

Samoyedes came flocking on board, pleasant-featured people of the broad Asiatic type. Of course it was only the men who came.

The first question I asked Trontheim was about the ice. He replied that Yugor Strait had been open a long while, and that he had been expecting our arrival every day since then with ever-increasing anxiety. The natives and the Russians had begun to jeer at him as time went on, and no *Fram* was to be seen; but now he had his revenge and was all sunshine. He thought the state of the ice in the Kara Sea would be favorable; some Samoyedes had said so, who had been seal-hunting near the eastern entrance of the Strait a day or two previously. This was not very much to build upon, certainly, but still sufficient to make us regret that we had not got there before. Then we spoke of the *Urania*, of which no one, of course, had seen anything. No ship had put in there for some time, except the sealing sloop we had passed in the morning.

Next we inquired about the dogs, and learned that everything was all right with them. To make sure, Trontheim had purchased forty dogs, though I had only asked for thirty. Five of these, from various mishaps, had died during their journey—one had been bitten to death, two had got hung fast and had been strangled while passing through a forest, etc., etc. One, moreover, had been taken ill a few days before, and was still on the sick list; but the remaining thirty-four were