

neighborhood of the Pole and geologists and paleontologists are anxious to know what exists there.

Is the North Pole worth the price which has been paid in human life? What will its discovery add to the world's knowledge, for certainly the finding of it is of no practical economic value although it has been the goal of ambitious and adventurous men for centuries?

Indescribable hardship or lonely death in the ice-bound North has been the fate of many luckless explorers. In the persistent search for this tip of the earth's axis, 750 persons lost their lives since 1553, the year when Sir Hugh Wiloughby was lured northward. That is the price paid for the information, that the region of the North Pole is "a trackless field of purple ice, devoid of any forms of life."

In the early days of polar expeditions, the desire was for a north-west passage to the western ocean, but this object was superseded long ago by mere ambition to find the pole. The discovery depends mainly upon the scientific results, which will be of value to geographers. Conditions of the sea and air are phases of Arctic exploration which probably will be influenced by Cook's and Peary's achievement.

It has been a costly adventure, this search for the North Pole. Possibly the discovery will put an end to polar expeditions, especially if he has obtained all the information possible as to the character of the region of never-melting ice. But we doubt it.

The best previous record to Dr. Cook's final triumph was that of Peary, who, on April 26, 1906, reached the latitude of 87 deg. 6 min. north of Greenland. Previous to that time the Duke of Abruzzi's expedition held the record of latitude 86 deg. 34 min., which they reached on April 25, 1900, north of Franz Josef Land. Nansen's record was 86 deg. 14 min. made on April 7, 1895.

The search for the Pole has been a quest which has drawn adventurous men into the Arctic regions for centuries. The Norsemen were probably the first Europeans to visit Greenland, which has been the base for most of the dashes to the Pole, but it was the attempt to find a shorter route to India that brought the first thorough knowledge of the Arctic regions.

CHAPTER I.

A SUCCESSFUL DASH FOR THE NORTH POLE.

Cook's Final Dash for The Pole—Nothing but Ice, Ice, Ice—Last Stretch The Easiest—May Repeat Trip to Confound Skeptics—The World Electrified—Not an Arctic "Joy Ride"—Supplies Stolen By Natives—Was Lightly Equipped—Found New Route North—Expedition Cost Less Than \$50,000—Pole Finder—Won Eskimos.

WHEN Frederick A. Cook's sextant told him that he had at last reached the one great goal of the centuries, he viewed a scene on which the eyes of mortal man never before rested.

He thus describes it:

"Then came April 21, 1908. That was a great day. We looked for the sun. As soon as we got it I made several observations. Great joy came over us. We were only sixteen miles from the desired spot. I said to myself, 'Bully for Frederick,' then went on.

"The last stretch was the easiest I ever made in my life, although I had still to make two observations and the ice was very broken here. My spirits were high and I shouted like a boy. The Eskimos looked at one another surprised at my gaiety. They did not share my joy.

"I felt that I ought to be there. I made my last observation and found that I was standing on the Pole.

