

CHAPTER XXII.

ON BOARD THE "FRAM."

WHEN Nansen and Johansen started on their adventurous journey, they left the *Fram* fast held in the embrace of the ice. It was not very long since that embrace had been a great deal too close to be pleasant; but the grip had relaxed, and for about a month after Nansen left the ship the ice remained quiet, and life went on in the same old monotonous way as it had done before the bustle of the start stirred the voyagers into unwonted activity. At that time the ship was drifting very slowly; but towards the end of April things became more lively, and the ice moved north-westwards at a fair rate. Then came contrary winds, which during the summer drifted the ship backward; but as autumn came on and the wind changed, the *Fram* was once more carried north-westward. She reached her highest point—85° 57' north latitude—on the sixteenth of October 1895, and from that time forward slowly but surely drifted south-westward.

Before Nansen left the ship he had given Sverdrup