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**STARVING ON A  
BED OF GOLD**

OR

**THE WORLD'S  
LONGEST FAST**

By **JAMES A. HALL**

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To My Alma Mater:  
with the compliments of the  
Author

Watsonville, Cal.

July 23<sup>rd</sup> 1909.

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# Starving on a Bed of Gold

OR

## The World's Longest Fast

BY

JAMES A. HALL

WATSONVILLE, CALIFORNIA



Press of the  
Sentinel, Santa Cruz, California  
1909

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JAMES A. HALL ON JULY 17TH, 1900







**PREFACE.**

All of this book, except Chapter VI, was written while I was imprisoned in bleak Alaska. Time hung heavily on my hands and during the long sunless days of winter it was a great relief to me to have something to occupy my time. It was generally known among the miners that I was writing the story of my experience and I had hundreds of applications for the little volume, even before I left the country. On my arrival in California, some of the largest dailies on the Pacific Coast made full page Sunday stories of the matter, and incidentally mentioned that I had written a book on the subject.

Several ministers have used the facts to illustrate their sermons. All this publicity has caused many applications to be made to me for the book when published. This constant demand is my excuse for giving it to the public.

JAMES A. HALL.

Watsonville, California, Feb. 22nd, 1909.

### **DEDICATION.**

I would be ungrateful if I did not dedicate this little volume to Judge Charles Udell, formerly of Los Angeles, California, the man who more than all others, rendered me aid and assistance, after I was rescued, though I had never met him until I went to Alaska.

May God, in his mercy and justice, bless and prosper him.

THE AUTHOR.

## CHAPTER I.

# THE START

I was sitting in my law office in San Francisco, one afternoon in the early part of March, 1900, when my clerk brought me in the card of one of the surgeons connected with the City Receiving Hospital.

The doctor was a frequent caller, and after some conversation on commonplace subjects, informed me he had the gold fever, was going to Alaska, and wanted me to go along. I told him I could not go, that I did not think I could stand the hardships of that kind of life. Finally, after some days of consideration, I agreed to take the trip.

We engaged passage on the Thrasher, one of the many vessels belonging to the Pacific Steam Whaling Company. It was advertised to sail on the 21st of April. I then invited the doctor to spend a week or so with me at Rose Hill, my father's ranch near Watsonville, Santa Cruz County, California.

After a pleasant visit we returned to San Francisco, and began active preparations for the long, dangerous journey. I had never been outside of California in my life, had never even been in a half inch of snow, and was now preparing to start to one of the bleakest, coldest and most barren countries in the world.

Finally the sailing day of the Thrasher came. She was about the first steamboat to start for the gold fields in the spring of 1900, and was a converted whaler. Like the fish after which she was named, she had killed many whales in her day. The boat had one great advantage over the ordinary passenger vessel—she was an "ice bucker"; her prow was ten or twelve feet thick and sheathed on the outside, so she could safely ram the ice. A new deck had been built on forward and the 'tween decks was filled with tiers of bunks, leaving just room for the dining table. Over two hundred souls were to be transported on a ship that would not comfortably carry-half that number. But

as every additional passenger meant one hundred and twenty-five dollars to her owners, the old saying, "There is always room for one more," was applied with vigor.

Promptly, at three o'clock in the afternoon the warning whistle sounded, and then many sad partings were witnessed between relatives and friends. "Au Revoir," (till we meet again), are hard words to say under these circumstances, but with many a poor unfortunate the Saxon words, "Goodbye," were more appropriate. It has been said that a metallic casket is a necessary part of every well selected outfit—if you do not need it yourself, you can always sell it for a good price. There was certainly a great demand for them the winter I spent in Alaska. Very few relatives or friends will allow the bones of their loved ones to rest in the bleak mountains of a country like this, if they can help it.

At last the starting whistle blew, the gang plank was drawn in, and we were under way to the celebrated gold fields.

The thoughts and feelings that possess the average passenger starting on a dangerous trip as he looks, perhaps, for the last time, upon the faces of loved relatives and friends, can never be told in words. If the reader has ever had the experience, the sentiment will be fully understood.

As we passed through the beautiful Golden Gate into the arms of the grim old ocean, a flood of thoughts came over me. I realized that my dangers would be many, but fully intended to return in the fall and not brave the terrors of an Arctic winter. But "man proposes and God disposes." I was compelled, much against my will, to remain for a year and a half in the land of the Eskimo.

Old Neptune was in a bad humor the day we started and we glided out of the comparatively smooth waters of San Francisco Bay into a terrific storm. In less than half an hour every passenger on board, except about six of us, was in his bunk, groaning from seasickness. The attendance at the dining table was, for several days, very slight.

Every shipload of people, like every town or city, contains its "characters". We were no exception to the rule. The most noted person on board was, probably, Sergeant Wright, the color officer of the regiment of Rough Riders who fought so bravely at San Juan and other battlefields, in the late Spanish

War. The Sergeant planted Old Glory on San Juan Hill. I chanced to have, among my books, a magazine that contained his picture and a full history of his many acts of bravery. He was easily the lion of the voyage. Tall, slim and wiry, with dark hair and eyes, he looked the typical Rough Rider that he was. The Sergeant was a good conversationalist, and after his seasickness wore off, used to interest us by the hour with tales of the war. He was very sparing in the use of the capital "I," but could not sing the praises of Colonel Roosevelt and his gallant band too loudly.

The comical character of the boat was "Ike," a young Jewish gold hunter. Ike was always in some trouble. He knew the location of every whisky bottle on board, and, although not a heavy drinker, was never at a loss for a taste when he wanted it. He was one of a party of six from Tacoma, Washington. "Deep Creek Jones," the head of the little company, was himself a man with a State reputation. He had been for some years the chairman of the Democratic State Central Committee of that State, and was a fluent talker and polished gentleman. He was one of the favorites of the ship.

"Murphy" was among the fun makers of the voyage. He was a son of the late Judge Murphy of Del Norte County, California, a big, raw-boned boy, good natured and good hearted; his pranks served to while away many weary hours for us.

"Dad" Trenchel was another of the ship's wits. He had in his company two young men. If "Dad" had not been particularly good natured, life would have been a burden because of the numerous pranks they played on him, but he generally paid them back in their own coin, much to our amusement.

A young San Franciscan named McGinniss was one of the greatest fun makers on board. His innocent pranks helped to shorten many hours of the long, dreary trip. At an entertainment of ours, one evening, McGinniss was called upon to do something for our amusement. He said he would try to relate a little incident that happened to him and his friend, Murphy. It occurred a week or so ago before he started on this trip. Murphy lived on top of Telegraph Hill, in San Francisco. They had been spending Saturday evening together, and McGinniss had gone home with him to stay all night. The next morning at eleven o'clock they were having a late breakfast to-

gether, when a rap came at the dining room door. Murphy said "come in," and in walked an Italian fish peddler with a big basket of fish on his shoulders. "You likee buy fish, Mister; nicea fresha fish; he no dead yet, just catcha him; heapa cheap." Murphy was not feeling very well that morning, and he told the fishman, in very plain terms, not to bother them with his fish, but the fellow was so persistent that Murphy had to almost throw him out. The day was a hot one, and the grade of the hill was very steep. After the Italian had been gone for a few moments a happy thought struck Murphy; going out on the porch he put his hand to the side of his mouth and yelling as loud as he could, succeeded in attracting the attention of the fishmonger; he then beckoned him to come back. The fellow, no doubt, had visions of a big sale, and toiled up the hill again with his heavy basket on his shoulders, large drops of perspiration rolling off him; finally nearly tired out, he arrived at Murphy's. Murphy, shaking his index finger at him, said: "**And see here, you Dago, we don't want any fish next Sunday; do you understand?**" McGinniss said he had all he could do to keep the fellow from braining Murphy then and there.

The heavy storm that was awaiting us as we passed out of the Golden Gate continued to increase, and you can safely surmise that this change was not at all welcome to those poor souls who were suffering with "mal de mer." Night came on and the staunch old boat was tossed about like a straw. Tons of water came down the hatchways, and through the seams of the boat, and was a foot deep, in some places, under our bunks. The lights had been turned out, and dismal darkness reigned supreme. About three o'clock in the morning, one of the life boats washed away, and, as it fell from the davits, one end of it struck the side of the ship, making a noise that sounded like the crack of doom. A poor fellow on the port side of the ship, just under where the boat struck, imagined that the judgment day had come, and yelled at the top of his voice, "Come over to this side, all you fellows; the ship's going over." Word was passed from bunk to bunk that the vessel had sprung a bad leak, and that we were trying to make port again; this turned out to be a false rumor. When daylight came, we found a rough sea and a laboring ship, but were assured by the captain that there was little or no danger. This was a great relief to

most of us. We had already learned to have a great deal of faith in noble Tom Ellis, the acting captain; he was the favorite of the whole shipload of passengers.

We who had left loved ones at home, were afraid that the life boat would be washed ashore and found, thus causing our friends and relatives to think we were lost at sea. Our fears were not unfounded for when we got to Dutch Harbor we learned that we had been reported wrecked. The storm finally calmed, but we were buffeted by adverse winds, and driven in the opposite direction to our true course.

A few nights afterward another storm struck us, and we lost a second life boat. When, at last, fair weather did put in an appearance those who had been so seasick gradually recovered, and we all began to get better acquainted. I will never forget the first general assembly of passengers on the after-deck in the evening. A male quartette got together and the first song they sang brought back to me a flood of recollections. It was "The Old Oaken Bucket," a song that my mother had sung to me when a child, and also one of the last songs some friends of mine had sung before I left "the States."

After the storms were over, and the passengers had recovered from their seasickness, we spent most of the day and early evening on the after-deck telling stories, planning our mining future, and entertaining ourselves generally. Long before we reached Dutch Harbor, the first and only stopping point ere we arrived at Nome, bets were being made among the passengers on the time it would take us to get there; one lost three hundred dollars on the ship's sailing time to that point. Finally, on May 17th, we arrived at that port. It was my first experience in the snow. I had lived nearly all my life in Santa Cruz and Monterey Counties in California, and had never been, as before said, in a half inch of snow.

There is an old Russian settlement at Dutch Harbor, and it is principally populated by Aleut Indians and their dogs. There are a few white men in business there, but half breeds and full blooded Aleuts are in the majority. This was the first of Indian semi-civilization that many of us had seen. They gave a squaw dance the night we were there, but I did not attend. I was told that it was conducted very much like a leap-year party in "the States." The women chose their partners.

The Barabaras, or native Aleut house is nothing but a rock or wooden frame with some kind of hide, generally walrus, stretched over it; every well built house has a bath attachment. The bath house contains a pool of water, a kind of fireplace and some rocks. They heat the rocks red hot, and throw them into the pool; a dense steam is thus generated. When the bather is well heated up and thoroughly steamed he plunges into the nearest ice water for a few moments. They claim this will cure most diseases, and it certainly seems very effective in some cases. His northern neighbor, the Eskimo, never takes a bath unless he falls in while after the festive walrus or seal.

We were told at Dutch Harbor that we would find the ice about five hundred miles out—and we did. We struck it in the night time. Next morning when we arose nothing but snow-covered fields of ice were visible as far as the eye could reach. It was a pleasant change for a time but soon became very monotonous. I was almost asleep when we “bucked the first ice,” and had a half formed idea in my mind that we had run aground, but when we began backing off, and then taking a rapid pace ahead I realized our position. The Thrasher is said to be the best “ice bucker” on the coast; she will back a quarter of a mile or so, then, with full speed ahead, strike the solid ice cracking it in twain, and going as far as her impetus will carry her. Then she will repeat the operation until a passage is made. The “ice captain,” in this case our acting captain, is located in the “crow’s nest” near the top of the foremast. He can see from his elevation the best path to pursue, and gives his commands to one of the mates, who is situated in the front of the wheel house; the mate repeats the command to the man at the wheel. About one-third of the thickness of the ice is above the water line and two-thirds below, so the captain easily estimates how heavy the ice is ahead of him. There were very few people on the boat who had ever seen “ice bucking” before, and it was an interesting experience to us all, at first, but soon became very tiresome. We met with a somewhat stirring incident after we had been in the ice fields a few days. The ice ahead of us seemed to be unusually heavy, and Captain Ellis decided to tie up to some “ground ice” near where we were, and wait until prospects were better. “Ground ice,” as the name implies, extends down to the ground. The piece we



tied to was several acres in extent, and in places was forty or fifty feet high, an ice island as it were. Two heavy hawsers were thrown out, and tied to immense pillars of ice. There were a couple of acres of level ice, and as soon as the boat was made fast we all climbed out, glad of the chance to exercise a little, after weeks of confinement. We had "tugs of war," played "prisoner's base," and in fact, behaved like a lot of school children just turned out for recess. We all got back on the boat before dark and retired, feeling much better for our exercise. When we awoke in the morning quite a heavy wind was blowing; several passengers, although cautioned by Captain Ellis, went off on the island again. The wind increased in fury, and the ice mountains began to break and slide, with a noise like thunder, into the sea. All but two of the passengers got back into the boat as soon as they saw the ice beginning to break. These two had taken their guns in the hope of shooting a walrus or seal, and had wandered to the opposite side of the island. We all beckoned to them to return at once, and the captain blew a number of warning blasts. They ran for the ship, and by throwing them ropes we managed to get them aboard, frightened half to death. The wind became a hurricane and mountains of ice were breaking off all around us, and lashed by the fury of the sea, were making every moment more dangerous. One of the hawsers had parted, but still the captain dreaded to undertake the run for the clear water we could see about half a mile off, on the side of the island that the wind was blowing toward. Finally, it became apparent that to stay in this position any longer, meant that our ship would be crushed like an egg shell. All was excitement aboard; passengers were rushing hither and thither; some ten or fifteen had gotten hold of a large spar, and were attempting to push away the icebergs that came near us. Twenty Samsons would not have moved one of them. Captain Humphries, and acting Captain Ellis were on the bridge, and we could plainly see that both were very nervous. In a few moments we beheld two immense icebergs approaching, one on each side of the Thrasher—the one on the lee side of the ship having broken from the island within a few feet of us it was plain that if they both struck us at once we were gone. Just then Captain Ellis, his voice sounding above the roar of the storm, yelled. "Cut

away that rope." The first mate seized an ax and cut the rope; the wheels began to turn and, in a few moments, we were threading our way among the icebergs for clear water. Fortune favored us, and in a short time we were out of danger, with no damage but the loss of about a hundred dollars' worth of rope.

One of the passengers, when the excitement was at its height, rushed on deck with a six-shooter in one hand and his grip in the other, while his face was the color of marble. We asked him afterward what he had intended to do; he said he knew there were not half enough life boats to go around, and he proposed to have a seat in one. He did not stop to think that a life boat would not have lived a minute in that sea of icebergs. The poor fellow did not hear the last of it during the rest of the trip. We had some good artists aboard, and his picture, with a gun in one hand and the grip in the other, adorned several bunks.

The rest of the trip was uneventful, and on May 28th we dropped anchor in Nome harbor, and the much talked of Mecca of the gold seeker was before us. A feeling akin to awe came over me as I gazed at this tented city through the gloaming of the evening. I was reminded of that ancient city whose name rhymes with this one, and which, from her seven hills, ruled the world, and I wondered if people were as greedy after gold in those days as they are today. I also wondered which was conducive of the more sorrow—the greed for power possessed by the Romans or the greed for gold which seems to possess us modern mortals. The world will never know the extent of the pain, sorrow and suffering that has been caused by that mystic word "Nome," during its existence. In one week, during the summer of 1900, twenty-five bodies were washed up on the beach between Nome and Topkok, a mining camp sixty miles down the coast. Undoubtedly, only a small proportion of the bodies were washed ashore there. In the winter of 1900-1, between the same two points, and in about the same length of time, nearly as many were frozen to death, not counting those who had arms and legs frozen off. Were the seven or eight millions of dollars taken out in the past two years enough to balance the suffering, pain and sorrow endured by these poor men, and incidentally, their families, remembering that this

does not include the suffering of those who did not die, and further remembering that those who died on that short coast line were a very, very small moiety of the total number during the entire two years, in all of Alaska? This means hundreds of families left without their bread-winner, and carrying a load of grief instead of gold. Can anybody say that eight millions, or even fifty millions would offset all this?

While I was standing at the rail contemplating the metropolis of the gold fields, most of the passengers had gone ashore in the numerous small boats that swarmed around the ship's sides as soon as we dropped anchor; as my destination was Port Clarence, about sixty miles further northward, and the Thrasher was to remain here a week before going on up, I decided to stay on board at night, and inspect Nome and vicinity in the daytime.



**THE GOLD SEEKERS.**

The panting steamer slowly drops  
Away from the crowded pier;  
The blackened deck recedes from view,  
And leaves me musing here.

Away where the gold so warm and red,  
Lies hid in the dark earth's breast;  
Little they reck of danger or cold,  
Aglow with the golden quest.

The rosy youth with kindling eye,  
In his manhood's early dawn;  
The pale man with the student's stoop,  
The stalwart man of brawn.

All, each and all, with fevered gaze,  
Fixed on the fields of gold;  
Ah, well-a-day! for a faith that's firm,  
And a heart that is brave and bold.

For those there be who will come again,  
All broken and worn and wan;  
While others left in the Arctic snows,  
Will slumber forever on.

And some will empty-handed come,  
Who have missed the golden goal,  
And some with gold, too dear, alas!  
The price of a sinless soul.

And those at home will sit at night—  
While the wind sweeps where it wills—  
With heart away in a shambling shack  
In the wild Alaskan hills.

'Tis thus I muse on the lonely quay,  
Whence the hurrying crowd is gone—  
Whilst far away for the frozen north  
A line of smoke trains go on.

## CHAPTER II.

**AN EXCITING TRIP THROUGH THE ICE.**

On June 5th, 1900, the good ship Thrasher weighed anchor, and we left Nome for Cape York and way stations. As before said, I wanted to go to Port Clarence Bay, between Nome and York, but it was understood that the ship would go to the latter place first. Just before we steamed out of Nome Harbor, the bark Alaska sailed around the stern of our boat and dropped anchor immediately off our starboard side. It proved to be the last time her hook ever fell. She was a total wreck the second morning afterwards, and had one or two other ships for company. Little did we think, as our steamer gave the customary three toots—the nautical goodbye—and was answered by three dips of the flag, that ere a second sun had risen, her bones would lie bleaching on that cheerless, barren, inhospitable shore. I have forgotten how many lives were lost that night, but there were a number. For several hours we sailed along towards our destination very smoothly. About dark, something of a storm came on; as the ice was very thick, Captain Ellis decided to stand well out at sea; when morning arrived we found we were many miles off shore, and almost opposite Cape York. As the captain had mail for Missionary Lopp at Cape Prince of Wales, which by the way, was in sight, he determined to go to that place first. When we came shoreward we could see two boats lying at York, one a steamer, the other a sailing vessel. We soon dropped anchor in Bering Straits, off Cape Prince of Wales. The sea was rather rough and some wind blowing, and it was an hour or so before any of the natives ventured to come out to us. Finally several boatloads came, bringing the missionary with them. It was my first meeting with the Eskimo in his native wilds. As they came through the water in their skin boats, and climbed over the ship's sides, in their peculiar dress, thoughts of my school days and the pictures so interesting to me in the old geographies flashed through my mind. I have since become so accustomed to them that they do not seem anything out of the ordinary; in fact, are very commonplace individuals. We did some trading with them; I remember paying one of them twenty dollars for a skin boat, and it proved to be one of the

most useful purchases I made in Alaska. The skin boat is nothing more nor less than a light frame, made something in the shape of our small boats, and covered with walrus skin. They are of all sizes, very light, and if properly handled and cared for, are durable; they should never be left with water in them as the skin soon softens. You are obliged to step very carefully, and only on the frame work, or you may have a hole through the bottom the size of your foot. If carefully balanced a big load may be carried in them.

There are few if any whites at this village except the missionary and his wife. Mr. Lopp, who has been in charge here for years, is well spoken of by the natives and whites; in fact, I have met some of the natives who thought him almost infallible. He was formerly a teacher here, and afterwards given charge of the mission. I am reminded of a story told by some sacrilegious people in this country; they say that those who preach the gospel here have to describe Hades as a very cold place instead of a very hot one, as the poor native is much inclined to favor a warmer climate.

After spending a few hours at anchor, we started for Cape York, with thirty or forty natives and the missionary aboard, their skin boats trailing behind the ship. In a short time we arrived there; passengers who expected to get off were on deck, their luggage and blankets at hand, all ready to be set ashore, and everybody was waiting for the anchor chain to rattle. Suddenly Captain Ellis, who was on the bridge called in stentorian tones to those in charge below, "**Don't drop that anchor.**" We heard him immediately ring for "full speed ahead". Astonished, we all looked seaward, and, in the distance could be seen a long white line, so well known to every ice captain. A storm was coming, driving the icebergs before it. One ship, the steamer that we had seen on our way up, was well outside the ice line. The sailing vessel had also seen the danger, but was powerless to get out of it. We did not wait to land natives or anybody else, but started for the open sea as fast as steam and sail could carry us. The poor vessel that was left fired her gun, and turned her flag upside down, signals of distress, but it was our ship and the lives of her passengers against the others, and we had not a moment to spare. The natives, well used to aquatic exercises, climbed over the stern

of the boat while we were under full speed, reminding me of frogs jumping into a mill pond; the squaws seemed even more expert than the bucks. Soon the storm struck us, but we had rounded the ice and were no longer in danger of being driven ashore by it. When we reached clear water, the captain turned the ship's stern to the gale and we scudded before the wind; on, on we flew, faster than we had ever traveled on the Thrasher before. Night dropped her sable curtain over the scene, but the frightful howling of the wind through the rigging told us, as we lay in our bunks, of the condition of affairs around us. Mariners say that though the Bering Sea is shallow, it can generate a more dangerous storm than the main ocean; the waves are short, choppy and irregular. We were driven through the Bering Strait and a hundred miles into the Arctic before the storm abated; we then took the back track, and, that night, hove-to in the lee of a bluff on the Siberian coast. Bright and early next morning we passed back through the straits and finally arrived again at Cape York. We found that all hands had abandoned the vessel we left in distress, and she had been driven about by the ice, but strange to say, was uninjured.

Just before we got there, the captain and some of his men had gone aboard again; if we had found her still drifting we would have had a rich prize, as the salvage in such cases is very liberal.

This time our York passengers managed to get off without any mishap. We then steamed on down the coast to Port Clarence Bay; as the ice had not yet gone out, we were landed on the "Spit," a narrow, fifteen-mile stretch of sand, separating Bering Sea from the Bay. This country abounds in "spits"; as you will soon hear, one of them came very nearly causing my death by starvation. About a dozen of the Thrasher party remained, camped together on the Spit, for nearly two weeks; when the ice went out of the bay, four of us crossed over to the old Reindeer Station, a government building put up some years ago as a headquarters for keepers of the reindeer, and for other purposes. My mining partner and myself were persuaded by the recorder of the mining district to stop over here for a time. There was no particular excitement, but we liked the looks of the country, and subsequent developments proved we were right in that respect. After we had camped at the station a week or two,

a little town began to spring up, three miles above, on the bay. The projectors of the tented city invited us up, and we went, locating a couple of lots. Dr. Sheldon Jackson, the government agent, who came in one of the boats about this time, suggested that the new town be called Teller; a little mass meeting was assembled as soon as we took this suggestion up, and the place was given that name—the name the Reindeer Station had borne on the maps. "Wilson Brothers" were just erecting a store building, up to that time, the only one in the city of tents. The members of the firm on the ground were Thomas G. and William M. Wilson; I mention their names, as they come more or less into the subsequent parts of this story. There was no particular life in this little mining camp of about sixty tents; at that time of the year it was daylight substantially all night. We went to bed at any hour, and got up the same way, just as our fancy dictated; there was nothing to do except to watch dog fights, and do a little fighting ourselves with swarms of tantalizing mosquitoes as our opponents. Like Dickens' celebrated character, we were "waiting for something to turn up," and, so far as the writer is concerned, it did. I went out on a trip that came very, very nearly costing me my life, and the equal of which is said never to have occurred in Alaska, the country where hardships and privation are the portion of every man. Before starting to give a detailed description of my journeying for sixty-seven days, lost and without food, through the roughest, wildest mountains of this wild, rough country, I realize that words can not begin to describe the suffering I passed through from the time I started, to the 22nd day of September, 1900, when I was found dying.

At this writing, a few months subsequent to the time I was discovered, I am still an invalid, imprisoned, as it might be termed, in the town of Teller, Alaska, in the midst of the worst winter that the country has seen for a quarter of a century, if the statements of the Indians and some "old timers" can be relied upon. I further realize that a great many people in "the States" will not believe that any person could have gone through what I describe. I have procured the affidavits of government officials and others who will vouch for the truthfulness of all, except those facts that are known



only to God and myself. For I was not seen by, and did not see a human being or hear a human voice (except my own) from the time I was lost until I was found dying. These affidavits will be found at the end of this book.

\* \* \* \* \*

## BERING SEA.

By W. H. Harrison.

Oh, Bering Sea! Oh, Bering Sea!  
 What fury hath awakened thee?  
 To lash thy sounding, sullen shore,  
 And with hoarse, tumultuous roar  
 Proclaim thy anger long and loud?  
 Art thou bellowing to the cloud  
 From whence the cold and slanting rain  
 Is driven by the wind amain?  
 Do the ships that at anchor ride  
 Upon thy dark and swelling tide,  
 Until chains creak and anchors drag,  
 And half-mast floats a signal flag—

Do they annoy and harry thee,  
 Oh, fitful, tempestuous sea?  
 Or is this sport and do you play  
 With sail and life and destiny?  
 Do you kick up these foam-flecked waves  
 In wanton fun, and laugh at graves,  
 Unmarked in ooze and sea weed rank,  
 Where luckless sailors, clammy, dank,  
 With eyeless eyes that need no light,  
 Lie and rot—weird, grisly sight?  
 Yet, still I love you, Bering Sea,  
 Oh, water—waste of mystery!

I love you in calm, peaceful mood,  
 When by the zephyrs you are wooed,  
 When sunlight glints your pulse beats faint  
 With tints that mortals could not paint;  
 But I love you most when you rage,

And roar and surge, and when you wage  
 The battle like the war of life;  
 This thrills and fills my soul with strife,  
 Until it beats its prison door  
 As the waves beat a rocky shore.  
 I love you, oh sea, tempest tossed;  
 The story you tell and is lost

By the winds in the silent hills  
 Of Nome, is always one that thrills  
 The heart—a tale of “hair-breadth ’scapes,”  
 Where the water stretches, yawns and gapes;  
 “Of moving accidents by flood,  
 The imminent deadly breach,” blood  
 Incarnardining world. You win  
 Me, Bering Sea, ere you begin,  
 Without “wit or words” of your life,  
 The tale that won the Moor a wife.  
 My heart is thine, I bend my knee,  
 Oh, restless, roaring, raging sea.

\* \* \* \* \*

### CHAPTER III.

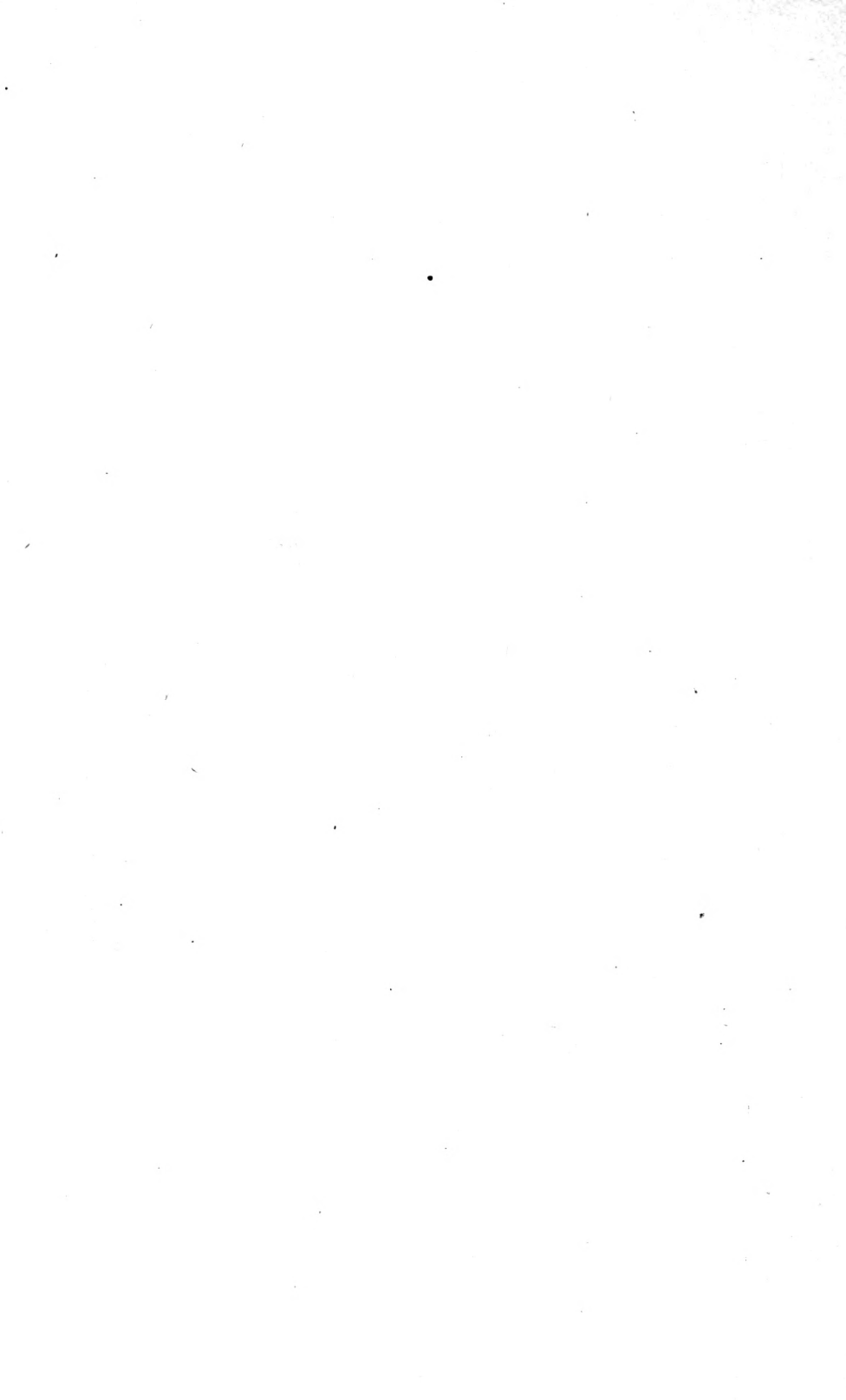
## LOST

Little did I think when I retired to rest in my tent at Teller, on the night of July 14, 1900, that on the following day I would start on a trip that would change me from a physically perfect man, six feet one inch and a half in height, weighing a shade over two hundred and twenty-five pounds, to a living skeleton, weighing one hundred and twenty-five pounds, and all within the space of sixty-seven days.

