

INTRODUCTION.

"So Zemblas rocks (the beauteous work of Frost)
Rise white in air, and glitter o'er the coast;
Pale suns, unfelt, at distance roll away,
And on the impassive ice the light'nings play;
Eternal snows the growing mass supply,
Till the bright mountains prop the incumbent sky;
As Atlas fix'd, each hoary pile appears,
The gather'd winter of a thousand years."

POPE. *The Temple of Fame*, lines 53-60.

FROM the earliest period in which we find history recording the dawn of discovery in the far north, down to the present time, that portion of the northern hemisphere lying within the Arctic Circle has not failed to attract a due share of attention from the maritime nations of Europe. During the last two centuries and a half, the imperial government of Russia sent out upwards of fifty expeditions to explore the polar regions adjacent to that vast empire. Denmark, or, more properly speaking, Scandinavia, although perhaps on a less extensive scale than Russia, was the first, how-