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LAND OF CARIBOUS.

THE SCHWATKA EXPEDITION ENCOUNTER WILD GAME.

A Caribou Bull for Food—Encountering a Branch of the Selwyn River—Traces of Shining Gold—A Big Lake on the Trail.

[Spl. to Deseret News Association.]

IN THE FIELD, ALASKA, July 19, 1891.—It was high noon on July 5 before we got away, it having taken from daylight morning until then to bring the various loads into a state of comparative mental satisfaction to the lessees. The first hour's walk was over a level tract of hard ground, the bottom land of the wide valley and immense for travel, by comparison with the Yukon trail. The white men were now carrying from 25 to 40 pounds on their backs and I must say it appeared a mere bagatelle to me by comparison with the load I had carried before. After the first hour's walk on the level we came to the low, rolling foot-hills. In the valleys of these great groves of quaking aspens were found, and here the trail was unusually good, the ground being carpeted with a soft, fine turf, from which sprung a luxuriant growth of grass. Among such groves one could often see the "girdlings" of the trees by the

THE WOODPECKER.

tiers gnawing bark for food, and sometimes to an extent that killed the tree. The various ages of the different girdlings (for I think it is only done when the snow is on the ground) was apparent, and, I supposed, indicates the depth of the snow during the different winter seasons. If so, it is not very great at any time, certainly not enough to interfere with stock-raising, while the woods would give ample protection in the coldest winds. There were many burnt timber tracts passed by us that day, but they were small. The maximum injury by fire to an unsettled or thinly settled region is reached in either a densely timbered country or one perfectly open, as our great western plains. In a happy mean between the two the trees are not close enough to assist the conflagration without the help of the strong wind, while the grass is not high, dense or dry enough to aid it in that way. As usual in open countries this boiling trail often scattered to an extent that no definite path could be seen, the natives simply following general direction. Through a densely wooded or rough mountainous country full of impediments to the pedestrian an Indian trail is always much plainer marked for the same amount of travel than an open one. In fact there is no essential difference between an Indian trail and a game trail of migratory animals, and I have seen well versed frontiersmen study as to which kind a certain path could be. Twelve cases out of a dozen, I believe, an assertion on either side would be correct and the trail is used indifferently by the game or human animal, the only difference being the Indians have a sort of right of way in using it whenever they want, while game will not travel it while the scent of the former is yet clinging to it from a recent trip. That afternoon we came to a profusion of light-colored moss that the natives and frontiersmen here call caribou moss. A characteristic of this is its lie always being more whatever may be the state of the weather and to this is attributed its palatability to the animal from which it derived its name.

It was nearly 8 before we went into camp, but as far as weariness was concerned, I felt as if I could walk the rest of the night.

That night mosquitoes were much more numerous than they had been along the river. Even worse than the mosquitoes, however, was the singing of one of my packers, who was a Swede by birth, but who had spent the portion beginning and ending at the "Celtic Laundress" and which he kept humming far into the night, but not far from my bed. The humming of the mosquitoes was much less irritating.

Just before noon we passed over a knoll south-facing that was almost covered with strawberries. At the same time a bunch of spruce grouse was flushed in the bottom near by but there was no very wild fruit some were secured. Reaching the strawberry crock is fairly name for a sub-arctic stream; we saw a few grayling in it and some were caught with a fly by the white men, the Indians securing a few with poles and clubs.

