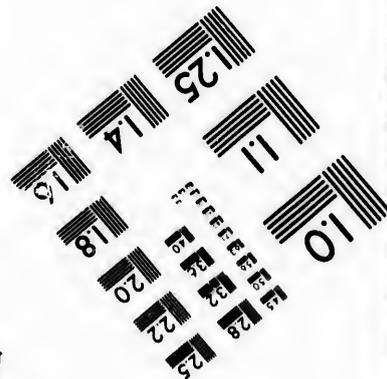
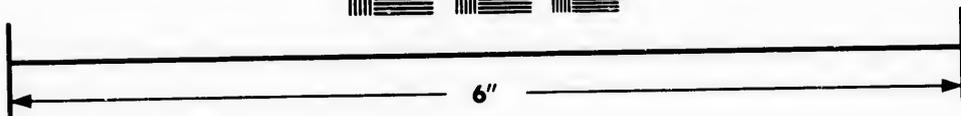
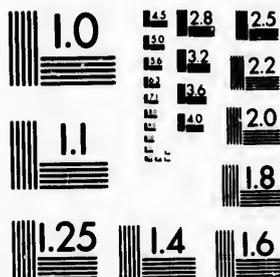


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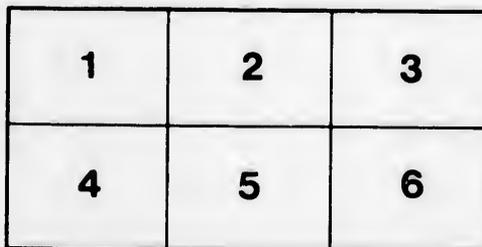
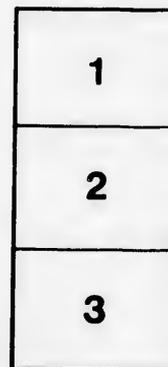
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DRIVING A BARGAIN WITH THE NATIVES.

## FROM THE COAST TO THE GOLDEN KLONDIKE. THE RECORD OF AN OFFICIAL JOURNEY.

By Edward Spurr.



**T**HE question of the veracity of the rumors from time to time reaching the Government as to the mineral wealth, especially in gold, of the upper Yukon district of Alaska, and the conditions under and means by and times of the year at which the district

could best be reached, were in the early part of last year subjects of departmental consideration.

In order to gather reliable information on the geological questions involved, and, incidentally, of course, some others, I, in the spring of 1896, as a member of the United States Geological Survey, was officially requested to undertake a journey into the interior of Alaska.

I had never been west of Utah, and, judging from the few accounts of travelers who have written concerning this remote region of central and northern Alaska, the difficulties were considerable. Only one season was possible, and that was the near-approaching one of high summer, and only two routes are available. One must either go to St. Michael, in the Behring Sea, and thence

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HIGH SUMMER IN THE CHULKOOT PASS.

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up the River Yukon, from its outlet to the beginning of its headwaters, some fifteen hundred miles; or land at some point on the Pacific, cross the head of land, and tap the headwaters of the Yukon at their source.

In either event the journey must be completed before September, when the Yukon freezes, and Alaska's arctic winter of the utmost rigor sets in and grips its vise.

Yet the possible novelties which the country offered, both from a scientific and from a personal standpoint, were so great that the opportunity was quickly accepted.

river as a highway, making such excursions from it as became necessary.

Alaska is a most difficult country for traveling, even in the only available short season of its arctic summer, there being no roads; and even Indian trails, on account of the small number of natives, are very rare. The surface is rough, being traversed by many ranges of mountains. Even in the more level portions travel is hindered in the summer by the wet moss which grows knee-deep, and by the insect pests; in the winter it is made impossible by the intense cold. In view of all these difficulties, the peculiar relation of the



TAGISH LAKE.

The time for preparation was very short, but when we left Washington at the end of May we carried with us so many good wishes that our spirits rose accordingly—for such good wishes from such good hearts carry with them actual influence over evil material things, I hope and half believe.

From Seattle we took passage on a steamer for the southern coast of Alaska.

At the little town of Juneau we left the steamer, and made preparations to turn our backs for good upon civilization. Our proposed route lay across the coast mountains to the headwaters of the Yukon, and thence down that

Yukon River to the coast is such that one might fancy Nature had arranged it especially for a highway through this inaccessible interior, in partial compensation to man for the obstacles she has put in his way.

The headwaters of the network of streams that ultimately drain into the Yukon River fortunately lie within about thirty miles of the sea, just on the northern or inland side of a range of mountains which runs along the southern coast of Alaska. From this point the river flows north, away from the sea, far toward the Arctic Ocean; then, suddenly changing its mind, turns

west ; and finally, after traversing the whole width of Alaska, arrives at the Behring Sea, its entire course being considerably over two thousand miles. For a considerable distance it is a broad and deep stream, so that one may go quite through the center of Alaska, from sea to sea, by crossing only thirty miles or so of land. This little geographical explanation has been made so that the plan of our trip may be clearly understood. There are various routes across the coast mountains to the various heads of this river. Of these we chose that over the Chilkoot Pass, which is the shortest, although the mountains which must be thereby crossed are higher than on any of the other routes.

