

the ice threatened to rush in over the vessel. We found that a tremendous ice-floe had been pressed up over the edge of the ice astern, and came gliding along unchecked until it ran right against our stern. But the *Fram* had borne shocks like this before, and now again she held her own well. The ice was split against the strong stern, and lay shattered on both sides of the ship on a level with the edge of the half-deck all the way forward to the mizzen-shrouds. The ship now lay almost loose in her berth, and the ice round about was broken up into a mass of smaller floes. As these were passed down by the heavy drifts, it was hard work to get round the ship, as one ran the risk of plumping down into the slush at any moment.

Late in the afternoon of May 13th the lane between the forge and the ship began to widen very much, so that in a couple of hours' time it was about 90 yards wide. From the crow's-nest I saw on the southeast a large channel extending southward as far as I could see, and the channel abaft us extended to the northeast as far as my sight could reach. I therefore went out in the "pram" to try to find a passage through to the channel on the southeast, but without result. After supper I was off again southward, but I could not find any thoroughfare. At 10 o'clock in the evening I again went up in the crow's-nest, and now saw that the channel had widened considerably and reached away southward as far as the eye could reach, with dark air over it.

Scott-Hansen and I deliberated as to what was to be done. Although I did not believe it would do much good under the circumstances, we decided upon an attempt to blast the vessel free. We agreed to try some mines right aft, and all hands were at once put to this work. First we fired six powder-mines at about the same spot, but without much result. Then we made an unsuccessful trial with gun-cotton. At 3 o'clock in the morning we concluded operations for the time being, as the ice was so thick that the drill did not reach through, and the slush so bad that it was impossible to get the ice-floes shoved away. At 8 o'clock the next morning we laid two new mines, which Scott-Hansen and Nordahl had made ready during the night, but