

previous to the expedition of which the present work treats.

By way of the sea between Greenland and Spitzbergen, several attempts have been made to penetrate the secrets of the domain of ice. In 1607 Henry Hudson endeavored to reach the Pole along the east coast of Greenland, where he was in hopes of finding an open basin and a waterway to the Pacific. His progress was, however, stayed at 73° north latitude, at a point of the coast which he named "Hold with Hope." The German expedition under Koldewey (1869-70), which visited the same waters, reached by the aid of sledges as far north as 77° north latitude. Owing to the enormous masses of ice which the polar current sweeps southward along this coast, it is certainly one of the most unfavorable routes for a polar expedition. A better route is that by Spitzbergen, which was essayed by Hudson, when his progress was blocked off Greenland. Here he reached $80^{\circ} 23'$ north latitude. Thanks to the warm current that runs by the west coast of Spitzbergen in a northerly direction, the sea is kept free from ice, and it is without comparison the route by which one can the most safely and easily reach high latitudes in ice-free waters. It was north of Spitzbergen that Edward Parry made his attempt in 1827, above alluded to.

Farther eastward the ice-conditions are less favorable, and therefore few polar expeditions have directed their course through these regions. The original object