.

I have, &c.

(signed) *Fred. C. Herbert,*  
Lieutenant and Commander,  
and Senior Officer.

The Secretary of the Admiralty,  
&c. &c. &c.

*P. S.*—Mr. Lynch's opinion has never altered as to what the vessels were, and their Lordships will see by his answers the data whence he draws his conclusions.

#### Enclosure in No. 43.

ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS put to Mr. *Lynch* by Lieutenant Frederick C. Herbert, commanding Her Majesty's Steam Vessel "Mohawk," Lakes of Canada, at Prescott, 14 May 1852.

How long were you looking at the vessels?

They were in view fairly, quite half an hour, and I had a spy-glass two-thirds of the time.

*Note.*—Mr. Lynch says the berg and vessels were in sight for a much longer period; but by "fairly in view," he means to say the time they were under actual observation.

### 32 COMMUNICATIONS IN REFERENCE TO VESSELS OBSERVED

Was it a good or indifferent glass?  
It was a fair common ship's spy-glass.

Did the master of the "Renovation" come up to look at them?  
My impression is he did not.

Was the iceberg to windward or leeward?  
To windward, I think.

Might not the "Renovation" have stood nearer to the berg, to reconnoitre, without danger?

I think she might; but the captain was ill, and the mate and himself not having been among ice before, were timid.

Was the master too ill to have taken charge of the "Renovation's" deck for a few hours?

Indeed he was; he was confined to his bed, and very ill.

Did you, while in sight of the berg, speak to the master about closing it to make out the vessels, and if so, what was his reply?

I did speak to him, but he said "it was too hazardous to attempt it." The "Renovation" was an old vessel, built in 1811, and the master was timid in the ice, and a little irritable from sickness; else he was a man to risk his life to save a dog.

When did you first observe that you thought they were Sir John Franklin's ships?  
On first seeing them; that is, as soon as I had carefully observed their condition.

Are you positive it was before they were astern?  
Oh, yes, positive.

Did you hear any other person on board propose to close the berg, or volunteer to go in a boat to examine the vessels?

No, I did not.

Do you remember the cook of the "Renovation"?

I do; he was an old man, entered as cook and A.B., and I think his name was Scott.

Did he offer to go in a boat?

No; I positively deny it. He was unable to go, as he was ill with dysentery, as were two other men also.

Were the master or crew aware of the reward offered for the discovery of Sir John Franklin?

I think not; as in conversation the mate observed to me that the chronometers and instruments (if they were the ships) would be a fortune to any one who got them.

How far apart were the vessels?

From three quarters to a mile at least. To the naked eye there seemed dark specks between them, but with the spy-glass they seemed only hummocks of ice.

It has been suggested that no vessels were seen in reality, but that they were optical delusions, produced by reflection or mirage?

I am positive they were ships, as I examined and noticed the smallest visible details.

Did you observe their rudders, or anything being at their sterns?

I did not; but I particularly noticed that there were no boats about them.

Did you observe a raised poop, topgallant forecastle, or caboose on either vessel?

On the upright vessel there was what I took to be a caboose, but I cannot say as to the poop or forecastle.

Were their yards squared or topp'd on end?

They were squared, and I think the yardarms of the vessel on her beam ends rested on the ice. I am positive she had no topmast up; they were not housed over; the upright vessel had her topmasts up, and lower and topsail yards squared. I did not notice any gaffs.

Was her topgallant rigging unrove or aloft?

I think it must have been down, as it was the lightness aloft and compactness of both vessels that first struck me at the time. Had there been any appearance of wreck about them, I should not have taken so much notice. It struck me they were consorts, and Sir John Franklin's vessels.

The mate and you differed as to the disparity of tonnage; what, in your opinion, was it?  
From their appearance, nothing like 100 tons.

Were they housed over, are you positive?

I am quite positive they were not.

When you say they were full-rigged, do you mean to discriminate between ships and barques, or merely to state that they were three-masted vessels?

I think, I am positive, they were both full rigged, and had mizen yards. I am sure the smaller one was so.

Did

Did you volunteer to return in search of them after your arrival at Quebec?