On July the 15th, 1900, about half-past ten o'clock in the morning, “Billy” Wilson, of the firm of Wilson Brothers, storekeepers at the tented town of Teller, opened the flap of my tent and said, “Come down to the store; there’s some business for you.” Being an attorney, I naturally concluded that there were some legal matters to attend to there. At that time of the year the dark part of the day, or what we usually



JAMES A. HALL IN ALASKAN GARB



call "night," was of very short duration. I had gone to bed late, and as a consequence woke up late. At the time he appeared I was lying in bed reading a magazine. I got up, dressed and went down to the store. He informed me that his brother Tom, who was out in front of the store, wanted to speak to me. I went out and saw Tom and was informed that he had brought two men up from Nome on a gasoline launch he had purchased down there a couple of days before. These men, it seems, claimed they had information, derived from the deathbed statement of some old friend of one of them in Florida, concerning the location of a very rich quartz prospect at some point a few miles back in the mountains north of Teller. It was asserted that this man was one of the first party of surveyors sent into Alaska by the United States government, many years ago. He had discovered this rich lode, but had no opportunity to prospect it. He had kept the information to himself, hoping at some time to come out and locate it, but one thing or another detained him until he found himself near the top of the "Great Divide" that we must all cross, sooner or later. He then communicated the information to others, and it fell into the hands of one of these two men.

Tom Wilson, on his way up from Nome on the launch, had made up his mind to send, as his representative, along with these men, an old miner who was clerking in his store, but when he arrived at Teller he found the old gentleman absent for a few days. He and his brother William then talked the matter over, and concluded to ask me to go. It was understood that the trip would not take over three or four days, so I consented. We were to start at noon, and this gave me less than an hour and a half to get my blankets ready. Wilson Brothers told me to come down to the store and get what provisions I needed. So I went to my tent, rolled up a double and single blanket in some canvas, threw a big plug of pipe smoking tobacco, a good sized bunch of matches, and some other small things into a United States haversack I had purchased in San Francisco for such emergencies. With my blankets strapped to my shoulders (their weight was about twenty-four pounds), my haversack leather over one shoulder, and a granite cup and sheath knife at my belt, I went down to the store. In the hurry, I forgot to put in a compass I had in the tent.

When I got to the store, Billy Wilson asked me what provisions he should put up. "Oh," said I, "put in some bacon, some crackers, some salt and some coffee. I do not want to take much, as I am a light eater and too soft yet to carry any more load than I can help." He stepped over to where the bacon was hanging, and putting a big knife up on the "side" said, "about that much?" I said, "No, Billy, that would make too much of a load—about half that." He cut it as indicated, about three pounds, then he put in some crackers to correspond, a little salt and a half-pound can of coffee. This is all I took on the trip, and would have been enough for the time I expected to be gone.

Promptly at noon we started, Tom Wilson taking us in the launch down the bay to the old Reindeer Station three miles below. From here we "mushed" (localism for tramped) over the tundra, westerly eight miles, to a stream known as Eureka Creek.

"Tundra," described elsewhere in this book, is the decayed vegetation of ages, covered by a kind of moss, and thickly studded with pools of stagnant water. It is from a foot to three feet in depth, and is frequently dotted with "nigger-heads". As a walking medium it is of course, abominable.

At Eureka Creek we turned and paralleled the stream northerly until late in the evening, when we camped on what is called Mystic River. When camp was reached, my companions suggested that we use my provisions first, as theirs was in tablet form and lighter to carry. I agreed, so we had supper and breakfast off my bacon, and they had some fresh bread which we used. At five o'clock in the morning we were off again in a dense fog. We traveled at a rapid gait until the middle of the afternoon, when we stopped for rest and luncheon. One of the party made a fire and they dissolved some of their tablets in hot water, which, with a portion of my crackers, made a fairly good meal. We laid down and slept for a time in the sun. On rolling up my blankets I forgot to put in a small army frying pan I carried; one of the party offered to take it, so late that evening when I was lost, they had the only cooking utensil I carried.

We traveled rapidly the rest of the day, they with chart and compass in hand, guiding the way. About six o'clock in the evening we crossed a snow glacier that had not even yet been.

melted by the summer sun, and began the ascent of a high, slate-covered mountain. I was much fatigued when we came to this climb, and as it was very steep, and I very tired, the slate rocks frequently giving way under my feet as I ascended, sending me crawfish-like backward quite a distance, I made very slow headway; they soon got some ways ahead of me. When I had proceeded about two-thirds up the mountain a heavy fog struck us. They were very nearly up, but I noted their location, and finally reached the top just at the point where I saw them disappear. Fully expecting to find them waiting for me, I called in a loud voice, but received no answer. There were fifteen or twenty acres of rough table land on top. I went directly across this, thinking perhaps they had gone down the opposite side. In the darkness I could see the outlines of an almost perpendicular cliff, and a steep ravine below me filled with a glacier. There being so many other directions they could take to get off this table mountain, I concluded it would be folly to attempt to follow in the darkness and heavy fog, so I unrolled my blankets, took a few mouthfuls to eat, and went to bed. I did not feel frightened, but badly disappointed at losing them.

The fog soon turned into a rain, and I had a sample of what I afterwards got for weeks in succession. Morning finally came, and with it one of those beautiful Indian summer days that sometimes occur here at that time of the year. On such a day the distance one can see, especially from such a high elevation as this, almost surpasses belief. We had made so many turns that I did not remember the points of the compass. I had laid my bed under the lee of a small cliff a little over the edge of the mountain so as to protect myself as much as possible from the wind and fog. Getting something to eat and rolling up my blankets I went to the highest part of the plateau to determine what I would do. When I reached the elevation I could very plainly see what I took to be Port Clarence Bay and the sand spit that separates it from Bering Sea. I argued to myself that there was no use trying to retrace the round-about trip we had made when I could cut across and get home so much easier. Oh, fatal mistake! How small a thing sometimes changes the whole current of our lives. This one caused me indescribable suffering, loss of health and money, caused my family and friends all the pangs suffered for the

death of a loved one, and left me a skeleton to battle with the hardest winter Alaska has seen in many years. If the day had been foggy or even an ordinarily clear one, I would not have seen this distant bay and spit, and would have tried to retrace my steps, or at the worst would have reached some point on the Bering Sea, in a day or so, where I would have found plenty of natives, and been perfectly safe. There had not been over three such days during the summer, and that I should catch this one just at this time, seems almost as queer a freak of the wheel of fate, as my rescue nine weeks later, when dying from starvation.

I stood for a few minutes on an immense boulder, pondering over the matter, and finally when my mind was made up, I tightened my pack straps, and started for my objective point, which was a high bald mountain, apparently near the shore of this bay. It seemed very near like a mountain I had seen back of Teller. Down I went over rocks and small glaciers, where the sun never struck, until, after a precipitous trip of probably a mile, I came to the bed of a stream of considerable size that seemed to run in the direction I wished to go. I followed this stream many miles, but as night drew nigh I seemed little closer to my landmark than when I started.

On the way down this little river, while mushing over the tundra alongside, I caught a young bird. It was the only one I had seen during the day and was some company to me as I sat on the bank fondling it. The temptation to kill and eat it was strong within me. I realized that my food was almost gone, and that even if I could reach Teller the next day, I would be glad enough to find some of my friends at dinner. Still, the poor little fellow seemed, like myself, lost, and as I had not, up to this time, felt the pangs of hunger, I let the poor thing go, and it flew off with a chirp that seemed to say "Thank you."

With the evening came another heavy fog, and I found a place on the stream where there were some dead willows, and camped. I made a fire and broiled a piece of bacon on the tines of a fork I had in my haversack; this was the last meat I ever cooked on the trip. The balance of the small piece of bacon I had left I ate raw, as there was too much waste in broiling it in this way. The portion that remained of this article was less in size than the palm of my hand. I had four



or five crackers and some salt. There was probably three-fourths of a half-pound can of coffee left.

I awoke early next morning, and rolling up my wet blankets, (it had rained again the previous night) took a few mouthfuls and started. A half mile or so below my camp the creek turned off my course, so I was obliged to cross the divides over the wet and miry tundra.

During this second day I was downhearted most of the time. I could see my distant landmark, but could not see the bay or spit.

My sheath knife was an eight-inch surgeon's amputating implement, given me by a dear medical friend. I had had a fine buckhorn handle put on before I left San Francisco, and the blade was as sharp as a razor. It stood me in good stead many a time during the trip, but was a sorry looking weapon; when I was finally found the point was broken off, the shaft was broken and an old willow handle—the sixth I had put on during the trip—had taken the place of the buckhorn. At one place where I stopped to rest, I took my little piece of bacon from my haversack, and with my knife drew fourteen lines across the rind equal distances apart, each portion being about the thickness of a case knife blade. I made up my mind to take one of these morning and evening. It was merely a mouthful, but I was determined to make my supply go as far as possible.

I was full of uncertainty; at times I was sure I was right, and then again a strong feeling that I was wrong would take possession of me. At one time I took a half day to climb a high elevation, that I might see the bay and spit. An idea had come over me that I might have seen a mirage. When I got to the top of the mountain there it was, in dim outline before me, but apparently still a long way off, although I had then been traveling four days. I went back down the mountain to where I had left my blankets and camped in some scrub willows on a stream; a bite of bacon, a quarter of a cracker, a smoke for a few minutes, and I was ready to wrap up in my blankets.

This was about the routine for the time it took me to get out of the mountains. I had been following a stream nearly all of the last day. Late in the afternoon of this day I had arrived very nearly to my landmark. The stream I was on

diverged, and I concluded to cross the low foothills that seemed directly on my course. I turned from the river, and climbed the first one; being now quite weak from want of food, it was a hard climb for me to get up this brushy ascent. When I did get to the top my heart was filled with joy. The sun was just setting and it threw long streaks of golden sheen across the water that appeared to be very close by. I knew, from hearsay, that there was a large lake back of Teller, although I had never seen it. I also knew that between Teller and this lake there was a sandy elevation. Here they were, two or three miles ahead of me, as plain as day. I was happy. I had nothing to do but "mush" over a few miles of swampy tundra and I would be at Teller. I was tired and weak from hunger and, furthermore, I felt I would rather go in early next morning and surprise them all asleep, than to get in at night and be joked about being lost, even had I been physically able to get there. I wrapped myself in my blankets and lay down to sleep on a dry piece of tundra I found on top of the hill, intending to rise early and go to town. It was the first good night's rest I had had since I was lost. There was nothing on my mind to worry me, as there had been for several days and nights past.

Morning came none too soon for me; with a cheerful heart, I rolled up my blankets in that neat, compact shape that a miner and "musher" soon learns in this country, and started. My course took me through the low, boggy tundra bordering the lake. I found it much farther to this lake than it had seemed from the hilltop, and I sank to my knees at every step. Here I felt my first thirst. While in the mountains I had plenty of fine, pure snow water in the creeks, but while there was an abundance of water here it was not fit to drink. No one in this country thinks of drinking tundra water without first boiling it.

Finally, after many hours, I got to the lake. I found it was fed principally by a mountain stream, and seemed reasonably clear and pure, so I drank several cupfuls of it. While on the border of the lake I discovered that I had lost my sheath knife. I remembered using it a few hundred yards back to cut some tobacco, so I retraced my steps and luckily found it. The lake had a kind of low wall or dyke all around it, except where the stream entered. It looked almost as though it had

been done by human hands. I saw a great many of these afterward, and figured out to my own satisfaction, at least, the cause. High winds prevail, especially at certain seasons of the year. The lake, having an area of several acres, generates quite heavy swells or waves; this would pile up the soft dirt and the debris until, in a few years, a heavy dyke would be built by nature. The rapid rise and fall of the lake, owing to the melting snows which feed the rivers, serve to keep the banks in good repair.

After resting on the lake shore for some time, I again shouldered my pack and started along the edge of the water toward the elevation now only about half a mile away, and from which I was sure I could see Teller. As the distance decreased the beating of my heart increased. I began to consider what it meant to me, if perchance, I should be wrong. At last I arrived at the foot of the low divide. To climb to the top was the work of but a few minutes. With eager eyes I scanned the landscape. My spirits sank as I realized there was nothing but a barren waste before me. I was on a little sandy hillock and the front of it was covered with scrub willows and streaked with little ravines filled with compact snow, which, slowly melting, fed a small lake at the foot. I was in despair, but I had one hope left. Port Clarence Bay is the largest of a chain of three inland seas, Grantley Harbor emptying into it from a narrow strait formed by a spit, and being itself the recipient of a still smaller body of water, known as Great Salt Lake. I might be approaching Great Salt Lake instead of Grantley Harbor. A body of water several miles in extent lay before me; now the next question in my mind was whether or not it was salty. If so, I still had a chance to be right. If not, I had been following a will-o'-the-wisp, and had come to some big fresh water lake. I could see, from where I stood, that the nearer bank of this body of water curved in a semi-circle until it almost touched the spit that seemed to form its opposite boundary, and which I had seen from afar. A heavy lake-covered tundra lay between me and the shore, but filling with ice my coffee can, from which I had emptied the coffee into a salt sack, I started. Those two or three miles were as bad as ten on the creeks. I sank above my knees at every step. Exercise, weakness and the heat of the burning sun, made me very thirsty. There was

nothing but stagnant, typhus breeding tundra water within reach; this I did not dare drink without boiling, and there was no wood. To make matters worse there were mosquitoes by the million.

After several hours I reached the shore. Here I found plenty of drift wood. Going down to the water's edge I dipped up a cupful. **It was salty.** Making a fire from the drift wood, I melted some of the snow found under the bank, and satisfied my thirst. I boiled some leaves I had gathered and drank the extract. After a smoke, I threw some more wood on the fire, and being very tired, lay down and slept an hour or so. After this rest, I started down the shore of the bay, hoping that when I reached the lower end of the body of water I would find Port Clarence and Teller on the other side of the little divide that appeared in the distance. The walking along the shore was comparatively good for the balance of the day. There is little, if any, tide on this coast, and no sandy beach.

Toward evening I came to an arm of the bay extending a couple of miles back into the tundra. This, of course, I had to go around. I decided to camp, and try this hard trip in the early morning. The sun was still an hour or so high, and the mosquitoes as thick as the hair on a Malamoot dog's back. I found some dry tundra, and unrolling my blankets, went to bed. I was unable at this place to find even grass roots to eat. I searched all the little ponds to see if I could find some frogs. **There are no frogs in this country.** I dug for worms. **There are no worms in this part of Alaska.**

This was on July 23rd, and I desire to digress, with the reader's permission, for a few minutes. A most startling instance in mental telepathy happened in connection with the following day. This book, as before said, is being written at Teller, Alaska, during the terrible winter of 1900-1. In the second mail to reach here from "the States," after navigation closed, I received a long letter from one of my sisters, Mrs. Adelia H. Taffinder, of San Francisco. My relatives had all believed me dead, but on September 27th, the day I was brought in in a dying condition, I had caused postals to be sent informing my relatives that I had just been found and hoped to live. No particulars were given. Imagine my surprise at the following sentences in my sister's letter, in reply:

"I dreamed not long ago that I was hunting for you in an

unknown land; at last I met you for an instant only. You looked so sad and troubled and did not speak, but handed me a piece of paper with only these words written thereon, 'July 24th'. I do not know what happened to you that day unless you felt utter despair."

Next morning I got up early, and following the winding of this inlet, finally got around to the bay again. I rounded another, much shorter, an hour or so afterward, and then had comparatively good walking until the early part of the afternoon when I came to a wide marsh, covered with the worst kind of tundra, and thickly dotted with lakes. Wading through this for a couple of hours, sinking nearly to the top of my hip boots at every step, and finding very few places where I could even stop for a breathing spell, I came to a big river. (I have since learned that this was the now celebrated Serpentine). Luckily for me the river formed a delta, there being two branches. The gravel from the mountains had washed down and the bed was comparatively firm. By selecting a wide place I was able to cross each branch, the water coming to within an inch or so of the top of my hip boots, except in one place where a little water ran into them, but as the weather was then warm I did not mind this.

After crossing this stream it was only a short distance to good walking on the bay shore again. Resting every few minutes, I kept going until almost dark. As I walked along the edge of the water, I saw in the distance something that appeared to be the frame of a small building, and also beheld with joy what I took to be a man coming in my direction. Before getting to the frame, I came across some old moss-covered chips, such as would be made by sharpening pickets. As I drew near what I had thought, in the uncertain light of the evening, to be a man, I found a heavy piece of drift wood set in the ground. It had the appearance of having been there for years, as did the several pieces of frame work I had taken to be the ruins of a native igloo or house. It must have been something used by whaling vessels in years ago.

I went on a hundred yards or so, and as it was getting dusk, and I was very tired, even with the numerous and long rests I had taken, I concluded to camp. I threw my blanket roll down at the water's edge and ascended the high embankment to see what could be seen. This was done hurriedly, as dark-

ness was fast approaching. Going a hundred yards or so back from the bank **my heart almost ceased beating at the sight.** In the limited horizon I could see an ocean, and immediately before me was another bay. Inland and in the edge of the low foothills I could distinguish two or three large lakes, such as I knew were not anywhere about Teller. Hope was now almost gone. I returned to my camping place and sat down upon my bedding, saying aloud, "**I guess the jig's up.**" I am not given to using slang, and know not why I did then, but the words will ring in my ears to my dying day. I was now perfectly convinced that I was at the Arctic Ocean, without food, or the prospect of food—I was almost a living skeleton even then—and knew, if it was the Arctic, I must be at least a hundred and fifty miles from Teller, as I remembered it on the maps.

I unrolled my blankets and lay down, but not to sleep. Carefully I considered what was best to be done in the morning. The great question in my mind was whether to attempt to follow the shore of the ocean or try to retrace my steps. From the hurried view I got on the hilltop the shore looked barren and desolate indeed. I realized that if I got into the mountains again I could have pure fresh water, and plenty of dead willows for a fire. Besides there was still a little grass and a few weeds and plants. This I **knew**, but what was on the shore was an **unknown** quantity to me.

I have been told many times since my rescue that I would probably have found shell fish or something of that kind on the rocky beach of the ocean when I got to it. Be this as it may, I carefully weighed every point for and against taking to the coast, well knowing that **my life probably hung on my judgment in the matter.**

Along towards morning I concluded to again go back to the knoll where I was the evening before, and if a clearer view should confirm my opinion of the looks of the shore, attempt to retrace my long journey. I dropped into a doze and upon awaking found that the usual morning fog had cleared away, and the sun was shining brightly.

Rolling up my blankets, I ran my arms through the shoulder straps and climbed the bank and knoll. In the clear morning light I could plainly see the barren, desolate shore of the grim old Arctic. It appeared even worse than it did the night

before. The die was cast. I must attempt to retrace my tracks.

I concluded that instead of following the bay shore back, I would cut across the tundra to the place where I came off the mountains and thus avoid the long "mush" around the arms of the bay. Taking a landmark as near as possible in line with this point, I started, traveling all day and at night camped, or rather slept, on a dry piece of tundra. I well remembered climbing over a small hillock on the ocean side of which there was some brush and melting snow, with a lake at the bottom, as heretofore described. My endeavor was to find such a place. I found a dozen that answered the description almost perfectly, but could not find the right one. I spent several days looking for it, tramping over this terrible tundra.

At last I gave it up in despair, and concluded to try to get to the low foot hills, and parallel the high mountain range until I could, if possible, get my bearings. While on the marsh I found a kind of rush that had a little nutriment in it. If I caught it firmly near the root I pulled up what very much resembled a young onion sprout. The outside of this was spongy and absolutely without nourishment, but the center, the youngest leaf (if that is the proper term, botanically speaking), contained a little nutriment. It was not as large as a shingle nail, but by collecting a great number of them they helped me some.

On this wet lowland, and in fact along the edge of the streams in the mountains, I found a weed that in childhood I had known as "sour dock". It has two elongated leaves and between them sends up a stem that we used to chew. This stem is sour to the taste and perhaps has a little nutriment in it. I used it whenever I found it. I had never tried the root of this plant, and one evening while on the lowlands, concluded I would try to cook some of it. It is yellowish in color and has quite a large bulb. It softened in the boiling and before I tasted it I thought I had found something that would serve me in good stead. When I came to eat it I found it as bitter as gall and a few minutes afterwards my stomach ejected it.

After an exhausting trip of a day, I got back to the foothills once more and started in to parallel the higher range. Up to this time I had never been able to see a clear sunrise

or sunset on account of fogs and because during all of the first week I was down in the ravines. I knew approximately the number of days I had been lost and could therefore tell very nearly what day of the month it was. I also knew, of course, that on September 21st the sun would rise due east and set in exactly the opposite direction.

After being in the low hills for two or three nights I finally got a clear sunset and that same night saw the north star, the evening being clear and cold. As soon as I had located the points of the compass I felt a little more hope. I knew that going south would take me to the Bering Sea. The trouble was that I found myself too weak to scale the high mountains that were to the south of me, and was obliged to continue in the same direction I was going, and which I now knew to be easterly, hoping that I would find some low place through the divide.

About this time I came across a small water course that did not contain running water but had a number of pools in its bed. As I was passing one of these I saw a small fish dart in under the tundra-covered bank. I dropped my pack and taking off my sou'-wester baled the hole dry after an hour or so of work, being rewarded by the possession of a minnow the length, probably, of an average finger. I did not stop to cook it but ate it raw in two bites. In this same little creek I caught three more during that day and the next, all about the same size. After this for two or three days, before the heavy rains began, I kept a sharp lookout for these dry water courses. I would even go out of my way for miles if I saw any indication. I found only one more, but a couple of hours before I reached it a heavy rain began and as soon as I came across a likely looking hole I **cached** my blankets under the brush and worked in the cold storm for hours, baling with my hat. I finally got it dry and was rewarded with three little fish somewhat smaller than the ones I got on the other creek. I caught two more a day or so afterwards in a manner that certainly seemed providential.

The latter part of the day had been warm but the evening was cold. I conceived the idea of sleeping in the rocky bed of the creek I was on and of building a big fire on the rocks and when they got hot, sweeping them off and making my bed. I tried it and made a dismal failure; the rocks were too hot



to be comfortable at first but along toward morning got very cold. I had always heard that rocks held heat for a long time, but I do not believe it now. Another thing that kept me very uneasy was the thought that perhaps I had not swept all the coals out of the crevices and would set my blankets afire.

Next morning I arose early from my cold, hard bed, and "mushed" on up the creek. I was suffering even more than usual from hunger that morning; there being no running water in the course and the tundra coming right down to the bank there were absolutely no weeds or grass at all. I had gone about half a mile when in a little shallow pool I discovered two of my small finny friends. It was only necessary to stoop down and pick them up. These, nine in all, completed my fish diet, as the heavy rains became almost continuous about this time, and started all the streams running.

I desire to explain the reason I use the word "mush" so frequently. While the word is a localism of this northern country it is not slang. It is used always by everybody who has been here any length of time and is very expressive. Traveling over the heavy, soft tundra we have could not be as well described by any other word. It is also used synonymously with the words "get out," especially when applied to dogs and persons.

They tell a story about a fellow who had lived in this country for several years. He went out to "the States" a year or so ago. The boat getting in late at night he did not land until morning. Of course the first thing he did was to hunt up the best restaurant he could find. Most Alaskans do this when they get out. He went in and sat down; not having had time to get shaved or change his old mining clothes, he fully realized that he had very much the appearance of a tramp. A neat lady waiter came to his side and said, "Mush, sir?". He got right up and went out, leaving the waitress gazing at his departing figure, speechless and full of wonder at the man's actions.

For some days after the fish episode nothing of particular interest happened. It would generally rain hard all night and clear up in the morning. I was very weak and emaciated and could rarely "mush" more than a couple of miles in a day and could never go to sleep before four or five o'clock

in the morning; if it was still raining when I awoke I often lay in my blankets all day with an oil coat (known here as a "slicker") over the upper part of my body and the piece of canvas in which I wrapped my blankets over the lower portion. With the blanket rope I would tie my blankets around me when I went to bed, and thus be warmer and at the same time keep the edges of the blanket from getting out into the rain. If it was not raining when I stopped to camp I always made a big fire, wood and water being two things that were always plentiful. I would boil some water in the half-pound coffee can and drink it, thus warming myself, it being almost impossible, as any old "sour dough" will tell you, to keep warm by an open fire.

I counted my matches over and over again, and during the last two-thirds of my trip could have told you at any time how many matches I had. I remember having sixty-five left the day I was found dying. In attempting to make a fire once after a heavy rain I used eight matches and then did not succeed. I decided not to try further and got into my wet blankets very cold and was almost frozen all night long. You can hardly imagine how much the wasting of these eight matches worried me. If they had been twenty dollar gold pieces and the last I had in the world, I assure you it would have troubled me less. The principal reason for the loss of matches this time was the absence of any suitable piece of wood to get shavings from. I became very expert in making fires and rarely used more than one or two matches, even after a heavy rain. I would find a limb of dead, barkless willow (willows were the only wood I saw on the trip) and taking my sheath knife, trim off the wet outside down to the dry part. Then I would cut some shavings from this stick after which I took the smallest branch tips to be found on a dead willow (of which there were always plenty, the heavy winds that prevail playing sad havoc with the scrub willows that line the stream banks), then I would put on larger and larger tips until finally the pile would burn easily. I was always in great fear that my matches would get wet. In order to guard against this, I left them in the paper in which they were bought; around this I kept a piece of oil paper in which most Alaskan goods are packed for import. This in turn was surrounded with a heavy piece of cloth and the whole package was kept in a



large rubber tobacco pouch I had in my pocket. To guard against the setting on fire of the whole bunch, in breaking off one, I separated it into several parts. I knew that the loss of my matches was sure death to me and I guarded them as I did my life. My blankets were nearly always wet until I dried them at bedtime, and the hot water to keep me warm was indispensable.

Seeing no low places in the rough mountains to the south of me I kept on easterly at my snail-like gait. After about three weeks, during which time the weather grew worse and worse, I saw, a few miles ahead of me, a high mountain which looked quite accessible, and from which I thought I might be able to better determine what I should do. Toward evening on the third day after this I arrived at the top. The mountain itself was quite high, but on the side I went up the ascent was so gradual that by taking a rest every few feet I got to the top without much difficulty, where there was a rectangular ledge of rocks four or five acres in extent and of an almost uniform height of perhaps twenty-five feet. On the westerly end of this rocky crown was an old, partially tumbled-down stone house. It must have been the work of natives in former years. Before examining this I eagerly surveyed the surrounding country. My heart rose within me as I beheld in the south a low pass through the mountains. While the elevation of this pass appeared even higher than the one I was on, still it was much lower than the rough, steep mountains on either side of it. After all I was afraid that I would not be able to scale even these lower mountains in my then physical condition, still having in mind the plan of following the Arctic shore. After calm deliberation and observation of perhaps half an hour, I came to the conclusion that I would try to reach another and still higher elevation about ten miles easterly. I favored the mountain route, but realized what a mistake would cost me. I could see a glacier on the side of this distant elevation and running down from it was apparently quite a large stream. Beneath the crown of this distant mountain top was the head of the largest and widest valley I had seen on the whole trip. There seemed to be a gradual slope of about five miles with very high precipitous mountains on either side of the little river that flowed down this valley and finally emptied, some miles below, into the

stream that ran easterly past the mountain I was then on. It appeared to me that it would not be a very hard trip down the latter stream and up the very gradual ascent of the former. It turned out to be the worst ten miles of my whole trip, not on account of the "mushing," for that was comparatively good, but because of the weather and other things. **I was ten days making this ten miles.**

When I had finished my observation and arrived at this conclusion, I went back to the easterly end of the cliff where I had left my blankets. At the base of this end was a low, marshy piece of ground. It seemed to me there should surely be worms here. In California, where I was raised, there would have been thousands of angle worms in such a place. I took my case knife from the haversack and dug over several feet of ground but there were no worms of any kind. I had thought of camping at this spot and getting some protection from the lee side of the cliff, if it rained, but there being no pure water and no wood, I decided to go down the mountain side to the stream heretofore spoken of. The way down was marshy and covered with scrub willows near the foot.

I had gotten well down the mountain and within, probably, two hundred yards of the stream when I beheld right in front of me, and just across the stream, what at first sight I took to be a prospector's horse. I stopped short and said aloud, "Thank God," well knowing that a prospector there meant food and life to me. A moment later my joy was turned to dark despair when on closer observation **I saw that the supposed horse was really an immense brown bear.** He had evidently not seen me. The reader may not believe me, but as God is my judge, I coolly deliberated for several minutes whether or not I should go on down to the stream and if the animal attacked me give him battle with my sharp knife. I was starving and bear steaks would have been much more welcome to me than pure gold; on the other hand I knew I was so weak I could hardly stand, let alone fight a bear, which would probably kill me outright or wound me badly and leave me for dead. I had become desperate, feeling certain that I was destined to die of starvation and reasoned that if the bear should kill me it would be a much easier death than the slow torture of starvation. My better judgment however prevailed

and I watched the bear wander slowly down the stream in the very direction I expected to go.

I made a big fire, drank some hot water, smoked some willow leaves and rolled up in my blankets on some branches I laid across the forked boughs of a willow that had been blown down almost flat to the ground by the wind. I frequently had an opportunity to get a comparatively good bed in this way. Toward midnight the rain began to pour down and did not cease during the night or the next day. I did not get out of my blankets until the morning of the second day after I saw the bear. I then "mushed" down to the stream, and the day being clear and cold, attempted to make a fire. Everything was wet and the proper kind of wood being unavailable I did not succeed. Weak and cold, I had to keep moving or almost freeze. A half mile or so down the stream I found the ruins of an old eglow; it had been made by sticking willow poles five or six feet in length into the ground in circular form and bringing all the tops of the poles as near together as possible. Some brush had then been thrown over these and this in turn covered with sod. Time had partially wrecked this shelter, but by cutting a little fresh sod with my case knife and putting it on I succeeded in getting considerable protection the rest of that day and night. I also managed to build a little fire inside. It seemed unusually cold that night, considering the shelter I had, but when I got up next morning the reason was apparent. **It had snowed heavily during the night.** This must have been as early as the middle of August. It did not begin to snow regularly until about the first of September.

The night I slept in this old eglow I thought of a plan by which I might get a few mouthfuls to eat and wondered that the idea had not entered my mind before. I had noticed at this and several other places where I had camped in the brush that the little birds were very gentle or rather had great curiosity. They would sometimes even alight on my blankets before I got up in the morning; the slicker being entirely over my head they could not tell that there was any living object under the blankets. At the first move I made, however, they were off like a shot. I imagined that I might be able to kill some of them with rocks. I was anxious for morning to come that I might try it. My mind was stronger than my body. When I tried the experiment I found I had not force

enough to kill one even if I did hit it. This same over-estimation of my strength frequently happened in regard to "mushing". I would wake up in the morning feeling, before I moved, strong enough to travel several miles that day. When I began to move about, however, I found my renewed strength had existed in my mind only.

