

treatment of this sort, but that was no more than I expected. So long as my feet did not freeze to stop my progress, I suffered all else without a murmur. I was as careful of my feet as of my eyes. There was not much danger of their freezing during the almost continuous running of the daytime, and at night when we camped my first act was to put on my unborn musk-ox skin slippers and a pair of fresh duffel, which I carried inside my shirt, next my skin; then I would put on two more pair of duffel and a pair of moccasins, taken from my sledge. Those I took off I put inside my sweater and slept on them. In the morning I again put my musk-ox-skin slippers and one pair of duffel inside my shirt, where I carried them all day.

But then these are details—and probably uninteresting ones—and I must get on to my first musk-ox hunt.

Two days more of hard running, in a wind that seemed to come direct from the north pole, brought us—we did not know where, but certainly once again to the verge of starvation. Meat there was none, and the little pieces of intestines and grease were not calculated to keep one up to such vigorous work. There had been no change in the country; indeed, the entire stretch of Barren Ground, so far as I saw, repeats over and again its few characteristics. Probably as you go north it becomes a little more rolling, if I may use such a word, where its face is broken by ridges of rock, round-backed and conical hills, small lakes, long, slow-rising and moderate elevations, all entirely unconnected and separated from one another, and yet the view from an especially prominent elevation always reveals the general prairie (rolling) contour of the whole benighted country. And everywhere silence; no sign of life, no vegetation, save the black moss that is used for fuel in summer by the Indians, and the gray moss and lichens upon which the musk-ox and caribou feed.

It was about three o'clock when we dragged ourselves wearily to the top of one of the many rocky ridges we had been going up and down all day, almost dreading to make the usual survey for the game we had looked for so often and in vain during the last two days. One quick, eager glance, that turned to despair as neither musk-ox nor caribou was to be seen in any direction, and we sat down to

draw consolation and nourishment from our pipes.

Suddenly keen-eyed Beniah jumped to his feet, and then on top of a rock, where he stood excitedly pointing to the northwest, and tremulously repeating *ethen, ethen*, as though to convince himself that his eyes were not playing him false. We were all standing in a second, staring into the horizon where Beniah pointed; but I could not discover anything, except what seemed to be a vapor coming up out of the rocks four miles away, and that I did not at once recognize as the mist which arises from a herd of animals when the mercury is ranging between 60° and 70° below zero, and may be seen five miles away on a clear day. A long look through my field-glasses told me the "rocks" were animals of some sort, but not caribou; and as I handed the glasses to Beniah I said, "*Ethen, illa*," and motioned him to look. I think he was nearly as much exercised by the power of the glasses as by the prospect of game: at all events, so soon as he got them ranged on the vapor he set up a yell that I interpreted to mean *ejeri*, and made a rush for his sledge.

Instantly there was excitement enough on top of that ridge to put life into eight hungry men. I never beheld such agitation. The Indians for a minute huddled together, chattering and grinning and gesticulating, and then each man rushed to his sledge and began slipping his dogs from the harness. I knew then we had sighted musk-ox. Of course I had suited my action to the Indians, and began unhitching my dogs also, but my harness came from the fort and had buckles, which in the bitter cold were unyielding, and by the time I had got all my dogs loose, put on my lighter capote—for I saw we were in for a long run—and strapped on my cartridge-belt, all the Indians and all the dogs had several hundred yards start, and were going along at a rattling pace. I saw at once that it was every man for himself on this expedition, and if I got a musk-ox I should have to work for him. And then I settled grimly to the business of running. Within about two miles I had caught up with the Indians, who had stretched out into a long column, with Seco and Echeena leading by half a mile. In another mile I had worked my way through the stragglers, and was hard on the heels of Echeena, but Seco was still