

An Authentic and highly Interesting Narrative  
 OF THE PERILOUS  
**VOYAGE OF CAPT. ROSS,**  
 TO DISCOVER A NORTH-WEST PASSAGE,  
 GIVING A FULL AND INTERESTING ACCOUNT OF THE  
*Unparalleled Hardships & Privations*  
 OF  
 Capt. ROSS and his Intrepid CREW,  
 WHILE SUFFERING ALL THE  
**HORRORS OF THE ARCTIC REGIONS,**

DETAILING, AMONG OTHER INTERESTING EVENTS,  
 The Discovery of a Continent, larger than Great Britain, on which were Natives who had never before communicated with Strangers—Loss of the ship Victory, which was obliged to be left in the Ice.—Travelling of the Crew nearly 300 Miles over the Ice, completely exhausted by Hunger and Fatigue.—Their being one Winter enveloped in Ice, in want of Bedding, Clothing, and Animal Food—With Particulars of Capt. Ross and his Crew going to Sea in open Boats, when they were saved by the Isabella, of Hull.



CAPT. ROSS.

IN the year 1818, the British government fitted out two expeditions to the North Pole. Captain Buchan, commanding the Trent and the Dorothy, was directed to attempt a passage between Spitzbergen and Nova Zembla, over the Pole, into the Pacific; and Captain Ross commanding the Isabella and the Alexander, to attempt the north-west passage from Davis' Straights and Baffin's Bay, into the Frozen Ocean, and thence into the Pacific. Ross reached 77 deg. 40 min. latitude, and more accurately determined the situation of Baffin's Bay, which until then was believed to extend 10 degrees further to the east than it actually does. Lieutenant Parry, who accompanied Capt. Ross, was sent, in conjunction with Capt. Lyon, in the year 1819, on a second voyage into Baffin's Bay, and having penetrated so far as to gain the first prize offered by Parliament (5000*l.*) and having made the most western point ever reached in the Polar seas, he was entrusted with the direction of the Hecla and Fury, on a similar expedition in 1821. These ships returned in October, 1823, without achieving the principal object for which they were dispatched. In 1824, Parry and Lyon were again sent out for the discovery of a north-west passage in the Hecla and Fury; and in consequence of storms and icebergs, it became necessary to abandon the Fury. Captain Parry returned to England in October, 1825. The Admiralty again sent Parry, in the Hecla, in 1827, to reach, if possible, the North Pole.—So far the exertions of the British Government.

Piqued, as we understand, by the real, or supposed, neglect of Government, Captain Ross, in the spring of 1829, undertook an expedition, on his own resources, with a view of effecting a passage into the Polar Sea, and to reach Behring's Straits, along the northern coast of the American continent. The progress and result is thus described by Capt. Ross, in his Letter to the Secretary of the Admiralty:—

" On board the Isabella, of Hull, Baffin's Bay, Sept. 1833.

" Sir,—Knowing how deeply my Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty are interested in the advancement of nautical knowledge, I have to acquaint you for the information of their lordships, that the expedition, the main object of which is to solve, if possible, the question of a north-west passage from the Atlantic to the Pacific Ocean, particularly by Prince Regent's Inlet, and which sailed from England in May, 1829, notwithstanding the loss of the foremast and other untoward circumstances, which obliged the vessel to refit in Greenland, reached the beach on which his Majesty's late ship Fury's stores were

