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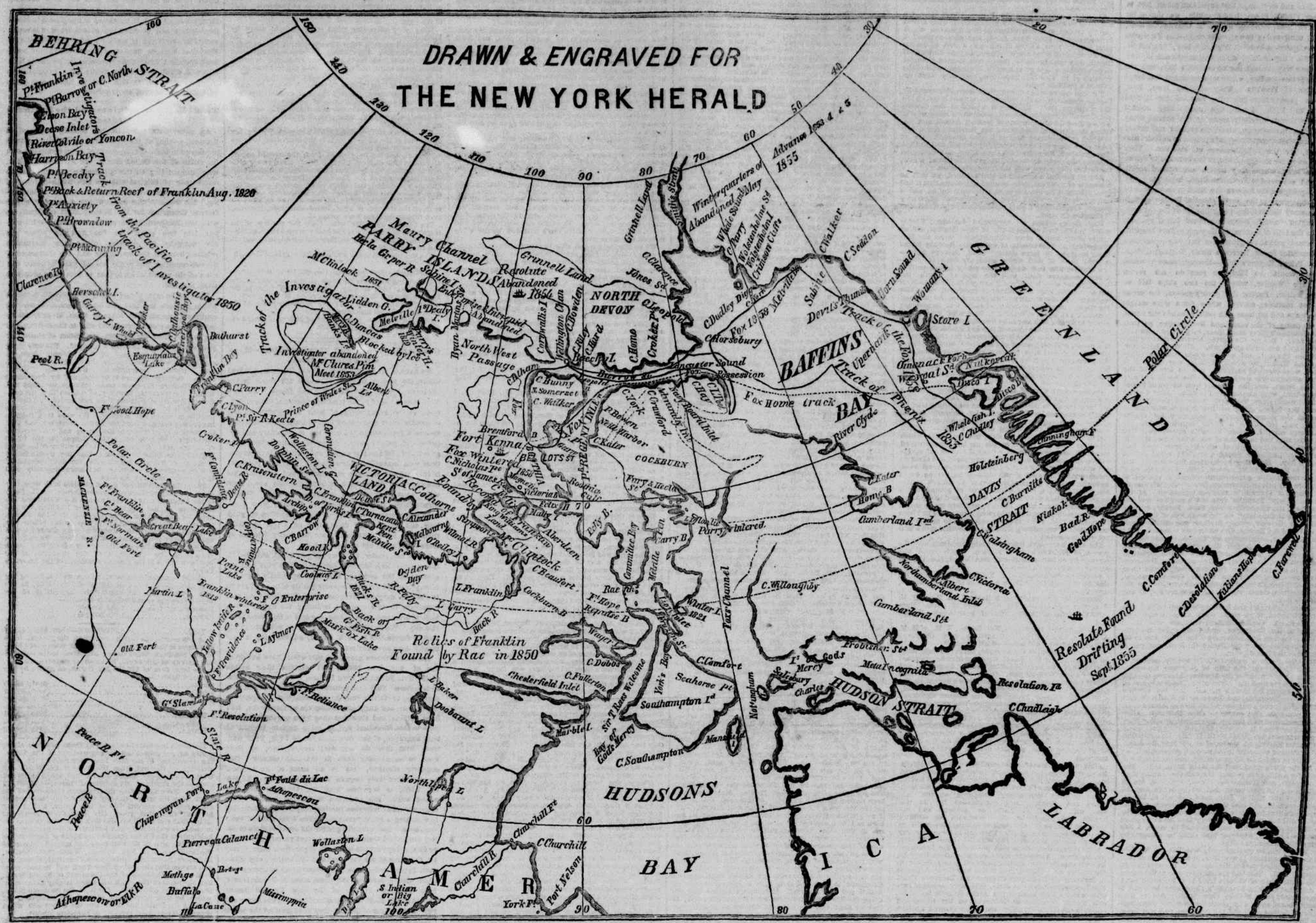
MAP OF THE POLAR SEAS,

With the Leading Points of Interest in Arctic Exploration.



