

CHAPTER IV

FAREWELL TO NORWAY

I FELT in a strange mood as I sat up the last night writing letters and telegrams. We had bidden farewell to our excellent pilot, Johan Hågensen, who had piloted us from Bergen, and now we were only the thirteen members of the expedition, together with my secretary, Christofersen, who had accompanied us so far, and was to go on with us as far as Yugor Strait. Everything was so calm and still, save for the scraping of the pen that was sending off a farewell to friends at home.

All the men were asleep below.

The last telegram was written, and I sent my secretary ashore with it. It was 3 o'clock in the morning when he returned, and I called Sverdrup up, and one or two others. We weighed anchor, and stood out of the harbor in the silence of the morning. The town still lay wrapped in sleep; everything looked so peaceful and lovely all around, with the exception of a little stir of awakening toil on board one single steamer in the harbor. A sleepy fisherman stuck his head up out of the half-deck of his ten-oared boat, and stared at us as we