

From Point Herschel to the western extremity of King William's Land, the traces of the natives were so numerous as completely to have effaced those of the unfortunate castaways ; but from the extreme western point to Cape Felix the beach was thickly strewn with signs of their miserable condition, like a rocky shore after some disastrous wreck. The whole of this melancholy Golgotha was carefully investigated by Captain M'Clintock from the south, and Lieutenant Hobson from the north, and the following were the principal results obtained :—

The *Erebus* and *Terror*, it is now known, spent their first winter at Beechey Island, after having explored Wellington Channel to lat. 77° N., and passed down again into Barrow's Straits, between Cornwallis and Bathurst Land.*

In 1846, the two ships seem to have successfully traversed Peel Channel, until imprisoned in the ice off King William's Land, on the 12th of September. Their position was about fifteen miles from the shore.

In May 1847, Lieutenant Graham Gore and Mr. Des Vaux landed and erected a cairn a few miles south of Point Victory, in which was deposited a document to the effect that on that day all the members of the expedition under Franklin were well and in safety.

In less than a month afterwards, however, the gallant Franklin was stricken down by disease and privation—a happy doom, as it spared him the long agony endured by his unfortunate followers.

The ice still continuing firmly set, they were unable to release the two vessels, and compelled to brave the perils of another winter.

Before the month of April 1848, nine officers and fifteen men “fell asleep.” The *Erebus* and *Terror* were then abandoned, and the survivors of their crews, 105 in number, under the leadership of Captains Crozier and Fitzjames, started across the plain of ice for the Great Fish River. At and around the cairn were scattered a vast number of articles, which the wanderers had been unable, from want of strength, to carry away.

From this spot to a point about mid-way between Point Victory and Point Herschel nothing of an important character was discovered, and the skeletons as well as the relics were deeply imbedded in snow. At this mid-station, however, the searchers came upon the top of a piece of wood projecting above the snow, and on digging round it discovered a boat. She was resting on a very heavy sledge, and inside of her were two skeletons. The one in the bottom of the stern-sheets was covered with a great quantity of cast-off clothing, as if some friendly hand had endeavoured to protect the body, while still alive, from the mortal cold ; the other, in the bows, seemed to have been that of an unfortunate seaman, who had crept thither to gaze wistfully around for the succour that came not, and in that position had yielded up his soul.

A couple of guns, loaded and ready cocked, stood close at hand, having probably been disposed for immediate use against wild animals.

Another pile of cast-off clothes lay near this boat ; and it was Captain

* [These particulars are known from a record deposited in the cairn constructed by Sir John Franklin on Point Victory.]