History of Arctic Expeditions from 1743 to 1859.

ANOTHER EXPEDITION PROPOSED.

Voyages of All the Navigators—Discoveries Made—The Northwest Passage Found—Searches for Franklin—His Fate Decided, &c. &c., &c.

Notwithstanding that the fate of Sir John Franklin has been ascertained, there seems a probability that the spirit of Arctic adventure is not yet at rest. Dr. Hayes, who accompanied Dr. Kane in his last expedition through Smith's Sound, is willing to make another visit to those regions, with a view to explore the open sea discovered by Kane.

The London *Medical Times* also suggests the propriety of an overland expedition up the Great Fish river, where it thinks some portion of Franklin's party may be still found alive. The *Medical Times* relates an interesting circumstance in connection with the several propositions made to search for Franklin in the years 1845-6 and '47. It appears that Dr. King proposed to visit the very spot where Franklin's remains were found in King William's Land. His second letter offering to make the search was dated June 10, 1847, the very day before Franklin died.

The recent discovery of the remains of Sir John Franklin's long missing expedition to the Arctic seas, by Capt. McClintock, of the yacht Fox, revives the interest in Arctic explorations, and brings back to memory the sufferings and sacrifices which so many gallant hearts have made to throw light upon the untrodden regions of the polar circle, and contribute to the wealth of science and discovery.

We present our readers to-day with a map of the Polar seas, drawn and engraved expressly for our columns, which embraces all the prominent points reached by the various explorations, and the tracks followed by some of the most important expeditions since the first attempt was made to discover the Northwest Passage, from Behring's Straits to Baffin's Bay, along the northern coast of America.

In 1743 the British government offered a reward of a thousand pounds sterling to any one who would make this passage by way of Hudson's Strait. From this period till the year 1818, two or three expeditions were undertaken both by sea and land, without success; one, in which Captain Phipps, afterwards Lord Mulgrave, accompanied by young Nelson, the future hero of the English navy, penetrated as far North as latitude 80 48 along the east shore of Spitzbergen. The celebrated Captain Cook also made his way as far as Icy Cape, latitude 70 45; but neither were able to proceed further through the ice. Meantime voyages by land were undertaken by Mr. Hearne from Hudson's Bay towards the Polar sea, in one of which he discovered the Coppermine river, and by Mr. Mackenzie, who descended the river, to which he gave his name, as far as an island where the tide was observed to rise and fall; but there is no certainty that he reached the ocean. These two streams, however, have since been followed to the Polar sea.

