

“ The sun mounts up and bathes the ice-plain with its radiance. Spring is coming, but brings no joys with it. Here it is as lonely and cold as ever. One’s soul freezes. Seven more years of such life—or say only four—how will the soul appear then? And she . . . ? If I dared to let my longings loose—to let my soul thaw. Ah! I long more than I dare confess.

“ I have not courage to think of the future. . . . And how will it be at home, when year after year rolls by and no one comes?

“ I know this is all a morbid mood; but still this inactive, lifeless monotony, without any change, wrings one’s very soul. No struggle, no possibility of struggle! All is so still and dead, so stiff and shrunken, under the mantle of ice. Ah! . . . the very soul freezes. What would I not give for a single day of struggle—for even a moment of danger!

“ Still I must wait, and watch the drift; but should it take a wrong direction, then I will break all the bridges behind me, and stake everything on a northward march over the ice. I know nothing better to do. It will be a hazardous journey—a matter, maybe, of life or death. But have I any other choice?

“ It is unworthy of a man to set himself a task, and then give in when the brunt of the battle is upon him. There is but one way, and that is *Fram*—forward.

“ Tuesday, March 27th. We are again drifting southward, and the wind is northerly. The midday ob-