between Greenland and Spitzbergen as surely as we can reckon on getting into the *Jeannette* current off the New Siberian Islands.

"But if this *Jeannette* current does not pass right across the Pole? If, for instance, it passes between the Pole and Franz Josef Land, as above intimated? What will the expedition do in that case to reach the earth's axis? Yes, this may seem to be the Achilles' heel of the undertaking; for should the ship be carried past the Pole at more than one degree's distance it may then appear extremely imprudent and unsafe to abandon it in mid-current and face such a long sledge-journey over uneven sea-ice, which itself is drifting. Even if one reached the Pole it would be very uncertain whether one could find the ship again on returning. . . . I am, however, of opinion that this is of small import: *it is not to seek for the exact mathematical point that forms the northern extremity of the earth's axis that we set out, for to reach this point is intrinsically of small moment. Our object is to investigate the great unknown region that surrounds the Pole*, and these investigations will be equally important, from a scientific point of view, whether the expedition passes over the polar point itself or at some distance from it."

In this lecture I had submitted the most important data on which my plan was founded; but in the following years I continued to study the conditions of the northern waters, and received ever fresh proofs that my