In 1817 the Greenland whalers reported the sea to be more free from ice than ever before, and the British Admiralty conceived the idea of making another attempt to discover the Northwest Passage, and if possible reach the Pole. Accordingly, on the 18th of April, 1818, Capt. (afterwards Sir John) Ross, and Lieutenant (afterwards Sir Edward) Parry, left the Thames in the Isabella and Alexander, and sailed for Cape Farewell, which they passed in about five weeks, and made for Cape Dudley Digges, in the midst of ice. From this they entered Smith's Sound, and after examining it carefully, concluded that it, as well as Jones' Sound, and Lancaster Sound, were bays without openings, having supposed that they saw headlands across. After surveying the shores of Cumberland Strait, and the coasts around there, Captain Ross returned to England in the following October, without making any important discovery. At this same time that Ross and Parry set out on this voyage, Captain Buchan and Lieutenant Franklin (afterwards Sir John), sailed in the Trent and Dorothea into the Spitzbergen Seas, with a view to reach the North Pole, when they found the temperature mild and pleasant, the sky clear and azure as the skies of Italy. Obstructed on all sides by icebergs, the navigators found it almost impossible to advance, and though they reached a point as far north as eighty degrees and thirty-four minutes, they returned to England in October, the Dorothea having almost foundered in a gale which took them in the middle of the ice, attempting to reach the Greenland coast. Next year Parry, assisted by Lieutenant Liddon, made another attempt to get through Lancaster Sound, being in doubt as to the opinion formed by Ross in the previous voyage, that it was simply a bay. He left the Nore with the Hecla and Griper, manned by ninety-four men and provisioned for two years, May 11, 1819. They pushed through Davis' Straits and Baffin's Bay into Lancaster Sound, through very heavy ice, and passed through it into Barrow's Strait, thus named by Parry, after the promoter of the expedition, one of the Lords of the Admiralty. Here, being beset in ice, they ran southward into a bay which they called Prince Regent's Inlet. Returning, they pushed on to the westward, passing Capes Hurd and Hotham and Beechy Island, until they entered Wellington Channel, and passed on northwards to Melville Island, where they wintered. The expedition had now reached the 110th meridian of west longitude, and the crew were entitled to the reward of five thousand pounds promised by Parliament to the first ship that should attain that point. Amusing his men with private theatricals and other pastimes, together with considerable hunting, Parry got through the dismal winter, and on the 2d of August the ice broke up, permitting a farther advance to within sight of the western extremity of Melville Island, where another line of land was discovered, and called Bank's land. It was found impossible to proceed farther west, so that the ships returned home after having reached thirty degrees of west longitude more than any former navigators, discovered several new lands, bays and islands, and established the existence of a Polar sea north of the American continent.

In the September of the year Parry sailed, an overland journey was set on foot under Sir John Franklin from York factory, Hudson's Bay, in which he was accompanied by Dr. Richardson, two midshipmen, Back and Hood, and a seaman named Hepburn. The intention was to examine the north coast of America eastward from the Coppermine river. This was a tedious and perilous journey, the men enduring unparalleled sufferings from starvation and cold. They travelled in this attempt 5,550 miles, and were three years in accomplishing that distance, having reached a point on the coast as far west as Point Barrow.

Captain Parry, encouraged by his previous success, undertook a second voyage in May, 1821, with the Hecla and Fury, intending to make for Repulse Bay by Hudson's Strait, in the hope that the Northwest passage might be found south of Melville Island, where he formerly found the ice impassable. Having reached within view of Southampton Island, Parry sailed up Fox's Channel, but he soon found that there was no outlet there. He next tried Repulse Bay, but with as little success. He then proceeded along the coast, and found himself in a labyrinth of small islands, and finally reaching an open sea, he ran before a northerly wind until at length, on the 3d of September, he found himself just where he started from on the 6th of August, the result of the voyage being the satisfaction that there was nothing to be discovered in that direction. Tracking along the coast northward, examining every channel and opening, the ships became frozen up in the middle of the Northern Sea. In July they broke from their icy barriers, and pursued their investigations for some time, but without any definite result as far as the Northwest Passage was concerned, and in October, 1823, they arrived in England. In May of 1824 Parry started on his third voyage with the same brigs, Hecla and Fury, but did not succeed this time in advancing higher than Port Bowen in Lancaster Sound, where the Fury was driven ashore and abandoned, and the Hecla returned to England.

