

ship. On going after them on the ice I soon shot one of them, and was not a little surprised, on picking it up, to find it was a little bird about the size of a snipe; the mottled back, too, reminded me also of that bird. Soon after this I shot the other. Later in the day there came another, which was also shot. On picking this one up I found it was not quite dead, and it vomited up a couple of large shrimps, which it must have caught in some channel or other. All three were young birds, about 12 inches in length, with dark mottled gray plumage on the back and wings; the breast and under side white, with a scarcely perceptible tinge of orange-red, and round the neck a dark ring sprinkled with gray." At a somewhat later age this mottled plumage disappears; they then become blue on the back, with a black ring round the neck, while the breast assumes a delicate pink hue. Some few days afterwards (August 6th and 8th) some more of these birds were shot, making eight specimens in all.

While time was passing on, the plan I had been revolving in my mind during the winter was ever uppermost in my thoughts—the plan, that is to say, of exploring the unknown sea apart from the track in which the *Fram* was drifting. I kept an anxious eye upon the dogs, for fear anything should happen to them, and also to see that they continued in good condition, for all my hopes centred in them. Several of them, indeed, had been bitten to death, and two had been killed by bears;