

west ; and finally, after traversing the whole width of Alaska, arrives at the Behring Sea, its entire course being considerably over two thousand miles. For a considerable distance it is a broad and deep stream, so that one may go quite through the center of Alaska, from sea to sea, by crossing only thirty miles or so of land. This little geographical explanation has been made so that the plan of our trip may be clearly understood. There are various routes across the coast mountains to the various heads of this river. Of these we chose that over the Chilkoot Pass, which is the shortest, although the mountains which must be thereby crossed are higher than on any of the other routes.

After a few days in Juneau, making the necessary preparations, we bade good-bye to civilization for good, and engaged passage on a little tug for Dyea, a more eastward point on the coast, where we were to begin our inland journey. The *Scrambler*, as the boat was called, had been originally designed for freight, but had been pressed into the passenger service without the formality of making alterations. A dozen men might have made themselves comfortable in her, but our load comprised fifty or sixty. They were mostly miners and prospectors, with pick, gold-pan, and flour-sacks, striking out for the rumored Golden Land in the interior. With one of these miners, who had prospected and mined in Alaska for many years, we entered into an agreement to travel together as far as he was going. De Windt's party of three were on the same boat. Among the other passengers were two men who had undertaken to carry the first regular mail into the Yukon district, and a Catholic priest bound for his mission among the Esquimaux on the lower river. We were huddled together so closely that we perforce became speedily acquainted, for although the space on the floor was large enough for all of us to sit down, there was hardly room to stretch out. When we grew weary of chatting, however, and of listening to the sound of the water as the boat threshed its way onward, we were forced by drowsiness to sleep where we could, and soon sleepers were scattered around in the most grotesque and uncomfortable attitudes. I had coveted a space

on or under the little table used for eating purposes, but found that choice position fully occupied before I made up my mind to retire ; but I finally wedged myself into a narrow space between the boiler and the pilot-house, where, throughout the night, passers continually stepped on my head. However, I slept several hours.

The system of eating is worthy of note. The table accommodated about six at a time, whereas, as I have mentioned, we were fifty or sixty in all. At each meal one or two, or sometimes three, sets of passengers would be fed ; then the captain, the sailor, the Chinese cook, and the dish-washer, after which the rest of us got our rations, in good time. As we grew very hungry during this process, we would stand around patiently waiting our chance to slip in ; but sometimes before we had tasted the tempting liver and coffee (to say nothing of the beans), we would be summarily ejected by the dish-washer, who was a very young man of dashing exterior and peculiar vocabulary, and who would disperse us with the assertion that "By—, the crew is going to eat now."

The day was foggy and rainy, and the sea quite rough. The Lynn Canal, up which we were steaming, is a long, deep, narrow fjord, from which the cold, snowy mountains to the north rise steeply to lonely heights. On this day the fog hid the precipices partly from view, giving us mostly half-veiled glimpses, strangely distorted. At times we saw a slim waterfall leaping down ; and here and there stood great broad glaciers, stretching from the clouds nearly down to the sea. These glaciers, like all that I have seen in Alaska, have wonderful purity of color. The predominating tint is a beautiful robin's-egg blue, which changes into pure white in the upper part, where the solid ice grades into the less compact frozen snow. Their surfaces are fantastically carved—pinnacled and turreted ; and irregular masses stand out in relief, which the imagination can transform into strange groups of figures. These surroundings produced upon me an uncanny sensation, which I think was shared by others on board. It seemed a gigantic, gloomy country, a fit abode for wild beasts and wild men, but, as one of the miners expressed it, "no place for a white man to live."

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