After my night in the old eglow I started on down the stream not knowing what minute I would run against Mr. Bruin, and to tell the truth, this matter was not bothering me a great deal. I did not meet him again, however, but saw his tracks once more on this stream, and once on another stream several miles from there. As I hobbled along down the creek, a cold rain set in. Finally I found a high, perpendicular, rocky cliff near the river bank. In the rain I cut with my sheath knife as many small poles as I could and making a "lean-to" against the lee side of the rock, covered it with tundra sod. I succeeded in making a fire under cover of this shed. At this place on the creek, nearly in front of my eglow, I found a small quantity of the rush plant which I had found over at the Arctic. I noticed at my last camping place there was some bird, undoubtedly of the snipe species, that followed along the stream at night and turned the smaller rocks over with its bill, seeking grubs or some kind of water bugs. I never saw any of them, but could hear them plainly and conceived the idea of making a trap to catch them. I spent most of the following day cutting the straightest willows I could find. At last I got the trap made, including the figure four trigger so often used in "the States". I had no bait, but in searching my pockets found a piece of red flannel. I set the trap and placed thereon a rock for weight. Tired and famished, I struggled back to my blankets and crawled in, anxious for morning to come and with it the bird feast I anticipated. I arose early and made my way down to my trap in the creek bed. When I reached the bank I was highly elated at the sight before me. **There was my trap down and the rock still on top.** I hurried to it. As usual, fate was against me. **The trap was empty.** I sat down on the bank in despair at my disappointment.

In a short time another cold rain started in. I went back to my shack and tried to make a fire but could not do it; by this time the rain had soaked through the sod and my "lean-

to" was leaking like a sieve. My blankets, yet unrolled, were getting quite wet. This was one of my darkest hours. I realized that if I stayed there without being able to drink any hot water to warm myself I would get pneumonia or perish from exposure and I felt too weak to mush that day. I protected myself as well as I could and shivered in the rain. Finally when the downpour stopped for a few moments I grabbed my blankets and hurriedly packing them together some way, threw them over my shoulders and started down the stream. I was in the habit of rolling my blankets in a neat, compact bundle, not for the looks, but to make them easier to carry. There is a great knack in doing up blankets. Spreading them out flat with about a foot of one end turned down, fold both sides to the middle; then tightly roll them, beginning at the end not turned down and upon reaching the turned down portion of the blanket, you will find this caplike end will fit over the roll.

I staggered along for a few hundred yards and concluded to cut across a low "divide" toward my objective point. I managed to get across this hill but could get no further. I was warmed up a little on account of the exercise, although it was still raining and sleeting. I got into some brush on a little stream and pulled my blankets over me and the canvas and slicker over them. In a few hours it cleared and began to turn warm. In the morning I was able to make a fire and get some hot water and could also dry my blankets.

Weak from my experience of the day before I did not feel strong enough to travel. I stayed by the fire, drank hot water, smoked willow leaves and passed the time until late in the afternoon, then moved my bed to a more comfortable place a few feet from where it had been deposited in the hurry of the night before. In front of me was a high, tundra-covered hill I knew I must scale before reaching the stream that would carry me to my elevated destination. I lay down on the bed and gazed, in the gloaming, at the hard climb before me. As you will shortly see, this much dreaded hill proved a lucky one for me.

I got up in the morning and tried to catch some of the small fish swimming in the creek. I used a little net that I had stayed up all night to make, about a week before, cutting a piece off the end of my canvas and unraveling the twine

from it. I tried many times, but never caught a single fish; it was too diminutive and the water too plentiful.

One day early in August I was crossing over a high divide and ran almost over a ptarmigan hen with four little chicks, evidently hatched a day or two before; as weak as I was, I managed to catch the four little ones. Each was only a mouthful but I made four meals of them. The second day after this I found one, a shade larger, of which I made a couple of mouthfuls. The ptarmigan is a bird about the size of a young pullet, and in fact, looks very much like one. It is brown in summer, but the color changes to pure white in winter. It is fully as good eating as any chicken; in truth I think it is better. I may be a little biased in its favor, because, as you will learn hereafter, it indirectly saved my life twice. Nature especially protects it, for as winter approaches feathers come out on its legs all the way down, but in the summer they are like those of any ordinary farm-yard chicken. Their white color prevents their being seen so easily in the snow by animals and hunters. Their color in summer is much the same as the tundra; some of the other animals also change color in the same way.

Well, about ten o'clock I shouldered my blankets and started over the divide. By resting every ten feet or so, I finally climbed about two-thirds of the way up this tundra-covered mountain when, at my feet, I beheld what I took to be a beautiful red flower. I was pleased and surprised to find this so late in the season, and stooped over to pluck it. Imagine my astonishment to find that **it was a berry**. I dropped my pack from my back saying aloud, "Thank God; if I can find enough of these they may pull me through"; I began to hunt for more, only finding a few at this spot but in a little wet hollow running down the side of the hill fifty yards away, I got thousands of them; in fact the ground was yellow with them. I crawled about on my hands and knees and ate until I was full. I have since learned that these are called salmon berries; they are red when ripe and yellow when over-ripe. It was so late in the season that all I found were yellow except on some high, dry spots. They are nearly all water and seeds and contain very little nourishment. After eating all I could I filled the coffee can and went back to my camp of the night before. I boiled those in the can in their



own juice; there is enough sugar in them to make them palatable. I thought I could keep this jelly to eat if I found no more berries but got so hungry, however, during the night that I ate it all up, knowing I could refill the can in the morning.

Next day I felt a little stronger and started out early, because I knew I would spend a couple of hours after berries. This time I began at the foot of the little hollow and worked up, making another discovery right at the start. I saw a number of little reddish colored plants growing out of the tundra and on them I found a small berry, bluish in color, when ripe. I have learned that these are called blueberries; in flavor they very much resemble our currant. The blueberry bush does not come more than from six to ten inches above the sod and the salmonberry does not grow on a bush at all, but comes right up out of the ground on a little stem. I may have walked over some of these berries before and not noticed them, as I had always been used to seeing berries grow on taller bushes and plants. I did not pay much attention to the blueberry then, as it was much more scarce and harder to pick than the other. I hated to leave the spot, but when I had eaten all I could and refilled my can, I concluded to go on, having been so much delayed in the past few days and everything indicated the approach of winter. On the top of the divide I walked over a few salmon berries, but I assure you I never stepped on them when I could help it; I was so glad to find them that it seemed to me, in my then frame of mind, almost sinful to crush them with my feet. On the other slope of the mountain I found even more than on the westerly side. The ptarmigan seemed to know a good thing when they saw it because here they were thick; I never wanted a gun so badly in my life.

When well down on the easterly side I stopped to rest and make up my mind what to do. A startling panorama was before me; at the foot of the mountain lay the widest valley I had seen in my whole trip, being probably a quarter of a mile in width. Heretofore, most of the mountains formed an acute angle at their bases; the lower part of this mountain was covered with a dense thicket of dwarf willows. Directly in front of me was an immense glacier, acres in extent and of the width of the valley. A big, wide stream of water ran

through a natural tunnel cut in the ice and fed by this glacier and others like it which I could see further up the valley; this was the slope that was to lead me, by gradual ascent, to the elevation I spoke of some pages back. I concluded to camp before reaching the bottom because I wanted to be near the berries without too much of a climb, so finding a place where dead willows were thick I took off my blankets and made a big fire, then emptying my berries out of the coffee can into my hat, went down to the stream for water; about the first thing I came across at the creek was fresh bear tracks—undoubtedly my friend of a few days before. He did not make his appearance again, however, but from the freshness of the sign I am satisfied he was in the thicket somewhere.

I came back to where my fire was burning, boiled some salmon berries, dried my blankets and made my bed on one of the horizontal willow forks heretofore described. I had become an expert weather prophet and had in my mind predicted rain that night. It soon began to pour down and kept it up continuously until late in the afternoon of the next day; when it stopped I got out of my wet blankets and went up on the hillside after some berries; I found that the heavy rain had almost ruined them but picked enough to fill my can and a few to eat. The grass and bushes were dripping with water and not being able to make a fire I was very cold. Before I got back to my blankets it began to rain again and did not stop until the next morning. I went to bed at once but not to sleep. How the rain did pour down during the night! It was frigid and I almost froze in my blankets. Toward morning the rain stopped a little and I concluded that the best thing I could do, not being able to build a fire, was to "mush" along as fast as I could and try to get some animal heat into my poor, cold body. Eating a few berries, I rolled my blankets and started. Getting around the big glacier I found the most interesting creek I had been on during the trip. On either side of me were rough, rugged mountains, their almost perpendicular sides forming the boundary of this valley.

Below each glacier, along the banks of the stream, I found a substance that at first I thought was good to eat, but I got badly fooled. It was white and of about the consistency and appearance of soft taffy candy, but when I tasted it I became

satisfied it was some combination of lime, and therefore not nutritious. As I went on up this little valley cold showers of rain frequently impeded my progress. Finally, an immense ledge of rock came into view near the center of the valley. I got on the lee side of this until the showers had stopped coming so frequently. There was a temptation to camp there, but I could not find any dry wood to make a fire and my blankets being very wet I soon "folded my tent like the Arabs and as silently stole away."

Late that evening I found a good camping place with plenty of wood and still having a few of the salmon berries left, ate them, and tied myself up in my blankets. The weather had cleared but as usual it became frosty. I woke up during the night and found myself groaning with the cold; next day I was too weak to travel, although the weather was beautiful—clear, bright and cold. After resting up a day I felt a little stronger and succeeded in reaching the high elevation mentioned some pages back. About the time I got to the top a heavy driving mist began to come in. I could see nothing and hurried to the lee of a big ledge of rocks to make my bed. I found I was not yet on the highest part of the mountain, but concluded to wait until morning where I was; hoping the weather would clear. I awoke early but it was still blowing and raining; I managed to roll my blankets and carry them up the rocky mountain to a kind of cave in the cliff of rocks, still several hundred yards from the top. Although it rained hard during the night, I slept quite snugly.

In the morning the weather cleared a little, but not enough to allow me to get a view of my surroundings. There was absolutely no plant or grass of any kind that I could eat on this rocky height. The water up here was only such as is contained in the tundra pools and I could not go down to the creek at the foot, as the trip back would be more than I could stand.

While sitting under the projecting and protecting end of a large rock, meditating, I spied on the ground near me, a small snail or periwinkle; to fall over and grab it was the work of but a few seconds. Looking around I found a few more in that immediate vicinity, but hobbling over to a low, damp, rocky swale near by, I found hundreds of them. I dropped down on my hand and knees and followed up this damp place

cracking periwinkles with my teeth as I would hazelnuts, and swallowing the tiny morsel therein contained. Although the meat in the shell was no larger than a quail shot, by eating a great many of them, I felt a little strengthened. I was at this place four days before the fog and mist cleared sufficiently for me to get a view. I hated the delay, knowing it was getting late in the season and that the terrors of an Arctic winter would soon begin in earnest, but, on the other hand, it was all-important that I should acquire the information I could only get here.

The fourth morning broke clear and bright; leaving my blankets where they were, I ascended the balance of the climb to the mountain top. Sure enough, I could see the low place through the mountains distinctly, and the desolate looking Arctic Ocean in the near distance, a marshy lake-covered tundra, miles in extent, lying between it and me. The pass through the mountains to the south looked better; it had the appearance of low hills and far, far in the distance I could see, apparently near the end of this mountain pass, two tall peaks, almost exactly alike in appearance. My mind was at once made up. I would head for those twins. Returning to camp I ate a few snails and started. I noticed one peculiarity about these snails; one hour there would be an abundance, the next there would not be one in sight. I suppose this must have been on account of the changes in the temperature; I can think of no other reason.

\* \* \* \* \*

## CHAPTER IV.

### STRUGGLING HOMEWARD.

I could see from my position that it would be necessary for me to go toward the southwest for awhile, although the pass lay directly to the south of me. There were a couple of high, bald mountains directly in the way.

The wind and sleet had come again, but not heavily as yet, so making a neat roll of my blankets, I started. For several miles I tramped over the worst of upland tundra. It was a rocky, wet plateau immediately overlooking the glacier valley up which I had come. I could, if I had had my usual strength,

have thrown a rock down the perpendicular side to the stream on which I had camped several times.

As the time passed on, the cold easterly wind blew the sleet in cutting gusts; I was wet and shivering with cold. The top of this mountain was very rocky; indeed, at places there were immense cliffs. During one of the worst showers I got in between two enormous boulders to protect myself. I was sitting there, damp, disheartened and full of meditation, when a moving object passed before my retina and I was conscious of some animal before me. I did not realize its size at first, but when I got a good look at it, I saw it was a large, black fox. When I first saw it, it was coming directly toward my rock, in a dog trot. Presently it saw me, stopped a moment, threw its pretty head to one side, and made a semi-circle around me. Oh, how often after that I wished that it had had a ptarmigan or other bird in its mouth! I am sure it would have dropped it from fright.

After the heavy shower was over I mushed along, an hour or so later coming to the largest cliff I had seen on the mountain. Although it was beginning to grow dark I could still plainly see my starting point. In this huge mass of rocks I found the best protected sleeping place of the trip. I was cold, thirsty and hungry; there was no running water and no wood. Without a mouthful of anything, I got into my blankets. It rained almost incessantly, but not a drop could strike me. As usual, I dreamed of food all night, after I got to sleep. This is one of the peculiarities of starvation. My every thought, almost, while lying awake was of something to eat. It is astonishing how your memory will run back clearly and distinctly to the minute details of meals you had years before, and which in your normal condition you had entirely forgotten. You will even remember what position you occupied at the table; whether the meat was well done or rare, and which dish you liked best. For weeks, after the first few days, it is safe to say I never had a dream that did not contain a meal. I ate, in my imagination, all varieties of meals from the finest French dinner to the most humble "kow-kow" I ever had in Alaska. I would see great stacks of all kinds of canned goods; the label on each can was plain to me. Meats seemed to predominate, but the numerous other canned stuffs that we have in this country were much in evidence.

During my trip on the Thrasher I was very much interested in a story I read of a man who was lost in the Alps and who was finally rescued by some monks and their St. Bernard dogs from a monastery in the wildest and roughest part of that country. Twice during my terrible trip I dreamed I came to a monastery, where I was well fed and attended medically and when I recovered, was sent, accompanied by a guide, to my destination.

The odd thing about these dreams was that I seemed to enjoy the meal in reality. Unlike Tantalus, the food was always within my reach; many a nice, thick, juicy beefsteak did I devour in my sleeping moments. But, oh, the awakening was awful! I seemed to feel the pangs of hunger much more than if I had never had the dream.

Next morning after the camp on the mountain top, I crawled out of my little cave and looked about for snails. I could find none, although I was not more than a mile and a half from where I had found many of them. The weather had cleared, but was still threatening. In the distance I could see a stream running past the foot of this mountain. There appeared to be plenty of wood on it, and in the Alaskan slang, "it looked good to me". Slowly I climbed over the rocky, wet tundra of the mountain side, resting at frequent intervals. Near the bottom were a number of scattered scrub willows. I lay down by one of these to rest for a few minutes. While reclining on my elbow on the wet ground, my slicker protecting me from the dampness, I saw near me a snail. I ardently seized it, ate it and hunted for more. I found quite a number. It was strange I should find them in this unlikely place and not on the top of the divide among the rocks. After eating all the snails I could find I went on down to the creek. At the foot of the mountain, on the bank of a stream, I found a fine mineral spring. There are a large number of these in this part of Alaska and some of them rival the most noted springs of "the States". There are two very fine ones near Teller.

Leaving the spring I staggered on down the creek through the brush, looking for a good camping place. I was always glad to follow a creek; it was so much better walking than on the rough tundra. Unless the stream is too large, you can nearly always take advantage of the gravel bars and in some places the walking is as good as on a sidewalk. I finally

found a place with plenty of dry wood and dropped my blankets. The wind was blowing quite briskly, so I brought some rocks up from the river bed and made a wind-break for the fire, to the lee of some thick brush. I tried to cook some leaves I found on the bank of the stream but could not eat them.

I made my usual bough bed and after a smoke of willow leaves went to my couch. It rained during the night but cleared in the morning. I arose early and going up on the bank among the bushes, found a few snails. I could not make a fire so rolled up my blankets and started on down the stream but was not able to go more than half a mile.

My next camp was about a third of the way up a divide I had to cross to get to my point of destination. There was the usual routine at this place. The following morning, a few hundred feet higher up on the hillside, I found some more snails near a small cliff. I made the best "mush" that day I had made during the latter part of my trip. The snails seemed to have strengthened me somewhat. Late that evening I reached a likely looking stream about eight feet wide and apparently running due east, past the low place in the mountains for which I was aiming. I came to a halt in some thick brush on the bank of this creek. To my surprise the morning dawned clear, cold and sunny. This stream was full of trout of all sizes. Oh, how they used to annoy me! They would sport about in the water, seeming to know that I, a poor starving mortal, was watching them. I happened to have a supply of white thread in my pocket. I took a piece of this about twenty-eight feet long and twisting and rolling it together, made a kind of a fish line. I had nothing to make a fish hook out of except a large safety pin. I bent this as nearly in shape as possible and cutting a little rod, tried my luck, having for bait the same piece of red flannel with which I had tried to catch the birds some days before. Patiently I waited for a bite. Carefully I slipped up to the foot of the ripples. Not a bite did I get. Then I got down below a small waterfall and tried to build a rock dam, thinking I might catch what fish there were in the enclosure. I managed to get a few rocks together but found that in my feeble condition it would take me a week to finish it and then perhaps not be able to catch a fish.

Next morning bright and early I started down this comparatively small brook, not dreaming I was destined to follow it week after week until it became a mighty river and a month later be found dying on its banks. During the day I gathered a small cupful of blueberries in a spot on the stream, but they were so scarce that it took me several hours to get even so many. By the time I finished picking them it was dark, but I was in a convenient place to stop for the night.

My next camp was unimportant, but the following day was a serious one to me. I felt particularly weak; a short time after I had started one of those cold, snow-charged rains that I dreaded so much began; I could find no place to camp. It seemed as if there was nothing to do but to spread my blankets in the cold, drenching rain, without shelter. The little river had made a complete semi-circle around a high, lone mountain. It did seem to me I should freeze if I had to stop, under the existing conditions. Finally I came to some brush, just where the river took a segment off the circle at the base of the mountain, but it was still raining nor did it stop for a single minute, so I kept on. I thought I saw a protecting cave in the mountain side. Trying it I found that it was too shallow and was in slate rock, which being wet, was as dirty as if covered with soot. I gave this up in despair, finally seeking the wet scrub willows on the bank. They kept very little rain off; in fact I do not know but their constant dripping made it more unpleasant. I slung my blankets off my back in a hurry and throwing them down on the wet ground, crawled into them; I had no time to cut boughs this night and was very much afraid that in my weak condition I would get the dread pneumonia. This was indeed another of my darkest hours, but as the dawn succeeds the darkness of the night, so I found a little ray of light next morning.

It had stopped raining and I got up early, and leaving my blankets hurried across the creek to where I could see a prospect for berries. I was mistaken; there were none, but I found something that gave me great comfort. Within ten yards of where I slept there were the tracks of two men, evidently made about two weeks before. The brush they had cut was not dry yet. When I crossed the creek I found their dead camp fire. Looking around I saw a thick piece of bacon



rind; I staggered to this and grabbing it, placed it to my mouth, then hesitated. I had been about receiving hospitals a great deal and knew the danger of ptomaine poisoning. This bacon was partly decayed and I dared not eat it. A second time I put it to my mouth thinking I would take a bite of the part that seemed the least decayed. Again I hesitated. If I desired to kill myself I still had my sharp surgeon's knife and need not die by slow poison, a death of terrible suffering. The thickness of the rind attracted my attention. I thought what a generous fellow the cook must have been. Well, the result was I did not eat the toothsome morsel. I could not find anything else around but a piece of baling rope that afterwards stood me in good stead. These fellows had taken what few dead willows there were, so I could not make a fire. I saw nothing to do but "mush" on, and this I did.

As I went along I found that the two men had gone down the stream also; in fact they were the most entertaining company I had all the rest of my terrible trip; they never left the stream. The reader can not realize how much company those footprints were for me. I knew that in all probability these men were headed for civilization; if so, I was on the right track. For the next couple of days nothing outside the regular, simple routine of my camp life occurred.

Near noon, on the third day, I saw I was approaching the low line through the mountains. I came very nearly turning off in the same direction once or twice before I arrived there. I then found the pass was only low hills and I came to a couple of big forks flowing into my stream from that side. I figured that such large streams must draw from an extensive watershed and by taking one of these branches I might thus save considerable distance. Fate favored me this time and I went on down the main river. If I had turned off, weak as I was, I would surely have perished. When I finally got within a few hundred yards of the pass I could see that either this main river turned almost at right angles and ran through it or a stream was running out of it into the river I was on. Notwithstanding these good indications I could follow with my eye a line of green willows for miles toward the Arctic that seemed to be a continuation of those along the bank where I was. Imagine my joy upon reaching the all-important spot to find that the river I had been following for many days,

turned almost at right angles and ran due south, through this low place in the mountains, the very direction I wanted to go. Another large stream, coming from the direction of the Arctic, emptied into it just where it turned. Hope, which at this time was at a very low ebb, began to revive. I soon found, however, that traveling on this now wide, rushing body of water was not what it had been; up to the last few miles I could cross and recross, and, taking advantage of the gravel bars, have very good walking. Now for several hundred yards on either side of the river there was a low, marshy tundra into which I would sink above the knees at every step. Sometimes dense groves of willows lined the immediate vicinity of the banks and these generally grew out of pools of stagnant water. I found really better "mushing" just above the outer edge of this marsh at the foot of the mountain, but even this was abominable.

A couple of miles below the bend of the river, I came to a point where it had cut away a precipitous side of the mountain, leaving an almost inaccessible cliff. I was in a dilemma. I could not ford the stream and, skeleton that I was, did not believe I could scale the cliff, yet I tried it. I failed, but found several acres of blueberries. Being the westerly slope, rain and heavy winds could not strike it so well, hence they were very plentiful. It was the only place I ever found these berries in their prime; there were a few green ones. I kept these and ate all the ripe ones I could. I was more anxious for the green ones because they would keep and not mash in my pockets. I had nothing to put the ripe ones in but the little half-pound coffee can. After picking what berries I could, I concluded to camp and try the cliff in the morning when I was fresh. It was impossible to find a good place to spread my blankets—the low land was so wet and the mountain side so steep. I finally bent some willows over and putting plenty of boughs on these, managed to keep out of the water.

During the night the usual cold rain set in and lasted until about nine next morning; shortly after it stopped I arose, ate what ripe berries I had in the can and rolled up my blankets. Once in a while I could hear a big fish jump out of the deep water after a fly, so I resolved to try my school-boy fish line, which I still had with me, but with my usual success—nil. Rolling up my thread and safety pin hook I ran my arms

through the blanket pack straps and made a desperate effort to scale the cliff, finally succeeding. On top I found a fresh supply of blueberries, but no green ones. I ate a few more and began to fill the can. With one exception, this was the last I ever found.

Within the next day or so winter set in in dead earnest; the high mountains and even the low hills on either side of me, were covered with snow all the time. In the daytime the cold wind blowing over this cut right through my clothes. My face and hands almost froze as I had little blood left to keep me warm. At night my suffering was even still more intense. This reminds me of a story that a friend of mine from California, John J. O'Leary, tells.

While personally I do not feel in the humor for joking, especially over a matter that was at one time so serious to me, still I realize that my readers may enjoy the yarn. It seems that a man who had been in Alaska for several years always expressed a desire to be cremated; he froze to death a year or so ago. His friends took his body out on a boat to one of the large cities; it arrived at its destination and was taken directly to the crematory from the ship; the body was prepared and placed in the metallic box used in these places. The furnace was heated to that terrific heat necessary for incineration; they slid the box in and left it for several hours. At the usual time they opened the furnace doors expecting to see but a few cups of ashes left. The fellow rose up in the box and said, "**Shut that door. This is the first time I have been comfortably warm since I started to Alaska five years ago.**"

Nothing of unusual importance happened during the next few days; I was on the lookout all the time for berries, but it was too late in the season; at one place I found a cupful of them, but even they were almost decayed. The time of year had arrived when there was absolutely nothing edible growing. What few plants that came with the summer sun had gone with the winter blasts. I had frequently looked for more periwinkles but never found them. Day after day never a morsel of **anything** but hot water passed my lips.

One day I came to a place where the river ran through a deep cut in the mountains; it was simply impossible to travel along the cliff, but by wading along the edge of the river I could just get by. At one spot where there was a little turn in

the stream I discovered a set of footprints going up and a set coming down. I wanted to see if these were made by two different men, or the same man ascending the river and then descending. If made by different men the fellow who went up might be coming back in time to pick me up. The tracks looked to be the same size but I concluded to measure them, and reaching over to the bank and pulling a twig from a bush, stooped over to make the measurement. I found them the same length and evidently made by the same man. I rose slowly and just as I stood straight everything turned black before my eyes. I **heard**, but did not **feel**, a dull thud. I had fainted. I do not know how long I lay there, but distinctly remember, either in going into or coming out of the faint, saying aloud, "**My God! Is this death?**" I had been expecting death for many days and suppose it was on my mind at this moment. Slowly, consciousness came back. My first rational thought was, "I am lost"; then everything was clear to me again. When I examined myself, I found no mud on my clothes, but quite a little on the blankets. I had evidently fallen squarely on my back. I found a piece of the bush that was growing on the bank, in my hand. Many times when I had stooped over, hunting for berries or plants, I had felt on the verge of fainting, but found if I raised up slowly, the feeling would pass away. **I never fainted before in my life, and never since.**

I felt no ill effect from the fainting spell and "mushed" along slowly down the stream. I tried dozens of times to cross the river but never succeeded. I had many narrow escapes from falling on the slippery rocks. I would probably have drowned if I had, for besides being so weak, I had my twenty-five pound pack of blankets strapped to my back. The side I was on seemed much worse for "mushing" than the opposite one.

Finally, late in the afternoon of one day about this time, I came to an island in the river containing several acres; the stream adjacent thereto was broad and apparently shallower than I had before seen it; after considerable effort I managed to cross to the island; here I rested and attempted the other branch. It was too deep and too swift for me to cross. I felt very tired and as there were some nice, large willows on the island, concluded to camp. While I was making a fire

to heat some water it began to rain. Luckily there were some large clumps of willows which had caught a great deal of driftwood and brush at high water. By getting to the lee of one of these I had pretty good protection. I hurriedly cut my boughs for a bed before the rain had wet them badly. After sitting around the fire and drinking hot water for a time, I got into my blankets. It rained all night and when morning came I found the river had risen considerably and I was a prisoner. There was nothing serious about this except the delay, for the rain had stopped and the weather had turned cold again. After a few hours I was able to re-cross to the mainland but there was trouble ahead. A high cliff faced the stream as far as the eye could see. It took me all the rest of the day to go about a quarter of a mile. In getting even that far I had to crawl along, inch by inch, over the immense boulders, some of which projected several feet into the stream. The crevices and open places between the rocks were filled with a dense growth of brush, making them well nigh impassable. I had a very bad place to camp that night but fortunately it did not rain.

Next day the traveling was a little easier and along toward evening I arrived at what seemed to be a place where two men had camped sometime before. The double set of tracks that I had frequently seen on gravel bars further up the stream were plain; remains of a dead camp fire were near the bank. My heart jumped for joy when, on looking into the bushes a few feet away, I beheld a salmon of large size. I staggered to it as rapidly as my legs would carry me, but horror! it was rotten; the roe and maggots ran out in a stream together. Notwithstanding all this, I would have eaten it with a relish, except for the reason heretofore given in the case of the bacon rind. I could hardly resist taking the chance anyway. After I was rescued, my mining partner, formerly a surgeon at the San Francisco Receiving Hospital, informed me that ptomaine poisoning was only generated at the time the decay took place, but not after it was completed.

Reluctantly I started on down the stream. At this period of my trip I was compelled to rest every few feet. While sitting resting I would pick out some object a little way ahead and endeavor to reach it next time, without stopping before I got to it.

An hour or so later I arrived at what seemed to be a general camping place for all the "mushers" who had passed during the season and found nearly a dozen dead fires, and for the first time found a camp where there were any tin cans; here there were quite a number. I searched each one thinking there might be a morsel left. I finally came to a small glass pickle bottle. "Thank God!" I said, "here is something in this". I took out the cork which was loosely in the neck and tasted the liquid. It was the strongest vinegar, but only about a wineglassful. In it I found about a third of a small cucumber pickle and a piece of cauliflower about the size of my thumb to the first joint. I also found about a dozen little black peppers. Gentle reader, you do not know how I enjoyed each of these ingredients. The vinegar was just what I craved; the taste of the pickle was like nectar; the peppers warmed up my stomach and I could taste them for hours afterward. You can hardly imagine how the labels on the cans tantalized me. My imagination ran wild at the sight. I concluded to be fashionable and camp here. I did not have to cut any brush; it was already cut and dried.

I felt elated over the outlook. It assured me I was nearing civilization, but I noticed frequently during this long trip that if things looked bright one hour, they looked correspondingly dark the next. Shortly after I went to bed a cold rain set in. It poured all night long; I had no shelter of any kind; in fact the place was very much exposed to wind and rain and it surprised me that so many campers stopped here. It was still raining when I woke in the morning, but getting up between showers I started, having first gathered up nearly all the best cans and the bottle and placed them in my pack; these made additional weight and a very unwieldy package to carry. I was determined, however, if I found any more berries to have something to carry them in.

A few hundred yards down the river I found a very wide place and after several attempts succeeded in crossing. The cold sleet which had been beating me in the face from the time I left camp was now pouring down and becoming unbearable. Of all the cold and exposure I had had on this awful trip, this was the worst. I began to feel that I could stand it no longer. Still, knowing that to stop was almost sure death, I kept going. I finally got into a clump of willows and tried

to make a fire. The willows were dripping with water and I could get no dry tips so I had to give it up after wasting three matches. To stop was to freeze, so I stumbled along. This was another of my darkest hours. I came to a grove of quite large willows. They were in a kind of marsh where the water was several inches deep, but finding one that the wind had blown over I put some boughs across the forks as heretofore described. In desperation I got into my blankets. I could not sleep for many hours but it soon turned a little warmer and stopped raining and sleeting. Sleep finally came and when I awoke the sun was shining brightly; it was morning; bright sunshine was something I had not enjoyed for many days. I took my things out to a sand bar near the river bank, spread my blankets on some bushes to dry and made a fire. After eating a hearty breakfast of hot water and imagination, I basked in the sun, and smoked willow leaves for an hour or so. I would probably have rested considerably longer if I had not seen signs of an approaching wind or rain storm. Experience had made me quite a weather prophet. I knew that if I desired to make any headway that day I would have to be moving along in a hurry; besides, I was anxious to find a more protected camping place. I did not start any too soon, for I had not gone more than a quarter of a mile before one of those cold, sleeting rains began; it was not quite so bad as the one of the previous day, but was very weakening to me.

