

AN EXPEDITION INTO THE ARCTIC REGIONS

"Lucky" Scott and some of the argonauts that went with him early in the summer of 1912, in quest of a golden fleece that was supposed to be hidden up in the Arctic regions, drifted back to New York, and reported that no gold was found, at least of the sort that could be taken away with profit, but there were whole heaps of adventure including the rescue of a ship's crew from the ice and a few narrow escapes of the sort that Mr. Scott has grown accustomed to; and such a store of furs, ivory, whalebone, and other valuable commodities were brought back that the leader of the expedition figured out there ought to be a handsome profit for "Northern Ventures, Ltd.," as the company interested is called.

Incidentally the members of the expedition did missionary work of a certain kind while in the northern latitudes. They taught the Arctic belies the American turkey trot, to the accompaniment of ragtime tunes from phonographs, and it is anticipated that this winter many an igloo will lose its somnolent characteristics, and echo with Eskimo endeavors to perpetuate the "poultry of motion" as some one has termed the dance, admitting, of course, that an igloo can echo.

Of course, Mr. Scott is not "Lucky" by name. He is A. W. Scott of Toronto. "Lucky" is a characteristic that has been his in mining and other ventures. His companions—and most of them, it is understood, were shareholders in the company—were Americans and Canadians. At a reunion in the Social Hall, at the west end of the Waldorf Astoria, held shortly after the return of the party, Mr. Scott, with an occasional consultation of the diary he carried in his vest pocket, when it came to giving a date, told the story of the trip.

"We chartered the Neptune, an old sealer 205 feet long, at St. John's," said Mr. Scott. "She was the boat that had been engaged by the Dominion Government many times for Arctic expeditions, and was used in the Greeley Relief Expedition. She carried, beside our party, a crew of 24 men. Of course, our main object was to look for gold.

There was another expedition, commanded by a Capt. Munn, an Englishman, that left St. John's 20 days ahead of us. They had an old British gunboat called the Algerine, which had been reconstructed into a sealer. We both started for supposed goldfields of the Salmon River, a tributary of Pond's Inlet, on Baffin's Bay, in latitude 72 degrees, 20 minutes north. Their ship was crushed by the ice in a gale on the 16th of July and sank. The crew took to the ice with provisions of only three barrels of biscuit. We picked them up at Button's Point on August 1st.

"We left St. John's July 15th, and struck ice just as we were entering Davis Strait. According to the old sealers we had on board, the Neptune was the first ship that ever went north through the Middle Baffin's Pack. We bucked the ice for six hundred miles, and several times it looked as if we might be stuck in a pack for eighteen months. The only diversion in this time was afforded by polar bears, of which we killed many. It was on this part of the journey that we got a young polar bear that Osgood Pell brought home for the Bronx Zoo. We had killed its mother and I lassoed the cub while it was swimming.

"We were 19 days in this ice, clearing it at Pond's Inlet. There Vassar and myself left the ship and went ashore to prospect for gold. We took no provisions, intending to depend upon our rifles. We made the journey with a small dory, a sledge, and dogs. It was twenty days before we could get back to the ship, and those on board thought we were lost, and spent the time in trying to reach us, but the ice kept them away. We had expected to get back to the ship in three or four days. The journey ashore had to be made over ice through open spaces of water. It was 26 miles to the shore, and it took us from early in the morning to nightfall. We had taken Eskimos on board, and with us on the journey to the shore were four of them, two men and two women.

"We found the country thereabout was inhabited by Eskimos, and we traded a good deal with them, getting many furs and much ivory and some valuable whalebone. The biggest animal in the region is the polar bear, and there are lots of duck, on which we practically had to live.

"We spent the whole time ashore in prospecting along the banks of the Salmon River. The country proved to be a gneiss and granite formation which gives a slim prospect for gold. In fact, there is no gold in the region. We did find copper and immense de-

posits of bituminous coal. "While we were on shore, the men on the ship became alarmed for us, as they knew we had taken nothing to eat, and outfitted two expeditions in the attempt to reach us. They kept trying to drive the Neptune in our direction but the pressure of the ice was too much. Then one day Vassar and I and one of the Eskimo made an attempt to get back to the ship. It was a terrible journey. One of us or another was overboard most of the time. Night came on and we had left the dogs ashore and carried the boat over the ice and paddled it between floes. Every few minutes it filled with water and we had nothing to bail it out with but our hats. A heavy storm came up when we had got within a mile of the ship, and we could get no further, but we had to make our way back to the shore. I have had many narrow escapes, but that night I guess I was closer to the last day than ever in my life.

