

in all directions. A sledge expedition would make poor enough progress on such ice as this."

Hitherto, however, progress had always been possible, but now the snow began to melt, and placed almost insuperable difficulties in the way. On June 13th I write: "The ice gets softer and softer every day, and large pools of water are formed on the floes all around us. In short, the surface is abominable. The snowshoes break through into the water everywhere. Truly one would not be able to get far in a day now should one be obliged to set off towards the south or west. It is as if every outlet were blocked, and here we stick—we stick. Sometimes it strikes me as rather remarkable that none of our fellows have become alarmed, even when we are bearing farther and farther northward, farther and farther into the unknown; but there is no sign of fear in any one of them. All look gloomy when we are bearing south or too much to the west, and all are beaming with joy when we are drifting to the northward, the farther the better. Yet none of them can be blind to the fact that it is a matter of life and death if anything of what nearly every one prophesied should now occur. Should the ship be crushed in this ice and go to the bottom, like the *Jeannette*, without our being able to save sufficient supplies to continue our drift on the ice, we should have to turn our course to the south, and then there would be little doubt as to our fate. The *Jeannette* people fared badly enough, but their ship