After a time I came to a fairly good camping location and was soon in my blankets again. I had frequent regrets for crossing the river; so far, I had found no berries or roots. I imagined several times I could see protected spots across the stream where I was almost sure there were a few left.

I slept unusually well that night and as the morning dawned clear and warmer, I felt my hope thermometer rise a little. The last taste of food I had was the little nibble of pickle I had found several days before. After making a fire and heating some water I rolled up my blankets and was soon on my way, being fortunate enough to find several long gravel bars ahead of me, but even on these I found I had to take a long rest every twenty or thirty feet.

After some hours the good walking gave out and the river bank became thickly lined with dense, wild, well nigh impass-

able willow groves. The wind as usual had played sad havoc, and there were as many dead as live ones. "Mushing" through this tangled mass would have been slow work for a strong man, but I traveled at a snail's pace; many a bad fall I received, being too weak to catch myself when I stumbled. Early in the afternoon I came to an old channel of the river. The stream had evidently in former years made a semi-circular bend in towards the foothills, on the side on which I then was. In some manner it had straightened itself and now ran its direct course. At first I thought I had come to a dry creek from the mountains, but this seemed impossible at this time of the year, and I soon came to the right conclusion. I at once determined to follow the old river bed, noticing a number of foot tracks in the damp gravel, and among them those of the two men I had been following for weeks. By the time I had completed the semi-circle I was very tired. In front of me on the bank was a large clump of willows. I struggled through them for awhile, until I came to a little knoll, where I concluded to camp. I noticed that between the river and the foothills there was a very bad looking marsh of several hundred acres, but thought, in the morning, I would continue down the bank and avoid this. Dropping my pack from my back, I began collecting wood for a fire. There was more nice, dry wood here than I had found at any other place on my entire trip. Within a space of ten feet I was able to collect wood enough for a big camp fire. My blankets needed drying badly and I was glad to have so good an opportunity to dry them.

At one side of this elevation was a little "nigger-head" swale, it being about fifteen feet, I should judge, from the top down to the water in this sluggish stream, which, by the way, seemed to empty into the main river. The knoll upon which I was camped was between this nigger-head swale and the dry channel which I had come down. I cut some boughs for my bed, and laid them sloping down hill; this still left probably eight or ten feet between the foot of my bed and the shallow water below me. I made a big fire, dried my bed-clothes and got into them; being very tired I went to sleep much sooner than usual. About eleven o'clock in the night I was awakened by rain, but this was nothing new to me. Besides, the weather seemed unusually warm, so pulling in the



outside edges of my blankets as much as possible to keep them dry, I dozed off to sleep again.

In the morning it was still raining and I did not get up that day. About twelve on the second night I had a sensation that felt as though my feet were in water; when I came to think of the distance down to the "nigger-heads" I was sure I must be mistaken. Lying there, half awake, for some moments, I still had that peculiar feeling; and though as usual, I had tied myself in my blankets, I managed to reach my hands down to my feet. To my horror the water was up to my ankles. I then realized that the warm rain must have melted the snow on the low hills and that I was in a rushing, roaring flood. As I listened I could hear that peculiar rumble so well known to every one who has ever been in a flood. Dark as it was I could see by the glinting on the water that the old channel, along which I had come into this place, was also full to overflowing. Untying my blanket rope I managed, in the rain and wet, to push some of the boughs a couple of feet further up the knoll and pull myself on to them, never dreaming the water could get any higher. I dozed off again shortly, (for some reason I felt unusually drowsy) but in an hour or so I was again awakened and putting my hand down found the water a little above my knees; the rain was still pouring down. Jumping up as quickly as my physical condition would permit me, I reached for my rubber boots where I remembered having left them. I found them in the water; one sock had washed away. Pouring the water out of my boots I pulled them on. I had hung my haversack on a limb; this I easily got. All my cans except a couple, had washed away. The lower part of my blankets were of course soaked with water. In the dark I pulled them and my other things to the very top of the knoll and throwing the single blanket down against a small willow tree, sat down on it with my back against the shrub and drew the dryer part of my double blanket over me. The drowsy spell overpowered me again in a few minutes, and a half hour or so afterward my shoulder slipped on the tree and instinctively I threw out my hand to the ground to catch myself. I was suddenly awakened by clapping my hand into several inches of water. Here was a terrible situation. I knew this was the highest point. It was still pitch dark, except that I could see a little glimmering on the water

all around me. I could hear the maddening rush and roar of the angry waters on all sides, and knew not what to do or which way to turn. It was evident that the freshet was growing in force and volume every moment. I knew I could not get out through the swamp for that was probably now a deep lake. Neither could I retrace my steps, for as I said before, I could see that the channel was overflowing its banks; there was one possible chance; I might keep along the high edge of the river. With my haversack over my shoulder and dragging my blankets, I tried this. After a few yards' travel I found there was no hope in this direction. I could not have done it even if I had been strong, for there was no spot so high as the knoll I was on. Every step took me deeper and deeper until in a few yards I was to the top of my rubber boots in water. Daylight began to break by this time and in the dawn I could see an unusually large scrub willow standing in the rushing water. Its forks were several feet above the surface. I threw my smaller blanket into the crotch of another tree and still dragging my double blanket, struggled to this one. With strength born of desperation I managed to get between its protecting limbs; my weight, poor as I was, pulled it down until I began to fear it would be no higher than the knoll. However, when I got quiet I found I was at the highest accessible point. I held tightly to the top fork to keep it from splitting, as this wood splits very easily and I knew that to fall on my back in that water was to drown. With one hand I managed to get the blanket over me and this broke the rain to some extent. I did not dare allow myself to doze now.

Dawn soon turned to broad daylight. I watched the trunk of that tree as a cat watches a mouse. By the limb marks I could see that the water was still rapidly rising. I would notice a spot on the trunk an inch or so above the water line and in a few minutes it was covered. Finally the water came up to within, probably, a foot of me. I saw death at my side. My dear reader, I speak truly when I say I prayed, of the two manner of deaths now before me, if I had to go by either one, that I be given death by drowning. For weeks I had calculated that the chances of starvation were as a hundred to one. All at once the water stopped rising and remained stationary for several minutes. **Then it began to recede.**

I watched it going down as rapidly as it came up. Soon I

became drowsy again and putting some more boughs across the limb I was on, fell into a deep sleep. When I awoke some hours afterward, the water had run off and the ground under me was comparatively dry; the rain had stopped and a heavy drying wind was blowing. I was shivering with cold. What could be done? I did not like this drowsiness that had taken possession of me and deemed it a bad sign, as my senses had all been so acute before. I knew if I had some hot water I could soon warm myself, but did not think there was any chance to make a fire with everything so wet. I tried it, however, and luckily was successful at the second match. The wind had dried the willow tips. I could not make a big one as I did the first night though, but still had plenty of hot water and dried my blankets some. They were so wet I could not get them entirely dry. I do not know what I should have done if I had not gotten the hot water, because in my weak condition I would very likely have died of pneumonia that night. I could not warm up by "mushing" as I did once or twice before under similar circumstances. I cut some dry boughs and went to bed early, feeling too weak to try to get out of the swamp that day; in fact my dreadful experience of the night before had taken almost every particle of strength I had left. It was the beginning of the end. Drinking some more hot water, and with no taste of grass or anything else, I went to bed and to sleep.

The sun came up clear and bright next morning and I managed to arise from my blankets, but staggering, fell against a tree, not fainting, however. I rolled my blankets after a great effort, and shouldering them tottered through the willows down the stream. After traveling about a quarter of a mile I came to an unexpected obstacle in the shape of a deep creek, the result of the flood, emptying into the main river. Oh, how I did hate to retrace my steps over that rough ground and through the tangled brush, but it had to be done and I did it. To cross the swamp was then my only recourse, as the old channel was still full of water. I started but could not take over ten steps without stopping. I could neither sit nor lie down on account of the deep morass, but had to rest standing. I fell in the muck a number of times, but by sheer will power, struggled on, as I did not want to die in this mire.

About sundown I arrived at the outer bank and exhausted, crawled into my blankets.

The next day was not a bad one; still I did not have sufficient strength to get up and "mush" along, although I knew that every day of delay was now reducing what little chance of rescue I might have. I slept all day. Toward evening it began to snow, and kept it up at intervals all night. I had arrived at that stage where I seldom dreamed of good things to eat. As I have already said, in the earlier stages every dream was of the dining table. When morning came I found a sleeting, cold, windy day. I determined to make at least one more effort, so, near the middle of the forenoon, I staggered to my feet, made a fire and boiled some tundra water. This warmed me a little. Every half hour or so a heavy snowstorm would pass over. During the couple of warm days, while I was having my experience in the swamp, most of the snow on the lower foothills had melted off, but now again they were white, and the wind that blew over them was piercing. I had a hard time rolling my blankets that morning. There were very few sparks of vital energy left in my poor frame. To make matters worse, another dismal swamp was to be crossed; otherwise I would have had to take what seemed an even worse trip around it. It was not quite so wide as the last one, but I had a dread of dying like a poor old farmyard cow in a pasture bog. With my pack on my back, I could hardly stand up straight, let alone accomplish the fearful task before me. Something had to be done—I must either give up and lie down never to rise again, or make an effort to proceed. With a dogged perseverance I did not know was in me, I started. A cold shiver ran through me, as I staggered through the tundra of the hillside, into the morass; it began snowing again just as I started. Slowly, step by step, for hours I writhed and struggled through this slime, falling a number of times, fearing each time that I would not be able to rise again.

On a little dry spot about half way across, I found an old ptarmigan nest, and saw that it contained one egg about the size of a pullet's. With a haste you can well imagine, I broke it; there was nothing left but sulphurated hydrogen. A few minutes afterward I was taken deathly sick at my stomach, and sorely wrenched myself in a vain effort to relieve this

nausea, not knowing whether it was caused by the bad egg or weakness, but hoping it was from the former, not liking the symptoms if it was the latter. I finally reached the bank again, and assure you I felt like getting into my blankets, but had lost so much time lately, and the weather was becoming so terribly cold that, weak and chilled as I was, I resolved to struggle on. In front of me, when I had climbed the bank, was a comparatively level tundra of several hundred acres that had been all burned over, probably during the summer season. By crossing this I would save a big bend in the river and arrive again shortly at the old river bank. By the term "old bank" frequently used heretofore, is meant the one next to the foothills. The stream, in its endeavor to carry off the water, caused by a sudden thaw in the spring, cuts a bed as wide as the foothills happen to be apart; during lower water, the actual bank of the river at the edge of the stream may be a half-mile away from the old bank.

I headed for my objective point. As I moved along through the burned ground, I picked up dozens of empty snail shells, but no live ones. On the way across this burned tundra, I came to a creek running down from the mountains, and emptying into the main river near by. Here again I saw several beautiful salmon trout sporting about in the water.

This little stream had cut a deep gully, and one of the heavy snowstorms being then at its height, I rested here nearly an hour, fairly well protected from the driving sleet. Determined to go as far as possible in order to make up for the loss of the previous day, I soon shouldered my blankets and again struggled on. Although the burned tundra was comparatively easy walking, I could barely drag one foot after the other. A number of times, when I had stumbled and fallen, it was almost impossible for me to rise again. I was determined, if possible, though, to get to the old bank of the river, which I now saw before me, feeling sure I would have better protection from the storm and wind, as the bluff at this place ran easterly and westerly, and the chilling blasts came from the north. Within about a hundred yards of my destination I fell, and this time **could not rise**. I was still on the flat, burned tundra, fully exposed to the weather. I crawled on my hands and knees to the edge of the embankment, and must have been a horrible sight, struggling over the burned hill-

side. My hands, and, I presume, my face, were as black as a negro; I was as near a living skeleton as a man ever gets to be; tall, gaunt, bony, and black, I surely was a weird looking object. A few feet below me on the steep slope, grew some small willows, almost in a row, and about the length of my body. I knew that to lie on the wet ground was to accelerate death, so being unable to cut boughs as heretofore, I managed to crawl down the bank to this brush. Near my feet, a little rill of dark germ-infected water trickled down the slope. I managed to get my pack unrolled, and tied myself in my blankets. Then I rolled over on these bushes, and was thus off the wet sod. My head was lower than my feet, making a very uncomfortable position, but little did such a thing as that bother me now. Pulling my blankets up over my head, I lay there panting and pondering. I was sure I should feel stronger in the morning. Had I not often been compelled to stop from weakness, even weeks before? Was I not always able to go some distance at least, the next time I started?

In an hour or so I was again attacked by nausea. There being nothing to emit, the wrenching was terrible. Lying on my back, my feet higher than my head, tied in my blankets, and unable to get an easier position, I thought my farewell to this world of care and sorrow was at hand. If mortal man ever wishes for the ministering hands of loved ones, it is in an extremity like this. The sickness at my stomach passed away shortly, but recurred a couple of times during the night. I dropped off to sleep near morning, and slept until the sun was well up; the day was clear and cold, as were, in fact, the remaining days until I was found.

When I awoke, and before I moved at all, I felt I was much stronger and was sure I would be able to go quite a little distance that day. Poor, deluded mortal! When I endeavored to rise **I found the end had come at last.** Struggle as I would, I could not get to my feet. My last spark of hope was gone. I knew that nothing short of a miracle could save me now. It was too late in the season to expect prospectors, and besides I was half a mile from the river in the brush, and if a late miner should pass he would go up or down the stream. For weeks I had known I had very little chance for life; now I was sure of death. Yet, strange to say, I did not have the

fear of death that I had always thought I would have. I hated to be cut off in the prime of life, but what **did** worry me much more than the dying, was the fact that my bones should be torn apart by the wild animals and Malamoot dogs, and scattered to the four winds of the earth—an arm here and a thigh bone there; that my relatives would never know where I had died, nor where my remains were. While this is mere sentiment, and would never be thought of by some people, I plead guilty to being brimful of that feeling, and am glad of it. I thought over my past life, and found that my conscience was clear—that while I had been by no means a saint, my sins were largely errors of the head and not of the heart. I have always been a firm believer in a Supreme Being and a here-after. I have ever hated hypocrisy, and would never attach myself to any creed unless I thought I could live up to its teachings. I remember well lying there, thinking, “Now within five days I will know what the Great Hereafter is.” I do not know **why** I put the limit at **five** days, for, as a matter of fact, I would not have lived half that long.

Sometime during the forenoon, on the second day, as I lay there waiting for death, my head under the blankets, I thought I heard a shot. I had been fooled so often before that I had little faith in the correctness of my supposition, but pulled the cover down and called, “Help! Help!” as loudly as my feeble, child-like voice would permit. I received no answer, but afterwards learned from the boys who found me that they did fire at some birds over on the river, on their way up the stream. During the first day I managed to crawl out on my hands and knees, and pluck a handful of grass that was growing in a protected spot on the bank near me, get a little water from the rill at my feet, make a small fire and boil the grass in the water. I drank a portion of this—a teacupful perhaps, but had nothing more until found, nor did I again get out of my blankets during the balance of the four days I lay there. I had the same drowsy feeling I experienced in the swamp. Nausea troubled me no more, but late in the evening of the day before I was found I experienced a most peculiar sensation, and one, I am told, not a person in thousands ever goes through. Beginning at my pelvis I could distinctly feel my stomach fall against my spine, gradually, as though a heavy flat iron had been placed at that point on my flesh, and run up

the medial line; when this took place I knew my hours were numbered. I had read of the feeling in medical works. Medical men tell me that one of the most singular facts connected with my case is that I retained my mind to the last moment. The boys who found me say I was perfectly rational, and I, myself, know I was. Several cases have happened here in Alaska, since I was rescued, in which starving men have lost their minds in from three to seven days. If I had not retained mine, my life would have gone out like a candle.

When I crawled back into my blankets on the second day, I was unable for lack of strength to make my position any more comfortable. My head was still lower than my feet.

Toward noon on September 22nd, as I was lying in my blankets with my head covered and a peculiar, drowsy feeling on me, I thought I heard voices. I was perfectly conscious, but came very nearly not trying to call because I had been so often disappointed before. There is a kind of bird in these mountains that, at night, makes a sound very much like a human being. It had fooled me many times. Still, without expecting any reply, I pulled the blankets off my head and called, "Hello, Hello! Help! Help!"

My heart almost stopped beating when in return I heard, "Hello there, what do you want?" I answered, "Come here, please"; then I could hear one say to the other, "I guess there's some fellow in trouble over there." At this time they could not see me on account of the brush, and I could not turn my head, much less raise myself up. They were down in the old river bed, and I was, as you already know, on the slope of the bank. Dear reader, I have told you in the previous chapter that there were portions of my experience that words were inadequate to describe; this is one of them. I had wandered for sixty-seven days over the roughest part of wild Alaska without food, without hearing a human voice, literally almost without hope. I had now resigned myself to death, and, silently, awaited the approach of the grim monster; he was but a few short hours behind his prey; I could feel the chill of his clammy claws; his enveloping saliva, such as a snake is said to emit over the body of the frog before it swallows it, was fast covering me; I could indistinctly hear the muffled oars of his boatman, Charon, as he made ready to effect a landing and take another solitary passenger to the side of the Great Majority. Then to know



that help was at hand, and life once more before me was certainly an indescribable feeling.

I have read, in the old school books, of a man being pardoned while standing on the trap of the gallows; I could never fully appreciate his feelings before.

As the two young men approached me, leading their pack horse, one of them called out as soon as he saw me, "What's the matter?" In my feeble voice I replied, "I have had nothing to eat for over two months." He afterward told me that he thought, at the time, I was some poor fellow who had been without food for four or five days, and was out of my mind, but when he got to me, saw the condition of my body and talked with me, he changed his opinion. The two good-hearted young miners who found me were John L. O'Brien, known among his friends as "Jack" O'Brien, and Frank Henson, both of Nome. They had been camped for two weeks with a couple of companions, William Clinton and Frank Henry, seven miles from where they found me.

After the boys talked to me a few moments, Frank grabbed his gun and started out to kill a ptarmigan to make me some broth. Both being old timers in the country, knew it would never do to give me solid food, though I begged for it as only a starving man can. Jack, after raising me to a more comfortable position, went to his pack and, cutting a very thin piece of bacon, parboiled and fried it, cooked a potato until it was mushy and passed them to me together with a small pancake, on a tin plate. Here again the vocabulary contains no words that will convey to the reader, who has never been starved, the gratification of these few mouthfuls. I have heard of "nectar for the gods"; this was what the food seemed to me.

I had eaten a few mouthfuls and Jack had turned around to the rill to wash his hands, when I was seized with a pain that I thought meant my end. He looked around and saw my face, and immediately jumped to me and asked what was the matter. By this time I began to feel a little better. I explained to him that I had had a feeling as though melted lead was being poured down my throat. It was no doubt the irritation caused by food going into a stomach that was "caved in".

I had never shed a tear on the trip, but when I was asked by

Jack who I was, and where I came from, tears rolled down my cheeks as I told of leaving a dear old father of over eighty, and relatives and friends in California the April before, and coming to Alaska to seek my fortune in the gold mines.

I begged Jack not to leave me alone, as it really seemed I must be in a dream, of which I had had so many. I call the boys by their given names, because I have since learned to know them well, and love them for their noble, generous treatment of me.

And right here I want to say a word of the "sour dough" miner of Alaska, and the same holds good of those who have followed the business of mining any length of time wheresoever dispersed around the globe; but I wish it distinctly understood that, with some exceptions, the rule does not apply to the "cheechako". The former are generally noble, true-hearted men, used to the many hardships of such a life, used to being poor one year and perhaps millionaires the next. They are liberal to a fault. They will take the coat off their backs to protect from the driving storm a fellow being in distress, having themselves often received the same treatment. Ready to fight a man who jumps a friend's claim or otherwise abuses him, as quickly as if they were themselves oppressed, yet slow to anger and willing to give and take if the right spirit is shown by the other. This is the true miner.

Frank returned, after a couple of hours' hard hunting, without a bird, but the boys resolved to get up at daylight and kill one at all hazards—and they did. Being determined I should have no more solid food while in their care, they picked me up and carried me about a hundred yards to a better camping place on the flat, threw a robe over me, depriving themselves of its comfort for the night, made a rousing big brush fire and scantily covered, went to bed. It was one of the coldest nights of the season; I did not close my eyes in sleep during this or the two following nights, and looking out from under my oil coat in the early morning, I could almost see the dew crystallize into frost. During the night, I traveled, in my mind, over the whole dreadful trip, step by step.

## CHAPTER V.

## IN THE HANDS OF FRIENDS.

My kind-hearted rescuers arose at four o'clock, cold as it was, and taking their guns, started out after ptarmigan for the purpose of making broth for me. After a couple of hours they returned with one; making a huge fire near my feet they warmed themselves, and, when it had burned down to coals, cooked breakfast. The broth they gave me was delicious, but I craved something more substantial; of course, I was not allowed to have it. I begged most piteously, but that did no good; the boys did not propose I should kill myself after they had rescued me. After breakfast, the pack saddle was put onto the horse, and I was tied on. The boys had to leave their picks, pans, shovels and several other things, as there was no room on the poor horse. We soon started over the rough tundra for the tent, seven miles away. Frank led the animal, and Jack, with the gun on his shoulder, kept a look-out for ptarmigan. The sun came up brightly, and, except for the terrible jolting I received as the horse struggled across the morass, the ride was not a hard one. When we finally arrived at our destination I was gently lowered from my position and carried to a bed in the tent. I was more comfortable during the two days and three nights I was there than I had been in nine weeks before, and the many months that have passed from that time to the present writing. The only thing that bothered me was my inordinate appetite. The boys killed many ptarmigan during these two days, but I only got the broth. How I did implore them to let me have some solid food! I would have eaten it had I known it would almost kill me. Here again, dear reader, words fail to convey the sentiment. No person, except one who has been at the verge of death from starvation, can realize the almost insane craving for food under these circumstances. The desire to eat is as strong as it was before you had anything at all, and oh, the taste of what you do eat! ! I would forfeit many months of my life if I could enjoy my food all the balance of my days as I did for the first two weeks after I was found. To see the boys eating solid food, and not be able to join them was torture. The meals were eaten as the boys reclined on their blankets, on the floor.

Bill Clinton, who, by the way, was a great big good-hearted fellow, fair, fat, but not forty, always lay next to me. When the other boys were not looking, I would quietly beg Bill to give me a mouthful of solid food—beans, potatoes, ptarmigan or bread. He could not resist, and in this way I got many a toothsome morsel unknown to the other three. They caught him in the act once, and scolded him roundly. If all the boys went out they hid everything that was edible. I had a particular desire for “bannocks” or “punk”, a kind of bread made of flour, baking powder and water and used in mining camps from pole to pole, and from Portland, Oregon, to Portland, Maine. The boys used to say they could not eat it themselves without being greatly distressed, and it would be sure death to me, but many a little piece found its way to my mouth through Bill’s generosity.

It began sleeting and snowing the day after we got to the tent; my rescuers had counted on starting to Teller with me at daylight next morning; but, when day dawned, the weather was so severe that they concluded to wait twenty-four hours longer. Their provisions were getting very low, and they were also very anxious to get me to a physician. I heard one of their private conversations when they thought I was asleep, as I was lying with my eyes closed. They were very much afraid they could not get me to town alive.

When we awoke on the third morning, the outlook was even worse than at any previous time. Things were getting desperate, so the boys decided to start anyway. I had remarked to my companions on the evening before that I felt very much as a man must feel who is to be executed next morning at daylight. I knew that even in good weather this thirty-three miles trip would be a terrible one for me, and I was satisfied that the storm would not abate during the night. I lay awake listening to the howling of the wind and Bill’s snoring until nearly daylight, but, not having been able to sleep any since I was found, finally dropped off into a doze. A few minutes after dawn Jack’s sonorous voice awakened the camp. Rubbing their eyes, they all arose and Frank Henson cooked a hurried breakfast. As soon as this was through, the work of breaking camp began in earnest. Each one had his allotted work to do, and soon we were ready to start on the terrible journey. They had decided to leave the tent, Yukon stove,

picks, shovels, gold pans and many other similar objects because there was no room for them with me on the pack horse. Some poor prospector undoubtedly made a rich find. When all was ready, they carried me forth and tied me to the pack saddle. My heavy blanket—the single one had been left where I was found—was thrown over my shoulders, and the oil coat over that. We started. If I should live to be a hundred years old, I shall never forget this trip. As soon as things were packed, two of the boys started ahead. Frank Henson led the horse, and the other, (Bill Clinton, I think it was) brought up the rear. It was about two miles over the worst kind of a morass before we came to the mountains. That poor horse would plunge and struggle along until I thought I would have to give up, and lose my feeble grip on the front cross bars of the pack saddle, in which event I would have fallen over the side of the horse. My two days of comparative comfort in the tent had made my feelings very acute. The sleet was falling so fast we could only see a short distance ahead, but the double set of footprints in the snow could be easily followed. At last we came to the mountains; everything was covered; if the lowland had been bad, this was doubly so. At many places we had to ascend and descend over sheer precipices at an angle of almost forty-five degrees. The loose rocks on these places were covered with many inches of snow, and how that horse ever kept its feet is more than I can tell. I thought every minute I would have a broken limb or two to add to my other calamities. Finally, after we had traveled many miles over the mountains and caught up with the other two boys, we all got lost in a blinding snowstorm. My friends had been heading for a couple of peaks that were side by side, and looked exactly alike. When they came to the place where they thought they ought to see them there were none visible. Here indeed was a fearful dilemma. The boys were complaining that they thought their feet were frozen. Be it remembered that they were full of health and life; had come out in winter dress and were exercising. I was almost a corpse from starvation; was dressed in my summer clothes, was not exercising, and had on rubber boots with only one pair of socks. Any "sour dough" knows your feet will freeze in rubber quicker than in anything else.

Frank dropped his leading rope, leaving the horse standing, and all four set out in different directions to hunt up their landmark—the twin peaks. After an hour or so of search up and down the creeks, a glad shout from one of the boys announced that we could again get under headway.

My rescuers afterwards told me they dreaded to return to the horse for fear I had already crossed the Higher Divide where no one ever loses his way. At this time it was agreed that Frank Henson, who had been leading the horse should go ahead to the bay on the opposite side from Teller and see if a man, who had been camped there hunting ptarmigan two weeks before, was still there with his boat. If so, it would save many miles around to the spit where a kind of ferry had been established. Right here I must tell the reader that the great mining excitement about the Bluestone, Gold Run and Krougarock mining districts had changed the town of Teller, which I had left, to another place of the same name seven miles away, across the bay. The new camp had many substantial two-story buildings, and I was told, contained a population at that time of nearly one thousand. I could hardly believe that the town, of which I was a trustee when I left, had been wiped off the face of the earth, and this new city had sprung up, all while I was without a meal. Even worse than that, the new place was not started until a month after I was lost.

Shortly after we passed the "twins", Grantley Harbor and Port Clarence Bay came into view. It was a welcome sight to me, I assure you. There, before us, lying at anchor in front of Teller, were eight large ships; we had not had two ships a month at old Teller.

A mile or so from the bay shore we met Frank coming to inform us that the hunter had gone, but there was a man with an old boat collecting wood for his camp some distance below. He called our attention to the fact that our dog had lost its pack; all the cooking utensils had been strapped on the little beast, and he had trotted contentedly along behind the horse most of the way.

Finally we arrived at the coast line. The boys hurriedly lifted me from the horse to a blanket spread on the ground; they had not realized before how nearly gone I was; in fact, I myself did not. For some time it was a struggle between life and

death. The owner of the old boat was there, and when asked for its loan to carry a sick man across, he hesitated and said he would have to see his partner who was hunting nearby, first. The man had good security; the boat was not worth ten dollars, and the horse, which could not be taken over at that point, was worth many times that amount. As the fellow walked back to see his partner, my companions agreed among themselves to take the boat by force if he showed the least hesitancy when he returned. Luckily, he came back and reported that he could not find his partner, but that we could take the boat. The boys carried me to it, and laid me in the bottom on some blankets. They then began the pull for Teller.

Nothing eventful happened on the way over. In about an hour we reached our landing place. I was hurriedly taken from the boat to Wilson Brothers' store, and deposited in a chair until a place could be prepared for me. There was not a vacant room that could be heated in the town, so through the kindness of Mr. A. McLean and Mr. W. J. Morse, I was taken to a cot in the rear of their saloon; within a few feet of me was a large stove, and although the weather was cold, I felt comfortable.

I was allowed no solid food for several days; as soon as I was given some my stomach began to misbehave; for over two months I never ate a meal but what I paid the penalty. My feet began to swell the next day after my arrival and continued in this condition all the long, dark, dreary winter.

I had visitors by the score; it seems to me that almost every soul of the several hundred people in town at that time came to see me. Some out of sympathy, and some out of curiosity; a number of newspaper reporters called. A special representative of the San Francisco Examiner had photographs taken of myself, my rescuers, and the horse that so safely brought me in; even the dog had his place in one of the pictures. Speaking of this horse, I must say my heart was full of gratitude to the poor animal. The boys had no hay or grain left for him while we were in camp, so they fed him bread and beans. If I had had the power I would have made as much of him as Caligula, Nero, and others did of their favorite horses.

We arrived at Teller a few days before the last boat went out, but my physical condition was such that my friends

thought I would be very foolish to attempt such a long trip when storms were so frequent. Besides, I had seen but little of mining life in Alaska, and hated to go back without this experience; I did not then know that I was about to face the worst winter that this country had witnessed in over a decade. Dozens upon dozens were frozen to death in the vicinity of Nome and Teller. Many a man had his face, fingers, or toes frozen within five minutes after he stepped outside his door, even though warmly dressed for winter. If possible, I suffered more during this dreadful winter than I did while lost.

I will conclude this chapter by quoting from one local paper and one outside paper in regard to my trip and rescue. The papers of Alaska and of every State in the Union had quite long accounts at the time.

The Nome Weekly News, a leading paper of Alaska, contained the following in its issue of October 6th, 1900:

**SAVED FROM STARVATION—ATTORNEY HALL'S  
AWFUL EXPERIENCE—LOST IN MOUNTAINS.**

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**His Only Food for Sixty-Seven Days Was a Pound of Bacon,  
a Few Crackers, and What Berries and Roots He  
Could Gather.**

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(From a Staff Correspondent.)

