

the other by Lieutenant Ross. They proceeded in the *Hecla* to Spitzbergen, and there left their ship, starting in their sledge-boats with seventy-one days provisions. On reaching lat $82^{\circ} 45'$ N. he found the ice becoming loosened by the advancing season, and carrying him south faster than he travelled north, so that he was compelled to abandon the undertaking as hopeless. Equally fruitless have been the efforts of several courageous officers of the Russian service to cross the ice north of Siberia, in dog-sledges. The most distinguished of these explorers was Wrangell who in 1821 travelled one hundred and forty miles northward, and then found the ice so thin and rotten that he had to retreat. In 1823 he made an attempt to reach some high northern land, the snow-clad mountains of which, some natives reported could be seen from Cape Shelagskoi, on a clear summer's day. At the distance of seventy miles from land the ice was found to be unsafe, and Wrangell had to turn back. Lanes of water were opening in all directions, and the little party were in extreme danger, being without a boat. A gale of wind arose and split many of the floes into pieces. The dogs saved them by rushing wildly and swiftly towards the land. This northern land, though not seen by him, Wrangell thinks may possibly exist. It was sighted in 1867 by Captain Long, an American whaler, who approached from Behring's Strait, and is now marked on maps as "Wrangell's Land." Dr. Petermann holds that Greenland runs up to and projects over the Pole, meeting this land. This, of course, is merely a theory at present.

It thus becomes evident that there is no hope of making any important discoveries by the Spitzbergen route. The boldest and most skilful sailors have led expedition after expedition, and the dread Polar pack has proved too strong for human courage and ingenuity. The opening by Behring's Strait holds out even less encouragement. From the north end of Prince Patrick's Island to Behring's Strait, the most formidable pack in the Polar seas, bars all progress in that direction; so that no vessel has yet succeeded in sailing any great distance towards the Pole on the meridian of Behring's Strait. Captain Collinson reached 70° N, and Captain Kellett saw some high land in 72° N. These are the highest latitudes reached by this route.

Are we then to regard the unknown Polar region as unknowable, and abandon it to the dominion of the Frost King? Not so.