

CHAPTER VIII

SECOND AUTUMN IN THE ICE

So summer was over, and our second autumn and winter were beginning. But we were now more inured to the trials of patience attendant on this life, and time passed quickly. Besides, I myself was now taken up with new plans and preparations. Allusion has several times been made to the fact that we had, during the course of the summer, got everything into readiness for the possibility of having to make our way home across the ice. Six double kayaks had been built, the hand-sledges were in good order, and careful calculation had been made of the amount of food, clothing, fuel, etc., that it would be necessary to carry. But I had also quietly begun to make preparations for my own meditated expedition north. In August, as already mentioned, I had begun to work at a single kayak, the framework made of bamboo. I had said nothing about my plan yet, except a few words to Sverdrup; it was impossible to tell how far north the drift would take us, and so many things might happen before spring.

In the meantime life on board went on as usual.