TELLER, Oct. 2.—An event in the life of an argonaut in search of the elusive gold has happened in this vicinity, which seems as strange and unusual as the tales of the Arabian Nights. It is the experience of a lost man who has almost crossed the portals of death and has returned to life after the pangs of starvation and hardship have turned his robust frame into an emaciated skeleton. It is the story of man's inhumanity to man, of base ingratitude, for the love of gold which resulted in an attorney's battle for life on the verge of starvation for the long period of sixty-seven days.

Attorney James A. Hall is lying on a cot in the Teller Saloon building, slowly recovering from the effects of living on berries and roots while lost in the mountains and on the lowlands to the north and west of Teller city.



On Sept. 22nd, upon the banks of American River, about 30 miles from here, Jack O'Brien and Frank Hensen found Hall lying on a bunch of willows, wrapped in his blankets, weak and exhausted in the last throes of starvation. He had subsisted on a pound of bacon, and a few crackers, and what berries and roots he could find for sixty-seven days. Nothing like such vitality and dogged perseverance in a fight for life has been chronicled in the history of this country's privations.

Hall told your correspondent the story of his pilgrimage in the shadow of death in such a simple and straightforward manner that one could hardly believe he could have passed through so great a struggle and still retain so gentle a disposition and kindly address. He was not embittered with life.

On July 17th, Attorney Hall, in company with Dr. Vincent and G. P. Hall, formerly of the A. C. Company, was sent out by Tom and Will Wilson from old Teller to locate a quartz ledge known to Dr. Vincent to be situated about fifty miles back of old Teller. Dr. Vincent had the dying statement of a prospector who claimed he had found all kinds of gold some years ago. On the second day out, Hall and Vincent left Attorney Hall on the top of a mountain, not waiting for him to catch up, and descended to a stream to the north. Attorney Hall reached the top about fifteen minutes later, and, not finding his companions, spread out his blankets and passed the night on the peak. He never saw his companions again.

Hall and Vincent returned to old Teller two days later and told how they had lost Attorney Hall in the mountains. Tom and Will Wilson formed two rescuing parties and searched all over the country in vain for Attorney Hall, and finally gave him up as lost. Hall and Dr. Vincent did not join the rescuing party, saying they were too tired to go.

Attorney Hall, with about a pound of bacon and five crackers, traveled for one week, a lost man wandering among the mountains and in the soft and swampy tundra off Kotzebue Sound. He tried to retrace his steps, and struggled along subsisting on berries, roots and grasses until he reached a branch of the American River. At last he became exhausted and lay down to die on Sept. 18th. He could no longer drag or crawl along in search of help. On the night of Sept. 21st he felt his stomach collapse and sink back against his spine. His sufferings were excruciating. Dazed, and ready to die, he heard a

shot and made one more effort for sweet life. Henson was following a flock of ptarmigans, and had missed a bird. He heard the call for help and approached. Hall raised his head feebly and begged for something to eat. He said he was starving. For the first time he wept at the joy of his delivery. O'Brien gave him a small piece of bacon and some potatoes warmed by a fire. Henson rushed out on the hills in search of a bird to make broth, but was unsuccessful. O'Brien and Henson then strapped Hall to their horse and took him to their camp and tent seven miles away where Frank Henry and William Clinton, partners of O'Brien and Henson, were located. They left their camp, the second day, after Hall had gained more strength. He begged piteously for solid food, but his new companions only fed him broth and liquids in order to save his life. He was taken to the coast on the horse, and brought here by boat. The Wilson Brothers have done all they can for his welfare and care, and he is now rapidly recovering his health and strength.

Attorney Hall came to Nome on the Thrasher, and two weeks later went to Port Clarence, being one of the first residents of old Teller. He practiced law in San Francisco and was formerly associated with Attorneys C. W. Cross, Tiley L. Ford and Frank P. Kelly. He was born in Monterey County, California, November 9, 1857, served in the California Legislature of 1889-90, and was District Attorney for Santa Cruz County in 1883-4. The people of Teller will see that he is looked after and when he opens a law office he will be engaged by many clients who wish to show their interest in his prosperity. The most pathetic part of his story was that pertaining to his matches, which he carefully counted each day, hoping that they would last to build fires as long as the spark of life could be maintained in his emaciated body. Attorney Hall is 6 feet 1½ inches in height, and weighed 225 pounds before his experience, losing fully 100 pounds in his sixty-seven days' fast. The only implement he had was a surgeon's knife, and with a safety pin he made a hook and tried to catch fish, but without success."

The reader will notice that this paper uses the name American River, while I call it the Agiapuk. Since I was

found the name has been changed from the former to the latter, by order of the U. S. District Court.

The San Francisco Examiner, the largest daily on the Pacific Coast, contained the following in its issue of Oct. 25th, 1900:

**“SAVED FROM DEATH ON AN ARCTIC TRAIL—  
ATTORNEY JAMES A. HALL OF THIS CITY RES-  
CUED WHEN HIS LIFE WAS PASSING IN A  
STORM SWEEPING NOME.**

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**For Over Two Months He Wandered Through the Snow and  
Subsisted on Bacon, Crackers and Roots—Rescuers  
Find Him After He Had Given Up Hope of Escaping  
From the Perils of the Snow-bound Country.**

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(Special Dispatch to the “Examiner.”)

SEATTLE, Wash., Oct. 25.—James A. Hall, an attorney who lived at San Francisco, was rescued from death by Frank Henson and “Jack” O’Brien, two big-hearted Nome miners.

These men found Hall wrapped in his blankets and lying in a bunch of willows on the banks of the American River, in the Teller City district. For sixty-seven days he had wandered in the mountains back of Nome, lost and bewildered. His grub stake consisted of a pound of bacon and a few dozen crackers. With these articles of food, and such berries and roots as he could find, he subsisted for over two months.

The rescuers found him Sept. 22nd, and they assert that such dogged perseverance and vitality in a fight for life have never been equalled in the history of the thousands who have searched for fortune in the northland.

Hall’s pilgrimage in the shadow of death commenced July 17th. He was out with Dr. Vincent and G. P. Hall (not a relation), in an endeavor to locate a quartz ledge fifty miles back of Teller. On the second day out, Vincent and G. P. Hall left the attorney on top of a mountain, not waiting for him to catch up, and descended in a northerly direction. G. P. Hall returned to Teller two days later and told how they had lost Attorney Hall in the mountains. Tom and Will Wilson organ-

ized two rescuing parties and searched all over the country in vain for the lost man.

For weeks the lost man traveled about the mountains and in the soft and swampy tundra of Kotzebue sound on the Arctic. He tried to retrace his steps and finally reached a branch of the American River where on September 18th he threw himself on the ground to die.

The men who found him took him to Teller, where he was being cared for with chances of recovery, when the San Pedro sailed. Hall had been professionally associated with Senator C. W. Cross, Tirey L. Ford, the present Attorney General, and Frank P. Kelly.

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## CHAPTER VI.

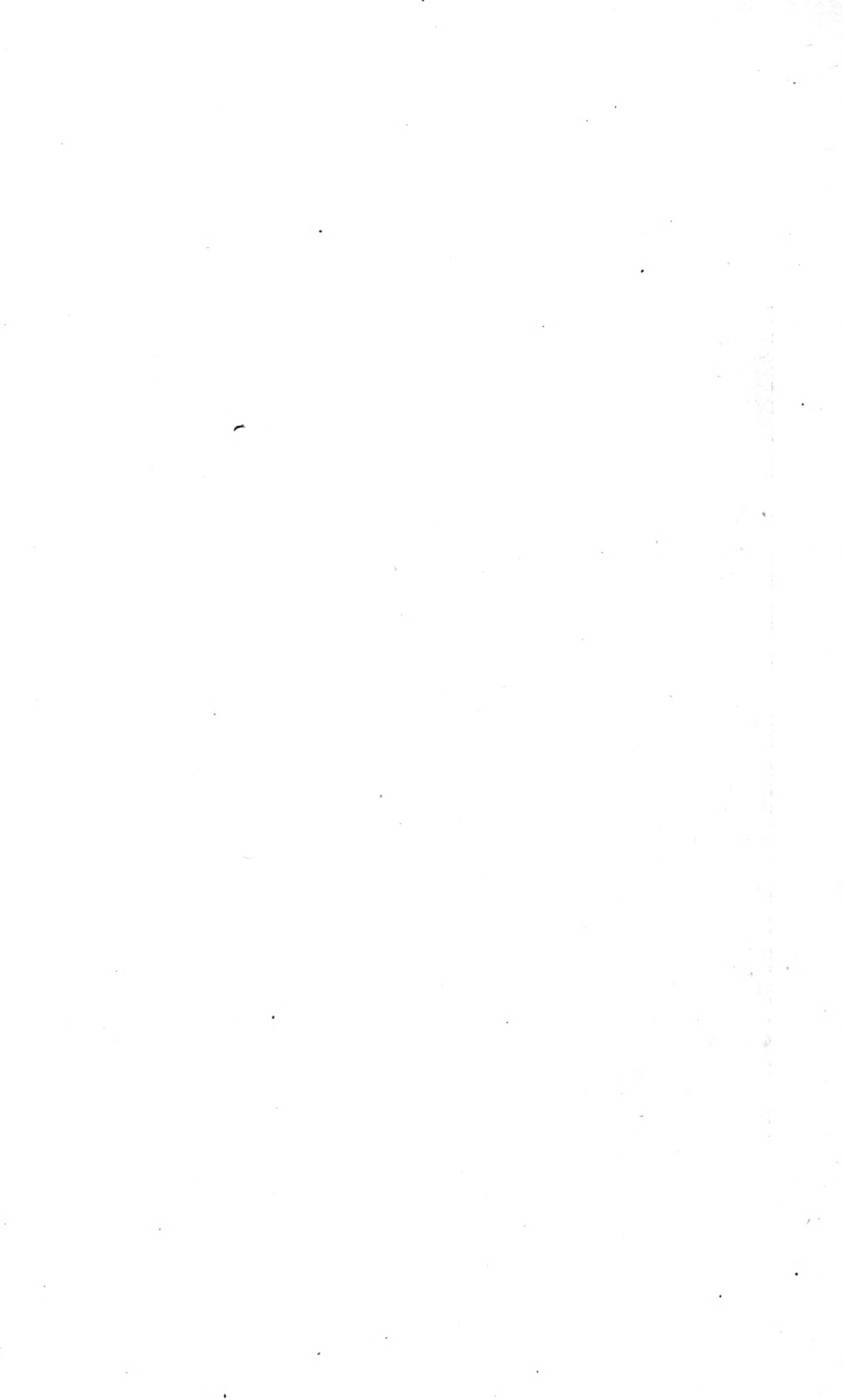
### A TERRIBLE WINTER.

For one month I lay on my back in my bunk, near a hot stove. At the end of that time I was able to walk across the floor by holding on to the wall.

I will never forget the first solid meal I was allowed to eat. It consisted of reindeer steak and potatoes. To describe the enjoyment of that meal is beyond my power. It was "as nectar fit for the gods". I could not eat often enough. Meals were one dollar each and my appetite soon knocked a big hole in what little money I had left. A few days after I had been brought in, I noticed that my feet were badly swollen. They had been frozen on that terrible trip through the snow, over the mountains, tied to a pack horse. The swelling did not abate during the long, long winter. In about a month, large sores began to break out all over the frozen portion of my lower extremities, from the knees down. I frequently had as many as twenty-five large running ulcers on my legs at one time. Dr. Bates, my physician, kept burning them out with nitrate of silver pencils to heal them. The pain of this was excruciating, in my feeble condition, and often I would send a friend to get morphine trichrates for me when I expected the doctor. Luckily, I did not contract the "habit". The cause of these sores was explained by my medical attend-



JAMES A. HALL, ON OCT. 1ST, 1900, AFTER THE LONGEST FAST ON RECORD



ant. He said that the freezing destroyed all the little blood vessels that carried the blood to the surface of the skin. This lack of nourishment caused the skin to rot. There was very little nutriment in the frozen, canned goods, which was about the only food we could get in this rough mining camp. Consequently I had no chance to build up my system, so was not relieved from these sores until I reached the "States," about a year after I was found dying. The scars left by this experience will probably go with me to the grave.

The first legal case I had after I was able to hobble around was one in which a man was arrested for locating a lot in the middle of a street and moving a house on it. It was disputed that the street had been regularly laid out, but the resident Deputy United States Marshal swore to a complaint against him. He was arrested and placed in the U. S. jail, which, by the way, did service also as a morgue and hospital. The camp was equally divided on the question. Finally we secured a jury, and after considerable conflicting evidence, the case was ready for argument. It was the first and only time in my twenty years of law practice that I ever addressed the jury, sitting. We got a verdict of "not guilty" and the partisans of the defendant picked up the chair on which I was seated and carried me downstairs and up the street.

About this time the largest building in the town was finished. I moved into one of the rooms and thereafter occupied it as law office and bed room. I was still so weak I could only hobble along with the assistance of a cane.

The snow was from ten to twenty feet deep around us and for months it was dark most of the twenty-four hours. I never dreamed that it was possible for time to pass so slowly. The building was a two-story one and contained a large saloon and gambling house. These saloons were headquarters for all the miners, as there was always a large fire in them, although coal was a hundred dollars a ton that winter. Those that were not playing at some of the numerous gambling games, sat around the fire and discussed the various mining prospects of the country and other matters of interest.

These persons that habitually sat around the fire were known as "chair-warmers". Through the floor I could hear their various discussions all day long.

I will never forget one old gentleman I met that lonely

winter. He was known as "Captain." Nearly all the men in this country were under fifty years of age, but the Captain was over three score. He was a walking encyclopedia and could give you accurate information on almost any subject. I noticed that the old Captain had the asthma very badly and as the dreary winter wore along he grew worse and worse. Finally, as some signs of spring began to approach, we missed the grizzled face from his accustomed chair around the stove for several days at a time. Upon his return he would tell us how near to death's door he had been. One day along about the last of May, 1901, a friend of the Captain's fell dangerously sick and he volunteered to sit up with him. The patient was almost unconscious and unable to move and it was necessary to give him his medicine at stated intervals. Those that called at the shack the next morning found the Captain stiff in death on the floor and the patient about to breathe his last.

We had all become very much attached to the old man and his funeral was indeed a sad one. The ceremonies were held in a room adjoining a saloon, but as a matter of respect the door between the two was securely locked.

A carpenter had made a coffin from some pine boards and it was covered with the most suitable cloth that could be found in the camp—a kind of polka dot, if I remember correctly.

Around that bier stood the little crowd of us that had passed the long, long winter together. It must be remembered that from the time the last boat left, early in November, we had been in prison, as it were. Nobody could get out of Alaska and nobody could get in. There we stood, the coffin in the center of the room, and the motley throng of mourners pressing close upon it. At the head of the coffin a miner-preacher gave us a short sermon. His audience was certainly a cosmopolitan one—merchants, miners, gamblers, two or three respectable wives and two or three wives that were not respectable, saloonkeepers, Government officials and a half dozen curious Eskimos.

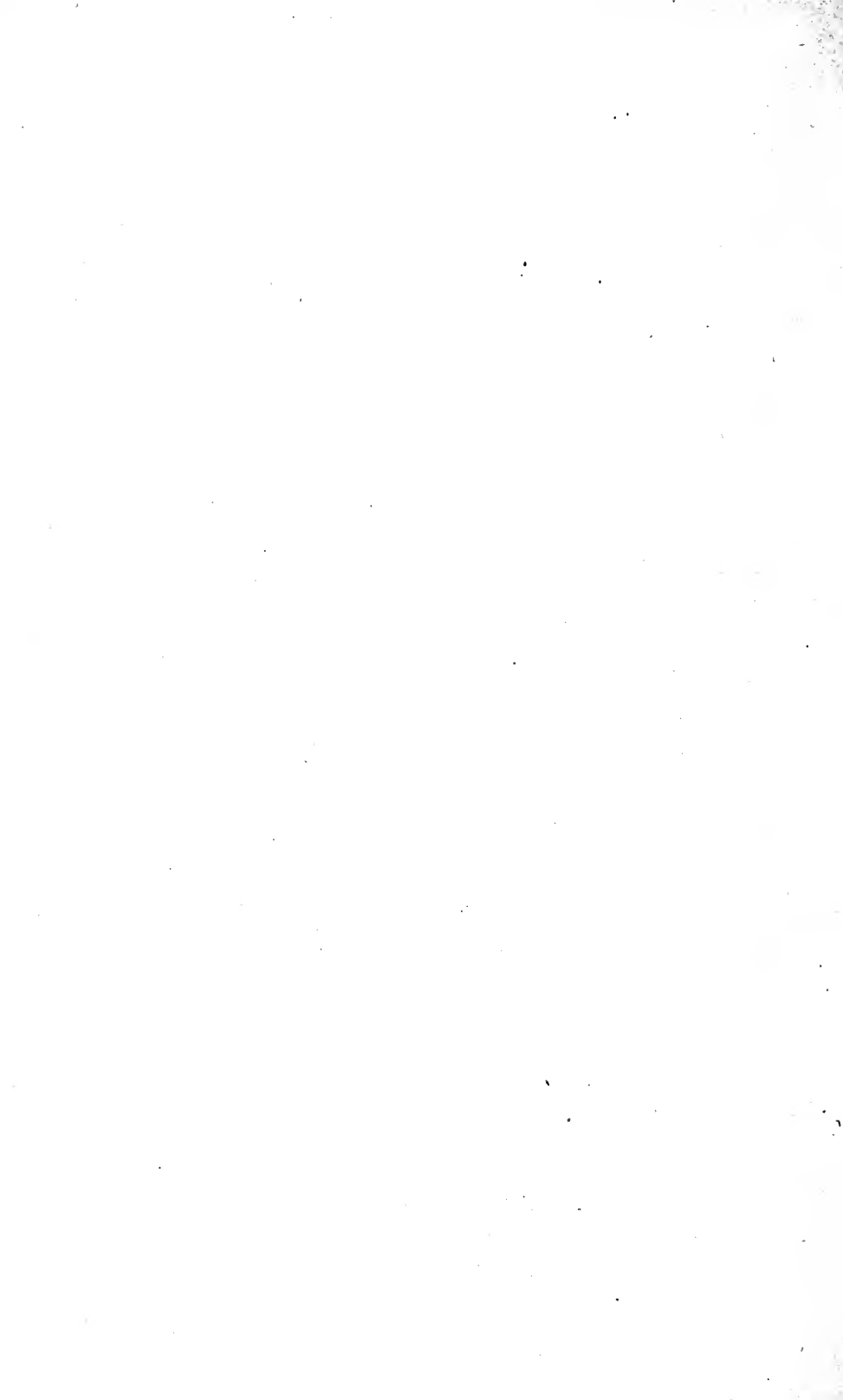
When the services were finished, willing hands lifted the coffin to a sled just outside the door, on the snow, and eight dogs slid the poor old Captain into his frozen grave, far from the home of his younger manhood and thousands of miles from a loving wife and family.

Such scenes as this were particularly sad for me because





DR. U. C. BATES AND CHARLES WILSON



on a number of occasions I had overheard remarks made by one miner to another, as I hobbled by, that "that man can not possibly live the winter through."

As feeble as I was, I managed to assist my physician in two capital and many minor surgical operations. The first of these was on a young man named Charlie Wilson. He had been out prospecting and when he returned to within a mile of his shack felt himself freezing. It was snowing heavily, but he could see the smoke curling up from his stove pipe and tried his best to get home. He became so weak and dazed that he fell down on his knees and crawled to within a number of yards of his abode. Here he was found by friends, who took him at once to Dr. Bates, the physician who was attending me. It chanced that he was placed in a room next to mine. The doctor discovered that all of his extremities were frozen, his feet were in such a bad condition that it was found necessary to amputate both of them immediately. I had had considerable experience in hospital work and was requested to assist in the operation; a capital amputation, even of a single limb, is very dangerous at any time and particularly so in a rough mining camp, where nothing is aseptic and the apparatus very crude.

There was no fire or place for a fire in this rough room and the thermometer was toying with the zero mark.

The operating table consisted of some old boards, fastened together. In fact, the surgeon was handicapped in every way. Charlie was game, though, and ten minutes before he began to take the chloroform, was chatting pleasantly with us. As soon as he was sufficiently under, the first cut was made. I had seen hundreds of operations, but never one in which I hated to see the first incision as much as I did here. The surrounding circumstances, the affable nature of the young man, the distance from relatives and old friends, all made it a pitious sight. It took nearly three hours to take off both legs, just below the knees. He rallied from the shock and in about two months was lifting himself along with his arms and stubs.

A few weeks afterward we cut off both hands of another man. He had been out with his dog team, twenty miles, to what was called the "Spit" (the place where I landed off the Thrasher), after drift wood. The mercury showed twenty-five

below, but he was well prepared and had returned safely back to within a couple of miles of Teller.

His hands becoming a little numb, he took off his "mits" to rub them together. The very moment he took off the gloves, his fists clenched, automatically, and he could not open them again.

He managed to kick the dogs loose and their wonderful sagacity is told of in another part of this book.

Though a large, strong man, this fellow soon began to stagger like a drunkard as he struggled homeward. At the edge of the camp several persons saw him, but thought he was under the influence of liquor. His mind seemed to wander and he was not able to tell them his troubles.

A few days afterwards we took off both hands, near the wrists. This man did not have the genial, affable temper that Charlie Wilson had.

As sick as I was, myself, I sat up with him, in his cold shack, through three long winter nights. The snow was deep, the thermometer low and the patient "cranky". Nobody could please him, although our services were gratis. I never saw men so different in dispositions as were these two patients.

Slowly, oh so slowly, signs of spring began to appear! We were waiting for the ice to go out in order that communication might be again opened up with the outside world. The long looked for event happened on July 2d. For weeks the ice had been rotting, which caused many unfortunate accidents.

One man was driving a fine large team of horses, attached to a sled, over the ice, a few days before the grand breakup. He struck a particularly rotten place and down went team and sled, the owner barely escaping, by falling backward out of the sled. As these animals were the only ones in that part of Alaska, and had been brought in at great expense, his loss was very heavy.

When at last the ice had gone out and the "cheechako" (new arrival) had come in, "there was something doing every minute", as the slang has it.

The visitor was after gold dust, and so was the "sour dough" (a man who has seen the ice go out of the Bering Sea for two successive seasons). The sour dough had "staked" almost every square foot of ground in that part of the country. The cheechako, whenever he saw a good looking piece of mineral

land, would jump it. Only about one-half of these disputes were ever carried as far as the courts. The shotgun or Winchester generally settled the trouble. The same rule held good on town lots.

Teller, as I have said before, was located or rather moved to its present site, about a month after I started on my fearful trip from old Teller.

The place was laid out on a gravelly beach and the scramble for lots began. Some secured a half dozen and some were unable to get any. The fellow that had several lots had to get a tenant for each lot, because possession was not only "nine points of the law"—but ten.

This state of affairs existed during the whole nine months of winter. There were many fights, legal and fistic, over lots. My partner had been one of the original locators of the town; having moved over from old Teller with the rush.

He had located a lot the value of which, in the open market, was several hundred dollars. One-half of this was, of course, mine. He went out on the last boat, leaving the lot with me and expecting to return in the spring. I was too feeble to erect a shack on it, consequently it was not held **possessio pedis**.

Everybody in the camp knew the terrible experience I had had, so through sympathy my lot was left unmolested for many months.

Finally, one fellow, a man who had a lot adjoining mine, allowed his greed to get the better of his sympathy and my lot was jumped. Many of my friends tried to shame him out of it, but, although I think he was really ashamed of himself, he still kept it.

I had one satisfaction, however, for when spring opened, and the mines did not turn out as well as expected, the bottom dropped out of the market and lots that had been held at many hundreds of dollars, sold for twenty-five or thirty. He had kept this, expecting a big price, but received nothing.

When the spring sun began to melt the snow, many bodies of people who had been lost, were found. In this country everybody is a stranger to everybody else. If a man starts out to go from Teller to Nome, "over the trail", and is lost in the snow, there is nobody to inquire whether he arrives safely at his destination or not.

During the winter, the whole country, as said heretofore, was staked. They drove the stakes down into the snow, regardless of the law that a discovery of gold must be made on a claim before it can be legally located. Several of these prospectors were kind enough to stake claims for me, some in very promising localities. Although I had been in bed a good portion of the winter, I had about fourteen claims when spring came.

After the first boats arrived there was considerable activity and I had hopes of selling my mining interests, but like the ignus fatuus, the sale was always just ahead of me. Finally, as the summer passed along, I determined to leave everything and get back to the "States". I sailed from Teller on the good ship Centennial, August 26th, 1901, for Seattle, arriving there safely after a stormy trip of nine days.

At last I was able to get fresh meats and vegetables and in the week spent there, before sailing for my old home in California, I gained many pounds. The terrible sores that had covered my frozen legs and feet began to disappear and I commenced to feel like my old self again.

After I had been home a few months I learned that one of the mines that had been staked for me during the winter and which I had abandoned when I left there, was afterward sold for several thousand dollars.

One of my greatest regrets is that my dear old father died at the age of eighty-two years, while I was gone and I would have given much to have seen him and let him see me after he had mourned me for dead many months.

One day I had been sitting, for several hours, hearing the trial of a lot case in which I had been chosen arbitrator, when the news came that the mail had arrived. As we only got mail about once a month, Court was immediately adjourned and we all proceeded to the Postoffice. Here I found the letter that told me the sad news, and, strangest of all, it gave me the second verification of mental telepathy I had received while in Alaska. The letter informed me that my father had died on February 4th, 1901, about six o'clock in the morning. On that very date, as I lay in my bunk, I was awakened at three in the morning, by what seemed to be the voice of my younger sister saying to me, "Father is dying, father is dying." It made a very deep impression and I could not get over the feeling for

several days. The difference in time between the two places is three hours. My sister afterwards told me that when she saw father was dying she thought of me, in that distant land.

I now feel no evil effects from my strenuous ordeal, except that my feet sometimes get very feverish after a long walk. My doctor warned me that this would last for years.

Upon my return to San Francisco the Examiner published a full page Sunday story of my experience.

In that article there was an interview with Dr. Edwin Bunnell, who was then the Chief Surgeon of the City Receiving Hospital of that place. Dr. Bunnell stands at the head of his profession. In closing this chapter I will quote his language:

**“MOST EXTRAORDINARY CASE I EVER HEARD OF.”**

By Edwin Bunnell, M. D., Chief Surgeon of the Receiving Hospital.

The survival of Mr. Hall is not only the most extraordinary case that has come under my observation—it is the most extraordinary I ever heard of. Undoubtedly the secret of his coming through such an experience alive is the strength of his nervous system. He possessed will power to an extraordinary degree and used rare judgment in conserving his physical force, but then, Hall is an educated man, and brought his intellect to bear upon the situation. I should say that two things saved him—will power and water. Physicians recognize the aid to them that mental force and a firm will can give. Place two patients side by side, suffering with the same disease, their chances for recovery equal, and the patient possessing the will to live recovers, while the other dies.

There have been numerous instances of remarkable fasting, but none like this. The case of Tanner and other so-called starvers are not a parallel at all. Hall was exposed to the elements in their worst form and he was in a perilous predicament at all times while they had every comfort they wanted but solid food. To me the physical aspect of Hall's case is not so amazing as his mental soundness after what he had gone through. Most men go crazy after a few days of hunger and exposure. Hall retained his mental poise perfectly after sixty-seven days of wandering in an icy desert.”

(Dedicated to my friend, James A. Hall, who made the longest fast ever recorded.)

**“TOMBSTONE BILL” PASSES THE BUCK.”**

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I'm an Arizona bad man,  
My name is Tombstone Bill,  
I'm right there in a show-down  
And I alwuz shoot to kill.

Go ask Long Pete of Bisbee  
Who filled him full of lead,  
And why Pichaco Charley  
Is numbered with the dead.

In Pinal and Maricopa,  
Quite broadcast is my fame,  
And many a heap that's cross-crowned  
Commemorates my name.

Once in the Harqua Halla,  
Close by the Granite Hill,  
Eight Apaches 'round me gathered,  
Fur to scalp your Uncle Bill.

With a quick manipulation,  
My guns I did unstrap—  
Not one of them wuz missin'  
At the finish of the scrap.

In many a noted instance  
I've been up against it hard,  
But a feller down from Teller  
Holds a somewhat stiffer card.

And though I've tagged a burro  
From Yuma to the rim,  
I pass the buck with plezhur  
To my friend, Alaska Jim.

I claim him as no fighter,  
Nor that he got his man;  
He wuz only a prospector,  
With his horn-spoon and his pan.

He blind-trailed in the ice-fields,  
Where the sky-fires flash and glow  
And great white b'ars in hunger  
Prowled hunting thro' the snow.

Nigh three straight months he fasted  
With no liquor in his hide,  
Had it a'been your uncle,  
I shorely would a'died.

I've eaten chip-broiled mule meat  
And partook of jerked coyot',  
Chawed the pulp of borel-cactus  
That would kill a Pima goat.

I have chased the Chuckawalla  
When my grub was gettin' slim,  
But I pass the buck for trouble  
To my friend, Alaska Jim.

Oh, I've hit the silent desert,  
Where the Colorado flows,  
Where the Needles raise their turrets  
And the thorny Yucca grows.

Where the burning Chimehuevis  
Hide their stores of wealth untold,  
Full patiently I've wandered  
In lone pursuit of gold.

Through rock-stréwn Coconino  
My weary feet have strayed,  
And with the grim side-winder  
I oft in sleep have laid.

I sartin am a tough one,  
Where such like plenty grow,  
And a noted individual  
Wherever I may go.

But 'till Satan forks your Uncle,  
Across the fiery brim,  
I'll pass the buck, by thunder,  
To my friend, Alaska Jim.

—Frank V. Gaffey, in Overland  
Monthly.



## CHAPTER VII.

**TERRIBLE EXPERIENCE OF THREE PROSPECTORS.**

On or about June 15th, 1901, a year after my awful experience, three men, Georg Dean, Jack Huston and Joseph C. Thierry, started from their mining camp on Clara Creek, a tributary of the celebrated Quartz Rock in the Good Hope mining district, near the Arctic coast, to return to Nome via the way of Teller. It will be remembered that this is the same section of country in which I had come so near dying as detailed in former chapters though then there were few prospectors in that section and the district had not been organized. The high waters of the various streams necessary to be crossed on their way to Teller delayed the party until the small supply of food on hand finally gave out. They were then compelled to eke out an existence on grass, roots, snails and wild goose eggs containing half formed birds, and finally the survivors were brought face to face with cannibalism. Joseph C. Thierry, who seems to have been the strongest of the three, made the following statement a few hours after they were found:

“We would travel for twenty hours at a stretch, and after a few hours’ rest, get up and go at it again. When we saw Salt Lake, we headed for that, but when we thought we were nearly there, we came to deep marshes or sloughs, ten to three hundred feet wide and from ten to twenty miles long. Being unable to cross these, we started back for the Agiapuk River, expecting to strike it farther up and continue down the river to the lake. In our trip back to the river we came to a slough that extended back from the lake, bench upon bench, for at least twenty miles to the mountains.

