

prairies to the Arctic Circle; he has visited the far coasts of Hudson Bay and of Labrador. He has made record journeys on snow-shoes, in dog-sleighs, on horseback, by canoe, in every way which land or sea permits. In common with most of the officers employed in the northern region by the great Company of which he is now the President, he has, I doubt not, known what it was on more than one occasion to be glad to eat his shoes; and had it pleased him to visit the Klondike last year in person he would probably have smiled to recognise in the much-talked-of hardships only a mild reminiscence of the daily round of his own early life.

I propose, with your permission, to restrict my remarks chiefly to the Klondike. But there are probably also in this room many persons who know far more than I know of the Klondike—men who have worked in the country, who have spent a longer time there than I, who have devoted more study to its conditions, and who have had a far rougher experience of its hardships. From this part of my audience I must crave indulgence if I seem in any way to make light of the obstacles encountered on the opening of the country by the pioneers. The difficulties of first entering a vast sub-arctic region, which, notwithstanding the existence of a few wandering Indian tribes, may be described as practically uninhabited, can hardly be exaggerated. It is not easy for those who live in civilisation to realise what it means to enter a country where nothing is to be bought; to have to carry everything you need, including food, upon your back; to have no means of locomotion but your own feet; to know that as you walk you are travelling further and further from all bases of supply; and to be aware that if you stray beyond the limits of the time for which you have provided there is no other end before you but an unrecorded death from starvation in the pitiless primæval woods. I am sure that I may count on the approval of experienced men when I say that the first explorers of the Yukon goldfields deserve the full admiration that splendid pluck, heroic endurance, and the attitude of mind which reckons life itself as but one of the counters of the game will always draw from those who can appreciate the value of courage in the march of life. Unless there had been men of this sort ready to lead the way, the Klondike goldfields would never have been opened to the world. Without risk no victories are won; and there can be no question that of the first lives played against success many were lost.

Between these two sections of my audience I stand abashed. I have neither the wide experience of the one, nor the claim to heroic

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