

did not slacken away much during last night after the violent pressure; and, what was worse, there was no indication of slackening in the morning, now that we were quite ready to go. Slight signs of it showed themselves a little later, upon which I gave orders to get up steam; and while this was being done I took a stroll on the ice, to look for traces of yesterday evening. I found tracks not only of the bear that had been killed and of a larger one that might be the mother, but of a third, which must have been badly wounded, as it had sometimes dragged itself on its hind quarters, and had left a broad track of blood. After following the traces for a good way and discovering that I had no weapon to despatch the animal with but my own fists, I thought it would be as well to return to the ship to get a gun and companions who would help to drag the bear back. I had also some small hope that in the meantime the ice might have slackened, so that, in place of going after game, we might go north with the *Fram*. But no such luck! So I put on my snow-shoes and set off after our bear, some of the dogs with me, and one or two men following. At some distance we came to the place where it had spent the night—poor beast, a ghastly night! Here I also saw tracks of the mother. One shudders to think of her watching over her poor young one, which must have had its back shot through. Soon we came up to the cripple, dragging itself away from us over the ice as best it could.