After a few days in Juneau, making the necessary preparations, we bade good-bye to civilization for good, and engaged passage on a little tug for Dyea, a more eastward point on the coast, where we were to begin our inland journey. The *Scrambler*, as the boat was called, had been originally designed for freight, but had been pressed into the passenger service without the formality of making alterations. A dozen men might have made themselves comfortable in her, but our load comprised fifty or sixty. They were mostly miners and prospectors, with pick, gold-pan, and flour-sacks, striking out for the rumored Golden Land in the interior. With one of these miners, who had prospected and mined in Alaska for many years, we entered into an agreement to travel together as far as he was going. De Windt's party of three were on the same boat. Among the other passengers were two men who had undertaken to carry the first regular mail into the Yukon district, and a Catholic priest bound for his mission among the Esquimaux on the lower river. We were huddled together so closely that we perforce became speedily acquainted, for although the space on the floor was large enough for all of us to sit down, there was hardly room to stretch out. When we grew weary of chatting, however, and of listening to the sound of the water as the boat threshed its way onward, we were forced by drowsiness to sleep where we could, and soon sleepers were scattered around in the most grotesque and uncomfortable attitudes. I had coveted a space

on or under the little table used for eating purposes, but found that choice position fully occupied before I made up my mind to retire ; but I finally wedged myself into a narrow space between the boiler and the pilot-house, where, throughout the night, passers continually stepped on my head. However, I slept several hours.

The system of eating is worthy of note. The table accommodated about six at a time, whereas, as I have mentioned, we were fifty or sixty in all. At each meal one or two, or sometimes three, sets of passengers would be fed ; then the captain, the sailor, the Chinese cook, and the dish-washer, after which the rest of us got our rations, in good time. As we grew very hungry during this process, we would stand around patiently waiting our chance to slip in ; but sometimes before we had tasted the tempting liver and coffee (to say nothing of the beans), we would be summarily ejected by the dish-washer, who was a very young man of dashing exterior and peculiar vocabulary, and who would disperse us with the assertion that "By—, the crew is going to eat now."

The day was foggy and rainy, and the sea quite rough. The Lynn Canal, up which we were steaming, is a long, deep, narrow fjord, from which the cold, snowy mountains to the north rise steeply to lonely heights. On this day the fog hid the precipices partly from view, giving us mostly half-veiled glimpses, strangely distorted. At times we saw a slim waterfall leaping down ; and here and there stood great broad glaciers, stretching from the clouds nearly down to the sea. These glaciers, like all that I have seen in Alaska, have wonderful purity of color. The predominating tint is a beautiful robin's-egg blue, which changes into pure white in the upper part, where the solid ice grades into the less compact frozen snow. Their surfaces are fantastically carved—pinnacled and turreted ; and irregular masses stand out in relief, which the imagination can transform into strange groups of figures. These surroundings produced upon me an uncanny sensation, which I think was shared by others on board. It seemed a gigantic, gloomy country, a fit abode for wild beasts and wild men, but, as one of the miners expressed it, "no place for a white man to live."

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When, toward night, we approached our destined landing-place, the surf on the beach was too heavy to attempt getting ashore, so we lay anchored during the night. About noon the next day, the captain made the first trial at landing, in a small boat, and was capsized. Then the dish-washer made himself conspicuous by his presence of mind.

"Man the life-boat!" he cried in such stentorian tones that one might shut his eyes and imagine himself at home in a theatre. "Man the life-boat; the captain's overboard!" There was, unfortunately, no life-boat to man; and the sailor, having but just come from driving a milk-wagon in San Francisco, did not know how to row well enough to venture out. Meanwhile the captain drifted ashore, righted his boat, and pulled out to the *Scrambler* again.

Shortly afterward we all debarked, and that night we pitched our tent on land. The place is called Dyea; there is a small trading-post, kept by a white man, around which is gathered a village of Indians or Siwash, belonging to the Chilkoot tribe. They are by no means ill-looking people. The men are strong and well-formed; the women (naturally, when one considers their mode of life) are inferior to the men in good looks. These women have a habit of painting their faces uniformly black with a mixture of soot and grease, a covering which is said to prevent snow-blindness in the winter and to be a protection in summer against the mosquitoes. Some have only the upper part of their faces painted, and the black part terminates in a straight line, giving the effect of a half-mask. At the time of our arrival the Indians were engaged very busily in catching and drying small fish. These fish are very oily, and when dried can be lighted at one end and used as candles; and for this purpose they are stored away against the long winter night.

Early next morning we were on the trail for the pass. The trip from salt water to the head of the navigable waters of the Yukon is usually made in two stages, each of about fifteen miles. The trader at Dyea had brought in a few horses, and we engaged him to transport our camp-outfit and provisions over the first stage, where the trail, though rough, can be gone over by pack-animals. Some of the miners, however,

engaged Indians immediately at Dyea to pack the whole distance; and, as it afterward proved, this was the wiser plan. We could also have obtained saddle-animals, but our party preferred to walk for the sake of getting toughened for the harder journeys.

The trip turned out to be exceptionally fatiguing, a large part of the distance being through sand and loose gravels in the bed of a stream, where it was impossible to find a firm footing; several times also we had to wade the stream. The valley along whose bottom we were thus traveling was narrow and canyon-like, with steep bare mountains rising high on either side. The tops of these mountains, so far as we could see, were capped with ice; and this great glacier stretched out long fingers down into the valley along each of the gulches or recesses in the mountain-wall. Finally, crossing the river a last time on a fallen tree, we followed the trail up into the more rocky and difficult portion of the valley; and some miles of this brought us, thoroughly tired, to our halting-place. A few miles before reaching this place I overtook one of the miners, who, with his two companions or "pardners," had started to pack over a part of their outfit themselves. He was a stalwart young Irishman, but the load of seventy-five pounds or thereabouts and the difficulties of the road had exhausted him, although he had outstripped by several miles his less robust companions. After a rest, however, he was able to get to the camp, where we ate together a supper proportioned in amount to the trials we had undergone.

