

and not to the west as usual. There could be no question of any movement of the floe on which we were lying ; for everything had been perfectly still and quiet, and it is inconceivable that a disturbance which could cause such a remarkable oscillation of two points and back again in so short a space of time should not have been noticed and heard on board. This theory, therefore, is entirely excluded, and the whole matter seems to me, for the present, to be incomprehensible. Blessing and I at once went on deck to look at the sky. Certainly it was so light that we could see the lanes in the ice astern quite plainly ; but there was nothing remarkable in that, it happened often enough.

"Friday, November 30th. I found a bear's track on the ice in front of our bow. The bear had come from the east, trotting very gently along the lane, on the newly frozen ice, but he must have been scared by something or other ahead of the vessel, as he had gone off again with long strides in the direction from which he had come. Strange that living creatures should be roaming about in this desert. What can they have to do here ? If only one had such a stomach, one could at least stand a journey to the Pole and back without a meal. We shall probably have him back again soon, that is if I understand his nature aright, and then perhaps he will come a little closer so that we may have a good look at him.\*

"I paced the lane in front of the port bow. It was 348 paces across, and maintained the same width for a considerable distance eastward, nor can it be much narrower for a great distance to the west. Now, when one bears in mind that the lane behind us is also of considerable width, it is rather consoling, after all, to think that the ice does permit of such large openings. There must be room enough to drift, if we only get wind—wind which will never come. On the whole, November has been an uncommonly wretched

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\* He did not return after all.