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THE POLARIS EXPEDITION.

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PART II.

[IN this practical age we are accustomed to determine the value of things by their results. Theories may be very ingenious and plausible, but unless they stand the test of practice or experiment, they command small respect. This is a beautiful and complicated machine, but we ask, will it do the work? This is a most venerable institution, but has it ceased to be effective, or does it still retain its hold upon the hearts and lives of living men? This expedition in search of the springs of the Nile is very heroic, but *cui bono*? These men, who set out to do battle with the ice-floes of the Arctic seas, are very brave and their enterprises very daring, and the amount of human toil and endurance which they have undergone is something wonderful; but after all, what good is to come of their efforts in cleaving ice-fields and sledging along hundreds of miles of foreign desolate shores, where even the wretched Esquimaux cannot exist? Such questions are often put in a narrow, cold, utilitarian spirit that is satisfied with nothing short of results that may be measured and described, and which ignores the higher issues—the intellectual and moral consequences which cannot be weighed in the common balance. But still, while we protest against this contracted, commercial view, we must allow, in all fairness, that fruit must be looked for, as the product of human energy, and that objectless