

unknown lands to the north. But should this be so—very well, we must take what chance we find. The ice can scarcely be altogether impassable. Even Markham was able to advance with his scurvy-smitten people. And the coasts of this land may possibly be advantageous for an advance; it simply depends on their direction and extent. It is difficult to say anything beforehand, except that I think the depth of water we have here and the drift of the ice render it improbable that we can have land of any extent at all close at hand. In any case, there must, somewhere or other, be a passage for the ice, and at the worst we can follow that passage.

“3. There is always a possibility that the dogs may fail us, but, as may be seen, I have not laid out any scheme of excessive work for them. And even if one or two of them should prove failures, that could not be the case with all. With the food they have hitherto had they have got through the winter and the cold without mishap, and the food they will get on the journey will be better. In my calculations, moreover, I have taken no account of what we shall draw ourselves. And, even supposing all the dogs to fail us, we could manage to get along by ourselves pretty well.

“4. The worst event would undeniably be that we ourselves should be attacked by scurvy; and, notwithstanding our excellent health, such a contingency is quite conceivable when it is borne in mind how in the English North Pole Expedition all the men, with the exception