

“Wednesday, March 14th. In the evening the dogs all at once began to bark, as we supposed on account of bears. Sverdrup and I took our guns, let ‘Ulenka’ and ‘Pan’ loose, and set off. There was twilight still, and the moon, moreover, began to shine. No sooner were the dogs on the ice than off they started westward like a couple of rockets, we after them as quickly as we could. As I was jumping over a lane I thrust one leg through the ice up to the knee. Oddly enough, I did not get wet through to the skin, though I only had Finn shoes and frieze gaiters on; but in this temperature, 38° Fahr. below zero (−39° C.), the water freezes on the cold cloth before it can penetrate it. I felt nothing of it afterwards; it became, as it were, a plate of ice armor that almost helped to keep me warm. At a channel some distance off we at last discovered that it was not a bear the dogs had winded, but either a walrus or a seal. We saw holes in several places on the fresh-formed ice where it had stuck its head through. What a wonderfully keen nose those dogs must have: it was quite two-thirds of a mile from the ship, and the creature had only had just a little bit of its snout above the ice. We returned to the ship to get a harpoon, but saw no more of the animal, though we went several times up and down the channel. Meanwhile ‘Pan,’ in his zeal, got too near the edge of the lane and fell into the water. The ice was so high that he could not get up on it again without help, and if I had not been there to haul him up I am afraid he