I did, in different companies, where Captain Coward and myself frequently spoke of the vessels; and he always observed, that nothing would persuade Mr. Lynch but that they were Captain Franklin's vessels.

Where did you serve while at sea?

Between Limerick and London, in the Quebec trade, and one voyage to Copenhagen.

Mr. Lynch also states that he himself made out the custom-house report for the "Renovation" at Quebec, mentioning the circumstance of seeing the vessels, and he was much surprised at no further notice being taken of it; in addition to which, the circumstances were freely discussed among the masters of the ships at Quebec, visited by himself and Captain Coward, during some weeks he remained at that port, although no one seemed much interested in the matter, but, on the contrary, very apathetic. Mr. Lynch states that he has always felt much interest in the Arctic Expeditions.

The above are the true answers given by me to the questions asked by Lieutenant Herbert, R.N., at Prescott, Canada West, 14 May 1852.

*John S. Lynch.*

(A true copy).

*Fred. C. Herbert,*  
Lieutenant and Commander,  
and Senior Officer.

No. 44.

Sir,

Quebec, 15 May 1852.

I HAVE the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 3d April last, relative to two ships seen on an iceberg by the "Renovation," on the banks of Newfoundland, on or about the 17th of April 1851, and requesting me, by desire of their Lordships, to obtain the best information from Mr. Lynch, now residing at Prescott, and who was a passenger on board the "Renovation" at the time of passing the ships; and, in reply, I have the honour to inform you that I had already anticipated their Lordships' desire, by requesting the collector of customs at this port to write to the collector at Prescott to examine Mr. Lynch on the subject of those ships, furnishing him at the same time with the necessary questions to be put to that gentleman, and to forward his answers by the mail to the Admiralty for their Lordships' information. But in consequence of their Lordships' letter, I propose proceeding myself this evening to Prescott to see Mr. Lynch personally, and will immediately communicate the result of my inquiry, by telegraph, to their Lordships, so as they may have the required information by this mail.

Their Lordships will observe by the examination of John Todd, which I forwarded by last mail, that the weather was particularly clear during the whole time the "Renovation" was passing the ships; Todd has since left Quebec, and no further information can be obtained from him here, but I rely much upon what he said.

I have, &c.,  
(signed) *Edward Boxer*, R.N.  
Resident Agent of Transports.

To the Secretary of the Admiralty,  
London.

No. 45.

MORSE'S AMERICAN TELEGRAPH.

By Telegraph from *Montreal* to the Secretary of the Admiralty, London, England,  
by Mail Steamer, by New York.

Sir,

New York, 18 May 1852.

HAVING ascertained yesterday at Prescott that the collector had examined Mr. Lynch on the questions I had submitted and forwarded his answer to their Lordships, and Lieut. Herbert had also examined him, you will therefore receive by this mail all the information required; but as their Lordships were particularly

34 COMMUNICATIONS IN REFERENCE TO VESSELS OBSERVED

larly anxious that he should be examined, particularly as to the weather, and whether any optical delusions might have deceived him as to their being really ships, I questioned him particularly on those two subjects:

Question 1st. How was the weather while passing the ships on the ice?  
The weather was clear.

2. Do you think it possible you could have been deceived by any optical delusion as to the undoubted fact of the objects seen being really ships?

Having seen them in different positions and minutely, I can have no doubt upon the subject at all.

I am therefore decidedly of opinion there were two ships or barques seen on the ice by the "Renovation."

I have, &c.  
(signed) *Edward Boxer*, Captain R. N.

No. 46.

Sir,

Colonial Office, 28 May 1852.

WITH reference to your letter of the 14th ultimo, I am directed by Secretary Sir John Pakington to transmit to you, for the information of the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty, the copy of a despatch from the Governor of Newfoundland, on the subject of the statement which appeared in the "Times" newspaper, to the effect that two vessels had been seen by the crew of the "Renovation" on a field of ice attached to an iceberg, off Cape Race, in April 1851.

Encl. in No. 46.

I am, &c.  
(signed) *Herman Merivale*.

Captain W. B. Hamilton, R.N.  
&c. &c. &c.  
Secretary, Admiralty.

