

INTRODUCTION.

It appears from the letters and papers of Captain Hall, purchased by the Government from his widow and now in possession of the Navy Department, that the expedition of the *Polaris* to the Arctic regions originated with him and was carried into execution according to his own plans.

During two prolonged residences among the Esquimaux—a period, to use his own language, of “about eight years”—he repeatedly speaks of his desire and purpose to lead such an expedition. Indeed, as far back as the beginning of the year 1863, in a letter written to Mr. L. J. Cist, of Saint Louis, shortly after his return from his first expedition, he says: “My third voyage to the Arctic regions will be (D. V.) for discovery, to the northern axis of the great globe.” This resolution he steadily maintained until the opportunity presented itself for carrying it into execution.