

of  $77^{\circ}30'$ , to have been beating about in perfectly navigable ice, but the fogs were so extensive they could not see far.

On the 29th August they had reached  $42^{\circ}$  E. long., and were much astonished to be able on the 30th, to pass  $78^{\text{th}}$  degree lat. and  $41^{\circ}30'$  E. long. without encountering ice; but that night they struck against the ice-edge. The ice, however, was moving to the north instead of to the east. On the 31st, at mid-day, the Report states they were in  $78^{\circ}25'$  N. lat.,  $42^{\circ}$  E. long.; at eight o'clock in the evening, in  $78^{\circ}41'$  N. lat., amongst ice, which seemed to be moving north-east. To the west the ice lay dense, with strong ice-glare and detached icebergs, but to the north it was loose or open. On the 1st September, midnight, they reached their highest latitude,  $78^{\circ}48'$  N., dead reckoning, and by indifferent observations at noon, on the 2nd, they were in  $78^{\circ}37'$  N.,  $42^{\circ}32'$  E.

I now particularly call your attention to the two following paragraphs of the Report:—

“Very thick fog, with a stiff, contrary wind, prevented our getting forward in a northerly direction. The condition of the ice would have been no obstacle. The  $79^{\text{th}}$  parallel we could, without very great effort, have passed, only, with the stiff north wind, it would have taken at least a day's cruising, and the short time which still stood at our disposal was too precious for us to be willing to sacrifice a whole day for a few miles.

“Many signs led us here to infer the near neighbourhood of land. We saw much drift-wood, which, further south, we had hardly ever met with; and at one spot, where we were fishing, there was fresh mud, also sea-weeds, and much fresh-water ice, which is easily known by its transparency. An almost infallible sign was six southward-flying eider-ducks, which never go far away from the land. Unfortunately, however, the fog was always so thick that we never got a wide prospect. These thick fogs with a north wind are very remarkable in such high latitudes.

“A further energetic northerly advance was no longer to be thought of: the obstacles being our scanty provisions, the disinclination, already mentioned, of the crew, and, lastly, the condition of our prow.

“The quality of the ice in these high latitudes was by no means difficult. Except detached and small icebergs, and one solitary larger old slice, we saw nothing implying heavy pack-ice in the north.

All these signs, read by the light of Arctic experience, point, in my opinion, to the existence of land not very far north of the position reached on the 42nd Meridian by the Austrian Expedition, and by no means towards an opening into the Polar Sea.