

## CHAPTER III

### THE START

“So travel I north to the gloomy abode  
That the sun never shines on—  
There is no day.”

It was midsummer day. A dull, gloomy day; and with it came the inevitable leave-taking. The door closed behind me. For the last time I left my home and went alone down the garden to the beach, where the *Fram's* little petroleum launch pitilessly awaited me. Behind me lay all I held dear in life. And what before me? How many years would pass ere I should see it all again? What would I not have given at that moment to be able to turn back; but up at the window little Liv was sitting clapping her hands. Happy child, little do you know what life is—how strangely mingled and how full of change. Like an arrow the little boat sped over Lysaker Bay, bearing me on the first stage of a journey on which life itself, if not more, was staked.

At last everything was in readiness. The hour had arrived towards which the persevering labor of years had been incessantly bent, and with it the feeling that, everything being provided and completed, responsibility