

CHAPTER V

VOYAGE THROUGH THE KARA SEA

It was well into the night, after Christofersen and Trontheim had left us, before we could get away. The channel was too dangerous for us to risk it in the thick fog. But it cleared a little, and the petroleum launch was got ready; I had determined to go on ahead with it and take soundings. We started about midnight. Hansen stood in the bow with the lead-line. First we bore over towards the point of Vaigats to the northwest, as Palander directs, then on through the strait, keeping to the Vaigats side. The fog was often so thick that it was with difficulty we could catch a glimpse of the *Fram*, which followed close behind us, and on board the *Fram* they could not see our boat. But so long as we had enough water, and so long as we saw that they were keeping to the right course behind us, we went ahead. Soon the fog cleared again a little. But the depth was not quite satisfactory; we had been having steadily $4\frac{1}{2}$ to 5 fathoms; then it dropped to 4, and then to $3\frac{1}{2}$. This was too little. We turned and signalled to the *Fram* to stop. Then we held farther out