

hardly keep them open, and they water copiously. But the consequences could be even worse. The train-oil lamp which I had contrived out of a sheet of German silver became over-heated one day under the hot frying-pan, and at last the whole thing caught fire, both the lumps of blubber and the train-oil. The flame shot up into the air, while I tried by every means in my power to put it out, but it only grew worse. The best thing would have been to convey the whole lamp outside, but there was no time for it. The tent began to fill with suffocating smoke, and as a last resort I unfortunately seized a handful of snow and threw it on to the burning train-oil. It sputtered and crackled, boiling oil flew in all directions, and from the lamp itself rose a sea of flames which filled the whole tent and burned everything they came near. Half-suffocated, we both threw ourselves against the closed door, bursting off the buttons, and dashed headlong into the open air—glad, indeed, to have escaped with our lives. With this explosion the lamp went out; but when we came to examine the tent we found an enormous hole burned in the silk wall above the place where the frying-pan had stood. One of our sledge-sails had to pay the penalty for that hole. We crept back into the tent again, congratulating ourselves, however, on having got off so easily, and, after a great deal of trouble, rekindled a fire so that I could fry the last pancake. We then ate it with sugar, in the best of spirits, and pronounced it the most delicious fare we had ever tasted.