Enclosure 1 in No. 46.

Government-House, St. John's, Newfoundland,  
6 May 1852.

Sir,

I HAVE the honour to acknowledge the receipt of Mr. Merivale's despatch of the 16th April 1852, together with its enclosure from the Board of Admiralty, respecting two vessels reported to have been seen on a field of ice attached to an iceberg, off Newfoundland, in April 1851, and which it is surmised may possibly be Sir John Franklin's ships; and, in compliance with the instructions therein contained, I have caused inquiries to be made through the Commercial Society of Saint John's, but can obtain no information whatever relative to the above-described vessels.

Sub-Enclosure in  
No. 46.

I enclose herein a letter received from the President of the Chamber of Commerce, and I share in the opinion therein expressed, that it is well nigh impossible that two vessels on a field of ice, attached to an iceberg of the magnitude and description spoken of by the men of the "Renovation," could have passed along this coast from the north, and have reached the latitude of Cape Race, without having been seen either by some of the numerous sealing vessels which intersect the field-ice in the months of March and April, or by some of the many vessels that pass this island at that season on their way to or from the Gulf of Saint Lawrence, Nova Scotia, or New Brunswick.

In the season of 1851 no vessels engaged in the seal-fishery of this island were lost, and therefore I agree in the opinion that there must have been some misapprehension on the part of the persons who supposed they had seen such vessels, occasioned perhaps by the deceptive appearance that icebergs assume under some peculiar action of the atmosphere; whereas had the inquiry been made with reference to the spring of this year, not two, but many vessels might have been seen in positions somewhat similar to that described by the men of the "Renovation;" for owing to two disastrous gales in the last month, very great damage has been sustained by our sealing fleet, and out of 400 vessels engaged in that fishery, upwards of 60 have either foundered or been abandoned at sea among the field-ice, and many of the derelicts have, after being deserted by their own crews, been brought in by those of other vessels, and vessels have also been dispatched by the local government in search of others, and to bring off from different parts of the coast the shipwrecked sealers, amounting nearly to 3,000 in number.

I have, &c.  
(signed) *J. Gaspard le Marchant*.

Sir John Pakington, Bart., &c. &c.  
Colonial Office.

Sub-Enclosure in No. 46.

Sir,  
I HAD the honour to receive your letter of this date, and, in compliance with your request, I have made inquiry from several members of the Commercial Society, and can obtain no information relative to the vessels said to have been seen in the ice in April 1851.

It is evident that there must have been some misapprehension on the part of the persons who supposed they had seen such vessels, occasioned perhaps by the deceptive appearance that icebergs assume under some peculiar action of the atmosphere, for it is almost impossible that an iceberg of the magnitude and description spoken of by the crew of the "Renovation" could have passed along this coast from the north, and have reached the latitude of Cape Race, without having been seen by some of the numerous sealing vessels which constantly intersect the field ice in the months of March and April; and if it had escaped their observation, it must have been seen when within 30 miles of Cape Race by others of the very many vessels that pass this island at that season on their way to or from the Gulf of St. Lawrence, Nova Scotia, and New Brunswick, or by one of the steamers that weekly pass within a few miles of the Cape, on their way from Liverpool to Halifax, or the States.

The opinion is very general here that no such vessels could have been seen by the crew of the "Renovation."

The Honourable James Crowdy,  
Colonial Secretary,  
&c. &c. &c.

I have, &c.  
(signed) *Wm. Thomas.*

No. 47.

Admiralty, 2 June 1852.

Commodore Superintendent at Woolwich,  
REFERRING to your communication of the 17th April last, upon the subject of painting the "Erebus" and "Terror," my Lords desire that you will state for their information how their lower masts were painted.

By command of their Lordships.  
(signed) *W. A. B. Hamilton.*

No. 48.

Sir,  
AGREEABLY to your minute on Captain Hamilton's letter of yesterday, we have to acquaint you that the lower masts of the "Erebus" and "Terror" were painted white when they left this port.

We are, &c.  
(signed) *O. Lang*, Master Shipwright.  
*H. Chatfield*, Assistant ditto.  
(*Mr. Peake* sick.)

