

**FAST IN THE ICE; OR,
ADVENTURES IN THE
POLAR REGIONS**

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Fast in the Ice; Or, Adventures in the Polar Regions by R. M. Ballantyne

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BY

R. M. BALLANTYNE,

AUTHOR OF "DOG CRUSOE," "GORILLA HUNTERS," "WILD
MAN OF THE WEST," ETC.



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FAST IN THE ICE.

CHAPTER I.

OUTWARD BOUND.

ONE day, many years ago, a brig cast off from her moorings, and sailed from a British port for the Polar Seas. That brig never came back.

Many a hearty cheer was given, many a kind wish was uttered, many a handkerchief was waved, and many a tearful eye gazed that day as the vessel left Old England, and steered her course into the unknown regions of the far north.

But no cheer ever greeted her return; no bright eyes ever watched her homeward-bound sails rising on the far-off horizon.

Battered by the storms of the Arctic Seas, her sails and cordage stiffened by the frosts, and her hull rasped and shattered by the ice of those regions, she was forced on a shore where the green grass has little chance to grow, where winter reigns nearly all the

year round, where man never sends his merchandise, and never drives his plough. There the brig was frozen in; there, for two long years, she lay unable to move, and her starving crew forsook her; there, year after year she lay, unknown, unvisited by civilized man, and unless the wild Eskimos* have torn her to pieces, and made spears of her timbers, or the ice has swept her out to sea and whirled her to destruction, there she lies still—hard and fast in the ice.

The vessel was lost, but her crew were saved, and most of them returned to tell their kinsfolk of the wonders and the dangers of the frozen regions, where God has created some of the most beautiful and some of the most awful objects that were ever looked on by the eye of man.

What was told by the fireside, long ago, is now recounted in this book.

Imagine a tall, strong man, of about five-and-forty, with short, curly black hair, just beginning to turn gray; stern black eyes, that look as if they could pierce into your

* This word is here spelt as pronounced. It is usually spelt Esquimaux.