THE POLARIS.

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Graphic Picture of Life and Death in the Empire of the Ice.

DUNDEE, Sept. 19, 1873.

This afternoon the whaling vessel Arctic, Captain Adams, arrived from the Davis Straits whale fishing, having on board the following members of the crew of the Polaris:—Captain Sidney O. Buddington, sailing and ice master; Dr. Emil Bessel; Hubbard C. Chester, first mate; William Morton, second mate; Emil Schumann, chief engineer; A. A. Odell, second engineer; W. F. Campbell, fireman; Nathan J. Coffin, carpenter; Henry Siemons, seaman; Henry Hobby, seaman, and Noah Hayes, seaman. All the men are well and none of them exhibit signs of emaciation or decrepitude. The first man Captain Buddington met on arriving was a HERALD reporter, who succeeded in obtaining from him and others of the expedition statements concerning the voyage of the Polaris, the separation from the Tyson party and the subsequent events. He also procured Captain Allen's statement for me. They will be found in proper order below.

Captain Buddington's Statement.

Leaving Tessuisak on the afternoon of the 24th of August, 1871, we shaped a course for Cape York, and, meeting very little ice, sighted it on the evening of the next day. We ran along the coast and passed between Wolstenholm and Saunders Islands late on the 29th. Meeting some ice off Whale Sound, we were compelled to go outside of Hackluyt Island. After forcing our way though a loose pack of small extent, we met fewer obstructions, and were opposite Cape Alexander on the afternoon of the 27th. We turned toward the west coast to avoid ice, and, when opposite Cairn Point, directed our course for Cape Frazer. The water being comparatively free from ice, we crossed the Sound and reached Cape Frazer early on the 28th. Here Captain Hall took a boat to sound a bay near by, and found it too shoal for good anchorage. We ran up the west coast, keeping some five or six miles from the land. In the evening

A COPPER CYLINDER WAS THROWN OUT,

containing a record of our proceedings to date. We could see both sides of Kennedy Channel distinctly. A little after midnight discovered a small island on our right. A thick fog having set in and meeting some ice, we stopped steaming, at nine A. M. of the 29th, the fog clearing away about noon, good observations were obtained, which placed us in latitude 81 20. Shortly after noon we started. When the fog lifted from the land we thought we were in a bay, but soon discovered a strait to the northeast, some twenty miles wide. We worked up the strait during the morning of the 30th, through heavy floes and stemming a strong current. Towards evening a second copper cylinder was thrown over, containing a record of our progress. We anchored to a floe for the night, being unable to proceed on account of fog. Early on the 31st we again started. We ran within two or three miles of the east coast, and Captain Hall

AGAIN TRIED TO LAND, BUT FAILED.

This bay, on account of the two rebuffs, he named Repulse Bay. We worked all the morning, but made little progress, the ice being close and consisting of extensive floes moving rapidly down the straits. I told Captain Hall that it was impossible to proceed further with safety, and advised him to go a short distance south to a bay that I had noticed (afterwards known as Newman Bay), where he would find a good harbor. A consultation of officers was called and their opinion asked. Captain Hall decided to attempt to cross the straits and seek a harbor on the west side, and, if not successful, to return to the bay of which I spoke. We worked our way with difficulty through the ice towards the west coast, but at six P. M. were obliged to fasten to a floe. The 1st of September found us thickly beset with ice and drifting with it to the south. Preparations were made to secure our safety in case of a severe nip. On the 3d Captain Hall announced that by dead reckoning we had

REACHED THE LATITUDE OF 82 26 NORTH.

On the evening of the 4th, the ice opening, we cast off, and by midnight reached the east coast. Captain Hall determined the next day to make this place our winter quarters, and the necessary preparations were at once commenced. On the 10th Captain Hall informed us that he named the harbor

THANK GOD HARBOR,

in remembrance of the dangers through which God in His mercy had safely led us. The bay he called Polaris Bay. A cape some four miles distant to the north he named Cape Lupton, after Colonel Lupton, and the straits Robeson, after the honorable Secretary of the Navy, George M. Robeson. He places the harbor in latitude 81 deg. 38 sec. north and longitude 61 deg. 44 min. west. On the 18th a party was sent to the southeast to hunt musk ox and to ascertain if there was a feasible route for a sledge journeys to the north. They returned on the 24th, having killed one musk ox, the only one seen. On the 10th Captain Hall

