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William Scoresby

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Written by explorer, scientist and later clergyman William Scoresby (1789–1857), this two-volume guide to the Arctic regions was first published in 1820. Scoresby, himself the son of a whaler and Arctic explorer, first sailed to the polar regions at the age of eleven, and was later apprenticed to his father. He became a correspondent of Sir Joseph Banks, and his extensive research on the Arctic area included pioneering work in oceanography, magnetism, and the study of Arctic currents and waves. He surveyed 400 miles of the Greenland coast in 1822. This account was the first book published in Britain which was devoted solely to the whale fisheries. Volume 1 is a general geographical survey of the Arctic region and includes detailed observations of polar ice conditions, atmospherology, and zoology. The book also considers the much-debated question of northern sea communication between the Atlantic and Pacific oceans.

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*With a History and Description of the
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VOLUME 1

WILLIAM SCORESBY



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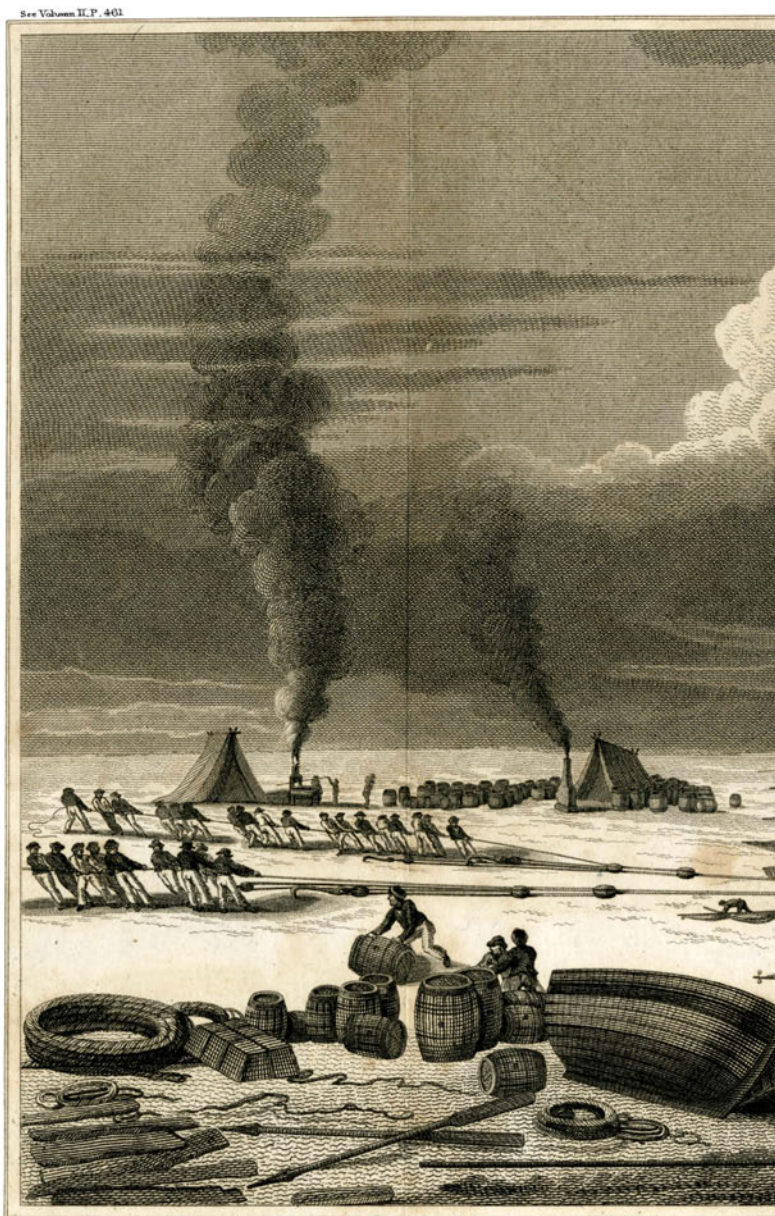
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Drawn by R.K. Curville Esq. after a Sketch by W. Scoresby Junr.

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**DAMAGED BY ICE AND ALMOST FULL OF WATER.
KEEL TO THE SURFACE OF THE SEA FOR REPAIRING THE DAMAGE.**

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BY
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TO

ROBERT JAMESON, Esq.

PROFESSOR OF NATURAL HISTORY IN THE UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH,

PRESIDENT OF THE WERNERIAN SOCIETY,

&c. &c. &c.

