

CHAPTER III.

THE BOY IS FATHER TO THE MAN.

Discoverer's Early Adventures—Started Career When But a Boy—Medicine Chosen as Profession—First Polar Trip—Plan for Dash Kept Secret—Picturesque Career of His Backer, Mr. Bradley—Explorer's Sister Tells of Dr. Cook's Ambition—Feels for Peary in Disappointment.

DR. FREDERICK A. COOK was born in Callicoon, Sullivan county, N. Y., on June 10, 1864. He celebrated his forty-fifth birthday somewhere in the frozen North in June, 1909. His father was Dr. Theodore A. Cook, who came to this country from Hamburg, Germany, about the year 1850.

Dr. Cook is one of four children, three sons and a daughter. His parents are dead, his mother having lived until two years ago, soon before Dr. Cook made his dash for the Pole. His sister is Mrs. Lilian Murphy, of Toms River, N. J. His other brother lives now in the house where Dr. Cook was born in Callicoon, N. Y. It is one of the oldest houses in that part of the State.

Until he was six years old the explorer's life was an easy one. His father was one of the first physicians to establish himself in that section of Sullivan county. The place was a wilderness, but developed rapidly, and the older Cook's practice expanded with the territory's development.

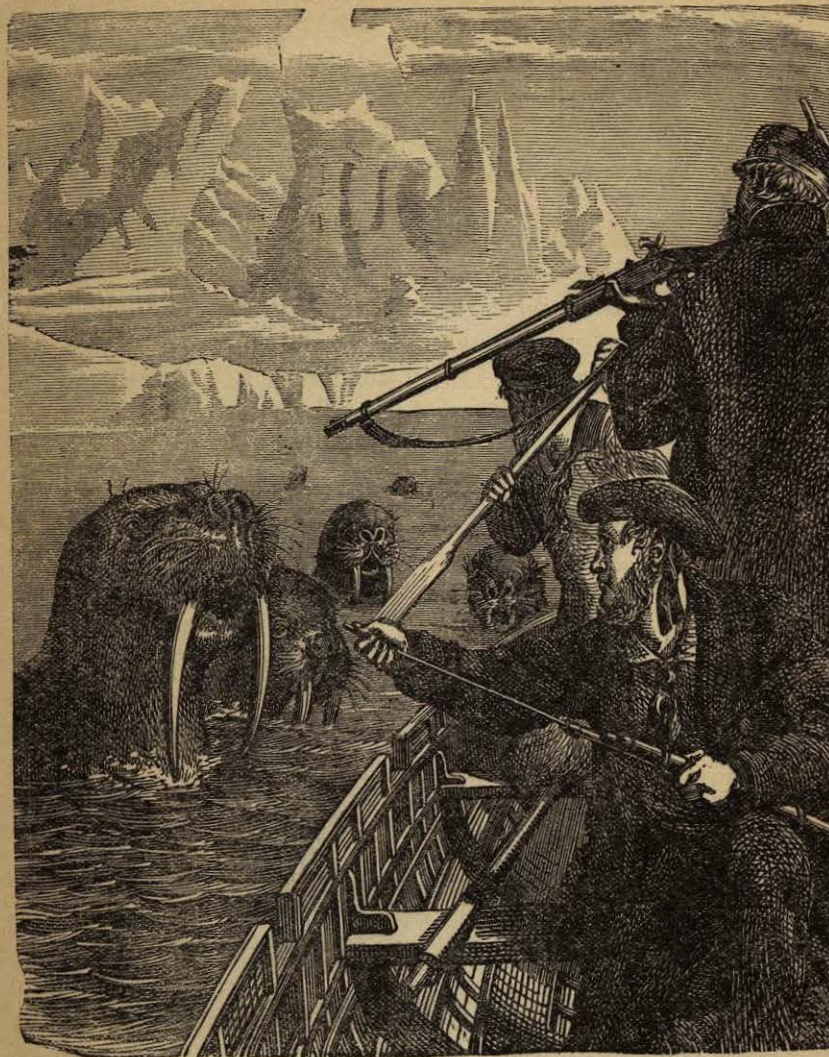
Dr. Cook's father died in the Cook homestead. There was fifteen acres of land contained in the little farm that was left to his family. His oldest brother was then twelve years old.

Dr. Cook was permitted to attend the district school in Callicoon. His brothers went there also, and the family prospered on the products of the farm and the efforts of their mother and themselves to keep the household together.

