

DEATH BY STARVATION

(Continued from page 1.)

others alone prevented the starving men from eating human flesh for the meat was almost ready to serve.

Was it chance or was it a Divine Providence which prompted Riech and Woods to stop their boat upon that particular sand bar and discover in the distance a peculiar looking boat, proceed to examine and finally to catch the sound of a faint whistle and hear the feeble cry of "For God's sake don't leave us; we are starving!" Who can say?

To empty the boiling pot of its gruesome contents and prepare a gruel for the surviving men was but the work of a moment. Giving such nourishment as was deemed best, the two living skeletons were tenderly placed in the canoe and by night they reached Teller and immediately willing hands attended their every want.

The dead body of George Dean was left where found but his pocketbook which was removed, contained a letter.

The following letter which was dated July 20th showed evidence of having been carried some time in a pocketbook, for the folded corners were worn off, and the red stains appearing upon it from the leather showed very plainly that the book had been in contact with water. This portion of the letter is written with a purple indelible lead pencil:

July 20, 1901.

Finder will recognize by this paper the body of George Dean of Canton, Ohio, U. S. A. Who with his two companions Jack Huston of Nome and Joseph C. Thiery of Davenport, Iowa, left their camp on Clara creek a tributary to Quartz creek in the Good Hope district with the intention of returning to Nome for New Supplies. Being without sufficient food and not able to find anybody nor could we cross the river we were compelled to starve. We are at present 22 days away from camp.

George Dean is a Free Mason and his sincere wish is to have his death reported to the Lodge at Nome. Proof of his being a member can be found at the Hiram Lodge No. 26 Canton, Ohio. Also like to have my family to be notified of my death and proof sent home of my being deceased.

Address of my wife, Anna Louise Dean, 1000 Lafayette Street, Canton, Ohio.

I also wish the Masons to take charge of my body and act as they think best with it to dispose of. Fraternal,

GEORGE DEAN,

Canton, Ohio.

This in black pencil follows the last will and testament of a man in possession of all his faculties of body and mind dying by inches from the lack of proper nourishment, but a careful examination shows that both letters were written by another beside an Englishman whose name might be George, for the signature appears spelled "Georg."

The interview with Thiery, printed below, explains that Dean dictated and Thiery wrote the letters.

What follows is without date and appears upon the last page of the same piece of folded note paper.

I George Dean born in London England 25th day of January, 1850. I pay the Masonic order will take charge of my effects that may be found on my body or in Nome with the exception of all clothing that my companion Joseph Thiery may need for his benefit. He being the one that has rendered us the most assistance in trying to save our lives by building a boat out of canvass and willows which he found in the swamps as I feel that I am near the end of this life. I pray that you will tell my wife that I die a Christian and that my last prayer is for her and dear family. Good bye friends.

GEORGE DEAN.

God's will be done. Amen.

Dr. Bates in whose charge the two men were placed upon their arrival in Teller, was seen by a News man as soon as he had waited upon his patients and in response to questions said:

"Huston is a living skeleton, and could not have lived another 24 hours. He is in a much more serious condition than was Mr. James Hall who, you will remember, spent 62 days last fall under similar circumstances."

"His mental faculties, however, are as keen as ever and with careful nursing he will pull through."

"Thiery would have been good for another ten days for he is a man of powerful frame and great enduring powers. His recovery will be complete in a month."

"We were all in very fair condition when we started for Teller, and made the trip of 15 miles to the head of Quartz creek in good time. When we arrived there a storm was raging and the creek was so full of water it was impossible for us to follow it down. We then returned to Quartz or Clara creek where we remained until the middle of June. The flour we had left when we made our first start, had dwindled down until we had but enough to make four loaves, and a pint of bread. With this small supply we again started for Teller, this time

headed for Burk creek, in order to cut off 16 miles of the distance. Arriving at Burk creek we found it so full of water that it would be dangerous to cross, and we decided to stick to the divide, following it down to the Agiak, where we expected to fall in with some other party. We would travel for 20 hours at a stretch and after a few hours rest get up and go at it again. When we saw Salt lake we headed for that, but when we thought we were nearly there, we came to deep marshes or sloughs, 10 to 20 miles long. Being unable to cross these we started back for the Agiak river expecting to strike it farther up and continue down the river to the lake. In our trip back to the river, we came to a slough that extended back from the lake, bench upon bench, for at least 20 miles, to the mountains.

