

our companions, and, without many words being uttered on either side, started out into solitude. Peter shook his head sorrowfully as we went off. I turned round when we had gone some little way, and saw his figure on the top of the hummock; he was still looking after us. His thoughts were probably sad; perhaps he believed that he had spoken to us for the last time.

We found large expanses of flat ice, and covered the ground quickly, farther and farther away from our comrades, into the unknown, where we two alone and the dogs were to wander for months. The *Fram's* rigging had disappeared long ago behind the margin of the ice. We often came on piled-up ridges and uneven ice, where the sledges had to be helped and sometimes carried over. It often happened, too, that they capsized altogether, and it was only by dint of strenuous hauling that we righted them again. Somewhat exhausted by all this hard work, we stopped finally at 6 o'clock in the evening, and had then gone about 9 miles during the day. They were not quite the marches I had reckoned on, but we hoped that by degrees the sledges would become lighter and the ice better to travel over. The latter, too, seems to have been the case at first. On Sunday, March 17th, I say in my diary: "The ice appears to be more even the farther north we get; came across a lane, however, yesterday which necessitated a long detour.* At half-past six we

*It was not advisable, for many reasons, to cross the lanes in the