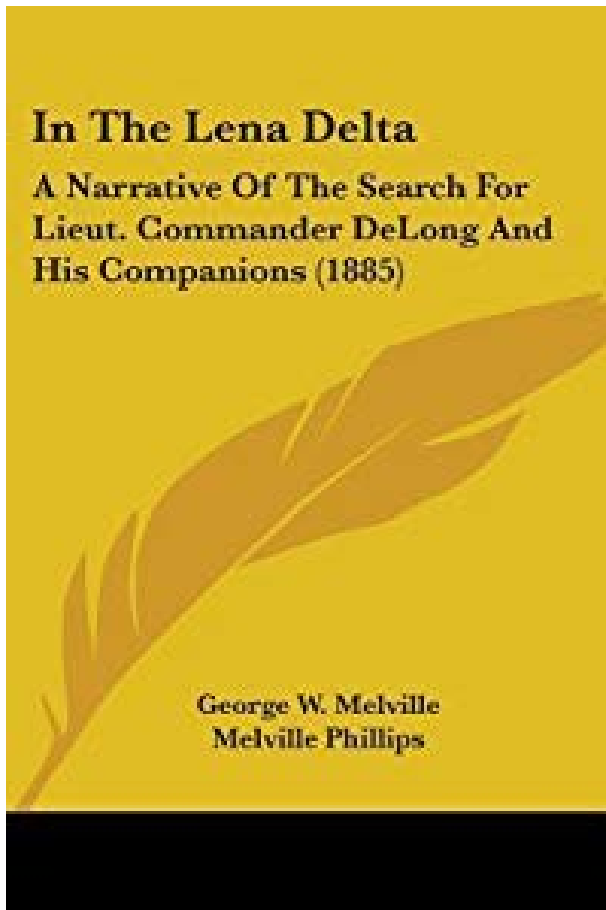


In the Lena Delta: A Narrative of the Search for Lieut. Commander DeLong and His Companions (1885)



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IN THE LENA DELTA A NARRATIVE OF THE SEARCH FOR LIEUT.-COMMANDER D E LONG AND HIS COMPANIONS FOLLOWED BY AN ACCOUNT OF THE GREELY RELIEF EXPEDITION A PROPOSED METHOD OF REACHING THE NORTH POLE BY GEORGE W. MELVILLE CHIEF ENGINEER U. S. N. EDITED BY MELVILLE PHILIPS WITH MAPS AND ILLUSTRATIONS BOSTON HOIJGHTON, MIFFLIN AND COMPANY New York 11 East Seventeenth Street 1885 Copyright, 1884, Br HOITGHTON, MIFFLIN CO. All rights reserved. EDITORS PEEFACE. IF it be true and Emerson affirms as much that great deeds deserve a fit and permanent record, then as surely there can be no need of explanation, much of apology, for the appearance of this work. We need books of this tart cathartic virtue, 5 wrote our New Eng land sage and so the editor flatters himself for having contributed to the birth of this one. The world knows the story of the lost Jeannette, the luck cruise and tedious drift of many months, the amazing march and terrible tribulation, the heroic en deavor and sad ending, the world is aware of all this, to be sure, because in all the worlds history it has no parallel and no matter the why or the wherefore, there is yet in this story a human sympathy that cannot be disguised, an abiding interest that overlooks the ques tion of utility. Perhaps there will be readers of this volume who, already acquainted with the prominent part played by our author in the many adventures attending the long ice - blockade of the Jeannette, may have expected a fuller account of that

interesting period than will be found herein and will consequently regard our brief narrative of it as insufficient and unsatisfactory. Certainly it does appear, considering the few pages devoted IV EDITORSPREFACE. to this prolonged and remarkable drift, that we have treated it too lightly and displayed an undue haste in transporting the reader to the shores of Siberia, Not all, it is true, of the Jeannettes experiences in the ice have been chronicled, but then more than enough have been published to enable the reader to gain an adequate idea of the wonderful voyage and retreat, and in the melancholy ice-journals 1 of Commander De Long these may be found embodied in their most permanent, authentic, and interesting form. Hence it was deemed advisable for this work, after affording the reader a running survey of the cruise and march, to begin its more elaborate discourse at the date of the separation of the three boats in the gale of September 12, 1881.

The events, indeed, which followed can have no competent historian save Chief Engineer Melville. He it was who directly gave rise to them, and was the prime mover and central figure in all the exploits In the Lena Delta. The greater portion of the authors manuscript was prepared between the months of January and April of this year 1884, and the final chapters were written at sea for, undaunted by his previous experiences, he sailed again in Arctic waters to the relief of Lieutenant Greeley and, moreover, he herein proposes, upon an original plan, to attain, the goal that has baffled the daring of Parry and of Franklin. One asks the utilitarian. There are numerous and well-known advantages that would result from the success of such a venture. Aside from the many useful facts that would be established concerning the laws of storms and wind-waves, the flattening of the earth at the 1 Voyage of the Jeannette, etc., Houghton, Mifflin Co.EDITORS PREFACE. v pole would be measured, and geographical science be plainly benefited. Additional information, too, would be gained in astronomy, meteorology, ocean physics, and natural history, a more thorough, knowledge of which would certainly add directly or indirectly to the comfort and safety of mankind. As to the rest, I refer the reader to the theory itself, merely observing that Prejudice, which, man pretends to hate, is, according to Carlyle, Ms absolute lawgiver. . . .