

# THE POLARIS.

Herald Special Report of the Search Expedition.

Wreck of the Polaris Off Cape Olsen.

The Ill-Fated Vessel Sunk in Nine Fathoms of Water.

BUDDINGTON'S PARTY.

They Quarter on the Main Land Near Littleton Island Last Winter.

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Still Looking for the Party in the Whaleboats.

First Despatch to the Herald. UNITED STATES STEAMSHIP JUNIATA, ST. JOHN'S, N. F., Sept. 10, 1873.

The Juniata has arrived here from her search. The Polaris is sunk near Littleton Island. Buddington's party left for the south in the middle of June, in two boats constructed from the ill-fated ship. The Tigress is still searching. I shall telegraph details. All on board are well. Unless otherwise ordered, the Juniata will sail homeward in six days. The Tigress simply

DISCOVERED THE POLARIS CAMP

(August 14). Buddington's party had left two months previously, in canvas covered boats, made out of the Polaris. Commander James A. Greer was too hurried, and this makes

HIS SEARCH IMPERFECT.

The Tigress was despatched westward and northward to continue the search. The Tigress is expected here in a few days. It is to be feared that Commander Greer has made a great mistake in the course he has observed. The Buddington party have been probably rescued by a whaler or lost.

Second Despatch to the Herald.

SLOOP OF WAR JUNIATA, ST. JOHN'S, NEWFOUNDLAND, Sept. 10, 1873.

The United States steamer Juniata arrived here at half-past six o'clock this morning from Disco Island, after a most eventful voyage to the regions of "eternal" ice.

THE POLARIS' CREW.

There must be another painful suspense before the Polaris mystery can be finally solved, but the following data at least leave the hope that everything connected with the unfortunate expedition may be ultimately cleared up. As yet, however, the fate of those who remained on board the vessel after Captain Tyson and his party were separated from them on the ice floe is unknown.

BUDDINGTON'S QUARTERS LAST WINTER.

Captain Buddington and his party lived on the main land near Littleton Island all last winter. Their quarters at that time may be designated as being on that part of the east coast of Smith's Land between Cape Olsen

and Foulke Fjord, and almost directly opposite Cape Imabella, on the west side of Smith Sound.

THEY LEAVE FOR THE SOUTH.

As soon as the ice began to break Buddington and the party with him made preparations to leave their desolate quarters, and in the month of June they started southward in two whaleboats which they had constructed from the ship, hoping to fall in with some rescuing whaler near Cape York and eventually reach civilization.

OPENING OF THE POLARIS.

The Polaris, after having withstood the fiercest Arctic storms and battling with immeasurable fields of ice, sunk in July near the main land, opposite Littleton Island (Cape Olsen), in latitude 78 degrees 23 minutes north, longitude 73 degrees 46 minutes west. This is, briefly stated, all the definite information obtained up to this writing concerning the Polaris and the unfortunate crew, but I will now proceed to give the details of the Search Expedition from which this information has been derived.

THE JUNIATA AT DISCO AND UPPERNAVIK.

The Juniata arrived at Disco from Holsteinborg on July 22 last. Commander Braine immediately went ashore and procured a number of sledge dogs, necessary for a successful prosecution of the work before us at the North. After this the coal intended for the Tigress was landed, other preparations for the same vessel were completed, and on July 29 we sailed for Uppernavik, arriving at the latter place July 31.

FIRST INFORMATION FROM A DANISH INSPECTOR.

On arriving at Uppernavik Commander Braine paid his respects to Mr. Krarup Smith, the Inspector Royal of North Greenland, from whom we gleaned the first item of intelligence concerning the Polaris—intelligence that, however painful to all present, was acceptable as a clew and a guide for further investigation.

QUARRELLING WITH CAPTAIN HALL.

Inspector Smith narrated with considerable minuteness the details of a quarrel on board the Polaris, and attributed the unhappy dissensions to Dr. Bissell, the scientific officer, who spoke most contemptuously of Captain Hall, alleged that he was ignorant of Arctic history and unfitted for the work to be accomplished, and endeavored to prejudice the crew of the ship against him. He apparently wished to give the expedition a German character, and desired to take full command.

