

PRESENTATION
OF THE
GOLD MEDALS

AWARDED TO MR. FRANCIS GALTON AND COMMANDER
E. A. INGLEFIELD, R.N.

THE Founders' Medal has been awarded to Mr. Francis Galton, "for having, at his own cost and in furtherance of the expressed desire of this Society, fitted out an expedition to explore the interior of Southern Africa, and for having so successfully conducted it through the country of the Namaqua, the Damara, and the Ovampo (a journey of upwards of 2000 miles), as to enable the Royal Geographical Society to publish a valuable memoir and map in the last volume of the Journal, relating to a country hitherto unknown; the astronomical observations determining the latitude and longitude of places having been accurately made by himself."

Whilst the above paragraph conveys the reasons which induced the Council to make this award, it is gratifying to me to add to it a few words of commendation.* I will not now repeat what I expressed last year, in giving a sketch of Mr. Galton's adventurous journey across that portion of Africa into which he was the first to penetrate. Those comments, which are now published in your Journal, concluded with a reference to certain astronomical observations, whereby the latitude and longitude of many places were determined, and which would, when published, be found, I hoped, worthy of your approbation. These observations having been examined by a committee of our associates, and having been entirely approved, the Council saw in this fact, a special reason why the journey of Mr. Galton should be preferred to all other enterprises now on foot in the interior of Africa; none of which had, as far as we were aware, determined such positions in other tracts of that continent.

Standing alone, therefore, in this respect Mr. Galton had a distinct claim on us above all his African fellow-travellers; and when we add to this consideration, that he had fitted out the expedition at his own expense, in furtherance of our wishes, and had successfully accomplished a most adventurous mission, we willingly offered to him one of our medals to mark our sense of the positive value of researches thus made by an independent English gentleman.

The President then rising, addressed Mr. Galton.—"It is now my pleasing duty to present this tribute of the Royal Geographical Society

* Mr. Galton's animated description of the Damara and Ovampo people, among whom he travelled, and the graphic sketches of his adventures, which have justly procured him the approbation of many readers, have been published since this Address was delivered.

to you, who quitted a happy home, and, in the ardour of research, explored at your own cost and under great privations a region probably never before trod by civilized beings. So long as Britain produces travellers of such spirit, resolution, conduct and accomplishments as you possess, we may be assured that she will lead the way in advancing the bounds of geographical knowledge. Pray receive this Medal as the testimony of the sincere approbation of the Council and Members of the Royal Geographical Society."

Mr. Galton replied :—

"Sir,—In acknowledging your very flattering expressions, and the kind sympathy which this Society has more than once shown towards me, I accept its Medal with the deepest gratitude. I am by it assured that the peculiar difficulties I experienced in travelling through a most inhospitable country are recognised, since you thus highly reward the efforts I made. Mr. Andersson, who was my companion, still remains in Africa, and he will, I trust, extend the limit of our joint explorations."

The President then proceeded to explain the grounds on which the other Medal had been adjudicated. "The Victoria, or Patron's Medal, has been (said he) awarded to Commander E. A. Inglefield, R.N., for his very remarkable and successful survey of the coasts of Baffin Bay, Smith Sound, and Jones Sound, in the last summer, during which he threw much new light on the geography of the Arctic regions, and with very limited private means accomplished most important results."

At our last anniversary, it was my painful duty to announce to you that the private expedition of the Isabel screw steamer, which had been prepared mainly through the liberal expenditure of Lady Franklin, and partly by the subscriptions of individuals, could not proceed, as was intended, to Behring Strait. But, even whilst the discourse delivered on that occasion was passing through the press, I had the gratification to announce, that the same stout little vessel having been given by her owners to Commander Inglefield, that gallant officer had undertaken, at his own risk, the enterprise of exploring Baffin Bay, including Jones and Smith Sounds.

This effort, undertaken so late in the season (for it was the 10th of July before the Isabel sailed), was indeed looked upon in scarcely any other light than that of an independent reconnoissance, in which everything was left to the energy and skill of the Commander, who might, it was hoped, turn so appropriate a vessel to some good service, by filling up lacunæ in Arctic discovery, even if he failed in the great object of obtaining any tidings of Franklin and his associates. When inspecting the preparations for the departure of the Isabel, I had strong reason to admire the energy with which Commander Inglefield equipped his vessel, and the ability and skill with which he overcame many difficulties. The survey which he made of the eastern and northern shores of Baffin Bay, in the few weeks at his disposal, is, I believe, the greatest amount of Arctic research ever accomplished in so short a time. It is true that good old Baffin, whose name is imperishably affixed to that great sea, around which he was the first to navi-

gate, defined the outlines of its chief bays and headlands ; but much more was required to exhaust the survey, and to bring certain suggestions concerning the fate of Franklin to the test of critical examination, than had been realized by any of the followers of Baffin. First clearing away all doubts respecting the destruction of our missing navigators by the Esquimaux on the east side of the bay, and favoured by a singularly open season, Commander Inglefield surveyed all the headlands and inlets from the Danish settlements to the northward, and judging from the set of the current, as well as from the great length of an opening unnoticed by former explorers, he suggested that in the $77\frac{1}{2}^{\circ}$ of north latitude, Greenland is probably separated from the more southern lands by a continuous strait, and is thus insulated.

