

FRANKLIN, SIR JOHN (1786-1847), English rear-admiral and explorer, was born at Spilsby, Lincolnshire, on the 16th of April 1786. His family was descended from a line of free-holders or "franklins" from whom some centuries earlier they had derived their surname; but the small family estate was sold by his father, who went into business. John, who was the fifth and youngest son and ninth child, was destined for the church. At the age of ten he was sent to school at St Ives, and soon afterwards was transferred to Louth grammar school, which he attended for two years. About this time his imagination was deeply impressed by a holiday walk of 12 m. which he made with a companion to look at the sea, and he determined to be a sailor. In the hope of dispelling this fancy his father sent him on a trial voyage to Lisbon in a merchantman; but it being found on his return that his wishes were unchanged he was entered as a midshipman on board the "Polyphemus," and shortly afterwards took part in her in the hard-fought battle of Copenhagen (2nd of April 1801). Two months later he joined the "Investigator," a discovery-ship commanded by his cousin Captain Matthew Flinders, and under the training of that able scientific officer was employed in the exploration and mapping of the coasts of Australia, where he acquired a correctness of astronomical observation and a skill in surveying which proved of eminent utility in his future career. He was on board the "Porpoise" when that ship and the "Cato" were wrecked (18th of August 1803) on a coral reef off the coast of Australia, and after this misfortune proceeded to China. Thence he obtained a passage to England in the "Earl Camden," East Indiaman, commanded by Captain (afterwards Sir) Nathaniel Dance, and performed the duty of signal midshipman in the famous action of the 15th of February 1804 when Captain Dance repulsed a strong French squadron led by the redoubtable Admiral Linois. On reaching England he joined the "Bellerophon," 74, and was in charge of the signals on board that ship during the battle of Trafalgar. Two years later he joined the "Bedford," attaining the rank of lieutenant the year after, and served in her on the Brazil station (whither the "Bedford" went as part of the convoy which escorted the royal family of Portugal to Rio de Janeiro in 1808), in the blockade of Flushing, and finally in the disastrous expedition against New Orleans (1814), in which campaign he displayed such zeal and intelligence as to merit special mention in despatches.

On peace being established, Franklin turned his attention once more to the scientific branch of his profession, and sedulously extended his knowledge of surveying. In 1818 the discovery of a North-West Passage to the Pacific became again, after a

long interval, an object of national interest, and Lieutenant Franklin was given the command of the "Trent" in the Arctic expedition under the orders of Captain Buchan in the "Dorothea". During a heavy storm the "Dorothea" was so much damaged by the pack-ice that her reaching England became doubtful, and, much to the chagrin of young Franklin, the "Trent" was compelled to convoy her home instead of being allowed to prosecute the voyage alone. This voyage, however, had brought Franklin into personal intercourse with the leading scientific men of London, and they were not slow in ascertaining his peculiar fitness for the command of such an enterprise. To calmness in danger, promptness and fertility of resource, and excellent seamanship, he added an ardent desire to promote science for its own sake, together with a love of truth that led him to do full justice to the merits of his subordinate officers, without wishing to claim their discoveries as a captain's right. Furthermore, he possessed a cheerful buoyancy of mind, sustained by deep religious principle, which was not depressed in the most gloomy times. It was therefore with full confidence in his ability and exertions that, in 1819, he was placed in command of an expedition appointed to proceed overland from the Hudson Bay to the shores of the Arctic Sea, and to determine the trendings of that coast eastward of the Coppermine river. At this period the northern coast of the American continent was known at two isolated points only, — this, the mouth of the Coppermine river (which, as Franklin discovered, was erroneously placed four degrees of latitude too much to the north), and the mouth of the Mackenzie far to the west of it. Lieutenant Franklin and his party, consisting of Dr Richardson, Midshipmen George Back and Richard Hood, and a few ordinary boatmen, arrived at the depot of the Hudson's Bay Company at the end of August 1819, and making an autumnal journey of 700 m. spent the first winter on the Saskatchewan. Owing to the supplies which had been promised by the North-West and Hudson's Bay Companies not being forthcoming the following year, it was not until the summer of 1821 that the Coppermine was ascended to its mouth, and a considerable extent of sea-coast to the eastward surveyed. The return journey led over the region known as the Barren Ground, and was marked by the most terrible sufferings and privations and the tragic death of Lieutenant Hood. The survivors of the expedition reached York Factory in the month of June 1822, having accomplished altogether 5550 m. of travel. While engaged on this service Franklin was promoted to the rank of commander (1st of January 1821), and upon his return to England at the end of 1822 he obtained the post rank of captain and was elected a fellow of the Royal Society. The narrative of this expedition was published in the following year and became at once a classic of travel, and soon after he married Eleanor, the youngest daughter of William Porden, an eminent architect.

