

with the engine; but the ship was in good hands. From his long experience as a whaler, Captain Brown knew well how to contend with greater odds than the thin ice we met with here—the only ice that is found in this sea. From morning till night he sat up in the crow's-nest as long as there was a bit of ice in the water. He gave himself little time for sleep; the point was, as he often said to me, to bring us home before the *Fram* arrived, for he understood well what a blow it would give to those near and dear to us if she got home before us. Thanks to him, we had as short and pleasant a homeward voyage as few, if any, can have had from these inhospitable regions, where we had spent three years. From the moment we set foot on deck, he did everything to make us comfortable and at home on board, and we spent many a pleasant hour together, which will never be forgotten by either of us. But it was not only the captain who treated us in this way. Every man of the excellent crew showed us kindness and goodwill in every way. I cannot think of them—of the little steward, for instance, when he popped his head into the cabin to ask what he could get for us, or wakened me in the morning with his cheery voice, or sang his songs for us—without a feeling of unspeakable well-being and happiness. Then, too, we were continually drawing nearer home; we could count the days and hours that must pass before we could reach a Norwegian port and be once more in communication with the world.