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On: 21 December 2014, At: 08:32

Publisher: Routledge

Informa Ltd Registered in England and Wales Registered Number:
1072954 Registered office: Mortimer House, 37-41 Mortimer Street,
London W1T 3JH, UK



Scottish Geographical Magazine

Publication details, including instructions for authors and subscription information:

<http://www.tandfonline.com/loi/rsgj19>

Arctic research before Franklin

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Published online: 27 Feb 2008.

To cite this article: W. Scott Dalglish M.A., LL.D. (1895) Arctic research before Franklin, *Scottish Geographical Magazine*, 11:5, 243-248, DOI:

[10.1080/00369229508732780](https://doi.org/10.1080/00369229508732780)

To link to this article: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/00369229508732780>

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admire the vigour and enthusiasm with which he has directed the publication of the reports. After he had been some six or seven years in charge of this work, H.M.'s Treasury, it would seem, declined to ask Parliament to renew the annual grant for its continuation—the excuse being that the time estimated for the completion of the publications had expired. Surely this was a case of swallowing the cow and worrying at the tail. After some correspondence, however, in which the Director offered to finish the Report at his own expense, Government agreed to expend the sum of £1600 on the completion of the official publications. This sum, we are told, has been the only payment from Government funds in connection with the *Challenger* Expedition during the past six years. We regret, with Dr. Murray, that the necessity for the rapid completion of the Report has compelled him to forego the discussion in detail of many theoretical views which have been suggested to him by the numerous facts collected in his Summary of Results. His generalisations—even if they fail sometimes to carry conviction—are always welcome, for they are at once interesting and instructive, and we must hope that he will ere long return to his review of the immense mass of evidence brought to light by the memorable voyage of H.M.S. *Challenger*.

JAMES GEIKIE.

ARCTIC RESEARCH BEFORE FRANKLIN.

By W. SCOTT DALGLEISH, M.A., LL.D.

THE proposal to commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of the departure from the Orkneys of the ill-fated expedition of Sir John Franklin, has revived public interest in the subject of Arctic research. The expedition, consisting of the ships *Erebus* and *Terror*, which were already famous in connection with Antarctic exploration, sailed from Greenhithe on the Thames on May 24, 1845. The ships afterwards visited Orkney, and sailed on June 2nd from Stromness, the last British port at which they touched.

The Royal Geographical Society of London has arranged to hold a commemorative meeting there on May 24, at which some of the distinguished men who have taken part in Arctic exploration will be present. The programme will include an expedition by the river to Greenwich, and probably a visit to Greenhithe, whence Franklin sailed.

The occasion is one with which the members of the Royal Scottish Geographical Society cannot fail to sympathise. A special committee of the Council is organising an Exhibition of relics, and of objects illustrating Polar research, to be held in the Society's Rooms on June 4.

It is hoped, in these circumstances, that the following brief notes on the expeditions that preceded and led up to Franklin's supreme effort may not be devoid of interest.

The active prosecution of Arctic research began in the sixteenth century. The record, indeed, goes much further back. It begins with

King Alfred's account, introduced into his translation of Orosius, of the voyages of Oether and Wolstan in the ninth century,—a narrative which the royal author is supposed to have obtained from Oether himself. The expeditions of the Norsemen, which extended from the tenth to the fifteenth century, and which led to the Norse colonisation of Iceland and Greenland (and perhaps of the coast of North America), had their most probable motives in the attractions of seal-hunting and the love of adventure for its own sake. But they produced a work of great value in Ivar Bardsen's account of Greenland, which is the oldest extant work on Arctic Geography, and is therefore of great value.