Early in 1825 he was entrusted with the command of a second overland expedition, and upon the earnest entreaty of his dying wife, who encouraged him to place his duty to his country before his love for her, he set sail without waiting to witness her end. Accompanied as before by Dr (afterwards Sir) John Richardson and Lieutenant (afterwards Sir) George Back, he descended the Mackenzie river in the season of 1826 and traced the North American coast as far as 149° 37' W. long., whilst Richardson at the head of a separate party connected the mouths of the Coppermine and Mackenzie rivers. Thus between the years 1819 and 1827 he had added 1200 m. of coast-line to the American continent, or one-third of the whole distance from the Atlantic to the Pacific. These exertions were fully appreciated at home and abroad. He was knighted in 1829; received the honorary degree of D.C.L. from the university of Oxford, was awarded the gold medal of the Geographical Society of Paris, and was elected corresponding member of the Paris Academy of Sciences. The results of these expeditions are described by Franklin and Dr Richardson in two magnificent works published in 1824-1829. In 1828 he married his second wife, Jane, second daughter of John Griffin. His next official employment was on the Mediterranean station, in command of the "Rainbow," and his ship

soon became proverbial in the squadron for the happiness and comfort of her officers and crew. As an acknowledgment of the essential service which he rendered off Patras in the Greek War of Independence, he received the cross of the Redeemer of Greece from King Otto, and after his return to England he was created knight commander of the Guelphic order of Hanover.

In 1836 he accepted the lieutenant-governorship of Van Diemen's Land (now Tasmania), and held that post till the end of 1843. His government was marked by several events of much interest, one of his most popular measures being the opening of the doors of the legislative council to the public. He also founded a college, endowing it largely from his private funds, and in 1838 established a scientific society at Hobart Town (now called the Royal Society of Tasmania), the meetings of which were held in Government House and its papers printed at his expense. In his time also the colony of Victoria was founded by settlers from Tasmania; and towards its close, transportation to New South Wales having been abolished, the convicts from every part of the British empire were sent to Tasmania. On an increase of the lieutenant-governor's salary being voted by the colonial legislature, Sir John declined to derive any advantage from it personally, while he secured the augmentation to his successors. He welcomed eagerly the various expeditions for exploration and surveying which visited Hobart Town, conspicuous among these, and of especial interest to himself, being the French and English Antarctic expeditions of Dumont d'Urville and Sir James C. Ross – the latter commanding the "Erebus" and "Terror," with which Franklin's own name was afterwards to be so pathetically connected. A magnetic observatory fixed at Hobart Town, as a dependency of the central establishment under Colonel Sabine, was also an object of deep interest up to the moment of his leaving the colony. That his unflinching efforts for the social and political advancement of the colony were appreciated was abundantly proved by the affection and respect shown him by every section of the community on his departure; and several years afterwards the colonists showed their remembrance of his virtues and services by sending Lady Franklin a subscription of £1700 in aid of her efforts for the search and relief of her husband, and later still by a unanimous vote of the legislature for the erection of a statue in honour of him at Hobart Town.

Sir John found on reaching England that there was about to be a renewal of polar research, and that the confidence of the admiralty in him was undiminished, as was shown by his being offered the command of an expedition for the discovery of a North-West Passage to the Pacific. This offer he accepted. The prestige of Arctic service and of his former experiences attracted a crowd of volunteers of all classes, from whom were selected a body of officers conspicuous for talent and energy. Captain Crozier, who was second in command, had been three voyages with Sir Edward Parry, and had commanded the "Terror" in Ross's Antarctic expedition. Captain Fitzjames, who was commander on board the "Erebus," had been five times gazetted for brilliant conduct in the operations of the first China war, and in a letter which he wrote from Greenland has bequeathed some good-natured but masterly sketches of his brother officers and messmates on this expedition. Thus supported, with crews carefully chosen (some of whom had been engaged in the whaling service), victualled for three years, and furnished with every appliance then known, Franklin's expedition, consisting of the "Erebus" and "Terror" (129 officers and men), with a transport ship to convey additional stores as far as Disco in Greenland, sailed from Greenhithe on the 19th of May 1845. The letters which Franklin despatched from Greenland were couched in language of cheerful anticipation of success, while those received from, his officers expressed their glowing hope, their admiration of the seamanlike qualities of their commander, and the happiness they had in serving under him. The ships were last seen by a whaler near the entrance of Lancaster Sound, on the 26th of July, and the deep gloom which settled down upon their subsequent movements was not finally raised till fourteen years later.

