

After this we began once more to drift northward, but not very fast.

As before, we were constantly on the look-out for land, and were inclined, first from one thing, then from another, to think we saw signs of its proximity; but they always turned out to be imaginary, and the great depth of the sea, moreover, showed that, at all events, land could not be near.

Later on — August 7th — when I had found over 2085 fathoms (3850 metres) depth, I say in my diary: “I do not think we shall talk any more about the shallow Polar Sea, where land may be expected anywhere. We may very possibly drift out into the Atlantic Ocean without having seen a single mountain-top. An eventful series of years to look forward to!”

The plan already alluded to of travelling over the ice with dogs and sledges occupied me a good deal, and during my daily expeditions—partly on snow-shoes, partly with dogs—my attention was constantly given to the condition of the ice and our prospects of being able to make our way over it. During April it was specially well adapted for using dogs. The surface was good, as the sun's power had made it smoother than the heavy drift-snow earlier in the winter; besides, the wind had covered the pressure-ridges pretty evenly, and there were not many crevasses or channels in the ice, so that one could proceed for miles without much trouble from them. In May, however, a change set in. So early as May 8th the