

LOCAL STORIES WELL TOLD

By Sidney Church Who Was Here in 1898.

Hardships of the Trail Not so Amusing at the Time Experienced—A Few Reminiscences.

It is hard to say just what turned the conversation to beds and sleeping places. It must have been because George had endeavored to give a practical illustration of an acrobatic feat he had seen performed at a San Francisco theater, and had landed so heavily on Webb's bunk that the supporting poles had given way, and transformed it from a bed into a brush heap. This had started an argument as to who should repair the damage. George claimed that it was good enough as it was. In support of his view he told how when in going down the Stikine river in the rainy season, he had laid his blankets on top of a cordwood pile, which was the only way he could get off the wet ground, and that he had slept well all night.

This had reminded Charlie of the time when he had been prospecting in the mountains and had slept in the open. It was a fine night when he went to sleep, but when he threw the blankets off his head in the morning, he let in on his neck about six inches of soft snow that had fallen in the night.

Then it was that Louis graced the drip-pan with a bacon rind, set in the kneaded loaves, and putting them in the oven, wiped his hands on his overalls and spoke as follows:

"When I was at one of the trading posts in the Northwest territories it was rumored that over in the mountains were vast deposits of mica, and with two partners, I started over to locate. We had traveled up the mountain all day with packs on our backs and were pretty well tired out at night. At last we came to a level where there was some timber, but just ahead the mountain rose sharply to its summit, and on this slope vegetation had pinched off. We decided to sleep there where we could get a level spot to lie, and dry wood for a camp fire. We spread our blankets near the foot of a large, dead pine, and against its root we built a fire to make our tea and cook some bacon. As soon as supper was over we went to bed and dropped asleep almost immediately. The next thing I knew was along near morning, I found myself suddenly very wide awake, with the sound of a slight crackling in my ears. I looked at the big tree in front of us and saw with horror that it was falling directly towards us. I gave a loud yell and sprang from the bed. This effectively awakened the others, for they started from a sound sleep, and without knowing why they did it, jumped up and bolted in another direction. We were none too soon for not more than four seconds from the time when I was sound asleep that big tree crashed down right across the bed. You see, the fire had kept slowly burning into the trunk of the tree until finally there was not enough left to support it. After that we kept our fires away from the tree trunks, and made sure that the trees were firmly rooted before we slept near them."

A confused groping was heard outside the cabin followed by a few rousing thumps which threatened to burst the door from its leather hinges. "Pull the string!" they shouted in concert, too lazy to bestir themselves. "Have pulled it clear through the socket," answered the voice.

Louis opened the door and admitted with a cloud of frost a bearded young man familiarly known as Jack. He had reached Dawson but a few months before having spent the previous year on one of the "back door routes" leading down the Mackenzie river to the Arctic and thence over a long portage to the Yukon.

"One would think from the way you barricade yourselves in that you had something to steal," he said as he threw the broken latch string on the table and proceeded to thaw the ice from his mustache and beard by the stove.

"We were just speaking," said Webb, "about some night experiences we've had on the trail. Louis' last story suggested to my mind a similar incident that happened to Dr. Brown, a Chicago man who started on the Edmonton trail. His party was on Moose mountain, near Lesser Slave lake, in the early winter of 1898. The snow was very deep and at this point it became necessary for everyone to get out and cut a trail through the wilderness in an effort to get to a river which led to the lake. The party had been out all day

cutting trail and wading through the deep snow and reached camp very much exhausted. They had some rum along with them and it was decided to make up some hot punch to revive drooping spirits. A liberal quantity was made and quickly consumed, while the party sat around a huge camp fire and discussed the situation. As the night was fine and they were going to move forward the next day it was thought unnecessary to put up the tent and each found a level spot to suit himself. The doctor selected a place where he would be in a measure sheltered by an uprooted tree that hung horizontally about three or four feet above him, and cutting a liberal supply of spruce boughs, he cuddled into his sleeping bag and prepared for a sound sleep. How long he slept he doesn't know, but he awoke with terrible pains in his stomach. He couldn't remember ever having suffered quite so acutely before and for once his professional skill was baffled.

"Oh, what could I have eaten," he moaned to himself. "It must have been the punch."

For a time he lay still hoping the pain would pass, but no relief came and with each breath it seemed the pain was doubled. Visions of a cheerless grave in this inhospitable land presented themselves to his mind, and he thought sorrowfully of the family who vainly awaited his return. In fancy he saw his white-faced wife swooning on receiving the dread tidings and his two children sobbing their hearts out when they learned that the father they loved so well would never return. The thought maddened him.

"I must live!" he thought in desperation. "I will get up and walk. Perhaps the exercise will have a beneficial effect."