“Huston, who up to this time had held on bravely, gave out and asked Dean and I to leave him to either get assistance or save ourselves. I left Dean there and walked to the top of the divide about five miles distant from which I could see the Agiapuk. I then returned and helping up Huston, whose legs had become partially paralyzed, continued our tramp. Dean, by this time, had become so weak that he could not carry the gun, and every time that we stopped he would pitch forward upon his face, or while walking would fall asleep and drop.

“In my condition it would take a mighty effort to get him to walking. Then the hallucination seemed to take possession of him that he was a drag upon the party, and he repeatedly asked to be left behind.

“We came to another slough about fifteen feet wide. The boys had not strength enough left to attempt to go around it, so I built a bridge of willows and our six pack straps, and one at a time I got them over.

“After following down the Agiapuk for thirty or forty miles, we arrived opposite the lower village. I left the boys here and went down the river two miles where I came to a slough that I knew could not be crossed, but I found a little igloo about six feet in diameter, where I brought the boys and made camp.

“While at this igloo we could hear shots every night, but could not locate the direction from which the sounds came. I found a rope of three strands ten feet long, and with this and several logs made a raft with which I intended to cross the river and procure help from the village. After building my raft I found that it would not sustain my weight, so I had to give up the idea of crossing. Later I found an Indian corpse rolled in a light canvas about fifteen by twenty feet in size from which I made a boat eight feet in length by four in width. It was too rotten to hold me up, and I was nearly drowned trying to row it. But the boat subsequently saved our lives as it was that which attracted the attention of our rescuers.

“About five days before we were found, Dean asked me to write a statement which he wished to dictate and which I did. Dean had seemed to be reviving physically, with rest, but he was still laboring under the delusion that he was in the way, and begged me to shoot him and put him out of his misery. He said that every bone in his body ached and he was suffering untold agony. He suggested to us that with his flesh we might sustain life until some one found us.

“The following day I found a partly decomposed ptarmigan, of which I made soup and a stew, dividing it equally among us. This was the last we had to eat until we were found, and the following day I almost broke down myself.

“The night of the 19th Huston and I talked the matter over,

and decided that unless we were rescued the next day we would act upon Dean's suggestion.

"He died at three o'clock the next morning and, (here Thierry's voice broke down and he wept) at eight I cut a piece from his thigh about three inches long and to the bone, and after removing the skin and outer flesh I placed it in the pot to boil. We decided to let it cook at least two hours, and while we were waiting we heard a voice. I immediately said to Huston that Dean was not dead and was talking to us. He said that it could not be, and I looked out and saw two men with a canoe, whom I called and we were saved. I then threw the pot and its contents into the river and I thank God that I was saved from this last extreme."

Thierry, so his living companion claims, displayed very heroic qualities in the treatment of his weaker companions. They both begged him to go on and leave them and try to save himself. This he refused to do, saying that he would stay with them till death, if necessary.

They, dying and dead, were found on the morning of July 20th, 1901, on the Agiapuk River, about ten miles up from where it empties into Great Salt Lake, by two miners, Louis Reich and George Woods. Strange to say, it was on this river, and near this very spot, where I was found dying nearly a year before, by Jack O'Brien and Frank Henson, two young prospectors.

Reich and Wood were rowing up the Agiapuk River and on a sand bar at one side saw a peculiar looking boat. They stopped to examine it and heard a faint cry of "**For God's sake don't leave us, we are starving!**"

Upon investigation they found the two living skeletons and the corpse.

On the fire near at hand was a stew of human flesh, the pieces being about the size of those in ordinary beef stew. Thierry at once emptied the can when he saw help at hand, and asked the rescuers if they had any food. They were given something light to eat, and then conveyed by boat to Teller. Dr. U. C. Bates was summoned by the United States Commissioner, who is ex-officio coroner, to accompany him to the scene of death. The doctor says that though the men of the coroner's party were used to rough scenes, there were few dry eyes when the corpse was inspected. There lay an emaciated

human body, partly denuded of flesh to save the lives of other humans.

The body, hair, beard and sunken eyes were covered with vermin. On the body of the deceased was found the following documents. As appears from the statement of Thierry, these documents were written by him at the dictation of the deceased. It also appears that the date should have been July 15th, instead of July 20th, 1901.

“July 20th, 1901.

“Finder will recognize by this paper the body of Georg Dean of Canton, Ohio, U. S. A., who with his two companions, Jack Huston of Nome and Jos. C. Thierry of Davenport, Iowa, left their camp on Clara Creek, a tributary to Quartz Creek, in the Good Hope District, with the intention of returning to Nome for new supplies. Being without sufficient food and unable to find anybody, nor could we cross the river, we were compelled to starve. We are at present twenty-two days away from camp.

“Georg Dean is a Free Mason and his sincere wish is to have his death reported to the lodge at Nome. Proof of his being a member can be found at the Hiram Lodge, No. 26, Canton, Ohio. Also like to have my family notified of my death and proof sent home of my being deceased.

“Address of my wife, Anna Louise Dean, 1000 Lafayette Street, Canton, Ohio.

“I also wish the Masons to take charge of my body and act as they think best with it to dispose of.

Fraternally,

GEORG DEAN,

Canton, Ohio.”

This was found in his pocket, written with an indelible pencil. In the same pocket in common black pencil was found a short will:

“I, Georg Dean, born in London, England, 25th day of January, 1850. I pray the Masonic order will take charge of my effects that may be found on my body or in Nome with the exception of all clothing that my companion, Joseph Thierry, may need for his benefit, he being the one that has rendered us the most assistance in trying to save our lives by building a boat out of canvas and willows which he found in the swamps, as I feel that I am near the end of this life.

I pray that you will tell my wife that I die a Christian, and that my last prayer is for her and dear family. Goodbye, friends.

GEORG DEAN.

God's will be done. Amen."

I was one of the pall bearers at the funeral of Georg Dean. The remains were at the U. S. Jail in Teller. The two survivors were quartered at the same place. The stronger one of the two requested to be allowed to see the remains. The coffin was placed near the outside door of the jail and after those who wished to view the remains had passed, the wish of the survivor was gratified. He was supported to the side of the body and stood in deep meditation for a few moments. His feelings overcame him, and he fell back into the arms of his supporters in a dead faint. The recollection of the terrible experience they had been through together was more than he could bear.

We buried Dean in the little lonely graveyard on the hillside near Teller, and, dear reader, I assure you there were few dry eyes in that crowd of rough, but good-hearted miners.

\* \* \* \* \*

## CHAPTER VIII.

### THE ESKIMO.

The Eskimo is low and squatty in stature, and very frequently bow-legged. It is a common theory of the old white residents of this country that these people are an off-shoot of the Japanese race, changed a little in color by climatic conditions. In former years, so the old traditions say, Bering Straits were frozen over almost every year. In these times, it only happens about once in a decade; the winter of 1900-1 was the first time in years that this has been the case.

The natives of the eastern Siberian coast are even more like the Japs than those of Northwestern Alaska. We had Japanese waiters on board the Thrasher, and one day at Cape Prince of Wales, a number of natives came aboard, and we all noticed the similarity at once. Some of the Eskimos could talk a few words of English. I asked one of them if he knew who those fellows were; quick as a flash he answered, "Japs". There really seemed to be a kind of fellow feeling between them.

The natives of Alaska, like all other peoples, have their good and bad traits of character; you very rarely find one who will lie or steal; it is said that before the advent of the whites they were absolutely perfect in this respect. Again they are generous; many a miner owes his life to the few mouthfuls of "chow-chow" (pronounced cow-cow) which some poor native had given him, retaining less for himself than he gave. Shortly prior to this writing, a U. S. Commissioner told me that an old native—who, by the way, was along with me in Teller at the time—had a few days before gone thirty-five miles through the most terrible storm Alaska has seen in years to get food to keep the former from starving.

The parents are good to their children, and will deprive themselves of food that a child may eat; on the other hand, the native, as a rule, is a great beggar. His plaintive whine for "cow-cow" is generally granted by the "sour dough" (old resident of the country) and refused by the "cheechako" (new comer.) The former perhaps well remembers the time when some native divided his last mess with him; the latter has not had that experience yet.

The native does not know the meaning of the word cleanliness; they rarely bathe, and "gray backs" are as thick on them as fleas on a California mongrel. Their eglows (native houses) are no cleaner. Rancid seal oil seems to permeate everything a native owns or has anything to do with. He, himself, reeks with it. It seems to come through his skin like beads of perspiration. They never carry a handkerchief, and most of them are afflicted with a catarrhal affection; you can imagine how disgusting they must be in this respect. Virtue is unknown to them. Fear of a beating from her buck or her squawman sometimes makes a native woman appear virtuous. They are a very lazy race; the men never work; the women never, when they can help it; the bucks make them do all the work that is done, however. Sometimes the men do a little fishing or hunting, but the women really do most of that, especially fishing. If whisky is the curse of some white men, it is doubly so with all the natives. A half-pint bottle of the stuff they get for whisky will convert a quiet, peaceable, inoffensive native into a demon; he has to be beaten into insensibility before he can be arrested. There are stringent laws against selling liquor to natives, but juries rarely convict for it; the



AN ESKIMO BELLE





probabilities are that half the jury have done the same thing themselves; whatever the reason may be, the fact is, he gets whisky whenever he has "the price".

The natives saw their first ship many years ago. I was told by an old fellow who speaks good English, that when they first saw it they thought it was some kind of a water animal that had made its way to this part of the country; but when they saw the white men getting out of it they rushed for the hills; in a short time they sent several of their bravest men to investigate; the men came back and reported that the strangers were evidently white Eskimos from the interior of the country somewhere. They further reported that these white Eskimos had many strange and beautiful articles that they seemed to want to exchange for furs and ivory. When the natives found that the new comers were not dangerous they came down from the hills to the boat. They saw the gaudy calico and bright jewelry; they liked the effect of the fire-water; they were willing even anxious to trade furs and ivory for these things. The ship also had a number of old guns. The natives did not understand these at first, but, when taught their use, they were considered very valuable. The whites of course, at first, evinced great reluctance to part with them, but when the Eskimo saw how easily the white men could kill the walrus and seal he was willing to pay any price in furs. The result was that in a week or so the ship was loaded with valuable furs and ivory and the poor native had a little cheap whisky, some tobacco, a few bolts of calico and some old rusty guns. This thing has been repeated with more or less profit to the white man ever since.

The Eskimo is of a migratory nature; in the winter he stays on the coast where he can cut through the ice and get fish, and where the seal and walrus are plentiful; in the summer he goes inland and catches salmon and other game. Eskimos live in eglows, which are peculiarly constructed sod houses, during their sojourn on the coast; inland, they generally inhabit tents. The time is likely to come soon when there will be few Eskimos in Northwestern Alaska. A plague, in the nature of our la grippe, is taking them off by the hundred every year.

About fifteen or twenty years ago, Captain Gilley left the Sandwich Islands in a schooner to trade with the natives of Port Clarence and Cape Prince of Wales villages. He dropped

anchor at the latter place very near the spot where a naval engagement of the late Civil War was fought between a Confederate privateer, the Shenandoah, and some armed whaling vessels, in which fight the whaling vessels were destroyed. About sixty natives came aboard and demanded whisky, which he refused to trade to them. They then undertook to take the liquor by force. A fight ensued in which eighteen of them were killed outright, and a number drowned in getting off the boat. This is the biggest fight that has ever taken place in this part of the country between the natives and whites; three or four years later, at the same place, they again became very threatening toward the whalers, and Capt. M. J. Healy of a United States revenue cutter shelled three villages, but it is not known how many, if any, were killed. Since that time Capt. Healy has been held in awe by them. Whenever any serious trouble arose between natives and whites, Capt. Healy would hold a preliminary examination, and if the facts warranted, the culprit was taken to St. Michaels to be tried; if not, he was turned loose. A few years ago, while Capt. Healy had charge of the revenue cutter Bear, a native named Posier beat out the brains of his own child. A council of three captains and the missionary at Herschel Island decreed that he have one hundred and forty lashes, which they gave him. Then they took him from the island to the mainland and ordered him to leave the country. He came down into Northwestern Alaska and murdered a native family of eight persons; robbed them of their canoes, dogs and other valuables and came to Point Barrow. In the family that he left for dead, a little girl revived, and was picked up by some hunters that were passing. She described the murderer and pointed him out. The natives notified Captain Healy of what had been done and he ordered them to arrest the murderer and have him at Point Barrow when he returned next year. Capt. Healy was relieved from duty before the next season, but the natives had the dead body of Posier there awaiting his return, and it still remains, frozen, in an ice house at that place, the natives confidently expecting Capt. Healy to return.

A group of about fifteen Eskimos was taken from near the old reindeer station on Port Clarence Bay, my first landing place in this section of the country, to the World's Fair at

Chicago by Minor Bruce, a trader for the Seattle Hardware Company. He had permission to do so from the Government Agent, Dr. Sheldon Jackson, and took them on his schooner to Seattle, from which place they went overland to Chicago. He represented that they were of the royal family, and called one of them the Duke, and another the Princess. They were here when I arrived, and I talked with them frequently. They are still known by these cognomens; it is interesting to hear them tell of their experiences in Chicago. In speaking of all the great men they had met back there, they told of Grover Cleveland, the Great Chief of the white man, and who, in their minds, still occupies that position, and of United States Senator Mason of Illinois, the "ahbibah ahmudluktuk," (which, translated means "great talker"); they could not remember the name of the Senator at first, but imitated his walk (he being lame) and said "all same Captain of 'Jenie' ", whose name is Mason. On being asked who was the greatest white man they had met they would say "Him, Mr. Healy". He was even a greater man with them than Grover Cleveland. The natives call the "Bear" the "Healy," and are sadly disappointed every year when the ship appears without that captain on board. He always distributed the food sent them by the U. S. Government, but the natives claim that some of the revenue cutters have not always done so since.

There is a very rich Eskimo near Teller on the Siberian Coast. He is a millionaire, the richest man, white or black, who resides in this northern country. He has large storehouses full of bone, furs and other like commodities. Hundreds of natives work for him, getting their pay in trade at Alaska prices. I am told he sells an immense amount of whisky to the natives; if he sells a shipload of ivory and furs, the space is soon filled again. His trading station is well known by most of the whaling captains.

The native women on the Siberian side dress differently from those on our side; they wear the old fashioned pantalets of our grandmothers' time. As you go up the Alaskan shore on the Arctic, you find the native in his more primitive state; he has seen fewer white men, and does not know the value of money; his great desire is to trade. At Point Hope, well toward the northern extremity of Alaska, is situated two Protestant missions; the Eskimo there is well-to-do, has plenty

of furs, whalebone and other trading material; is generous, peaceable, and for their race, industrious; there is a whaling station here, and he has become skilled in this business. There are very few native settlements between Point Hope and Point Barrow, the most northern piece of land in America, lying in about latitude 71 degrees 22 minutes north. The natives around Point Barrow seem to be particularly bright fellows. They have heard from the whalers so much about the north pole that it would not be surprising, as well equipped as they are for traveling over ice and snow, and as accustomed as they are to this work, that some of them should find that much sought object before the white man does; it is said they have talked of making an effort in this direction. Would it not be poetic justice that the real inhabitants of the bleak northland should get the credit of this discovery? True, it might not be of any scientific benefit to the world, but there is really not much science connected with it after all. From what I have seen in the mining districts of Northwestern Alaska, I am inclined to believe that the only thing that will prevent the dusky native from being the first to discover the pole, if he sees fit to make the effort, will be the circulation of a report in this country that there is undoubtedly a rich deposit of gold there. There would surely be an immediate stampede for that quarter, and some "sour dough" would reach it. Mr. Eskimo, standing on that imaginary spot, would indeed be able to say what no other human being ever has said. Time would be wiped out so far as it related to him, for time is reckoned by noon and he could have no noon while he remained on that spot; his compass would not work; three of its main points would be entirely useless—north, east and west. He would not need a compass though, as he could only go south; if he should lie down on his side across the pole and sleep for twelve hours, his head and heels would be just reversed when he woke up. If he should camp on the spot for a year he would only have two days, both of equal length—one of darkness and the other of light. On March the 21st the sun would rise for him; at first he would get only a glimpse of it; next day it would make a complete circle around him, following the line of the horizon. The next, it would describe a little higher circle and so on, like a spiral staircase until June 21st following, when it would begin to retrace its steps downstairs again

until September 21st, when it would disappear altogether until the 21st of the succeeding March. The North Star would be right over the fellow's head as he stood on that mystic spot, and all of the other stars within the line of his vision during that six months of night would circle on a horizontal plane around him.

But the Eskimo need not go so far north to see curious astronomical phenomena. I, myself, have seen the sun rise and set almost directly in the north on June 21st, and the length of time it was down did not exceed a few minutes. I was camped on a low spot at Port Clarence Bay. If I had gone to the top of any nearby mountain it would not have set at all to me. On December 21st the converse was true.

Five miles west of Point Barrow at Cape Smith, is the second largest settlement on the Arctic coast; the inhabitants live mostly in "knock down" houses brought in by the whalers, burn coal, and have the ordinary cooking utensils of the whites; they live well, have plenty of flour, "black skin" (whale meat), walrus, seal, ducks, geese and such other edibles as tickle the native palate; they keep all these things in "dug outs" or ice houses, thereby having them frozen and fresh the year round. You must travel fully three hundred and sixty-five miles east of these before you find any more natives. Then you come across a race called the Nunatamas, who are fine looking Eskimos, fully six feet in height, and in fine proportion. It is said that the name of this tribe is from Nuna (land) and tama (inward), though they live on the coast; it is thought that they take this manner of distinguishing themselves from the island natives. This tribe is not so large as it used to be; before the advent of the missionary, they are said to have been accustomed to kill all their children except the oldest boy; in fact, I have it on the best authority that it is practiced more or less today. These people are particularly peaceable and hard working fellows; they are about the best looking natives on the Arctic coast. About one hundred and fifty miles east of Herschel is Richards Island; here is found the Cognulic tribe, the largest settlement on the coast, and the most eastern; Cognulic means Eastern native in their language; unlike the other tribes of the coast, they practice polygamy. Game is very abundant in this section.

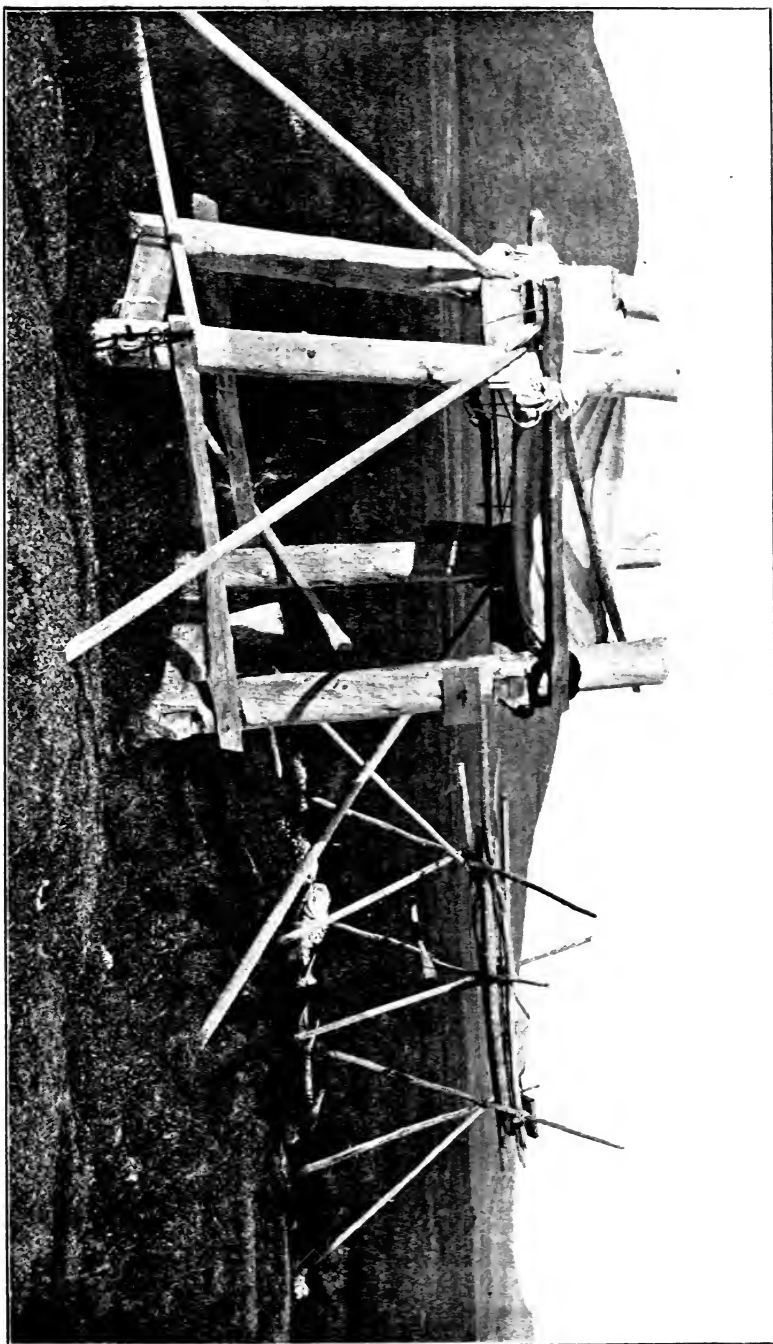
If a white man kills one of these natives, they return the com-

pliment; if an old one is the victim, then an old white man "bites the dust" sooner or later; if a young one, then a young white man pays the penalty.

These fellows are skillful workers in brass, which they get from the whalers. Inland, up the McKenzie River about two hundred and fifty miles, we find the Ithilie, or Slavey native; they are particularly noted for their hunting and trapping; they trap a great deal for the Hudson Bay Company; these fellows are very small in size, but wiry and full of life and vigor; the nearest neighbors of this tribe are what is called the "Dogribbed natives," and inhabit the Great Bear Lake country and what is known as the Barren Lands; in fact, very little is known of any of these natives not living immediately on the coast.

The traditions, superstitions, habits and customs of the northern native are most interesting; like their brothers of more southern climes, they have their "medicine men"; these fellows adopt all manner of methods to compel the others to look upon them with awe. I knew of one at Cape York, who went out hunting seal one day; he was being watched from the shore by the whole population of the native village. Suddenly, they saw the smoke of his gun, and shortly heard the report; the doctor fell over as if shot; they all ran toward him, but just before they reached him, he arose, and waving his hands in the air and dancing in a demoniacal manner, informed them that he had been shot, but had healed himself; in proof of this he showed them that he was covered with fresh blood, which he said had come from the wound before he healed it. The truth was he had taken a quantity of blood with him when he went out.

The natives near the white settlements are fast learning that the medicine of the pale face is superior to the fantastic gyrations of the medicine man. When an Eskimo dies in an igloo or tent, it will never be inhabited by people of that race again unless the body is taken out through a hole in the roof; they are frequently taken outside on the ground or snow to breathe their last; they bury their dead on poles about eight feet above the ground; the corpse is well wrapped in canvas and other covering, and generally deposited in a rough box or coffin; every article belonging to the deceased is buried with the body; I have seen their gun, kayak, (canoe) oomiak, (big boat) and



AN ESKIMO GRAVE





other similar articles lying alongside the box that contained the remains. The native will never sell or even use, if he knows it, any article so consecrated. Sometimes the wily white man confiscates these things for his own use, but he can neither sell nor even give any of them to another native if the latter is aware of the theft. I once saw two white men disputing over the name of some small native relic; they could not agree, and, calling up a native who stood near, referred the matter to him; he took it in his hand and examined it closely, then asked where they got it. On being told that it was from a native grave he dropped it to the floor as if it had been red hot.

The Eskimo has no method of measuring the time of day; he reckons the month by the moon. Six months with him is "six moons"; distance is computed by "sleeps"; a "sleep" is a day's travel, but if the traveler takes sick or is otherwise delayed on the way no allowance is made and the "sleeps" are counted from the time he starts until he arrives at his destination. If the fellow does not understand enough English to say "sleeps" then he will make an appropriate gesture.

Their story of how day and night originated is interesting. They will tell you that centuries ago all this northern country, except some mountain highlands in the section now known as the Kotzebue Sound region, was under water. One great chief ruled over all the northern Eskimos. He had a grand eglow on the top of a high table mountain, which sloped gradually toward the Arctic Ocean. On the side of this mountain were hundreds of snow-covered eglows wherein lived most of his subjects. Guards patrolled the regal plateau night and day, for it seems that even in those early times the head that wore a crown did not rest easily. From time immemorial there had hung in the eglow palace of the successive chiefs two large golden balls several feet in diameter, but light as air. No one knew what they contained, but tradition informed them that if they should be broken the people would be scattered and the ruler would lose his authority; to guard these was a part of the duty of the sentinels. One day while the chief was down on the shore watching a great walrus hunt, two children of the tribe passed the sleeping sentinels, and in their childish curiosity entered the royal dwelling; in the dim twilight that then pervaded the country, they saw these beau-

tiful globes hanging from the ceiling; it was the work of but a few minutes to get them loose; they rolled them around in the snow near the building for some time without awakening the oil-scented guardians. Finally the spheres escaped from their control and started down the mountain side; the natives saw them bounding by, but could not stop them; a wild scene of commotion ensued. When near the bottom of the mountain the long cherished spheres broke into a thousand pieces, and night and day were given forth to the world. At the same time a noise like the crack of doom was heard, and the sea receding, left all this northern country exposed. The new arrivals struggled and fought for many "sleeps," each claiming the right to rule the country. During all this time the elements were badly disturbed; lightning flashed, thunder roared, and the waters rolled high; at last, the terrific struggle ended in a compromise; it was agreed that each should rule for six "moons" beginning with day. Then quiet reigned. The natives soon scattered to the new lands, and the old chief lost his power.

Another tradition on the same subject is that while semi-darkness covered the country there appeared one day a bird resembling our crow; the natives had heard that in some land far to the southward there was bright daylight; they asked this strange bird if this was true and received an affirmative answer; they then implored it to go back to this country and supplicate the Great Spirit of that region to grant them the same blessing. The crow finally consented, and after many "moons" returned with the information that their request was partially granted; that henceforth they should have daylight at least half the time.

There is a rugged, dark looking mountain near Kotzebue Sound that the natives think is haunted; they will go miles out of their way to avoid it; no native has ever been known to scale this elevation. I did not learn what particular kind of an evil spirit is supposed to dwell there. At another place in the same locality, there is a rough mountain pass which the natives will tell you is guarded by an immense bird unlike any other ever seen in this country. No Eskimo is allowed to pass this winged sentinel.

An article on the Eskimo would be incomplete without some mention of the native dog; this creature is to them what the

horse is to the outside world; in fact, the white miner of Alaska today could scarcely get along without this animal. He might get along without the Eskimo himself, but not his canine. Since the great influx from the outside world, many foreign dogs have been brought in, but they do not take the place of the Malamoot or Siwash; they can not stand the rigors of winter very well, and this is the particular time of the year they are needed. The foreigner has to be fed even in summer, while the other will "rustle" for himself if necessary. I have found this out to my sorrow. My first few months here were spent in a tent; when my things were landed from the boat I did not get them all under cover the first night. Among the articles left out was a box of bacon well bound with iron hoops; next morning the thick boards had been gnawed through between the bands, and some dog had had a good feed. After I got my tent up I used to miss any article of food that was left out of the heavy iron bound grub box. One morning I hung a side of bacon to the ridge pole which was very high in my tent, and stepped out for a bucket of water, having fastened the door flap of the tent securely and boarded it up with a knock-down rocker I had convenient. When I came back the bacon was gone. Being a "cheechako" and not knowing the shrewdness of the Malamoot, I laid the theft to some human being; it did not seem possible that any animal could get the meat, firmly tied and fully seven feet from the ground. I hung up another side of bacon, and cut off enough for breakfast and dinner. I was about the tent all day, but next morning went off a few hundred yards after water again, having fastened the tent door this time so well that I was sure no two-legged thief in the country could get in short of five minutes without cutting the heavy canvas. Imagine my surprise on returning with the water to see a contemptible Malamoot dog disappearing across the tundra a hundred yards away with my bacon; you can rest assured I never hung any more meat there.

In winter almost all the hauling is done by dog teams; there are quite a large number of reindeer here, but they do not seem to be half as satisfactory as the former; they will not travel when tired, but stand and sulk, and are much trouble to feed and care for. The sagacity of the Eskimo dog is wonderful. He both loves and fears his master. Two cases came under my immediate notice during the winter I spent in Teller that

were the talk of the camp for some time. Dr. Tam and his brother, residents of the town, had gone to the Spit, eighteen miles away, with their dog team after wood. The thermometer was only about 15 degrees below zero, but a heavy wind was blowing. When within a mile or so of home the doctor gave out; his brother covered him up as warm as he could, turned the dogs loose from the sled and hurried to town for help. A rescuing party soon started out, and after a struggle through the rapidly increasing storm, found the lost one unconscious but still alive. Beside his body cuddled up as closely as possible as if to keep him warm, was one of the faithful dogs; the animal at first refused to allow the party to touch his master, and only did so after much persuasion. The physician was so badly frozen he died the next morning. The dog seemed disconsolate for many days. The other case was even more startling. In this the man had also been after wood with a team of two dogs; on the way back he felt his fingers getting numb and took off his "mits" to rub his hands together. The weather was so cold that his hands involuntarily clinched, and he could not get them covered again. He managed, however, to unloose the team from the sled, and staggered on toward his destination. The dogs, fastened together, left their master and ran to Teller. They went to a house where the man had frequently visited, and scratched at the door until it was opened; then they turned and started back toward the freezing man as much as to say, "Follow me," The people did not comprehend, and did not follow. The dogs went all the way out until they met the object of their solicitation, and jumping up on him, seemed by their actions to try to tell him what they had done. Then they started off for help again, rapping at two other houses, as they had at the first one, and each time returning to meet the man. He finally got to town and secured aid but was badly frozen. I helped the surgeons to amputate both his hands a couple of weeks afterward.

An ordinary dog on a fair trail will pull one hundred and fifty pounds on a sled. The Eskimos are generally kind to their animals. I have seen some white men abuse their dogs so badly that they would have been arrested on the spot in any of the large cities of "the States," for the same acts.

A great many dogs go mad in this climate, but they generally seem to want to bite other dogs, and do not often molest human

beings. I have known a Malamoot dog to cause a loss of many hundreds of dollars, as each good work dog is worth from one hundred to one hundred and fifty dollars in the winter time. Some "leaders" are worth even more than the latter amount. The "leader," as the name indicates, is a dog who leads all the others; he minds the words of command well, and will "gee" and "haw" as neatly as an ox.

