

and the forecasts made were apt to be sanguine enough. "If the wind keeps long in this quarter we shall be at such and such a spot on such and such a day. It is as clear as daylight we shall be home some time in the autumn of 1896. Just see how we have drifted up to now, and the farther we get west the faster we shall go," and so forth.

The cold which in the middle of March did not exceed -40° C., kept steadily at from -30° to -25° during April, but it decreased at a comparatively rapid rate in May, so that by about the middle of the month the thermometer registered -14° , and in the latter part only -6° . On June 3d—so far the warmest day—a large pond of water had formed close to the vessel, although the highest temperature attained that day was -2° , and the weather was overcast.*

On June 5th the thermometer for the first time stood above freezing-point—viz., at $+0.2^{\circ}$. It then fell again for a few days, going down to -6° ; but on the 11th it rose again to about 2° above freezing-point, and so on.

The amount of atmospheric moisture deposited during the above-mentioned period was most insignificant; only a very slight snowfall now and then. However, Thursday, June 6th, was an exception. The wind, which for several days had been blowing from the south and west, veered round to the northwest during the night, and at 8 A.M. next morning it changed to the north, blowing a fresh breeze, with an exceptionally heavy snowfall.

We saw the midnight sun for the first time during the night of April 2d.

One of the scientific tasks of the expedition was to investigate the depth of the Polar Sea. Our lines, which were weak and not very suitable for this purpose, were soon so worn by

* On April 18th, when the doctor and I were out looking for a suitable piece of ice for determining the specific gravity of the ice, we observed a remarkable drop of water hanging under a projecting corner of a large block of ice, reared up high by pressure. There it hung, in the shade, quivering in the fresh breeze, although the thermometer registered about -23° of frost. "That must be very salt," I said, and tasted it—"Phew!" It was salt in very truth—rank salt, like the strongest brine.