

turn one's hand to. How we longed for a book! How delightful our life on board the *Fram* appeared, when we had the whole library to fall back upon! We would often tell each other how beautiful this sort of life would have been, after all, if we had only had anything to read. Johansen always spoke with a sigh of Heyse's novels; he had specially liked those on board, and he had not been able to finish the last one he was reading. The little readable matter which was to be found in our navigation-table and almanac I had read so many times already that I knew it almost by heart—all about the Norwegian royal family, all about persons apparently drowned, and all about self-help for fishermen. Yet it was always a comfort to see these books; the sight of the printed letters gave one a feeling that there was, after all, a little bit of the civilized man left. All that we really had to talk about had long ago been thoroughly thrashed out, and, indeed, there were not many thoughts of common interest that we had not exchanged. The chief pleasure left to us was to picture to each other how we should make up next winter at home for everything we had missed during our sojourn here. We felt that we should have learned for good and all to set store by all the good things of life, such as food, drink, clothes, shoes, house, home, good neighbors, and all the rest of it. Frequently we occupied ourselves, too, in calculating how far the *Fram* could have drifted, and whether there was any possibility of her getting home to Norway before us.