

emptiness. If we put a couple of dozen into our mouths at a time they tasted somewhat like shrimps. But I am afraid that were we limited to such fare, and nothing else, we should soon diminish unpleasantly in weight.

In the later days of May the prospects became brighter, as the wind changed to half a gale from the east and north. The ice began to drift slowly towards the southwest, and continued to slacken at the same time, so that on May 29th we could see to the southward a good deal of open water, with dark air above, as far as the eye could reach.

After several requests had been made to me, I decided to make an attempt at blasting the vessel clear. At 1 P.M. we set off a mine of 110 pounds of gunpowder. It had an astonishingly good effect, wrenching up heavy masses of ice and sending them rushing out into the channel. Our hopes revived, and it really seemed that another such blasting would entirely liberate the vessel. Immediately after dinner we went to work to lay out another large mine 20 yards abaft the stern. It gave us an incredible amount of work to make a hole in the ice to get the charge down. We first bored a hole; then we tried to make it larger by blowing it out by means of small gunpowder charges, and later with gun-cotton; but it was of no avail. Then we had to resort to lances, ice-picks, steam—in short, to every possible means; but all in vain. The ice had, however, got so cracked in all directions, owing to the many charges which had been exploded in the same place, that we presumed that a large mine in the log-line hole would blow up the whole mass. As the ice was thinner at that part, the mine was lowered to a depth of 10 yards. It exploded with terrific effect. A mighty column of water was forced as high as the foretop. It did not consist of water alone, but contained a good many lumps of ice, which rained down for some distance round. One piece of over one hundredweight came down right through the tent and on to the fore-castle; other pieces flew over the vessel, and fell on the starboard side. Scott-Hansen and Henriksen, who were standing on the ice at the electric battery used for firing the mine, were not pleasantly situated when the mine exploded. When