We had brought with us from Juneau lumber for the purpose of building a boat when we should get across the pass into the Yukon waters, but the Indians demanded such high wages for carrying it over that it was left at Dyea, the more readily since there was a rumor that some white men had taken a small saw-mill across the pass in the winter and were now engaged in sawing lumber at one of the lakes on the other side. In order to make sure, however, Wiborg, the miner who accompanied us, started in advance across the pass early the next morning, taking with him an Indian, while we lay in camp till he should send the Indian back with news from the other side.

We profited by the delay to climb up to the face of the glacier which overhung the camp. The climb up the mountain side was difficult, there being a constant succession of cliffs, the rocks of which had been so severely wrenched by glacial action that it was not safe to trust to them for handhold or foothold; so that we depended mainly on the stout bushes or young saplings which grew in the crevices and on the benches. These trees averaged fifteen or twenty feet in length—I say length, for most of them grew straight out horizontally, and some even had a down-hill inclination; this was evidently the result of the weight of snow and ice moving down hill over them for a large part of the year.

We were well paid for our trouble on reaching the glacier, which expanded before our eyes as we drew nearer. It was of pure blue ice, extremely beautiful; and its front rose perpendicularly for several hundred feet. A

deep chasm separated it from us as we stood on the summit of a pinnacle of bare rock, a few hundred feet away; and as we looked across we saw great irregular clefts and caverns of the deepest blue, guarded by slender towers. Further up the great blue-white field stretched till lost to sight in the mists of the mountain, its surface seamed and cracked and obstructed by huge, irregular mounds, so as to be apparently impassable. I have seen few things more awe-inspiring than this great ice-field, this vast, pure, chaotic silence.

As we sat we noticed a very slender spire of ice quite near which seemed as if it must topple. After awhile it began to aggravate us that it would not, so we began shooting at it with the repeating

rifle which we had brought along, firing a number of shots in rapid succession for the purpose of knocking it over. This we did not succeed in doing, but when we got back to camp we found that our shots had greatly excited the Indians who were camped near by, and who imagined that we were quarreling with one of the great bears found in these mountains. The idea of a sensible being shooting at a piece of ice is not readily grasped by the savage mind.

From Sheep Camp, where we were, the only way to get our supplies over the pass was to get Indians to carry them. Although these Indians are no stronger than average white men, yet

they greatly excel them in point of endurance; and they willingly undergo extreme fatigue for any limited period. At this time, however, the trail was so bad, on account of the softening of the snows in the hot June sun, that they concluded to strike for higher wages. This was the cause



LAKE BENNETT.

of some little delay for us, for most of the men in camp were opposed to yielding, especially the miners, who represented that the increased cost would inconvenience them considerably. So began a siege on both sides; we announced our intention to the Indians of staying in this pleasant place for a month or two, and both in our camp and in that of the Siwashes the most ostentatious carelessness prevailed. Late in the day this state of affairs was interrupted by the action of one small party of miners, who were anxious to get at the gold which they imagined lying around thickly in some interior gulch, waiting for the first comer to pick it up, and so went secretly to the other camp and compromised

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LOOKING UP LAKE LINDERMAN.

with them. We were informed of this by a series of wild whoops from the Siwashes, as they poured over the hill and into our camp. Our first thought was that it was a hostile attack, but we were reassured when we saw them begin to parcel out the goods belonging to the

miners. It happened that these men were the very ones who had so strongly urged holding out against the increased price; and as it took all the available Indians to carry their outfit over, we were delayed a couple of days by this. Finally, however, we secured packers,



LOOKING DOWN DYEA INLET.

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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and ourselves followed the Indian who was carrying our tent came along, and we proceeded to make ourselves as comfortable as possible, after some time spent in settling affairs with our packers. The endurance of these people is shown by the fact that they made this very fatiguing trip, with loads averaging over a hundred pounds each, in the same time as ourselves who carried little or nothing.

These Indians all have some English name, which they have got from the mission, where they hang around when there is anything to be got by it. I find in my notes "Tom" credited with carrying one hundred and ten pounds of meat, and "Jim" with one hundred and sixty-one pounds of sundries. Tom's original name was Kuk-shon, and he claimed to be a chief of the interior, or Stick, Indians. He spent his spare time during the short space of my acquaintance with him in daubing vermilion around his left eye. Before starting across the pass he painted the rest of his face black with soot and grease, but carefully left the red around his eye; and this ornamentation, together with a smile, which I think he meant to be engaging, and which he offered on all occasions as a substitute for conversation, made him a particularly villainous-looking personage. Among the packers were also a number of women. These were mostly ugly old hags, and many of them plainly suffered greatly from fatigue; yet their patient endurance was remarkable. It seems to fall to the lot of the old women, among these people, to do the hardest work; but men, women and children are schooled to carry heavy burdens. We met on the trail a whole family packing, carrying out a sort of contract with some of the miners. The man carried one hundred and twenty-seven pounds, a boy of thirteen carried one hundred pounds, and the squaw and little girls had heavy loads. Even the dog, about the size of a setter, carried forty pounds, with which he waddled along patiently enough.

We had some very slight perplexity in settling accounts. One woman, who started across the pass as Jenny, turned up as Sally at Lake Linderman, having evidently made up her mind to change her name on the way; and as she understood no word of English we had a

momentary difficulty in identifying her. She and her friends seemed to have some inkling of political principles, for they all wanted to be paid in silver, and distrusted gold, while it was with difficulty that they could be induced to accept bills. Nearly all of these people on being paid started immediately back over the trail, without resting, intending to travel all night, and be in Sheep Camp in the morning; and this after they had already been twenty-four hours on the road.

