

along the land against a strong current. There seemed to be no end to this land. Its discrepancy with every known map grew more and more remarkable, and I was in no slight dilemma. We had for long been far to the north of the most northern island indicated by Nordenskiöld.* My diary this day tells of great uncertainty. "This land (or these islands, or whatever it is) goes confoundedly far north. If it is a group of islands they are tolerably large ones. It has often the appearance of connected land, with fjords and points; but the weather is too thick for us to get a proper view. . . . Can this that we are now coasting along be the Taimur's Island of the Russian maps (or more precisely, Lapteff's map), and is it separated from the mainland by the broad strait indicated by him, while Nordenskiöld's Taimur Island is what Lapteff has mapped as a projecting tongue of land? This supposition would explain everything, and our observations would also fit in with it. Is it possible that Nordenskiöld found this strait, and took it for Taimur Strait, while in reality it was a new one; and that he saw Almquist's Islands, but had no suspicion that Taimur Island lay to the outside of them? The difficulty about this explanation is that the Russian maps mark no islands round Taimur Island. It is inconceivable that any one

* It is true that in his account of the voyage he expressly states that the continued very thick fog "prevented us from doing more than mapping out most vaguely the islands among and past which the *Vega* sought her way."