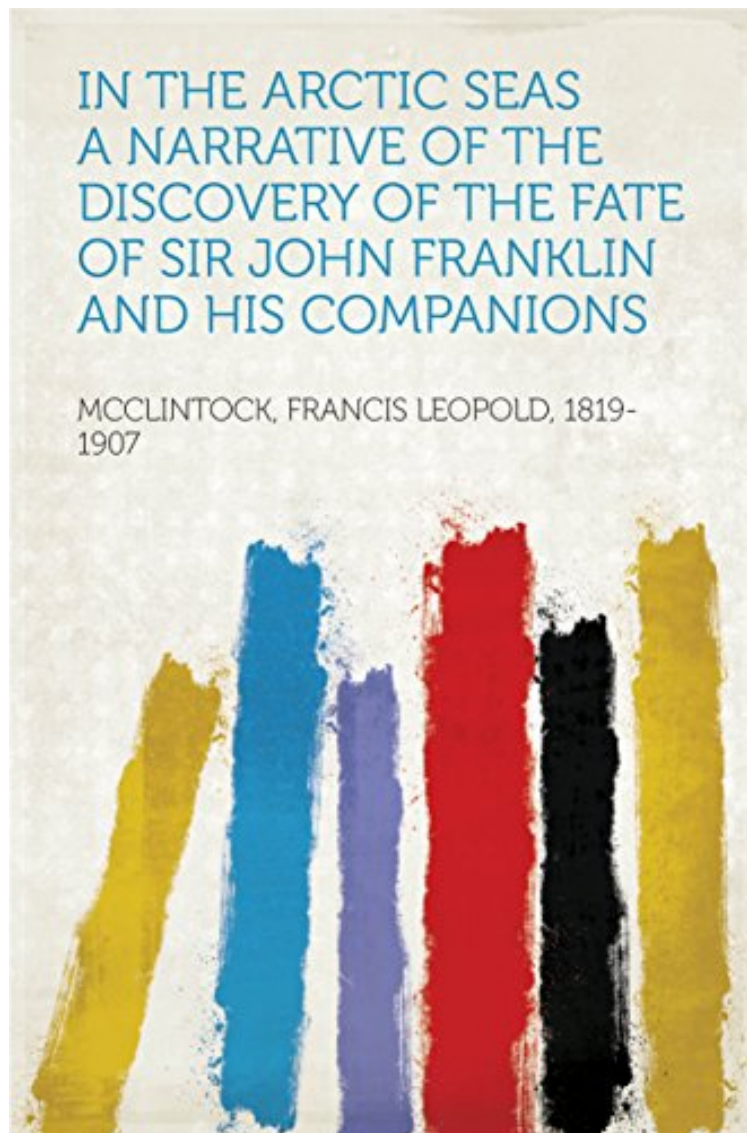


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In the Arctic Seas A Narrative of the Discovery of the Fate of Sir John Franklin and his Companions

Von Francis Leopold, 1819-1907 McClintock
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Von Francis Leopold, 1819-1907 McClintock : In the Arctic Seas A Narrative of the Discovery of the Fate of Sir John Franklin and his Companions before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised In the Arctic Seas A Narrative of the Discovery of the Fate of Sir John Franklin and his Companions:

KundenrezensionenHilfreichste Kundenrezensionen1 von 1 Kunden fanden die folgende Rezension hilfreich.

Fascinating glimpse into different times and places of my own Von Meks Librarian McClintock was born in 1819 and 38 years old when he was asked by Franklin's widow, Lady Jane Franklin, to head the last search party for her late husband, his men and the scientific records they had undoubtedly accumulated during their ill-fated voyage in the 1840s. By then, nobody hoped to find any survivors of the expedition, but understandably, Lady Franklin wanted certainty, and the authorities were not willing to fund yet another (mostly) unsuccessful search for the two ships and their crews. The widow rallied round all her friends (today, we would say that she was a most active networker), and by combining their private funds and what they were able to collect from public subscription, managed to buy and equip the "Fox", a schooner with a crew of 25, with everything they deemed necessary for a two-year-voyage to and in the Arctic Seas. McClintock was indeed successful; not only did he find plenty of relics (sold to him by Inuit who had found one of the abandoned ships, and also found by him and his men at the places the original expedition had come across) and chartered hundreds of miles of up-to-then unknown coast line, but it was one of his companions who found the only written document left by Franklin's expedition, confirming Franklin's death on the 11th June 1847. Piecing together all the evidence he had, he drew the conclusion that all men from both ships' crews had perished, and returned to England. His account was originally not meant to be published, but merely his personal journal, written on board and during his land-travels (using sleds pulled by men and dogs). In the foreword he states that he had written the journal originally for Lady Franklin, and that it was she who insisted in him having it published. It became a bestseller in Victorian times, adding to McClintock's fame (he was knighted upon his return). The journal is written in an unexcited, almost unemotional style, not excluding either hardships or reasons for hope and joy, but all in a manner that allows the reader to grasp the general atmosphere of a mixture of scientific coolness and spirit of adventure. Without the latter, McClintock would never have accepted the task; without the former, he would not have been successful. I learned many words from this book, a lot of them relating to Arctic fauna and phenomenons: ptarmigan, dearth, mock moons, paraselena, haswers, snow bunting, fulmar petrel, rotchies and auks, to name but a few. Pemmican and sugar beer featured in the book, as well as the beautiful word "vicissitudes", which I recognized from Italian ("vicissitudine"). Details such as McClintock's question to himself, "Does Bellot Strait really exist?", reminded me of how unsure travelling in those days was - they really had no way of knowing the true shape and outline of any coast line unless someone had been there before them and drawn up reliable charts. Reading a good portion of this book while standing around on snow-covered platforms, waiting for the train to or from work, I appreciated even more the comforts I can avail myself of - central heating, hot showers, adequate clothing and wholesome nutrition. It does have its lengths, admittedly, but it was a fascinating glimpse into a life and times that could hardly be more different from my own.

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