

ice, and it was like walking through gruel. As a matter of fact, the ice about here is nothing else but pure broken-up sea-ice, consisting of large and small floes, not infrequently very small floes closely aggregated; but when they have the chance of slackening they will spread over the whole sea hereabouts, and we shall have water enough to row in any direction we please.

“The weather seems to-day to be of the same kind as yesterday, with a southwest wind, which is tearing and rattling at the tent walls. A thaw and wet snow. I do not know if we shall get any more frost, but it would make the snow in splendid condition for our snow-shoes. I am afraid, however, that the contrary will rather be the case, and that we shall soon be in for the worst break-up of the winter. The lanes otherwise are beginning to improve; they are no longer so full of brash and slush; it is melting away, and bridges and such-like have a better chance of forming in the clearer water.

“We scan the horizon unremittingly for land every time there is a clear interval; but nothing, never anything, to be seen. Meanwhile we constantly see signs of the proximity of land or open water. The gulls increase conspicuously in number, and yesterday we saw a *little auk* (*Mergulus alle*) in a lane. The atmosphere in the south and southwest is always apt to be dark, but the weather has been such that we can really see nothing. Yet I feel that the solution is approaching. But, then,