STARTED ON A SLEDGE JOURNEY TO THE NORTH,

taking with him Mr. Chester, the first mate, and the two natives, Joe and Hans. He left written instructions with me. On the 16th the sun was seen from the vessel for the last time. On the afternoon of the 24th Captain Hall and party returned, having seen a bay which he called Newman's Bay. The cape at its northern entrance he named Cape Brevoort, after J. C. Brevoort, and that at its southern entrance Cape Sumner. He placed Cape Brevoort in latitude 82 north. A copy of his journal during this journey is with me. Not long after his return, Captain Hall was

TAKEN VERY ILL.

Dr. Bessel said his disease was apoplexy. For about two weeks he remained ill, at times being apparently almost well, and then becoming suddenly and strangely worse. At twenty minutes past three on the morning of the 8th of November he expired, having been insensible nearly twenty-four hours. On the 10th the body of Captain Hall was interred, about half a mile to the south of the Observatory. The character and ability of Captain Hall need from me no eulogium.

POSTERITY WILL AWARD HIS NAME

a place among the Arctic navigators, whose deeds, while living, it was his ambition to emulate. The change in the administration consequent upon the death of the commander may now be considered. The instructions given to Captain Hall by the Secretary of the Navy when referring to this possible calamity, were as follows:—

You will give special written directions to the sailing and ice master of the expedition, Mr. S. O. Buddington, and to the chief of the Scientific Department, Dr. E. Bessel, that in case of your death or disability a contingency which we sincerely trust may not arise, they shall consult as to the propriety and manner of carrying into further effect the foregoing instructions, which I here urge must, if possible, be done. The results of their consultations and the reasons therefor must be put in writing and kept as part of the records of the expedition. In any event, however, Mr. Buddington shall, in case of your death or disability, continue as the sailing and ice master, and control and direct the movements of the vessel, and Dr. Bessels shall, in such case, continue as chief of the scientific department, directing all sledge journeys and scientific operations. In the possible contingency of their non-agreement as to the course to be pursued, then Mr. Buddington shall assume sole charge and command, and return to the United States with all possible despatch.

No special written instructions were given to either Dr. Bessel or myself by Captain Hall; hence the first two sentences of these instructions do not apply to the case. The last sentence must be placed in the same category, as a new agreement "as to the course to be pursued" could only exist where there had been a "consultation." The sentence commencing "In any event" is the only one that applies to the case. From this it was evident that my duties in regard to the vessel remained the same, the only change being that I was responsible to the Secretary of the Navy instead of the commander of the expedition. Dr. Bessel's duties were somewhat increased by his being entrusted with the direction of all sledge journeys. The view taken above, which seemed so plain, was not, however, received as the true view, and I was consequently oftentimes

PLACED IN A VERY DISAGREEABLE POSITION.

On the 13th Dr. Bessel drew up a paper which he asked me to sign, and, as it was a declaration that our intentions were to carry out our relative instructions, I at once affixed my name. It concludes:—"It is our honest intention to honor our flag and to hoist it upon the most northern point of the earth." On the 20th

A GALE FROM THE NORTHEAST

sprang up, which increased to such an extent that on the 21st the vessel moved at nine A. M. On the 21st we heard the waves dash against the side of the vessel. Another anchor was let go and very little chain ran out, although we were broadside to the wind. On looking out the ice port we found that we were against the berg, which was keeping us from drifting out into the straits. We placed ice anchors on the berg, to which we secured the vessel by large hawsers. On the 25th ice seven inches thick had formed over the open water. A passage through it having been sawed, the vessel was moved eighty feet ahead and fifty from the berg. On the 28th a heavy gale from the southwest set in which drove the ice in, piling it up in immense hummocks. The berg was driven against the vessel and

A TONGUE OF IT STRUCK HER BOW

and wrenched the stern very badly. The ice on the shore side of the vessel fortunately broke, which probably saved the vessel. We continued to be driven in shore with the berg until three A. M. of the 29th, when, the gale moderating, the ice ceased to move. The bow of the vessel remained on the tongue of the berg, and she could only be released by moving her astern. The ice, however, had been piled up so much there that sawing was out of the question, and I was obliged to allow her to remain in that position. During the latter part of January frequent excursions were made to Cape Lupton, and considerable

OPEN WATER WAS SEEN IN THE STRAITS.

