

When we shall see the end of it I can no longer form any idea; I only hope whatever may be in store for us is not very far off, open water or land—Wilczek Land, Zichy Land, Spitzbergen, or some other country.

“Yesterday was not quite so bad a day as I expected. We really did advance, though not very far—hardly more than a couple of miles—but we must be content with that at this time of year. The dogs could not manage to draw the sledges alone; if there was nobody beside them they stopped at every other step. The only thing to be done was to make a journey to and fro, and thus go over the ground three times. While I went on ahead to explore, Johansen drove the sledges as far as he could; first mine, and then back again after his own. By that time I had returned and drove my own sledge as far as I had found a way; and then this performance was repeated all over again. It was not rapid progress, but progress it was of a kind, and that was something. The ice we are going over is anything but even; it is still rather massive and old, with hummocks and irregularities in every direction, and no real flat tracts. When, added to this, after going a short distance, we came to a place where the ice was broken up into small floes, with high ridges and broad lanes filled with slush and brash, so that the whole thing looked like a single mass of *débris*, where there was hardly standing-room, to say nothing of any prospect of advance, it was only human to lose courage and give up, for the time being, trying to get on.