Wiborg had succeeded in obtaining for us a boat already built, which saved a great deal of time, as it takes about two weeks to whipsaw lumber and build a boat, as miners usually do.

The next morning, therefore, we loaded our outfit and sailed down Lake Linderman with a fair wind. The boat was a small, double-ender, flat-bottomed craft, fifteen feet or so in length, and open to sun and rain alike. For a sail we used our tent-fly, an article which was put to many important uses in the course of our trip, but never to that for which it was originally intended.

De Windt's party followed us in a similar boat; and with De Windt came the priest whom we had encountered on the *Scrambler*—a genial and cultured gentleman, whose light heart kept him from being long affected by the physical discomforts we were all obliged to undergo. To complete the flotilla, there was a small scow, of rather shaky construction, which had just been completed by a party bound for the American mining camp of Circle City; this party was remarkable for containing one of the fair sex, who seemed as well fitted as the men to make the journey successfully. In after days we met the party repeatedly as we all floated down the river, the lady always sitting in the front of the scow and six or seven men behind, all wearing flowing veils as defence against the mosquitoes, and waving branches for the same purpose; and we likened her to Cleopatra, in her barge. Just after starting, Cooper, a frontiersman who was with De Windt's party, sighted a mountain-goat close to the shore, and shot at it, but failed to bring it down.

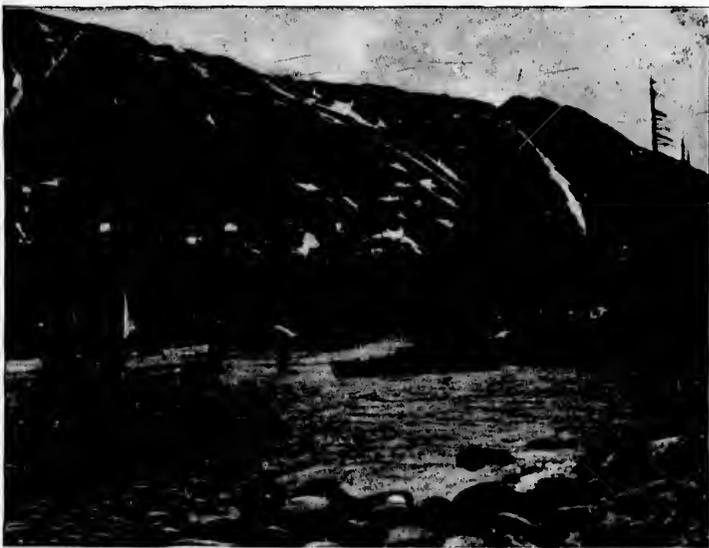
The lake down which we sailed is only a few miles long; at its foot it connects with a larger body of water, called Lake Bennett, by a short but rapid and danger-



CLEOPATRA'S BARGE.

ous channel. For such places as this we had brought along a hundred and fifty feet of strong line; and after unloading our outfit at the head of the rapids, leaving only a few light things which would not be damaged by water, we attached the line to the bow of the boat, and let

it drop down with the current. Wiborg remained on board to steer, for if a boat sheers or yaws when going over rapids, she is likely to careen and capsize. We three greenhorn geologists held the line, with which we waded in the shallower parts of the current, and scampered over



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the rocks and cliffs where the water was deep and swift, letting run or holding firm, as Wiborg signaled. These rapids are among the most difficult to pass of all those on the Yukon, and it is customary for miners to go below them before building their boats; so the process of lining our boat down was not devoid of excitement. Any tendency to overheating as a consequence of exertion was, however, counteracted by our having to wade in ice-water up to the waist. We had unwisely put on rubber boots reaching to the hips, and strapped to the belt; these soon got full of water, the weight of which was so great that it was hardly possible to walk, so I was obliged to take advantage of a lull in the proceedings to stagger ashore and make frantic attempts to stand on my head, till most of the water ran out of my boots down my back, and so made me capable of freer movement. We were finally successful, however, and the boat shipped very little water, thanks to Wiborg's manœuvring. Afterward we named our craft the *Skookum Pete*, as a compliment to the cool and determined Norwegian—*skookum* being a Chinook word signifying strength and daring, together with other qualities necessary to a man who lives in the woods. Pete's modesty, however, made him erase his own name from the legend, so that the boat was, and is, if she still exist in the possession of the Indian who finally obtained her, simply the *Skookum*, and as such she must go down in history.

The weather was cool, and our bath in ice-water none of the most agreeable; we were thoroughly dried, however, before we finished the remainder of our task, which was to carry the outfit, we

had unloaded at the head of the rapids, across the portage, which was three-quarters of a mile in length. We had about twelve hundred pounds in all.

For this work I had brought specially made packsacks from Minnesota, where I had used and thoroughly tested them; they consisted of a canvas bag with broad shoulder-straps of leather, and a still broader one to go across the forehead or the top of the head. This latter band, called the "tump-strap" in Minnesota, is mostly used to sustain the weight of the articles carried in the sack, the shoulder-straps being mainly for steadying the load, and occasionally relieving the strain upon the neck. The Alaskan Indians carry packs in much

the same way, but use straps which they fasten to the article to be carried; with our packsacks, however, they were much pleased, and all anxious to be allowed to carry them, in preference to more difficult bundles, in the trip across the pass. With this apparatus a man

can carry for half a mile or more a weight far greater than he can lift to his back unaided.