The next expedition set on foot was in another direction, namely, to sail round Cape Horn and enter the Polar Sea by Behring's Straits. This enterprise was undertaken by Capt. Beechy in the Blossom, in 1825, who reached Kotzebue Sound on the 22d of July, and thence proceeded to Chamisso Island, there to await Franklin, who was out on his third expedition. He surveyed the shore westward with a boat for a distance of 126 miles, as far as Point Barrow, without meeting Franklin, who, it was afterwards found, had reached within 146 miles of that place. Beechey returned to England in October, 1828. We will now advert to the land expedition of Franklin, which Beechy was expected to meet. Franklin's plan was to descend the Mackenzie river in boats to the sea, and push on from thence to Joy Cape or Behring's Straits, westerly with one party, and easterly to Coppermine river with another. Dr. Richardson and Lieut. Back, his old companions, accompanied him. In July, 1825, they reached Fort Chippewyan, arriving in safety at Great Bear Lake, from which point, after erecting a winter dwelling, a small party, headed by Franklin himself, set off down the Mackenzie river, journeying a thousand miles, until, on ascending an eminence on Garry Island, they beheld the sea, entirely free from ice, open before them. Here Franklin elevated a silk flag which his first wife had made and given him as a parting gift, with instructions to hoist it when he reached the much coveted polar sea—she being on her deathbed at the time of his departure. Satisfied at having beheld the open sea, Franklin returned to his companions at Bear Lake, arriving there on the 8th of September, and there wintered for seven or eight months. When the summer opened two parties again set out down the Mackenzie, Franklin taking a westerly direction from the mouth of the river, and Richardson an easterly one. Franklin, however, failed, as before stated, in getting as far west as the Blossom's boat had come to in search of him.

About this time some private adventurers were making excursions in the Northern Seas about the coasts of Greenland. Among them Mr. Scoresby, an experienced whaleman, and Capt. Clavering, of the British navy, but no discoveries of the northwest passage resulted.

The idea of reaching the north pole in ships having been for some time abandoned, Capt. Parry now undertook the attempt over the frozen sea in boats provided with runners, which might be used as sledges and boats alike. He set out from Spitzbergen in May, 1827, and after a dangerous and tedious journey got as far north as 82 degrees, 45 minutes parallel, almost the utmost limits of animal life, when he was compelled to return.

In May, 1829, Captain Ross, accompanied by his nephew, Commander James Ross, sailed in the Victory on his second voyage in search of the Northwest Passage, by some opening leading out of Prince Regent's Inlet. Pushing through Lancaster Sound, they reached Brentford Bay, where they landed, and called the land Boothia, in honor of Sir Felix Booth, who fitted out the expedition. They wintered at Felix Harbor, both places having become since remarkable by the visit of the yacht Fox, and the discovery of Franklin's remains by McClintock. Here, also, James Ross ascertained the location of the magnetic pole to be in the southern part of Boothia, as marked on our map. This expedition lasted four years, during which the crew endured the utmost privations. On the 29th of May, 1832, the Victory was abandoned, and the party attempted the terrible journey over the frozen sea and land in their boats towards Baffin's Bay. Finding Barrow's Strait an impenetrable mass of ice when they arrived at the junction of Prince Regent's Inlet on the 29th of August, they hauled their boats on shore and pitched their tents. After waiting nearly a month in the hope of advancing, they found no choice left but to return to Fury Beach and there spend their fourth dismal winter. They arrived here on the 7th of October, having left their boats on the shore at Batty Bay, and dragging their provisions over the ice in sledges. The winter proved a terribly severe one; but in July they moved on to where the boats were left, and after waiting a month for an open channel, resumed their voyage towards Baffin's Bay. They found Barrow's Strait open, and sailed on past Admiralty Inlet. On the 26th of August a sail hove in sight, which proved to be the Isabella, of Hull, formerly commanded by Ross himself. The unfortunate navigators were taken on board and conveyed to England, which they reached on the 11th of October, 1833, having been four years absent. Great alarm was created by the long absence of Ross, and Back started in search of him in February, 1833, from Montreal, down the St. Lawrence, and reached Sault Ste Marie on the 11th of May; then coasting Lake Superior, he pushed on to Fort Chippewyan and Fort Resolution, on the Great Slave Lake. On the 8th of August the party struck the Fish river, and Hoar Frost river, which they ascended until forced to abandon the enterprise in consequence of the rapids. Returning, they laid up for the winter at Great Slave Lake. The cold was intense, and the sufferings of the adventurers throughout the whole journey were almost incredible. About the middle of April, as they were preparing to resume their journey to the Polar Sea, news of Ross' safety reached them, to their great joy. Back, however, advanced towards the sea in boats by the Fish river, a distance of 530 miles, and reached the sea about 37 miles south of the Coppermine. This land he called King William's land, after which he retraced his steps and returned to England, in September, 1835. In June of the following year he again set out in the Terror for a sea journey, through Davis Strait and Hudson's Strait. Here, getting into the ice in July, they were nipped for four months. The perils through which the Terror passed at this time, are, we believe, without parallel in Arctic adventure; tightly locked among terrific icebergs, she was dashed and drifted about for miles between Cape Comfort and the middle of Hudson Strait, until every timber was strained so that the crew momentarily expected to go to destruction. An attempt was made to cut her out with instruments, when happily the ice broke away in July, and the Terror was forced from her dangerous position, but in such a leaky condition that Back was compelled to make direct for England.

