

Dr. Cook's Final Dash to the Pole

One of the first acts of Dr. Cook after he landed in civilization, was to send the following cablegram to his financial backer, John R. Bradley, in New York: "In accordance with the credit for my discovery of the north pole, I do not forget that half of the credit at least belongs to John R. Bradley of New York."

FORERIGHT, alertness and the unflinching aid from the purse of John R. Bradley were elements which made possible the brilliant success of Dr. Frederick A. Cook, for the expedition which was sent to the pole had been equipped quietly in a more efficient and thorough manner than any which had ever crossed the frozen north, says the New York Herald.

Mr. Bradley, in commenting upon the feat of Dr. Cook, smiled when he referred to the remarks of Rear Admiral Melville and others who believed that Dr. Cook had not been sufficiently well prepared for his undertaking.

"They don't know," said he, "and we took good care that no one should know how we were prepared for the enterprise. Now that the thing has been done there are those who do not know what to make of it all, because the plans were not formed on the traditional lines. There never was a better equipped expedition."

ON STRICTLY MODERN LINES. "It had many new features and it was laid out on strictly modern lines, but because we did not leave a ship to be frozen in but had a house on shore there are those who do not seem to think that it was according to the way the books prescribe that arctic expeditions should be conducted. All the others failed; this one succeeded. It is a difference worth noting."

"Now, I have much respect for Rear Admiral Melville, and I regret that he has been so ill informed concerning the expedition as he shows himself to be in his interview in the Herald this morning. Without backing, without money, outfit or equipment, says he, 'I do not see how Dr. Cook could have reached the pole, let alone his return journey.' If Peary, with the best equipped expedition that ever penetrated the northward, could not get within a hundred miles of the earth's apex, I cannot conceive how Dr. Cook has done it on his nerve, so to speak."

"The admiral does not know that I spent thousands and thousands of dollars on this expedition. Our ship was as well equipped for an arctic journey as any that ever left this country, yet there are some persons who seem to think that I started for a fishing trip and that the physician went up to the pole and back in a straw hat. We never made a move but what we knew just what we were about."

"I had 'Bob' Bartlett, commander of the Roosevelt, Peary's ship, which was then lying in dry dock here in New York, go with me to Gloucester and look over our ship. 'Bob' considered it as safe a ship as ever left for the arctic. I engaged as captain his nephew, Moses Bartlett, who had been first officer on the Roosevelt. The mate was 'Mike' Wise, and we had a first class sailor in a young Irish boy named Kirby—as tough as nails was he."

"We left Gloucester, made a good trip without hurrying too much and got into Melville bay. Now there are those who seem to think that we ought to have declared ourselves. It is not necessary for a ship bound for the pole to leave New York with a half dozen men of

war following her and a brass band playing all the way down to the Narrows. Suppose we had found the south pole. The newspapers would have said that we got our feet and came back. Then again, Mr. Peary was in New York, trying to get a living start and mending the tailors of the Roosevelt. He was unable to get enough money to suit him just then, and I guess we had as much as he did."

"If the admiral wishes to know where the Cook expedition got its backing I do not mind telling him that it was John R. Bradley's bank account in New York city. Mr. Peary was about to go, and if he had obtained news as to our purpose he might have been able to hurry considerably, especially if the winter was coming. I wanted to do a little winter hunting on my way north, and that was another reason why we did not wish to be hurried, and I found some good hunting at that."

"We made our way into Melville bay, got into the ice three times, nearly lost the ship, and finally got out safe. It took us seven days to cross Melville bay, which is 12 miles broad. Now that certainly shows that we must have had some ship."

"However, still a vessel the arctic explorer may have, it must be always kept in mind that once he is in the ice he must go or not go. What is a vessel frozen in but a house, as far as its use to the explorer is concerned. It does not have to take a departure into the arctic circle, because when the ice is too close he cannot use any material than can be made available with dogs and sleds, with which may be carried provisions and the few instruments necessary to take the observations. The important thing is food. The more food that can be carried within the smallest space, the greater the chance of success."

MINIMIZED THE WEIGHT. "My expedition had the latest devices for minimizing weight and at the same time increasing efficiency. For instance, a box of an expedition several years ago which carried five or six brass stoves weighing from 16 to 18 pounds each, to be used with kerosene or oil for making tea. Our stoves were made of aluminum, their weight was three pounds each and they did precisely the same work. We got rid of 12 or 15 pounds on each stove, and without impairing our efficiency got rid of as much unnecessary weight as a dog can pull and had so much more for food."

"I merely give this as an example of how the whole expedition was planned. Not an ounce of weight was wasted. An enterprise like this has to go on its stomach, and we had plenty of food packed in tin cases for transportation."

