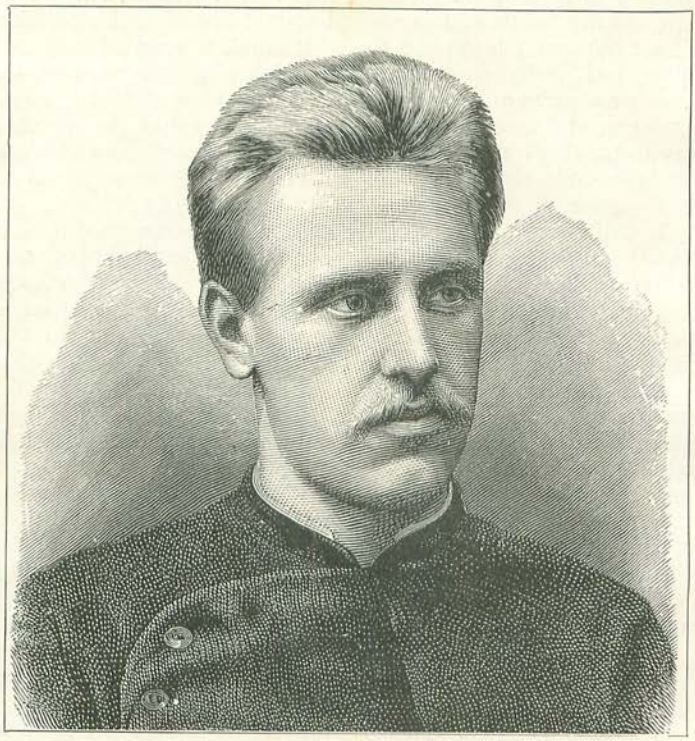
Towards the North Pole.

By Dr. Fridtjof Nansen.

[*This article was written especially for* The Strand Magazine *by Dr. Nansen after starting on his present adventurous expedition in search of the North Pole, and just before he and his brave companions disappeared, for years, into the unknown regions of eternal ice. The photographs were also supplied to us by Dr. Nansen especially for this article.*]



DR. FRIDTJOF NANSEN.

THE principal feature in the plan of my attempt to penetrate into the North Polar region, or if possible to cross it, is, in brief, to try to make use of the currents of the sea instead of fighting against them. My opinion is, as I have already explained on several occasions, that there must somewhere run currents into the Polar region which carry the floe-ice across the Polar Sea, first northward towards the Pole, and then southward again into the Atlantic Ocean. That these currents really exist all Arctic expeditions prove, as most of them have had to fight against the currents and against the ice drifting southward, because they have tried to get northward from the wrong side. I think a very simple conclusion must be drawn from this fact that currents and drifting ice are constantly coming from the unknown North, viz.: Currents and, perhaps, also ice must pass into this same region, as the water running out must be replaced by water running in. This conclusion is based upon the simplest of all natural laws; but there seem to be people who will not even admit the necessity of this.

That such currents run across the North Polar region is also proved by many facts. I may mention the great quantities of Siberian driftwood which are annually carried to the

DR. NANSEN'S HOUSE.

shores of Spitzbergen and Greenland; it comes in such abundance, and with such regularity, that it is quite impossible that it should be carried to these shores, so far from the original home, by occasional winds or currents. There must be a regular communication between the coasts of Siberia and those of Spitzbergen and Greenland. By this same communication were several objects from the unfortunate *Jeannette* carried to the Greenland coast. The *Jeannette* sank in June, 1881, to the north of the New Siberian Islands, and three years afterwards, in June, 1884, a great many objects belonging to her or her crew were found on an ice-floe on the south-west coast of Greenland. This floe can only have been brought there by the same current which carries the driftwood. By this same current an Eskimo implement, a throwing-stick or harpoon-thrower, was also carried the long way from Alaska to the west coast of Greenland. There can, in my opinion, be no doubt of the existence of such a communication or current across the North Polar region from the Siberian side to the Greenland side.

My intention is now to make use of this communication, which Nature herself has established. I shall try to find the place where the heart of this current has its origin, and shall go north there until I am beset in the Polar ice, and then simply let the current have its way, and let it carry us across the unknown region and out into the open sea again on this side of the Pole.

