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On the *Polar Star* in the Arctic Sea

Prince Luigi Amedeo of Savoy, a grandson of King Vittorio Emanuele II of Italy, was well known as a mountaineer and traveller when, in 1899, he organised an expedition to the Arctic, obtaining a steam whaling ship in Oslo which he renamed the *Stella Polare*. His ambition was to reach the highest possible latitude (and possibly the North Pole itself) by careful logistical arrangements, wintering on the ice in Franz Josef Land and using dog-sledges to travel further north. He also intended a scientific survey of the area in which the team passed the winter. His account of the expedition was published in Italian in 1902 and this two-volume English translation by William Le Queux (better known as the author of sensationalist spy and crime novels) appeared in 1903. Volume 1 recounts the genesis and progress of the expedition, including the crew's efforts to free the ice-bound ship using explosives.

Cambridge University Press

978-1-108-07219-9 - On the Polar Star in the Arctic Sea: Volume 1

Luigi Amedeo Di Savoia

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On the *Polar Star* in the Arctic Sea

VOLUME 1

LUIGI AMEDEO DI SAVOIA
TRANSLATED BY WILLIAM LE QUEUX



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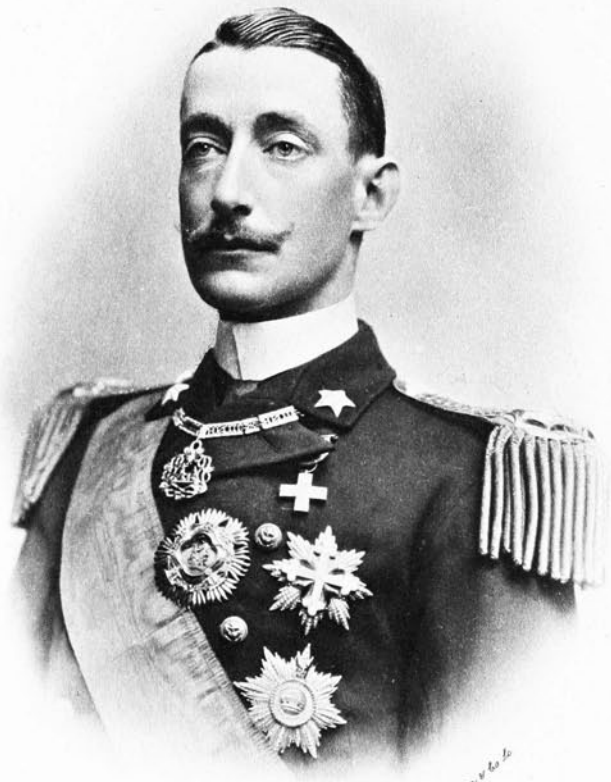
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IN THE ARCTIC SEA

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*H.R.H. Luigi Amedeo of Savoy
Duke of the Abruzzi*

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On the "Polar Star"

IN THE ARCTIC SEA

BY HIS ROYAL HIGHNESS

LUIGI AMEDEO OF SAVOY
DUKE OF THE ABRUZZI

WITH THE STATEMENTS OF COMMANDER U. CAGNI UPON THE
SLEDGE EXPEDITION TO 86° 34' NORTH, AND OF DR. A. CAVALLI
MOLINELLI UPON HIS RETURN TO THE BAY OF TEPLITZ

TRANSLATED BY

WILLIAM LE QUEUX

IN TWO VOLUMES, WITH 212 ILLUSTRATIONS
IN THE TEXT, 16 FULL-PAGE PHOTOGRAVURE
PLATES, 2 PANORAMAS, AND 5 MAPS

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TO HER MAJESTY
THE QUEEN-MOTHER

WILL YOUR MAJESTY ALLOW ME TO DEDICATE THESE PAGES TO THE MEMORY OF KING HUMBERT, WHOSE LOSS WE DEPLORE? HIS MORAL AND MATERIAL ASSISTANCE ENABLED ME TO CARRY OUT THIS VOYAGE, BY THE RESULTS OF WHICH HE WOULD HAVE BEEN MUCH REJOICED IF THE HAND OF AN ASSASSIN HAD NOT SUDDENLY ENDED HIS LIFE BEFORE THE RETURN OF THE EXPEDITION. THE DEDICATION OF THESE PAGES TO THE MEMORY OF KING HUMBERT IS TO ME A DUTY DICTATED BY GRATITUDE, AND THE EXPRESSION OF MY AFFECTION WHICH HAS BECOME STILL GREATER SINCE HIS DEATH. MAY YOUR MAJESTY BE PLEASED TO ACCEPT THE ASSURANCE OF MY UNSWERVING LOYALTY.

LUIGI DI SAVOIA.

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INTRODUCTION

THE object of the expedition of the *Polar Star* was to sail as far to the north as possible along some coast-line, and then to travel on sledges towards the Pole from the place where the winter had been passed. The Pole was not reached, but the sledge expedition, led by Commander Cagni, pushed on to a latitude which no man had previously attained, and proved that with determination and sturdy men, and a number of well-selected dogs, the frozen Arctic Ocean can actually be crossed to the highest latitude.

The practical use of Polar expeditions has often been discussed. If only the moral advantage to be derived from these expeditions be considered, I believe that it would suffice to compensate for the sacrifices they demand. As men who surmount difficulties in their daily struggles feel themselves strengthened for an encounter with still greater difficulties, so should also a nation feel itself still more encouraged and urged by the success won by its sons, to persevere in striving for its greatness and prosperity.

Our expedition was composed of Italians and Norwegians. The willing and disinterested assistance of Captain Evensen, and of the Norwegians, in navigating in the midst of ice, brought the *Polar Star* to the highest latitude in the north of Europe hitherto attained by a ship following a coast-line. The well-tried courage,

the steadfast perseverance, the moral and physical endurance of every sort of privation and hardship shown by the Italians composing the sledge expedition under Commander Cagni, has won for Italy the first place among the nations which have approached nearest to the Pole.

Italians and Norwegians behaved throughout this voyage as though the crew were composed of one nationality. I had comrades with me, rather than subordinates. I express, therefore, my gratitude towards all, since to their harmonious co-operation is due the success of my expedition; and I express the same gratitude to the memory of the three brave men who perished whilst on the sledge expedition. Honour to those who sacrificed their young lives in pursuit of a noble idea, and may my admiration, as well as that of their comrades on board the *Polar Star* and of the whole civilised world, afford some consolation to their afflicted families.

As conclusion of this introduction, I feel it my duty to thank His Excellency the Italian Minister of Marine, Vice-Admiral Morin, for having allowed me to have a great part of my work executed in the Royal Hydrographical Institution, and all those who have helped to compile the narrative and scientific portions:—Commander Cagni, Dr. Cavalli, A. Alessio, and G. Schoch (Lieutenants in the Royal Navy), Professors Rizzo, Aimonetti, Palazzo, Cappa, Camerano, Salvadori, Pollonera, Giglio-Tos, Nobili, Parona, Mattiolo, Belli, Spezia, Colomba, Piolti, Ermanno Ferrero, Dr. Filippo de Filippi, and the Cavaliere Ufficiale Vittorio Sella.

November, 1902.

TRANSLATOR'S NOTE

THE temperature is given in Centigrade scale. The miles are geographical miles, or 6,080 feet. The tracks, the bearings, the direction of the winds and currents, are in the true meridian when not otherwise indicated.

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