HALL'S PREMOTION OF DEATH.

The Inspector further stated that Captain Hall evidently had some kind of misgiving or premonition of death while at Disco, where he saw Mr. Smith and placed in his care valuable records of the Franklin Search Expedition, which records were handed over to Commander Braine, who will place them in the custody of the Secretary of the Navy on his arrival in the United States. The officers and crew of the Polaris were utterly demoralized before the expedition sailed for the North, which might perhaps have influenced the action of the commander in reference to these records.

GOING NORTH IN A STEAM LAUNCH.

According to instructions, the Juniata remained at Uppernavik, while the magnificent steam launch, named Little Juniata, was brought into requisition. The powerful little craft was thoroughly equipped, coaled for fifteen and provisioned for sixty days, and, under the command of Lieutenant De Long, with eight volunteers and an ice pilot, was sent to Cape York for the purpose of collecting all possible information concerning the missing party. The launch sailed northward on the 2d of August, amid the enthusiastic cheers of the crew and spectators. At midnight of the same date she arrived at Tessusik, the last point of civilization.

A GLORIOUS SPECTACLE.

Early on the morning of August 3 the Lieutenant ordered another move forward. I have never witnessed a more glorious yet impressive scene than that which presented itself here as we were about to start. Looking abroad on the immense fields of ice, glittering in the rays of the sun, and the thousands of huge, craggy icebergs as they sulkily floated out into Baffin's Bay, one became awed by the dreadful majesty of the elements, and wondered how it would be possible to avoid being crushed to atoms between the unshapely masses that floated above and beneath the surface of the water. But the ingenuity and skill of man can overcome even such tremendous obstacles, and so we proceeded onward, although not without a certain cautiousness that, some might aver, bordered on fear.

DANGER—REFOGGED AND REBOUND.

Our party was well organized, and, after much careful groping and manoeuvring, we got through to Duck Islands, which we sighted early on the evening of the 4th of August, and later, on the same night, we reached the point known as Wilcox Head. Here, however, we were enveloped in a dense fog, and soon became lost in an "ice-pack." We struggled to clear ourselves and attempted to retrace our course, when finally we became absolutely hemmed in. We were now in a most perilous position, and sudden destruction threatened us. We forced a passage westward at length, our boat and the rigging being covered with ice, and, after a terrific struggle of twelve hours, found open water again.

IN MELVILLE BAY—A REGION OF TERRORS.

When still forty miles from Cape York half our fuel had been expended, and so we pushed ahead under sail. On the 6th of August we entered Melville Bay, the notorious region of terrors, where the boat got into a false lead, the ice closing in firmly ahead of her.

At three o'clock on the morning of August 8 Cape York was sighted and the launch was headed towards the land, where a fog as dark as night prevailed. Two hours later a gale arose, which suddenly increased to a frightful tempest. Here were new dangers. The gallant craft struggled along the edge of the packed ice, but found no passage.

NARROW ESCAPE OF THE SEARCH PARTY.

There was a terrible sea running and the spray danced into the air to a great height and could be seen overlapping icebergs of 100 feet high, and the waves, lashed to fury by the hurricane, burst against these mountains of ice, breaking off ponderous-looking, solid masses, which fell into the sea with a rushing, deafening sound. The destruction of the boat and all on board now seemed imminent.

For thirty-six hours we were bound up in this terrible place, the gale continuing the meanwhile and the appalling precipices of ice casting off their unceasing missiles of death.

ALL WERE NEARLY LOST.

Should the boat be saved it now became a question if it would be well to attempt to go on. Indeed, further search seemed impossible, there being, apparently, one solid "ice pack" to the northward and westward, and the Melville Bay pack was also close at hand.

NO SIGNS OF LIFE.

There were no signs of life anywhere along the shore as far as it could be scanned with the aid of a telescope, and, landing being impracticable, Lieutenant De Long reluctantly ordered a return.

RETURN TO TESSUSIK.