This is the basis upon which I am acting. In order to be able to lead a relatively comfortable life during the ice-drift, the first thing of importance is to get a good and strong ship especially adapted to withstand the pressure of the ice-floes when they are pressed together by the currents and the heavy gales of the Arctic Sea. Such a ship cannot be had ready-made, and I had to build the *Fram*, in which we are now steering into the unknown North. It took me two years to get her ready, but I believe the result is good. She is an unusually strong ship; the frame timbers are made of hard Italian oak, are 10in. to 12in. thick, and are placed close together. Inside them is the ceiling, consisting of pitch-pine planks, alternately 4in. and 8in. in thickness. Outside the frame timbers is the planking, consisting of three skins; first a 3in. oak skin, over which is another of 4in., and finally an outer planking, or "ice-sheeting," of greenheart, which increases in thickness from the keel towards the water-line from 3in. to 6in. Greenheart is a very hard, strong, and slippery wood, but also very heavy, as it sinks in water. The whole thickness of the sides of the *Fram* is thus 28in. to 32in.: a solid mass of pitch-pine, oak, and greenheart, with a little pitch in between to make it watertight.

A ship's side of these dimensions and material will alone have a great power of resistance to the pressure of the ice. But this power is to a very essential degree increased by the many beams, stays, and strengthenings of every kind placed inside the vessel. These are so carefully arranged and united to each other that the whole is like one coherent mass, and the ship may almost be considered as if built of solid wood. But even if this had been the case, she would not be strong enough to resist the ice if she had not got a suitable shape, as the ice is able to crush anything which it gets a firm hold of with its cold, irresistible grasp.

The most important feature in the *Fram's* construction is, therefore, that she is built on such lines as will tend to lift her, and thus make her escape the grasp of the ice when it begins to press. The sides are not perpendicular as those of ships generally are, but slope from the bulwark to the keel; her "dead rise" is great, so that when the ice-floes are pressed against her sides, they meet with no perpendicular wall to press against and break, but with sloping walls, along which they will glide downwards, and at last pass under the keel of the ship, tending to lift her out of the water. The keel is not projecting, in order that the ice shall not get hold of it. On the whole, everything is made as smooth and rounded as possible. There are no edges, no projecting corners for the ice to catch hold of; she is like a bowl, and a transverse section of the *Fram* resembles very much that of a cocoa-nut.

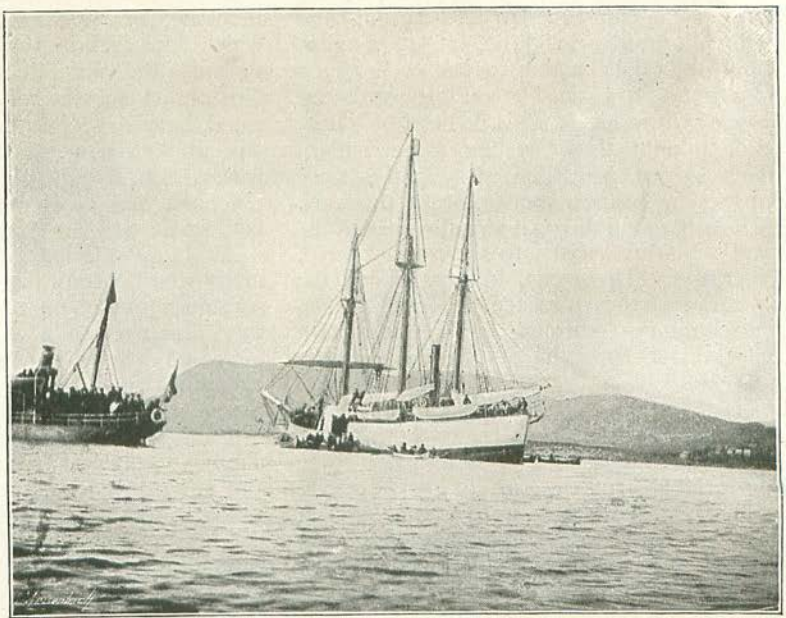
The length of the *Fram* is 128ft., the greatest beam is 36ft.; she is consequently very broad compared with the length. Her draught at present is about 16ft., and her freeboard is only 3ft., but now she is heavily loaded, as we have taken as much coal as we can carry. This will, however, gradually be burnt in our engines, and she will soon be lifted again. The size of the ship is about 310 tons register, and her displacement with her heavy cargo at present is, I should say, about 800 tons, or a little more.