The Commodore Superintendent.

Submitted for the information of their Lordships.

*Henry Eden*, Commodore Superintendent.

The Secretary of the Admiralty.

No. 49.

Sir,  
HAVING by the last mail acknowledged the receipt of your letter of the 30th ultimo, informing me of their Lordships' anxiety to obtain every information with regard to the ships seen on the ice by the brig "Renovation" on or about 20th April 1851, and their directions that I should immediately communicate with Mr. Lynch (a passenger in that vessel at the time the vessels were seen), pointing out two questions of importance to be submitted to him; but as I had, previous to the receipt of your letter, taken measures to have him examined at Prescott by the collector of customs of that place, submitting the necessary questions to be put to him, and requesting he would forward them to their Lordships by the mail; and also having shown Lieutenant Herbert John Todd's statement,

### 36 COMMUNICATIONS IN REFERENCE TO VESSELS OBSERVED

statement, he, on his passage to Kingston, stopped at Prescott, and examined Mr. Lynch, who no doubt forwarded it at the same time; but, considering a personal examination might throw more light on this important matter, I proceeded at once to Prescott, and examined him very particularly on the two questions their Lordships were anxious about; viz.

1. Was the weather clear at the time of passing?
2. Could any optical delusions have deceived him as to the undoubted fact of the objects seen being ships?

*Enclosure in 49.*

I now have the honour to forward to you his examination; but, considering that the above two questions were of importance, and the mail having left Montreal, I telegraphed them to New York, to go by the packet with the other documents. But the statement of the mate, Mr. Lynch, and John Todd differ so little on the several points, that there cannot, in my opinion, be the least doubt as to the fact that two ships or barks were seen by the brig "Renovation" near Newfoundland on or about the 20th of April 1851.

I have also taken steps that every master of the Quebec and Montreal trade arriving here shall be examined before they sail as to whether any vessels were seen by them on the ice or wrecks floating on their passage out last year; but it is here necessary to state that our Montreal trade was in the Gulf before those vessels were seen, and I think they would have drifted to the southward of the track of our Quebec ships before they reached the stream of the latitude they were seen in.

The collector and comptroller of customs here are also using every exertion to obtain information on this subject. Mr. Bruce, the comptroller, has, at my request, written to the comptroller at St. John's, Newfoundland, to examine the sealers and other spring vessels; and if he gains any information respecting the ships seen on the ice, will forward it immediately to their Lordships.

Not having received, by some mistake, Mr. Barrow's letter, with its enclosures, until I returned from Prescott to Quebec, and there being a difference of opinion of the ship upright on the ice, between the mate and Mr. Lynch, I telegraphed to Mr. Luard, the barrack-master at Prescott, who had assisted me in examining Mr. Lynch, to examine him again particularly as to their position, and received the following answer:—"The stern of the vessel furthest on the iceberg was towards the vessel on her beam ends nearest the water." This appears to me to be the only difference of any consequence. As to the distance from them, from the very short time they took in passing, I think it must be even less than three miles.

I have, &c.  
(signed) *Edward Boxer*,  
Resident Agent of Transports.

The Secretary of the Admiralty.

#### Enclosure in No. 49.

*John S. Lynch*, Esq. further Examined by Captain Boxer, R.N., at Prescott, on the  
17th May 1852.

STATE if the weather was clear, and if there was any swell upon the ice in passing the vessels?

The weather was clear, and there was a swell breaking on the ice.

When you first saw the vessels, in what direction were they from the "Renovation," and distance, as near as you can judge?

On the starboard bow, and the distance about three miles, and when abreast of them the distance about the same.

How was the wind?

On the starboard side.

Do you recollect what sail was set?

Under easy sail; thinks topgallant sails were set, but not sure.

State how long the vessels remained in sight of the "Renovation"?

Distinctly for half an hour, and over an hour altogether.

When you first saw the vessels, did you state to the captain, mate, or crew, that in your opinion they might be Sir John Franklin's ships?

Immediately after I was called I examined the ships with a telescope, and stated my opinion, first to the mate and to the captain, and spoke general, that they were Sir John Franklin's ships.