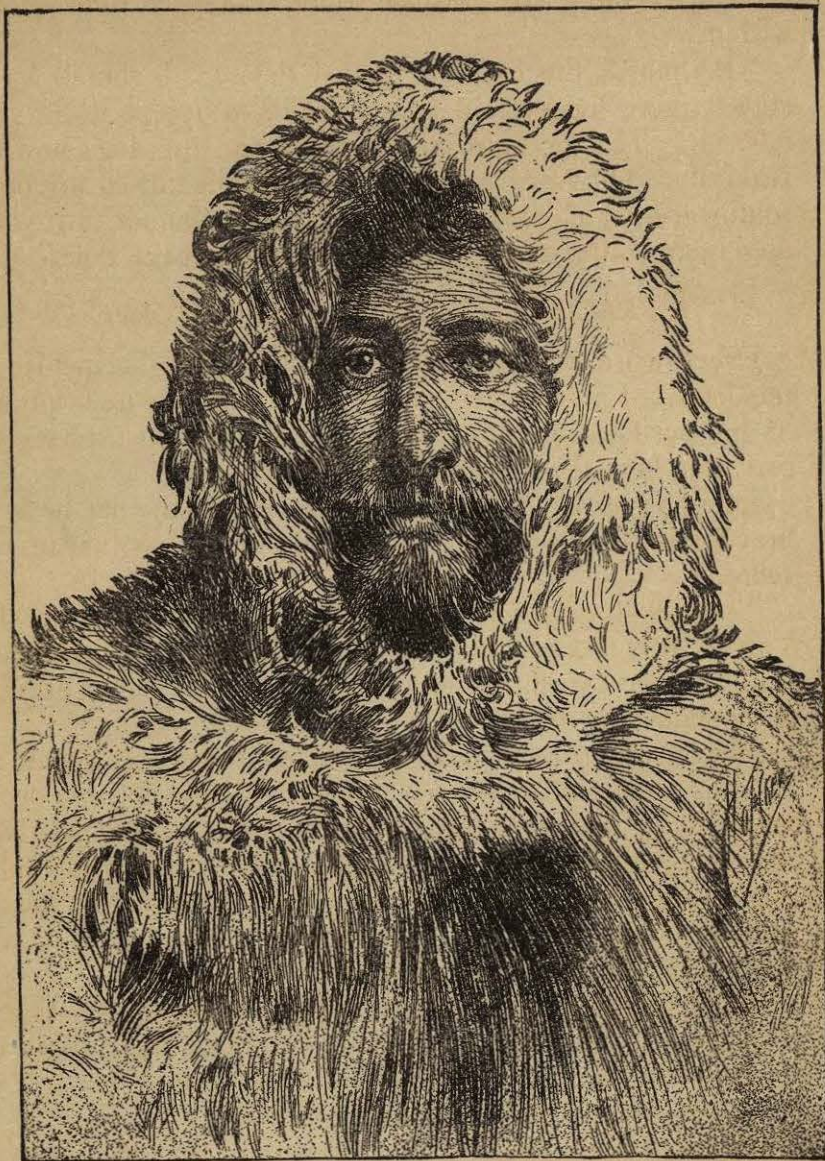
"My feelings? Well, I was too tired, really, to feel any sensation. I planted the Stars and Stripes in the ice field and my heart grew warm when I saw it wave in the wind."

"How does the North Pole look?" he was asked.

"Well," said Doctor Cook, smiling, "it amounts to the size of a 25-cent piece. There is nothing to see but ice, ice, no water, only ice. There were more holes here than at the 87th degree, which shows there is more movement and drifts here, but this and other observations I made afterward—when I got more settled. I stopped two days at the Pole and I assure you it was not easy to say good-by to the spot.

"As I was sitting at the Pole I could not help smiling at

the people who on my return would call the whole expedition a humbug. I was sure the people would say that I had



DR . FREDERICK A. COOK IN ARCTIC COSTUME.

bought my two witnesses and that my notebook with my daily observations had been manufactured on board this ship.

"The only thing I can put up against this is what the Eskimos have told Knud Rasmussen. Let the skeptics who disbelieve my story go to the North Pole. There they will

find a small brass tube which I buried under the flag. That tube contains a short statement about my trip. I could not leave my visiting card because I did not happen to have one with me.

"Perhaps," the explorer added dryly, "I should have stayed there longer had it not begun to freeze us in our idleness. The Eskimos were uneasy and the dogs howled fearfully. On April 23, therefore, I again turned my nose southward, which was much easier, as you cannot turn your nose in any other direction when you stand at the Pole."

A REALISTIC AND CONVINCING STORY.

Every word of his story is realistic. All the incidents, the details of his thrilling battles with death, his descriptions of his perilous situations on ice drifts and his stories of privation bear the imprint of truth.

Every word he utters carries the conviction that he is a brave man, whose last thought would be a deception of his fellows.

"I shall live to confound the skeptics," said Dr. Cook, "and if it is necessary to accomplish this I will undertake to lead another expedition to the Pole over the same ground accompanied by witnesses.

"Up to the present moment," he continued, as he sat at comfort amid civilized surroundings, "I have been so overwhelmed by this whole-hearted ovation that I have not had the opportunity to go into great details concerning the expedition itself. These details will be furnished by me as soon as possible, and then those who are inclined to doubt my story will confess themselves in the wrong.

"I must admit that I am greatly surprised at the scepticism displayed in some quarters, but this kind of thing must be expected by men who accomplish something which others have tried to do and have failed.

