

Islands, in case the *Fram* should meet with disaster and the expedition should be obliged to return home that way. On Von Toll's mentioning this, Kelch at once expressed himself willing to bear the cost, as he wished us in that event to meet with Siberian hospitality even on the New Siberian Islands. As it was difficult to find trustworthy agents to carry out a task involving so much responsibility, Von Toll determined to establish the depots himself, and in May, 1893, he set out on an adventurous and highly interesting journey from the mainland over the ice to the New Siberian Islands, where, besides laying down three depots for us,* he made some very important geological researches.

Another important matter, I thought, was to have a cargo of coal sent out as far as possible on our route, so that when we broke off all connection with the rest of the world we should have on board the *Fram* as much coal as she could carry. I therefore joyfully accepted an offer from an Englishman, who was to accompany us with his steam-yacht to Novaya Zemlya or the

* These depots were arranged most carefully, and every precaution so well taken that we certainly should not have suffered from famine had we gone there. In the northernmost depot at Stan Durnova on the west coast of Kotelnoi, at 75° 37' N. L., we should have found provisions for a week; with these we could easily have made our way 65 miles southward along the coast to the second depot at Urassalach, where, in a house built by Baron Von Toll in 1886, we should have found provisions for a whole month. Lastly, a third depot in a house on the south side of Little Liakhoff Island, with provisions for two months, would have enabled us to reach the mainland with ease.