

“Yes; lead us, if not to our goal—that would be too early—at least towards it; strengthen our hope; but perhaps—no, no perhaps. These brave boys of mine deserve to succeed. There is not a doubt in their minds. Each one’s whole heart is set on getting north. I can read it in their faces—it shines from every eye. There is one sigh of disappointment every time that we hear that we are drifting south, one sigh of relief when we begin to go north again, to the unknown. And it is in me and my theories that they trust. What if I have been mistaken, and am leading them astray? Oh, I could not help myself! We are the tools of powers beyond us. We are born under lucky or unlucky stars. Till now I have lived under a lucky one; is its light to be darkened? I am superstitious, no doubt, but I believe in my star. And Norway, our fatherland, what has the old year brought to thee, and what is the new year bringing? Vain to think of that; but I look at our pictures, the gifts of Werenskjöld, Munthe, Kitty Kieland, Skredsvig, Hansteen, Eilif Pettersen, and I am at home, at home!

“Wednesday, January 3d. The old lane about 1300 feet ahead of the *Fram* has opened again—a large rift, with a coating of ice and rime. As soon as ice is formed in this temperature the frost forces it to throw out its salinity on the surface, and this itself freezes into pretty salt flowers, resembling hoar-frost. The temperature is between 38° Fahr. and 40° Fahr. below zero (–39° C. to