

CHAPTER IV

BERING SEA AND ITS ISLANDS

THE surfaces of the arctic regions are to a much greater extent water than land. In some places more than two miles deep, its ocean is nearly two thousand miles long and one thousand miles broad. From Point Barrow, Alaska, to North Cape, Norway, a distance of more than three thousand miles, there is no known land. This extensive, land-enclosed sea, with an area of nearly two million square miles, is in the main unnavigable, owing to its being continually covered by densely packed ice floes, some of great extent and thickness.

Its water connections with the North Atlantic Ocean are shallow passages, whose submarine ridges, rising to within two hundred and fifty fathoms of the surface, permit a quite insignificant outflow. Of these outlets only one is of extent and importance, that between Svalbard (Spitsbergen) and Greenland. Through this passage pours into the Atlantic continuously an ice stream of incalculable magnitude, skirting the east coast of Greenland. Minor and unimportant outflows occur between ice-clad Northeast Land and Franz Josef archipelago, as well as from Kara Sea to the