"The next day the ship managed to get into a harbor but she could not make the place where we were. She was cornered by the pressure of the ice to Eclipse Sound, about twenty miles away from us, and some of the company and some of the Eskimos made their way over the ice to us. Then the Neptune managed to get out again, and took us aboard, together with several Eskimo families, and fifty dogs. We attempted to reach Arctic Bay, to the north, as we wanted to take a look at the reported copper strike, but we encountered such heavy ice in Admiralty Inlet that we were forced back, and had to run south for shelter.

"At Admiralty Sound we met the most northerly Eskimos. They came on board, and proved to have a good deal of fur and ivory. We traded liberally with them, giving them everything they wanted, such as tobacco, flour, biscuit, hardwood, iron and fox traps. Also we let them have guns, ammunition and phonographs. These people are very fond of music, and have much talent in a musical way. If you hum over a tune once an Eskimo can immediately play it on a concertina. The women are good waltzers, too, and immediately learned the turkey trot, which some of the younger members of our party taught them, and dancing helped us to while away some of the evenings. We took the Eskimos on board to scrape the animal skins and make us fur clothes.

"We encountered a great many icebergs on the way back to Pond's Inlet, some of them further south than we had seen bergs on the previous trip. We had once to tie to a pack and wait for the weather to clear but the ice forced itself around us to such an extent that it looked as if we should get jammed. We made an attempt to reach the musk-ox country, though our coal was running short, 550 tons having been burned already, but every time we were turned back by heavy ice, until finally we ran to Button Point for ballast and water. Here, on account of heavy sea, we could not take either on board, so we decided to come south, and left September 2nd for Blacklead Island, about one thousand miles from where we were then. This island is the most northerly point where a missionary station has been established. There the Rev. E. W. T. Greenshield, a Moravian missionary from England has been working for 12 years, and if ever a missionary has served his Master faithfully, Mr. Greenshield has, according to the evidences about there. He wanted some supplies, and asked to be allowed to pay for them, but we gave him a boatload of things, and threw in a phonograph and fifty records.

"I was almost forgetting that while attempting to make Blacklead Island we went on the rocks. We were steaming when we struck. We had an Eskimo for pilot named Tom, and I want to tell you that those people know a lot about charting. Why, they can draw a coast line three hundred miles long, and not miss a single inlet. While on the way down we were in a fog and Tom came to me and said we were too near the shore. The captain was on the bridge.

"Tom squatted on the deck, took a piece of chalk and drew on the deck a crooked line showing the coast line. 'I've there,' he said, pointing ahead, 'is this headland. We are almost on it.' I rushed him up to the bridge, and the Captain handed the wheel over to him. Tom threw the helm hard down. Just as we turned, sure enough, an enormous jagged cape rose out of the mist in the course we had been steering.

"There were 28 feet of tide at Blacklead Island. It was about eight o'clock in the evening, when we attempted to make it, and our skipper misjudged the tide, and the first thing we knew we were upon the rocks. All our false keel was carried away, and by forming an endless chain of men we shifted the ballast,

and, having put out a kedge anchor, we worked the vessel off when the tide came in.

"The missionary at Blacklead Island had only one white man there with him, a Dundee trader, and this recalls that just as we were getting ready to leave the island, a boatload of Eskimos arrived there and reported the loss of a vessel called the Sedni Satni, belonging to a Mr. Grant of Dundee, Scotland, and commanded by a Captain Cannon, with a crew of eighteen, and sixty Eskimos. This practically wiped out a settlement of Eskimos, who had been taken on board to hunt for walrus. The Sedni Satni broke down in a gale and nothing was seen of her afterward but wreckage. She is supposed to have gone down in June. This story was shouted to us by Mr. Greenshield from his boat as the Eskimo craft came alongside of him.

We had a rough passage down to St. John's, arriving there September 15th. No, I do not consider the expedition a failure. We brought back between ten and fifteen thousand dollars' worth of furs, three thousand pounds of ivory, which is worth two dollars a pound; two hundred and fifty pounds of right whalebone, worth five dollars a pound; about one hundred white and blue fox skins, five thousand five hundred feet of moving picture films, and one thousand and six hundred photographs.

"There is much talk up in those regions about Peary and Cook, and the controversy is still fresh among the Eskimos. No, I won't tell what they are saying. I don't want to get into an argument. But I do want to say that everybody who has gone up there and traded with the Eskimos has robbed them, and I will exclude none. The natives have had no incentive to hunt. I simply turned them loose among my stock, and let them take what they thought was fair in exchange. Yes, I had a few gum drops, but not many. I took up what was useful. I had 800 pounds of tobacco for them. They all want this, and men, women and children smoke. Why, I met a man who had once made a journey of 600 miles to the south, accompanied only by his dogs, just to get a supply of tobacco. When we got to Admiralty Inlet, old Chief Nassau, a fine old man nearly one hundred years old, greeted us with the remark, 'Heap hungry tobacco.'