"We did not take Capt. Bartlett into our confidence in the matter of our destination. He was curious and interested at times."

"Got enough pemmican here to feed a tribe of Eskimos," remarked he one day.

"O, yes," I answered. "Might need it in case we are shipwrecked."

PLENTY OF HICKORY, TOO.

"Quite some hickory wood aboard," he remarked later.

"Quite so," I answered. "We may need it to build houses with when we get crashed in the ice."

"Well," he answered after a moment's thought, "if I didn't know you were going on a fishing trip I would say you were going to find the pole."

"Well, we arrived and everything seemed to be adapted for the attempt which Dr. Cook had in mind. We went 35 miles above Etah at first and Dr. Cook was sent ashore. He returned to the vessel and reported that he considered the conditions ideal for his pur-



DR. FREDERICK A. COOK.

pose. Now let me show you how he reasoned and let us see whether or not this was the harum-scarum dash of a man for the pole in a straw hat."

"First, he made a census of the natives at the point where he landed and found that there were 240 of them, as compared with 250, according to the last record, which made a decrease of only 10 in 20 years. The little colony was in the pink of condition; the young men were strong and healthy. The Eskimos had had a good winter, for it was on Aug. 25, 1907, that we landed. They had plenty to eat. Game was abundant and muskoxen, walrus and other animals were abundant, and there were large numbers of fish. We found that there was little ice in Kennedy channel, that the traveling over the land was good and that weather conditions were perfect."

SAW CHANCE AND TOOK IT. "There could not have been a combination of circumstances better adapted to the purposes of Dr. Cook. He saw the chance and he took it, and he had the nerve and the will to avail himself of his opportunities."

"On our way up we had encroached a good deal on the stock of the 2,000 gallons of gasoline with which we had started, and we were taking on ballast. As we were running a little light, I came on deck and said to Bartlett: 'Captain, get all the men ready and send all the natives aboard ashore. Prepare to unload as soon as possible,

for we are to put Dr. Cook and his supplies ashore for the winter.' "Is this a polar expedition?" he asked.

"It is," I answered.

"I knew it! I knew it!" he exclaimed. "Never was there a ship fitted out as this one is, which was not intended for the pole. Expect me to stay all winter!"

"Not if we can help it," said I. "I wouldn't stay here myself. It is not necessary to stay here on account of Dr. Cook. We have a house on board for him."

"Glad to hear you say that," was the captain's answer. "I wouldn't stay here for anybody on earth."

THREE YEARS' SUPPLIES. "Three years' supplies were left with Dr. Cook. That does not convey much of an idea perhaps, but if I had the inventory of it at hand it would astonish those persons who speak of this expedition as a haphazard affair with nothing but the nerve of Dr. Cook to back it. There were tons of pemmican and that kind of material, sugar, tea, coffee, canned goods, dried meats, quantities of hickory for sled building, hardware, iron, steel, copper, cooking utensils of all kinds, 150 feet of stove pipe, 10,000 boxes of matches, bales of biscuits, 150,000 cans of food, 150 gallons of alcohol, a barrel of gunpowder for the sweet tooth of Mr. Eskimo, barrels of rice and flour, guns for trading, knives, beads and trinkets of all

kinds and boxes of instruments for observation. I do not care to tell the cost of the expedition, for that is a private matter, but since this question of supplies has been raised I am telling some things about it to show that Dr. Cook had all the backing that he needed."

"How was Dr. Cook equipped with instruments for making observations?" Mr. Bradley was asked.

"I've seen the bills for all those things," replied Mr. Bradley imperturbably, "for I paid them. They were packed away in boxes and I did not see them, so I cannot give an inventory of just what Dr. Cook used. One could tell that he was at the pole by taking the latitude alone."

THE ACCIDENT. An old man is walking along Regent street. He is dressed shabbily, and he is tired. He is nearly 80, and he stoops as he shuffles through the crowd. His face is pale and worn, and there are deep lines about his mouth, and his body is thin and weak.

Women avoid touching him as they pass, men push him into the gutter, and children look askance at him. He has only a few pence in his pocket. All round him he sees money. Motor-cars pass him almost every second, and every now and then one stops, and out of it step women who hurry across the street into a shop. A short time ago he would have opened the door of the car for them and earned, perhaps, twopenny, but now he feels he is too shabby even for that, and he walks on blindly.

He has never been noticed much. He has always lived in back streets. He knows he is of no importance, and that he has no right to be in Regent street, but he has drifted there aimlessly, and he finds some pleasure in shuffling through the crowd. It is good to come from his back street into the glitter of the shops.

