



## On the Great Sledge Journey.

AT the time of our leaving Hudson's Bay in the early spring of '78 on our long sledge-journey of a year's hard work we had forty-two very fine Eskimo dogs to pull our three heavily-laden sledges over the hard frozen snows. Among the wild Eskimo we met on that distant trip, so far away that only a very few had ever seen any white men before, we added by purchase eighteen more good dogs, making sixty in all.

When the year was gone and the journey ended with a bitter cold Arctic winter, and the joyful sight of our old home in Hudson's Bay was again brought before us, we had out of the sixty but nineteen of the faithful creatures left. Nearly all the rest had starved to death during the hard part of the trip where we had fought our way along, almost starving ourselves.

When we started in the spring of '78, we had enough good food for our forty-two animals for a number of days. A funny kind of food it was, too—great slabs of tough walrus hide, nearly two inches thick and covered with bristly hair. This we cut into strips about a foot long, and about a dozen of the strips were given to each dog. The animals were not fed

When our summer's task was done of following the lonely line of death and burying the bones, we prepared for our winter's sledge journey home to Hudson's Bay, whence next summer a ship would take us to the United States.

The first cold snap of winter—and in the Arctic regions winter sets in earlier than in our own country by two or three months—started the reindeer, now fat and in fine fur, to migrate southward where the climate would be a little milder; so we had to scurry around pretty lively to kill enough of them for clothing, bedding and meat until we should overtake them farther south again.

We were quite successful and early in November we started back, hoping and expecting to reach home in a month or two at the most—an expectation that was dragged out two or three months, even longer than that, and gave us a sledge journey through the whole of the winter, an undertaking before unknown even among the Eskimo.

Our dogs were good and strong and covered with fat when we started, and everything worked along happily enough while we were passing from one Eskimo village to the other, where we could exchange trading material for dog-food.

The last village we left November 10. As our reindeer meat was fast disappearing—we had not seen one of these animals since the seventh of October—we did not feed our dogs again until the fourteenth of the month. This day we left the head of a deep inlet and thought that by the time another four days had passed we would be at the Dangerous Rapids at the mouth of Back's Great Fish River, where natives catch fish, and where we could therefore replenish our supplies for our dogs without using more of our precious reindeer meat. Still we were traveling across a wholly unknown country, and everything was purely conjecture.

### The Main Sledge Starting.



again for two days. That is the rule on a journey, however much food may be on hand; and if there be a scarcity they may be fed only every third or even fourth day. Singular as this seems it appears yet more wonderful that the dogs will keep up their strength and spirits when doing ordinary sledging, day in and day out, and yet be fed only alternate days. I have lived directly among the Eskimo for over two years, just the same as one of them, and I never saw them feed their dogs oftener than every second day, unless it was to give them something that otherwise would be lost or spoiled.

When the walrus hide gave out, as it did in about three weeks, we had to rely on game, principally the flesh of the reindeer, over five hundred of which we killed on our year's trip. Nearly all of these we secured through the vigilance of our Eskimo hunters. Had we all been white men I believe we never could have made the trip from Hudson's Bay to the Arctic Ocean, and my belief is founded on many years' hunting experiences in the West. I feel perfectly confident that no average body of white men (we numbered seventeen in all, four being white) could have made the journey and supported the forty-two hard-working dogs with their voracious appetites. My sledge expedition would have been absolutely impossible without the aid of my Eskimo allies, and shows the folly of attempting Arctic enterprises without them and their means of life and traveling.

When we reached the Arctic Sea, we got dried fish from the natives to feed the dogs, and also killed a few seal on the ocean ice. All summer we thus kept them alive on King William's Land, and ourselves too for that matter; for we could only carry less than a month's civilized provisions and were gone within ten days of a year; therefore, when our starting-out supply was gone we had to live for nearly a year the same as the Eskimo; the same as the dogs, in fact, except that they would be stinted first in times of scarcity.

During all this long summer—when the sun never went down, when the only way we could tell midnight from noon was by noting that the sun was a little nearer the horizon at the former time although it was just as light—we were burying the scattered bones of a brave British expedition of over a hundred souls that visited that lonely island many years before and not one of whom ever returned to tell in what a dreadful way they were lost. As my little band carefully completed the last sad rites for these remains I could not help but wish that their party too had been much smaller in numbers and had added faithful natives to it, so at least a few could have escaped along the dreary coast where we were living in plenty at the corresponding time of year when they were lost.

The four days faded into five, then six. On the seventh my dog-driver, Toolooah, fed the dogs from the reindeer meat. I had felt as if I must have them fed before, but I fully comprehended that he knew the best and I must let him have his way about the poor beasts.

Then came another long stretch of six days, till November 28, before the dogs were again fed; and now only lightly.

