

The following winter was spent in Baffin's Bay, and on the 27th of July 1858, the *Fox* made Lancaster's Sound. On the 11th of August she made Beechey Island, where she replenished her scanty stores from the depôts left by former expeditions. Then she steered westward, past Cape Hotham and Griffin's Island, and southward down Sir Robert Peel's Channel, until arrested by a barrier of fixed ice. Captain M'Clintock then resolved to retrace a portion of his course, and endeavour to force a passage through Bellot's Channel, which leads from Regent's Inlet into the great western sea whose waters wash the American coast from the Great Fish River to Behring's Straits. From the 20th of August to the 6th of September 1858, he watched his opportunity to make the projected "dash." On the last-named day the channel, which is eighteen miles long and one mile wide, was sufficiently free of ice for the *Fox* to attempt the passage. She ran through it merrily, but at its western extremity was repulsed by a belt of fixed ice, some miles in width, beyond which the open sea was rolling majestically.

Nothing could be done but prepare for another winter in the Arctic solitudes. It was enlivened by the well-directed efforts of Captain M'Clintock and Captain Young, his second in command, to amuse the crew, and glided by with sufficient rapidity. On February 17th, 1859, the two captains left the ship to establish depôts for their contemplated long journeys. Young struck westward for Prince of Wales Land; while M'Clintock proceeded in a southerly direction towards the magnetic Pole. These excursions were very brief; the cold was so intense that mercury remained frozen during the greater part of the time the men were absent from the *Fox*. But they sufficed to show that they were on the right track; for at Cape Victoria, on the west coast of Boothia, Captain M'Clintock was informed by the natives that, several years previously, a ship had been wrecked on King William's Land, but that all her people landed safely, and made their way to Great Fish River, where they died.

Accordingly, on the 2nd of April, the searching parties set out from Bellot's Straits. Captain Young proceeded northward and westward, but without making any discovery. Lieutenant Hobson and Captain M'Clintock, however, were more fortunate. Both made for King William's Land, where they parted: the former surveying the western, and the other the eastern shore. Captain M'Clintock rapidly completed his circuit across to Montreal Island, round the estuary of the Great Fish River, visiting Point Ogle and Barrow Island.

During this outward journey no wreck was found, and no bones of the lost crews discovered, but the few natives whom M'Clintock encountered readily gave him all the information they possessed, and bartered their relics of the *Erebus* and *Terror*.

The commander now turned to the north-west to complete the survey of King William's Land. Making a descent on the north side of Simpson's Strait, he made for the cairn erected by that discoverer, in 1839, on Point Herschel; and within ten miles of it, came upon a bleached skeleton. The poor fellow—probably a steward in Franklin's expedition—would seem to have dropped behind the retreating party, and in silence to have perished. At Point Herschel the cairn had been disturbed; and Captain M'Clintock conjectured that Franklin had placed there some memorial or record which the natives had subsequently removed.