

camp of mixed Iwillik, Igloodik and Netschilluk Eskimo. I employed four families of them, thirteen souls in all, to accompany me on my proposed spring sledge journey to the Arctic Sea. Around this winter camp the natives reported that bear were reasonably common, and quite a number of them had promised that we, the white men, should be indulged in some of this exciting sport before the winter should wear away, if we would accompany them on their sledge journeys along the coast. That winter, however, yielded us no sport in this line, although one of the native members of the party, Ik-quee-sik, a big, robust Netschilluk, fully six feet in height, killed one bear on or near Depot Island, while encamped there for walrus hunting to secure oil for my party's sledge journey, and this was the only bear, I believe, whose tracks were seen near our camp that winter, although such a scarcity was unusual. Bruin had evidently been attracted by the scent from the numerous walrus cairns, or little rock *caches* where meat is stored, that dotted Depot Island, and he came lumbering along, suspecting no danger, early one February morning. Now "early in the morning" depends upon the season, and in the Arctic February or thereabouts it means nearly eleven o'clock in the forenoon, and consequently our polar ursine friend found every body astir in order to take full advantage of the very short day. Ikqueesik's family were alone on the island, many of his associates of the village being absent at the whale-ships wintering at Marble Island, some eighty or ninety miles to the southward. The consequence was that the bear got fairly into the village before he was discovered even by Ikqueesik's four or five runty, little, half-grown black dogs that looked more like wolverine kittens than the true Eskimo class of canines. They were, however, equal to the emergency, and Eskimo-like, Ikqueesik had to first come out of his snow hut unarmed to see the cause of the disturbance, when Bruin got a good long start of him, despite the persistent nippings of the pursuing puppies that delayed him considerably. It was a running chase for a good long distance, but the dogs, encouraged by Ikqueesik's approaching presence, worked like heroes to delay the bear, and finally succeeded to an extent that gave their master a long shot at the game with his smooth-bore musket that luckily planted itself in the foreshoulder and