

From these places it would be quickly thrown on to the ice.

“Saturday, December 23d. What we call in Norway ‘Little Christmas-eve.’ I went a long way west this morning, coming home late. There was packed up ice everywhere, with flat floes between. I was turned by a newly formed opening in the ice, which I dared not cross on the thin layer of fresh ice. In the afternoon, as a first Christmas entertainment, we tried an ice-blasting with four prisms of gun-cotton. A hole was made with one of the large iron drills we had brought with us for this purpose, and the charge, with the end of the electric connecting wire, was sunk about a foot below the surface of the ice. Then all retired, the knob was touched, there was a dull crash, and water and pieces of ice were shot up into the air. Although it was 60 yards off, it gave the ship a good jerk that shook everything on board, and brought the hoar-frost down from the rigging. The explosion blew a hole through the four-foot-thick ice, but its only other effect was to make small cracks round this hole.

“Sunday, December 24th (Christmas-eve), 67 degrees of cold (-37° C.). Glittering moonlight and the endless stillness of the Arctic night. I took a solitary stroll over the ice. The first Christmas-eve, and how far away! The observation shows us to be in $79^{\circ} 11'$ north latitude. There is no drift. Two minutes farther south than six days ago.”