When we reach the sixteenth century, however, we find a remarkable expansion of the ideas and aims of the explorers. Their motive was neither profit from seal-hunting nor love of adventure, but a very practical desire "to open a way and passage for travel to new and unknown kingdoms," and, above all, to discover a sea-route to India and Cathay. During the Middle Ages the trade with the East was in the hands of the Venetians and the Genoese, and it was with the hope of sharing in this source of wealth, with the advantage that a sea-route would give, that the Portuguese, under the guidance of Prince Henry, and afterwards the Spaniards on the representations of Columbus, sent forth expeditions, the former eastwards, the latter westwards. The voyage of Vasco da Gama solved the question of the eastern route, while the Spaniards found their way blocked by the American continent. Still intent on the treasures of the East, they diligently sought for a channel leading to the Pacific ocean. Stimulated by the success of Spain and Portugal, the English, and afterwards the Dutch, took their part in the search, naturally directing their efforts to the northern hemisphere, where they might hope to hold control over the passage, if discovered. That was the aim of Sir Hugh Willoughby and Richard Chancellor, who sailed to the White Sea (1553), and of Stephen Burrough and Arthur Pet, who discovered Novaya Zemlya, and the Strait of Waigatz leading into Kara Sea (1556 and 1580). The idea of discovering a new route to India by the north-west seems to have been first discussed at length by Sir Humphrey Gilbert, and was prosecuted by Sir Martin Frobisher in three expeditions between 1576 and 1578; and here we have the first definite conception of the great quest which fired the minds of modern explorers, and in which Sir John Franklin and his brave companions perished.

Frobisher's lead was earnestly followed up by John Davis in three expeditions (1585-87), in the last of which he reported "no ice toward the north, but a great sea, free, large, very salt and blue, and of an unsearchable depth." The reasons in favour of the search of a north-west passage were powerfully set forth by him in 1595, in a tractate entitled *The World's Hydrographical Description*.

The project of a north-eastern route to India and the East of Asia was warmly espoused by the Dutch navigators in the end of the sixteenth century. Their hero was Wilhelm Barents, who made three voyages between 1594 and 1596, in the third of which he was fortunate enough to discover Spitzbergen. His expeditions were by far the most important of those undertaken in the sixteenth century. Their chief result was that

they led to very profitable whale and seal fisheries, in which the Dutchmen had the largest share. These fisheries received a fresh impetus from one of the expeditions of Henry Hudson, who in his second voyage, in 1608, explored the seas between Spitzbergen and Novaya Zemlya. In the previous year he had traced the east coast of Greenland as far north as to latitude 73° , and, between Greenland and Spitzbergen, had touched the unprecedentedly high latitude of $80^{\circ} 23'$ north. In these voyages, he was in the employment of the Muscovy Company. In his third and fatal voyage (1610), in which he was the servant of the Dutch East India Company, Hudson explored the east coast of North America, and discovered the Hudson River, and subsequently Hudson Strait and Hudson Bay, on the bosom of which he was abandoned by his mutinous crew, who left him to perish miserably on its waters.

Passing over the Danish expeditions promoted by Christian IV. (1605-1607), and those of Sir Thomas Button, on behalf of the Merchant Adventurers of London (1612-13), we come to the important achievements of William Baffin and Robert Bylot (1615-16), who discovered Baffin's Bay and Smith Sound,—the latter named after Sir Thomas Smith, the liberal supporter of the expedition, and the first governor of the East India Company. Baffin's great feat, however, was the discovery of the wide channel stretching northward from Davis Strait, and bearing his name.

We come next to the familiar Fox Channel, to the north of Hudson Bay, and between Baffin Land on the east and Melville Peninsula on the west. This passage was discovered by Luke Fox, who was sent out by the Merchants of London in 1631, and who, on his return to England, wrote an admirable and most interesting account of his adventures—perhaps the best description of Arctic exploration in the English language.

The famous Hudson Bay Company was founded in 1670; but nearly fifty years elapsed before its officers took any noteworthy part in Polar exploration. An expedition, consisting of two ships, sent out by the governor of Fort Nelson in 1719, ended in disaster, both the ships and the crews being lost. A search expedition, undertaken by Captain John Scroggs in 1722, found no traces of the missing ships; but the information it gathered was believed at the time to establish the existence of a north-west passage to the Pacific, as a probability, if not as a certainty.

Toward the end of the eighteenth century, the servants of the Company discovered Wager Inlet, Wager River, and Repulse Bay; and, in 1789, Alexander Mackenzie discovered the great river which bears his name.

