

we were no farther advanced in February, 1896, either; but it is more likely, from all I can make out, that the drift will increase rather than diminish as we work westward, and, consequently, in February, 1896, we should have got too far; while, even if one could imagine a better starting-point than that which the *Fram* will possibly offer us by March 1, 1895, it will, at all events, be a possible one. It must, consequently, be the safest plan *not to wait for another spring*.

“Such, then, are the prospects before us of pushing through. The distance from this proposed starting-point to Cape Fligely, which is the nearest known land, I set down at about 370 miles,* consequently not much more than the distance we covered in Greenland; and that would be easy work enough over this ice, even if it did become somewhat bad towards land. If once a coast is reached, any reasonable being can surely manage to subsist by hunting, whether large or small game, whether bears or sandhoppers. Thus we can always make for Cape Fligely or Petermann's Land, which lies north of it, if our situation becomes untenable. The distance will, of course, be increased the farther we advance northward, but at no point whatever between here and the Pole is it greater than we can and will manage, with the help of our dogs. ‘A line of retreat’ is therefore

* There must be an error here, as the distance to Cape Fligely from the point proposed, 83° north latitude and 110° east longitude, is quite 460 miles. I had probably taken the longitude as 100° instead of 110°.