

was last at Wrangel Indians were hard to hire. They don't like hard work more than other men, and boating on the Stikine is very hard; besides, for them Wrangel is a paradise. When the tide is out, their table is spread. There are clams and 'gum-boots' for the gathering on the shore; anyone can catch a basket of fish from the pier, or a halibut large enough to feed a family for a week in the bay. Two Indians, when I was there last, killed fifty deer, two wolves, and a bear in about a fortnight's hunting on the islands within a few miles of the town, and there are always the white men's stores to loaf and smoke cigarettes in when they tire of their own rancherie.

So my friend and I could not get a crew. He proposed that we should paddle our own canoe, and assured me that if I made no 'misslick' with the paddle it would be all right.

But I was not prepared to promise that I would make no 'misslick' in 150 miles or so of canoeing on such a river, and therefore proposed instead that we should volunteer to go as two of the crew in a trader's boat, which was also detained for want of Indians. The canoe had nearly 4,000 lbs. of bulky freight on board, and only two 'Siwashes,' besides the steerer; but we were fairly strong men and known on the river, so Johnny the trader accepted our offer, and we not only worked our passage, but were offered thirty-five dollars and board if at any time we could find no easier way of earning our living than by taking freight up the Stikine.

At the mouth the Stikine runs about two miles an hour, higher up it has a current of from five to six miles an hour, and it is not difficult to imagine that a canoe piled high with bales which cramp the rowers' legs is no pleasure-boat for the crew, whether they propel it with clumsy oars in the slack water, with back-breaking, chest-contracting paddles, with poles on the shallows and in the rapids, or drag it at the end of a tow-line, walking waist-deep in the water, or skating over a bank of battered boulders set occasionally at a precipitous angle. But the work, though hard, is not the worst of the Stikine, though during our ten days we could rarely steal a pipe between breakfast and lunch, or lunch and dinner. If you were not rowing monotonously against a strong stream, you were poling for dear life, each man afraid to take an 'easy' because the strength of all was only just adequate to the strain. At the end of the rapid it would be necessary to cross the river; so that, just as you were prepared to sink from exhaustion, 'Jim the Boatman' would sing out, 'Get oars—quick—pull like——' and you pulled frantically,