

stores from the great hummock had been placed. Its plan was very much like that of the former smithy. We first hollowed out a cavity of sufficient size in the pressure-ridge, and then roofed it over with blocks of ice and snow.

As the year waned, and the winter night impended, all the sea animals and birds of passage which had swarmed around us and awakened our longings during the short summer deserted us one by one. They set off for the south, towards sunshine and light and hospitable shores, while we lay there in the ice and darkness for yet another winter. On September 6th we saw the last narwhals gambolling in the lanes around the ship, and a few days later the last flock of skuas (*Lestris parasiticus*) took their departure. The sun moves quickly in these latitudes from the first day that he peers over the horizon in the south till he circles round the heavens all day and all night; but still quicker do his movements seem when he is on the downward path in autumn. Before you know where you are he has disappeared, and the crushing darkness of the Arctic night surrounds you once more.

On September 12th we should have seen the midnight sun for the last time if it had been clear; and no later than October 8th we caught the last glimpse of the sun's rim at midday. Thus we plunged into the longest Arctic night any human beings have yet lived through, in about 85° north latitude. Henceforth there was nothing that could for a moment be called daylight, and by October 26th there was scarcely any perceptible difference between day and night.

Whenever time permitted and the surface was at all favorable we wandered about on snow-shoes in the neighborhood of the ship, either singly or several together. On October 7th, when all of us were out snow-shoeing in the morning, the mate found a log of drift-wood 7 feet long and 7 inches thick. Part of the root was still attached to the trunk. The mate and I went out in the afternoon and brought it in on a hand-sledge. No doubt it had grown in one of the Siberian forests, had been swept away by a flood or by the current of a river, and carried out to sea to be conveyed hither by the drift-ice.

Besides snow-shoeing, we also took frequent walks on the ice,