I deem it proper in this chapter to say something of the "squaw man". I did think of writing a separate one on this subject, but it being so closely allied to the matter in hand, and hardly of enough importance for a separate heading, I changed my mind. I approach it with some hesitancy, as I am well acquainted with quite a number of these men, some of whom are really good fellows, as the term is generally understood, but I propose to "hew to the line, let the chips fall where they may." It is not my intention to be personal, and I am satisfied it will not be so taken. They are found in almost every Indian settlement from Point Barrow on the north to the most southern extremity of Alaska. Nearly all the whalers' officers are in the same boat, and if not called "squaw-men" should be so termed. If they do not live with the native women on the land they take them with them on the ships during the trip and keep them on board during the long winter while the vessel is frozen in in the ice. Within a very few miles of the town of Teller, where this book is being written, there are at least six half-breeds, some of them nearly grown, who claim sea captains, married men with white children in "the States" as their fathers. As was said in a former chapter, there is no such word in the Eskimo language of this country as virtue. They have no need of the word as they do not know what it means. The sea captains and the regular squaw men generally feed the squaw a little better than the buck does, and give her a little brighter material for her parka or other wearing apparel. In return she gets the squaw man's wood and water and cooks the little "cow-cow" for him. I suppose they, like Tennyson's love-sick swain in Locksley Hall, think, "There the passions cramped no longer shall have scope and breathing space; I will take some savage woman; she shall rear my dusky race."

When he returns to his oil-scented cabin or native eglow after his day's work at the mine, he finds this dusky face at the

door and perhaps two or three half-breeds, blood relatives of his white children at home, hanging by their dirty black hands to their mother's parka. "Iron-jointed, supple-sinewed, they shall dive and they shall run; catch the wild goat by the hair, and hurl their lances in the sun."

How proud he must feel of his offspring **here!** How he must love those at **home!**

It is a well known fact that nine-tenths of the half-breeds die of consumption or like diseases before they are grown. God thus seems to put the brand of Cain upon them.

Most of these men talk the native jargon well. There are only about eight hundred words in the tongue as spoken in this part of Alaska. There is no alphabet or written language. Few, if any white men, understand the simon-pure spoken language. What they do talk is a corrupt conglomeration of Eskimo and English. The first white men who came to Alaska were to some extent excusable for leading such a life. The natives would not so readily give them food or other necessaries unless they were one of the tribe, so to speak. I know it to be a fact, even today, that the squaw man has much more influence over them than anybody else.

I never heard of any marriage ceremony between these people. In fact, so far as I know, the natives have no such thing, except that those near missions, who have listened to the teaching of the missionary, follow our ceremony.

It sometimes happens that the "better-half" really loves her lover; then, when the time for his return to the south comes, and he is perhaps about to go to the other woman, who has been, during the years of his absence after a fortune, a good, pure, faithful wife to him, there are heartaches and wailing in the smoke-begrimed eglow, for the poor native woman has a heart as well as her white sister. I have known of one or two such scenes myself. But the hand of Fate is upon her. She, with her numerous progeny, has to return to her tribe or relatives, and the squaw-man never sees his quondam wife or beloved children again. As a rule, the squaw-man feels in his own heart that he has degraded himself. He seeks the company of natives more than he does that of his fellow white men. He usually lives at the native village, and is apparently in all but color, one of them.

**THE LAMENT OF THE OLD SOUR DOUGH.**

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By Sam. C. Dunham.

I've trudged and I've starved and I've frozen  
All over this white barren land,—  
Where the sea stretches straight, white and silent,  
Where the timberless white mountains stand,—  
From the white peaks that gleam in the moonlight,  
Like a garment that graces a soul,  
To the last white sweep of the prairies,  
Where the black shadows brood round the pole.

(Now, pray don't presume from this prelude  
That a flame of poetical fire  
Is to burst from my brain like a beacon,  
For I've only been tuning my lyre  
To the low sad voice of a singer  
Who's inspired to sing you some facts  
About the improvements in staking  
And the men who mine with an ax.)

I've panned from Peru to Point Barrow,  
But I never located a claim  
Till I'd fully persuaded my conscience  
That pay dirt pervaded the same;  
And this is the source of my sorrow,  
As you will be forced to agree  
When you learn how relentless Misfortune  
Has dumped all her tailings on me.

I worked with my partner all summer,  
Cross-cutting a cussed old creek,  
Which we never once thought of locating  
Unless we located the streak;  
And when at the close of the season  
We discovered the creek was a fake  
We also discovered the region  
Had nothing left in it to stake.

We traversed the toe-twisting tundra,  
 Where reindeer root round for their feed,  
 And the hungry Laplanders who herd them  
 Devour them before they can breed.  
 Here it seems that good claims might be plenty,  
 And we thought we would stake one—perhaps;  
 But we found to our grief that the gulches  
 Were staked in the name of the Lapps.

A hundred long leagues to the northward,  
 O'er the untrodden, sun-burnished snow,  
 We struggled, half blinded and half famished,  
 To the sea where the staunch whalers go.  
 We found there broad beaches of ruby  
 And mountains with placers and leads,  
 But all, save the sky, was pre-empted  
 By salt-water sailors and Swedes.

Then we climbed the cold creeks near a mission  
 That is run by the agents of God,  
 Who trade Bibles and prayer-books to heathen  
 For ivory, sealskins and cod.  
 At last we were sure we had struck it,  
 But alas! for our hope of reward,—  
 The landscape from sea-beach to sky-line  
 Was staked in the name of the Lord!

We're too slow for the new breed of miners,  
 Embracing all classes of men,  
 Who locate by power of attorney  
 And prospect their claims with a pen,—  
 Who do all their fine work through agents  
 And loaf around town with the sports,  
 On intimate terms with the lawyers,  
 On similar terms with the courts.

We're scared to submission and silence  
 By the men the Government sends  
 To force us to keep law and order,  
 While they keep claims for their friends,  
 And collect in an indirect manner



An exceedingly burdensome tax,  
 Assumed for a time by the traders  
 And then transferred to our backs.

We had some hard knocks on the Klondike  
 From the cub-lion's unpadded paws,  
 And suffered some shocks from high license  
 And other immutable laws;  
 But they robbed us by regular schedule,  
 So we knew just what to expect,  
 While at Nome we're scheduled to struggle  
 Until we're financially wrecked.

I'm sick of the screams of the eagle  
 And laws of dishonest design,  
 And I'm going in quest of a country  
 Where a miner can locate a mine;  
 So when I've rustled an outfit  
 These places will know me no more,  
 For I'll try my luck with the Russians  
 On the bleak Siberian shore.

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## CHAPTER IX.

### ALASKAN SENSE AND NONSENSE.

It would hardly be expected that there could be any humor where there are so many hardships and trials and troubles as there are in this northland, but there is considerable of it. The average man does not feel like joking or making fun when dangers beset him on every hand, but he is very ready to enjoy it if somebody else makes it. Like everything else that is scarce it is unusually enjoyable when he does come across it.

This chapter will necessarily be more or less disconnected; it is my intention to make it a kind of "pot-pourri" of different scenes, incidents and customs that go to make up a miner's life on this bleak shore.

One of the most laughable incidents I have heard of occurred in one of the little mining towns near here. A friend of mine, "Dick" Tracy, who had been spending the evening with his

mining friends, found himself, late at night, some distance from home, so he thought he would stop at one of the numerous "bunk houses" in the camp; the clerk told him to go upstairs and take the first room on the **right**, at the head of the stairs; there were several turns in these stairs, and the hour being late Dick's mind was not so clear as when he awoke in the morning. The result was that he took the first room on the **left**. When he entered the room he saw there was no lamp or candle, and he had no matches; this made no difference to him, however. He could see, in the dim moonlight, that somebody had gone to bed ahead of him. It very frequently happens that entire strangers are compelled to bunk together in this country. Dick undressed and retired, noticing as he crawled into bed, that the other fellow was right in the middle of the couch. After he had located himself on the outer edge he gave the fellow a little nudge in the side to remind him that he had taken his half out of the middle, but the stranger did not budge. Dick gave him another punch in the ribs, but this did not awake him. Getting out of patience, he waited a few moments, then landed a pugilistic upper cut on the short ribs; the fellow did not move. Just at this moment the door opened, and a man and woman came in; they sat down on the sofa in the room, and began a low conversation; Dick was at once all attention. Suddenly the lady said, "It's a shame for us to sit here talking nonsense when that poor man that was frozen to death yesterday lies there in bed." Dick, upon hearing this, gave one jump and landed in the center of the floor; the couple thinking the dead had come to life, made a rush for the door, closely followed by our mining friend. They all tried to get down the narrow staircase at once; the result was a broken shoulder for Tracy, and various bruises and contusions for the other parties.

The summer after the rich "diggings" were found on the world-renowned Anvil and other creeks, the newly appointed district judge incurred the displeasure of the mining public by ordering a receiver in almost every case where a valuable mine was in controversy. Two Irishmen had been at work for some time, sinking a shaft on a claim they had located. One day the fellow at the windlass felt a jerk on the rope, evidently given to attract his attention. Upon looking down the hole,

he heard the voice of his partner from out of the darkness call out, "Say, Pat, send down a receiver; I've struck gold."

Speaking of courts, reminds me that it would indeed be interesting to the person who is used to living in a country where trials are conducted with strict formality to know how these matters are frequently carried on in a mining camp. The following from the Klondike Nugget will serve as an illustration; the story is absolutely true and not overdrawn. I have talked with several of the parties who took part in it:

### THE TRIAL OF A POLAR BEARSKIN.

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#### A Rare Contribution to the Unique in Yukon Literature— Graphic Description of the Efforts Made to Prove the Ownership of a Robe—The Jury Unable to Reach a Determination.

The following description of a court scene occurring recently at Circle City was handed in for publication by a recent arrival from that place. The truth of its statements is not vouched for by us, though it is by the contributor, and it is published only as a contribution to the unique Yukon literature.

Scene—Court-room; present about fifty residents of Circle. Enter U. S. Deputy Marshal; walks up to desk and takes off his hat, and everybody else does the same. The Marshal has tears in his eyes, and presents the appearance of a man who has just lost his grandmother.

Mar. (in a cracked voice)—"Well, I guess we'll go on with this thing now."

And thus was the now famous Polar Bearskin trial opened.

Mar.—"Mr. Montifield, call the jury."

Mr. Montifield reads—"Messrs. Wadleigh, Levante, Hock, Durand, Morency and Shropshire."

The first five answer to their names and take the seats of honor to the left of the acting judge.

Mar.—"Where's Shropshire?"

Mont.—"He'll be here in a minute."

Mar.—"Never mind him, we'll go ahead without him."

Capt. Storey—"If it pleases the court, that's only five jurors."

Mar.—“Never you mind; five’s just as good as six; it’s none of your business anyhow.”

Mar.—“Now, Captain, how about that bear skin?”

Storey—“What bear skin?”

Mar.—“The one I took from your cabin?”

Storey—“I don’t know anything about it; you took it from the Columbia Navigation Company; it was freight in transit to Dawson.”

Mar.—“Never mind that; what I want to know is, who owns it?”

Storey—“Look here, Marshal, what am I in this case anyhow? Am I the plaintiff, the defendant, or a witness; and I’d like to know by what right you, a Deputy U. S. Marshal, or anyone else has to go to my cabin and take anything out without any legal measures being taken?”

Mar.—“I knew you’d kick. You’re always kicking; you’re a regular calamity howler anyway.”

Storey—“That’s just what I’m here for; I get paid for that.”

Mar.—“When we take anything we take it, and that’s all all there is to it.”

Storey—“I know you do; that’s just where my kick comes in.”

Mar.—“Well, shut up now and tell us who this robe belongs to.”

Storey—“I don’t know what robe you’re talking about.”

Mar. (getting hot)—“I’ll damn soon show you.”

Marshal goes to his office and comes back with a Polar bear skin rolled and tied with a rope.

Mar.—“There’s the robe; now who owns it? That’s the question.”

Voice from the Audience—“Open ’er up, Frank, and let’s have a look at it.”

Note—The Marshal at this moment took a notion to inform the jury as to the reason they were in court, so he explained it as follows: “This case or suit is brought to prove that that man French owns this robe. You see he owes the N. A. T. & T. Co. \$40 or \$50 for rent or something and they have a claim against him for that amount. I seized the robe for that claim. and French now claims that it is not his. Judge Crance wants

to act fair in the matter, so he is letting me decide this thing, as he is an interested party."

"Mr. Montifield, what do you know about this robe?"

Montifield—"I'm sure I can't recognize it to be the robe."

Mar.—"Didn't you ever see it before?"

Montifield—"I can't say for sure. I'm supposed to be under oath, ain't I?"

Mar.—"Well, 'er yes; you're supposed to be, but then it ain't necessary to swear you in a case like this. It'll be over in a minute."

Montifield—"I can't swear to that one; I can't say that I have ever seen it before."

Mar.—"French tried to sell you a robe, didn't he? Tell us all about it."

Montifield—"I went to his cabin and saw a robe there, and he asked me if I wanted to buy it, but I can't say that this is the robe."

Storey—"That robe belongs to Scates, and when he went to Dawson he gave it to Captain Seigass who entered it as freight in transit to Dawson for the Col. Nav. Co."

Mar.—"Never mind all that; have you got a receipt from Scates?"

Storey—"No, I don't need one till I land the bearskin in Dawson."

Mar.—"Here, French, what do you know about this robe?"

French walks out from the audience and eyes the robe critically.

French—"I don't know anything about it."

Mar.—"Didn't you ever see it before?"

French—"I don't know."

Here the jailor and his prisoners poke their heads out of the cooler, and the Marshal turns to them with the query of:

"How's everything in there, Jake?" (Then turning to French): "What do you know?"

French—"Nothing."

Mar.—"Don't you own it?"

French—"No, sir."

Mar.—"I think it's yours anyhow."

French—"That's your privilege, sir."

Mar.—"What do you know about this robe?"

French (with a long face)—"I know nothing."

Mar.—“Well, gentlemen of the jury, you have all the evidence; now we await your decision; who owns this bearskin?”

Wadleigh (a juror)—“Nobody seems to own it; it don't belong to Scates or Storey or French or you. I'll take it; give it to me.”

Levante (another juror)—“Hold on there; we've all got a finger in this skin. Let's play sluff for it.”

Just about this time the whole court—spectators, acting judge and all—were in danger of going into convulsions from continued laughter.

Mar.—“Well, you must decide. You can go into my office and deliberate.”

Storey—“I suppose you're through with me, and as I've got work to do, I ask to be excused.”

Mar.—“You can just stay where you are for a few minutes.”

Storey (hot)—“What am I in this case, anyhow?”

Mar.—“You're the defendant.”

Storey—“Then as the defendant I move that the case be dismissed and the bearskin be returned to where it was taken from.”

Mar.—“We return nothing.”

Storey—“You're right; I never knew you to return anything you once laid your hands on.”

The jury files out. During the time the jury is out everybody, Marshal, and all, indulge in a smoke. Big Theodore Whollers tries to impose on the Marshal's good nature by putting on his hat, but the Marshal cut him short with the order to “Take off your hat; take off that hat, or give me a cigar.”

The hat comes off. At this time the Marshal must see his prisoners in the cooler so he tries to open the door, but finding it locked, he pushed in vain. Then he tried to tear off the cheesecloth covering; when it was half off the jailer opened the door and the voice of the Marshal was heard asking the same old question, “How's things in there, Jake?” To reassure himself he went to look, and while he was in there the jury returned with their verdict.

Wadleigh (with a sheet of paper in his hands)—“Whar's the judge?”

Just then the judge returns.

“What's your verdict, gentlemen?”

Wadleigh—“There it is on that paper on the desk.”

Mar. (examining paper on both sides)—“Where is it?”

Wadleigh—“Here; I'll read it.”

Wadleigh, as foreman of the jury, then reads: “Circle, May 4th, '99, we the undersigned jurors in the trial of a polar bear skin find that it belongs to nobody in particular; so we'll keep it for ten days and give the owner a chance to prove his property. If it is still unsettled at the end of that time we will play sluff and see who gets it for keeps. Signed, F. Wadleigh, Charles Levante, Al Morency, Teddy Hock, Joe Durand.”

The man who succeeds in Alaska is the fellow commonly known as a “hustler”. He has a finger in every pie that is cut, and grabs as large a piece as possible; on the other hand, the man who sits still with his thumb in his mouth will either spend the balance of his days here or go out poor. The first mayor of the town of Teller belonged to the former class, and the following written for an entertainment in this mining camp by Judge Charles Udell, is true in fact as well as amusing:

### A BRIEF HISTORY OF TELLER.

#### Dedicated to the Founder of the Teller Masonic Club.

A year ago this icebound coast  
Was solitude and ice and frost,  
Lone mountains in chill snowpeaks lost,  
White plains by human foot uncrossed,  
Unconscious of the coming host.

But the Anglo-Saxon was seeking gold—  
The days of the Esquimaux were being told—  
A human tide toward the northland rolled,  
Undaunted by storm, or famine, or cold,  
For had they not Wilson, Tom Wilson, the bold?

A city was planned in which to allot  
Space for a home to each brave Argonaut,  
Then like true Saxons they staked, jumped and fought.  
'Twas ruled that each could stake but one spot,  
And Wilson,—well, Tom Wilson, he got a lot!

A Council was formed to raise revenue,  
The townlet to care for, its future to hew,  
And seven were chosen, our acts to review—  
Seven wise Solons, all good men and true,  
Tom Wilson, of course, was one of these few.

Then a mayor was needed to govern the town,  
To levy our taxes and do things up brown,  
And as only one could have that renown,  
All of the others stepped quietly down,  
And Tom Wilson donned the mayoralty crown.

Uncle Sam had provided a judge for the place,  
Forgetting that Wilson was in every race.  
The certain result was, of judges, a brace;  
For Tom opened a court with infinite grace,  
And presided o'er many a lot jumping case.

But Uncle Sam grew wise from that little fight,  
And knowing three postmasters wouldn't look right,  
Messrs. Brevig and Morse made haste to alight  
From the Postoffice chairs they were holding down tight,  
And the government asked pardon for its brief oversight.

But time is short, the subject great,  
The rest but briefly I'll relate;  
How groceries started, large and new,  
And Thomas Wilson started one too;  
Stores for clothing and cap and shoe;

How each found Wilson a rival too;  
How saloons were opened for mountain dew,  
And how Tom Wilson was right there too;  
How restaurants came where all could chew;  
And Wilson promptly opened one too;

Hotels and lodgings not a few;  
But both found Wilson in the business too.  
Stables on alley and avenue,  
And Wilson at once built stables, too;  
'Gene Allen his news plant to Teller drew,



But found Wilson and Riekey with a paper too.  
 Kief, Rogers and Stephens did real estate too;  
 Which caused Wilson to start in real estate too;  
 The lawyers arrived, but they all felt blue  
 When they found Wilson practiced and won cases too;

How the Koogrock tiger came into view,  
 But found Tom with a limit of one and two;  
 How Meacham came our souls to subdue,  
 But Tom, not content with engaging a pew,  
 Started sacred concerts at his place, too.

Good people of Teller, when you bid life adieu,  
 In a large corner of heaven you'll find Wilson too;  
 Yet the poets of Teller when their crimes they rue,  
 Condemned for bad verses to an eternal stew,  
 Will not be all lonely with no one they knew,  
 For Tom wouldn't be happy unless there too.

Every miner knows that he can stake twenty acres of unappropriated Government land in Alaska for placer mining purposes. The boundaries must be properly marked and also the exact location of the claim given on the notice posted on the ground, and a copy of which must be filed within ninety days with the recorder of the local mining district. In the spring of 1901 a native approached the recorder of the Good Hope District on the Arctic, with the following for record: "I claim Little River; maybe money; maybe not. Octuk, Alaska." Another by a white man filed in the Nome country was almost as bad. It read as follows: "I locate this (description of ground) for Ole and me." There was no name signed. Some of the natives, however, are much brighter and better educated than the one who wrote the location notice just quoted. The following letter written by an Eskimo is in my possession; the handwriting is fair—as good in fact as that of the average white man.

"Penny, July 24, 1900.

Mr. Billee Langdon:—For you buy some of little rubber boots; will come see you soon, Billie, and tell you my mamma dead, Sunday, July 22, 1900.

Very truly,  
 EDDIE KORBLE."

The local courts are kept busy in the winter time with dog cases. In the summer these animals are not used frequently and are therefore not so much of a "casus belli". The converse is true of mining suits, six or eight feet of snow puts a damper on this class of cases, but the summer crop is numerous. There are probably more dogs stolen in winter in Alaska than in all the balance of Uncle Sam's dominions. I was very much amused at a case which came under my notice a short time since. A tall, gaunt-looking fellow was driving a beautiful team of five dogs through the main street of Teller, when another fellow about equally matched in size came rushing out from a store, and grabbing the front dog, said to the driver, "See here, you are the fellow that stole my leader, are you?" He at once began to unhitch the animal from the sled; we all looked for one of the customary rough and tumble fights. But no! The driver assumed a broad grin, and as the dog was being led away, sang in plaintive melody to the tune of a popular ballad, "Well, I guess I'll have to get a leader of my own."

A short description of winter life in an Arctic mining camp may not be uninteresting to the reader. As before stated I spent that season of the year during 1900-1 at the celebrated town of Teller. The natives say it was the most terrible winter that has been known for many years. The thermometer frequently went as low as 45 degrees to 50 degrees below zero. This temperature is as dangerous to life here as 80 degrees below would be at Dawson, or any other place where the wind does not blow; the snow was from ten to fifteen feet in some parts of the camp, thus entirely covering up many of the cabins or "shacks" of the miners. The place had sprung up mushroom-like late in the preceding fall, and there being no wood nearer than eighteen miles, and coal being a very scarce and high-priced article, the illy-prepared sojourner suffered terribly. Not a day passed that from one to a dozen persons were not more or less seriously frozen. Four were frozen to death in the immediate vicinity of the town. One man froze his hands while locking his cabin door. Two or three saloons kept a hot fire going all the time, although coal was one hundred dollars a ton, and thus furnished places where the freezing miner could be somewhat comfortable. They each lost several hundred dollars by this kindness, for there was little or no money in the pockets of their guests to pay for drinks. The

men who spent the winter around these public stoves were called "chair warmers"—stool warmers would be more appropriate, as chairs are almost an unknown luxury in a mining camp. These men hugged the fire through the long, dark, winter days, and cussed and discussed the country and its hardships. Many a man had nothing but frozen canned beans and hard tack all winter. He had no wood or coal sometimes, even to warm up the former article of diet. The "meals" at the restaurants were from a dollar and a half up. A meal consisted of reindeer meat, potatoes, onions and canned fruit—all in a frozen state before being cooked; nothing fresh except the breeze that entered every time some muffled figure opened the double doors; then a cloud of vapor would fill the end of the room, the result of the meeting of the low tempered outside air with that of the room. The ice on the windows inside would frequently be two or three inches thick. The salutation that the new arrival from outdoors frequently received was, "Hello, there! Your nose is frozen." This was indicated by its marble whiteness. He would rush out, and rub some snow over it, thus thawing it out. Sometimes the whole face would be as white as a ghost—caused in coming a distance of a block perhaps in the freezing cold. The dread of the chair warmer was the hour when hunger or the closing of the saloon drove him to his ice-lined shack. It seems almost impossible that human endurance could withstand the cold that these men nightly passed through in their cabins—some with few blankets and no robes.

One of the regular chair warmers came in one morning and astounded all those sitting around the stove by announcing that he had eggs for breakfast. Beans were the regulation diet, so all were anxious to know about how he happened to get the eggs. "Well," said he, "I will tell you how it was; I was in a store yesterday, and the clerk told me that they had a few unfrozen eggs. I sold an interest in a claim a few days ago, and as I had not tasted eggs for so long I bought half a dozen for a dollar. I only had a little wood in the shack, but I put it all in my Yukon stove this morning and broke the whole half dozen eggs into my frying pan; the wood burned out about the time they were cooked on one side; when I started to eat them I found they were frozen on the other side. My cabin was not any colder than usual, either."

A few days after this another man, a real estate agent named Stephens, came into the saloon, his fur cap and parka covered with ice, and after standing before the fire a few minutes, remarked, "Well, boys, I opened a can of beans for a **change**, this morning,"—he got no further; the continued roars of laughter that broke forth drowned all explanations that he attempted.

This same gentleman, at another time, told us that when he was in an outfitting store, laying in his supplies preparatory to coming to Nome, the clerk asked him what kind of shoe wear he wanted—at the same time handing him a pair of moccasins to examine. He looked them over a few moments, and finally asked whether these were warmer than **snowshoes**. **He knows better now.**

Ananias would have held up his hands in horror if he could have heard a full-fledged Alaskan liar. I do not know whether it is the climate or because of the great latitude here (71 degrees), but the fact is there are more liars to the square mile in this country than in any other place on earth of an equal population. Mrs. Rose H. Leech, an Alaska correspondent of the Chicago Inter Ocean, once read an interesting essay on the subject at a winter entertainment in Teller; it was as follows:

### THE ALASKAN ANANIAS.

Some wise man has said that there are three classes of liars—plain liars, liars and Yukoners. The plain liar is the man who lies to protect himself, to please his friends, or to advance his interests. The liar lies through spite, malice and envy; to work injury upon some luckless individual who has been so unfortunate as to incur his displeasure; the amount of harm he does in the world is incalculable. His long suit is his ability to take the truth, and by a few simple twists of the tongue, so distort and change it that its own maternal relative would not recognize it when brought face to face with it.

But the Yukoner! Ah, who can do justice to the skill, the grace, the enthusiasm, and the unbounded industry, which he displays in this, his chosen vocation. By this, of course, it is not meant that all Yukoners are liars; far from it. But when a man is a Yukoner and a liar the combination is one that is a world beater. This Yukon liar is, as a rule, a lazy mortal; he believes in always putting off until tomorrow what should

be done today. But when opportunity offers he can be aroused to an effort, which, if otherwise applied, would have elevated him to the pinnacle of fame and fortune long ere this. Somewhere in the dim and distant past, he has heard that the devil is the father of lies, and he has a laudable ambition to add to Mephisto's large and interesting family. He has also been told to "tell the truth and shame the devil," but with a zeal incomparable the Yukoner has thus far managed to avoid bringing the blush of shame to the countenance of that ruler of the under world.

He is a genial liar, this Yukoner, and for the ordinary lies of life he needs make no effort; they roll from his lips as regularly and as smoothly as do compliments from the lips of a sour dough man in conversation with a cheechako girl.

It is only when brought into conjunction with another sour dough liar that the Yukoner is at his best. Then indeed are his flights of fancy as high as Mount Olympus, and his fluency of language unequalled by any save that possessed by the silver-tongued W. J. Bryan. It has always been thought that no cheechako could compete with him in the arena of prevarication but it now develops that a certain Alaska judge has a friend from the outside—the cheechako lady in the sour dough camp of Nome—whom he is willing to back against the Yukoner any day, feeling confident that the Yukoner would be humbled down to the tundra.

To the Yukoner lies are as beer and skittles, cakes and ale. If 'twere possible to condemn him to pass three weeks without indulging in Munchausen-like narratives, he would pine away and soon be put up on sticks. He doubtless sometimes soliloquizes after the following fashion:

"To lie or not to lie; that is the question. Whether it is easier far to bear the lies and taunts of other sour doughs, or to take arms against a score of lies, and by some bigger lying end them." He always decides in the affirmative of course, and after such soliloquy mounts his Pegasus with renewed ambition.

Have you been on a hunting trip and killed 100 ptarmigan? The Yukoner has many times killed three hundred in a few moments. Have you caught forty tom cod in two hours? The Yukoner makes you feel that as a disciple of Isaak Walton you are a failure when he assures you he has caught 400 in

the same time. Have you been out mushing and walked from Shea's road house to Teller in a day? The Yukoner makes you feel what a poor worm of a cheechako you are by telling you that he made the trip from Mary's Eglow to Teller and from there to Nome in one day. Have you found one and one-half cents to the pan on a prospecting trip? The Yukoner has found one and one-half dollars. Have you heard that three hundred people are on the way from Dawson to Teller? The Yukoner tells you that there are three thousand. I have heard recently an expression which appears to me to be very applicable to this propensity of the Yukoner; where it came from I do not know. It may be a recent arrival from the Bowery, or it may have originated in the fertile brain of the young man whom I heard use it. It is called, "Peddling the bull." I think this expression fills a long felt want, as it were. Instead of saying, "Sir, you are a liar; you are lying to me!" one can say softly, sweetly, like the whispering of the spring winds through the boughs of a pine tree, "Sir, you are a Yukoner! You are peddling to me."

It is not expected that every Tellerite will understand this dissertation; those who have lived in Dawson and Nome will of course do so, but as yet the Yukoner does not dwell within our gates, and it is possible that for that reason some may fail to appreciate it. But as "all things come to him who waits" we may yet point with pride to our progress, and Teller need no longer rest under the ban of being the only Alaskan town of any size without its own bright, particular Yukoner."

There is a phase of life in the northland to which I intended to devote a whole chapter. It is the moral, or rather the immoral side. I have changed my mind, however, and will take it up briefly at this time. Morality in nearly all mining camps the world over is almost an unknown quantity. The reasons for this are manifold. Mining communities are generally made up of young or middle-aged men of bold, adventurous spirit, who, while generous and good-hearted, were not, even at home, particularly scrupulous about their morals. There is always more or less of a sprinkling of the real desperado present. The conditions are all favorable to him. The law is not as strict as it is in the older communities.

Again, he has more or less of a desire to make a good appearance before his relatives and friends, but in a mining

camp, especially one so far away as Alaska, he is a stranger among strangers. A miner's money comes easily, and is apt to go in the same way. There are five saloons to any other one class of business. Almost every saloon has from one to a dozen gambling games open night and day. With all restraint off, the temptation to drink and gamble is almost irresistible as long as the "poke" (purse) holds out. The man who comes to the dreary northland stakes his life against a fortune, and very frequently loses.

Probably the most potent reason for the laxity of morals in a far-away mining camp is the absence of the refining influence of good women. I do not desire to be understood that there are not good women in Alaska, but the ratio of women to men is very, very small and the ratio of good women to immoral ones is still smaller.

If a mining claim is of any value at all it is probably worth a fortune. The miner who is in possession and thinks his title is good will be apt to guard it with his life, after having undergone so many hardships to get it. The laws are loose and there is no dearth of excuses for claim "jumping". During the mining season, shooting scrapes are of almost daily occurrence. Frequently there are a number of men engaged on each side, and a small but deadly battle is the result.

The sight of a drunken miner with a fat "poke" is more than the cupidity of the desperado can stand, and murders are by no means uncommon in the northland. There are comparatively few churches in the country—saloons, dance halls and gambling houses are far more plentiful.

