



GOING FISHING.

each side of the room. A dirt floor about seven feet square was left in the center, and on this the fire burned and the pot of halibut boiled merrily. Our arrival was hailed with stolid indifference. The family circle reclined and squatted as usual, and went on with the apparently enjoyable occupation of scooping up handfuls of raw herring-roe, which they munched with great gusto. Sitka Jack was absent on a trading expedition to the Chilkáht kwáhn or tribe. One of his brothers-in-law was chief of this tribe, and being a one-eyed despot of sanguinary principles not only held his tribe under absolute control, but inspired his relatives and connections with wholesome awe. His sister, Mrs. "Sitka Jack," was, therefore, a person of great consequence, and her influence surpassed even the usual wonderful authority of the Alaskan women. Evidently she was the head of the house, and as such she received us haughtily. She weighed at least two hundred pounds. She gave us her terms, pointed coldly at the slaves she would send with us, and told us she was the sister of the terrible Chilkáht chief. As we still hesitated, she threw her weight into the scale, and said she would go with us and protect us. We could not get one of the great canoes

holding from sixty to eighty warriors, but finally closed a bargain with Tah-ah-nah-klékh for his canoe, of about four tons burden. He was to act as pilot and steersman. We hired Nah-sach, Klen, and Jack as crew. Jack, our interpreter, was a Sitka Indian who had a smattering of mongrel Russian and English. Myers went with us as prospector and miner.

We had accumulated a cargo that looked fully twice the size of the canoe, which, like all of her kind, was as buoyant as a bladder, as graceful as a gull, and very capacious, so that by skillful stowage we loaded in the entire cargo and left room for ourselves; that is, we could swing our paddles, but we could not change our seats. Jack, or Sam as we had newly named him, was fond of "Hoo-chinoo." This is a native distilled liquor, colorless and vilely odorous. The stills are large tin oil-cans, and the coils are giant kelp. The Sitkans never set forth on an expedition of unusual importance without first getting beastly drunk. Sam had evidently gauged the importance of this expedition as immense. We loaded him in as cargo, and waited for the last man, Myers, who presently appeared, dragging at the end of a rope a half-grown black dog. Myers took his place, his canine friend was put