

FARTHEST NORTH

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

“A time will come in later years when the Ocean will unloose the bands of things, when the immeasurable earth will lie open, when seafarers will discover new countries, and Thule will no longer be the extreme point among the lands.”—SENECA.

UNSEEN and untrodden under their spotless mantle of ice the rigid polar regions slept the profound sleep of death from the earliest dawn of time. Wrapped in his white shroud, the mighty giant stretched his clammy ice-limbs abroad, and dreamed his age-long dreams.

Ages passed—deep was the silence.

Then, in the dawn of history, far away in the south, the awakening spirit of man reared its head on high and gazed over the earth. To the south it encountered warmth, to the north, cold; and behind the boundaries of the unknown it placed in imagination the twin kingdoms of consuming heat and of deadly cold.

But the limits of the unknown had to recede step by step before the ever-increasing yearning after light and