What

What answer did the captain and mate give you?

The captain, who was below, said he did not think they were Sir John Franklin's ships; the mate said very likely they might be, and further they would be a good prize, as their chronometers and instruments would be a fortune for any one. No other opinion was expressed by any person that I am aware of.

On which side did you pass the iceberg?

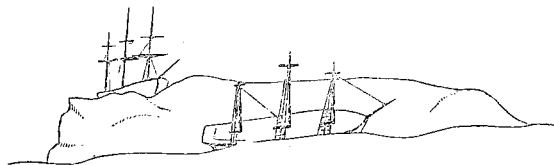
To the best of my belief it was on the starboard side.

Do you think it possible you could have been deceived, by any optical delusion, as to the undoubted fact of the objects seen being really ships?

Having seen them in different positions, and so minutely, I can have no doubt on that subject at all.

Is the plan now handed to you (published in the "Illustrated London News" of the 17th April 1852) correct?

The ship on her beam ends (nearest the water) appears to be correctly laid down, but she was much further upon the ice; the other vessel was lying with her stern to the other's broadside; distance from each other I thought about one mile.



Could you make a plan of the ships' positions?

No, I cannot; but I think the upright vessel is thrown too high on the sketch, and the iceberg in the rear is not thrown nearly high enough.

Do you know if the master of the "Renovation" reported this circumstance on his arrival, officially, at Quebec?

I do not know; I filled up a report for him, and mentioned that two vessels had been seen on an iceberg, under the head of "Intelligence," but said nothing about the opinion that they might be Sir John Franklin's ships.

Was John Todd a seaman on board the "Renovation"?

He was; he shipped as cook and seaman, but was sick during the passage.

*John S. Lynch.*

Taken in my presence, in Prescott, this 17th day of May 1852.

*Edward Boxer, Capt. R.N.*

*Thomas W. Luard,*

Prescott, 17 May 1852.

Barrack-Master & Acting Ordnance Storekeeper.

No. 50.

Colonial Land and Emigration Office,  
Park-street, Westminster,

3 June 1852.

Sir,

WITH reference to your letter of the 6th ultimo, I am directed by the Colonial Land and Emigration Commissioners to inform you that they lost no time in conveying to their officers at the outports instructions to institute the inquiries directed by the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty, in respect to the vessels seen in the ice in the spring of last year by the "Renovation."

The Commissioners have as yet received answers from only two of their officers; viz., from Captain Ellis, at Limerick, who states that there was not at the time any vessel in that port which has sailed for North America early in 1851, and that the only information on the subject which he had been able to obtain was from the examination of Mr. Simpson, the mate of the "Renovation," at which he assisted, and the other from Lieutenant Griffiths, at Waterford.

Of the latter letter I enclose a copy, as it contains some observations in regard to Sir John Franklin's ships which may be of use.

The Commissioners apprehend from their not receiving answers from any of their other officers, that they have been unable to obtain any information on the subject.

I have, &c.  
(signed) *S. Walcott,*  
Secretary.

To A. Stafford, Esq. M.P.  
&c. &c. &c.  
Admiralty.

Enclosure in No. 50.

Government Emigration Office, Waterford,  
27 May 1852.

Sir,

"Velocity,"  
"Sophia,"  
"Eliza,"  
"Harmony."

IN reference to your letter of the 10th instant, requesting to have all the information I could gain from the masters of the several vessels that sailed from this port bound to North America, respecting the two ships reported to have been seen on the ice by the "Renovation" in April 1851, I have the honour to acquaint you, that all that I have as yet been able to collect is from the masters of the vessels named in the margin, and that the first mentioned, commanded by Mr. Peter White, fell in with the ice on the 26th October 1851, in latitude  $43^{\circ} 47' N.$ , longitude  $48^{\circ} 38' W.$ , and states that he only saw three small icebergs, and no vestige or sign of a vessel; also that he never has, in conversation with his brother captains, ever heard any of them say that they had seen or fallen in with ships on the ice, and is certain that if they had they would have told him of it; is of opinion that the ships said to have been seen by the "Renovation" were not Sir J. Franklin's vessels, but deserted whalers.

