

to spend years of his brief existence in drifting through frozen seas? Is, then, the whole thing but the meteor of a moment? Will the whole history of the world evaporate like a dark, gold-edged cloud in the glow of evening—achieving nothing, leaving no trace, passing like a caprice?

“Evening. That fox is playing us a great many tricks; whatever he can move he goes off with. He has once gnawed off the band with which the door-skin is fastened, and every now and then we hear him at it again, and have to go out and knock on the roof of the passage. To-day he went off with one of our sails, in which our salt-water ice was lying. We were not a little alarmed when we went to fetch ice and found sail and all gone. We had no doubt as to who had been there, but we could not under any circumstances afford to lose our precious sail, on which we depended for our voyage to Spitzbergen in the spring, and we tramped about in the dark, up the beach, over the level, and down towards the sea. We looked everywhere, but nothing was to be seen of it. At last we had almost given it up when Johansen, in going on to the ice to get more salt-water ice, found it at the edge of the shore. Our joy was great; but it was wonderful that the fox had been able to drag that great sail, full of ice too, so far. Down there, however, it had come unfolded, and then he could do nothing with it. But what does he want with things like this? Is it to lie upon in his winter den? One would almost