

rests on the inside of a sledge loaded with ten days' provisions in the bottom layer. Four men and six dogs were ready on deck with a sledge or such an emergency. Details had been made for the party, and at a moment's notice they could have started.

In a few words Captain Schley gave me an inkling of his plans: "If the whalers show disposition to push on, I'll send the *Bear* after them while I pick up Colwell and keep hands to the land. If the whalers stay with us, we will go up the coast together."

A word in explanation: From Cape York Littleton Island there are two routes, one close in shore, the other up the center of Smith Sound. The whalers could have slipped out of sight to the westward, bound apparently for Lancaster Sound, and then could have turned up this middle passage, and gone directly to Littleton Island while we were rounding the coast, which it was our bounden duty to do. It was a question with the whalers whether to try for the \$25,000 reward, or take advantage of their early arrival in the fishing-grounds. The reward was equivalent to several good whales, and might induce them to take the greater risks of Smith Sound.

Meanwhile we approached Cape York. The distances shortened. The *Bear* reached the floe; black objects appeared on the ice, and shining with which our strong glass told us to be Colwell and his party dragging their boat toward the open water immediately off the Cape. The *Volf* simply touched her nose to the ice, as if saluting the headland, then turned, and was off to the westward. The *Bear* steamed out to the eastward and tried a narrow lead that promised to carry her closer in shore. The *Aurora*, to our surprise, lowered a boat, and her captain was rowed toward us. While he was pulling over to us, the captain and I descended from the cro' nest. I welcomed Captain Fairweather, a red-faced, honest-looking Scotchman, as he came over the side, and escorted him to Captain Schley. "There is your path, Captain," the whaler said; "keep close to the land! Mine lies yonder," he added, pointing to the south-west. "Good luck to ye, and God grant that ye may find the poor fellows alive and well!" A word of thanks for his kind visit, a grasp of his hand, and he was off.

Then the question arose,—"What are the intentions of the whalers?" Their pretensions were for Lancaster Sound. In two hours they will be out of sight and able to turn toward Littleton Island. There seemed but one thing to do—follow them! Signaling to the *Bear* to come over to us, Captain Schley instructed them to "take the middle passage; leave records at Cape Parry, and wait for us

at Littleton Island." Captain Emory waved his "Aye! aye!" from his cro' nest, and turned to the westward in pursuit of the black smoke of the *Aurora*, that was already on the horizon.

We turned our attention to Colwell, who could not be seen from the deck; but the lookout in the cro' nest soon discovered him, and indicated the direction the ship should take to intercept him. He had not yet reached the shore. We steamed around and approached the group that had halted for some reason. The word came down from the nest: "There is a native with him!" All glasses were at once turned upon the party. We could see the dory hauled up on the floe, and the men gathered about a native, who stood beside his sled in a frightened, undecided attitude. In a few moments the *Thetis* was near them. Colwell reported that he had learned by signs that no white men were in the neighborhood. The native was questioned again, and fed; we loaded his sledge with a generous supply of salt meat and bread, and then allowed him to go. He snapped his whip to arouse his sleeping team of dogs, untangled their traces, started them off on a good gallop, then sprang upon his sledge and disappeared behind the hummocks.

We started northward again, having taken on Colwell and his party, and kept close to the shore. We reached Conical Rock at three in the afternoon, and deposited a record on its western end. Arctic postal arrangements require the correspondent to seal his letter in a bottle and then place it in a cone-shaped pile of rocks on some prominent cliff or peak. It is customary to plant a flag or a stick in the top of the cone, so as to attract the attention of passing ships. This is what is known as a *cairn*. When provisions are stored under a pile of rocks, it is called a *cache*.

An attempt to find a lead at midnight resulted in failure, and we put back to our old moorings. At noon of the 19th we tried again, and with great difficulty forced our way through the heavy but soft ice that lay off the Petowik Glacier and Cape Atholl. Midnight found us at Wolstenholme Island, where we left a record, and then visited Saunders' Island. There the natives knew nothing of white men, save a story, more or less legendary, that was supposed by us to refer to Captain Hall and the *Polaris*. Cape Parry was reached about noon of the 20th, and we left a cairn and record there. We had carefully scanned the coast for any traces of life, but nothing had been discovered. We passed Northumberland and Hakluyt islands at evening-time, and finally, on the morning of the 21st, reached Littleton Island and made fast to an iceberg within two hun-