

before us, indeed, was not a very great one; the thing was simply to reach Spitzbergen and get on board the sloop; but it was long enough, after all, to make it necessary for us to take certain measures of precaution.

When we dug up the stores which we had buried at the beginning of the winter, and opened the bags, we found that there were some miserable remains of a commissariat which had once, indeed, been good, but was now for the most part mouldy and spoiled by the damp of the previous autumn. Our flour—our precious flour—had got mildewed, and had to be thrown away. The chocolate had been dissolved by the damp, and no longer existed; and the pemmican—well, it had a strange appearance, and when we tasted it—ugh! It too had to be thrown away. There remained a certain quantity of fish flour, some aleuronate flour, and some damp half-moulded bread, which we carefully boiled in train-oil, partly to dry it, as all damp was expelled by the boiling oil, partly to render it more nutritious by impregnating it with fat. We thought it tasted delightful, and preserved it carefully for festal occasions and times when all other food failed us. Had we been able to dry bear's flesh we should have managed very well; but the weather was too raw and cold, and the strips of flesh we hung up became only half dry. There was nothing for it but to lay in a store of as much cut-up raw flesh and blubber as we could carry with us. Then we filled the three tin boxes that had held our petroleum with train-oil, which