On the 10th of August the weather cleared, and at one P. M. of the same day we sighted Little Thumb.

On the 11th we arrived back at Tessusik.

On going north the little Juniata hugged the land and sailed along on the edge of the "ice pack" the whole distance, but neither going nor returning did we perceive the least sign of the Polaris' crew or the whereabouts of the Esquimaux. Our expedition was well managed, proving that the commander was a skillful and courageous officer, and worthy of honorable mention on the record of Arctic heroes.

MEETING WITH THE TIGRESS.

We sighted the United States steamer Tigress, Commander Greer, near Uppernavik. The Tigress had arrived at Disco on the 4th of August, took in the coal left there for her by the Juniata, and had arrived at Uppernavik on the 10th, where she was coaled again by the Juniata, and otherwise prepared, leaving the latter place on the 11th.

VALUABLE HINTS TO COMMANDER GREER.

Lieutenant De Long boarded her and imparted valuable information to Commander Greer, exhibiting the chart showing the track of the launch, and recommended him to take a northwesterly course from Cape Shackleton, which suggestion was followed with good results. The Tigress then steamed across Melville Bay and passed Cape York on August 13, and without stopping passed across North Star Bay also. As she steamed rapidly along the coast she saw no signs of life anywhere, and finally took a northwesterly course and

STARTED FOR NORTHERNBERLAND ISLAND,

where Frederick Meyer erroneously asserted Tyson's party last saw the Polaris. Some of the Tyson party, now on the deck of the Tigress, were on the lookout, eagerly watching for the landmarks.

THE ROCK THAT TYSON RECOGNIZED.

On the 14th of August the Tigress passed Cape Alexander and Port Foulke. It was now all daylight; and a rock in the vicinity of Cape Olsen was now recognized by Captain Tyson as the same that hid the Polaris from the view of the party on the "ice floe."

HUMAN VOICES CALLING—EXCITEMENT ON BOARD.

The vessel was here stopped by order of the commander, when the sound of human voices was heard in the distance. A boat was instantly lowered. It was about nine o'clock in the evening, and amid the greatest excitement, Commander Greer exclaimed, "I see their house; two tents are clearly perceptible, and moving human figures can be seen on the mainland near Littleton Island." There was considerable exultation on board at this announcement. In an hour afterwards the boat returned from the shore, but only brought disappointment to the eager crowd that awaited the intelligence. Captain Buddington and his party had gone south in the middle of June last in two boats, hoping to meet friendly whaling vessels to carry them to Newfoundland.

A FURTHER INVESTIGATION—THE DESERTED HOUSE.

The Tigress' boat was again manned, accompanied this time by Commander Greer and Esquimaux Joe, who was to act as interpreter. A crowd of Esquimaux, consisting of five men, two women and two children, greeted them on their arrival at the shore, where they found a house, abandoned and presenting interiorly a scene of the wildest confusion; broken instruments lay on the floor, while the remains of a mutilated log book were scattered about in every direction. The Esquimaux had come from Pond's Bay and had remained with the Buddington party all

winter. The house contained a storeroom, a ship's galley stove and tables and chairs, taken from the Polaris. There were fourteen bunks ranged along each side of the chief apartment.

AN INSUFFICIENT EXAMINATION.

Only half an hour was spent in searching for records by the commander and his men. Esquimaux Joe conversed with his kinsfolk present briefly, but the boat was quickly ordered away. This party from the Tigress picked up what curiosities they could and returned to the ship. The boat was manned a third time, and this party picked up some torn diaries, all reference to the death of Captain Hall being destroyed. With the exception of a torn memorandum, setting forth an agreement between Buddington and Chester to continue the search for the North Pole, nothing of importance was discovered.

THE SUNKEN POLARIS.

The Esquimaux pointed out the spot where the Polaris had sunk, and stated that Captain Buddington had given them the ship; but that when the ice broke, in the middle of July, she floated into a small cove and went down. A small iceberg had grounded on the wreck, which lies in about nine fathoms of water.

WHY WAS THIS?