When we had finished packing, we lighted a fire on the beach and cooked supper; and presently we rolled ourselves in our blankets, lay down in the sand under the clear sky, and slept soundly. As the wind was blowing smartly, we piled some of our provisions up as a wind-break; toward morning the wind freshened and toppled over a portion of this wall. I was awakened rudely by a bag of flour falling upon my stomach; and it took me fully five minutes to recall where I was, and how and why I came there.

There was a fresh breeze blowing fair down the lake, so we soon got under



AT SHEEP CAMP.

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way, and with our little tent-fly as a sail we went merrily skimming along. The further we went, however, the harder the wind blew, and the rougher became the water, so that when about half-way down the lake we made a landing to escape a heavy squall. After dinner, it seemed from our snug little cove as if the wind and waves had abated, and so we put out again. On getting well away from the sheltering shore we found it rougher than ever; but while we were eating dinner we had seen Cleopatra's barge go past, its square bows nearly buried in foaming water, and had seen it apparently run ashore on the opposite side of the lake, some miles further down. Once out, therefore, we steered for the place where the scow had been beached, for the purpose of giving aid if any were necessary. On the run over we shipped water repeatedly over both bow and stern, and sometimes were in imminent danger of swamping, but by skillful handling we gained the shelter of a little nook about half a mile from the open beach on which the scow was lying, and landed. We then walked along the shore to the scow, and we found them all right, they having beached their craft voluntarily, on account of the roughness of the water. However, we had had about enough navigation for one day, so we did not again venture out. Presently another little boat came scudding down the lake through the white water, and shot in alongside of the *Skookum*. It was a party of miners—the young Irishman whom I had overtaken on the trail to Sheep Camp, and his three "pardners."

It was not an ideal spot where we all camped, being simply a steep rocky slope at the foot of cliffs. When the time came to sleep we had some difficulty in finding places smooth and level enough to lie down comfortably, but finally all were scattered around here and there in various places of concealment among the rocks. I had cleared a space close under a big boulder, of exactly my length and breadth (which does not imply any great labor), and with my head muffled in my blankets, was beginning to doze, when I heard stealthy footsteps creeping toward me. As I lay, these sounds were muffled and magnified in the marvelous quiet of the Alaskan night (although the sun was

still shining), so that I could not judge of the size or distance of the animal. Soon it got quite close to me, and I could hear it scratching at something; then it seemed to be investigating my matches, knife and compass. Finally wide-awake, and somewhat startled, I sat up suddenly and threw the blanket from my face, and looked for the marauding animal. I found him—in the shape of a saucy little gray mouse, that stared at me in amazement for a moment, and then scampered into his hole under a boulder. As I had no desire to have the impudent little fellow lurching on me as I slept, I plugged the hole with stones before I lay down again. Some of the same animals came to visit Schrader in his bedchamber, and nibbled his ears so that they were sore for some time.

As the gale continued all the next day without abatement, we profited by the enforced delay to climb the high mountain which rose precipitously above us, for this lake is shut in on all sides by a rock wall. And apropos of this climb, it is remarkable what difference one finds in the appearance of a bit of country when simply surveyed from a single point and when actually traveled over. Especially is this true in the mountains. Broad slopes which appear to be perfectly easy to traverse are in reality cut up by narrow and deep canyons, impossible to cross; what seems to be a trifling bench of rock, half a mile up the mountain, grows into a perpendicular cliff a hundred feet high before one reaches it; and pretty gray streaks become gulches filled with great angular rock fragments, so loosely laid one over the other that at each careful step one is in fear of starting the whole mighty avalanche, and of being buried under rock enough to build a city. Owing to difficulties like these, it was near supper-time when we gained the top of the main mountain-range. As far as the eye could see, in all directions, there rose a wilderness of barren peaks, covered with snow; while in one direction lay a desolate, lifeless table-land, shut in by higher mountains. Below and near us lay gulches and canyons of magnificent depth, and the blue waters of one of the arms of Lake Bennett appeared, just lately free from ice. Above us rose a still higher peak, covered with deep snow, steep, and difficult of access; and

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could not judge of the animal. I went to me, and I looked at something; I was investigating my way through the pass. Finally I was startled, I saw the blanket and the man for the man—him—in the man's mouse, that I went for a moment into his hole and had no desire to go on lurching down the hole again. I came to visit him, and I was sore for

this the lateness of the hour prevented us from attempting. Next day and the next the wind was as high as ever; but the enforced waiting became finally too tedious, and we started out, the four miners having preceded us by about half an hour. Once out of the shelter of the projecting point, we found the gale very strong and the chop disagreeable. We squared off and ran before the wind for the opposite side of the lake, driving ahead at a good rate under our little rag of a sail. Although the boat was balanced as evenly as possible, every minute or two we would take in water, sometimes over the bow, sometimes the stern, sometimes amidships. I have in my mind a very vivid picture of that scene: Wiborg in the stern, steering intently and carefully; Goodrich and Schrader forward, sheets in hand, attending the sail, and myself stretched flat on my face across the provision sacks, in order not to make the boat top-heavy, and bailing with the frying-pan. On nearing the lower shore we noticed that the boat containing the miners had run into the breakers, and presently one of the men came running along the beach, signaling to us. Fearing that they were in trouble, we made shift to land, although it was no easy task on this exposed shore; and we then learned that they had kept too near the beach, had drifted into the breakers and been swamped, but had all safely landed. Three of our party went to give assistance in hauling the boat out of the water, while I remained behind and fried the bacon for dinner. After dinner we concluded to wait again before attempting the next stage, picked out soft places in the sand and slumbered. When we awoke we found the lake perfectly calm and smooth, and lost no time in getting under way. On this day we depended for our motive power solely on the oars, and we found the results so satisfactory that we kept up the practice steadily hundreds of miles.