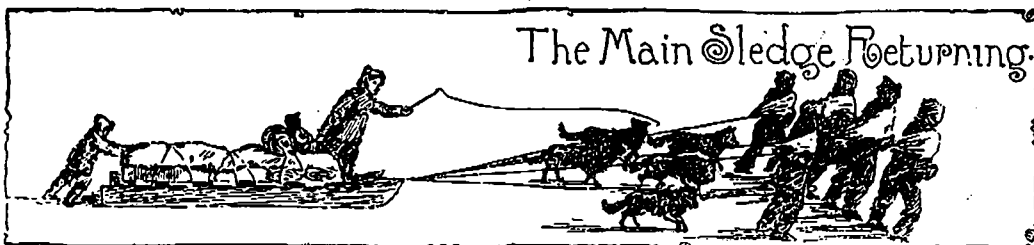
Then came the third stretch without food—an interval of seven days, which ended on the fifth day of December when we reached the Rapids, and found a huge cairn of fish put up by the Eskimo. This we bought, and gave our poor polar puppies a most royal feed. The thermometer had been as low as minus forty degrees. We had traveled nearly two hundred miles, and the intervals of feeding had been, for three times, about a week apart—yet not a single dog of the nineteen in my sledge had succumbed, although each one had dragged over double his own weight through it all. Such a trip would have killed every dog of any other breed but these from this part of Eskimo land, while white men pulling such a sledge with such a load would have starved before they had made one-third of the way. Little enough do we know about winter travel in comparison with the northern natives. In as cunning a way as one could devise they cover the bottom of their broad sledge runners with ice which makes it so slippery that a dog can pull four or five times his own weight on a sledge on the best snow; without this ice he probably could not pull one-quarter as much. One who has not seen this great aid to sledging cannot imagine what a help it is; and when I read of the many Arctic sledge-trips by those who know nothing of it my admiration for their doing so well under such difficulties as many of them have had, is fully equal to my pity that they did not know how to wipe half or two-thirds their labors away. It is an intricate and delicate affair, known only to perfection among the Eskimo.

We left the kind Eskimo on Back's River December 12, having been joined by my other two sledges. From now on, the

thermometer sank to 60°—65° and once 60°, and the gentlest zephyrs cut like razors. We had supposed we would make twenty or thirty miles a day on the level ice of the river and be home by New Year's. But instead of being better sledging it was much worse than on the rolling land, and we seldom made over five or six miles a day. So at last we left the river and started straightway across the hills.

On the third of January it was seventy-one below zero—one hundred and three degrees below freezing—the coldest weather on the trip and the coldest ever endured by white men traveling, for that day we moved camp ten or twelve miles farther on. Our fish were now rapidly disappearing, and coupled with the intense cold and hard work our poor dogs were faring badly. At the time we left the river we had lost one fine dog. We were stripped of all but nineteen when we reach Hudson's Bay. Worst of all our fatty food was entirely gone. With a goodly amount of this a person or an animal can resist bitter cold; but the lean and blue reindeer meat gave but little sustenance to the poor brutes doing such hard work in such severe weather. There was none too much to give them either, so short were the days—but two or three hours long—in which our Eskimo could hunt them. All this told terribly. Hardly a day passed that we did not lose a dog or two.

They were through all this horrible time perfect respecters of their human allies, and the little children used to go among them and play with them by pelting them over the back with their toy whips; and yet the same dogs were starving and should one of them die his comrades would eat him. I notice this particularly as some sensational writers have tried to make their readers believe that the Eskimo dogs are liable to become dangerous fellows even to a powerfully built man, when simply hungry, and to be worse than wild beasts when ravenous. It is true that so wild are they for food after long deprivation that their actions might be taken by people with timorous natures for intentions to devour a person; but any onslaught of Eskimo dogs is unknown among the northern natives where I traveled. It was pitiable in the extreme to see their sufferings as they so devotedly helped us along, many of them up to the very minute they had to be taken from the harness and abandoned on the road. Our Eskimo hunters made heroic efforts at hunting, but the Arctic day was so short and reindeer and musk-oxen so scarce that in order to



### The Main Sledge Returning.

give the poor dogs any we often had to reduce our own food supply which we cheerfully did.

As they dropped out along the way, we harnessed ourselves in their places to the sledge-traces, and it was only thus we were not compelled to abandon important parts of our load.

About the middle of February, the wolves began to trouble us, and although they killed four of our nearly famished dogs at the very doors of our snow-houses, we rather welcomed the sight of them, as we knew their presence indicated our nearness to the reindeer-hunting grounds of the Hudson Bay Eskimo, and that we were therefore nearly home, and might fall in with natives we knew at any time. In fact, the latter part of February we saw a Kinnepetoo Eskimo, and from him got help to reach our old home with our nineteen dogs, all that was left of sixty, about two-thirds of that loss being purely from starvation. FREDERICK SCHWARZKA.

### Time.

A frolicking fellow is Time!

He stirs young hearts to a vague desire;  
He blossoms the rose; he buds the briar;  
He frets the ivy to start and climb;  
He tunes the world to a summer rhyme.  
Oh, a frolicking fellow is Time!

A treacherous tyrant is Time!

Young hearts' desires he ne'er fulfills;  
He blights the rose, and the bud he kills.  
The garden gathers his gift of grime;  
The still pool sleeps 'neath his sheet of slime.  
Oh, a treacherous tyrant is Time!

A comforting comrade is Time!

He heals young hearts of their piercing pain  
With his soothing similes and restful rain;  
The bare world gives he a robe of rime,  
Till it glisters far like a thing sublime.  
Oh, a comforting comrade is Time!