

INTRODUCTION

SOME years ago I met at a dinner in Washington the famous Norwegian arctic explorer, Nansen, himself one of the heroes of polar adventure; and he remarked to me, "Peary is your best man; in fact I think he is on the whole the best of the men now trying to reach the Pole, and there is a good chance that he will be the one to succeed." I cannot give the exact words; but they were to the above effect; and they made a strong impression on me. I thought of them when in the summer of 1908 I, as President of the United States, went aboard Peary's ship to bid him Godspeed on the eve of what proved to be his final effort to reach the Pole. A year later, when I was camped on the northern foothills of Mt. Kenia, directly under the equator, I received by a native runner the news that he had succeeded, and that thanks to him the discovery of the North Pole was to go on the honor roll of those feats in which we take a peculiar pride because they have been performed by our fellow countrymen.

Probably few outsiders realize the well-nigh incredible toil and hardship entailed in such an achievement as Peary's; and fewer still understand how many years of careful training and preparation there must be before the feat can be even attempted with any chance of success. A "dash for the pole" can be successful only if there have been many preliminary years of painstaking, patient toil. Great physical hardihood and endurance, an iron will and unflinching courage, the power of command, the thirst

for adventure, and a keen and farsighted intelligence — all these must go to the make-up of the successful arctic explorer; and these, and more than these, have gone to the make-up of the chief of successful arctic explorers, of the man who succeeded where hitherto even the best and the bravest had failed.

Commander Peary has made all dwellers in the civilized world his debtors; but, above all, we, his fellow Americans, are his debtors. He has performed one of the great feats of our time; he has won high honor for himself and for his country; and we welcome his own story of the triumph which he won in the immense solitudes of the wintry North.

THEODORE ROOSEVELT.

THE WHITE NILE, March 12, 1910.

THE NORTH POLE

ITS DISCOVERY IN 1909 UNDER THE
AUSPICES OF THE PEARY
ARCTIC CLUB

BY
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WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY
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AND A FOREWORD BY
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*WITH EIGHT FULL-PAGE ILLUSTRATIONS REPRODUCING PHOTOGRAPHIC
ENLARGEMENTS COLORED BY HAND; ONE HUNDRED
ILLUSTRATIONS IN BLACK-AND-WHITE, FROM
PHOTOGRAPHS; AND WITH A MAP IN
COLORS BY GILBERT H.
GROSVENOR*