No attempt appears to have been made to examine the position of the wreck, and nothing was ascertained as to how the winter was passed, the whereabouts of the missing men, or how they spent their time while waiting for the ice to break up. The entire time of the Tigress in the neighborhood of Littleton Island was only five hours.

SUSPICIOUS CIRCUMSTANCES.

The Esquimaux were not sufficiently interrogated. When first seen from the deck of the Tigress these people on shore were in the uniform of sailors of the United States Navy, but they subsequently changed their clothes and donned the Esquimaux apparel, an action that looks very suspicious.

A LACK OF HUMANITY.

The Esquimaux, moreover, had but little provisions, their food being nearly all consumed, neither had they any boats. Under these circumstances, they asked, through the medium of dusky Joe, to be taken on board the Tigress. Commander Greer declined to do this. There was certainly a lack of humanity in this refusal.

HOMEWARD BOUND.

After the boat had returned to the Tigress three cheers were given for homeward. The assistant ice pilot reported an ice blink (?) fifteen miles off, and the vessel was hastily headed south, at fifteen minutes past two o'clock in the morning, after an imperfect search, and leaving the unfortunate Esquimaux behind to battle with fate. Instead of crossing to the westward from Cape York and following the probable track of Buddington's party towards Pond's Bay, the Tigress returned to Uppernavik, on the 19th of August, and arrived at Godhavn, Disco, on the 25th.

DISCOURAGING PROSPECTS.

Here the Tigress was again coaled by the Juniata and immediately afterwards sent to the northward and westward to continue the search for Buddington's party. The prospects of finding them are discouraging, however, unless, as they hoped, they have been picked up by whaling ships.

Nothing has since been heard of the Tigress.

BUDDINGTON'S PARTY.

The names of the members of the expedition over whose fate the great uncertainty of the ice kingdom hangs are given below. They are fourteen in number corresponding to the number of bunks found by the Tigress party in the house on the mainland:— Sidney O. Buddington, sailing and ice master.

- Hubbard C. Chester, chief mate.
- William Morton, second mate.
- Emil Schumann, chief engineer.
- A. A. Odell, assistant engineer.
- Dr. Emil Bissell, chief of the scientific corps.
- R. W. D. Bryan, astronomer and chaplain.
- Nathan J. Coffin, carpenter.
- Herman Simmons, seaman.
- Henry Hobby, seaman.
- Joseph B. Mauch, seaman.
- Noah Hayes, seaman.
- W. F. Campbell, fireman.
- John W. Booth, fireman.

COMMANDER BRAINE'S REPORT.

WASHINGTON, Sept. 10, 1873.

The Secretary of the Navy received the following despatch to-day:—

UNITED STATES STEAMSHIP JUNIATA, ST. JOHN'S, N. F., Sept. 10, 1873.

Hon. GEORGE M. ROBESON, Secretary of the Navy, Washington:—

The Juniata arrived to-day. Met the Tigress at Uppernavik and coaled her. She sailed August 11 for Littleton Island. The Tigress met the Juniata's steam launch, Lieutenant De Long, off Tessusik, who had been to Cape York in the launch and returned. At Disco met the Tigress again and coaled her August 25. Commander Greer reports the camp of the Polaris found August 14, off Littleton Island, latitude 78 degrees 23 min. north, longitude 73 degrees 46 min. west. The crew of the Polaris were all well. Had gone south two months before in two boats made from the ship. Polaris sank one month after. Kept a careful lookout going north and coming south. There were no signs. Stopped at all the settlements for news. The crew of the Polaris probably on board of a whaler from Cape York. The

Tigress left Disco August 25 for Labrador coast, to continue the search so long as coal and season permit. D. L. BRAINE, Commander, United States Navy.

The above despatch was received from Commander Braine, commanding the Juniata. Littleton Island referred to is about sixty miles north of Northumberland Island, where the party rescued from the Polaris supposed they had left her. It is a little south of the life-boat depot of Dr. Kane, in 1853. The probability is that the Tyson party were mistaken as to the locality of their separation from the Polaris, and that it was really Littleton Island instead of Northumberland Island. It is hardly possible that after the separation, the Polaris, in her disabled condition, succeeded in any way in reaching a point sixty miles further north.

