

“Life goes its regular, even, uneventful way, quiet as the ice itself; and yet it is wonderful how quickly the time passes. The equinox has come, the nights are beginning to turn dark, and at noon the sun is only 9 degrees above the horizon. I pass the day busily here in the work cabin, and often feel as if I were sitting in my study at home, with all the comforts of civilization round me. If it were not for the separation, one could be as well off here as there. Sometimes I forget where I am. Not infrequently in the evening, when I have been sitting absorbed in work, I have jumped up to listen when the dogs barked, thinking to myself, who can be coming? Then I remember that I am not at home, but drifting out in the middle of the frozen Polar Sea, at the commencement of the second long Arctic night.

“The temperature has been down to 1.4° Fahr. below zero (-17° C.) to-day; winter is coming on fast. There is little drift just now, and yet we are in good spirits. It was the same last autumn equinox; but how many disappointments we have had since then! How terrible it was in the later autumn when every calculation seemed to fail, as we drifted farther and farther south! Not one bright spot on our horizon! But such a time will never come again. There may still be great relapses; there may be slow progress for a time; but there is no doubt as to the future; we see it dawning bright in the west, beyond the Arctic night.

“Sunday, September 23d. It was a year yesterday