

to go after sledges and knives. As there was a possibility, too, of the ice breaking off and being set adrift, I also thought it wise to take the kayaks on the sledges at the same time, for it had begun to blow a little from the fjord. But for this fortunate precaution it is not easy to say what would have become of us. While we were engaged in skinning, the wind rose rapidly, and soon became a storm. To landward of us was the narrow channel or lane beside which the walrus had been lying. I feared that the ice might open here, and we drift away. While we worked I therefore kept an eye on it to see if it grew broader. It remained unchanged, and we went on skinning as fast as we could. When the first walrus was half skinned, I happened to look landward across the ice, and discovered that it had broken off a good way from us, and that the part on which we stood had already been drifting for some time; there was black water between us and the shore-ice, and the wind was blowing so that the spray flew from the foaming waves. There was no time to be lost; it was more than doubtful whether we should be able to paddle any great distance against that wind and sea, but as yet the ice did not appear to have drifted a greater distance from the land than we could cross, if we made haste. We could not bring ourselves to give up entirely the huge animals we had brought down, and we hurriedly cut off as much flesh as we could get at and flung it into the kayaks. We then cut off about a