She is rigged as a three-masted fore-and-aft schooner. The mainmast is high, and on the top is the crow's-nest at a height of about 105ft. above the water. From there you have a splendid view over the ice-fields, and can easily see where to steer your ship through open water.

The *Fram* has an auxiliary engine of about 200 indicated horse-power. Deeply loaded as she now is, however, she does not get a speed of more than about five knots from the engine alone, but with a lighter cargo she makes six or even seven knots. She is consequently not a fast vessel, but this is relatively of no great importance on an expedition like ours, where we shall have to depend principally on the speed of the current and the ice-movement, and unfortunately not on that of the ship.

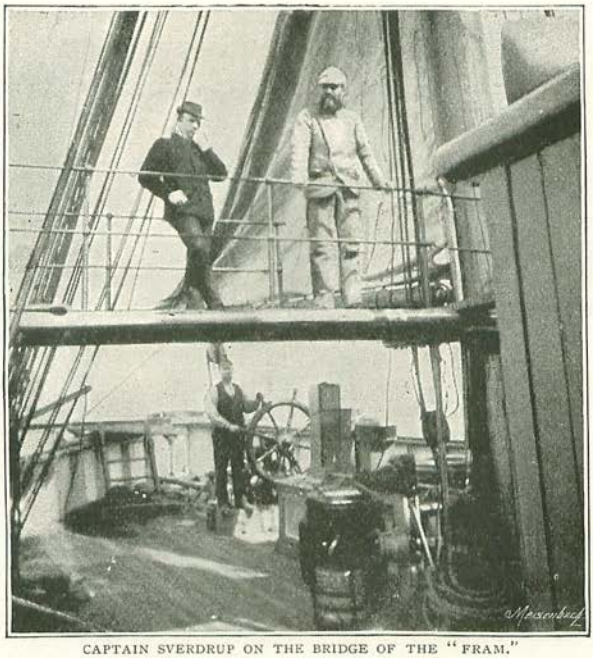
The members of the expedition are the following: Otto Sverdrup, master of the ship. He was my companion on the expedition across Greenland. Sigurd Scott Hansen, lieutenant of the Norwegian navy and leader of our meteorological, astronomical, magnetic, and geodetic observations. Henrik Blessing, physician of the expedition and botanist. Claudius Theodor Jacobsen, mate of the *Fram;* formerly sealer and shipmaster in the Arctic Sea round Spitzbergen and Novaya Zemlya. Peder Hendriksen, harpooner; formerly sealer and shipmaster in the Arctic Sea round Spitzbergen and Novaya Zemlya. Hjalmar Johannesen, lieutenant of the Norwegian army; on board the *Fram* he is fireman and general utility man. Ivar Mogstad, carpenter, etc.; has also occasionally served as steward. Bernhard Nordahl, electrical assistant and fireman. Anton Amundsen, engineer. Lars Pettersen, engineer. Adolf Juell, steward and sailor; formerly shipmaster. Bernt Bentsen, sailor. We are thirteen all told.

We have one saloon in common, where we take our meals and spend our leisure time.



THE "FRAM" ON HER WAY NORTHWARDS; OFF BPÖNO SUND, NORWAY.

Round the saloon six cabins are placed—four single cabins for Captain Sverdrup, Lieutenant Hansen, Doctor Blessing, and myself; and besides these, two cabins with four or five men in each. These cabins are so placed that they surround the saloon and protect it against the outer walls of the ship, thus making it nice and warm. The walls and roof are also made very thick, and consist of many heat-isolating layers, with reindeer hair, felt, and cork dust in between. Special care is taken in this respect, not only to keep in the heat but also to avoid the moisture, which is so easily condensed on the cold walls of every ship in the Polar night, and which has been of great annoyance during most Arctic expeditions. This I hope we shall to a great extent avoid.



CAPTAIN SVERDRUP ON THE BRIDGE OF THE "FRAM."

