



# AMONG THE POLAR BEARS:

THE ADVENTURES OF  
CAPT. HEMSKERK AND HIS CREW.



## CHAPTER I.

### THE FAR NORTH.



PREVIOUS to the formation of the Suez Canal, which connects the Mediterranean with the Red Sea, all ships from Europe to India and China had to proceed round the Cape of Good Hope. This was a long and tedious route for vessels on their way to Northern Asia, and three hundred years ago it would have been both difficult and dangerous to send merchandise by way of Russia. It was in consequence of this that the maritime nations of Northern Europe early endeavoured to discover a passage for their vessels