It is understood that orders were sent to Commander Braine to continue the search for the crew of the Polaris.

THE NEWS IN WASHINGTON.

The Question of Exactitude—Consulting the Chart—How Buddington May Be Heard of by Cable—The Search to be Pushed on with Zeal.

WASHINGTON, Sept. 10, 1873.

The telegram from Commander Braine, of the United States Steamer Juniata, dated at St. John's, Newfoundland, to-day, announcing the partial success of the vessels sent in search of the North Polar expedition, was received at noon to-day by Acting Secretary of the Navy, Commodore Reynolds, and copies immediately sent

TO THE PRESIDENT, AT LONG BRANCH, and to Secretary Robeson, at Portsmouth, N. H. The Navy Department officials had some difficulty in making out the despatch at first, as the latitude given by Commander Braine of the locality where the tidings of the ill-fated vessel were obtained by Commander Greer, of the Tigress, was questioned. An examination was at once made of the charts drawn by Kane and Dr. Hayes, as well as of those of the British Admiralty. The reports of Captain Tyson, Sergeant Meyer, of the Signal Bureau, and others belonging to the Polaris were also carefully examined. They all agreed that the Polaris, as last seen, was STEAMING BEHIND NORTHERNBERLAND ISLAND, in latitude 77 degrees, 10 minutes. The despatch from Commander Braine showed that her camp had been found by Commander Greer at Littleton Island, which is in latitude 78 degrees and 23 minutes, and was correctly reported by the commander of the Tigress, or over a degree nearer the Pole than the locality of Northumberland Island. This excused the questioning by the Navy Department of Commander Braine's despatch, but Commodore Reynolds believes that it is perfectly correct. The query then was, Had the Polaris during the Arctic winter just passed

DRIFTED TO THE NORTH

with some unknown Arctic current, or been driven north by strong southwesterly winds, or were Tyson and his party, as they drifted away from the ship in the Arctic night,

CONFUSED IN THEIR BEARINGS,

and uncertain of their whereabouts? The naval officials, as they cudgelled their brains, considered the latter more probable. Littleton Island, the charts showed, lies just to the south of Cape Hatheron, the northern point of the channel which leads into Smith's Sound, and is the scene of the burial of one of the men of Kane's expedition. Repulse Bay, Kane's winter quarters, is but a few minutes of latitude north of this position, but nearly a degree east on the southern border of Smith's Sound. The despatch of Commander Braine to the Navy Department it was thought was unnecessarily vague; but the hope was expressed that with the memorandum or despatch, or whatever it may have been, which gave Commander Greer his tidings of the Polaris, other data may have been found, and possibly all the scientific papers, charts, botanical and other collections which had been made previous to Captain Hall's death.

The latest despatch received at the Navy Department from Captain Hall in 1871 was delivered by him to a Danish whaler at Uppernavik and carried to Copenhagen, and thence sent to Washington; and it is thought possible that, if Captain Buddington and party have been

PICKED UP BY ONE OF THE DANISH WHALING VESSELS

in Baffin's Bay, that they, too, may have been carried to Europe, and that we shall first hear of them through the cable. Commodore Reynolds thinks that neither this party nor their possible saviors could have known anything of the search instituted for their safety, as they appear to have had no communication whatever with the Esquimaux of the Greenland coast, who could have transmitted such intelligence. The character of the vessel commanded by Commander Braine—the Juniata—obliged Secretary Robeson to give him orders to avoid any

UNNECESSARY DANGER FROM THE ICE

and to allow the Tigress to push forward among the ice floes. It will, therefore, be necessary for the Juniata to allow the Tigress to prosecute the greater part of the search necessary on the Labrador coast, but the Juniata or some other vessel will be held in readiness in this latitude to assist the Tigress if possible. It is stated on authority that Secretary Robe-

son feels himself bound by the report received to-day

TO PUSH THE SEARCH FOR THE MISSING ARCTIC NAVIGATORS

with renewed zeal. The Polaris, formerly the steam tug Periwinkle, of the Navy, 387 tons, was selected by the Navy Department as the most suitable vessel and was fitted out at the Washington Navy Yard regardless of expense. She sailed from here in July, 1871, and of her subsequent history the HERALD has published the fullest details.

