

ceived, when he set foot again in his native country after the long and famous expedition, but was very kind and good-humored when I begged his pardon for the rudeness with which I had received him. In my inmost heart I made an even warmer apology than I had stammered out in my first embarrassment.

“When Sverdrup was seated, the first question was naturally as to the way he had come. They had just arrived from off the coast of Spitzbergen. On the 13th they had got out into open water, where they almost immediately met with Captain Botolfsen, from Tromsö, who was there with his whaling-ship. They had brought him with them. They had next visited Andrée, who was about to pack up and go home, and had then proceeded to this place. They had first learned from Botolfsen, and then from Andrée, who ought to have had some of the latest tidings from Norway, that nothing was known about Nansen, whom they hoped to find at home, and the joy they were feeling at the prospect of reaching home soon was considerably damped by this news.

“‘Ah, but I can give you news of Nansen,’ said I. ‘He arrived at Vardö on August 13th, and is now at Hammerfest. He’s probably starting for Tromsö to-day in an English yacht.’

“‘Has Nansen arrived?’

“The stalwart form bounded up in a state of excitement rarely shown by this man, and exclaiming, ‘I must tell the others at once,’ he vanished out of the door.

“A moment later he returned, accompanied by Scott-Hansen, Blessing, Mogstad, and Bentzen, all of them perfectly wild with joy at the latest news, which crowned all, and allowed them to give full vent to their exultation at being once more in their native land after their long and wearisome absence, which the uncertain fate of their leader and his comrade would otherwise have damped. And they did rejoice! ‘Is it true? Has Nansen arrived?’ was repeated on all sides. ‘What a day this is, what joy! And what a curious coincidence that Nansen should arrive on the same day that we cleared the last ice and steered homeward!’ And they congratulated each other, all quivering with emotion, these sturdy fellows.