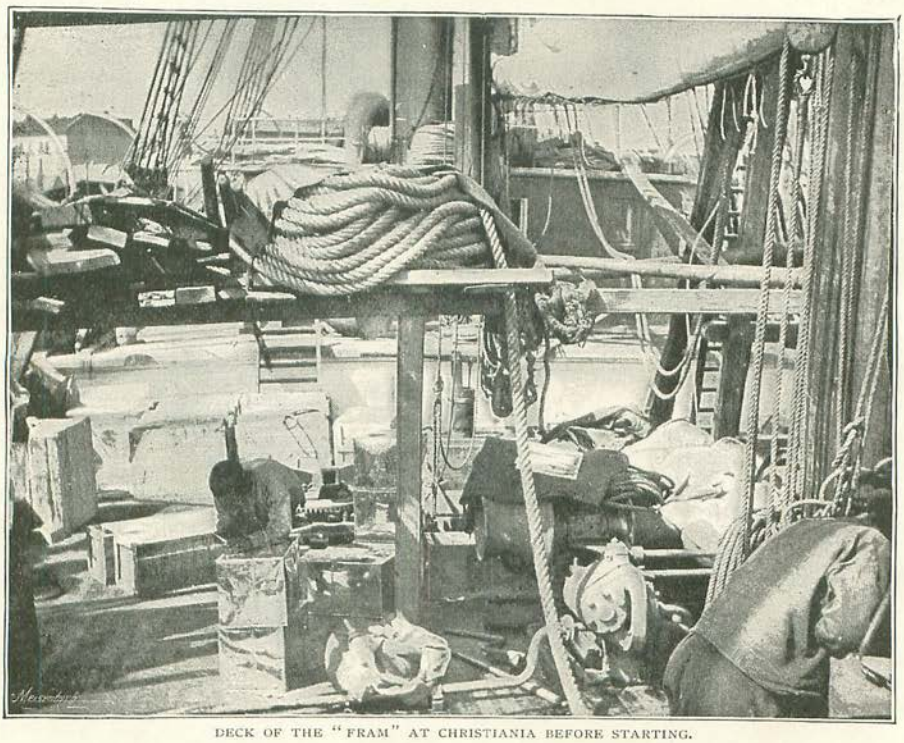
For this purpose, and also in order to get good air in the saloon and cabins, special attention is paid to the ventilation. The cold, fresh air from outside is taken in through a heating apparatus, which I have specially constructed for the purpose, and which is heated by mineral oil. After having circulated in the rooms the air is again sucked out by another ventilator. From the English firm, Robert Boyle and Son, I have got two extra ventilators—one downcast ventilator and one upcast—by help of which I can improve upon the ventilation if necessary and make it quite perfect. A good ventilation is certainly a most important thing during an Arctic expedition, but heat is also good. If therefore we should not have fuel enough and it should be too cold to sleep in our cabins, it is so arranged that we can, all of us, live and sleep in the saloon only. We shall then shut the doors of the cabins closely; to go into the open air we have to pass through four thick doors, and thus we need not let in more cold air than we like. It will certainly not be difficult for us to keep up the warmth in this way, even without any fuel on the fireplace; for many people to live together in a small room with thick walls gives too much heat.

In order to obtain a pleasant place for promenading, the deck of the *Fram* will be sheltered by a huge tent in the winter. This will also add to the snugness. Upon the whole, I think we shall possess cosy and comfortable winter quarters. Our saloon we have made as home-like as we have been able. The first Norwegian artists have decorated our walls with beautiful pictures of our home. Everyone has in his cabin pictures of his dear ones. The saloon as well as the cabins is lighted with electric light, the walls and roof are painted white, and at night when all lamps are burning it really looks quite festive, reminding you of home and happiness, and certainly not of the Polar solitude. We have also plenty of books of all kinds—thanks to several friends of the expedition—and games in any variety, and also an organ and other musical instruments. We can thus get musical entertainment, reading, and if this is no longer satisfying we can play at chess, dominoes, halma, cards, at pleasure. I believe the winter will not be felt as very long, though the night may last six months.