While these results were being obtained in the western Polar regions, the Dutch and the Russian whalers were busily engaged in exploring the eastern seas from Spitzbergen to Iceland, and from Iceland to the east coast of Greenland. One important result was the well-known Chart of Spitzbergen prepared by the two Van Keulens (1728). Another was the discovery by Vitus Bering (a Dane sent out by Peter the Great) of the strait between Asia and America (1728), and also of the Aleutian Islands and Mount St. Elias (1740).

In the same region, and about the same time, English whalers and explorers were active. Conspicuous among these was Captain Scoresby, who, in 1806, pushed his ship, the *Resolution*, northward as far as to $81^{\circ}12'42''$. Scoresby's valuable *Account of the Arctic Regions* is still a standard work.

The familiar name of Captain Cook now comes into the record. He made three voyages of exploration in the North Pacific Ocean, in the last of which (1778) he succeeded in reaching Cape Prince of Wales, the most westerly point of North America, in passing through Bering Strait, as far as to Icy Cape, and in surveying the coast of Asia up to Cape North. Captain Cook was thus the precursor of M'Clure, who was the actual discoverer of the north-west passage by the same route in 1851.

In 1818, Sir John Barrow induced the British government to offer a reward of £20,000 to any one who should make the north-west passage, and a bonus of £5000 to any one who should succeed in reaching the latitude of 89° N. These offers gave a certain impetus to Polar exploration. They led directly to the expedition of Captain John Ross in 1818, and to those of Lieutenant Edward Parry in 1819 and 1821-23. Parry discovered and named Barrow Strait, the westward extension of Lancaster Sound, and also Melville Island.

It was while Parry was engaged on his first voyage that Franklin made his *début* as an Arctic explorer. His expedition of 1819, however, was not a voyage, but an overland journey, from Fort York on the west coast of Hudson Bay to the Great Slave Lake, thence to the mouth of the Coppermine River, and thence along the coast for upwards of 500 miles, his most easterly point being Cape Turnagain. His companions were Richardson, Back, and Hood. Their sufferings on their return journey, from cold and lack of food, were intense, but at last they succeeded in reaching Fort Chippewayan.

The result of these explorations was to limit very considerably the unknown coast of North America. Cook, sailing eastward from Bering's Strait, had reached Icy Cape. Parry, sailing westward, through Lancaster Sound, had reached Melville Island. Mackenzie had arrived overland at the mouth of Mackenzie River. Franklin, Richardson and Back had reached, also by an overland route, the mouth of the Coppermine River, and had pushed eastward to Cape Turnagain. The distance between the extreme points east and west, reached by vessels, was thus reduced to 50 degrees of longitude. The next object of Arctic explorers was to connect, if possible, these points with each other, and also with the points on the north coast of the mainland reached by Mackenzie and Franklin.

With this view, several combined expeditions were organised in 1824, Captain Beechey was to follow the lead of Cook through Bering Strait, and eastward along the north coast. Parry was again to pass through Lancaster Sound, and was then to go southward through Prince Regent Inlet. Franklin was to make another overland journey to the north coast of the Hudson Bay Territory. Beechey succeeded in reaching Point Barrow. Franklin descended the Mackenzie River to its mouth, and explored the coast westward for 370 miles. At the same time

Richardson explored the coast between the mouth of the Mackenzie and that of the Coppermine River. He also sighted and named Wollaston Land, part of Prince Albert Land, across a channel which he called Dolphin and Union Strait. For reasons which subsequent discoveries have made obvious, Parry's exploration of Regent's Inlet led to no result. The expeditions returned to England in the end of 1826.

In the following year (1827), Parry made a brave attempt to reach the North Pole by way of the shores of Spitzbergen. He reached $82^{\circ} 45' N.$ lat., but the ice-drift stayed his further progress, and compelled him to return to England.

In 1829, Felix Booth, a rich distiller, undertook the equipment, at his own charges, of a private expedition to follow up the Arctic researches of Parry and Franklin. The conduct of the expedition was entrusted to Captain John Ross, and James Ross, his nephew. In their one small ship, the *Victory*, they passed through the Prince Regent Inlet of Parry to the Gulf of Boothia, and discovered a land which they called Boothia Felix. Their greatest achievement, however, was the discovery of the magnetic pole in King William Land. They also explored the north coast of King William Land, now a well-known Arctic island west of Boothia Felix. The prolonged absence of the Rosses caused much anxiety; and in 1833, a search expedition was sent out by land under Sir George Back. In the same year, the Rosses were picked up by a whaler, and were brought back to England. In the meantime, Back's search expedition, after wintering at the Great Slave Lake, descended the Back, or Great Fish River, whence the shortness of supplies forced them to return (1834).