Below Lake Bennett came Tagish Lake, beautiful and calm, and walled in by mountains. Its largest arm is fjord-like, and is famous for heavy fogs, whence it has been given the name of Windy Arm; but as we passed it we could scarcely distinguish the line of division between the mountains in the air and those reflected in the sea, so

completely at rest was the water. At the lower part of the lake, where we camped, we found the first habitation since leaving the coast. Here was a party of natives, belonging to the Tagish tribe; a handful of wretched, half-starved creatures, who scatter in the summer season for hunting and fishing, but return always to this place, where they have constructed rude habitations of wood for winter use. We bought from these people a large pike, which formed a very agreeable change from bacon, beans and slap-jacks.

After passing out of this lake we entered another, appropriately called by the miners, Mud Lake; it is very shallow, with muddy bottom and shores. On this lake we found camping disagreeable, for on account of the shallowness we could not bring our rather heavily laden boat quite up to the shore; but were obliged to wade knee-deep in soft mud for a rod or two before finding even moderately solid ground.

About this time also we experienced the first sharp taste of the terrible Alaskan mosquito—or it might be more correct to reverse the statement, and say that the mosquitoes experienced their first taste of us. At the lower end of Tagish Lake they suddenly attacked us in swarms, and remained with us steadily till near the time of our departure from the Territory. We had heard several times of the various difficulties and hardships to be encountered in Alaska, before venturing on this trip; but, as is often the case, we found that these accounts had left a rather unduly magnified image of the difficulties in our imaginations, as compared with our actual experiences. In this generalization the mosquito must be excepted. I do not think any description or adjectives can exaggerate the discomfort and even torture produced by these pests, at their worst, for they stand peerless among their kind, so far as my experience goes, and that of others with whom I have talked, for wickedness unalloyed.

Out of Mud Lake we floated into the river again, and slipped easily down between sand-banks. Ducks and geese were very plentiful along here, and we practiced incessantly on them with the rifle, without, however, doing any noticeable execution. On the second day we knew we must be near the famous canyon and rapids of the Lewes; and

one of our party was put on watch, in order that we might know of its whereabouts before the swift current should sweep us into it, all heavily loaded as we were. The rest of us rowed, steered, and admired the beautiful tints of the hills, now receding from the river, now coming close. Presently we heard a gentle snore from the lookout, who was comfortably settled among the flour-sacks in the bow; this proved to us that our confidence had been misplaced, and all hands immediately became alert. Soon after we noticed a bit of red flannel fluttering from a tree projecting over the bank, doubtless a part of some traveler's shirt sacrificed in the cause of humanity; and by the time we had pulled into the shore we could see the waters of the river go swirling and roaring into a sudden narrow canyon, with high, perpendicular walls.

We found the party of miners already landed, and presently, as we waited on the bank and reconnoitred, De Windt's

party came up, and not long after Cleopatra, with her barge and retinue; so that we were about twenty in all. Wiborg and De Windt's guide, Cooper, were the only ones who had had experience in this matter, so all depended on their judgment, and waited to see the results of their efforts before risking anything themselves.

In former years all travelers made a portage around this very difficult place, hauling their boats over the hill with a rude kind of windlass; but a man having been accidentally sucked into the canyon came out of the other end all right, which emboldened others. In this case Wiborg and Cooper decided that the canyon could be run, a though

the water was very high and turbulent; and they thought best to run the boats through themselves. Our own boat was selected to be experimented with; most of the articles which were easily damageable by water were taken out, leaving perhaps eight hundred pounds. I went as passenger sitting in the bow, while the two old frontiersmen managed paddles and oars. Rowing out from the shore we were sucked immediately into the gorge, and went dashing through at a rate which I thought could not be less than twenty miles an hour. So great is the body of water confined between these perpendicular walls, and so swift is the stream, that its surface becomes convex, being considerably higher in

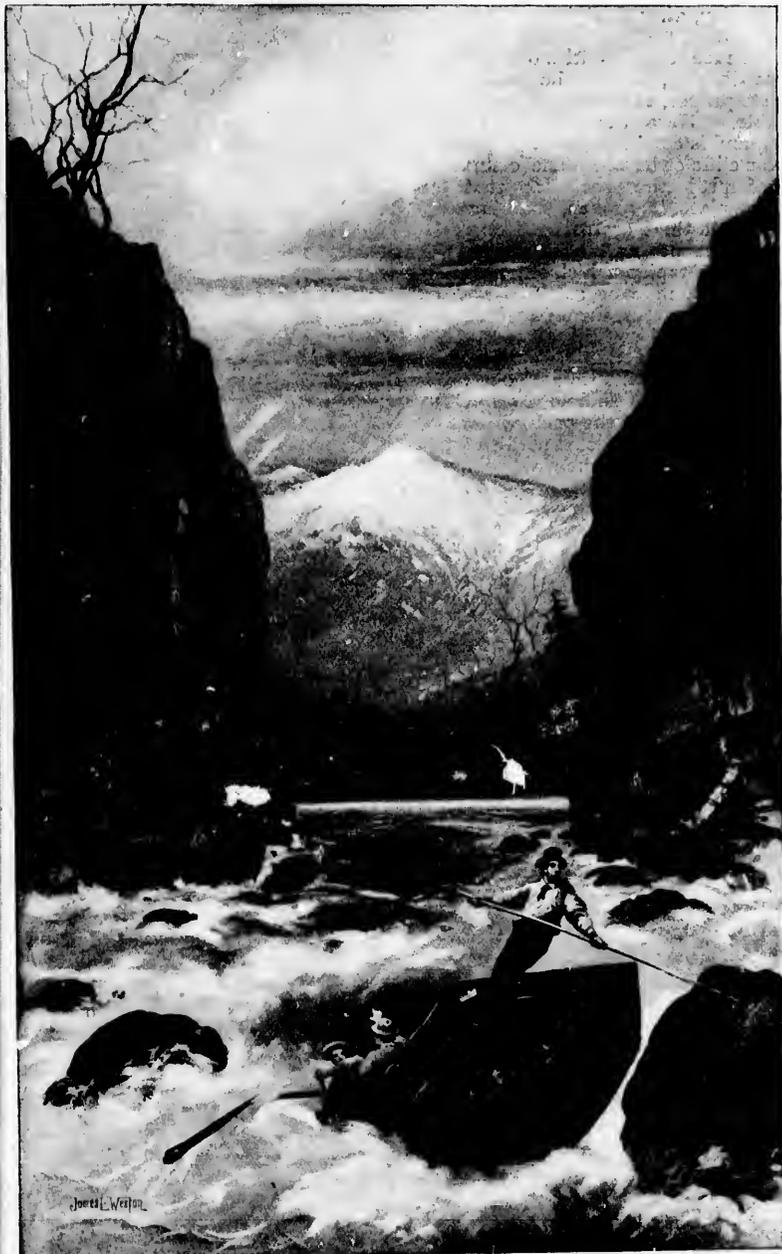
the center of the channel than on the sides. Waves rushing in every direction are also generated, forming a very puzzling chop. Two or three of these waves presently boarded us, so that I was thoroughly wet, and then came a broad glare of sunlight as we emerged from the first half of the



