

# NIMROD IN THE NORTH.

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## CHAPTER I.

### THE POLAR BEAR.



OUR first introduction to this boreal Bruin, "the tiger of the ice," as an Arctic writer has aptly termed him, occurred in the latter part of July, 1878, when we encountered the Eskimo of the Savage Islands, on the northern coast of Hudson's Strait, who had, among other kinds of Arctic merchandise, a number of polar bear skins to sell. These simple natives are certainly easily satisfied, or, more properly speaking, easily cheated; for half-a-tumblerful of shot secured four saddles of reindeer meat, while a fine polar bear robe was obtained for half-plug (one-twelfth of a pound of Navy six) of tobacco and a few charges of powder. Twenty-five caps were given for one fifth as many white fox skins, and many other things were paid for in the same proportion. I bought three dogs—all they had brought in their *oomien*, or seal-skin scow—for my party, and when I gave them something approximately near their true value (for I was not a little disgusted with the Shylock manner in which they had been treated), their astonishment knew no bounds, and one old fellow, with a huge smile breaking through an inch of dirt, so insisted on rubbing noses with me, that, although the ceremony was a pledge of eternal friendship, I almost repented of the act of justice which he mistook for generosity.