

BY TELEGRAPH.

AMERICAN.

WASHINGTON, 19.—Secretary Alex. Belknap has returned.

Secretary Robeson, in sending to the president his report of the investigation of the *Polaris* matter, says that the statements of all the rescued persons who could speak or understand English, except the wife of Hans Christian, were taken, and are now being printed, together with the diaries kept by some of the ice party. A diary of the cruise of the *Polaris* was kept by Herman Zarons, one of the seamen remaining on board, and picked up on the ice after the separation from the ship. The secretary says it must be clearly understood that in permitting this publication, the department neither make nor declare any judgment against Buddington, who has no opportunity for defence or explanation. The facts show that though he was perhaps wanting in enthusiasm for the grandest object of the expedition, and at times grossly lax in discipline, and though he differed in judgment as to the possibility, safety and propriety of taking the ship further north, yet he is an experienced and careful navigator, and a man not addicted to liquor, of which none remained on board at the time of the separation. The secretary then gives the details, already made public, of the measure taken by him to send the steamers *Junata* and *Tigress* to the relief, if possible, of the *Polaris* and the remainder of her crew. The *Tigress* he proposes to purchase and strengthen for the service required in the Arctic regions. Capt. Tyson, Esquimaux Joe, and all the rescued seamen will accompany the expedition, being anxious to rescue their comrades and bring out their old ship.

The following is the result of the investigation, and examination of Capt. Tyson, Frederick Meyer, Esquimaux Joe, and others of the rescued crew:

At midnight on the third of September 1871, Capt. Hall landed with a boat on the east shore of Polaris Bay, and in the name of God and the President of the United States, raised the American flag on the land he had discovered. On one occasion, the *Polaris* seemed to be in such danger of being crushed that provisions were placed on the ice and measures taken to be in readiness for leaving her. But she happily escaped without injury. Immediately after securing the ship in winter quarters, Capt. Hall made preparations for the sledge journey northward, and other work was commenced, by landing and setting up an observatory, getting the scientific observations under way, surveying the harbor, clearing up the ship, and making snug for the winter. On the 10th Capt. Hall left the *Polaris* accompanied by Mr. Preston, first mate, Esquimaux Joe and Hans, with two sleds and fourteen dogs, setting out on this expedition. The first step taken by Capt. Hall he fell upon land more northern than white man's foot ever before touched. In the progress of this journey, unhappily the last that Captain Hall was to make towards the Pole, he discovered, as appears by his dispatch, a river, a lake, and a large inlet, the latter in latitude 81 deg., 57 seconds north. He named this Newman's Bay, calling its northern point Cape Brevoort, and the southern one Summer Headland. At Cape Brevoort, in latitude 82 degrees, 2 seconds west, he rested, making there his sixth snow encampment. On the 20th he wrote his last dispatch to the Secretary of the Navy, the original draft of which was found in his own hand writing, on his own desk. It was delivered to the Secretary of the Navy by Esquimaux Joe, who had kept the desk in his custody from the time it was picked up on the ice after the separation of the rescued party from the ship. A copy of this dispatch, so singularly preserved, accompanies this report. Captain Hall, it appears, had hoped when he left the *Polaris* on this journey, to advance northward, at least one hundred miles, but after having gone about fifty he was compelled by the condition of the shore and ice, and by the state of the climate to return and await the approach of spring for another attempt. He reached the ship on the 24th of October in, apparently, his usual fine health, but was attacked the same evening with sickness at the stomach and vomiting, and was

taken to his bed. He was found to be seriously ill. His most marked symptoms seem, from the evidence, to be such as indicated congestion of the brain, accompanied by delirium and partial paralysis on one side. The witnesses all state that his attack was called apoplexy, and some of them speak, of their own knowledge, of his paralysis and delirium. He recovered, however, some days after, sufficiently to leave his bed, to move about the cabin; and to attempt to attend to business, but he soon had a relapse, became again delirious, and died on the 8th of November, 1871. Three days after he was buried on the shore. From personal examination of all the witnesses and from their testimony as given, we reach unanimously the opinion that the death of Captain Hall resulted naturally from disease and without fault on the part of any one.