"Huston who up to this time had held on bravely, gave out and asked and I to leave him, to either get assistance or save ourselves. I left Dean and Huston there and walked to the top of the divide, about five miles distant, from which I could see the Agiak. I then returned and helping up Huston, whose legs had become partially paralyzed, continued on tramp. Dean by this time had become so weak that he could not carry the gun, and every time that we stopped he would pitch forward upon his face, or while walking would fall asleep and drop.

In my condition it would take a mighty effort to get him to walking. Then the hallucination seemed to take possession of him that he was a drag upon the party, and he repeatedly asked to be left behind. "We came to another slough about 15 feet wide. The boys had not strength enough left to attempt to go around it, so I built a bridge of willows and our six pack straps and one at a time I got them over."

"After following down the Agiak for 30 or 40 miles, we arrived opposite the lower village. I left the boys here and went down the river two miles where I came to a slough that I knew could not be crossed, but I found a little igloo about six feet in diameter, where I brought the boys and made camp.

"While at this igloo we could hear shots every night, but could not locate the direction from which the sounds came. I found a rope of three strands ten feet long, and with this and several logs I made a raft with which I intended to cross the river and procure help from the village. After building my raft I found that it would not sustain my weight, so I had to give up the idea of crossing. Later I found an Indian corpse rolled in a light canvas about 15 by 20 feet in size, from which I made a boat eight feet in length by four in width. It was too rotten to hold me up and I nearly drowned trying to row it. But the boat subsequently saved our lives as it was that which attracted the attention of our rescuers.

"About five days before we were found, Dean asked me to write a statement which he wished to dictate and which I did. (This is the letter which appears above.) Dean had seemed to be reviving physically, with his rest, but he was still laboring under the delusion that he was in the way, and begged me to shoot him and put him out of his misery. He said that every bone in his body ached and he was suffering untold agony. He suggested to us that with his flesh we might sustain life until someone found us."

"The following day I found a partly decomposed ptarmigan with which I made soup and a stew, dividing it equally among us. This was the last we had to eat until we were found, and the following day I almost broke down myself.

"The night of the 19th, Huston and I talked the matter over, and decided that unless we were rescued the next day we would act upon Dean's suggestion.

"He died at 3 o'clock the next morning and (here Thiery's voice broke down and he wept); at 8 I cut a piece from his thigh about three inches long and to the bone, and after removing the skin and outer flesh I placed it in the cot to boil. We decided to let it cook at least two hours and while we were waiting we heard a voice. I immediately said to Huston that Dean was not dead and was talking to us. He said that it could not be, and I looked out and saw two men with a canoe, whom I called, and we were saved. I then threw the pot and its contents into the river, and I thank God that I was saved from this last extreme."

During the latter part of this interview, Thiery could not hold back the tears. He is deeply grateful to a kind providence which saved him from an act that would have haunted him the balance of his days, and to the people who saved him from death. He cannot say enough of the men who found them.

Huston who was too weak to talk much, says that Thiery is a hero. That he (Huston) and Dean asked repeatedly to be left behind, but Thiery's



only reply was, "I'll never leave you. I'll stay to the death."

The news of the awful death of Dean and the miraculous saving of his comrades spread like wild fire.