THE NEWS OF HER LOSS

is not generally known here to-night, and in the absence of more definite information from Commander Braine, those who know the meagre news sent by him to-day can at best only conjecture what the probable fate of Captain Buddington and his party has been.

Interview With Sergeant Meyer, One of the Party Rescued from the Ice Floe.

On receiving from the Navy Department a copy of the despatch of Commander Braine, of the Juniata, your correspondent called upon Sergeant Frederick Meyer, of the Signal Service Bureau, who, it will be remembered, accompanied Captain Hall, in the Polaris, in search of the North Pole, and was one of the party of nineteen which were sent adrift from the Polaris, in the Arctic regions, about one year ago. On reading the despatch

MR. MEYER WAS GREATLY SURPRISED

and at first was inclined to doubt its correctness, but when assured that it had come through official channels, and was Commander Braine's report to the Navy Department, made in accordance with instructions carefully prepared for his guidance, he was compelled to admit its authenticity, while somewhat credulous about its reliability. As he is the only survivor of the Polaris crew now in the United States, and as he was entrusted with the records of the ice-floe during that perilous voyage of over six months, exclusively and graphically described in the HERALD, and is competent to speak of the POSSIBLE RESCUE OF CAPTAIN BUDDINGTON and his party, your correspondent asked him to narrate his opinion of Commander Braine's despatch as he judged it from his own experience in the frigid zone. Sergeant Meyer, who still retains somewhat the bronze complexion got during his Arctic expedition, said he would gladly contribute anything of interest to the HERALD. After thanking your correspondent for the information contained in Commander Braine's despatch, he said:—

"WHAT SURPRISED ME MOST

was the quickness with which the designs of the Navy Department were carried out, as I hardly expected any tidings from the Polaris before the middle or end of September. According to the despatch it appears that without any loss of time the Tigress proceeded north, steaming up the east coast as far as Littleton Island, which is situated more than a degree to the north of Northumberland Island, the supposed winter quarters of the Polaris. Taking into consideration the quickness of execution, it may at first sight seem most probable that Captain Tyson and my other comrades of the ice drift by passing Northumberland Island, in which they were unable to recognize the locality of our famous disaster, enjoined Commander Greer to push forward to the north, and that on arriving at Littleton Island they at once knew it to be the place of their never-forgotten commencement of misery. Granting this to be so, it remains a mystery how the Polaris came to return to Littleton Island after, to my own knowledge, she had passed the same island three days before the disaster, had sighted Northumberland Island one day previous to the separation of her crew, and was seen by the ice party on the 16th of October, 1872, at anchor, between the main land and Northumberland Island, in Murchison Sound. Should she, by the immediate following southerly storms, have been driven north, and brought up at Littleton Island, or been taken there by the will of her master, who may have thought to find provisions and clothing, said to have been deposited at Mount Garry Island by Dr. Hayes' expedition. As this may be, it remains a fact that signs of the Polaris have been found at Littleton Island. She even is reported to have sunk a month after she had been abandoned by Captain Buddington.

This latter news can have come to the ears of Commander Greer only by communication from natives; and, if so, it may be all a misunderstanding, as natives which visit the vicinity of Port Foulke are those which generally reside at Netlik, Whale Sound, just below Northumberland Island, and by telling the fate of the Polaris and her crew have been misunderstood as to the locality of the last anchorage of the Polaris. To some it may appear strange how Captain Buddington could be so well informed of the condition of the Polaris as to abandon her a month before she really sunk. This is easily explained by the fact that, as the vessel undoubtedly was cradled in the ice in contact with the ship's side melted early in spring, and the water created thereby rushed in through the Polaris' skin, while she was still kept up by the ice underneath. The amount of water which streamed in during a short time being very great, the ship's company had warning of her condition.

The despatch states that Captain Budding-

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