INDIAN GRAVE AT PELIV POST.

canyon into a sort of eddion which lies about in its center. Here we were twisted about by eddy currents for a few seconds, and then precipitated, half sidewise, into the canyon again. This latter half turned out to be the rougher part, and our bow dipped repeatedly into the waves, till I found myself sitting in water, and the bow, where most of the water remained, sagging alarmingly. It seemed as if another ducking would sink us. This fortunately we did not get, but steered safely through the final swirl to smooth water. During all this trip I had not looked up once, although as we shot by we heard faintly a cheer from the rocks above, where our companions were.

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Painted for Oving by J. L. Weston.

"SOMETIMES THEY SAW ONLY THE BOTTOM OF THE SCOW." (A. 536.)

Next day, after a night rendered almost unbearable by mosquitoes, we arose to face the difficulties of the White Horse Rapids, which lie below the canyon proper, and are still more formidable. Here the river contracts again, and is confined between perpendicular cliffs of basalt. The channel is full of projecting rocks, so that the whole surface is broken, foaming and tossing, and there are many strong conflicting currents and eddies. At the end of these rapids, which extend for a quarter of a mile or so, is a narrow gorge in the rocks, through which the whole volume of water is forced. This is said to be only twenty or thirty feet wide, although at the time of our passing the water was sufficiently high to flow over the top of the enclosing walls, thus concealing the actual width of the chute. Through this the water plunges at a tremendous velocity—probably thirty miles an hour—forming roaring, foaming, tossing, lashing waves which somehow make the name White Horse seem appropriate.

Above the beginning of the rapids we unloaded our boat, and carefully lowered it down by ropes, keeping it close to the shore, and out of the resistless main current. After having safely landed it, with considerable trouble, below the chute, we carried our outfit (about twelve hundred pounds) to the same point. De Windt's boat, and that belonging to the miners, were safely gotten through in the same way, all hands helping in turn.

When it came to Cleopatra's barge, it was the general opinion that it would be impossible to lower it safely, for its square shape gave the current such a grip that it seemed as if no available strength of rope or man could hold out against it. As carrying the boat was out of the question, the only alternative was to boldly run it through the rapids, in the middle of the channel; and this naturally hazardous undertaking was rendered more difficult by the frail construction of the scow, which had been built of thin lumber by unskilled hands. The royal retinue did not care to make the venture themselves, but finally prevailed upon Wiborg and Cooper to make the trial.

Reflecting that at any future time I might be placed in similar difficulties, in this unknown country, and thrown upon my own resources, I resolved to

accompany them, for the sake of finding out how the thing was done; but I was ruled out of active service by Wiborg, who, however, consented finally to my going along as a passenger. Two of the scow's own crew were drafted to act as oarsmen, and we pushed out, Cooper steering, and Wiborg in the bow, iron-shod pole in hand, fending off from threatening rocks; and in a second we were dancing down the boiling rapids, tossed hither and thither like a cork. I sat facing the bow, opposite the oarsman, who tugged frantically away, white as death; behind me Cooper's paddle flashed and twisted rapidly, as we dodged by rocks projecting from the water, sometimes escaping them by only a few inches, where a collision would have smashed us to chips. The rest of the party, waiting below at the chute, said that sometimes they saw only the bottom of the scow, and sometimes looked down on it as if from above. As we neared the end, Cooper's skillful paddle drove us straight for the center, where the water formed an actual fall; this was the most turbulent spot, but the safest, for on either side, a few feet away, there was danger of grazing the shallow underlying rocks. As we trembled on the brink, I looked up and saw our friends standing close by, looking much concerned.

A moment later there was a dizzying plunge, a blinding shower of water, a sudden dashing, too swift for observation, past rock walls; and then Wiborg let out an exultant yell; we were safe. At that instant one of the oarsmen snapped his oar, an accident which would have been serious a moment before. On the shore below the rapids we found flour-sacks, valises, boxes and splintered boards, mementoes of poor fellows less lucky than ourselves.