With a groan he attempted to roll on his side, but he found he was as helpless as though he had been stricken with paralysis. Oh, this was too horrible! Better, far better, death! He felt he was smothering and throwing back the flap of his sleeping bag, looked despairingly at his surroundings.

"Oh, why did I—" he moaned, weakly. "Hello, fellows!" he finished in a lusty bawl.

A half dozen interrogatory grunts answered him from as many sleeping bags.

"Come out here eight or ten of you and lift this double blanked California redwood off my stomach."

Those who came to his assistance found it was true. The camp fire during the night had caught on to the tree near its root, and as it burned, the tree had sunk gradually and very gently across the sleeping doctor, until it rested so heavily on him that he awoke.

"I wonder," said Jack, quitting the stove, and throwing himself luxuriantly on a confused pile of bed clothing. "I wonder if there was ever a story told yet, but that the narration reminded a listener of a similar experience. Now, I came over here tonight to get my revenge for last night's poker game; but since you have turned this into an experience meeting, why I have caught the contagion."

"It was on the Mackenzie river that this thing happened that I am about to tell you of. It was in the month of June when the rains cause sudden fluctuations in the height of the water in the rivers. Between rains the mosquitoes flourished, so between the rains and the mosquitoes life had little to offer, that was sweet. During the day it had been raining heavily, but toward evening it cleared off and gave promise of a fine night. The bank on each side of the river we were following was covered with dense undergrowth, so it was difficult to find an open space where we could erect our tent. Even if this were possible the mosquitoes in such a place would be unbearable, and we agreed that we would camp out on the gravel beach. Consequently we gathered our spruce boughs and made things comfortable. After everything was ship-shape, we tied our dog to a little willow back of the tent for dogs like bacon, you know—and went to sleep. Along in the night we are all aroused by an alarm from one of the fellows who slept outside the tent.

"Hi! Get up quick!" he shouted. "We're drownin'."

With this startling information we started from our bed and stepped into water. One of the fellows was so confused that he snatched up an armful of blankets and started away from the bank towards the channel. He had gone but a few feet, when he stepped in a little hole and fell flat in the water, getting thoroughly wet. This sudden shock served to collect his senses and he scrambled back to the bank. We followed him in a good deal of confusion, and finally succeeded in getting everything in sight moved up high and dry on the bank. Each rolled himself up in a blanket wherever he could.

Dawson Society

The present reasonable action of thermometers has led to the general waking up of society, and the past week has been productive of a number of events, very pleasant in themselves and gratifying to guests and hosts alike.

Last Tuesday evening there was a most delightful party given in the large furniture department room of the N. A. T. & I. Co.'s store, which was cleared for the occasion.

Good music was in attendance, and the floor was all that could be desired by those who shook the light fantastic, and for those who chose the quieter amusement of card playing, tables and comfortable chairs were provided.

The evening spent under these conditions could not fail to be a pleasant one, and the comfort of every one was looked after in a way befitting the well known character of the entertainers, Miss Crowley and Miss Long.

About 20 couples were present and a most enjoyable evening was spent.

On Friday evening a number of friends gathered at the home of Mr. and Mrs. H. Phillips on Sixth avenue to celebrate the 27th birthday of the hostess. The house was very prettily and artistically decorated with flags, bunting, fans, flowers, etc. Progressive whist was announced as first on the program and all present entered into the struggle for "points" as each and every one present seemed to have an aversion to the "booby." A sumptuous lunch was served. The Italian band discoursed soft, sweet music throughout the evening and after lunch had been served the room was cleared for dancing and it was in the wee sma' hours when "Home, Sweet Home" was played and all present joined in wishing the hostess many happy returns of the day.

The first prizes were awarded to Mrs. Hemen and Mr. Everson, while Mrs. Townsend and Mr. Anderson received the "boobies." Those present were: Mr. and Mrs. Gustafson, Mr. and Mrs. Rose, Mr. and Mrs. Townsend, Mr. and Mrs. Hemen, Mr. and Mrs. Siegel, Miss Anderson, Miss Barnes, Mr. and Mrs. Phillips, Messrs. Warner, Everson, McDonald and Esler.

The Snowy Range Dancing Club gave another of its most enjoyable dances at the Wheeler and Allen hall, No. 36 Gold Run, last Saturday evening. A number of Dominion creek residents took advantage of the moonlight night for a trip across the divide and joined the festivities.

Mrs. Lucas served a banquet at 12 o'clock when 60 plates were laid. Mr. W. W. Chute, Percy Reid, Phil Holliday and Mr. Berg responded to toasts in a very witty manner.

