

at length I could stand it no longer, and set off homeward, with the dogs dashing wildly on in front. On approaching the ship I saw some of the men setting off with guns; they were Sverdrup, Johansen, Mogstad, and Henriksen. They had got a good start of me in the direction in which the dogs were barking before I, too, got hold of a gun and set off after them. All at once I saw through the darkness the flash of a volley from those in front, followed by another shot; then several more, until at last it sounded like regular platoon firing. What the deuce could it be? They were standing on the same spot, and kept firing incessantly. Why on earth did they not advance nearer? I hurried on, thinking it was high time I came up with my snow-shoes to follow the game, which must evidently be in full flight. Meanwhile they advanced a little, and then there was another flash to be seen through the darkness, and so they went on two or three times. One of the number at last dashed forward over the ice and fired straight down in front of him, while another knelt down and fired towards the east. Were they trying their guns? But surely it was a strange time for doing so, and there were so many shots. Meanwhile the dogs tore around over the ice, and gathered in clumps, barking furiously. At length I overtook them, and saw three bears scattered over the ice, a she-bear and two cubs, while the dogs lay over them, worrying them like mad and tearing away at paws, throat, and tail. 'Ulenka' especially was beside herself.