Franklin's instructions were framed in conjunction with Sir John Barrow and upon his own suggestions. The experience of Parry had established the navigability of Lancaster Sound (leading westwards out of Baffin Bay), whilst Franklin's own surveys had long before satisfied him that a navigable passage existed along the north coast of America from the Fish river to Bering Strait. He was therefore directed to push through Lancaster Sound and its continuation, Barrow Strait, without loss of time, until he reached the portion of land on which Cape Walker is situated, or about long. 98° W., and from that point to pursue a course southward towards the American coast. An explicit prohibition was given against a westerly course beyond the longitude of 98° W., but he was allowed the single alternative of previously examining Wellington Channel (which leads out of Barrow Strait) for a northward route, if the navigation here were open.

In 1847, though there was no real public anxiety as to the fate of the expedition, preparations began to be made for the possible necessity of sending relief. As time passed, however, and no tidings reached England, the search began in earnest, and from 1848 onwards expedition after expedition was despatched in quest of the missing explorers. The work of these expeditions forms a story of achievement which has no parallel in maritime annals, and resulted in the discovery and exploration of thousands of miles of new land within the grim Arctic regions, the development of the system of sledge travelling, and the discovery of a second North-West Passage in 1850 (see POLAR REGIONS). Here it is only necessary to mention the results so far as the search for Franklin was concerned. In this great national undertaking Lady Franklin's exertions were unwearied, and she exhausted her private funds in sending out auxiliary vessels to quarters not comprised in the public search, and by her pathetic appeals roused the sympathy of the whole civilized world.

The first traces of the missing ships, consisting of a few scattered articles, besides three graves, were discovered at Franklin's winter quarters (1845-1846) on Beechey Island, by Captain (afterwards Sir) Erasmus Ommanney of the "Assistance," in August 1851, and were brought home by the "Prince Albert," which had been fitted out by Lady Franklin. No further tidings were obtained until the spring of 1854, when Dr John Rae, then conducting a sledging expedition of the Hudson's Bay Company from Repulse Bay, was told by the Eskimo that (as was inferred) in 1850 white men, to the number of about forty, had been seen dragging a boat southward along the west shore of King William's Island, and that later in the same season the bodies of the whole party were found by the natives at a point a short distance to the north-west of Back's Great Fish river, where they had perished from the united effects of cold and famine. The latter statement was afterwards disproved by the discovery of skeletons upon the presumed line of route; but indisputable proof was given that the Eskimo had communicated with members of the missing expedition, by the various articles obtained from them and brought home by Dr Rae. In consequence of the information obtained by Dr Rae, a party in canoes, under Messrs Anderson and Stewart, was sent by government down the Great Fish river in 1855, and succeeded in obtaining from the Eskimo at the mouth of the river a considerable number of articles which had evidently belonged to the Franklin expedition; while others were picked up on Montreal Island a day's march to the northward. It was clear, therefore, that a party from the "Erebus" and "Terror" had endeavoured to reach the settlements of the Hudson's Bay Company by the Fish river route, and that in making a southerly course it had been arrested within the channel into which the Great Fish river empties itself. The admiralty now decided to take no further steps to determine the exact fate of the expedition, and granted to Dr Rae the reward of £10,000 which had been offered in 1849 to whosoever should first succeed in obtaining authentic news of the missing men. It was therefore reserved for the latest effort of Lady Franklin to develop, not only the fate of her husband's expedition but also the steps of its progress up to the very verge of success, mingled indeed with almost unprecedented disaster. With all her available means, and

aided, as she had been before, by the subscriptions of sympathizing friends, she purchased and fitted out the little yacht "Fox," which sailed from Aberdeen in July 1857. The command was accepted by Captain (afterwards Sir) Leopold M'Clintock, whose high reputation had been won in three of the government expeditions sent out in search of Franklin. Having been compelled to pass the first winter in Baffin Bay, it was not till the autumn of 1858 that the "Fox" passed down Prince Regent's Inlet, and put into winter quarters at Port Kennedy at the eastern end of Bellot Strait, between North Somerset and Boothia Felix. In the spring of 1859 three sledging parties went out, Captain (afterwards Sir) Allen Young to examine Prince of Wales Island, Lieutenant (afterwards Captain) Hobson the north and west coasts of King William's Island, and M'Clintock the east and south coasts of the latter, the west coast of Boothia, and the region about the mouth of Great Fish river. This splendid and exhaustive search added 800 m. of new coast-line to the knowledge of the Arctic regions, and brought to light the course and fate of the expedition. From the Eskimo in Boothia many relics were obtained, and reports as to the fate of the ships and men; and on the west and south coast of King William's Island were discovered skeletons and remains of articles that told a terrible tale of disaster. Above all, in a cairn at Point Victory a precious record was discovered by Lieutenant Hobson that briefly told the history of the expedition up to April 25, 1848, three years after it set out full of hope. In 1845-1846 the "Erebus" and "Terror" wintered at Beechey Island on the S.W. coast of North Devon, in lat. 74° 43' 28" N., long. 91° 39' 15" W., after having ascended Wellington Channel to lat. 77° and returned by the west side of Cornwallis Island. This statement was signed by Graham Gore, lieutenant, and Charles F. des Voeux, mate, and bore date May 28, 1847. These two officers and six men, it was further told, left the ships on May 24, 1847 (no doubt for an exploring journey), at which time all was well.