The next named, commanded by Mr. John Bellord, sailed from hence on the 12th May 1851, saw only one small piece of ice on his voyage to Quebec.

The third named, commanded by Mr. Brothers (a very intelligent person) sailed from hence 17th April 1851, and in latitude  $43^{\circ} 30' N.$ , longitude  $47^{\circ} 40' W.$  on the 18th May 1851, fell in with a few icebergs, rather large, but saw no vessels near them; never heard at Quebec of the two ships seen by the "Renovation;" is also of opinion that they must have been deserted whalers, or merchant vessels.

The last vessel, now fitting out here, for North America, is commanded by Mr. Rees, but who was not in her last voyage, nor is there any one on board that was, except John Tower, A.B.; he states that they did not see the ice, or fall in with any vessels in distress, or water-logged; and on asking him if he had ever heard of a large reward having been offered to any vessel or persons giving information as to the fate of Sir John Franklin's ships, he answered in the negative, nor had he ever heard it a subject of conversation between the seamen.

The only further information that I have at present gained is from Mr. Thomas Dawson, master of the ship "Crown," 1,284 tons, now lying at Passage, put in here from Liverpool, with 500 emigrants for New York, reported to you in my letter of the 24th instant; he has acquainted me that when in the command of the "Lady Constable," they sailed from Liverpool, 9 April 1851, and on the 20th April, in latitude  $47^{\circ} N.$ , longitude  $48^{\circ} W.$ , he fell in with several icebergs, and further to the northward and westward, a great deal of field ice, so much so as to be impeded for about 10 days, and then had to bore their way through the ice, but saw no vessels or wrecks; is of opinion that those seen by the "Renovation" were merchant vessels; once saw a small schooner so circumstanced that was afterwards liberated by the breaking up of the ice.

In offering my own opinion that the vessels seen by Mr. Simpson, mate of the "Renovation," commanded by Mr. Coward, were not the "Erebus" and "Terror," but whalers, or merchant vessels, I may be excused by the Commissioners for so doing, when I acquaint you, that, as agent for transports, in the "Barretto Junior" I accompanied Sir John Franklin to the edge of the ice, and with my boat's crew, on the 12th July 1845, was the last person on board the discovery ships to take leave of them; and from that moment it will easily be believed that I have felt the deepest possible interest in their safe return, and given the subject my most anxious consideration.

It has been stated by Mr. Simpson, and I believe since by Captain Coward, that the largest of the vessels seen by them was from 600 to 700 tons, and the smallest about 300. The "Erebus" is 370 tons, and the "Terror" 326 tons. The vessels seen are also described as full-rigged ships; the "Erebus" and "Terror" are both barque-rigged, and low in the water, neither of them being so high as the "Enterprise," "Investigator," "Resolute," or "Assistance." If these last points could be decided to a certainty by them, or by Mr. Lynch, the passenger that was on board, it would be conclusive: this last gentleman's evidence would be valuable.

I have, &amp;c.

(signed) *Edward Griffiths,*  
Lieutenant, R. N.

To S. Walcott, Esq.,  
Secretary to the Colonial Land and Emigration Office.





VESSELS IN THE NORTH ATLANTIC.

---

COPIES of COMMUNICATIONS between the ADMIRALTY and any PUBLIC AUTHORITIES at Home and Abroad, in reference to certain VESSELS observed on an Iceberg in the *North Atlantic* in 1851, and supposed to have been Abandoned."