Of provisions we have plenty and in great variety; much more so, I believe, than most previous expeditions in the Arctic. Variety of food is the most important thing in order to avoid scurvy, which has destroyed so many well-equipped expeditions. We have, of course, tinned meat in all possible forms: boiled, roast, and corned beef, ditto mutton, rabbits, collops, Oxford sausages, cutlets, pork, ham, bacon, etc.; tinned fish and roe in various forms; tinned

fruits, dried fruits, jams, marmalades, blanc mange, Bird's custard powder, egg powder, and baking powder; concentrated lime juice from Rose and Co.; rizine, peas, pea-soups, lentil soup, bean soup, Frame Food, Bovril, dried vegetables, biscuits; Cadbury's chocolate, steam-cooked and dried meal and flour of various kinds, dried fish, dried potatoes, preserved milk, with sugar and without sugar, compressed tea, cheese, sugar, etc.; and, above all, butter, which is most important in the cold, where you especially want fat. We carry six tons of butter.

For sledge expeditions we have, of course, specially concentrated and light food, principally consisting of dried meat with fat. The Bovril Co. has, on my suggestion, made a special food consisting of these materials which is highly concentrated; they have called it "emergency food." For sledge expeditions we shall also use biscuits and butter, steam-cooked meal for porridge, milk, chocolate, dried fish, dried fruits, dried cranberries, sugar, a little compressed tea, and also some biscuits, to which I have added a quantity of a German product called Aleuronat powder, which principally contains albumen. I have added about 30 per cent. of this to the biscuits, so that a certain number of them, with a suitable quantity of butter, will be sufficient for one man per day; I believe a pound and a half of biscuits or a little more and half a pound of butter will be an appropriate ration. For drinking we shall have nothing except water, which we shall get by melting snow. This water we may, however, mix with lime juice and sugar, or with milk, or make tea, chocolate, or soup of it, and thus we shall have pleasant drinks. A good drink is also water mixed with oatmeal. Spirituous drinks will not be allowed; tobacco will be distributed in very moderate rations on board ship; on sledge expeditions no tobacco, or very little, will be allowed.



DECK OF THE "FRAM" AT CHRISTIANIA BEFORE STARTING.

Our dress will indoors consist entirely of wool. Thanks to the Jaeger Company in London, we have a splendid equipment of woollen garments. Out of doors in the winter when the winds are blowing we shall wear weather-proof suits, made of light canvas, gabardine, or similar stuff, which protects against the snow-drift. When it is very cold we shall wear fur suits, made principally of wolf and reindeer fur. To sleep in the snow or in our tents during the sledge expeditions we have also sleeping-bags made of the same material, in which we can easily and with comfort stand a temperature of one hundred degrees below zero.

VISITORS TO THE "FRAM" BEFORE STARTING.

Our tents are made of raw silk and are exceedingly light. Lightness is, of course, of the highest importance, when everything must be carried on the sledges. The tent floor is, however, of a somewhat heavier stuff, as that has to keep out the moisture which is easily formed when you sleep on the snow, with nothing under you except a thin canvas or calico layer. It is also well to have the tent floor rather strong, as it can then be used as a sail on the sledge when you have a favourable wind. For our scientific observations we carry, of course, a great number of scientific instruments. I need hardly say that photographic cameras of various sizes and kinds are not forgotten.

We are now (as I write this) steering eastward across the sea from Norway to Novaya Zemlya, through fog and against the wind. Yesterday we had a short, sunny glimpse of Goose Land on Novaya Zemlya, and were just steering in there, when the fog came again and shut us out from the world around us. We were obliged to steer out to sea again, and make for Yugor Strait, the most southern strait which separates Novaya Zemlya, or rather Waigats, the most southern island, from the Continent. Here we expect to meet a small vessel, which I have sent from Norway, with fifty tons of coal. At Khabarova, in Yugor Strait, a Russian, Trontheim, is also waiting us, with more than thirty sledge dogs. He had to travel from Tiumen, in Siberia, last winter to the Ostjaks to buy these dogs, and had then to travel the long way from Siberia, through the north of Russia to Pechora, and from there he travelled with the dogs to Yugor Strait in company with the Samoyeds, who go north in the spring. I hope we shall find the dogs in good condition, as well as Trontheim himself, who will possibly accompany us on the expedition.

