

“Little auks fly backward and forward in numbers, and they sit and chatter and show themselves just outside the tent door; it is quite a pleasure to see them, but a pity they are so small that they are not worth a shot. We have not seen them in flocks yet, but in couples, as a rule. It is remarkable how bird-life has increased since the west wind set in the day before yesterday. It is particularly striking how the little auks have suddenly appeared in myriads; they whiz past the tent here with their cheery twitter, and it gives one the feeling of having come down to more hospitable regions. This sudden finding of Brünnich's guillemots seems also curious, but it does no good. Land is not to be despaired, and the snow is in as wretched a condition as it can be. A proper thaw, so that the snow can disappear more quickly, does not come. Yesterday morning before breakfast I went for a walk southward to see what were our chances of advance. The ice was flat and good for a little way, but lanes soon began which were worse than ever. Our only expedient now is to resort to strong measures and launch the kayaks, in spite of the fact that they leak; we must then travel as much as possible by way of the lanes, and with this resolution I turn back. The snow is still the same, very wet, so that one sank deep in between the hummocks, and there are plenty of them. We could not afford a proper breakfast, so we took  $1\frac{2}{3}$  ounces bread and  $1\frac{2}{3}$  ounces pemmican per man, and then set to work to mend the pumps and put the