This was encouraging, as indicating that something might be done by boats towards reaching a high latitude. On the 19th of January Mr. Schumann, Chief Engineer, handed in a report respecting the state of the engine, which was satisfactory. On the 28th of February

THE SUN WAS SEEN

after an absence of 134 days. On the 21st I received a communication from Dr. Besseis, detailing a plan of operations for the spring and summer work. On the 29th I sent a reply to him, wherein I approved of the sledge journeys he proposed, and offered to render him all the aid in my power in preparing for them. The boat journeys, however, I proposed myself, and declined to make known my plans respecting them.

BOAT EXPEDITIONS.

On the 1st of April the two small whale boats were brought alongside the vessel to be fitted out, as the weather permitted, for the voyage north. I entrusted Messrs. Chester and Tyson with crews of four men each for the proposed journey. On the 8th Dr. Bessel returned from a sledge journey to the south, having been gone since the 27th of March. The furthest point reached was about fifty miles southwest of our position, where his farther progress was stopped by open water. Cape Constitution, the point he set out to reach, was in sight and some twenty miles distant. I sent with one of the natives, on the — day of May, a copper cylinder, to be thrown in the open water of the straits. I have retained a copy of the paper it contains. On the 14th Mr. Meyer and Captain Tyson returned from a sledge journey towards the north, having been gone five days. They reached latitude 82 deg.,

THE HIGHEST EVER ATTAINED ON LAND.

A record was deposited by Mr. Meyers at my request on the shore of Newman Bay. During the month of May many hunting parties were sent out. Twenty-eight musk cattle were killed, along with several seals, hares and birds. On the 20th one of the boats was taken to Cape Lupton to be launched as soon as practicable. On the 24th the other boat was slided to the Cape and on the next day the provisions for them were taken along. On the 24th, the ice in the hold having melted, it was found that