All the persons examined testify to the uniform kindness of Captain Hall and to the good order and efficient condition of the *Polaris* while under his command. On the death of Captain Hall, Buddington succeeded to the command of the *Polaris*, as had been provided for in the regulations for the voyage issued by the Secretary of the Navy. The winter passed by as is usual in the Arctic region. Early in June, before the *Polaris* was released from the ice, Capt. Buddington dispatched Mr. Chester and Tyson with boats to endeavor to get as far north as possible. With much difficulty and delay they got as far north as Newman bay; they there awaited the possible opening of the ice till the middle of July, when written orders from Capt. Buddington directed them to return. While away and some time in June, the *Polaris* had broken out of its winter quarters, and had made several attempts to proceed northward to pick up the party with the boats, but the ice was found to be impassable, and Capt. Buddington, on receiving the party on board, determined to make the best of his way southward to the United States as soon as it would permit.

They started southward in August, 1872, and slowly made their way along the western shore until the next day, when the ship, having got further in mid-channel, was beset by ice in latitude about 80 degrees and 40 seconds north. She was in danger of wrecking for several hours, when she was freed again. In August the ship was made fast to a large floe of ice in latitude 80 degrees and 30 seconds north, and longitude about 68 degrees west. While still fast to the floe she drifted south through Smith's Sound, nearly to Northumberland Island. In pursuance of the usual order under similar circumstances, a quantity of provisions and some fuel were placed on the deck of the steamer in readiness to be removed to the ice, should the safety of the ship become endangered; and it was ordered and understood that if a crisis should be imminent, not only the sextants, but the clothing, papers, records, instruments, guns, ammunition etc., were also to be put upon the floe, in order to preserve the lives of the party and the result of the expedition, should it become necessary to abandon the ship and take refuge on the ice. A canvas had also been erected on the floe, for shelter, should the ship be lost.

On the night of the 15th of October, in about latitude 53 north, during a violent gale of wind and snow, need for such preparations became apparent, as the ship was suddenly beset by a tremendous pressure of ice which was driven against her from the southward, and forced under her, pressing her out of the water and by successive and violent shocks finally throwing her over on her beam ends. Captain Buddington directed the provisions, stores and material in readiness as before described, to be thrown over board on the ice, and ordered half of the crew upon the ice to carry them upon a thicker part to the hammocks, where they would be comparatively safe; he also sent all the Esquimaux, with their kyacks, out of the ships, and lowered the two remaining boats upon the floe. While surrounded in the darkness of an Arctic night, amid a fierce gale and driving snow, the storm howlers of the *Polaris* failed to hold her, and she broke adrift from the floe, and in a few moments was out of sight of the party, who at that moment were busily at work on the ice. It is the opinion of the witnesses, from the circumstances, that the

separation of the ship from the men, women and children upon the ice floe, was purely accidental.

After losing sight of the ship some of the men and women, and part of the provisions, were found to be afloat on a separate piece, and were rescued by means of boats, which fortunately had been saved on the ice, and the party thus collected on the main floe passed the night as well as they could. Next day they made several attempts to reach the land with the boats, but failed, notwithstanding their most persistent efforts, owing to the obstruction of the ice and the violence of the wind.

While thus striving to get on shore, but at what particular time of day is not exactly ascertained, the *Polaris* came in sight to the northward, apparently coming toward the floe, under steam and sail. An India rubber blanket was hoisted on an oar and displayed from the top of a hammock; the colors were set and other signals were made to attract the attention of the *Polaris* and, as she passed so near them that they plainly saw her down to the rail, and could distinguish her escape pipe, and she kept on towards them until they supposed her to be not more than four miles off, they felt sure she could force her way through the ice to their position, and that in a little while they would be again on board. In this they were disappointed, for the *Polaris* altered her course and disappeared behind the shore. Some time afterwards, as the floe drifted away, she was again seen by some men under land with her sails furled and apparently at anchor or made fast to the shore or to the ice.

