

Kane, Elisha Kent, American Arctic voyager: b. Philadelphia, 20 Feb. 1820; d. Havana, Cuba, 16 Feb. 1857. He was graduated as M.D. in the University of Pennsylvania in 1842, and shortly afterward became surgeon to the American embassy to China. After extended travels in India, Egypt, and the continent of Europe he returned to America in 1846, and was employed in the government survey of the Gulf of Mexico. In 1850 he obtained the appointment of senior medical officer to the expedition of two vessels, the Advance and the Rescue, which sailed from New York on the 22d of May in that year in search of Sir John Franklin. On the return of the expedition Dr. Kane published "The United States Grinnell Expedition in Search of Sir John Franklin -- a Personal Narrative." On the 31st of May 1853, the Advance alone, under Dr. Kane's command, sailed again from New York to resume the search, and proceeding up Baffin's Bay and through Smith's Strait, reached lat. 78 43 N. Here the Advance remained frozen up for 21 months, and was finally abandoned because provisions were becoming scarce and scurvy and other diseases had made their appearance. The object now was to reach the Danish settlements in Greenland, about 1,300 miles distant. This long and perilous journey, partly in boats and partly in sledges, was accomplished, after 10 weeks of severe privation, with the loss of only one man, and that by an accident. In 1856 Dr. Kane published "The Second Grinnell Expedition," and was awarded gold medals from Congress, the New York legislature and the Royal Geographical Society. Consult Elder, "Biography of Elisha Kent Kane" (1857); Greely, "American Explorers" (1894).