When we have got our dogs and coal, and if the Strait and the Kara Sea are open, we shall make our way eastward along the Asiatic coast as quickly as possible. The first part of the way through the Kara Sea will perhaps be the worst, as the ice is often very bad there. More easterly the water running out from the rivers generally forces the ice a little from the coast, leaving an open passage along the shore. We shall have to pass Cape Chelyuskin, the most northern point of the Continent, which has only once before been passed by any vessel, viz., the *Vega*, on Nordenskiöld's famous expedition. If we still find open water we shall go on eastward along the coast until we reach the mouth of the Olenek River, to the east of the Lena Delta. If we have time I shall go in there to take twenty-six sledge dogs which are waiting for us. The reason why I want to get dogs there also is that the dogs from East Siberia are stronger and better than the West Siberian ones; therefore Baron Toll, who is now travelling in Siberia, proposed this, and has now kindly arranged this depôt for me; it is he also who arranged with Trontheim about these other dogs. If we get too many dogs, it is of course easy to pick out the best ones of the whole lot.

DR. NANSEN IN DRESS FOR ROUGH WEATHER.

From Olenek I shall steer north-east towards the west coast of the New Siberian Islands. If the season is favourable, I hope to find open water here a good bit northward into the unknown regions. We shall go as far as we can northward in open water, and, when we can do so no more, choose our place and run the *Fram* into the ice.

Then our work will be done for a long time, probably, as the ice will have to carry us further north. That such will be the case, if we only get far enough northward in open water, I do not doubt. We shall then arrange our ship as best we can to make her a comfortable winter quarter. If we drift many years in this way the life may become somewhat monotonous, but we shall have plenty of things to do to pass the time. There is much scientific work to be done in these unknown regions. The climate must be observed each hour in the day, the currents in the water under the ice, the ice itself and its formation; the Northern Lights must be watched, the magnetism of the earth, and if new land is met with this must be carefully examined.

In the long, light summers, the life is almost gay up there. Then the sun sends its refreshing, glorious light — day and night — over this frozen white ice world, and does not disappear for many months; and there will be excursions in all directions on our *ski* (Norwegian snow-shoes), or on the sledges drawn by the dogs, or, even still better, standing on your *ski* and letting the dogs draw you at a tremendous pace over the flat floes. If any land is discovered, we might even get good shooting.

But after the bright day comes the long, dark, Arctic night, when the temperature sinks lower than, perhaps, anybody knows. Then there will not be much to do in the open air, except to take the necessary meteorological and astronomical observations, besides a little exercise and, perhaps, to take a drive

DR. NANSEN ON THE "SKI" (SNOW-SHOES) WITH DOG AND SLEDGE.

DR. NANSEN READY TO START FOR A DRIVE WITH DOG AND "SKI."

with the dogs while the moon is shining. In our winter quarters there is, however, much to be done, and we shall certainly do our best to lead a cheerful life.

I have already said that we have a snug saloon to live in, and we have electric light to make us forget the absent sun. But many will perhaps ask how we shall get the necessary power to produce the electricity, as we could not afford to burn coal for that purpose. This is not, however, so very complicated. On one hand we have the wind, and by the help of a big windmill we shall be able to work the dynamo, and by help of our accumulators we shall be able to store up electricity for some time when we get a gale. But when there is no wind, we have ourselves. We are thirteen men, and when a capstan is arranged on deck, we shall be able to do work similar to that which a horse does in its horse-mill on land. In this capstan four men take their turn at a time; thus we shall obtain good and regular exercise, and be useful at the same time. When the sun disappears and the long night comes on, we shall take our walk in a ring on the deck of the *Fram* to produce our own sun. In this way man must conquer Nature. But I dare not say for certain that we shall not long for the natural sun, and look eagerly forward to its appearance again in the dawn of spring. Then it will rise slowly and majestically, over the horizon, and pour its blessed light into our souls.

