

## CHAPTER IV

JANUARY 1 TO MAY 17, 1896

NEW-YEAR'S-DAY came with fine, clear weather, moonlight, and about 43 degrees of cold. The ice kept remarkably quiet for about a month, but on February 4th the pressure commenced again. It was not of long duration, but made a great noise while it lasted; the ice all round us roared and screamed as if a tremendous gale were blowing. I took a walk on the ice for the purpose, if possible, of observing the pressure more closely, but could see nothing. The following day we again sallied forth on the ice, and found a comparatively new channel and a large new pressure-ridge about a mile from the ship. It was impossible, however, to get any comprehensive view of the state of the ice, as it was still too dark, even at midday. The surface of the snow was hard and good, but the hollow edges of the snow-drifts were so deceptive that we every now and then tumbled head over heels.

On February 7th Scott-Hansen, Henriksen, Amundsen, and myself took a run northward from the ship. The farther north we went the more broken and uneven the ice became, and at last we had to turn, as we came to a new and wide lane. During the morning a dark bank of clouds had been gathering in the southwest, and now the fog got so thick that it was not easy to find our way back to the ship again. At last we heard the voice of "Sussi," and from the top of a pressure-ridge which we ascended we got sight of the crow's-nest and the main-topmast of the *Fram*, towering above the fog, only a little way off. Close as we were to the ship, it was not so easy to get on board again. We were stopped by a large lane which had formed just abaft