

without seeing so much as the track of a beast of any kind. A forlorn land, indeed! Most of the birds of passage had already taken their way south; we had met small flocks of them at sea. They were collecting for the great flight to the sunshine, and we, poor souls, could not help wishing that it were possible to send news and greeting with them. A few solitary Arctic and ordinary gulls were our only company now. One day I found a belated straggler of a goose sitting on the edge of the ice.

We steamed south in the evening, but still followed by the dead-water. According to Nordenskiöld's map, it was only about 20 miles to Taimur Strait, but we were the whole night doing this distance. Our speed was reduced to about a fifth part of what it would otherwise have been. At 6 A.M. (September 3d) we got in among some thin ice that scraped the dead-water off us. The change was noticeable at once. As the *Fram* cut into the ice crust she gave a sort of spring forward, and, after this, went on at her ordinary speed; and henceforth we had very little more trouble with dead-water.

We found what, according to the map, was Taimur Strait entirely blocked with ice, and we held farther south, to see if we could not come upon some other strait or passage. It was not an easy matter finding our way by the map. We had not seen Hovgaard's Islands, marked as lying north of the entrance to Taimur Strait; yet the weather was so beautifully clear