She at last reached the northwest coast of Ireland, gradually sinking by the head, and was run ashore in Lough Swilly on the 3d of September, and, had she been three hours longer at sea, she would certainly have gone to the bottom. Her whole frame proved to be strained and twisted, many of her bolts were either loosened or broken, her forefoot was entirely gone, and upwards of twenty feet of her keel, together with ten feet of her sternpost, had been driven over more than three feet and a half on one side, leaving a frightful opening astern for the free ingress of water. Well, therefore, might her crew, when they afterwards looked on her as she lay dry on the beach at low water, express astonishment that ever they had floated back in her to British shores; and ample occasion had they to cherish adoring gratitude to the All-Powerful and All-Benevolent Being who had preserved them.

Simultaneously with Back's expedition, the Hudson's Bay Company despatched two of their employés, Dease and Simpson, to survey those portions of the northern coast which Franklin and Back had failed to reach. They descended Mackenzie river, and followed the coast eastward, discovering the two rivers, Garry and Colville, as well as a new land, which they named Victoria. In the following year (1839) they sailed through the narrow strait between Victoria and the mainland, now called Dease's Strait, where they ascertained that Boothia was an island. Beholding from an eminence the open Gulf of Boothia, and having determined the line of coast thus far, they returned on the 16th September into the Coppermine river, after travelling in boats a voyage of 1,600 miles through the Polar Sea.

Under the auspices of the Hudson's Bay Company, Rae set out again overland through Canada, arriving on the 8th of October, 1846, at York Factory. His object was to explore the open bay from the point reached by Dease and Simpson, eastward to Fury and Hecla Strait, so as to connect their discoveries with those of the second voyages of Parry and Ross. Starting from York Factory in July, with two boats, each manned by six men, along the shore of Hudson's Bay, he reached Churchill and passed Chesterfield Inlet on the 13th of July, reaching the head of Repulse Bay on the 25th. The ice prevented further progress at that time, and the party wintered at Repulse Bay. Next April a party started in sledges westward, and Rae himself succeeded in getting on foot to within sight of the ice-covered sea, studded with islands, which proved to be Lord Mayor's Bay, where the disaster occurred to the Victory, under Sir John Ross, some years before. They did not succeed, however, in reaching Dease and Simpson's farthest point, and on the 12th of August the adventurers left Repulse Bay for home.

We now come to the last fatal voyage of Sir John Franklin, so wrapped in mystery for nearly twelve years, and upon which only recently so much light has been thrown by the discovery of McClintock. The Erebus and Terror were got ready for another Arctic investigation by the British Admiralty, and the command given to Franklin, who was assisted by Captains Crozier and Fitz James and a gallant band of officers and men, not one of whom returned to tell the tale of the disasters which befel them. On the 19th of May, 1845, the doomed ships left the Thames in search of the Northwest Passage, with instructions to proceed through Davis' Strait, Baffin's Bay and Lancaster Sound, thence through Barrow's Strait to Melville Island, when it was hoped an open passage would be found to Behring's Strait, a distance of about 900 miles. He was directed in proceeding westward in this course not to stop to examine any openings, either north or south, but to push straight on in lat. about 74¼ deg. till he reached Cape Walker in long. 98 deg. west, and from thence endeavor to reach Behring's Strait. In the event of being obstructed in this course, he was ordered to pass through the Strait between Dover and Cornwallis islands (Wellington channel), should that channel offer a more practicable outlet from the Archipelago and a more ready access to the open sea. Upon passing Behring's Strait he was to proceed to the Sandwich Islands and Panama, and then put an officer ashore with despatches. By reference to the map the probable ramblings of Franklin's party during the early part of the expedition may be readily inferred from the nature of these instructions.