"We passed a great many whales up there, and there is no question that whaling will be revived. There will be two or three ships going up after whales next year.

"An Eskimo can do with a match what no white man can. He can split one safety match into four good matches. Then when one quarter is burned twenty people can light their pipes from it.

"One night, while going up the Salmon River we saw two birds, of which I had never heard before. They were so big we took them for polar bears. The sun was up at the time, and we could see well, though by the clock it was night. We followed those birds for miles. They did not attempt to fly, but the nearest we got to them was half a mile. The Eskimos called them 'deer birds,' and they say they come from the south. They are afraid of these birds. The two we saw were fully five feet tall, were white, and had a red splash down the back.

"No, you couldn't call our expedition a failure, when you take into consideration the fact that we saved the lives of 24 men. The crew of the Algerine had remained practically in the spot where their ship was lost. They had few blankets, and most of them were suffering from cold. They were living on an allowance of four biscuits a day. A day or two before we reached them, three of the party had started to find the government cache at Albert Sound, and if they could have brought provisions back from this they could have subsisted two months. They had planned to head for the south in small boats, but if they had started they would never have got through the ice. We picked up the three men after we had got the main body.

"One curious result of the report of gold in Baffin's Bay was that when we got to St. John's we found a lone Swedish prospector who had come all the way across the continent from Nome to try his luck up here."

Put \$15,000 On Collection Plate

Haileybury, Ont., Dec. 27. — The Christmas spirit has its effect on Dr. R. E. Allen, of Leon, Mexico, when at the special services on Christmas day in the Baptist church here he deposited a marked cheque for \$15,000 on the collection plate. When the elders first saw the offering they thought it was possibly a mistake but a note attached stated that the money was to be used for a new church and parsonage.

Hotel Directory

Fernie, British Columbia

Hot and Cold Baths

Sample Rooms

HOTEL FERNIE

THE COMMERCIAL HOTEL, FERNIE, B. C.

Rates \$3.00 per Day.

S. F. Wallace, Proprietor

THE WALDORF HOTEL

Mrs. S. Jennings, Prop.

L. A. Mills, Mgr.

American and European Plans.
Telephones

Electric Light
Excellent Cuisine.

Steam Heat Hot and Cold Baths.
Sample Rooms.

American Plan \$2.00 Per Day. Special Rates by the Month

European Plan, Rooms, 50 cents and up.

Steam Heated Throughout

Hot and Cold Baths

THE KING EDWARD HOTEL

Tourists' and Travellers' Home.

Sample Rooms

Rates \$2.50 per Day and Upwards.

J. L. Gates, Prop.

The Imperial Hotel

Rizzuto Bros., Props.

When in Fernie stop at this hotel. Situated just across the corner from the C.P.R. depot, and offering clean and well furnished rooms with excellent board at moderate rates.

THE BEST IN THE WORLD TO BE HAD OVER THE BAR

The Royal Hotel

John Podbellancik, Prop.

Light and well heated rooms. First-class board.

Bar stocked with the best Liquors and Cigars

THE KING'S HOTEL

Wm. Mills, Proprietor.

Victoria Avenue,

Fernie, B. C.

The new King's hotel is now open and offers the very best of accommodation and service in the dining room and the bed rooms.

BAR STOCKED WITH NONE BUT THE BEST.

Billie Ross

Billie McKay

THE CENTRAL HOTEL

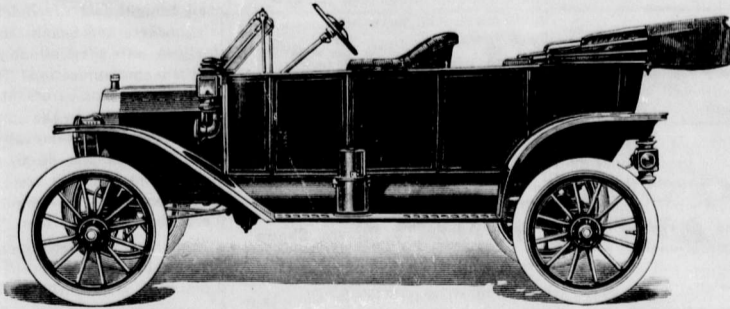
Corner Victoria Ave. and Gemmil St.

Comfortable Home for Workingmen. Bar Equipped with the Best

Automobile Livery

We have recently added an up-to-date auto service to our extensive equipment.

PHONE US FOR PROMPT SERVICE



Wood & Coal

For Immediate delivery by the same old firm and at the same old prices.

When ordering Coal give Street and House number

Rizzuto Bros. The Fernie Livery Co. Phone No. 24