(*Sir R. H. Inglis.*)

---

*Ordered, by The House of Commons, to be Printed,*  
*22 June 1852.*

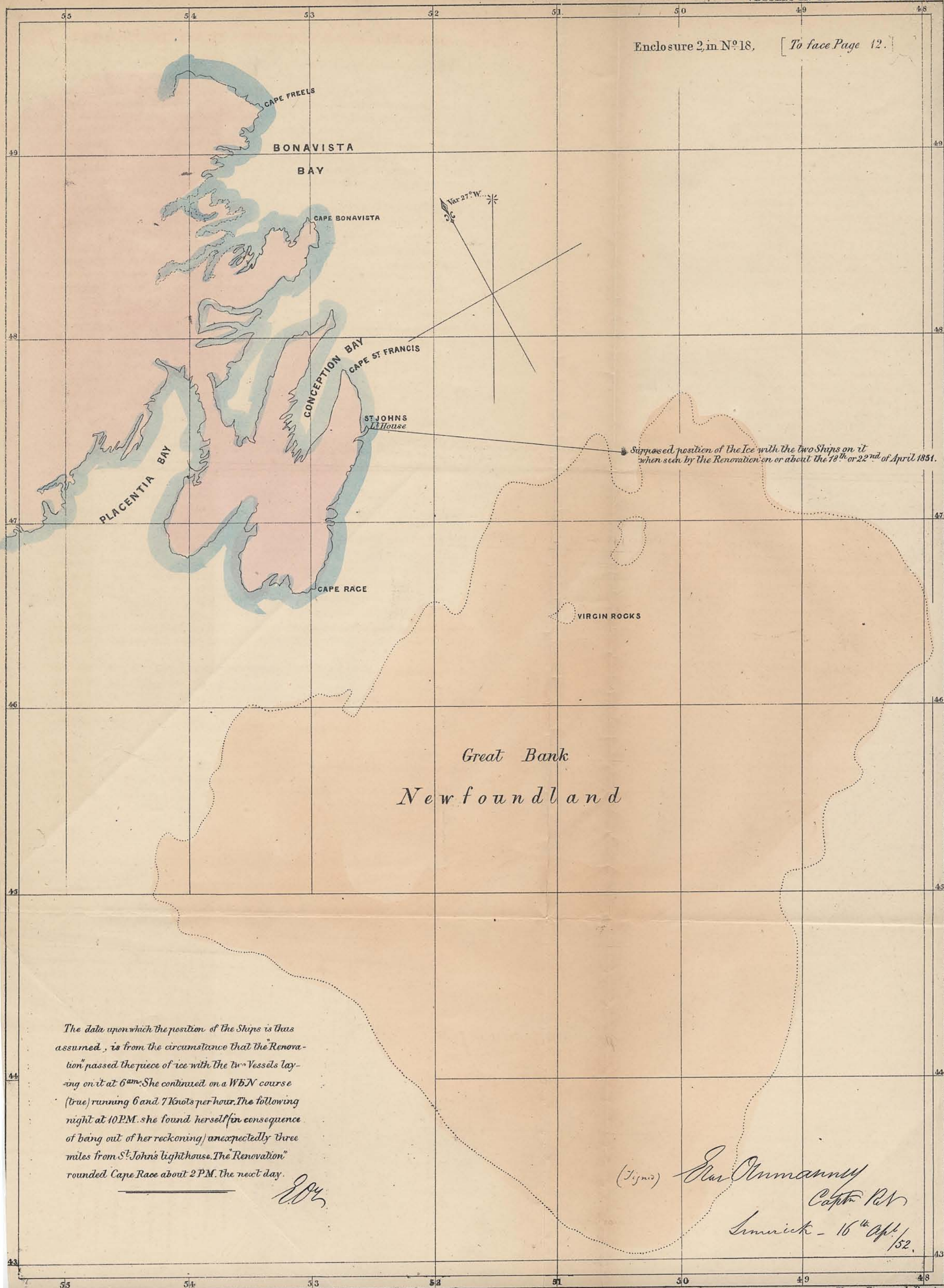
---

[*Price 1 s. 2 d.*]

501.

*Under 8 oz.*





The data upon which the position of the Ships is thus assumed, is from the circumstance that the Renovation passed the piece of ice with the two Vessels laying on it at 6<sup>am</sup>. She continued on a WbN course (true) running 6 and 7 knots per hour. The following night at 10 PM. she found herself in consequence of being out of her reckoning unexpectedly three miles from St John's lighthouse. The Renovation rounded Cape Race about 2 PM. the next day.

*E. O. Y.*

(Signed) *Earl Ommanney*  
 Captain R.N.  
 Liverpool - 16<sup>th</sup> April 1852.