Even at this early age Dr. Cook manifested a desire for adventure. Some of his love for exploration was also noticed. At every opportunity he would go off into the woods, always to an unknown place and endeavor to trace his way back home by following the direction he obtained from the sun. Frequently he was accompanied on these

youthful exploring expeditions by William L. Cook and his older brother.

The school year at the old district school in Callicoon lasted for a little more than four months. He always stood



ATTACKED BY WALRUS.

at the head of his class in the subjects. Geographical locations interested him. He gathered together every book upon the subject which he could obtain. He studied them closely and seemed never to tire of his pursuits in this direction.

Life in the Cook home went on much the same until Dr.

Cook had grown to the age of fourteen years. Then in 1878 the family found it more convenient to live in Port Jervis, N. Y.

"We were pretty nearly down and out," William Cook said, "when we went finally to our new home in Port Jervis. Fred, however, managed to work before and after school hours, so that he was able to continue his studies at the high school in Port Jervis. Life went on in much the same manner here as it had in Callicoon. Finally, in 1880, Fred came to Brooklyn."

Upon his arrival in New York city young Cook obtained employment in Fulton Market. His brother William also went to work there. The young man, however, still retained his ambition as a student. He has always been a silent, thinking individual, and a book was accepted by him as his best companion.

WORKED WHILE ATTENDING SCHOOL.

Young Cook soon learned that he could study in high schools in New York at night. He attended one of these institutions in Brooklyn, but his brother is not sure whether it was the Boys' High School or another. It was while engaged in this work, making his living by day and studying by night that the younger Cook conceived the idea of bettering his financial condition and continuing his studies by a college course.

If Dr. Cook had any ambition to become an explorer in those early days he never mentioned it to his brothers. He continued, however, to display a deep interest in geography and followed the subject closely; more so than any other.

To study medicine seemed to fit him naturally when Dr. Cook chose a profession. His father had been a physician, and as far back as he knew the occupations of his ancestors on his father's side they had all followed the same calling in Germany.

So it came about that the young man chose the Columbia Medical School as the place for him to complete his education. Financial difficulties, however, entered largely into the young man's calculations. He determined to give up his place in Fulton Market, where he had been employed in

selling vegetables. He had saved a small sum of money since his arrival in New York.

With his accumulated earnings, at least with that part which had been left over after following his high school course, young Cook purchased a small, very small, milk business. He started out to enlarge the business, and his determination to succeed caused him to give almost all of his time to getting the business on such a paying basis as would permit him to enter Columbia.

In this he finally succeeded. Not much time, however, was free to him. It was necessary for Dr. Cook to begin work at 2 o'clock in the morning. He delivered his milk to his customers between that time and 7 o'clock in the morning. Then he hurried to his Brooklyn home, and with his books under his arm reported for study at Columbia at 9 o'clock in the morning.

SUCCESSFUL IN BUSINESS.

He remained in school until 4 o'clock in the afternoon. Between that time and 1 o'clock in the morning he slept. Lack of sleep, William Cook remarked, was made up on Saturdays and Sundays, when there was no school, but there was work on these days as well as others. Whatever few spare moments the young man had he spent in studying.

Young Cook's incessant labor and great effort to build up his business were so successful that he found the work growing beyond his power to control. He invited William to share the business with him on a partnership basis. With this accomplished, he continued his studies.

Because of his work, Dr. Cook required six years to complete his course at Columbia. He was a member of the class that graduated in 1891.

One year before Dr. Cook graduated from college he was married. His wife was Miss Libbie Forbes, a Brooklyn girl. She died one year later. There were no children by this marriage. About the time that Dr. Cook was being graduated Robert E. Peary was preparing for his trip to the Polar region. No surgeon had been selected for the trip, and he turned to the Columbia graduating class to select one.

Here was the chance for which young Cook seemed to have been waiting. Until this time he had not shown any de-

cided craving for travel. He had been too engrossed in the work of completing his education by his own efforts. His natural reticence, however, his relatives believe, may have had much to do with his failure to make known his plans.

Dr. Cook freed now from the ties that had held him so closely to a quiet and confined life decided to make known his desire to go into the North. He requested to be sent as surgeon on the Peary expedition. Whether there were other applicants William Cook does not know, but his brother succeeded in obtaining the assignment to the ship that was soon to leave for the Polar region.

FIRST POLAR TRIP.

This was the beginning of Dr. Cook's ambition to find the North Pole. He went frequently into the North on later expeditions, returning always with a more pronounced love for exploration, and filled even to a greater degree with his ambition to be the one to go down in history as the discoverer of the Pole.

