

## CHAPTER VI

### THE WINTER NIGHT

IT really looked as if we were now frozen in for good, and I did not expect to get the *Fram* out of the ice till we were on the other side of the Pole, nearing the Atlantic Ocean. Autumn was already well advanced; the sun stood lower in the heavens day by day, and the temperature sank steadily. The long night of winter was approaching—that dreaded night. There was nothing to be done except prepare ourselves for it, and by degrees we converted our ship, as well as we could, into comfortable winter quarters; while at the same time we took every precaution to assure her against the destructive influences of cold, drift-ice, and the other forces of nature to which it was prophesied that we must succumb. The rudder was hauled up, so that it might not be destroyed by the pressure of the ice. We had intended to do the same with the screw; but as it, with its iron case, would certainly help to strengthen the stern, and especially the rudder-stock, we let it remain in its place. We had a good deal of work with the engine, too; each separate part was taken out, oiled, and laid