The work of surveying the north coast of the American Continent was completed by the servants of the Hudson Bay Company. In 1837 Simpson and Dease succeeded in connecting the mouth of the Mackenzie River with Point Barrow—Beechey's furthest. In 1839, Simpson traced the coast eastward from Franklin's Cape Turnagain to the mouth of the Back or Great Fish River—and thence to the Castor and Pollux River. The survey of the north coast of the American mainland was completed by Dr. John Rae in 1846 and 1847.

Before that, Sir John Franklin had started on his final and fatal expedition; and in point of fact he was pushing his way southward from Beechey Island at the very time when Rae was exploring the coast of Boothia, which he subsequently found to be a peninsula, projecting from the American mainland. It may therefore be useful to take stock at this point of the state of our knowledge regarding the Arctic coast of North America.

Starting from Behring Strait in the west, we find that the coast of the mainland had been traced and mapped from Cape Prince of Wales to Point Barrow, from Point Barrow to the mouth of the MacKenzie River, thence to the Coppermine River, thence to the Back or Great Fish River, and thence to the Castor and Pollux River and the Boothia Peninsula. The southern coast of King William Land (west of Boothia), which had been discovered by James Ross in 1831, had also been explored.

On the east, there was a well-known open course westward from

Baffin Bay through Lancaster Sound and Barrow Strait. This was the course which Franklin was instructed to follow; and the problem he had to solve was, to establish a connection by sea between Barrow Strait and King William Land. He found (1846) a channel now known as Peel Sound, leading southward from Barrow Strait, between North Somerset and Prince of Wales Land. There he encountered a great barrier of ice; but he pushed his ships through it, and actually succeeded in reaching King William Land, where death overtook him in the midst of his triumph, and disaster overwhelmed his brave companions (1847). Franklin had solved the problem, nevertheless.

M. ELISÉE RECLUS AND THE *GÉOGRAPHIE UNIVERSELLE*.

(*With Illustrations.*)

JACQUES ELISÉE RECLUS was born at Sainte Foy-la-Grande, in the Gironde, on March 15th, 1830. He was the second son of a Protestant pastor who had twelve children, several of whom have gained more or less reputation in the literary world. M. Elisée Reclus was brought up in Rhenish Prussia, and received part of his education in the Protestant Faculty at Montauban. Thence he went to the Berlin University, where he studied under Karl Ritter. Being involved in the political tumults of the forties, he was obliged to leave France after the *Coup d'État* of December 2nd, 1851, and from 1852 to 1857 he wandered through England, Ireland, the United States, Central America, and Colombia, where he sojourned several years. On his return to Paris he published several articles in the *Revue des deux Mondes*, the *Tour du Monde*, and other publications, in which he made known the geographical results of his studies and voyages. Of all the journalists of Paris, M. Reclus alone supported in his writings the party of Lincoln during the American war; and it redounds to his credit that he indignantly rejected a large sum of money offered to him by the United States Ambassador in acknowledgment of his services, saying that he fought for justice and freedom, not for gain.

During the siege of Paris, M. Reclus served in the National Guard, and in the company of Aeronauts under the direction of M. Nadar. After the insurrection of March 18th, 1871, he continued in the ranks of the insurgent National Guard, and on April 5th was taken prisoner near Châtillon. Being brought before a council of war at Saint-Germain, he was condemned to transportation, but in consequence of urgent appeals made to the President of the Republic, notably by English men of science and politicians, among whom were Darwin, Wallace, and Lord Amberley, the sentence was commuted to one of banishment, on January 4th, 1872. M. Reclus first visited Italy, and then fixed his residence in Switzerland, where he settled at Clarens, on the lake of Geneva, and took up again his scientific pursuits. He refused to return to France until the general amnesty of all the condemned Communists was proclaimed in 1879. At the end of 1882 his political views were again brought into prominence by the proceedings instituted before the tribunal of Lyons against the