

tion, he said ; he was quite willing to go. Sverdrup had long ago mentioned the possibility of such an expedition, and he had thought it well over, and made up his mind that if my choice should fall on him he would take it as a great favour to be permitted to accompany me. 'I don't know whether you'll be satisfied with this answer, or whether you would like me still to think it over ; but I should certainly never change my mind.' 'No, if you have already thought seriously about it—thought what risks you expose yourself to—the chance, for instance, that neither of us may ever see the face of man again—and if you have reflected that even if we get through safe and sound we must necessarily face a great deal of hardship on an expedition like this—if you have made up your mind to all this, I don't insist on your reflecting any longer about it.' 'Yes, that I have.' 'Well, then, that is settled. To-morrow we shall begin our preparations for the trip. Hansen must see about appointing another meteorological assistant.'"

"Tuesday, November 20th. This evening I delivered an address to the whole ship's company, in which I announced the determination that had been arrived at, and explained to them the projected expedition. First of all I briefly went through the whole theory of our undertaking, and its history from the beginning, laying stress on the idea on which my plans had been built up, namely that a vessel which got frozen in north of Siberia must drift across the Polar Sea and out into the Atlantic, and must pass somewhere or other north of Franz Josef Land, and between it and the Pole. The object of the expedition was to accomplish this drift across the unknown sea, and to pursue investigations there. I pointed out to them that these investigations would be of equal importance whether the expedition actually passed across the Pole itself or at some distance from it. Judging from our experiences hitherto, we could not entertain any doubt that the expedition would solve the problem it had set before it; everything had up to the present gone according to our