It is most likely that the party on the ice was seen from the *Polaris*. The *Lutetia* on the floe, the ship's boats, the colors, the elevated signal blankets and the group of nineteen persons standing in relief against the white background could scarcely have remained unnoticed. It was natural under these circumstances that the party on the ice should have felt deeply disappointed at the failure of the ship to come to their relief, and should at the time have ascribed it to over-caution if not indifference rather than inability on the part of her responsible commander. Neither is it unnatural that this feeling, fostered during the weary watches of their long winter upon the ice, should remain to affect, in a greater or less degree, their present judgment on the subject; but it must not be forgotten that they, like ourselves, were and will remain without full information of the actual condition of the *Polaris* at the time spoken of, and cannot know how far their position was understood and appreciated by those on board. Such information and knowledge are absolutely necessary to correct the judgment, and must not be assumed as a foundation for censure against persons acting under circumstances so trying and uncertain, who, by reason of their enforced absence, have no opportunity for explaining. It seems most likely that the actual condition of the *Polaris* was such as to impose on her commander the duty of moving her, with the lives and property which remained under his charge, at once into a position of safety, under the shelter of Northumberland Island, where she was last seen by the party of the floe. If such were the state of the case, the first duty of Captain Buddington, under such circumstances, was to look to his vessel particularly, as he probably believed that the party on the ice, by the aid of the two boats, the kyacks and scow, in their possession, would find their way back to the *Polaris* as early as he could force his way to them; but whatever may have been his opinion on this, the elements quickly determined his action, for shortly after the *Polaris* had been sighted for a second time, a violent gale from the northeast sprang up, the weather became thick and the ship and land were lost sight of, and the ice floe drifted away southward with the nineteen persons still upon it. In view of the circumstances detailed, it is therefore our unanimous judgment that this final separation from the ship was also accidental.

The report next details the adventures of the party on the floe until rescued by the *Tigress* on the 18th day of April. At the time of their separation from the *Polaris* every one belonging to the expedition was in good health. The *Polaris* had plenty of provisions, but not much coal, probably enough to last through the winter. She was

last seen, apparently at anchor, under Northumberland Island, where it is most likely she remained for winter. Mr. Hayes found Esquimaux residing on the island, and Esquimaux settled at Nacoki, close by. Communication with these people could be easily opened and maintained, and no apprehension for the *Polaris* and, in the absence of accident and sickness, for those on board, is entertained by any of the rescued persons.

As to the question whether the ship can make her way to the Danish settlement at Upper Navik or Disco, without steam, if she gets free from the ice this season, supposing her to be in as good condition as when the rescued party was last on board, the witnesses differ in their judgment, but a safer if not better opinion is that she will need assistance to bring her completely and safely out.

On board the *Polaris* are specimens of drift wood picked on or near the shoals of Newman's Bay and Polaris Bay, among which Myers thought he recognized distinctly, the walnut, ash and pine.

Among the numerous facts that appear to be shown by the testimony elicited on examination, we may mention as one of great interest, that the dip of the needle amounted to 44 degrees, and its deviation to 96 degrees, being less than at Port Foulke and Pennsler harbor, as given by Dr. Kane and Dr. Hayes. The rise and fall of the tide was carefully observed, the average being about five and one half feet. The greatest depth of water noted was about 100 fathoms. The existence of a constant current southward was noticed by the expedition, its rapidity varying with the seasons and locality. The winter temperature was found to be much more mild than was expected, the minimum being 58 degrees below zero in January; though March proved to be the coldest month, on account of prevailing winds from the northeast, although there was occasionally tempests from the south-west. High winds were noticed, however, from all points of the compass. Rain was occasionally observed, only on land, the precipitation presenting itself over the ice in the form of snow. During the summer a great extent of both low land and elevations were bare of snow and ice, excepting patches here and there in the shade of the rocks. The soil during this period was covered more or less densely with moss, with which several arctic plants were interspersed, some of them of considerable beauty, but entirely without scent. Many small willows, scarcely reaching the dignity of shrubs, were seen. The rocks noticed were of schistose, in a state of nature, and in some instances contained fossil plants, specimens of which were collected. Evidences of glacier were seen in localities now bare of ice, these indications consisting in the occurrence of terrenal and lateral marines. Animal life was found to abound, the musk ox being shot at intervals throughout the winter. Geese, duck, and other water fowls, including plover and other birds, abounded during the summer, although the species of land birds were comparatively few. No fish were seen, although nets and lines were frequently called into play in attempting to obtain them. The waters, however, were found to be filled to an extraordinary degree, with marine invertebra, including jelly fish and shrimp. Seals were very abundant. Numerous insects also were observed, especially several species of butterflies; also flies and bees and insects of a like character.