Such an amount of successful work has seldom been accomplished by an Arctic expedition within any one season. The alternative course permitted Franklin by his instructions had been attempted but not pursued; and in the autumn of 1846 he had followed that route which was specially commended to him. But after successfully navigating Peel and Franklin Straits on his way southward, his progress had been suddenly and finally arrested by the obstruction of heavy ("palaeocrystic") ice, which presses down from the north-west through M'Clintock Channel (not then known to exist) upon King William's Island. It must be remembered that in the chart which Franklin carried King William's Island was laid down as a part of the mainland of Boothia, and he therefore could pursue his way *only* down its western coast. Upon the margin of the printed admiralty form on which this brief record was written was an addendum dated the 25th of April 1848, which extinguished all further hopes of a successful termination of this grand enterprise. The facts are best conveyed in the terse and expressive words in which they were written, and are therefore given *verbatim*: "April 25th, 1848. H.M. Ships 'Terror' and 'Erebus' were deserted on 22nd April, five leagues N.N.W. of this, having been beset since 12th September 1846. The officers and crews, consisting of 105 souls under the command of Captain F. R. M. Crozier, landed in lat. 69° 37' 42" N., long. 98° 41' W. This paper was found by Lieut. Irving . . . where it had been deposited by the late Commander Gore in June 1847. Sir John Franklin died on the 11th June 1847; and the total loss by deaths in the expedition has been to this date 9 officers and 15 men." The handwriting is that of Captain Fitzjames, to whose signature is appended that of Captain Crozier, who also adds the words of chief importance, namely, that they would "start on to-morrow 26th April 1848 for Back's Fish river." A briefer record has never been told of so tragic a story.

All the party had without doubt been greatly reduced through want of sufficient food, and the injurious effects of three winters in these regions. They had attempted to drag with them two boats, besides heavily laden sledges, and doubtless had soon

been compelled to abandon much of their burden, and leave one boat on the shore of King William's Island, where it was found by M'Clintock, near the middle of the west coast, containing two skeletons. The route adopted was the shortest possible, but their strength and supplies had failed, and at that season of the year the snow-covered land afforded no subsistence. An old Eskimo woman stated that these heroic men "fell down and died as they walked," and, as Sir John Richardson has well said, they "forged the last link of the North-West Passage with their lives." From all that can be gathered, one of the ships must have been crushed in the ice and sunk in deep water, and the other stranded on the shore of King William's Island, lay there for years, forming a mine of wealth for the neighbouring Eskimo.

This is all we know of the fate of Franklin and his brave men. His memory is cherished as one of the most conspicuous of the naval heroes of Britain, and as one of the most successful and daring of her explorers. He is certainly entitled to the honour of being the first discoverer of the North-West Passage; the point reached by the ships having brought him to within a few miles of the known waters of America, and on the monument erected to him by his country, in Waterloo Place, London, this honour is justly awarded to him and his companions, — a fact which was also affirmed by the president of the Royal Geographical Society, when presenting their gold medal to Lady Franklin in 1860. On the 26th of October 1852 Franklin had been promoted to the rank of rear-admiral. He left an only daughter by his first marriage. Lady Franklin died in 1875 at the age of eighty-three, and a fortnight after her death a fine monument was unveiled in Westminster Abbey, commemorating the heroic deeds and fate of Sir John Franklin, and the inseparable connexion of Lady Franklin's name with the fame of her husband. Most of the relics brought home by M'Clintock were presented by Lady Franklin to the United Service Museum, while those given by Dr Rae to the admiralty are deposited in Greenwich hospital. In 1864-1869 the American explorer Captain Hall made two journeys in endeavouring to trace the remnant of Franklin's party, bringing back a number of additional relics and some information confirmatory of that given by M'Clintock, and in 1878 Lieutenant F. Schwatka of the United States army and a companion made a final land search, but although accomplishing a remarkable record of travel discovered nothing which threw any fresh light on the history of the expedition.

See H. D. Traill, *Life of Sir John Franklin* (1896).