

business in despair. The loss of that rifle saved the life of many a seal; and, alas! it had cost me £28.

We took the boat again next day and rowed eastward, to find out if there really was a passage for us through this strait. It had turned cold during the night and snow had fallen, so the sea round the *Fram* was covered with tolerably thick snow-ice, and it cost us a good deal of exertion to break through it into open water with the boat. I thought it possible that the land farther in on the north side of the strait might be that in the neighborhood of Actinia Bay, where the *Vega* had lain; but I sought in vain for the cairn erected there by Norden-skiöld, and presently discovered to my astonishment that it was only a small island, and that this island lay on the south side of the principal entrance to Taimur Strait. The strait was very broad here, and I felt pretty certain that I saw where the real Actinia Bay cut into the land far to the north.

We were hungry now, and were preparing to take a meal before we rowed on from the island, when we discovered to our disappointment that the butter had been forgotten. We crammed down the dry biscuits as best we could, and worked our jaws till they were stiff on the pieces we managed to hack off a hard dried reindeer chine. When we were tired of eating, though anything but satisfied, we set off, giving this point the name of "Cape Butterless." We rowed far in through the strait, and it seemed to us to be a good passage for ships