Among those present were: Mr. and Mrs. A. W. Robinson, Mr. and Mrs. Oscar Thompkins, Mr. and Mrs. Lucas, Mr. and Mrs. J. W. Rodgers, Mr. and Mrs. McGinty, Mr. and Mrs. Clinton, Mr. and Mrs. Davies, Mr. and Mrs. Taylor, Mrs. John Yeaker, Mrs. Goddell, Mrs. Sloggy, Mrs. Morrell and the Misses Sloggy, Simpson, Keeney and Ness, Mr. and Mrs. Yeager, with Messrs. Wissing, W. Smith, McKee, Tygleson, Hart-Murray and Holliday were the guests from Dominion, who with the large number of Gold Run gentlemen, spent a delightful evening.

The Bon Ami Club gave their regular

lie in a horizontal position, and endeavored to get what was coming to him of a night's sleep. The mosquitoes welcomed us in song and kept up their ceaseless serenade all night. We didn't sleep much more, but spent the night talking to the mosquitoes and soliloquizing on the cussedness of rivers in general and the Mackenzie in particular.

After what seemed an age of waiting, morning dawned. The river had risen, and the gravel bar, where we had pitched our tent, was completely covered with the dirty water of the freshest season, and tied to the willow, just back of where the tent had stood, with only his back and head visible above the water, was the most disheartened bird dog you ever saw, whining pitiously and looking anxiously toward shore.

George pulled out his watch, which he had recently repaired with a tin cog wheel cut from a condensed milk can, and said:

"It's 8 o'clock. I see by yesterday's Nugget that a contortionist came in over the ice the other day and appears at the Monte Carlo tonight. Let's go down."

"When you've fixed my bunk," said Webb. — Sidney Church.

dance at Pioneer hall last Wednesday night, the hall being crowded with merry dancers. During the evening an enjoyable lunch was discussed, Mine Host Blaker of the Fairview being the eater. After the dance a merry party repaired to the Fairview, where they were royally entertained by Mr. and Mrs. Julian Blaker. Those present at the dance were:

Mr. and Mrs. Fitzpatrick, Mr. and Mrs. Blaker, Mr. and Mrs. Gillespie, Mr. and Mrs. Anderson, Mesdames Braisen, Moore, Orr, Hillery, Bonifield, Voskell, Burt, Grady, York Veager, Marland, Bjeermark, Meyrick, Anderson; Misses Miller, Beede, Clegg, Bense, Johnsons, Grady, McLain, Anderson, Bart; Messrs. Hillery, Kennedy, Boise, Braison, Joferrison, McKenzie, Berg, Anderson, McGeere, Dillon, Parson, Chisholm, Maltby, Patten, Taylor, Payne, Pollock, Way, Merland, Steel, Conway, Scott, Babb, Mullen, Weld, Short, French, Rower and Asom.

The Presbyterian church social at the Forks Thursday evening was a grand success. More than 250 people being present, standing room was at a premium and many came too late to get in at all.

The entire program by Dawson talent, rendered many happy numbers before a large and appreciative audience of miners, claim owners and society people from the Forks, Eldorado, Bonanza, and from the surrounding hillsides.

Mr. Moore gave a reading, Mr. Johnson, Mrs. Capt. Olson and Mr. McLennan recited. A duet by the Misses Larsen, songs by Mr. Craig, also Mrs. Delwig, Mr. Miller, Mr. McPherson, Mr. Scott and Dr. McDonald. Mr. Raymond of the Forks presided at the piano.

Several private turnouts and three stages filled with Dawsonites attended, among them being Rev. Dr. Grant, Mr. and Mrs. Milne, Mr. and Mrs. McLennan and daughter, Mr. and Mrs. Te Rother, Mr. and Mrs. Capt. Olson, Misses Williams, Larsen, Pratt, McDonald, Hartman, McKee, Hanna, Lilly, Mesdames Miles, Moore, Bryant, Warren, Arnold, Delwig, Larsen. After the literary entertainment the

audience adjourned to a large tent where a supper was served in a manner doing credit to the ladies having the matter in charge. Four long tables invitingly laid in white damask centerpieces, decorated china and silver and fairly groaning under the weight of good things to eat. It certainly was a splendid affair and reflects credit upon Rev. Cox and his co-workers who made everyone welcome and made it possible for so many to cache the memory of one truly delightful evening spent in a worthy cause.

The Terpsichorean Club hop last night in Pioneer hall was, as usual, a great social success, being largely attended by the lovers of the dance who enjoy such affairs under the right conditions. The music was first-class, and the floor in first-class order, and it is safe to say that out of the large number present all went away feeling that they had spent a most enjoyable evening.

Ben Davis apples at Mecker's.
Brewitt makes fine pants. crt
Round steak 30c at P. O. Market.

Robinson the well known merchant tailor of Vancouver is here now to take orders for gentlemen's spring clothing and ladies' tailor-made dresses. Mr. Robinson is stopping at the Hotel McDonald, room No. 10. cr3

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