"I dare say that because I am so sure of my own observations that the idea that I could be doubted in real earnest never occurred to me. My note-books, my observations and all my data will, however, be put at the disposal of any competent body of scientists or geographers who wish to take the trouble to verify my claims; moreover, I am willing to submit to any test, tending to demonstrate my proficiency

with the sextant and the chronometer, or as a mathematician."

But that is beginning in the middle of the story. Before going deeper into the wonderful trip that electrified the world, it may be well to retrace our steps and tell its details from the first.

The news of Doctor Cook's thrilling feat did not reach the world for almost a year and a half after he had stood on the pinnacle of the earth. But the cable's announcement that he had won the battle of the centuries and planted the Stars and Stripes at the North Pole, thrilled the American nation as no other deed had ever done.

The brief tidings that Dr. Cook had succeeded, where hundreds had failed with a sacrifice of many lives, sent through the slender thread of cable from the Shetland, soon flashed its way over the civilized world and announced that an intrepid American had won victory greater than very many of the achievements of kings and princes, soldiers, statesmen and explorers of all ages—more even to many minds than the great navigator who reached the new world in the fifteenth century.

A MOST DRAMATIC AND AMAZING FEAT.

The feat was as dramatic as it was amazing. It was a race with Peary across the northern ice that Cook won, although Peary also reached it but a little later. With such light equipment as no other man had dared carry into the far North, he set out, on the spur of a moment's whim, upon the daring dash that was to make the Polar region territory of the United States, by right of discovery.

And the last 500 miles of the appalling journey he traversed without a single white companion—with but eight stolid Esquimos, four sledges and twelve dogs.

One can imagine him at the moment of supreme achievement, alone in the vast reaches of northern wastes—the first man in all the unmeasured ages to set foot upon the hub of the whirling globe—a conqueror with none to share his conquest.

One can imagine, too, Commander Peary, the other daring contestant in the mighty race, reaching the Pole himself, and finding there the signal of his rival's victory.

John R. Bradley, the financial backer of Dr. Cook, took

pains to explain when the news reached him, that the explorer's success in reaching the North Pole was not so much the result of chance as the opinions of several Polar experts would indicate.

"This was no haphazard expedition," he said, "no intensified Arctic joy-ride undertaken on nerve. We went about our preparations for this thing quietly and without brass band accompaniment, but every imaginable contingency had been provided for.

"We studied out the mistakes and misfortunes of other men who had tried for the pole, hoping to benefit by their errors, and we certainly benefitted by their examples.

"I am not going to tell what the cost was, but I'll tell you this much: One single item of the equipment was 5,000 gallons of gasoline and another was two barrels of gum drops. An Esquimo will travel thirty miles for a gum drop. His sweet tooth is the sweetest in the world.

DR. COOK'S WONDERFUL NERVE.

"Now Cook has as much nerve as any man in the world, I guess; but he had something besides nerve to carry him through. I'm not trying to take any of the credit; but I want to say that he had the right kind of an outfit to take him through. Cook will prove to the satisfaction of every fair man that he has done exactly what he claims he did."

Dr. Cook started in the summer of 1907 from North Sydney, C. B., as the guest of his backer, Mr. Bradley, who had planned a hunting trip to Greenland. If Mr. Cook had then in his mind a dash for the Pole, he said nothing of it. They had a little yacht, converted from a fishing schooner, and, meeting rough weather, had to put in to North Star Bay for shelter. After a successful hunt, they made their way to Etah, Greenland.

The lure of the great North suddenly overcame the love of sport in the mind of the explorer. He became inspired with the idea of an immediate, almost an impromptu dash for the Pole. He told his friend Bradley, almost apologetically, that he simply had to do it. And he did.

He made no mention of such a plan even to his wife. The discovery of the North Pole was an afterthought.

Mr. Bradley readily agreed to Dr. Cook's plan and will-

ingly financed the preparations for the project. They went ashore at Etah, which is about one thousand miles from the Pole, and when Dr. Cook set out northward in December Mr. Bradley bade him goodby and returned to New York.

Dr. Cook's sole white companion when he left Etah for his base of supplies at Annoatok, was Rudolph Francke, a cook from Bradley's yacht, but Francke became stricken with illness on the first stage of the difficult march and was forced to turn back.