Wherever we came to a deep crock a log bridge would have to be built to enable the dogs to cross without wetting their packs. Even in the shallower crossing they had to be watched for if the dog was warm and they were belighted they would lie down in the water to cool off. That day, July 16, was particularly bad on the dogs on account of the fallen timber that lay nearly everywhere across the trail and compelled, usually, small logs that were greater obstacles to the canine packers than larger timber would have been. The evening's camp was near a clear stream and a fair score of grayling were caught. These four game fish are in every clear stream on the base of the Yukon but has yet been investigated and without any reference to the consolidation of the receiving stream through which they must have passed to reach the clear tributaries. We now began to encounter an obstacle to pedestrianism that is common in interior Alaska and adjoining regions. I refer to a sort of coarse bunch grass that affects marshy places, which, when dry and thick, divests up into clumps called "bigger heads" by whites. Of course there are many variations in these with the common characteristic of always appearing more than the variation may indicate. Next forenoon we climbed a high ridge 1,800 feet above our morning's camp. The afternoon's journey can be condensed into—up-hill and mosquitoes. By sunset we had seen in nearly fresh game signs that we felt hopeful that something would soon be encountered, as the dogs required needed food. One of the unarmed Indian guides came back and bagged a gobel, as he explained the country was one famous for savage bears and an encounter might be expected any time plunging through the brush. We encountered no bears and but one Indian. The game excitement was kept up by Indians ahead reporting they had shot a caribou, but that it had escaped. That evening we camped on a stream that was undoubtedly a branch of the Selwyn, a river I named 1883 after the director of the Canadian Geological Survey while drifting by its mouth. Bowker prospected a "streaky" ledge for gold, but only got a couple of colors. Dalton, prospecting for grayling, got five. Next morning we ascended the Selwyn a short distance and then took up one of its westerly branches. In this latter the grayling were so abundant that the Indians hastily extemporized poles of forked poles and caught quite a number of them. From this stream we ascended a high ridge and were descending into the valley beyond when a shot was heard ahead and on coming up found that David had killed a fine two-year-old caribou cow. All around us were other fresh signs; some few of wild goats also, while plover were numerous on the high barren ridges. That evening, as we went into camp, we encountered mosquitoes in the greatest abundance we had yet seen on the expedition, or that we ever saw afterwards. It was impossible to breathe without getting them in the mouth or nostrils, while I were out the smoke of my hat completely in beating and in keep them away. That day, in the trail, a hornet or wasp stung me severely; and, in a general sort of way, I wished I was back in the land of rattlesnakes, centipedes and tarantulas. Throughout all this country I noticed the tops of many of the ridges were covered with projecting pinnacles and pillars of rocks that gave the rolling hills and otherwise almost pastoral scenery an extremely picturesque appearance. Near to a lake had been dammed by an enormous ice-gorge, not half of which had yet melted. This lay lake, with the snow-drifts all around on the ridges, gave the country a more general Arctic appearance for July than I ever saw for the same month on King William's Land in the Arctic, where Sir John Franklin's large party had so terribly perished with cold and hunger. Next morning we awoke to the fact the dogs had eaten up most of the caribou during the night and, though not lost to use by this theft, yet they had overcropped themselves until loathe to move, whining piteously when their masters beat them rather than move along. Next day an agreeable surprise was had in reaching the White river basin by an unexpected low pass when the prospects showed very high hills and ridges.

The next day, July 18, we made some thirteen miles, a little over the daily average we had been traveling so far. The forenoon of the 17th gave us some pretty high climbing and in a few hours we were 2,200 feet above the morning's camp. From this ridge we could see the valley of the main White river from which ascended a number of scattered smokes, some of which, our guides told us, were the camping places of other Indians, while others, as we could see, were spreading forest fires, probably set by accident. We could also see good chief mountains in the far southwest, evidently our first glimpse of the distant St. Elias Alps, or some of its interior bearing spurs. Bearing south by west from twenty-five to thirty miles away, was an enormous lake of at least twenty miles in

LAKE LOW VIEW.

length but the air was so hazy with smoke that estimates were necessarily uncertain.

Late in the afternoon, while the party was strolling along, almost in a body, gabbling like geese, we popped over a ridge that disclosed a 2-year-old caribou bull in full sight, about seventy-five to 100 yards ahead. Bowker, getting the first shot and securing it. It was in better condition than the first one and that night we revelled in tender steaks, liver and boiled tongue, the dogs, too, getting a fair share for their trouble in carrying most of it into camp.

[Continued on Seventh Page.]

The French Crisis.

The recent exodus in France showed a foreign population in the country outside of Paris: of 84,000 Germans, 171,000 Belgians, 366,741 Italians, 85,287 Swiss, 12,108 Luxemburgians, 87,702 Spaniards, 28,321 English and Irishmen, 13,704 Russians and 4,319 citizens of the United States. Population of Paris has a population of 187,567 foreigners. Wonders of foreign hotels are situated in these northern.

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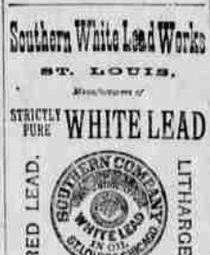

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