

and one afternoon they announced their intention of starting across the pass—for they are very independent about such matters, and will wait indefinite periods till the weather or their humor is satisfactory. Unlike the civilized man, the Indian has plenty of time; he is never in a hurry.

Once we saw the Siwash safely started with their packs, we set out ourselves, at about six o'clock in the afternoon. At this time of year the trip is usually timed by the Indians so that the deepest snow will be crossed between twelve o'clock at midnight and three in the morning; for in these hours a crust forms, which in daytime is softened by the warm sun. Our way soon led us on to a glacier-like field of snow, which often sounded hollow to our feet as we trod, and at intervals we could hear the water rushing beneath. The grade became steep, and the fog closed around us thickly, joining with the twilight of the Alaska June night to make a peculiar obscurity which gave things a weird, ghostly appearance. As we toiled up the steep incline of hardened snow, those ahead of us looked like huge giants; while those on whom we looked down were ugly, sprawling dwarfs, toiling up the mountain side like Hendrik Hudson's sailor, whom luckless Rip Van Winkle met. As we drew near to one another, our faces seemed a pale blue color, though very clearly seen; and we left bright blue footprints on the pale snow.

Presently we saw a fire a little way above the trail, and climbing up to it found a deaf-and-dumb Indian and his squaw or "klutchman," who were drying their moccasins before a fire made out of a few stunted bushes. He explained to us by signs that the trail was dangerous, and that it was too dark to see clearly. So we waited till midnight, when another Indian, one of our packers, came up, and we started out on the trail again.

All the rest of the climb was over snow, the ascent being very steep, with cliffs on all sides, which loomed up gigantic and ghostly. It is impossible to describe the effect produced by these bare, jagged rocks rising out of the snow-field, in the silence, the fog, and the twilight. We were forcibly reminded of some of Doré's imaginative drawings. In the course of the ascent

Goodrich and myself found ourselves ahead of the party, who followed the Indian, toiling along under his pack.

After a while the well-beaten trail faded to almost nothing, and at the same time the snow-slope became of excessive steepness. We were obliged to kick footholds for every step on a surface so smooth and steep that a slip would have sent us sliding into depths which we could not see. Looking down, it seemed a bottomless pit, shapeless and fathomless, in the eddying fog. After a while we gained the top, and waited till the rest should come up. When they appeared, we were surprised to find that they came from a somewhat different direction; and we found on inquiry that we had neglected to turn off with the regular trail, which led in a roundabout way through the rocks, with a rope for handhold and safety, and had instead kept straight up the mountain to the top.

On the other side of the summit a short but steep declivity led down to a small frozen lake, named by the miners Crater Lake, on account of the steep crater-like walls which surround it on three sides. On one side, however, this wall opens out into a valley, through which a small stream runs; the lake is, therefore, one of the ultimate sources of the Yukon, and it was with a feeling of relief that we stepped upon its frozen surface.

From here our way lay down the stream-valley and across little lakes into which the stream broadened out at intervals. Sometimes we walked over the stream on an archway of snow and ice, and again trod cautiously along its banks, while the river, broken loose from its covering, ran turbulently between its icy banks. The upper lakes were frozen, but further down we had to wade knee-deep in slush for miles, putting occasionally a foot through the rotten ice beneath; and finally we were obliged to skirt along the shore, which was precipitous. During the last few miles it rained and snowed alternately. Finally, at nine o'clock at night, we reached the shore of Lake Linderman, the first of the Yukon's navigable waters.

Linderman is a pretty little lake several miles in length, and partly shut in by the high, snow-capped mountains over which we had come. Here we

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