Cook had laid out a new line of march to the Pole. He first made his way to Cape Thomas Hubbard, on the edge of the ice of the Polar Sea. Thence he crossed Ellesmere Land safely, killing enough musk oxen, bear and Arctic hare to insure plenty of food for the immediate future.

A MESSAGE FROM THE FROZEN NORTH.

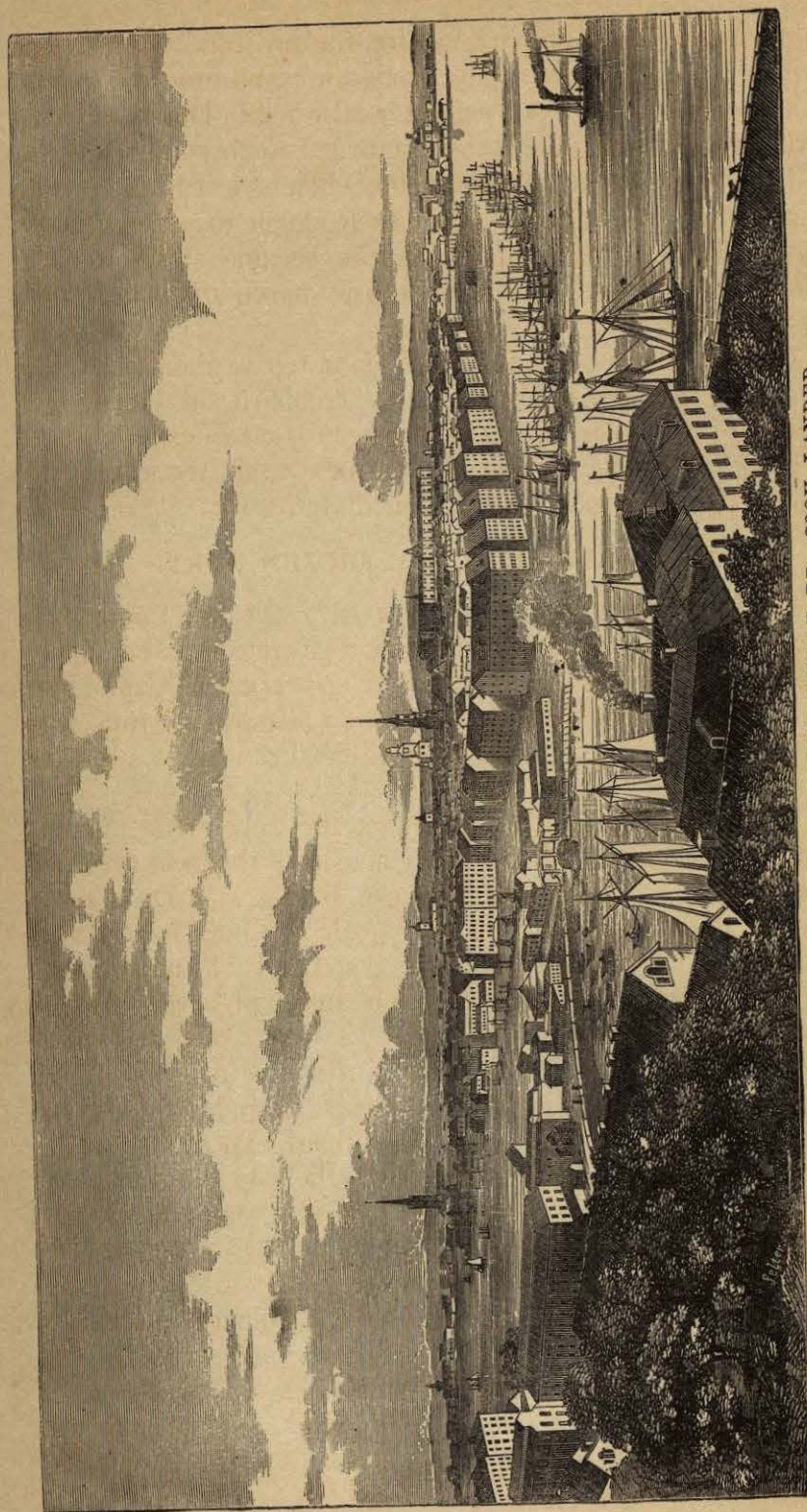
The last word the world received from Dr. Cook until September 1, 1909, was in a letter to Francke at the supply station. This was written on March 17, 1908, at Cape Hubbard. It instructed Francke to wait at Etah until June, and if Cook had not appeared by that time Francke was to take the first whaler back to America.

