

So they tried to rush it. They druv on ahead through storms and snows for eight on nine days, getting every day desperater and desperater, and then struck the Fraser, well up above the Canons. Of course, this was before the Gov'ment had blasted out that a——d road that has let all the blanked Chinamen into the back country; and the Scotchmen knew there was full three weeks more of the very roughest sort of travel before 'em, even if they followed the very trickiest trail, and a good deal longer if they took the safer grades—let alone the snows were gettin' deeper and deeper.

"It was on a Wednesday that they sat down and reckoned it out, and, being desperate and dead broke, and not caring much which way things went—because they were just sick of the whole thing—they said 'Yale or Hell before Sunday,' and made up their minds to chance which. They took their axes and worked like devils, and in two days fixed up a rough log-raft. They tore up their blankets to make lashings, and fixed it as strong as they knew how with these and wooden bolts, and set up two steerin' oars between pins, and struck their picks deep into the timbers to give 'em something to hold to in the riffles; and then it was 'All clear?' 'Le' go!'—and off they went!

"Now you all know what the Fraser's like!"

Here the Old Man paused to shift his plug to the other cheek, and it gave us time to get well into our minds the memory of that great swirling river, reeling with speed between mountain cliffs that the clouds hang over like rafters, and out of it the sound of the groaning and thumping of great rocks rolling over and over along the bottom that rises above all the tumult of its waters.