

a cosy little hut of snow, into which they crawled in their wolf-skin garments, and had a tolerably good night. I was awake early the next morning ; but when I crept out of the tent I found that somebody else was on his legs before me, and this was Pettersen, who, awakened by the cold, was now walking up and down to warm his stiffened limbs. He had tried it now, he said ; he never should have thought it possible to sleep in the snow, but it had not been half bad. He would not quite admit that he had been cold, and that that was the reason why he had turned out so early. Then we had our last pleasant breakfast together, got the sledges ready, harnessed the dogs, shook hands with our companions, and, without many words being uttered on either side, started out into solitude. Peter shook his head sorrowfully as we went off. I turned round when we had gone some little way, and saw his figure on the top of the hummock ; he was still looking after us. His thoughts were probably sad ; perhaps he believed that he had spoken to us for the last time.

We found large expanses of flat ice, and covered the ground quickly, farther and farther away from our comrades, into the unknown, where we two alone and the dogs were to wander for months. The *Fram's* rigging had disappeared long ago behind the margin of the ice. We often came on piled-up ridges and uneven ice, where the sledges had to be helped and sometimes carried over. It often happened, too, that they capsized altogether, and it was only by dint of strenuous hauling that we righted them again. Somewhat exhausted by all this hard work, we stopped finally at 6 o'clock in the evening, and had then gone about 9 miles during the day. They were not quite the marches I had reckoned on, but we hoped that by degrees the sledges would become lighter, and the ice better to travel over. The latter, too, seems to have been the case at first. On Sunday, March 17th, I say in my diary : " The ice appears to be more even the farther north we get : came across a lane, however, yesterday which necessitated a long detour.* At half past six we had done about 9 miles. As we had just

* It was not advisable for many reasons to cross the lanes in the kayaks, now that the temperature was so low. Even if the water in the lanes had not nearly always been covered with a more or less thick layer of ice, the kayaks would have become