landed on the 13th of August. We found the boat, provisions, &c. in excellent condition, but no vestige of the wreck. After completing in fuel and other necessaries, we sailed on the 14th and on the following morning rounded Cape Garry, where our new discoveries commenced, and keeping the western shore close on board, ran down the coast in a S. W. and W. course, in from 10 to 20 fathoms, until we had passed the latitude of 72 North in longitude 94 West: here we found a considerable inlet leading to the Westward, the examination of which occupied two days: at this place we were first seriously obstructed by ice, which was now seen to extend from the south cape of the inlet, in a solid mass, round by S. and E. to E.N.E.; owing to this circumstance, the shallowness of the water, the rapidity of the tides, the tempestuous weather; the irregularity of the coast, and the numerous inlets and rocks for which it is remarkable, our progress was no less dangerous than tedious, yet we succeeded in penetrating below the latitude of 70 North in longitude 92 West, where the land, after having carried us as far east as 90, took a decided westerly direction, while land at the distance of 40 miles to southward was seen extending east and west. At this extreme point our progress was arrested by an impenetrable barrier of ice. We, however, found an excellent wintering port, which we named Felix Harbour. Early in January 1830, we had the good fortune to establish a friendly intercourse with a most interesting conciliation of natives, who, being insulated by nature, had never before communicated with strangers; from whom we gradually obtained the important information that we had already seen the continent of America, that about 40 miles to the S. W. there were two great seas, one to the west, which was divided from the east by a narrow strait or neck of land. The verification of this intelligence either way, on which our future operations so materially depended, devolved on Commander Ross, who volunteered this service early in April, and accompanied by one of the mates, and guided by two of the natives, proceeded to the spot, and found that the north land was connected to the south by two ridges of high land. 15 miles in breadth, but, taking into account a chain of fresh-water lakes, which occupied the valleys between, the dry land which actually separates the two oceans is only five miles. This extraordinary isthmus was subsequently visited by myself, when Commander Ross proceeded minutely to survey the sea-coast to the southward of the isthmus leading to the westward, which he succeeded in tracing to the 49th degree, or to 150 miles of Cape Turnagain of Franklin, to which point the land, after leading him into the 70th degree of north latitude, trended directly: during the same journey, he also surveyed 30 miles of the adjacent coast, or that to the north of the isthmus, which, by also taking a westerly direction, formed the termination of the western sea into a gulf. The rest of the season was employed in tracing the sea-coast south of the isthmus leading to the eastward, which was done so as to leave no doubt that it joined, as the natives had previously informed us, to Ockullee, and the land forming Repulse Bay. It was also determined there was no passage to the westward for 30 miles to the northward of our position.

This summer, like that of 1818, was beautifully fine, but extremely unfavourable for navigation, and our object being now to try a more northern latitude, we waited with anxiety for the disruption of the ice, but in vain, and our utmost endeavours did not succeed in retracing our steps more than four miles, and it was not until the beginning of November that we succeeded in cutting the vessel into a place of security, which we named " Sheriffs' Harbour."

I may here mention, that we named the newly-discovered continent, to the southward, " Boothia," as also the isthmus, the peninsula to the north, and the eastern sea, after my worthy friend Felix Booth, Esq. the truly patriotic citizen of London, who, in the most disinterested manner, enabled me to equip this expedition in a superior style.

The last winter was in temperature nearly equal to the average of what had been experienced on the four preceding voyages, but the winters of 1830 and 1831, set in with a degree of violence hitherto beyond record, the thermometer sunk to 92 degrees below the freezing point, and the average of the year was 10 degrees below the preceding; but, notwithstanding the severity of the summer, we travelled across the country to the west sea by a chain of lakes, 30 miles north of the isthmus, when Commander Ross succeeded in surveying 50 miles more of the coast leading to the N.W., and by tracing the shore to the northward of our position, it was also fully proved that there could be no passage below the 71st degree.

