



CHAPTER XII.

CONCLUSION.

"HOME safe, after a fortunate expedition," ran the first telegram announcing Dr. Nansen's return.

It is a popular fallacy that Dr. Nansen started out solely to reach the North Pole. If this had been so, no doubt the criticisms of those who say that the voyage was a failure would be justified; but that view is inaccurate and unjust to Nansen. What he went out to do was to explore the Arctic basin, and, if possible, settle certain problems connected with it. He said this in so many words in his address to the English Geographical Society in 1892. Here is a typical sentence, and the italics are Nansen's:—"It may be possible that the current will not carry us across the Pole, but *the principal thing is to explore the unknown polar regions*, not to reach exactly that mathematical point in which the axis of our globe has its northern termination." Bearing this