

of his coming. The far-off din of his approaching victorious march makes the air tremulous, and tells that the mighty conqueror is at hand. The very silence of these yet uninvaded recesses proclaims his name and prophesies his dominion. Nature awaits her king and eagerly listens for his footsteps. In the depths of American forests, where the sound of axe has never resounded, the winds, in their march amid the pine tops, murmur his name, and the rushing streams take up the secret and spread it far and wide over the plains, and at the glad intelligence "all the trees of the forest clap their hands." Nay, even in the icy solitudes around the pole, in the awful stillness of the arctic night, there is a murmur in the air which speaks of human approach, and predicts the not distant day when man will pierce these ice-barriers which have so long defied his efforts, and burst into the unknown waters of the Polar Sea. For all earth is given to man, as his fair domain, to gather up its treasures, and subdue it to his use and pleasure.

There are two regions which have hitherto withstood the most determined efforts of the explorer, and driven him back, baffled and defeated. I refer to those portions of the earth's surface which spread around the north and south poles. These extensive tracts nature has guarded with such formidable ice-ramparts, that the bravest navigators have failed to pierce them, although their attempts have been renewed again and again, during the last three centuries. If we take the north polar region, we find, first of all, around the north pole, an ocean of enormous extent, at least two thousand miles in diameter, and having an area of more than three millions of square miles. We find further, that this polar sea is almost entirely surrounded by land, and almost at a uniform distance from the pole; but that everywhere its shores are within the region of perpetual frost. The northern coasts of Asia and Europe, as well as those of America, terminate about 70° N. lat., which may be regarded as the general boundary line of the polar sea; but within this boundary, and separated from the mainland, are some of the largest archipelagos in the world. A glance at the map shows us vast land-masses, separated from the northern coasts of America by very narrow straits. Then comes Greenland, having an unknown northern extension, and on the east of it the extensive group of islands known under the name of Spitzbergen, the small island of Jan Mayen, Iceland, Nova Zembla, and the