Between his trips into the Polar region Dr. Cook established himself in the Williamsburg section of Brooklyn and carried on his practice as a physician. Here his indomitable will, always with the fixed purpose of finding the Pole, helped him to greater efforts. Success came to him in his practice.

In 1902 Dr. Cook again married. His second wife was Mrs. Marion F. H. Hunt, widow of a well-known and wealthy Philadelphia physician and surgeon. She had one child, Ruth. From this marriage Dr. Cook now has one child, Helen, four years old.

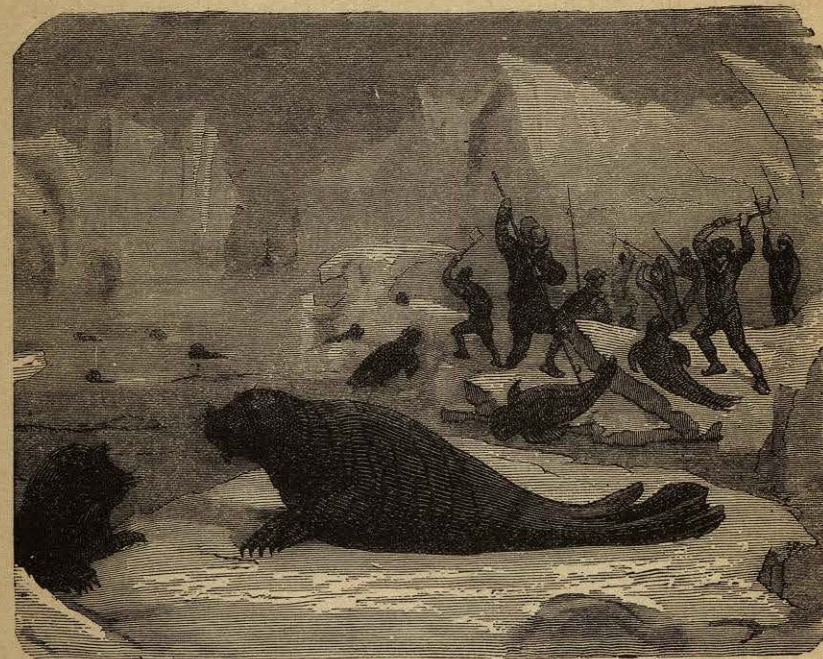
From the time of her marriage to Dr. Cook Mrs. Cook seemed to share enthusiastically his ambition to reach the North Pole. She entered heartily into all of his plans, and was ready at all times to assist him in every possible way.

One of Dr. Cook's characteristics was a love for organization. He was a regular attendant during his life in Brooklyn of the South Second Street Methodist Episcopal Church. He seemed to lean toward sociability, though it was difficult for him to become intimate with any one. He organized several social clubs from among the friends he had made in church circles.

Dr. Cook is an interesting conversationalist. His wide

knowledge of generally misunderstood subjects has made him very popular. Physically Dr. Cook does not impress persons as powerful. He is about five feet eight inches in height and weighs about 145 pounds. When Dr. Cook left Brooklyn on his last trip none of his friends, and, it has been asserted, not even his wife, had been told by him that he had even the slightest intention of considering a dash toward the Pole.

Members of the Explorers' Club, of Brooklyn, and men



A BATTLE WITH BLADDER-NOSES.

who know the explorer intimately declare that Dr. F. A. Cook is somewhat of a "dreamer," and that it is due to his restlessness and love of adventure that he has been enabled to come to the front in the world as he has done. Doctor Cook is represented as a quiet man who does not permit any one to obtain his secrets until he has them developed. In common parlance Doctor Cook may be said to be a self-made man, of great determination.

His friends declare that remarks detrimental to him at this time would be much like the late Rev. T. DeWitt Talmage's favorite sermon, "cut behind." Dr. Talmage had

an apt expression that applied to those who said sneering and unkind things of the successful. It was best illustrated by boys stealing a ride on the back of a wagon. Those who failed to get on notified the driver to "cut behind." That is, swing his whip and catch the rider. So Doctor Cook's friends declare that they are in that position to-day.