He has worked for over 60 years, and only lately has he lost his job. Until a few years ago he could always earn 20 shillings a week, and some time after then he managed to make a living by doing odd jobs picked up out of the street. Only a week or two ago would he admit he was "too old." It was when he tried to lift something, and found the weight too much for him, that he felt useless, and afraid; he thought then there was no room for him in the world, and the thought frightened him.

And now as he walks along the street he is wondering how he shall live. He likes to go in Regent street, the brightness and the cheerful faces persuade him he is still alive and that there is nothing to fear. He is afraid of his back street. He always thinks of heaven as a rich place, and it occurs him to see the motor-cars, and the brightly dressed women, and the laughing children.

He is not surprised at being pushed aside by the men and avoided by the women and looked askance at by the children. He knows his clothes are ragged, and that he has only a few pence in his pocket, and that he is old, but he knows also that children have not always looked askance at him, and he hopes that some day he will be able again to give a child a penny. A week or so ago, when he saw some money, he gave a little girl a halfpenny to buy some sweets; but now, with only a few pence in his pocket, he feels alone and useless. He would almost like to get drunk—he would do anything to feel less lonely and afraid!

II. He is wondering where he shall go. He is too tired now to walk much farther, but he knows that in London he is not allowed to stand still and rest. He wishes he were in the country, where he could sit down by a hedge, and go to sleep, and forget.

London is cruel to him. He sees people meet, and stop to shake hands, and talk, and laugh, and go on again. He

sees women bow from their carriages to someone across the street. He sees a group of men laughing loudly at some joke.

He begins to feel cheerless among the crowd. He can no longer respond to the brightness round him. His insignificance begins to torture him. But he knows he has no right to expect to be noticed by these people. He has done nothing for his country and very little for himself. He has read of great men, and he has seen them go through the streets, and he has been one of many a cheering crowd. But he has always been outside. He has never been able to get to the front line, even of a crowd.

And now as he shuffles along the street he begins to be appalled by his isolation. What would these people ever do for him? They are anxious to avoid touching him. He begins to hate them. He feels inclined to stop a lady going into a shop, and to tell her he is hungry, and to ask for a copper. But he has never begged, and he is afraid to start. So he begins instead to despise these people who avoid him as they pass, and his humility gives place to arrogance, and he is happier.

But when he comes to a throng of brightly dressed women crowding the pavement opposite a shop window filled with gay colors, he steps with his old confidence into the road. Then he hears a shout, and as he turns he sees a horseman heavily on to him. He tries to avoid it, but the horse knocks him down, and he lies half stunned on the road.

III. Men rush towards the horse. One backs it, and another supports the old man's head, and shouts to a boy to run for a policeman. An immaculately dressed youth in frock-coat and top-hat suggests carrying the old man into a shop. Women look pityingly at him, one forces her way through the crowd, and when she sees the pained face and the white hair her color goes, and she turns away quickly.

Policemen arrive, and men take their coats off and wrap them round the old man, and so they carry him into a shop. Brandy is given to him, and anxious people ask him how he feels and whether he is badly hurt.

The ambulance is sent for, and in a few minutes there is the insistent ringing of a bell, and the traffic is stopped to make way for the arriving motor ambulance. People ask what is the matter, and they are told that an old man has broken his leg, and the crowd grows outside the shop. But the motor ambulance enters it, and directly it stops the doors are opened and the stretcher taken out.

And soon the old man is cradled out of the shop bound to the stretcher. He is very white, but strangely cheerful, and he looks gratefully at the crowd. Tenderly he is carried to the ambulance. The frock-coated young man tells him to cheer up, and women look kindly at him.

The doors are shut, and again the traffic is held up, and everything makes way for the motor ambulance carrying this almost painless old man to the hospital. Motor-cars swerve aside to let him pass. A carriage and pair wait patiently to give him a clear crossing at the corner. A hansom that may be carrying a cabinet minister pulls quickly out of the way.

Triumphantly he rushes through the city. At last he is important. He cares little about the paining leg. He is not lonely now, or frightened. He does not think unkindly of anyone. He remembers the anxious faces of the crowd, and he can see the pitying looks of the women. He hears the roar of the traffic outside, and he knows that as is going faster than anyone else and that for once he is the most important man in the street.

He does not know he is important only because he is dying. He is not in much pain. He only feels weak and helpless. He hears no grudge against the driver of the hansom. He would not have missed this ride for any-

thing. The policeman in the ambulance speaks kindly to him, and holds his hand, and motions his lips with his hand, and when he gets to the hospital and faints, he does not know that he has died.

R. CLEMMAN PALMER.

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