

should moor our precious vessel. "Take one of the braces," said Johansen; he was standing on the ice. "But is it strong enough?" "Yes," he answered; "I have used it as a halyard on my sledge-sail all the time." "Oh, well, it doesn't require much to hold these light kayaks," said I, a little ashamed of having been so timid, and I moored them with the halyard, which was a strap cut from a raw walrus hide. We had been on the ice a little while, moving up and down close to the kayaks. The wind had dropped considerably, and seemed to be more westerly, making it doubtful whether we could make use of it any longer, and we went up on to a hummock close by to ascertain this better. As we stood there, Johansen suddenly cried, "I say! the kayaks are adrift!" We ran down as hard as we could. They were already a little way out, and were drifting quickly off; the painter had given way. "Here, take my watch!" I said to Johansen, giving it to him; and as quickly as possible I threw off some clothing, so as to be able to swim more easily. I did not dare to take everything off, as I might so easily get cramp. I sprang into the water, but the wind was off the ice, and the light kayaks, with their high rigging, gave it a good hold. They were already well out, and were drifting rapidly. The water was icy cold; it was hard work swimming with clothes on; and the kayaks drifted farther and farther, often quicker than I could swim. It seemed more than doubtful whether I could manage it. But all