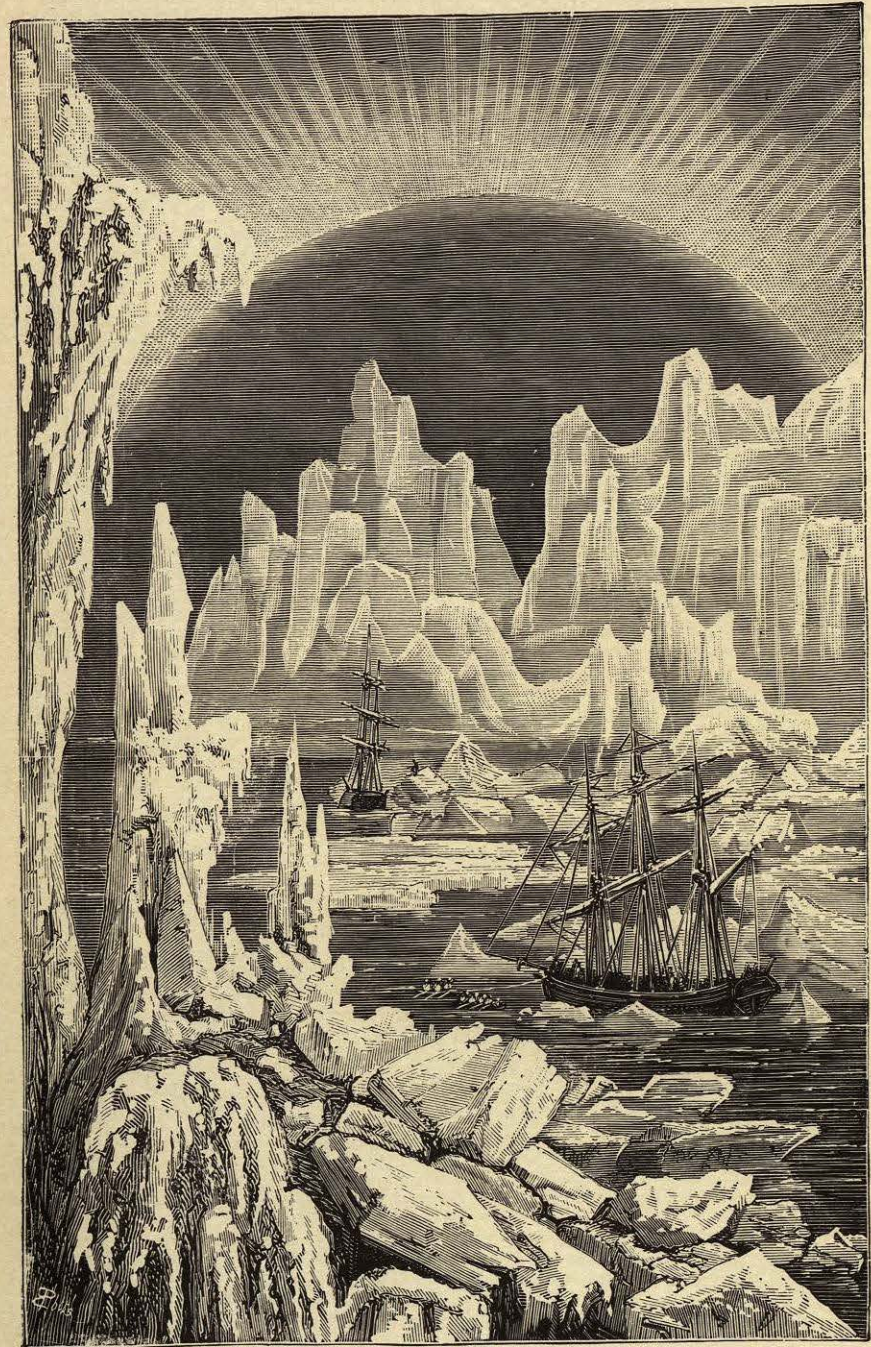
To the world Doctor Cook first came into prominence in connection with the Peary expedition to the Arctic regions, and it was declared that he could not agree with the naval officer, and consequently was sent to the rear. Be that as it may, the doctor severed his relationship with Peary. His ascent of Mount McKinley in 1906 has been called into question by Prof. Herschel C. Parker, of Columbia University, who was one of the exploration party, but who left before the final ascension was made. Strange as it may seem, the same charge was made in the Mount McKinley case as is used in the North Pole controversy, namely, that sufficient time did not elapse to have accomplished the feat.

PERSEVERANCE AND GRIT.