When Cook failed to appear at the appointed time his companion fell in with the Peary auxiliary ship and returned to America. But before Francke finally left Dr. Cook's supply station he had made a trip to North Star Island, and, finding no whalers there, had returned to Etah, under great privations, to find that the supply hut had been rifled by marauding Esquimos.

The theft of these supplies was a source of peril to Dr. Cook, and when nothing had been heard from him his Brooklyn friends decided to send out a relief expedition. They raised a fund, which was applied to help fit out the Peary relief ship *Jeannette*, which was to bring home Dr. Cook if he could be found.

The explorer's failure to state explicitly in his first message to his wife that he had reached the Pole led to considerable doubt as to the authenticity of the report, until the confirmatory cablegram reached Copenhagen.

Mr. Bradley gave this account of Cook's start for the Pole. It was made public just before Doctor Cook's ship reached Copenhagen.



VIEW OF COPENHAGEN, DENMARK, WHERE DR. COOK LANDED.

"The only reports I have received," he said, "have been through the newspapers. This, I believe, is due to the fact that Dr. Cook doesn't speak any language but English, and he is waiting to file his regular message at Copenhagen, where his ship is expected to arrive on Saturday.

"If the reports received by the newspapers are correct, the expedition has come out just as we planned before I left Dr. Cook at Etah. When he started for the Pole, he arranged to return to civilization without the aid of a ship. This he has done, according to the published reports.

PROVISIONS ENOUGH FOR THREE YEARS.

"Dr. Cook was supplied with enough provisions to last him for three years if necessary. He also carried one hundred pounds in gold to pay for his return passage. Being an experienced explorer, he was familiar with the country he traveled, and was prepared to take a different route from that followed by other explorers who have attempted to reach the Pole.

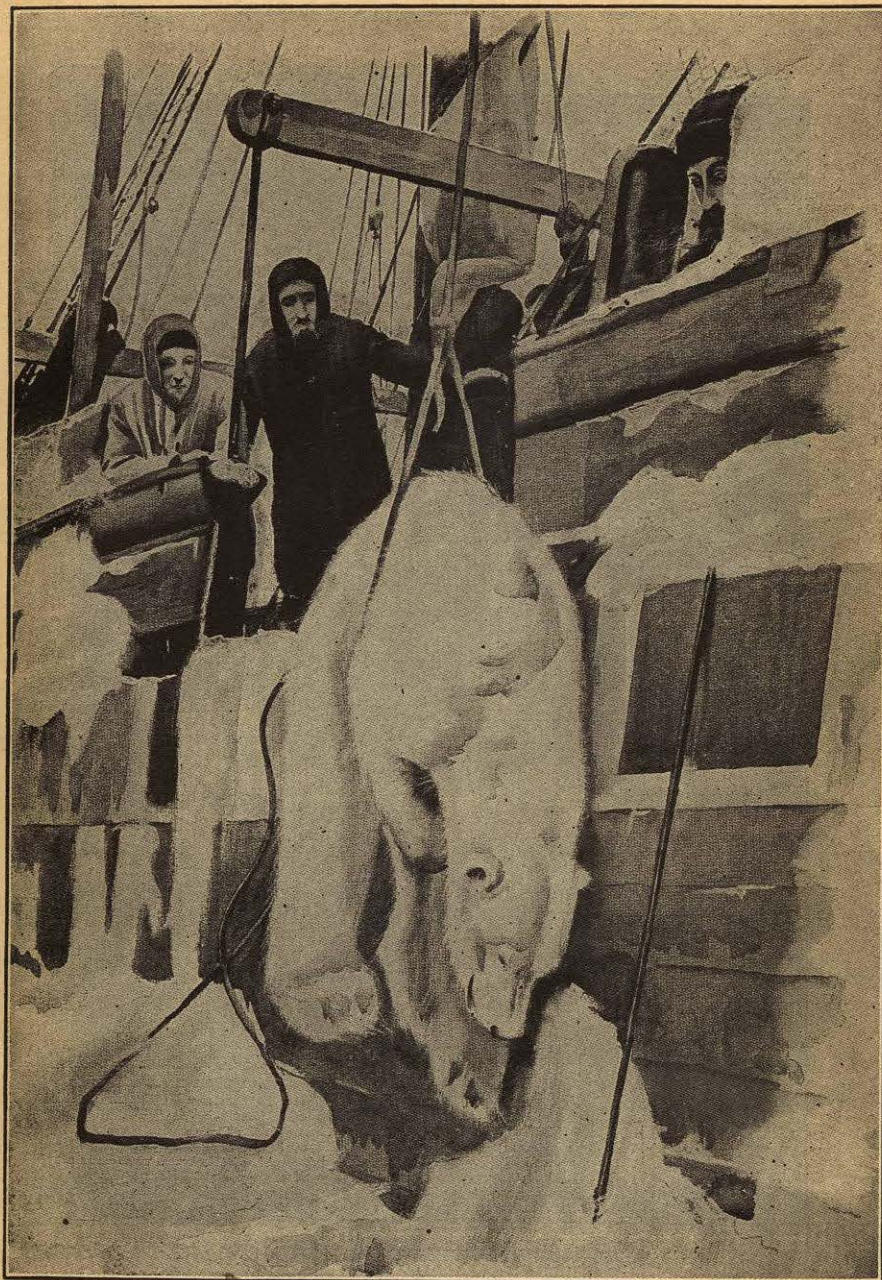
"I have never had any doubt as to Dr. Cook's success.

