

smashed and buried, and would disappear; but the pygmies have built their nutshell so cleverly that it always keeps afloat, and wriggles itself free from the deadly embrace. The old traditions and legends about giants, about Thor's battles in the Jötunheim, when rocks were split and crags were hurled about, and the valleys were filled with falling boulders, all come back to me when I look at these mighty ridges of ice winding their way far off in the moonlight; and when I see the men standing on the ice-heap cutting and digging to remove a fraction of it, then they seem to me smaller than pygmies, smaller than ants; but although each ant carries only a single fir-needle, yet in course of time they build an ant-hill, where they can live comfortably, sheltered from storm and winter.

"Had this attack on the *Fram* been planned by the aid of all the wickedness in the world, it could not have been a worse one. The floe, seven feet thick, has borne down on us on the port side, forcing itself up on the ice, in which we are lying, and crushing it down. Thus the *Fram* was forced down with the ice, while the other floe, packed up on the ice beneath, bore down on her, and took her amidships while she was still frozen fast. As far as I can judge, she could hardly have had a tighter squeeze; it was no wonder that she groaned under it; but she withstood it, broke loose, and eased. Who shall say after this that a vessel's shape is of little consequence? Had the *Fram* not been designed as she was,