


## INTRODUCTION.

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HE Arctic regions have hitherto been interesting chiefly as a field for Geographical research. The Diary, comprised in the following pages of the six months' Cruise of the "Esquimaux," may serve to show that the Polar Seas and Shores offer opportunities and conditions most attractive to the keen sportsman. Bracing air, grand and diversified scenery, and life under conditions absolutely novel are in these latitudes the accompaniments of varied, and, in most instances, exciting adventure. Besides the pursuit of the whale, narwhal, walrus, seal, bear and deer, there is abundant employment for net and gun in gathering salmon, wild duck and looms. The latter rarely fail to afford excellent shooting when big game does not happen to be at hand.

Although one of the most fascinating forms of sport whaling has up to the present time been considered wholly as a commercial adventure. The value of the Whale Fishery, and the fact that a well grown whale is worth £2,000, go a long way to account for this view.

But the whale is not easy to find, and when found creates an amount of excitement even among the oldest of hands, which culminates only with success, or changes into despair in the event of failure. He may justly be reckoned among the finest of big game.

Built in 1865 the "Esquimaux," in spite of her thirty-four years, proved one of the soundest and most comfortable sea boats afloat. We had every reason to be well satisfied with the old ship, and not less so with our skipper, Captain McKay, whose experience in the