

faint dawn of day—that day at whose sunrise we were to start. On January 18th I say: “By 9 o'clock in the morning I could already distinguish the first indications of dawn, and by noon it seemed to be getting bright; but it seems hardly credible that in a month's time there will be light enough to travel by, yet it must be so. True, February is a month which all ‘experienced’ people consider far too early and much too cold for travelling; hardly any one would do so in the month of March. But it cannot be helped; we have no time to waste in waiting for additional comfort if we are to make any progress before the summer, when travelling will be impossible. I am not afraid of the cold; we can always protect ourselves against that.

“Meantime all preparations are proceeding, and I am now getting everything in order connected with copying of diaries, observation-books, photographs, etc., that we are to take with us. Mogstad is working in the hold making maple guard-runners to put under the sledges. Jacobsen has commenced to put a new sledge together. Pettersen is in the engine-room, making nails for the sledge-fittings, which Mogstad is to put on. In the meantime some of the others have built a large forge out on the ice with blocks of ice and snow, and to-morrow Sverdrup and I will heat and bend the runners in tar and stearine at such a heat as we can produce in the forge. We trust we shall be able to get a sufficient temperature to do this important work thoroughly, in spite