

actly what the Russians would call a 'polynja.' It was covered with young ice, too weak to bear. We started confidently alongside it in a southwesterly direction (true), in the belief that we should soon find a way across; but 'soon' did not come. Just where we expected to find a crossing, an overwhelming sight presented itself to our gaze; the pool stretched away in a southwesterly direction to the very horizon, and we could see no end to it! In the mirage on the horizon, a couple of detached blocks of ice rose above the level of the pool; they appeared to be floating in open water, changed constantly in shape, and disappeared and reappeared. Everything seemed to indicate that the pool debouched right into the sea in the west. From the top of a high hummock I could, however, with the glass, see ice on the other side, heightened by the looming. But it was anything but certain that it really was situated at the western end of the pool; more probably, it indicated a curve in the direction of the latter. What was to be done here? To get over seemed for the moment an impossibility. The ice was too thin to bear and too thick to set the kayaks through, even if we should mend them. How long it might take at this time of year for the ice to become strong enough to bear, I did not know, but one day would scarcely do it. To settle down and wait, therefore, seemed too much. How far the pool extended and how long we might have to travel