"The expedition was not really started until we were about to part company at Etah. We had simply gone to Greenland on a hunting trip. After I had shot a few polar bears and was preparing to return, Dr. Cook suggested that as he had gone so far he would like to continue on to the North Pole. I told him I would leave the entire expedition to him, and arrangements were made for his plunge northward.

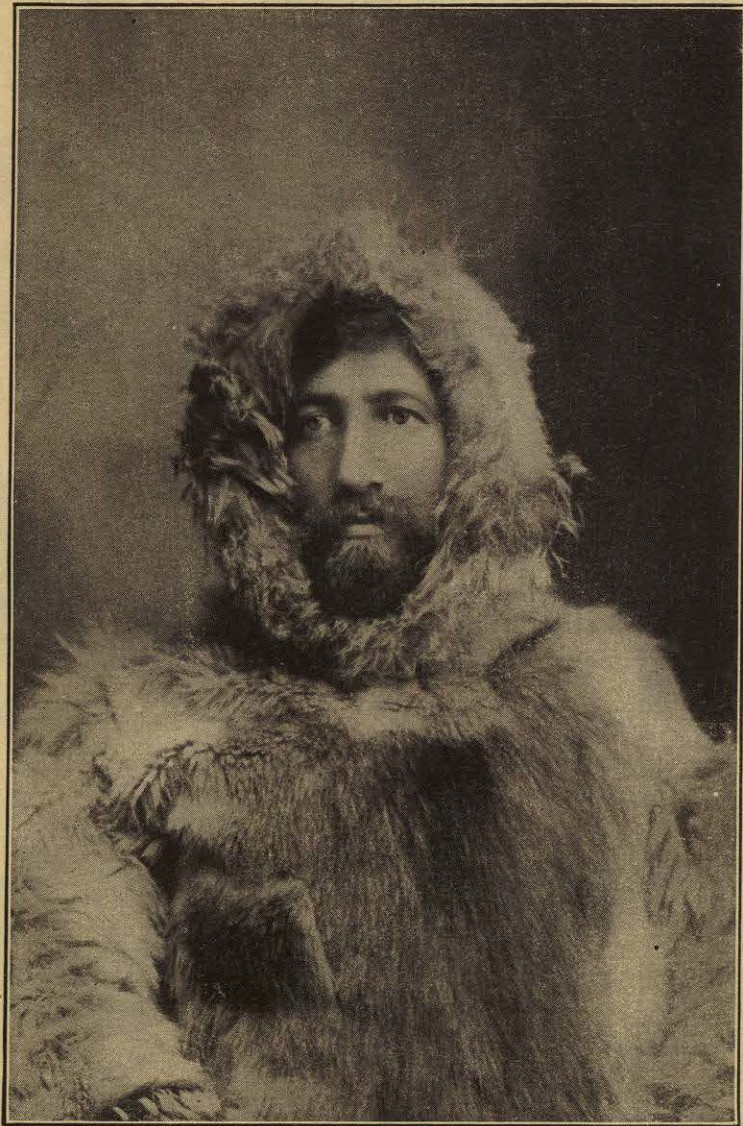
"He was accompanied by Rudolph Francke, who was formerly my cook, but Francke returned, after falling a victim to a severe illness. Dr. Cook was travelling light. With his equipment of dogs and sledges his best time would be sixty miles a day. Instead of carrying heavy stoves of ten to fifteen pounds, as used by Greely, Dr. Cook was supplied with aluminum stoves of only three pounds weight. Everything else was reduced, proportionately.

