

looked up, and there stood three bears on the heaps, tearing at the blubber. They were a she-bear and two young ones. "Oh dear!" said I; "shall we have to set to at bears again?" I was tired, and, to tell the truth, had far more desire for our sleeping-bag and a good potful of meat. In a trice we had got our guns out, and were approaching cautiously; but they had caught sight of us, and set off over the ice. It was with an undeniable feeling of gratitude that we watched their retreating forms. A little later, while I was standing cutting up the meat and Johansen had gone to fetch water, I heard him whistle. I looked up, and he pointed out over the ice. There in the dusk were the three bears coming back—our blubber-heap had been too tempting for them. I crept with my gun behind some stones close to the heap. The bears came straight on, looking neither to right nor left, and as they passed me I took as good an aim at the she-bear as the darkness would allow, and fired. She roared, bit her side, and all three set off out over the ice. There the mother fell, and the young ones stood astonished and troubled beside her until we approached, when they fled, and it was impossible to get within range of them. They kept at a respectful distance, and watched us while we dragged the dead bear to land and skinned it. When we went out next morning, they were standing sniffing at the skin and meat; but before we could get within range they saw us, and were off again. We now saw that they had been there all