

Khabarova. According to what Trontheim told us, this was the work of the monks—about the only work, probably, they had ever taken in hand. The soil here was a soft clay, and the channel was narrow and shallow, like a roadside ditch or gutter; the work could not have been very arduous. On the hill above the lake stood the flag-staff which we had noticed on our arrival. It had been erected by the excellent Trontheim to bid us welcome, and on the flag itself, as I afterwards discovered by chance, was the word "Vorwärts." Trontheim had been told that was the name of our ship, so he was not a little disappointed when he came on board to find it was *Fram* instead. I consoled him, however, by telling him they both meant the same thing, and that his welcome was just as well meant, whether written in German or Norwegian. Trontheim told me afterwards that he was by descent a Norwegian, his father having been a ship's captain from Trondhjem, and his mother an Esthonian, settled at Riga. His father had been much at sea, and had died early, so the son had not learnt Norwegian.

Naturally our first and foremost object was to learn all we could about the ice in the Arctic Sea. We had determined to push on as soon as possible; but we must have the boiler put in order first, while sundry pipes and valves in the engine wanted seeing to. As it would take several days to do this, Sverdrup, Peter Henriksen, and I set out next morning in our little petroleum launch to the eastern opening of the Yugor Strait, to see with our