John R. Bradley, the man who furnished the funds that enabled Cook to make the recent polar trip, has unbounded confidence in him. Perseverance and grit are the two qualities which Doctor Cook has to thank for getting him through the Arctic ice to the Pole and back again, says Mr. Bradley, who is somewhat of an explorer himself. So firmly has Mr. Bradley trusted all along in Doctor Cook's courage to bring him through that he refused last year to take any interest in a movement set on foot to start a relief expedition in search of the explorer. Many were convinced that Doctor Cook had perished in the ice, but Mr. Bradley scouted the idea, and predicted that he would turn up this fall according to the original schedule.

This action displayed another trait in Doctor Cook's character. His sensitiveness and desire to do something that would bring him fame. He knew that Peary intended to seek the North Pole. So the doctor decided to go secretly and capture the prize first. At his success the world marvels.

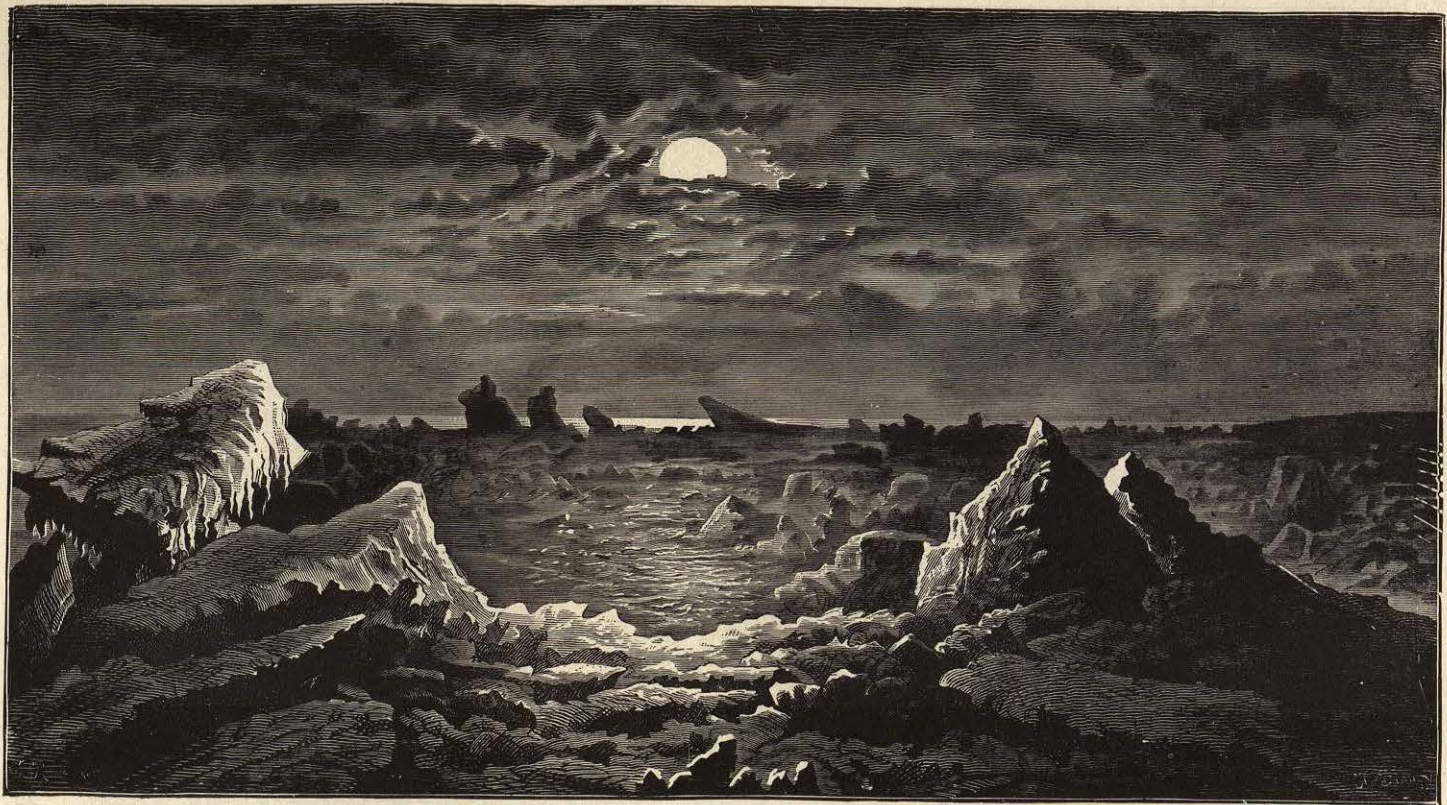
When the news of Dr. Cook's finding of the North Pole was flashed all over the world, no one, with the possible exception of the explorer's wife, was more overjoyed at his



