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LIFE AT THE NORTH POLE.

Washington, D. C., Oct. 27, 1897.—All the forces of exploration are being massed for the icy north. The proceeds of Nansen's lectures in this country will go into a new expedition to reach the north pole. Lieutenant Peary has his fund of \$150,000 made up, and is making his arrangements to start on a five years' race from northern Greenland. Wellman, the newspaper man, has one hundred dogs in training in Norway, and his expedition will be ready to start in the spring. In the meantime the man who has perhaps done more than any other now living to increase our knowledge of polar matters is working quietly away here at Washington, attending to his official duties at the war department and devoting his leisure to writing books on a variety of subjects. I refer to Gen. A. W. Greely, whose party made the land point farthest north that has yet been attained. Nansen drifted nearer the pole, but he was upon the water, and for practical results his observations are of little value. For three long years General Greely lived almost under the shadow of the pole, if, indeed, the pole can cast a shadow. Surrounded by ice and snow he studied polar conditions amid polar surroundings. He had the finest scientific instruments. His library contained the best works of former explorers, and his knowledge of the arctic regions were soaked into him, as it were, in such a way that today his authority upon polar matters is unsurpassed.

General Greely is now 53 years of age. He is tall, straight and fine looking, his black beard and hair just beginning to show their first gray strands. Looking at him you would not imagine that he had gone through some of the most terrible experiences known to man. He was 27 when he was started for the pole to be gone two years. He went with the understanding that he was to be relieved at the close of that time, and he took with him only stores for twenty-seven months. The two years ended and no expedition. The party then started southward to find a place for winter quarters until the following summer could bring a ship. They drifted in the arctic waters of Smith's sound for thirty days on an ice floe, and when they went into Cape Sabine they had only six weeks' provisions to last them for six months. As time went on their rations got lower and lower. They soon became so small that only the hardest could survive. There were twenty-five in the party when they sailed from St. John in 1881. Only seven were left when they were rescued by Captain Schley in 1883, and these seven were so far gone that had Schley arrived two days later all would have been dead. During their last days the men lived by boiling their sealskin boots and and clothing. They ate moss and shrimps and of these were allowed only enough to sustain life. The diary of that starving time has been given to

the world, and General Greely has told how his men died one after another and how one of them had to be shot by his order in order to save the lives of the rest.

I met General Greely in the library of the war department yesterday. The subject of Peary's new scheme came up, and I asked Gen. Greely as to whether a white man could stand five years of arctic exposure, saying that I supposed that he would be less able to resist the intense cold from year to year. Gen. Greely replied:

"Five years is a long time on the shores of the Arctic ocean, but I think a man could stand it that long, although I believe he would be able to do less work as time went on. We were not so strong the second year as we were the first. Still we had learned how to use our energies better by the experiences of the first year, and through that knowledge were able to do quite as much the second and the third years of our stay as the beginning. From the point of experience Lieut. Peary's fourth and fifth years might be worth quite as much as his first and second."

"Were you able to work all the time you were in the arctic regions, general?"

"Yes, as long as our food held out. During the last few months we were so weak that no one could do much. I was very systematic in my work, and I tried to make my men so. I had to keep them busy, in order to prevent them from getting sick. I had to study each man and to see that those who needed exercise got it. Some of the party were rather lazy. I could not tell them that I wanted them to work merely for the sake of exercise, for if I had done so they would have thought that there was already something the matter with them. I simply gave directions to the officers to give them certain kinds of work out of doors, and in this way kept them in good physical condition."

"Tell me, general, how you managed about sleeping during the arctic nights and days. How could you arrange to take only so much sleep when it was dark for four months at a time, and how, when the sun shone for months without setting?"

"We had regular times for sleeping," replied Gen. Greely. "Our retiring hour was 11 o'clock, and by that time every one was supposed to be in bed. Some of the men acted a good deal like children in such matters. They wanted to stay up, and when the time for rising came they wanted to remain in bed. During the second year I issued an order prohibiting the men from lying in bed between 8 a. m. and 3 p. m. We slept more during the second year than the first, my officers sleeping then from fourteen to sixteen hours a day. As for me, I slept only nine hours, but I found trouble in doing so."

"How about food? Did the cold air make you crave castor oil and candles, as the Esquimos are said to do?"

"No," replied Gen. Greely. "I don't think any of us ever saw the day when

we wanted to eat candles. The desire of people in cold countries for fat has been much overestimated. The human being can assimilate only a certain amount of fat, and the stories published of Esquimos who drink oil like wine are overdrawn. You can stand more fat in cold regions than in warm, but the limitations are fixed."

"I suppose the arctic explorers of next year will have a great advantage over you on account of the condensed foods which has since been invented?"

"I don't know about that," replied Gen. Greely. "You can't live long on bread pills and meat essences. The stomach has to have something to fill it in order that it may do its work properly. Condensed foods are very well for a spurt, but they will not do for a steady diet for any length of time. If I were going north again I should take a great deal of condensed milk and butter. We had plenty of butter for the first part of our stay. We carried it with us in tins and found it very good. It might not have been so appetizing at home, but you can eat stuff in the arctic regions that you would not touch here."

"Tell me something as to what you took with you."

"Our stock of provisions was made up to last for two years. I had studied the subject, and I took a good list of supplies for that time. We had about a ton and a half each of condensed milk, butter and oatmeal. We had plenty of cheese and macaroni and condensed eggs. We had canned fruits and dried apples, peaches, grapes and raisins. I think that tomatoes were our best vegetable, and we found the apples and the peaches our best fruits. We had plenty of flour and some canned meats."

"Did you have any fresh meats?"

"Yes, some; but if I were going again I should carry a great lot of fresh meat with me. It could be kept in refrigerators. We kept meat quite a long time. I remember that the birds which we killed in Greenland in July formed good eating in June in Conger the next year. You need meat to feed your dogs. The dogs you have there do not like biscuits or patent dog foods. They will not eat them unless they are half starved, and it is very important in such explorations to keep up the strength of your dogs. As to cured meats we found that bacon, ham, corned beef and pemmican were among the best."

"How about game; is there any chance of getting any in the regions about the pole?"

"Yes, in the lands where we were found quite a lot of game at certain times of the year. We killed during our stay more than an hundred musk oxen, a number of seals and about fifty ducks."

"Suppose you were going again, general, what kind of clothing would you take?"

"I should use woolen cloth for many of my suits. I believe that wool is better than fur for many purposes. It is well to have an overcoat lined with