"The Danish Government sends a blubber ship up along the coast of Cape York, a little Danish settlement. It is due to return about September, and in all probability Dr. Cook is on that boat."

At a meeting of the Explorers' Club, of New York, in

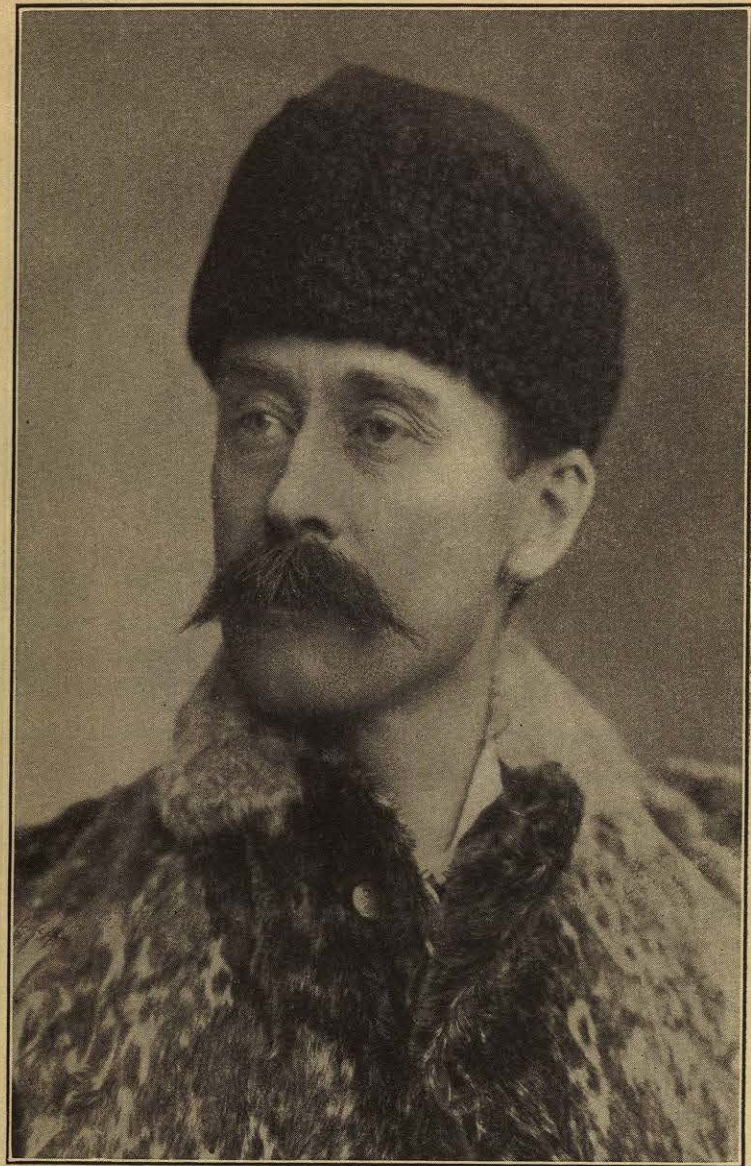


ON THE WAY TO THE NORTH POLE—TAKING
CHRISTMAS DINNER ABOARD SHIP



DR. FREDERICK A. COOK
IN ARCTIC COSTUME

ON THE WAY TO THE NORTH POLE TAKING
CHRISTMAS DINNER ABOARD SHIP



COMMANDER ROBERT E. PEARY

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