

forward, with painful effort. Slowly the day has approached; even now we are but in its early dawn; darkness still broods over vast tracts around the Pole.

Our ancestors, the old Vikings, were the first Arctic voyagers. It has been said that their expeditions to the frozen sea were of no moment, as they have left no enduring marks behind them. This, however, is scarcely correct. Just as surely as the whalers of our age, in their persistent struggles with ice and sea, form our outposts of investigation up in the north, so were the old Northmen, with Eric the Red, Leif, and others at their head, the pioneers of the polar expeditions of future generations.

It should be borne in mind that as they were the first ocean navigators, so also were they the first to combat with the ice. Long before other seafaring nations had ever ventured to do more than hug the coast lines, our ancestors had traversed the open seas in all directions, had discovered Iceland and Greenland, and had colonized them. At a later period they discovered America, and did not shrink from making a straight course over the Atlantic Ocean, from Greenland to Norway. Many and many a bout must they have had with the ice along the coasts of Greenland in their open barks, and many a life must have been lost.

And that which impelled them to undertake these expeditions was not the mere love of adventure, though that is, indeed, one of the essential traits of our national