Fortunately U. S. Commissioner Ben L. Miller, ex-officio coroner of the Agiak district was in Teller and he in company with Commissioner Galen organized a party consisting of Commissioners Galen and Miller, Dr. U. C. Bates, Attorney Charles Udell, "Slim" McRae, E. C. Allen, James Turner, Louis Reich and George Woods and about 1 o'clock on Sunday morning with the launch "Lizzie M." left Teller for the scene of starvation, death and mutilation.

The spot was reached about noon and the body found as described. It was a sight to make the stoutest heart quail and the assembled men, used as they were to scenes of distress and suffering, shuddered as they viewed the emaciated skeleton of what but a short time before was a strong healthy man in the prime of life.

Myriads of vermin were found on the body, hair, beard and in the sunken eyes. The party was face to face with by far the most appalling picture that human eyes ever gazed upon—a human body with the bone laid bare and confronted with the realization that the missing flesh which once encased it had by necessity been used to keep the spark of life in the dying body of a comrade.

One look and the stout men turned away. Deftly the accompanying surgeon dressed the body and wrapped in canvass it was carried to the launch.

Returning to Teller the remains were placed in charge of Marshal Evans, and as we go to press, 11 o'clock a. m., the inquest is being held.

The body will be turned over to the Masons, in accordance with the request of deceased. It is understood the funeral will occur at 4 p. m. today.

Huston was born in Liverpool, England, and 45 years of age. He has a brother who has served 30 years in the American navy.

Thiery is a German, but calls Davenport, Iowa, his home. He is 33 years of age, but looks to be 45 today.

The foregoing is verified by Clarence Berry who saw and talked with one of the survivors prior to leaving Teller. According to the narrator the half of the awful ordeal which he underwent has not been told, nor could words fittingly describe it. Mr. Berry has several photographs of the scene of desolation and death taken by one of the party who returned after the body of Dean after the rescuers had arrived at Teller with the living. One of the photos shows Dean as he was found lying in his bunk dead after the flesh had been removed from his leg by his partners for the purpose of making the stew. He also possesses as a gruesome souvenir a piece of the flesh taken from the pot after it was cooked and just as it was about to be eaten by the famishing men.

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H. A. Brigham, who is reported as one of the Islander's victims, was one of the half dozen hydraulic miners of the world. He was one of those like Hamilton Smith, James O'Brien, E. Perkins and Joseph McGilivray, who built up the California system of hydraulic mining in the '70's, the first work of the kind done of any moment and which has been but little improved since. It is now, in fact, the standard of the mining world.

At the close of the celebrated Debris fight in California's Hamilton Smith went to London and formed the London Exploration Co., which now owns the Treadwell and other famous mines all over the world. Hamilton Smith handled more mining millions than Cecil Rhodes even.

Mr. Brigham was the successor of Hamilton Smith as manager of the North Bloomfield hydraulic mines in California, the largest in the world. He came there from the Cherokee mines, where he was succeeded by Gardner Williams who at the time of the Boer war was drawing \$60,000 a year as manager of the De Beers diamond mines at Kimberley.

In the employ of the London Exploration Co. Mr. Brigham visited many parts of the world. He was sent to Byrrmah to expert some ruby mines; then to Brazil, then Bolivia, then Mexico, then Caribou, and the North-western states.

In 1899 he came to Dawson for the London Exploration Co., and last year went out by way of Nome. This summer he was sent to the Porcupine district south of Skagway, and particularly to expert the copper deposits of Rainy Hollow upon which Henry Bratnaber, representing the same company, had already reported. He thought this a good opportunity of taking a run from Skagway to Dawson to visit his son, who was acting manager of the Hunker creek concession until it closed down and is now with the Anglo-Klondike Mining Co. at Fox gulch. He left here two weeks ago.

Mr. Brigham was about 64 years of age, small in stature but of iron muscles and of a mentality toughened by obstacles overcome, of the greatest mining ventures all over the world. Among mining men his name and ability is well known and venerated.

Mr. Nelson A. Soggs has sold his interest in the jewelry business to his partner Mr. Vesco who is now continuing the business on Second street opposite the Bank of British North America.

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