Upon the whole we shall lead quite a pleasant life as long as we have the ship, but it may be that in spite of all precautions she may be lost. It will certainly be a sad moment when we shall have to say farewell to our dear *Fram*, but we shall be able to go on all the same. We have many

DR. NANSEN DRIVING DOG ON "SKI."

boats with us of different sizes; two of these are very big, and are specially built for the event of such an accident. They are 29ft. long and 9ft. broad; they have a deck, and can really be regarded as two small reserve ships. The whole crew can live pretty comfortably even in one of them, and there will be room for a good deal of provisions besides. A disaster can hardly come so suddenly that we shall not be able to see beforehand, and get good time to put these boats and provisions and fuel on the ice. Then there will be no danger; we can drift on with the ice just as safely as we did before, nay, even more safely, as the boats will stand on the ice and thus cannot easily be crushed by the floes.

DR. NANSEN IN WINTER DRESS OF WOLF-SKIN.

We should certainly not have as much comfort as we had in the *Fram*, but it is not difficult to make these boats good warm winter quarters by help of snow and warm tents made of fur. And in case the big boats should also be lost, we can build snow-huts on the ice.

How long the expedition will last is, of course, very difficult to calculate beforehand, as we do not know much of the speed of the current with which we are going to travel. I believe, however, there is not much probability that it will take more than three years till we come out into open sea again or to somewhere from whence we can return home; and as we have taken provisions for five or even six years, I think we shall not run the risk of starving.

It has been said that this expedition is very risky; indeed, I believe this is the general opinion. I cannot agree with it. The reasons why it is considered risky are, however, of different kinds. Some people say there is no such current as I have supposed—the ice does not move at all; others say the ice is only carried along by occasional winds; others, again, say there are certainly currents, but nobody knows where they will take you. A few people agree with me that there must be such a current as I maintain there is, but the ice is dangerous and may destroy us, or we may be stopped by unknown lands in the north. Nothing of all this convinces me. If there is no current, I do not see why it should be risky to go: we shall be unable to advance, and will be able to return when we see we are mistaken. If there are currents, however, or if the ice is only moved by winds which have the same effect, we must certainly, in less than five or six years, be brought somewhere near the coasts of the Polar Sea, and wherever we come we shall be able to reach human dwellings, whether it be on the American or the Asiatic side. The Polar basin is really so small that in the course of five years we must be drifted across it, whatever the speed may be. If the ship is destroyed we will make use of our boats, as I have already mentioned; and if our drift is stopped by land, we shall either have to try and get afloat again or have to travel over the ice and make for the nearest land known. The Polar basin is not so great as to render this impossible when you have an equipment specially adapted for it, and take care to travel with the currents and not against them.

But all these and many other similar questions we shall probably be able to answer more fully when we return, whether we have been successful or not. We are certainly prepared to meet with hardships of various

kinds, perhaps more than we wish for; but it is to explore that we go out, and there is no exploration to be made without sufferings, as well as no victory without a risk.

On the 24th of June we started on our expedition from Christiania, and sailed northward along the beautiful Norwegian coast. Everywhere people came from the most distant places in order to see the strange ship and her crew. Whenever we stopped in some little place the deck was at once crowded with people who wanted to see everything. On the 21st of July we left Vardö, our last harbour in Norway, and now we are sailing eastward across the Barents Sea.

Within a few days we shall enter the ice and shall get the first cold embrace of the ice-world which is going to be our home for years hence, and from which no tidings will reach the dear ones at home, when first entered. To give those who have not seen this world of ice an idea of what it looks like is not easy, as it is so different from anything else. It is a strange thing with this region, that when you are there, you think it sometimes monotonous perhaps; but when you are away from it, you long to get back again to its white, vast solitude.

