

the snowfall at the mouth of the Stikine is sometimes ten feet deep. It is not a tourist's river, but it is a grand river for salmon and glaciers and grizzlies. The road to Wrangel from Victoria lies over a dull grey sea, flecked in autumn with little vicious white waves, and pitted by wind-driven rain. At times the mists clear and the sea looks a yachtsman's paradise, but as a rule the mist hides the distance, broken only by the shaggy outlines of pine-covered islands, from which rise spouts and columns of white fog.

On the sea front of such an island lies Wrangel, a townlet, for the most part on the beach, built, of course, of wood, and inhabited by hibernating miners and fish-eating Indians.

At one end of the one street are the wharf, the few stores, and the white men. One side of this street practically overhangs the sea by only a very few feet at high tide. Beyond the stores the street becomes one-sided; there is no room for houses on the seaside, where the Indian canoes lie on the weed-covered boulders and a hundred mongrel dogs fight day and night over fish offal. At the end of all is the house of Shek, the hereditary chief of the Phlinkits, reached by a single plank bridge across a slough. Shek is the best canoe captain on the Stikine, the representative of those wild monopolists who traded with the Tal Tans; he is owner of several magnificent totem poles, up which climb the tracks of the grizzly, and which hardly seem to lie when they suggest that Shek himself and his immediate ancestors have been evolved from the bear of his native river.

There is only one residence of any importance beyond the chief's, and that is the burying-ground, over which a winged saurian (with his anatomy painted outside) watches year by year, whilst the tall weeds struggle up to hide him, and men forget those who make the weeds grow rank.

There are no suburbs, no walks, no 'buggy rides' in Wrangel. You cannot take a constitutional if you want to. There are no trails in the woods; there are no beaches by the sea. If there is anything between wood and water, it is bog and boulder.

Man's life is fashioned by his environments. At Wrangel his environments are such that he slips quite naturally from his blankets into his 'gum' boots and macintosh; then, as Wrangel is a prohibition town, he goes round to a certain place and takes a drink; then he smokes a cigar, plays a game of patience with an old pack of cards in a corner, breakfasts in a devil of a hurry, as if the necessity of supporting life alone warranted such a waste of time, and then, if energetic, he may go down