Gentle reader, in conclusion it is just this way:

### WHEN A MAN'S IN ALASKA.

Of all the insidious,  
 Temptations invidious  
 Contrived by the devil for making men bold,  
 There's none more delusive,  
 Seductive, obtrusive,  
 Than the snare to a man in that land of coarse gold.  
 He feels such delightfulness,  
 Stay-out-all-nightfulness  
 Sure-to-get-tight-fulness,  
 I own it with pain.

A bachelor rakishness,  
 What-will-you-take-ishness  
 None can explain.  
 His wife may be beautiful,  
 Tender and dutiful,  
 'Tis not that her absence  
 Would cause him delight:  
 But the cursed opportunity,  
 Baleful immunity,  
 Scatters his scruples as day scatters night.

The spirit of sportfulness,  
 Full-as-a-goatfulness,  
 Upset-the-boat-fulness,  
 Goes with the gold seeker wherever he be,  
 A dare-devil jokefulness,  
 Bet the whole pokefulness,  
 So sad to see.  
 The girls may be plentiful,  
 Social and ventureful,  
 He's sure that his family  
 Think's him a saint.  
 But the wicked community,  
 Gives opportunity,  
 To the fellow whose habits are not under restraint.

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## CHAPTER X.

### THE DISTRICTS ADJACENT TO NOME AND TELLER.

When California was acquired by the United States as one of the trophies of the war with Mexico, the calamity howlers sat on their hind legs and wailed more dolefully than a disconsolate Malamoot dog. They said it was a barren waste of rugged mountains and arid plains, the home of sage brush and cacti, and the habitat of coyotes and grizzly bears. But the discovery of gold in California worked a transformation. The gold hunters found the most equable climate in North America, and a soil of unexcelled fertility. Now grain fields



and vast orchards cover those arid plains, and on the slopes of those rugged mountains one can see the largest vineyards in the world. California is the home of fifteen hundred thousand people, and her exports reach every principal port of the world.

When William H. Seward completed the negotiations for the purchase of Alaska, the same doleful dirge was chanted by those who saw nothing in Alaska but icebergs and Polar bears. Eventually, fur seals attracted the attention of capitalists and increased their riches. The salmon canners found Alaska a profitable field to exploit, but they did not advertise their discovery, because competition would lessen their profits. It remained for the miner, the true pioneer of civilization, to tell the people who paid \$7,500,000 for this territory, of its great wealth; that it was habitable, that the opportunities for making money and acquiring that competence we all hope and strive for, are better here than in any other part of Uncle Sam's domain. Gold is not the only mineral in Alaska. There are veins of coal of good quality; there are quartz ledges showing copper in profitable quantity; there are deposits of the finest graphite; platinum, some pieces weighing an ounce or more, have been found. There is an old silver mine between Golovin Bay and Norton Sound that was worked by the Russians many years ago. There are great belts of good timber in Southern Alaska, and better agricultural land in South-eastern Alaska than there is in some of the New England States, and a climate in many places not more severe; plenty of game, and fish galore.

The discovery of gold in California and its subsequent development, will be paralleled in Alaska. That great range of mountains which extends in an almost continuous chain from Cape Horn to the Arctic Ocean has proved to be an immense mineral zone. The mysterious laws of nature that have deposited more wealth in some sections of this great zone than others, have been lavish with Northwestern Alaska. Except in some of the great belts of granite, there is gold everywhere, not always in paying quantities, but sometimes in fabulously rich deposits. The country has only been partially prospected, and nothing beyond assays has been done to determine the value of the numerous quartz ledges that have been located. There are thousands of claims that have never been prospected,

and rich strikes are frequently heard of near at hand on ground that had been traveled over, and perhaps partially prospected. The remote unexplored territory is extensive, and the unprospected claims are in the ratio of 100 to 1.

What are the inevitable deductions of these facts? There is a field here for men of good health, strength and industry; there are opportunities for capital, opportunities for investments that will enrich the owner and help develop the country, and possibly, chances to loan money and get as much interest in a month as could be obtained in a year in some localities. But the man who comes here takes his life in his hands, or, in other words, stakes his life against a fair chance to make a fortune.

North latitude 64 degrees and 32 minutes, west longitude 165 degrees and 30 minutes, on the northern shore of Bering Sea, is Nome. A few years ago these treeless shores looked bleak and cheerless enough. It was not a place where "every prospect pleases," but by chance, gold was discovered, and during the summer of 1900 there were fifteen thousand people in Nome. The town has some fine buildings, telephone lines, a railroad to the mines of Anvil Creek, a water system that brings the water five miles from the mountains, and many other improvements that belong to a modern city.

Nome is situated at the mouth of Snake River. No one can realize how appropriate the name of this river is until he has stood upon some of the mountains overlooking it and viewed its sinuous course to the sea. The principal part of Nome is east of the river. On the west side is a sandy spit or point, covered with tents, dwelling houses, a number of small stores, lumber and coal yards. The beach at Nome is 100 feet wide, and very high water is 20 feet above mean low water. The greatest altitude is the tundra, or flat land, that lies between the sea and the mountains. The tundra is a moss-covered marsh, full of pools and lagoons. In the driest part of the summer time, one can walk over it dry shod by avoiding the low wet spots, but when it rains the "rocky road to Dublin" is preferable. Long hip boots and a courage that does not fear violent exercise are indispensable.

The tundra extends back to the mountains, a distance of four or five miles. These mountains are not more than 600 or 700 feet high, and are covered with the same kind of mossy

vegetation that grows on the lowlands. The only evidence of timber are thickets of small willows, perhaps waist high, near the creeks. The country rock is a mica schist, and the croppings are very conspicuous. If it is an evidence of age to be gray and bald, then the hills of Nome belong to the Paleozoic age. The greatest altitude of these mountains is reached in the Sawtooth range, forty miles to the north. It was in this range I had my dreadful experience. This side of the range the water flows into Bering Sea, and numerous streams with their feeders flowing from every compass point cut these mountains into queer shapes, so that if one attempts to follow a water course to the sea he would have a mazy road.

The theory has been advanced that in a comparatively recent geological period, the earth's axis has been changed by a cataclysm. The shifting of the poles converted a warm or temperate zone into a frigid region, and made a complete change in the forms of vegetable and animal life. In support of this theory are found the remains of the mastodon imbedded in fields of Alaskan ice, traces of other animals indigenous to a milder climate, in addition to the geological evidence in some of the substratas of the earth. The United States Geological Survey, we are informed, states that Northwestern Alaska belongs to a much earlier period than any other part of the western section of the United States. It possibly may be classified as belonging to the lower stratas of the Paleozoic age. The tundra has probably been made by the receding waters of the ocean. It is known that the waters of the Pacific, on the west coast of America, are receding so that in the course of a century several feet are added to the shore line. In the tundra are found evidences of this in the form of driftwood, remains of sea life and the sand stratas of the ocean shore.

In Northwestern Alaska, and particularly in the territory contiguous to Nome, the mountains are not precipitous, but are cut up by numerous streams into a heterogenous mass of varying altitudes, the ridges trending in the direction of the principal streams. The highest point is thirty-five miles north of Nome, Mt. Osborn, in the Sawtooth range, 4800 feet. Geologists assert that there is no evidence of glacial disturbance in this country, but the sharp edges of float show that the action of water has not been the principal agency in depositing

this kind of rock where it is found, and the twisted, contorted condition of the bedrock and frequent displacement indicate a disturbing force that can not be attributed to the numerous slides.

Nome and Teller are situated in one of the greatest mineral zones of Northwest Alaska. The country rock, mica schist, is frequently found as bedrock, decomposed so that a pick and shovel easily removes it. The entire surface of this part of the earth, except in the river beds and where rock crops, is covered with moss, beneath which there is a very scant alluvial deposit. The superstratas of bedrock, which is of varying depth, but seldom very deep, are clay and sand. Many quartz ledges doubtless exist in this formation but they are covered with moss and difficult to find. Those that have been discovered lay exposed by streams or the sea.

Between the mineral zones are belts of coarse granite, their dark dykes cropping in rugged outline and sharp contrast to the light shale of the mineralized part of the country.

One of the most agreeable surprises to the Nome or Teller summer visitor is the climate. He expects to find cold, rainy, disagreeable weather, and prepares for it with heavy woolen underwear, and outer garments of oilskin and rubber. But he finds the ordinary clothing worn in San Francisco and Seattle more comfortable. The days are bright and warm and the early summer is dry, too dry to please the miners.

The greatest variation of temperature is probably from 50 degrees below in winter to 70 degrees above in summer. For these places of recent settlement an accurate meteorological record can not be given. Such a record would not convey a complete idea of the temperature and meteorological conditions. It is possible for conditions to exist where 50 degrees below zero is more comfortable than 30 below in some other locality. Besides, simple figures do not tell the story of the facts they record; so, if the reader will follow us through the seasons we will endeavor to impart the knowledge of experience. "All's well that ends well"; so we will begin with autumn and end with summer.

September, and shorter days and colder nights are on picket duty for winter; some mornings there are frost and thin ice, while back in the mountains heavy snows fall. The wind blows, sometimes furiously. The southeast gales sweep over

Bering Sea, and make the destructive storms of Nome. Teller, being on a small bay, does not suffer so much. These gales usually last two or three days, and are succeeded by a few days of fair weather. The wind is unsteady, shifting to all points of the compass. The atmosphere is laden with moisture and frequent precipitations result. There are squalls and drizzles, but there are calms and sunshine. October differs only in temperature, but frequently, the natives tell, there have been weeks of splendid weather during these months.

During the month of November the snow falls thick and fast. There is much ice in Bering Sea, and quietly the ice floats downward from the north. Some mornings the people of these towns awaken and behold this restless sea a silent field of ice. Winter is here; the snow blows and drifts and the north wind "is a nipping and an eager air." But so gradual has been his approach, and so well prepared is everybody that business is not suspended nor work impeded to any great extent, except in bad winters like the one of 1900-1. The days are short and the nights long, but the great white robe of the cold earth prevents the darkness that otherwise would make the nights dreary. Houses are made tight and comfortable. Men with dog teams travel over the country, and the ordinary affairs of life pursue the even tenor of their way, very much the same as in New England or Canada. Some days are very cold, but the thermometer in an ordinary winter is frequently and for days above zero. And thus the winter passes.

Spring is heralded by chinooks or warm winds, and, as gradually as he approaches, winter departs. The longer and warmer days are loosening the icy grip that clasps the earth and holds the waters imperceptibly as seen from day to day, but surely, as the weeks pass. The ice breaks, forms again, and breaks until some fine day in May or June it floats away, and the rythmical pulsebeats of Bering Sea are heard again. The people wait anxiously and look longingly for the first steamer that will restore commercial relations with the outside world. They had watched the last outgoing vessel with a feeling of isolation, and as the desire for a nearer touch of the great human family is soon to be realized there is pleasure in its contemplation. The spring has passed.

The summer begins with fine weather. The sun is bright and warm and the earth responds to his genial rays by sending

up grass where the moss has not protected the frost, and wild flowers in astonishing variety and of the most beautiful and delicate colors. During the month of June "there is no night; what seems so is transition" from twilight to dawn. From June until August, Nome and Teller might be seaside resorts. The waves of the sea idly lap the shore. Women wear white shirt waists and screen their faces from the sun with parasols. The hills back of these towns are a delightful place for a ramble if one loves pretty flowers. The atmosphere is invigorating.

This is a treeless country. For many miles back into the mountains the only evidence of timber is willow thickets on the creeks and gulches. These willows attain a height of three or four feet. They burn quickly, but make good fuel, and are utilized by miners and prospectors. It is probably fifty miles from Nome in the direction of Council City to the timber line. The timber one finds here is spruce, big enough for cabin logs, but not an inviting field for the lumber industry.

The great reach of bare hills and mountains does not make the most charming perspective, but an agreeable surprise awaits anyone who travels over this country during the month of July. He will forget all about the perspective in contemplation of the beauty of his immediate surroundings. The moss is a carpet in all shades of brown, and verdant spots adorn many places where there are soil and sunshine. The flowers are beautiful; little ones that belong to the daisy family are everywhere; forget-me-nots with the richest fragrance, adorn the benches and in moist spots the stately fleur de lis as they bend with the breeze, greet the passerby; buttercups make one think of the Mikado air "The flowers that bloom in the spring;" but the most beautiful flower of them all is the pansy, a wee, delicate thing, hiding its rare beauty near the earth and beneath the greater effulgence of its more gorgeous sisters. The writer has never seen this little beauty, with its delicate blending tints, except in the Santa Cruz mountains, California. It grows there, but not to greater perfection than it does in the hills of Nome and Teller. These are a few of the old favorites you can find in this part of Alaska, but there are many varieties. In a space of ten feet square twenty varieties of wild flowers have been gathered. They are not of such luxuriant growth as the same varieties in a more tem-

perate clime, but the loss in luxuriance is more than balanced by the gain in delicate coloring and refinement.

Later in the season the moss is plentifully sprinkled with salmon berries, and blueberries are abundant.

The story of the discovery of gold in this section of Northwestern Alaska has been often told and need not be repeated here. In 1898, when the first "prospects" were found, it was not dreamed that a gold bearing area of country extending from Norton Bay to the Arctic Ocean and for one hundred miles inland from the coast of Bering Sea ever existed. Yet such was the case; the developments since that time have amply demonstrated the fact that here in this bleak country are deposits of gold which for richness and extent have never been equalled in the history of gold discoveries. And these do not only include placer, but quartz as well. Prospecting for quartz may be said to have only been begun, but enough work has been accomplished to show the existence of both gold and copper ledges, some of which promise to be exceedingly rich and valuable. Galena mines in the Fish River country were worked years ago, but these have long since been abandoned, not because the ledges were exhausted, but because of the "slump" in the price of silver and the cost of working these mines under the difficult conditions existing at that time.

As has been stated the placer prospects extend from Norton Bay over all Northwestern Alaska. The mining district which has hitherto commanded the greatest amount of attention, by reason of its discovery and development work, is Cape Nome. The fame of Anvil, Snow, Glacier and Dexter Creeks has gone abroad. Dozens of others have been added to the list of actual producers, besides a large area of rich bench claims in the neighborhood of Anvil and Dexter Creeks, and many of which have proved phenomenally rich.

Very little work has been done in the Norton Bay country. This section is well watered and wooded, and will undoubtedly be added to the list of gold producers. Extensive quartz ledges have also been found here, as well as a fine quality of coal.

In the Council City, or Golvin Bay country, a great deal of work has been done. There are many promising creeks in this section, actual producers, among which may be mentioned Ophir, Crooked, Sweetcake, Elkhorn, besides scores of others

upon which sufficient development work has been done to establish the fact that they contain pay. Ophir is a rich creek and has already produced hundreds of thousands of dollars in dust.

Tributary to Council City, Teller and Nome is the great Casa de poga country, embracing thousands of creeks and river benches. A good deal of prospecting has been done, but little actual mining work has been accomplished.

The origin of the name Nome has never been discussed in print. People have speculated about it, and wondered if there were natives here who believed in elves and fairies and gnomes and other sprites, and if this particular part of the peninsula was the habitat of the gnomes. But the natives are not so poetical and imaginative. The gnomes of fairyland are strangers to the Eskimo. He is not as sublime as the "Poor Indian who sees God in the cloud and hears Him in the wind." His deities inhabit beavers and wolves.

The Eskimo equivalent for "No" is "no me"; for "I don't know", "Ka no me."

In the earlier days, when there were but few white men on the peninsula, a whaler or trader on landing would inquire of the natives about something or someone. The answer was almost invariably, "no me" or "Ka no me", and these terms have been abbreviated into the monosyllable Nome. Hence the name.

Probably, if a California miner had named Nome, following the example of those who named Hangtown, Jimtown, Big Oak Flat, and other places according to the Indian custom, he might have called it Stringtown, because it is strung along the beach for several miles. Nome town lots have been staked on the shores of the Bering Sea for three miles, and Teller is almost as long. During the summer of 1900 there were tents five times that distance, and occasional stores, and saloons for the accommodation of the miners. At one time, there were fifteen thousand people in Nome and all day long the crowd on the main street equalled any seen on the principal thoroughfare of a metropolis.

When navigation closes the town is confined to an area of three square miles, and consists of a population of probably 5000. Considering its age, it is substantially constructed.



The buildings have been put up for winter use, and are provided with double floors, ceilings and storm doors.

Nome has two principal streets, First and Second, running parallel to the beach. Most of the business is conducted on First street. The principal cross street is Steadman Avenue. Nearly every important business is represented at Nome. The number of business houses and offices is not less than 400. There is a telephone system connecting the leading business houses and the town with the mines on Anvil and Dexter creeks. The Nome water company has a pipe line from Anvil mountain to Nome, and supplies the town with pure spring water.

One of the most novel features of Nome, because one would hardly expect to find such a thing in this remote region is the wild goose railroad. This road is five miles long connecting Nome with the Anvil mines. The cheerful whistle of the little engine is heard with a feeling of pride and pleasure, as a railroad indicates one of the most important steps in the development of a country. The growth of Nome from a population of 2500 in the winter of 1899, to 15,000 in 1900, is remarkable. Nome has incorporated, being the only incorporated town in Alaska. About 300 regular soldiers are stationed there, and before incorporation, they afforded police protection. But, at no time, has the camp been riotous or unruly. Considering the fact that a new mining camp is generally the Mecca of many disreputable and hard-case adventurers, the town has been remarkably quiet and orderly.

Nome has four churches, the Catholic, Episcopal, Congregational and Presbyterian, and a weekly meeting of Theosophists and people interested in that line of thought, is held. There is a school and good postal facilities. A large and commodious court house has been built for the accommodation of the district court. Considering all circumstances, Nome is an up-to-date city, and an illustration of the wonderful enterprise and capability of the progressive American.

A railroad to Teller, which is one of the probabilities of the near future, will connect Nome with one of the best harbors on the coast, and open up one of the finest mineral countries of the world.

The facts unquestioned by those who know anything about

the country, that there are the most extensive gold fields on this peninsula ever discovered, and that the country contiguous to Nome and Teller is rich with the precious mineral, and will not be worked out for many years, presage a future bright from a commercial standpoint, and full of promise to all who have been fortunate enough to secure interests here.

Teller is named after United States Senator Teller, the man who has done so much for the miners of Alaska in particular, and the other member of that craft, wheresoever dispersed around the United States. It has the distinction of being the most northern town on the American continent.

Within a month after the first tent was put up, there was a population of fully one thousand souls, the result of the wonderful discoveries on the Bluestone, Krougarock, and other adjoining districts.

Unlike Nome, Teller is founded on a gravel bed. There is little or no tundra on the town site. It has a most excellent harbor. In fact, there is what might be called an outer and an inner harbor, as the town faces both Port Clarence Bay, itself well protected, and Grantley Harbor, a smaller body of water, tributary to the Bay and a typical haven. Though a year younger, Teller bids fair to rival and even outdo Nome in growth. It has two wide business streets and is very neatly laid out. There were six or eight stores, four hotels and seventeen saloons in full blast before the camp was a month old. Steps are being taken to incorporate, and no doubt before this book goes to press this will have become an accomplished fact.

There had not been a single death from disease in Teller up to the time I left. This shows that the location is a healthy one. It is the key city to the newly discovered gold fields, and if they turn out as well as the prospects indicate, the future of the camp will be a bright one.

When a person makes up his mind to go to Alaska, the first question that presents itself is what to take along in the way of provisions, clothing, etc. All the pamphlets on Alaska contain a list of the things one should have. Some of these writers have never been in Alaska, and the "cheechako" upon his arrival here, finds himself provided with a lot of useless truck, and unprovided with many things that are necessary.

The best way to obviate this is to bring only such articles as

are necessary, and buy what you need after arriving here. If one comes to prospect and mine there is a splendid opportunity to get a second service out of old clothes. If one lives in town, he should dress as he would in any other civilized and respectable community. But these are matters that can be easily settled after he gets here.

\* \* \* \* \*

### HOMEWARD BOUND.

By Sam C. Dunham.

I am out upon the ocean,  
 Sailing southward to the Sound  
 With six hundred busted brothers,  
 Kicking hard, but homeward bound.  
 There are sixty in the staterooms  
 And some eighty souls or so  
 Sleeping on the floors and tables,  
 While the rest seek sleep below.

Of the sixty in the cabin  
 Only thirty had the stuff,  
 While the others came on passes  
 Or some other sort of bluff.  
 How the hundreds in the steerage  
 Got the gold to get them home,  
 Always will remain the greatest  
 Of the mysteries of Nome.

There's a siren from Seattle  
 Who is traveling in style,  
 Basking in the brilliant sunshine  
 Of the purser's dazzling smile,  
 She has jumped a first-class stateroom  
 That is simply out of sight,  
 And has oranges and apples  
 With her champagne every night.

There's a widow with two children  
 Who is trying to get home,

Having given up the struggle  
 When her husband died at Nome.  
 Both her kids exhibit cravings  
 For all kinds of fruit and things,  
 But they can't get 'nough of either  
 To distend their little strings.

There's a smooth absconding lawyer,  
 Wearing diamonds like a sport,  
 Who spends all his lucid moments  
 Praising Nome's imported court.  
 He has beefsteaks in his stateroom,  
 Purloined by the pantryman,  
 While his clients in the steerage  
 Eat cold corn-beef from a can.

There's a Topkuk sub-receiver  
 Who is smuggling like a thief  
 All the gold the gang could gobble  
 For their late transported chief.  
 He indulges in fresh oysters,  
 Fine cigars and foreign wines,  
 While the man who first staked Topkuk  
 Tells us how they robbed his mines.

There are counts galore from Paris  
 And a few of them from Spain,  
 Who invaded Nome to traffic;  
 But they'll not do so again,  
 For they found their debts so heavy  
 That they had to leave them there,  
 While their unpaid dago valets  
 Had to come out on the Bear.

Late last night they gave a banquet,  
 And imposed some heavy fines  
 To defray the steward's charges  
 For his bummiest brands of wines.  
 All the guests stood the assessment  
 Without making any kick,

But as soon as they get sober  
They'll appreciate the trick.

I shall not recount the horrors  
And the terrors of the trip,  
For the same may be imagined  
By all those who know the ship;  
But I'll simply say in closing  
That the most distressing fact  
That has come to my attention  
Is the way the ladies act.

THE END.

**AFFIDAVIT OF G. P. HALL.**

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA, }  
 District of Alaska, } ss.

G. P. Hall, being first duly sworn, deposes and says:

“I know James A. Hall. I first met him on or about July 12th, 1900, and on July 15th, 1900, he started in company with Dr. W. T. S Vincent and myself on a three days’ trip into the mountains near the coast of the Arctic Ocean in search of a quartz prospect that Dr. Vincent and I had information about. On the evening of July 17th, 1900, we were separated from Mr. Hall, on the top of a high, rough mountain, in a dense fog. We expected to be back at Teller again within three days after we started, so only took provision for that length of time.

“I know that Mr. Hall did not have as much as three pounds of food left when we were separated, and had no compass, gun or fishing apparatus. Shortly after we were parted from him we were ourselves lost for some time.

“The day after our separation was a clear, bright one, and from the top of that high mountain he could easily have seen and mistaken a spit on the Arctic Ocean for one on the Bering Sea.

“Distances are very deceptive in the atmosphere of this country. Heavy, cold rain storms began about August 1st, 1900, and lasted until about the 1st of September, when it began snowing.

“During August, there was one of the heaviest rain storms I have ever seen in my several years in this country.

“Mr. Hall was clad in summer clothing.”

G. P. HALL.

Subscribed and sworn to before me this 24th day of July, 1901.

T. G. WILSON,

Notary Public in and for the District of Alaska.

**CERTIFICATE OF ERNEST G. ROGNON, EX-U. S.  
COMMISSIONER.**

Teller, Alaska, Aug. 20, 1901.

To Whom It May Concern:

The experience of James A. Hall, as related in his book, "**Starving on a Bed of Gold,**" is so remarkable that many people will no doubt find it difficult to believe that anyone could survive such suffering and hardships and be able to tell the story. On August 28th, 1900, Dr. W. B. Deas brought to my office, when I was the U. S. Commissioner at Teller, the valise and other personal effects of Mr. Hall, with the request that I forward them to his relatives, since there was no doubt that Mr. Hall had perished. I was here when he was brought to Teller, and know that the main facts as narrated by him are true.

ERNEST G. ROGNON,

Ex.-U. S. Commissioner.

**AFFIDAVIT OF WILLIAM M. WILSON, OF THE FIRM OF  
"WILSON BROS."**

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA, }  
District of Alaska, } ss.

William M. Wilson, being duly sworn, says:

"I know James A. Hall and have known him since about the middle of June, 1900.

"On July 15th, 1900, he started from the then town of Teller, on Port Clarence Bay, Alaska, with two other men, to go on a three or four days' prospecting trip in the mountains near the Arctic Ocean. I put up the provisions for him myself. He took about three pounds of bacon, a few crackers, a little salt and a half-pound can of coffee. He had no firearms nor fishing apparatus with him. He was brought directly to our house by his rescuers. I did not know him at first, though I was so well acquainted with him at old Teller. He was a complete skeleton, although he had weighed fully 225 pounds when he left our store on July 15th.

"Mr. Hall's reputation for truthfulness is first-class and there can be no doubt that he states all the facts just as they occurred. It is not doubted in this community, in fact there are dozens of witnesses as to the length of time he was lost, the amount of food he had with him, the condition of the weather he experienced and his physical condition when found.

W. M. WILSON.

Subscribed and sworn to before me this 11th day of October, 1901.

ROBERT M. PRICE,

Notary Public for the District of Alaska.



**AFFIDAVIT OF THE MAYOR AND POSTMASTER OF  
TELLER, ALASKA.**

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA, }  
District of Alaska, } ss.

Thomas G. Wilson, being first duly sworn, says:

"I know James A. Hall and have known him since about the middle of June, 1900.

On July 15th 1900, he left the then town of Teller, on Port Clarence Bay, Alaska, with two other men, to go on a three-days' prospecting trip in the mountains, near the Arctic Ocean. He took his provisions for the trip from the store of 'Wilson Bros.', of which I was one of the proprietors. He took some bacon, crackers, coffee and salt—there not being over three pounds of bacon and a very small quantity of crackers. I took him and the two men who accompanied him down to what is known as the Government Reindeer Station in my launch, and I know he had no firearms or fishing tackle.

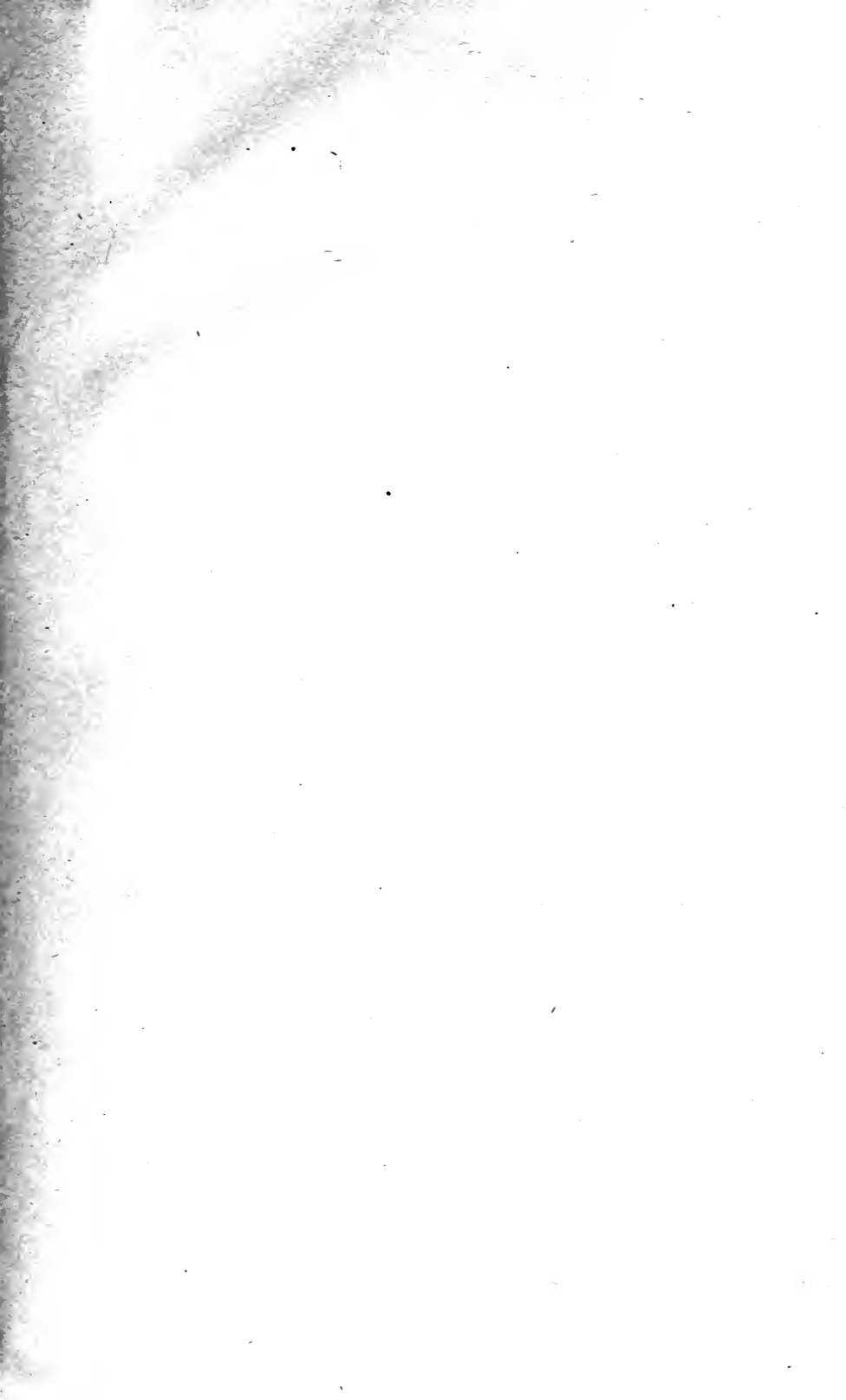
"We had all given him up for dead many weeks before he was finally brought in to our hotel, in the present town of Teller (about seven miles from the town he left) on or about September 26th, 1900. He was a strong, healthy man, of about 225 pounds in weight, and six feet and an inch and a half tall, when he started, and when brought into our place on a stretcher, was as near a skeleton as it seems possible for a living human being to be. Though I had known him intimately before he went on the trip, it was some time before I recognized him when brought in. It was about a month before he could walk across the floor. He stayed at our hotel all the terrible winter just passed, and it was predicted by a large number of the residents of this town that he would not live until spring. The last winter is reported to be the worst one that has occurred in this part of Alaska for twenty years.

T. G. WILSON,

Subscribed and sworn to before me this 11th day of October, A. D. 1901.

ROBERT M. PRICE,  
Notary Public in and for the District of Alaska.









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