

equal those. Mr. Morrell then wound up with what may be considered a "clincher," by characterising the island as "a delightful retreat for a few amiable families." Of the same spot, Sir James Ross said, "Well adapted for a penal settlement." Captain Hamilton had referred to Mr. Morrell's modesty, the following was a specimen of it from his book :—

"I regret extremely that circumstances would not permit me to proceed farther south, when I was in lat. 70° 14' s., on Friday, 14th March, 1823, as I should then have been able, without the least doubt, to penetrate as far as the 85th degree of south latitude. But, situated as I then was, without fuel, and with not sufficient water to last twenty days, destitute of the various nautical and mathematical instruments requisite for such an enterprise, and without the aid of such scientific gentlemen as discovery-ships should always be supplied with; taking all these things into consideration, I felt myself compelled to abandon, for the present, the glorious attempt to make a bold advance directly to the South Pole. The way was open before me, clear and unobstructed; the temperature of the air and water mild, the weather pleasant, and the wind fair. Under such tempting auspices, it was with painful reluctance that I relinquished the idea, and deferred the attempt for a subsequent voyage. The anguish of my regret, however, was much alleviated by the hope that, on my return to the United States, an appeal to the Government of my country for countenance and assistance in this (if successful) magnificent enterprise would not be made in vain. To the only free nation on the earth should belong the glory of exploring a spot of the globe which is the 'ne plus ultra' of latitude, where all the degrees of longitude are merged into a single point, and where the sun appears to revolve in a horizontal circle. But this splendid hope has since been lost in the gloom of disappointment. The vassals of some petty despot may one day place this precious jewel of discovery in the diadem of their royal master. Would to heaven it might be set among the stars of our national banner!"

Taking the whole subject into consideration, he, Captain Davis, was morally convinced that the voyage was never made.

Mr. ENDERBY said, many years ago Mr. Morrell applied to him to be employed in his service, but he had heard so much of him that he did not think fit to enter into any engagement with him. He did not believe Mr. Morrell had made the voyage which he described in the book. If he did, it was most extraordinary that when he passed Enderby and Kemp Land he did not see the southern parts of those lands, which, from his statement, must have been islands, for not one word was said in his book about them. The work was full of extraordinary things, and Mr. Morrell appeared to be a kind of Baron Munchausen.

Mr. GALTON said, Captain Morrell pretended, at the time when his ship visited the west coast of Africa at about 23° s. latitude, to have made an excursion a considerable distance into the interior. He (Mr. Galton) had travelled through that country, and could say that, while Morrell's description was very graphic and truthful concerning the coast, he evidently knew nothing about that part of the interior. He described it as consisting of rich valleys, with large herds of cattle roaming over them, whereas it was a barren desert.

Captain SHERARD OSBORN said he could not help wondering that Mr. Morrell, finding the sea so clear and the temperature so warm, did not sail right across the pole, instead of making a circle round it. He quite agreed with the author of the paper in the necessity for exploring the Antarctic lands, as at present our information with regard to them was very imperfect. He thought justice had not been done to the advantages which steam afforded in penetrating the Arctic Seas. The fact was the discovery vessels he and McClintock had commanded were always tied to a big ship, which impeded their progress.

It was true that Kane beat Inglefield in the *Isabella*, but Kane followed the *Isabella*, which had cleared the way. So McClintock, in the *Fox*, passed safely beyond where Ross lost his ship and Parry lost his. He expressed his perfect confidence that when the Lords of the Admiralty had carried out proper measures of retrenchment, they would then be anxious to have an efficient body of officers and sailors; and he was firmly convinced that a better school in peace time could not be found for sailors than the Polar Seas, notwithstanding that a dilettante Admiral lately thought otherwise.

Admiral OMMANNEY said he was equally surprised with Captain Davis at the extraordinary speed with which Mr. Morrell had passed over such a great distance when the seas were encumbered with floating ice. With reference to the Antarctic Expedition destined for taking the observations of the transit of Venus, astronomers have decided that the most desirable spot for observing that phenomenon in 1882 is on the southern continent, in latitude exceeding 72° s., near to Mounts Erebus and Terror. But it would be very unwise to send out this expedition without some previous exploration of the Antarctic seas, in order to reconnoitre the position where the observing party can be placed, with the requisite arrangements and equipments for a service of such extremely hazardous character; otherwise that valuable opportunity for the solution of the greatest astronomical problem of the age might be lost for a century. As regards the sort of ship for exploring the Antarctic seas, no one would dream of going there now in such sailing-ships as Sir James Ross had to put up with when he made his important discoveries. With our improved knowledge of strengthening ships, and in the construction of marine engines which are now worked with so much less fuel, we could send forth ships perfect in all improvements of the day, and thus ensure a thorough survey of the southern continent preparatory for this great event. The *Erebus* and *Terror* had been described that evening as having drifted under an ice-barrier, where they seemed to be inextricably fixed, yet Sir James Ross brought those ships home, and managed to escape from many a similar predicament. In the Arctic seas, when he fixed the position of the magnetic Pole, he was given up for lost; four years had passed without any tidings of his party, but he managed to effect his retreat to Baffin's Bay and brought his party home. No tribute exists to commemorate the name and services of that distinguished officer of Arctic and Antarctic renown, Sir James Ross. He (Admiral Ommanney) begged to inform the meeting that a memorial was in progress, with a view to place his portrait in Greenwich Hospital alongside that of Captain James Cook, now in the Painted Hall, and he solicited their contributions in behalf of this object.

Captain HAMILTON said, whatever else Mr. Morrell might not have discovered, he was the first discoverer of guano in the island of Ichaboe and Lobos. The speed of 120 miles a day, with which he made the voyage, was nothing uncommon as the sea was not encumbered with ice. The objection about the size of the vessel was not very forcible, for Weddel made his voyage to the south accompanied by a cutter of only 64 tons, while Balleny was also accompanied by a cutter of the same size. A vessel of the size of the *Wasp* could easily sweep off an iceberg—Weddel did so. Mr. Morrell was a sealer, not an educated man, and therefore due allowance must be made for his errors. However, by-and-by, one proof of the accuracy or otherwise of his descriptions would be afforded by any one coming across New South Greenland. Every ice-navigator knew that the season varied very much in the Polar regions; and Weddel, at his highest latitude, found the temperature of the water 34° or 36°, and the air 42°. Then, too, Weddel had found the sea open, as well as Morrell, while Sir James Ross was invariably almost beset in a close pack, and the difference of temperature between a pack and open water is considerable. It was by no means strange that he did not see