

“Silent, oh, so silent! You can hear the vibrations of your own nerves. I seem as if I were gliding over and over these plains into infinite space. Is this not an image of what is to come? Eternity and peace are here. Nirvana must be cold and bright as such an eternal star-night. What are all our research and understanding in the midst of this infinity?”

“Friday, November 16th. In the forenoon I went out with Sverdrup on snow-shoes in the moonlight, and we talked seriously of the prospects of our drift and of the proposed expedition northward over the ice in the spring. In the evening we went into the matter more thoroughly in his cabin. I stated my views, in which he entirely coincided. I have of late been meditating a great deal on what is the proper course to pursue, supposing the drift does not take us so far north by the month of March as I had anticipated. But the more I think of it, the more firmly am I persuaded that it is the thing to do. For if it be right to set out at  $85^{\circ}$ , it must be no less right to set out at  $82^{\circ}$  or  $83^{\circ}$ . In either case we should penetrate into more northerly regions than we should otherwise reach, and this becomes all the more desirable if the *Fram* herself does not get so far north as we had hoped. If we cannot actually reach the Pole, why, we must turn back before reaching it. The main consideration, as I must constantly repeat, is not to reach that exact mathematical point, but to explore the unknown parts of the Polar Sea, whether these