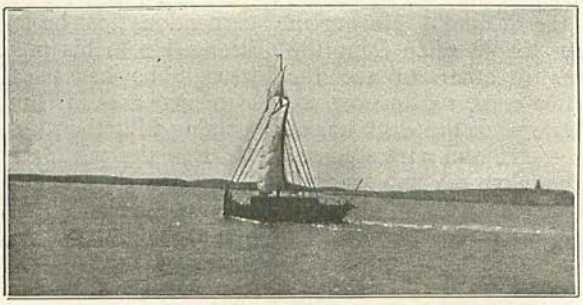
When you approach the ice-fields of the Polar Sea you hear them far off by the noise of the breakers against the floes; it sounds like the strange roar of a distant earthquake or thunderstorm. Over the horizon to the north you will also see a strange light: this is the white reflection which the ice throws on the sky above. When you sail on you will after a while begin to meet the white floes riding on the dark water. It is along the margin of this ice that the sealer hunts for the seal; between these tremendous floes he forces his way with his strong ship to his prey. But many a hard struggle he has to fight here when the elements are in tumult. Nothing more foaming wild than a tempest in the winter-night in the north can easily be imagined. When the storm whistles over sea and ice, lashes snow and foam in your face, and seizes you so that you cannot stand on deck; when the waves rise into huge water-mountains, between which the ship disappears, and is all in foam; when sea and ice meet, and the waves rise like towers and break in over the floes like greenish-yellow waterfalls, and the huge floes are thrown against each other and crushed into dust, while the water foams and ice-blocks are thrown high against the dark sky—then it may happen that you will feel the wild horror of the Polar Sea. No stars, no Northern Lights, no light of any kind over this furious uproar. Heavy storm-charged clouds fly across the sky; all around you is blackness and darkness, noise and tumult. It is the wild demons of Nature in fight. It thunders and roars, it hisses and whistles in every direction—it is Ragnarök which is coming; the world is shaking to its foundations.

But in the middle of this wild fight of the sea and the demons, between these tower-like waves, a small, frail work of man is riding, a ship with living men on board. Woe to them if they now make a single mistake; woe to them if they come too near one of these floes or put the ship's bow between them at the moment they strike together: in the next instant they will be crushed and disappear! But through the noise words of com-

DR. NANSEN PREPARING FOR DRIVE IN DOG SLEDGE.
(Eight or ten dogs have to be harnessed to this sledge.)

mand can be heard; punctually they are obeyed; the sealer steers quietly his way out into the sea. He is accustomed to such a turmoil, and he knows that the world will still last a while.

But there is not only storm in the Polar Sea; indeed, it can be just as mild and peaceful there as a day in spring at home, with bright sunshine and glittering snow. When you come some distance into the ice it is so as a rule, and that which most often comes before my memory when I think of the Polar regions is not the storms, not the hardships, but this strange peace, so far from the vortex of the world, when from the bright blue sky the sun is pouring its flood of light over the white, snow-covered ice, outward and outward to the horizon. It glitters in the snow and sparkles in the deep blue water; it gleams and glitters everywhere around, while cold blue tints are reflected from the sides of the floes, and border them with all tints of blue and green, clear as the clearest crystal, far down into the cold, transparent water. And in the sunshine the seals are lying in thousands and thousands on the floes, enjoying life. Some of them sleep, others are busy with their toilette, and prune and scratch themselves; others again are playing, whilst some are in the water and dive up and down, and the sun is shining on their wet heads. The whole is a picture of the most perfect, charming peace, and the memory never wearies of recalling it to view.



A MODERN VIKING-SHIP OF NORWAY PASSING THE "FRAM."

But when you penetrate further into ice, and further northward, the open water gradually disappears, and the sea is totally covered by immense drifting ice-floes; the whole world becomes one field of white, snow-covered ice; only now and then between the floes a narrow strip of dark water can be seen. Soon all life also disappears; no seals any longer, such as those keep near open water, neither any birds: the only animal which you may perhaps meet is a single, lonely Polar bear, but soon he also disappears, and there is nothing left except yourself and the endless ice in constant drift across the sea towards the south, towards warmth and sun, where it is soon destroyed. So extends the Polar Sea northward and northward to the Pole.

In the summer the sun is shining all day and night, and circulates round and round in the sky, and never disappears until the autumn comes; but then begins the long, dark winter night, which at the Pole itself lasts six months. Then the stars are constantly shining over the desolate snow-fields. When the moon comes it circulates round the sky and shines day and night until it disappears again. But sometimes the Northern Lights begin their play, this great mystery of the north; then there comes life; it scintillates and burns; sparkling lights and rays are running to and fro over the whole sky, until they disappear again, leaving the scene quiet and desolate as before.

In this dead, frozen world is it that the Polar explorer has to live. There he roams with sledge and dogs in summer, and from thence he sends longing thoughts in the dark winter night southward to the dear ones at home, over whom the same stars are twinkling in their cold peace.

Onboard the "Fram."
in the Barents Sea
26th July 1893.

Fridtjof Nansen.