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The Franklin Search: Fiftieth Anniversary of the Sailing of the "Fox"

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## THE FRANKLIN SEARCH: FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY OF THE SAILING OF THE "FOX."

ON the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of the sailing of the Franklin Search Expedition in the *Fox*, fitted out by Lady Franklin, the following letter was addressed to Admiral Sir Leopold M'Clintock, K.C.B., the commander of the expedition, by Sir George Taubman Goldie, President of the Society, Sir Clements R. Markham, Vice-President, and himself a member of a previous search expedition, and Sir Allen Young, navigation officer of the *Fox* :—

" 1, Savile Row, Burlington Gardens, June 30, 1907.

" DEAR SIR LEOPOLD M'CLINTOCK,

" In the name and on behalf of the Council of the Royal Geographical Society, we salute and congratulate our Gold Medalist of 1860, and one of the most valued of our colleagues, on a great occasion. For this day is the fiftieth anniversary of the departure of the *Fox* on her memorable voyage.

" We are reminded of your long preparation for your final Arctic service, during which you became the organizer and the creator of Arctic sledge-travelling. You brought your system to such perfection that you and your companion, Lient. Frederick Meham, achieved the wonderful journeys of 1853 and 1854—the most wonderful on record. These results afford the strongest proof of the suitability of your travelling equipments.

" With such experience you were the leading Arctic authority when Lady Franklin, forced to complete the search for her husband and his gallant companions at her own expense, secured your services to command the expedition. The voyage of the *Fox* was a great landmark in the history of Geography, whether we consider its conduct, its discoveries,

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or its momentous results. There is nothing finer in our naval annals than your firmness and resolution when, after the misfortune of being beset for a winter, and then driven out of the ice in a gale of wind, you coolly turned the ship's head again 'Northward Ho!' You sought no port for refreshment, but turned at once to the battle. Such indomitable pluck commanded success.

"The discoverer of the fate of the *Franklin* bears a name which will never be forgotten by his countrymen. Your book has long been, and will continue to be, one of the classic narratives of our language, recording a great achievement simply and modestly, yet in a way which fills the reader with sympathy and interest.

"It is not for us to refer to your long and valuable subsequent services in the Navy and at the Trinity House; but we may express our deep sense of the value of what you have continued to do in the interests of geography and discovery during a long course of years.

"You have lived to see much valuable and some splendid work achieved in the Arctic Regions, but no one has approached your unequalled journeys, and you still continue to be the greatest, as you are the first, of Arctic sledge-travellers.

"That you may long be spared to us, and that you and yours may continue to enjoy health and happiness, is the earnest wish and hope of your numerous friends and admirers, and, above all, of your old colleagues, who take this propitious opportunity of giving expression to their feelings.

"We are, dear Sir Leopold, yours most sincerely,

"GEORGE TAUBMAN GOLDIE, P. R.G.S.

"CLEMENTS R. MARKHAM, V.P. R.G.S.

"ALLEN YOUNG, Navigating Officer of the *Fox*."

The following reply was received from Sir Leopold M'Clintock :—

"16, Queensberry Place, S.W., July 1, 1907.

"GENTLEMEN,

"I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 30th ultimo bearing the signatures of the President of the Royal Geographical Society, Sir George Taubman Goldie, Vice-President Sir Clements Markham, and Fellow Sir Allen Young, the latter being, I believe, my only remaining companion of the *Fox*.

"Such a letter could not fail to raise in my mind feelings to which it is quite impossible to give adequate expression. In the exploration of several hundred miles of newly discovered coast-line in the hope of finding survivors or traces of the lost Franklin Expedition, my duty impelled me to exercise to the utmost of my capacity that high sense of responsibility which is characteristic of our Naval Service, and most loyally was I supported by those associated with me or under my command. I only wish that more of my companions were still living

to share with me the gratification of the generous recognition you have bestowed upon us.

“From my heart I thank you, and most grateful am I to you for the manner in which you have given expression to your feelings towards me. It is most touching to find that one is still remembered after so long a time as half a century.

“I remain, gentlemen, yours most sincerely and gratefully,  
“ F. L. M'CLINTOCK.

“The President and Council of the Royal Geographical Society.”

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## FROM THE NIGER, BY LAKE CHAD, TO THE NILE.\*

By BOYD ALEXANDER, Lieut. Rifle Brigade.

IN the short time that is at my disposal to-night, I feel that it would be very difficult to give you a well-proportioned account of so large an expedition. As my object must be to give as complete an account as possible, it will be necessary to cover the ground very quickly, so I regret that the scientific results can be only very lightly touched upon.

The first work we wished to carry out was a systematic survey of a portion of Northern Nigeria. Secondly, to explore Lake Chad, and the rivers between the Niger and the Nile, with the idea of demonstrating the wonderful system of waterways that connects the west with the east; and I think this is fairly well shown when I tell you that in the three years which the journey took to complete, the boats were carried for only fourteen days. Together with these primary objects special attention was to be given to tribal distribution and orthography of native names, and a careful study made of the distribution of the fauna to prove its affinity between the West Coast and the Nile.

The party consisted of my brother officer, Captain G. B. Gosling; Mr. P. A. Talbot; my brother, Captain Claud Alexander; and myself. With me I took my Portuguese collector, José Lopes. We were fully equipped with survey instruments.

Captain Gosling was active in obtaining zoological collections; Mr. Talbot and my brother were responsible for the Nigerian survey, for which they had special qualifications; while I acted as leader; so we were well equipped for the object in view. For the river work we took with us two steel boats, double keeled, 26 feet long and 6 feet wide, drawing  $1\frac{1}{2}$  foot for  $2\frac{1}{2}$  tons, and made on the Hodgett principle by Forrest Bros. of Wyvenhoe. It took twenty-four men to carry each boat, which was in six sections. It would be hard to exaggerate the importance of these boats to the expedition. In many places they did the work of bullock transport and carriers, that it was impossible to

\* Read at the Royal Geographical Society, May 13, 1907. Map, p. 236.