

BELOW ZERO
SONGS AND VERSES

FROM

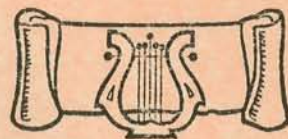
BERING SEA AND THE ARCTIC

BY

OFFICERS OF THE U. S. REVENUE CUTTER SERVICE

AND SOME OF THEIR FRIENDS

Below Zero



Songs and Verses

FROM

Bering Sea and the Arctic

BY

**OFFICERS OF THE U. S. REVENUE CUTTER SERVICE
AND SOME OF THEIR FRIENDS**

Originally printed in 1903 and reprinted in 1939 by
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Cold on his midnight watch the breezes blow
From the wastes that slumber in the eternal snow,
And wafts across the waves' tumultuous roar
The wolf's long howl from Unalaska's shore.

The Arctic

(Air: The Bowery)

I once went on a little cruise—
Call it a junket, or what you choose,
To spend the summer in the Bering Sea,
Protecting the sealing industry;
Searching for sealers in vain we ran,
Finally asked an Aleutian Man;
Said he, "Don't you know they're all in Japan?"
And I'll never go there any more.

CHORUS

The Arctic! The Arctic!
They say such things, and they do such things.
The Arctic! The Arctic!
I'll never go there any more.

I bought a gun to shoot a polar bear—
I had been told I could find them there—
Miles I traveled o'er the snow-clad hill,
And could find nothing but time to kill:
I asked a native were there bears there now;
He shook his head and remarked as how
The only game thereabouts was a cow,
And I'll never go there any more.

I thought I'd purchase a pelt or two,
So I went ashore and found a few;
They were a poor lot that the agent threw
Aside, but I thought perhaps that they might do;
I reached in my pocket, pulled out a stack
To buy enough skins for a sealskin sacque;
They cost London prices, and freight charges back,
And I'll never go there any more.

One summer day I passed on the street
A man dressed in furs from head to feet;
Said I, "Poor creature, to have to wear such clothes.
But they laughed and said, "That there
Is only an officer from the BEAR;"
And I'll never go there any more.

They told us the life would be awfully tough,
Of Bering Sea cruising we'd soon get enough,
We'd live on salt codfish and bread that's stale,
Sea-lion cutlets and blubber from whale,
We'd land in the surf in tempestuous seas,
Have our boat swamped, get a ducking and freeze,
And sail with a skipper a saint couldn't please,
And I'll never go there any more.

But I cannot be tough a bit;
I have seen nothing of roughing it;
Excellent fare, and nice fresh fish,
While sea-lion pup makes an excellent dish;
Our skipper is all that could be desired,
These surf stories are all inspired,
And the whole damn business makes me so tired
That I'll never go there any more.

* * *

Bering Sea

(Air: Beulah Land)

We've reached the land of Arctic fame,
Where we are sure to make a name;
We love the seals, the fog, the rain,
And great renown we'll surely gain.

CHORUS

O, Bering Sea! Bleak Bering Sea!
So long we've sought to sail o'er thee;
For ne'er can sailor salty be
Until he's sailed the Bering Sea,
And viewed Alaska's dreary shore,
And filled himself with Arctic lore.

Full many a sailor points with pride
To cruises o'er the ocean wide;
But they cannot compare with me,
For I have sailed the Bering Sea.

Columbus and Balboa, too,
And Nelson formed a salty crew;
But they are fresh to you and me,
They never sailed the Bering Sea.

Old Noah has our deep respect,
And yet he was not quite correct;
Instead of Ararat, you know,
He should have touched on Bogoslov.

Though years you've sailed on the fishing bank,
Trode slaver's deck and pirate's plank,
Seen Spanish Main and Crusoe's Isle,
At you we Arctic heroes smile.

What though you've weathered fiercest gales,
And every ocean you have sailed;
You cannot salty sailor be
Until you've sailed the Bering Sea.

We breakfast, dine, and sup on fat,
Eat walrus blubber and all of that,
Bull seals and whales are our delight,
And polar bears we love to fight.

Just think of all our dreary tracks,
To guard the jaunty sealskin saques,
And have old England laugh with glee,
While Yankees guard the Bering Sea.

And when they sound our funeral knell;
They'll say we've had our share of hell;
Our welcome sure in Heaven will be,
Because we've sailed the Bering Sea.

* * *

The Bear

(W. E. C. in the New York Sun)

A dandy, trim old craft, sir,
In weather bright and fine,
O'er smooth, green seas cavortin'
With quick winds, bright sunshine.

Off Sunny San Diego
In climate passing fair,
There never was a vessel built
To match the good ship BEAR.

But made for rougher coasts, mate,
And stiffer work was she,
And scorns fair-weather sailors,
Loves windward, shuns the lee.

The Bering, frozen Arctic
No terrors have for those
Who sails on craft like her, man,
Winged lady of the floes.

The Lost Mine

It was aboard the good ship BEAR
That sailed the Bering Sea
The skipper had taken along with him
A mining company.

He heard the yarn of a whaler bold
Who, fifty years ago,
Discovered a land of golden sand
Where the Arctic breezes blow.

