

‘And your feet are not cold now?’ ‘No, I can’t say that they are, but one’s fingers get a little cold sometimes.’ Two of his had just been frost-bitten; but he refused to wear one of the wolf-skin suits which I had given out for the meteorologists. ‘It is too mild for that yet; and it does not do to pamper one’s self,’ he says.

“I believe it was when the thermometer stood at 40° below zero that Hansen rushed up on deck one morning in shirt and drawers to take an observation. He said he had not time to get on his clothes.

“At certain intervals they also take magnetic observations on the ice, these two. I watch them standing there with lanterns, bending over their instruments; and presently I see them tearing away over the floe, their arms swinging like the sails of the windmill when there is a wind pressure of 32 to 39 feet—but ‘it is not at all cold.’ I cannot help thinking of what I have read in the accounts of some of the earlier expeditions—namely, that at such temperatures it was impossible to take observations. It would take worse than this to make these fellows give in. In the intervals between their observations and calculations I hear a murmuring in Hansen’s cabin, which means that the principal is at present occupied in inflicting a dose of astronomy or navigation upon his assistant.

“It is something dreadful the amount of card-playing that goes on in the saloon in the evenings now; the gaming demon is abroad far into the night; even our