

forms small waves that ripple and splash against the edge of the ice, the only signs of life in this desert tract. It is like an old friend, the sound of these playful wavelets. And here, too, they eat away the floes and hollow out their edges. One could almost imagine one's self in more southern latitudes. But all around is wreathed with ice, towering aloft in its ever-varying fantastic forms, in striking contrast to the dark water on which a moment before the eye had rested. Everlastingly is this shifting ice modelling, as it were, in pure, gray marble, and, with nature's lavish prodigality, strewing around the most glorious statuary, which perishes without any eye having seen it. Wherefore? To what end all this shifting pageant of loveliness? It is governed by the mere caprices of nature, following out those everlasting laws that pay no heed to what we regard as aims and objects.

"In front of me towers one pressure-ridge after another, with lane after lane between. It was in June the *Jeannette* was crushed and sank; what if the *Fram* were to meet her fate here? No, the ice will not get the better of her. Yet, if it should, in spite of everything! As I stood gazing around me I remembered it was Midsummer-eve. Far away yonder her masts pointed aloft, half lost to view in the snowy haze. They must, indeed, have stout hearts, those fellows on board that craft. Stout hearts, or else blind faith in a man's word.