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American Explorations in the Ice Zones

In 1879, the steamer Jeannette went missing near Alaska. It had been sent by the American Navy in search of a missing Swedish expedition. Having become trapped in ice, the ship was not heard from for almost two years, when her remaining crew finally reached safety. By this time, any American expedition that focused its efforts further north than the sixtieth parallel was usually considered to be within the Arctic, and these invariably perilous expeditions were often launched in search of lost ships. In 1884, Joseph Everett Nourse (1819–89) published details of all the major American expeditions, including the efforts to rescue the Jeannette, Hayes’s attempt to prove the existence of the Open Polar Sea, and Schwatka’s 3,000-mile sledge journey across the tundra. Written to make the journals of explorers more accessible to young readers, Nourse’s comprehensive text is still of relevance to students of American maritime history.
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American Explorations in the Ice Zones

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AMERICAN EXPLORATIONS 
IN 
THE ICE ZONES.

THE EXPEDITIONS OF DEHAVEN, KANE, RODGERS, HAYES, HALL, SCHWATKA, 
AND DeLONG; THE RELIEF VOYAGES FOR THE JEANNETTE BY THE 
U.S. STEAMERS CORWIN, RODGERS, AND ALLIANCE; THE 
cruises of Captains Long and Raynor 
of the Merchant Service:

WITH A BRIEF NOTICE OF

THE ANTARCTIC CRUISE UNDER LIEUTENANT WILKES, 1840, 
AND OF THE LOCATIONS AND OBJECTS OF THE U.S. 
SIGNAL SERVICE ARCTIC OBSERVERS.

Prepared Chiefly from Official Sources

BY PROF. J. E. NOURSE, U.S.N. 
EDITOR OF "HALL'S SECOND EXPEDITION."

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C. J. PETERS AND SON,
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TO

THE AMERICAN EXPLORERS,

NAVAL, MILITARY, AND CIVIL,

AND

TO THE MEMORY OF THE GALLANT SPIRITS

WHO OPENED UP THEIR

PATHWAY.
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THis volume purposes to accredit the work of American explorers in a region toward which the world still looks with interest and unsatisfied inquiry. Arctic exploration will not soon be abandoned. However much, in this age of unprecedented advance in the more directly practical, it may seem to some to deserve place with the visionary only, it confessedly embraces problems of high value. The geographer would gladly exchange his dotted and broken lines for definite boundaries; the ethnologist and the Christian have questions to ask of this region bearing on the unity and the development of the race; and the scientist awaits from the sea of the far-off North, revelations the key to which Nature has as yet hidden from him.

A third of a century has passed since history cordially admitted to her domain the records of De Haven and Kane; Hayes and Hall gave to her their work of the succeeding decade; our younger officers—De Long, Chipp, and their associates—have closed with their lives the latest Arctic records.

The volumes from Kane's pen cannot be found on the shelves of a large number of our increasing libraries, while the publications of the United States Government, in official form, are too bulky for the convenience of the general reader. It is the design of the publishers of the volume now offered, to bring together within the reach, especially of the young, the labors of each American explorer, and to this desire the most cordial response is made from a re-study of these labors, each of which reflects honor upon our country. The chapters which follow embrace brief notices of the expedition for the Northwest passage under Sir John Franklin, the voyages of Lieutenant De Haven, and of Dr. Kane, of the late Admiral Rodgers, Dr. Hayes, the three expeditions of C. F. Hall, the remarkable sledge journey of three thousand miles by Lieutenant Schwatka, U.S.A., the cruise and loss of the "Jeannette," and the relief expeditions sent out for De Long by the Treasury Department under Captain Hooper, and by the Navy Department under Lieutenant Berry. To these is added a notice of the first expedition sent out by the United States for scientific purposes, that of 1888–89 under Lieutenant (late Admiral) Wilkes; the volume closes with a statement of the positions and objects of the Arctic Observers under the U.S. Signal Service.

J. E. N.

WASHINGTON, Dec. 1, 1888.