

Wright's Wk.
Nov. 1900

NORTHERN INDIAN AND DOG SLEDGE (Igloos in the background).

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A DAY'S WORK OF AN ARCTIC HUNTER

STARTING BY AURORAL LIGHT AND RUNNING OVER ICE FOR TWELVE HOURS—A 10 x 11 FOOT HOUSE FOR NINETEEN PEOPLE AND THREE DOGS—SLEEPING IN AN AIR-TIGHT HUT

BY

A. J. STONE

ARCTIC EXPLORER IN THE INTERESTS OF THE AMERICAN MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY

[The experience of Mr. Stone, the Arctic hunter, has been an exceedingly interesting one. Five years ago he was engaged in business in Montana, but his whole interest was in natural history. With the support of the American Museum of Natural History, he prepared himself for an Arctic journey by the most rigorous training—starting out in the morning, for instance, without breakfast, and climbing over the mountains all day long without touching food. He started on his first Arctic trip in 1896. For four years he was exploring the northern interior and coast-line from Seattle to a point about two hundred miles east of Franklin Bay, travelling in one sledding trip, along the coast, more than a thousand miles. Of the country through which he travelled comparatively little was known. Mr. Stone during his journeys corrected and made exact the undefined geography of the northern coast; compiled a list of the region's fauna, and added to our knowledge, among other animals, a new mountain sheep, the *Ovis Stonei*, and a new caribou; and made a close study of the northern tribes, both Indian and Eskimo, most interesting in its detail. Indeed he has observed most carefully two tribes which, we believe, have never been scientifically described. In the present sketch he tells of a unique day's work done on Christmas Day, 1898, near the mouth of the Mackenzie River. This magazine will contain from time to time vivid stories of what "a day's work" means to men in different walks of life, and this lifelike picture forms an excellent introduction to the series.]

THREE weeks passed rapidly at Herschel's Island, with the colony of Noonitagmiot Eskimo to amuse and interest us, and December was already half gone when we started back to Fort McPherson. Progress was slow, and with storms and bad sledding it was Christmas when I reached Oak Pik again.

Christmas comes to the fields of ice and snow as surely as it comes to the land of flowers, but not a Christmas of chiming bells and laughter and play. Out on the masses of ice that break in the wind and current, the great ice-bears of the Eskimo growl and fight over a seal they have caught or the stranded

carcass of a giant bow-head; and in the mountains, the home of the reindeer, the wolves are plotting for their holiday feast; while the traveller, facing the icy wind, tingles at its touch and shivers as he thinks of the South.

The coast was low and treeless, with no living thing in sight except my Indians and dogs. Beyond was the monotonous stretch of country which forms the delta of the Mackenzie River. We were still one hundred and eighty miles from camp, and the hardest part of the journey was before us, for we had hitherto been travelling on hard ice and snow, and the soft snow of the sheltered places was still to be passed.