

Before leaving the *Fram* for good I ought, perhaps, to give a short account of the equipment we finally decided on as the most likely to suit our purposes.

I have already mentioned the two kayaks that had been made during the course of the winter, and that we required to have with us in order to cross possible channels and pools, and also for use when we should come to open sea. Instead of these kayaks, I had at first thought of taking ready-made canvas boat-covers, and of using the sledges as frames to stretch them over. By this means a craft perfectly capable of carrying us over lanes and short bits of open sea could have been rigged up in a very short space of time. I subsequently gave up this idea, however, and decided on the kayak, a craft with which I was familiar, and which I knew would render valuable assistance in several respects. Even if we had been able to contrive a cover for the sledges in such a manner that a boat could have been got ready in a short space of time, it would not have been such quick work as simply launching a ready-made kayak. Added to this, the craft would, necessarily, have been heavy to row; and when it was a question of long distances in open water, such as along the coasts of Franz Josef Land, or across thence to Spitzbergen, much time would have been lost. One consideration indeed, and that of some moment, was the saving in weight if the sledges were made use of; but even this was not of so much importance as it seemed,