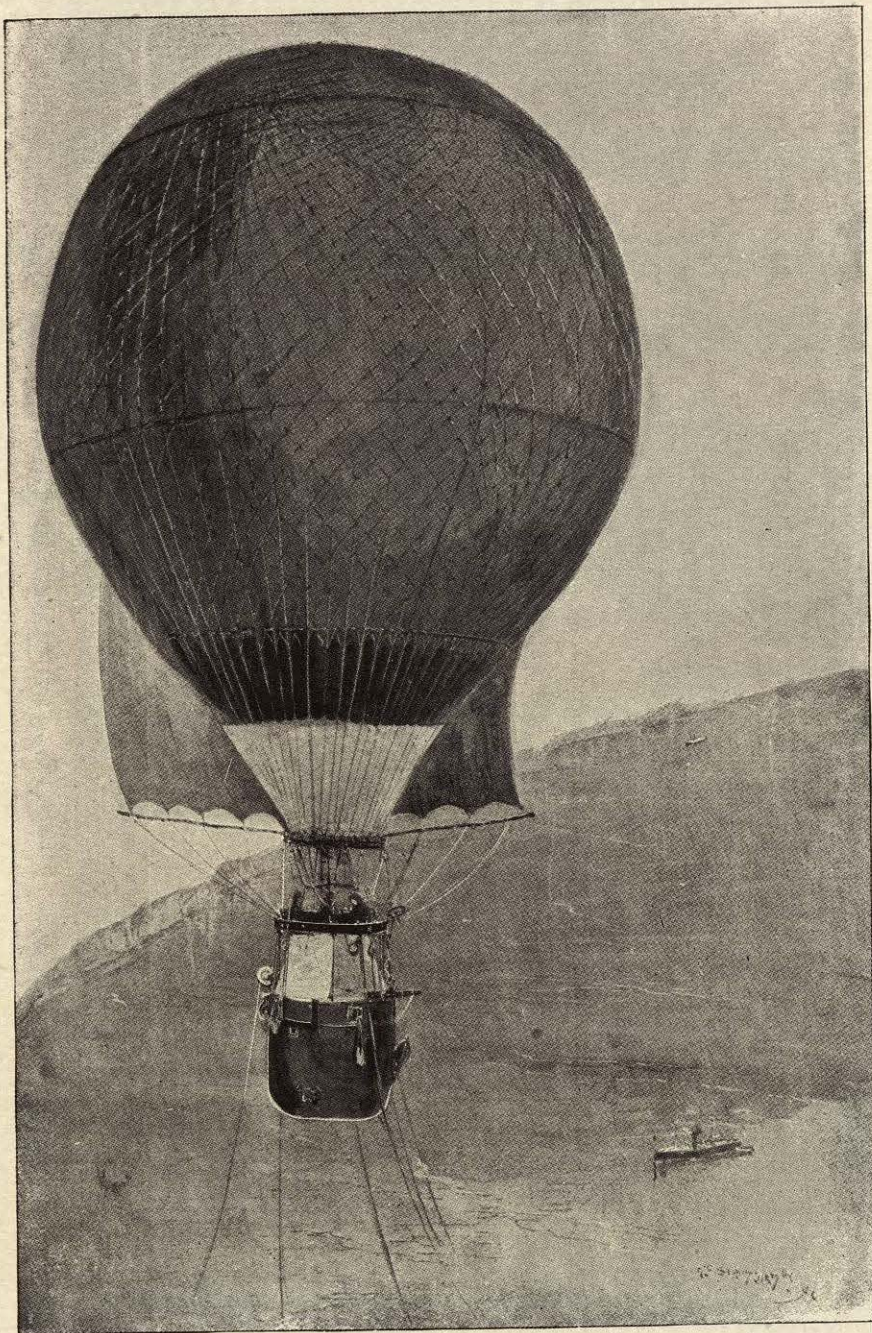
SCENE AMONG ICEBERGS IN THE POLAR REGION.



KAISER FRANZ-JOSEPH'S LAND.



SCENE IN THE POLAR REGIONS—THE EDGE OF THE ICE-PACK.



DR. ANDREE'S ILL-FATED BALLOON VOYAGE
DEPARTURE FROM SPITZBERGEN IN SEARCH OF NORTH POLE



LIEUTENANT ROBERT E. PEARY
RENOWNED ARCTIC EXPLORER.