

dred yards of the shore. The *Bear* had not yet arrived. The Beebe cache of 1882 was visited and found intact; therefore, Greely must be somewhere between Cape Sabine and Fort Conger, and the prospects for his safety became a subject of grave comment. His orders required him to abandon his station at Fort Conger not later than September, 1883. Provisions had been promised him to fall back upon. But the utter failure of the *Proteus* to fulfill her mission made Greely's obedience to orders a retreat to death. Reflecting on these facts, we hoped that Greely had remained at Conger.

The above, as also what follows, is a condensation of the entries in my journal (written from day to day) of what I saw and of conversations had by me with members of the rescued party.

#### THE FIRST TIDINGS OF GREELY.

LITTLETON ISLAND is the largest of a group of islands that lie in a small indentation of Smith Sound, known as Life Boat Cove. It is simply a granite rock, about two miles in circumference and one hundred feet high. Its sides are precipitous; its top is flat. From its position at the junction of Smith Sound and Kane Basin, it has always been considered an important point in Arctic exploration. It is usual to cross over to the western shore from here; and a depot of provisions is generally deposited: any further advance is made. A channel, a mile wide separates its eastern side from the mainland; lying off its western and south-western side is a much smaller island, known as McGary Island. A channel of two hundred yards width separates the two. There is considerable rise and fall of tide, and the current in these channels runs very swiftly. When we were there, the report of a gun would start thousands of eider-ducks from their nests on McGary Island. The shooting was easy, except that we found it difficult to penetrate their thick shield of feathers and down with our small shot. They flew in pairs. The male black and white, with a greenish-gold patch over the ear; the female mottled brown. They make their nests among the rocks by scratching a hole in the gravel and lining it with the down from their breasts. They lay from one to four eggs, green in color. We tried the eggs both boiled and fried, and found them quite palatable. The ducks themselves, when skinned, were delicious.

The *Thetis* had been moored to a grounded iceberg just north of McGary Island, so that the view to the south was cut off from the deck. Nothing was to be learned of Greely

on this side of Smith Sound, and we were anxious to push on. The sound was nearly clear of ice, the wind favorable, though increasing in force. Hunting, nesting, and raking a bling had grown monotonous; but still the *Bear* did not come. A gale was threatening so it was decided to run over to Cape Sabine. The time for starting was set at 1 p. m. Sunday, the 22d. A record was left on the top of McGary Island, directing the *Bear* to come over at once; the fires were spread, and the line that held us to the berg was singled; we were ready to start. Two men had obtained permission to pick up the bodies of some ducks that were seen on the ice-foot on Littleton Island. They were returning in the dory, sculling across the mouth of the narrow channel, when one of them suddenly shouted and up "There's the *Bear*!" The excitement warranted a trip to the crow's nest, so I mounted as quickly as I could. Two or three minutes passed, and then the little black nest at the *Bear's* foremast-head slowly crept over the edge of the island; then her mainmast and mizzenmast heads, with the ensign and pennant flying, assured me beyond doubt that it was the *Bear*. She soon made fast. Captain Emory came on board, reported, and returned to his ship, and by 2:30 we were bound across Smith Sound under sail and steam, with a gale of wind behind us. We had occasionally to dodge a piece of floe, but on the whole the run across was uneventful. It is thirty-five miles to Payer Harbor; we reached it at 6:30, and made fast to the edge of the ice that filled the harbor from Brevoort Island to Cape Sabine. Payer Harbor is a little bay opening to the northward, two miles long by three wide in its widest part. It is bounded on the east by Brevoort Island, a conical mass of black rock about five hundred to six hundred feet high, and perhaps three miles in circumference at its base; a narrow strait, through which the tide ran sufficiently strong to keep it generally clear of ice, separated it from Stalknecht Island, a low-lying rock bounding the bay on the south; to the westward was a high range of hills, with occasional ravines filled with glaciers, the outcroppings of the ice-cap that covers their top. These hills terminated at their northern end in the point known as Cape Sabine.

There was a cairn on the top of Brevoort Island; we saw it as we approached; our ice-pilot had visited the harbor before in the *Neptune*, in 1882, and told us of another cairn on Stalknecht Island, describing its exact location and appearance. Mr. Taunt and I were sitting at the wardrobe table hastily writing letters that were to be left here for the *Alert* to carry back with her, when the word

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