AT WHOSE SUGGESTION THIS WORK WAS UNDERTAKEN,

AND TO WHOSE EARLY AND UNIFORM FRIENDSHIP THE AUTHOR

IS DEEPLY INDEBTED,

THESE VOLUMES

ARE RESPECTFULLY

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PREFACE.

THOUGH the Natural History of the Countries within the Arctic Circle, and the nature and practice of the Whale-Fishery, possess peculiar, and I may add almost universal, interest ; yet it is remarkable that no original work, published in Britain, excepting a single Tract by Henry Elking, appears to have been devoted entirely to either subject. In this respect, notwithstanding our important and extensive annual adventures to the Seas of Greenland and Davis' Strait, we have been anticipated and our supineness tacitly reproved by several works that have appeared in other countries. Among foreign authors who have treated of the Regions of the North, or of the

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Whale-Fishery, may be mentioned, La Martiniere, Pierre de Mezange, Boisgelin and Fortia, though these are writers, it should be observed, who cannot be altogether followed ;—M. La Peyronie, and Bernard de Reste, who have given translations in French, not altogether accurate however, of works of some value;—and Torfæus, Otho Fabricius, Olafsen, Olaving, Egedé, Crantz, Zorgdrager, Eggers, Moriniere, and a few others, who have produced works of real merit.

The Accounts of Greenland by the faithful and enterprising Moravian Missionaries Hans Egedé and David Crantz, whose zeal and philanthropy carried them into one of the most uncomfortable and inhospitable regions of the globe, but particularly the latter, are works of peculiar fidelity and value ; and the account of the Whale-Fishery given by Zorgdrager, though written considerably above a century ago, is, perhaps, on the whole, the best that has appeared in any language.

The works of Egedé and Crantz have been translated into English, and, with the article of Sir Charles Giesecké, in Dr Brewster's Encyclopædia, and some others, included in works

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on miscellaneous literature or science, form the principal sources of information on the Natural History of Greenland, published in the English language. The tract by Henry Elking, already alluded to, entitled “ A View of the “ Greenland Trade and Whale-Fishery, with “ the National and Private Advantages there- “ of,” is, I believe, our only original work on this interesting subject.

A considerable quantity of miscellaneous information, however, relating to Arctic Countries and to the Whale-Fishery, is to be found interspersed through the Collections of Voyages, &c. by Hakluyt, Purchas, Churchill, Harris, Pickersgill, Goldson, Forster, Müller, Coxe, Pinkerton, Kerr, Clarke, Barrow, Burney, &c. ; in the translations of the Voyages or Narratives of Barentz, Martens, M. Le Roy, &c. ; and in the original Voyages of Ellis, James, Fox, Ross, and others, into Baffin’s or Hudson’s Bay ; of Cook into Behring’s Strait ; and of Phipps towards the North Pole.

The work now submitted to the Public is in a great measure original, being chiefly derived from researches carried on during seventeen voyages to

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the Spitzbergen or Greenland Whale-Fishery. It consists of two distinct parts, each occupying a volume. The first relates to the progress of Discovery in the Arctic Regions, and the Natural History of Spitzbergen and the Greenland Sea; the second is devoted to the Whale-Fishery as conducted in the Seas of Greenland and Davis' Strait.

Numerous authorities have been consulted in preparing these sheets for publication, and in all cases, as far as I am aware, a proper reference has been made to the works from which any information has been derived. For a small but interesting *Mémoire* by M. S. B. J. Noel, *Sur l'Antiquité de la pêche de la Baleine*, from which I have drawn some valuable historical information, I was indebted to the kindness of M. Noel de la Moriniere, author of an extensive work on Ancient and Modern Fisheries, now in the course of publication in France. Access to some valuable works which I had not in my own possession, and different acts of kindness or assistance were afforded me by the Right Honourable Sir Joseph Banks, Professor Jameson, P. Neill, Esq. Dr Traill, and my Father. By means of some va-

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luable instruments, &c. furnished me by Sir Joseph Banks, whose friendly suggestions and encouragement I am happy to acknowledge, and whose kindness and liberality I shall ever remember with gratitude, I was enabled to make some experiments on sub-marine temperature, the result of which proved novel and interesting. These, with some facilities kindly given me by William Swainson, Esq. of Liverpool, the Reverend George Young, and Mr Thomas Parkin of Whitby, and occasional obligations from other friends, noticed in different parts of the work, constitute, I believe, the amount of the assistance which I have received in preparing the materials which occupy the following pages.

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