Besides delineating the outlines of many masses of land which never before were named, he boldly sailed into the northernmost opening or Smith Sound, into which Baffin only peeped, but which he, Inglefield, so far penetrated, as to determine that a current there prevailed from south to north, thus indicating a communication between Baffin Bay and a great unknown Arctic sea. The determination of this point, which is of the highest importance in respect to all Arctic endeavours, was accompanied by the discovery of lands covered with a green vegetation, a conspicuous island in the distance, and an abundant distribution of animal life in a higher degree of latitude than was ever reached by any navigator in that meridian. Unluckily, a furious storm drove back the little Isabel, and carried her out of the strait far to the south, or assuredly the explorer would have forced on his way, and have endeavoured to reach that "Polynia" or open northern sea, which it is presumed that Belcher may have entered by another channel.

When defeated in that project, see with what skill and energy he employed his remaining days of fair weather. Entering Jones Sound on the west coast of Baffin Bay, he so far trended its banks, and ascertained its current, now an outward one, as to lead him to believe that this so-called "sound" might be also a *strait*, communicating with a northern sea ; thus confirming the views arrived at by similar tests applied to the east and north sides of the great bay. And as the navigable season came rapidly to a close, mark with what good seamanship he got rapidly round through the fast-accumulating ice and shoals, with his little screw, to Beechey Island, and how he put himself in communication with the station of our Arctic squadron.

Let me here advert to one of the deeds of our medallist, for which, in my opinion, the friends of Franklin ought to be sincerely indebted to him. That three of the missing expedition had been buried in Beechey Island was well known, as recorded on their gravestones ; but their graves had never been examined. Now, whatever prejudices sailors might have on such a subject, Commander Inglefield, being in a private expedition, resolved to dig down into the frozen ground, for the purpose of ascertaining the condition in which the men had been interred. The opening out of one coffin quite realized the object he had in view, for at six feet beneath the surface, a depth reached only with great difficulty, by penetrating frozen ground as hard as a

rock, a coffin, with the name of Wm. Heartwell, was found in as perfect order as if recently deposited in the churchyard of an English village. Every button and ornament had been neatly arranged, and what was most important, the body, perfectly preserved by the intense cold, exhibited no trace of scurvy, or other malignant disease, but was manifestly that of a person who had died of consumption, a malady to which it was further known that the deceased was prone. The knowledge of this simple fact assures us therefore, that when last at Beechey Island, the Franklin expedition was in perfect order, and ready to traverse the icy barriers the moment weather permitted.

Even in returning home, and in very tempestuous weather, we see how much Commander Inglesfield added to our acquaintance with the west coast of Baffin Bay, and I must say, that when he re-appeared among us last autumn, the clear and manly description he gave of what he had done in the brief space of three months, accompanied as it was by charts and very numerous characteristic drawings, produced such an effect upon all geographers, that I felt certain the Council of our Society would crown so brilliant and successful a survey with its highest reward.

Sir Francis Beaufort having offered to receive the medal, the President thus addressed the gallant Admiral :—

“To you, Sir Francis, who are the best possible judge of the merits of an Arctic explorer who has delineated headlands, gulfs and straits, in a manner formerly unknown to us, I have singular satisfaction in handing this Victoria Medal; since your offer to receive it for your friend is the best guarantee we can have that our award is a just one. I feel, indeed, assured that when Commander Inglesfield returns from the renewed Arctic Expedition on which he has just sailed, and learns that the veteran and distinguished hydrographer of Her Majesty’s Navy has stood sponsor for him on this occasion, he will acknowledge that he has received an honour second only to that of the entire approbation of the Royal Geographical Society.”

Admiral Sir Francis Beaufort replied :—

“Sir Roderick,—First thanking you for the gracious and flattering terms in which you have addressed yourself to me, I am desirous of expressing the double pleasure I have had in listening to the masterly panegyric you have bestowed on my gallant friend, and in being made the medium of transmitting to him this high and well-merited honour which has been unanimously awarded to him by our Council—which has been so heartily confirmed by the acclamations of the present numerous meeting of the Society—and which will be warmly ratified by the voice of the nation.

“Sir, the object of these honourable testimonials is not only to reward, but to stimulate; and therefore, in accepting the duty you have conferred on me, I beg permission to add, that strongly as you have sketched out Commander Inglesfield’s brilliant antecedents, I venture to pledge myself that they will be surpassed by his future conduct.”*

* Whilst these pages were passing through the press, Commander Inglesfield was elected a Fellow of the Royal Society.