

widely extended. Hence we may see that no work done in the service of investigation is ever lost, not even when carried out under false assumptions. England has to thank these chimeras in no small degree for the fact that she has become the mightiest seafaring nation of the world.

By many paths and by many means mankind has endeavored to penetrate this kingdom of death. At first the attempt was made exclusively by sea. Ships were then ill adapted to combat the ice, and people were loath to make the venture. The clinker-built pine and fir barks of the old Northmen were no better fitted for the purpose than were the small clumsy carvels of the first English and Dutch Arctic explorers. Little by little they learnt to adapt their vessels to the conditions, and with ever-increasing daring they forced them in among the dreaded floes.

But the uncivilized polar tribes, both those that inhabit the Siberian tundras and the Eskimo of North America, had discovered, long before polar expeditions had begun, another and a safer means of traversing these regions—to wit, the sledge, usually drawn by dogs. It was in Siberia that this excellent method of locomotion was first applied to the service of polar exploration. Already in the 17th and 18th centuries the Russians undertook very extensive sledge journeys, and charted the whole of the Siberian coast from the borders of Europe to Bering Strait. And they did not merely