This autumn we succeeded in getting the vessel only 14 miles to the northward, and as we had not doubted the Eastern Cape all hope of saving the ship was at an end, and put quite beyond possibility by another very severe winter; and having only provisions to last us to the 1st of June, 1833, dispositions were accordingly made to leave the ship in her present port

which (after her) was named Victory Harbour. Provisions and fuel being carried forward in the spring, we left the ship on the 29th of May, 1832, for Fury Beach, being the only chance left of saving our lives: owing to the very rugged nature of the ice, we were obliged to keep either upon or close to the land, making the circuit of every bay, thus increasing our distance of 200 miles by nearly one half; and it was not until the 1st of July that we reached the beach, completely exhausted by hunger and fatigue. A hut was speedily constructed, and the boats, three of which had been washed off the beach, but providentially driven on shore again, were repaired during this month; but the unusual heavy appearance of the ice afforded us no cheering prospect until the 1st of August, when in three boats we reached the ill-fated spot where the Fury was first driven on shore, and it was not until the 1st of September we reached Leopold South Island, now established to be the N.E. point of America, in latitude 73. 56, and longitude 90. West. From the summit of the lofty mountain on the promontory we could see Prince Regent's Inlet, Barrow's Strait, and Lancaster Sound, which presented one impenetrable mass of ice, just as I had seen it in 1818. Here we remained in a state of anxiety and suspense which may be easier imagined than described. All our attempts to push through were in vain; at length being forced by want of provisions, and the approach of a very severe winter, to return to Fury Beach, where alone there remained wherewith to sustain life; there we arrived on the 7th of October, after a most fatiguing and laborious march, having been obliged to leave our boats at Batty Bay. Our habitation, which consisted of a frame of spars, 32 feet by 16 feet, covered with canvas, was during the month of November enclosed, and the roof covered with snow, from 4 feet to 7 feet thick, which being saturated with water, when the temperature was 15 degrees below zero, immediately took the consistency of ice, and thus we actually became the inhabitants of an iceberg during one of the most severe winters hitherto recorded; our sufferings, aggravated by want of bedding, clothing, and animal food, need not be dwelt upon. Mr. C. Thomas, the carpenter, was the only man that perished at this beach, but three others, besides one who had lost his foot, were reduced to the last stage of debility, and only 13 of our number were able to carry provisions in seven journeys of 62 miles each to Batty Bay. We left Fury Beach on the 8th of July, carrying with us three sick men, who were unable to walk, and in six days we reached the boats, where the sick daily recovered. Although the spring was mild, it was not until the 15th of August that we had any cheering prospect. A gale from the westward having suddenly opened a lane of water along shore, in two days we reached our former position, and from the mountain we had the satisfaction of seeing clear water almost directly across Prince Regent's Inlet, which we crossed on the 17th, and took shelter from a storm 12 miles to the eastward of Cape York. The next day, when the gale abated, we crossed Admiralty Inlet, and were detained six days on the coast by a strong north-east wind. On the 25th, we crossed Navy Board Inlet, and on the following morning, to our inexpressible joy, we descried a ship in the offing, becalmed, which proved to be the Isabella, of Hull, the same ship which I commanded in 1818. At noon, we reached her, when the enterprising commander, who had in vain searched for us in Prince Regent's Inlet, after giving us three cheers, received us with every demonstration of kindness and hospitality, which humanity could dictate. The Captain concludes by bestowing high encomiums on his officers, and adds—

Commander Ross, Mr. Thom, and myself, have indeed been serving without pay; but, in common with the crew, have lost our all, which I regret the more, because it puts it totally out of my power adequately to remunerate my fellow sufferers, whose case I cannot but recommend for their lordship's consideration. We have, however, the consolation that the results of this expedition have been conclusive, and to science highly important, and may be briefly comprehended in the following words:—The Discovery of the Gulf of Boothia, the continent and isthmus of Boothia, Felix, and a vast number of islands, rivers, and lakes; the undeniable establishment that the north east point of America extends to the 74th degree of north latitude; valuable observations of every kind, but particularly on the magnet; and to crown all, have had the honour of placing the illustrious name of our most gracious Sovereign William IV. on the true position of the magnetic pole."

On Capt. Ross's arrival in England, every respect was paid him; and a subscription has been set on foot in London and Liverpool, to indemnify and reward the gallant captain and his intrepid crew for their great loss, and for their praise-worthy exertions.