We camped at the mouth of the Tahkeena River that night, and arrived the next day at Lake Labarge, the last and longest of the series. When we reached it at one o'clock its water was calm and still; and although it is nearly forty miles in length, we decided to keep on without stopping till we reached the other side, for fear of strong winds such as had delayed us on Lake Bennett. De Windt's party concluded to do the same, and so we rowed steadily all night, after having rowed all day.

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favorable wind sprung up suddenly, and increased to a gale. At this time we became separated from the other boats, which kept somewhat close to the shore, while we, with a rag of a sail, stood straight across the lake for the outlet. As soon as we stopped rowing I could not help falling asleep, although much against my will, for our position was neither comfortable nor secure; and thus I dozed and woke half a dozen times before landing. After landing, we found difficulty in sleeping, on account of the swarms of hungry mosquitoes, and so we soon loaded up again.

Below Lake Labarge the journey was comparatively easy. The skies were always clear and blue, and the stream had by this time increased to a lordly river, growing larger by continual accessions of new tributaries. It is dotted with many small islands, which are covered with a dense growth of evergreen trees. On the sides of the valley are often long, smooth terraces, perfectly carved, and smoothly grassed, so as to present almost an artificial aspect. From this sort of country are sudden changes to a more bold and picturesque type, so that at one time the river flows swiftly through high gates of purple rock rising steeply for hundreds of feet, and in a moment more emerges into a wide low valley. The cliffs are sometimes carved into buttresses or pinnacles, which overlook the walls, and appear to form part of a gigantic and impregnable castle, on the top of which the dead spruces stand out against the sky-like spires and flag-staves. Usually on one side or the other of the river is low, fertile land, where is a profusion of shrubs, vines, and flowers. In the mellow twilight, which lasts for two or three hours in the middle of the night, one can see nearly as far and as distinctly as by day, but everything takes on an unreal air. This is something like a beautiful sunset effect further south, but is evenly distributed over all objects in the landscape. At about ten o'clock the coloring becomes exquisite, when the half-light brings out the violets, the purples, and exquisite shades of yellow and brown in the rock, in contrast with the green of the vegetation.

We had some difficulty in finding suitable camping-places in this country. One night, I remember, we ran fifteen miles after our usual camping-hour,

with cliffs on one side of the river and low thickets on the other. Three times we landed on small islands, in a tangle of vines and roses; and as many times were driven off by the innumerable mosquitoes. Finally, we found a strip of shore about ten feet wide, between the water and the thickets, sloping at a considerable angle, and there made shift to spend the night.

There are two places below the White Horse Rapids, where the channel is so narrowed or shallowed that rapids are formed. At the first of these, called the Five Finger Rapids, the river is partially blocked by high islets of conglomerate, which cut up the stream into five chief portions. Although the current in each of these "fingers" is rapid, and the water rough, yet we found no difficulty in running through without removing any part of the loads, although one of the boats shipped a little water. When we arrived at the second rapids, which are called the Rink Rapids, and are not far below the Five Fingers, we were relieved to find that, owing to the fullness of the river, the rough water, which in this case is caused by a shallowing of the stream, was smoothed down, and we passed through, close to the shore, with no more trouble than if we had been floating down a lake.

During our whole trip the country through which we passed was singularly lonely and uninhabited. After leaving the few huts on Tagish Lake, which I have mentioned, we saw a few Indians in a summer camp on Lake Labarge; and this was all till we got to the junction of the Lewes and Pelly Rivers, over three hundred miles from Tagish Lake. At Pelly we found a log trading-post, with a single white man in charge, and a few Indians. There were also three miners, who had met with a misfortune, and were disconsolate enough. They had started up the Pelly River with a two years' outfit, intending to remain and prospect for that period, but at some rapid water their boat had been swamped and all their provisions lost. They had managed to burn off logs enough to make a raft, and in that way had floated down the river to the post, living in the meantime on some flour which they had been lucky enough to pick up after the wreck.

Although there are very few people in the country, one is continually surprised

at first by perceiving a solitary white tent standing on some prominent point or cliff which overlooks the river. At first this looks very cheerful, and we sent many a hearty hail across the water to such habitations; but our calls were never answered, for these are not the dwellings of the living, but of the dead. Inside each of these tents, which are ordinarily made of white cloth, though sometimes of woven matting, is a dead Indian, and near him are laid his rifle, snow-shoes, ornaments and other personal effects. I do not think the custom of leaving these articles at the grave implies any belief that they will be used by the dead man in another world, but simply signifies that he will have no more use for the things which were so dear and necessary to him in life—just as, among ourselves, articles which have been used by some dead friend are henceforth laid aside and used no longer. These dwellings of the dead are always put in prominent positions, commanding as broad and fair a view as can be obtained. At Pelly we saw

several Indian graves which were surrounded by hewn palings, rudely and fantastically painted, and some by poles.

Below Pelly we found no settled habitations till we reached a considerable village of the Klundek or Clondike Indians. These people were watching very eagerly for the appearance of the salmon that came up the river every year from the sea to spawn; and at the time of their coming the Indian lays in a large part of his year's food-supply, hunting them with spear and club from a birch canoc, so narrow and so light that the operation seems a marvel of skill. On account of the swift current of the river, the canoes used by these natives are very narrow and shallow, having some suggestion of a racing shell in their lines, and they are difficult to manœuvre.

The day after passing the Klundek village we arrived at the mining-camp of Forty Mile. We had reached the edge of the Klondike. Our next effort would be to see the gold producing country about which we had heard so much.



AN ARM OF THE DYEA GLACIER.