WATER RAN IN FROM THE LEAK

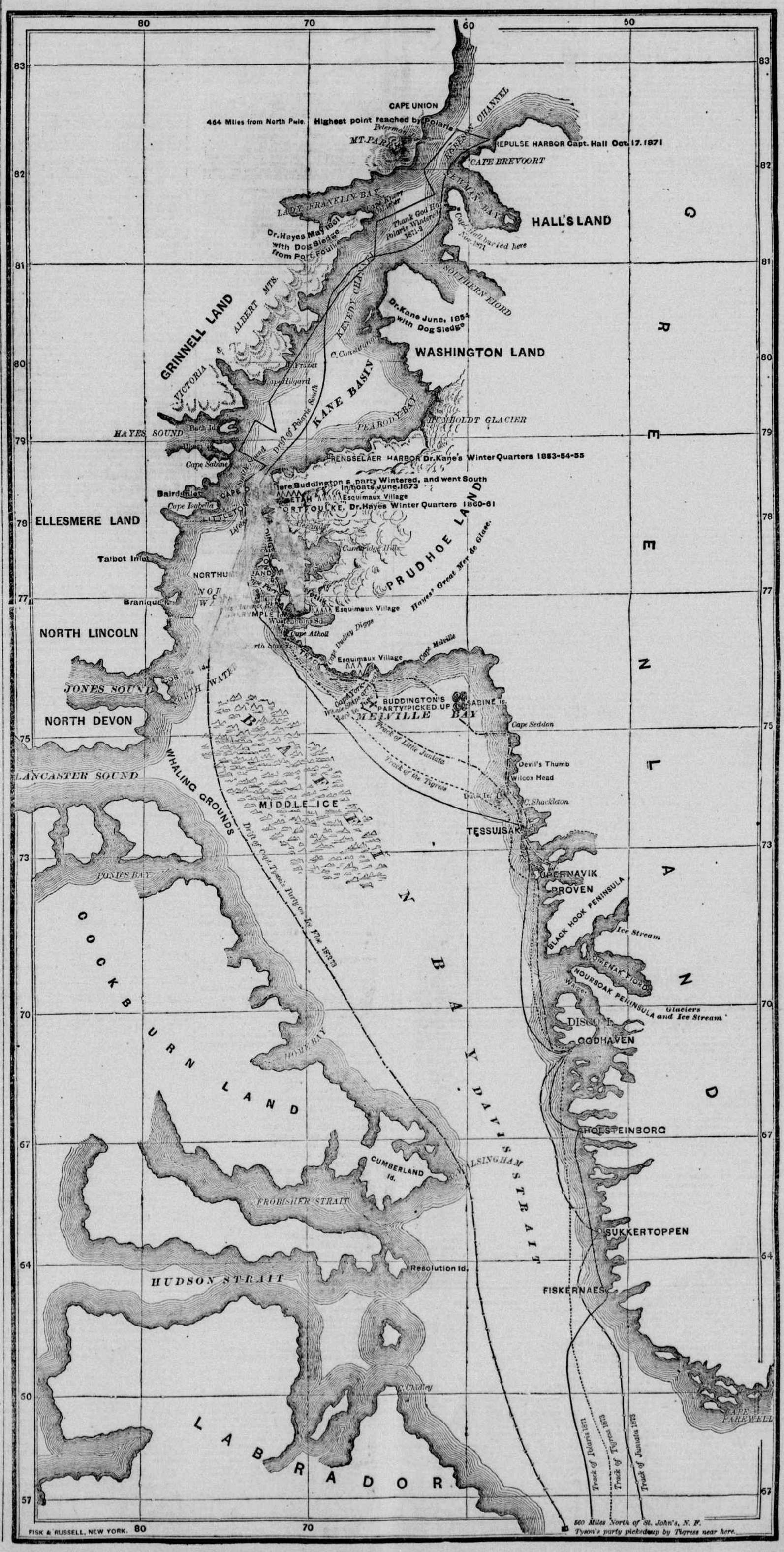
in the bow, and the deck pumps were started. On the 3d I sent Mr. Tyson to report upon the condition of the ice north. His report led me to consider that little could be done in boats. I resolved, however, to do what was possible with the boats until the vessel broke out, when I would make an effort to get north with it. On the 1st of June I gave written instructions to Messrs. Chester and Tyson and ordered them to be ready to start. The small alleyway pump, which was all we could work with the diminished crew, was found to be insufficient to keep the vessel free, and I ordered steam to be made in the small boiler to work the donkey pump. On the 5th the ice was cut away from the bow, and a large crack was seen on the starboard side, some eight feet long. As it was out of the water at low tide, efforts were made to stop the leak. At the next high tide, however, the vessel was still found to leak, and then a crack was discovered on the port side, as long, if not longer, than that on the starboard side. This crack, which was below the six-foot mark, was under water even at low tide, and hence could not be stopped up so as to prevent the water from coming in. On the 12th, Mr. Chester having gone to Cape Lupton, and judging there was sufficient water in which to start, he and his crew left the vessel. Dr. Bessel went with Mr. G. E. Tyson and Mr. Meyer accompanied Mr. Chester. Mr. Tyson started from the vessel the same day Mr. Chester returned with the sad news that he had

LOST HIS BOAT.

it had been crushed by the ice early that morning, about three miles from the cape, and everything was lost save a few personal effects and the box chronometer. Mr. Chester was by no means discouraged by his misfortune, but immediately began to prepare the Heygeman canvas boat, in which to make another attempt. On the 12th Mr. Chester and crew left for Cape Lupton. On the 16th had a copper cylinder thrown into the open water, containing a copy of the report I have retained among the ship's papers. A strong northeast gale sprung up on the 20th and made much open water in the straits. The next day the water was within a mile of the vessel. Every preparation was made for the vessel being freed from the ice and driven into the straits. A record was placed in the observatory for the absent crews. The gale moderated, and on the 21st the water was to the outer side of the berg to which we were attached and within thirty feet of the stem of the vessel. We

COMMENCED SAWING TO FREE THE VESSEL

early on the 24th, and on account of the heavy gale it was not until the afternoon of the 26th that the vessel was once more adoat. I resolved to attempt to follow up the boats with the vessel, using sails as much as possible. We started in the evening

THE ROADWAY TO THE POLE.

Map Showing the Track of the Polaris on Her Last Voyage, the Point of Separation of the Crew, the Tracks of the Two Parties Afterward, the Respective Points of Rescue, Track of the Search Steamers and the Discoveries of the Expedition.