So he posted a notice on the store
Of the Company N. A. C. *
And said to himself, "If the suckers bite,
It's a damn good thing for me.

"And if it proves there be no gold,
And there's not like to be,
The suckers will damn the whaler bold
And never think of me.
For the suckers' tin is as good as gold
To the hobo miners and me."

* North American Commercial Company, Dutch Harbor, Alaska.

Where The Sun Comes Up At Midnight

(Air: Mandalay)

Hear the rattle of our windlass as our anchor comes aweigh
We are bound for old Point Barrow and we make our start today.
Keep a tight hold on your dinner, for outside the South wind blows,
And unless you are a sailor, you'll be throwing up your toes.

Up in the Polar Sea, where the night is same as day,
Where our creditors can't touch us for the best part of our pay,
Where there ain't no lubbers seasick, cause the ship forgets to roll,
And the sun comes up at midnight from an ice pack round the pole.

Take me north to old Point Barrow, for 'tis there that I would be,
I am sick of this 'ere country and I guess it's sick of me;
I am tired of dodging tailors, breaking nickle-slot-machines,
And playing cards with fellows who are dragging off my jeans.

Up into the polar sea, where ice is delivered free
Where a man don't have to hustle like a bloomin' bee,
Where there's no Salvation Army, where the church bells never toll, ..
And the sun comes up at midnight from an ice pack round the pole.

I have had enough of actors, clubs and dinners, and these balls
Where one's knocked down to a lady, gets a dance and that is all;
On the street next day she greets you with an icy, polar stare,
She remembers to have met you but she disremembers where.

Up into the polar sea, where the Innuited maidens be,
There's a fat, bright-eyed waheeny who is longing now for me;
She is sitting in her igloo chewing on a mukluk sole,
Where the sun comes up at midnight from an ice pack round the pole.

I was thinking last November I had come away to stay,
But almost before I landed I had blowed in all my pay;
Now I've hocked my tailored outfit, yellow shoes and neckties queer,
And to save my life I couldn't raise the price of one small beer.

Up into the polar sea, with Point Barrow on our lee,
With a strip of open water leading north to eighty-three,
Where there ain't no bloody fashions to perplex a good man's soul,
And the sun comes up at midnight from an ice pack round the pole.

Take me north of old Point Barrow, where there ain't no east or west,
Where one has a thirst that lingers and where whiskey tastes the best,
Where the Arctic ice pack hovers twixt Alaska and the pole,
And there ain't no underwriters taking mortgage on one's soul.

Up into the polar sea, where the greasy whalers be,
Where "Cobergers" * do boat duty just the same as you and me;
Where the bloomin' seal and walrus on the ice floes bask and roll,
And the sun comes up at midnight from an ice pack round the pole.

* * *

* An officer accustomed to seek out easy duty.

The Arctic Hero

(With apologies to Mr. Rudyard Kipling and Lt. P. H. Scott)

Hear the rattle of our hero as he spins a yarn for you
Of thermometers at zero, latitude of eighty-two;
Fought a bull seal single handed, with Point Barrow on his lee,
Then he calmly raised his anchor and went on to eighty-three.
Up into the polar sea, fairly blowin' off with glee.
While the wind blew through his whiskers, this he blows to you and n
Docked the vessel by an iceberg, where the frisky walrus play,
That's the yarn he will spin you some two hundred times a day.

Then he tells of Oomiak maidens, Unalaska, wot t'hell?
Heathen names of heathen places makes him sound so awful swell;
Chignik Bay, a fat waheeney saw and loved him where he stood—
Fat Waheenys, he will tell you, are of Aleut's royal blood.
Bloomin' well I'd like to see fat Waheenys lovin' me.
Making sassy royal goo-goos up there in the polar sea;
Must a been a royal conquest that he made in Chignik Bay
For he'll sit and tell you of it some two hundred times a day.

Then he tells you of the tradin' that he done with Arctic men—
Ten cent bales of 'bacco kow-kow for a hundred dollar skin,
Four boat loads of walrus ivory for a box of carpet tacks
And a pair of carriage reindeer for a bloomin' dollar axe.
Up there in the polar sea ain't no place for you and me;
We're too all-fired conscientious to do things like that, you see.
No, I ain't no Arctic hero, and I think that I will stay
In the East and hear 'em tell it some two hundred times a day.

Christmas Greetings To The Bear

I'm not at all artistic, and pictures
I can't paint,
But sometimes the poetic muse my brain's
Been known to taint.
I can't make the gift I'd like
For I'm no millionaire;
But here's a Merry Christmas to the good
old boozing BEAR.

For years I've traveled far and wide,
For years I've sailed the deep,
For years I've known some officers
Who always lived asleep.
But no matter where I've traveled
Whether here or there,
God knows no ship I've ever seen could touch
the good old BEAR.

L'Envoi

Now that we've made six cruises,
And written all these rhymes,
And suffered all the hardships
Of those rigorous Arctic Climes,
We look to Charles Almighty,
For approval, and receive:
"You will start for North tomorrow,
Don't ask for any leave."