

satisfied. There was some chance, indeed, that this wind might loosen the ice farther north, and yesterday's experiences had given me the hope of being able, in case of necessity, to force a way through this strait; but now the wind was steadily driving larger masses of ice in past us; and this approach of winter was alarming—it might quite well be on us in earnest before any channel was opened. I tried to reconcile myself to the idea of wintering in our present surroundings. I had already laid all the plans for the way in which we were to occupy ourselves during the coming year. Besides an investigation of this coast, which offered problems enough to solve, we were to explore the unknown interior of the Taimur Peninsula right across to the mouth of the Chatanga. With our dogs and snow-shoes we should be able to go far and wide; so the year would not be a lost one as regarded geography and geology. But no! I could not reconcile myself to it! I could not! A year of one's life was a year; and our expedition promised to be a long one at best. What tormented me most was the reflection that if the ice stopped us now we could have no assurance that it would not do the same at the same time next year; it has been observed so often that several bad ice-years come together, and this was evidently none of the best. Though I would hardly confess the feeling of depression even to myself, I must say that it was not on a bed of roses I lay these nights until sleep came and carried me off into the land of forgetfulness.