The geographical results of the *Polaris* expedition, so far as can now be ascertained from the testimony of Tyson, Meyer and comrades, may be summed up briefly as follows: The open Polar seas, laid down by Kane and Hays, is found to be in reality a sound of considerable extent, formed by a somewhat abrupt expansion of the Kennedy Channel to the northward, and broken by the Lady Franklin Bay on the west and on the east, and by a large inlet, twenty miles wide, at the opening and certainly extending far inland. Its length was not ascertained, and Myers thinks it may be in fact a strait extending till it communicates with the Francis Joseph sound of the *Germania* and *Hansa*, from twenty-five to thirty miles wide, opening out of the sound above mentioned, to which Captain Hall, as has already been stated, gave the name of Robeson Straits. The western

shore of these straits, north of Grinnell's land, is also nameless. North-east of Cape Lupton, in Lat. 81, 37, is a deep inlet, which Captain Hall called Newman's Bay, naming its northern Point Cape Brevoort, and its southern bluff Summer Headland. The trend of the land continues to Repulse harbor in lat. 87 deg. 9, north. The highest northern point reached by land during this expedition was an elevation of 1,700 feet at Repulse Harbor. On the east coast of Robinson's Straits the land continues N. E. to the end of the straits, and thence east and south-east till lost in the distance, its vanishing point bearing south of east from the place of observation. No other land was visible to the N. E., but land was seen on the west coast, extending north as far as the eye could reach, and apparently terminating in a headland 84° north. The errors in the shore line of the west coast, as laid down by Dr. Hays, and also the errors in the shore line of Greenland, as laid down by Dr. Kane, were observed and corrected. Of course the full scientific results of the *Polaris* expedition cannot be known until the vessel shall have been found and brought back with the treasures she has gathered, with the records and details of the arctic explorations.

The limit of Greenland was called the southern fiord; north of it is an indentation of the shore, called by Capt. Hall, Polaris Bay. The *Polaris* wintered there. The northern point of this bay is named Cape Lupton. Its southern point is yet without name. From Cape Lupton the land bends to the northeast, and from the eastern shore is a new channel, from twenty-five to thirty miles wide.

The report is signed by George Robeson, secretary of the navy, Spencer F. Baird, assistant secretary of the Smithsonian Institute, Wm. Reynolds, commandant of U. S. navy, H. W. Howgate, acting signal officer of the U. S. A. To the President, June 16.

The following is a copy of the draft of Captain Hall's dispatch:

"Sixth snow house encampment, Cape Brevoort, north side of the entrance to Newman's bay, lat. 82 deg. 3, north; long. 61 deg. 20 min. west, October 26, 1871.

"To Honorable Secy. U. S. Navy, G. M. Robeson:

"Myself and party, consisting of Mr. Chester, 1st mate, my Esquimaux, Joe, and the Greenland Esquimaux Hans, left the ship in winter quarters, thank God, in harbor, latitude 81 degrees 38 minutes north, longitude 61 degrees 44 minutes west, meridian, October tenth, or a journey by two sleds, drawn by fourteen dogs, to discover if possible a feasible route inland for my sleds to journey next spring, to reach the north pole, purposing to adopt such route if found better than a route over the old floes and hammocks of the strait which I have designated Robeson Strait, after the Hon. Secretary of the U. S. N. We arrived here on the afternoon of Oct. 17., having discovered a lake and river on our way. Along the latter our route is an almost serpentine one, which led us on to this bay; fifteen minutes distant from here southward and eastward, from the top of an iceberg near the mouth of said river, we could see that this bay, which I have named after the Rev. Doctor Newman, extended from Cape Brevoort. We can see land extending on the west side of the strait to the north, 22 degrees west, and distant about twenty miles, thus making the land which we have discovered as far as latitude 83 degrees 5 north. There is an appearance of land further north, and extending more easterly than what I have just noticed, but the peculiar dark nimbus of the cloud that constantly hangs over what seems to be land, prevents my making a full determination. On August 31st the *Polaris* made her greatest northern latitude 82 degrees 29 north; after several attempts to get her further north, she became beset, when we were drifted to 81 30. When an opening occurred we steamed out of the pack and made harbor Sept. 31st, where the *Polaris* is. (A corner of the manuscript is here burned off.) Up to the time I and my party left the ship, all have been well, and continue so with high hope of accomplishing our great mission. We find this a much warmer country than was expected.

All the mountains on either side of Kennedy's channel and Robeson strait were found entirely bare of snow, and with the exception of a