The Erebus and Terror entered Davis' Strait in July, 1845, and were seen for the last time on the 26th of that month by the whaler Prince of Wales, being then moored to an iceberg in lat. 74 deg. 48 min. north, and long. 66 deg. 13 min. west., not far from the centre of Baffin's Bay, and about 210 miles from the entrance of Lancaster Sound.

Toward the end of the year 1847 anxiety began to be felt in regard to the fate of Franklin and his men. Not a word had been heard from them since they had been seen by the Prince of Wales whaler, and apprehension became general that they had shared a similar fate to the Fury of Sir Edward Parry, or the Victory of Sir John Ross. The government, therefore, promptly determined to send three expeditions in search of them. The first was a marine expedition, by way of Behring's Strait, to be conducted by Capt. Henry Kellett, of the ship Herald, of twenty-six guns, then in the Pacific, aided by Commander Thomas E. L. Moore, in the Plover, surveying vessel; and this was designed to relieve Sir John Franklin and his companions in the event of their having gone through the northwest passage, and stuck fast at some advanced point of the Polar Sea. The second was an overland and boat expedition, to be conducted by Sir John Richardson, to descend the Mackenzie river, and to examine the coast eastward to the Coppermine; and this was designed to afford relief in the event of the adventurers having taken to their boats westward of the northern Archipelago, and forced their way to the American continent. The third was a marine expedition, to be conducted by Sir James Clarke Ross, with the ships Enterprise and Investigator, through Lancaster Sound and Barrow's Strait, to examine all the tracks of the missing ships westward as far as they could penetrate into the Archipelago; and this was designed to afford relief in the event of the adventurers having been arrested either in the very throat of the supposed passage, or at some point on this side of it, and of their attempting to retrace their steps. This plan of search seemed comprehensive and noble, and was carried with all possible promptitude into execution.

On the 14th July, 1849, the Herald and Plover, commanded by Kellett and Moore, reached Kotzebue Sound by way of Behring's Strait, when hey were joined by Mr. Shedden in his yacht the Nancy Dawson. From this they pushed on to Icy Point, and on the 25th sent a boat party with Lieut. Pullen, accompanied by the yacht, as far as Dease's Inlet. The boat expedition was intended to connect the proceedings of the present voyage with those of Richardson's overland journey. Pullen reached Dease's Inlet, leaving deposits of provisions at different points along the route; and having despatched two whaleboats well manned up the Mackenzie river with orders to return home by Fort Hope and York Factory, he returned to the ships, which by this time had proceeded to Cape Lisburne, on the 24th of August, without finding any trace whatever of Franklin or his party. Kellet meantime had been making extensive explorations around the vicinity of Cape Lisburne, and discovered a new territory or island in latitude 71 20 N., longitude 175 16 W., which he supposed to be a part of the lofty range seen by natives off Cape Jakan, in Asia. The ships went north until they met the pack ice, and then by means of boats examined all the bays and inlets between Icy Cape and Point Barrow, without being able to throw a ray of light on the fate of Franklin. The ships returned home in October, 1850.

The second expedition, under Sir John Richardson and Dr. Rae, in search of Franklin, started overland, in June, 1848, from Methy Portage, and reached the last portage or Slave river on the 16th of July, and there divided into a seaward or exploring party under Richardson and Rae, and a land or auxiliary party