



HUNTING IN THE ARCTIC

On the Trail of the Musk Ox in Ellesmere Land.

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Illustrated with Photographs by the Author

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SIPSU in the lead headed his dogs toward the open water. Oxpuddyshou and I followed, while Awhella and Tukshu were a considerable distance in the rear. Numerous cracks in the old ice, some of them very wide, crossed our path. These were covered with young ice, and before trusting his sledge upon it, cautious Sipsu tested its strength with a harpoon staff.

On this smooth, level ice the going was good and the dogs travelled at a rapid pace. We were permitted to ride, and I took advantage of the opportunity to settle comfortably upon the *komatik* for a nap. I was just dropping into a doze when suddenly the Eskimos began shouting wildly and excitedly to each other and I opened my eyes to see them turning the dogs sharply to another direction, whipping and urging them forward at the utmost speed. Something momentous had occurred, but for a time I could make nothing of it. At length, however, in a moment of calm, Oxpuddyshou told me that the ice we were on had *shad-dacood*, that is, gone adrift.

The situation was serious. Presently we reached the widening lead of green-black water that cut us off from the main body of ice, and mile after mile we raced along its edge, looking for a bridged passage. But no means of escape presented itself. With each mile the excitement of the Eskimos increased. The dogs began to tire and lag under the unusual strain. I became very nervous myself as a full realization of our precarious position forced itself upon me.

At length the men grew desperate. They ceased to follow each other and rushed off in different directions, and for several hours, widely separated, dashed hither and thither in a vain endeavor to find a means of escape.

This was the condition of affairs when we heard a shout from Sipsu, who was far to the northward. We ran in his direction, and when we reached him found that he had discovered a point where the crack which separated our floe from the main ice

was not so wide as elsewhere, while several small pans of floating ice between the two larger bodies offered a possible, though uncertain, route to safety. It was a desperate chance, but we decided to

punishment for disobedience. It became necessary at length to tie three of them securely to one end of a harpoon line, on the other end of which Sipsu hauled, while we on the ice floe pushed the animals to a near-by pan of loose ice, and utilising this pan as a ferry all the dogs and *komatiks* were at length transferred to the main ice in safety.

Tukshu had not yet arrived with his team when this was accomplished, but we had no time to look for him if we were to escape with our own lives. Farther out on the sound the ice was driving rapidly to the southward and smashing with loud and ominous reports. The lead of open water was visibly widening at our crossing point, and every moment was precious. Therefore, reluctant as we were to do so, we were forced to abandon the luckless Tukshu to his fate, and one by one made the passage on the ice raft to the main ice.

The last of us had just made the landing in safety when we heard Tukshu shout, and a few minutes later he arrived, in a state of great excitement, at the point on the floe we had just abandoned. His coming brought us relief, for he might even yet be saved, though in imminent danger now of being hopelessly cut adrift. All hands worked rapidly and feverishly. Tukshu's dogs, then his *komatik*, and finally his belongings were all successfully transferred, and at length the Eskimo himself was afloat on the ice-pan ferry. But the danger was not over.

Tukshu on a block of ice was scarcely halfway across the open lead, when with a roar like the discharge of artillery, the floe he had just left broke into three parts. An upheaval of water followed, the pan upon which Tukshu was standing turned over, and a wave broke over the main ice, running a long distance and wetting everyone to his knees.

Tukshu seemed lost, but in some manner he succeeded in reaching the main ice and was hauled upon it. The other Eskimos began at once to beat the water and quickly-formed ice out of his bearskin



A School of Walrus in the Arctic Sea.

attempt the passage.

Tukshu had not responded to Sipsu's call, but we hoped he would soon join us, and turned at once to our work. Without hesitation, Sipsu tied one end of a harpoon line about his waist as a life line, and while Oxpuddyshou and I held the other end, the venturesome Eskimo landed safely upon the first pan with a running jump. Thus he passed from pan to pan, finally reaching the main ice with no other mishap than wet feet.

Now it was a question how to induce the dogs to cross. It is difficult to force an Eskimo dog into a place where he will get wet. Among animals he is the greatest fool in this respect I have ever seen. Where one or two dogs go, however, the others will usually follow like a flock of sheep, and the problem therefore was to get some of them started.

Sipsu's dogs would not respond to his call. Their dread of the water was greater than their fear of



A Remarkable Arctic Picture—Little Auk Swimming near Etah.

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