

and succeeded in inspiring a hope of untold wealth in thousands of hearts. I didn't know which to admire most, the cleverness of the companies or the power of imagination in the people. When the winter covered the lake and Yukon river with ice and stopped the mad rush for 1897, there was left a few hundred men who were willing to risk their lives in a new experiment in attempting to reach the land of gold over the ice. They hoped to be at the Chilcoot pass early enough to strike clear ice and be able to take on sleighs with dog trains enough provisions to last until summer. It is the fate of those few hundred men I am about to describe.

The first obstacle was the pass itself. To cross it we had to pack our provisions, tent, stove, clothing, etc., on our backs for six and a half miles over hills, up and down, crossing creeks, climbing hills, jumping from rock to rock, and higher up working through snow and breaking new trail every day. At last 200 men succeeded in placing their goods at the scales, about a week before Christmas, and the last ascent of the 1,400 feet high summit was commenced. We had to make footholds in the snow-wall which rose almost perpendicular up to the famous top of the Chilcoot pass. There were days when we had nice calm weather at the Scales, and a blizzard blowing on the summit, and vice versa. An avalanche covered the most part of our outfits, but through hard work we got them out again, and by the last of December we all had our stuff cached on the bluffs. When I say all, I forgot to mention that about one-half already had dropped out at Sheep Camp, tired of the packing and scared of snowstorms and cold weather. We then moved our camp over to Lake Lindermann and pitched our tents on the snowy hillside among the trees. The camp was named after me, whose tent was the first pitched there. So far our calculations were all right; the ice on the lakes was still clear, and if we then had had our stop down we could have gone further, but for four weeks a heavy snowstorm blew almost without cessation, and if we had a single clear day it was almost impossible to take any sleigh load through the snow over the ten miles road from the top to Lake Lindermann; furthermore, the mountain lakes were dangerous, and several of our best friends got lost on Crater lake and were lost forever.

The road from Crater lake to the next lakes, Long and Deep lake, goes through a five mile long canyon, and if a storm is blowing on Crater Lake, it is almost impossible, even for an old-timer, to find the mouth of the right canyon. The trail is gone, the snow and fog do not allow you to see two feet ahead and several other canyons, leading to unknown regions and with swift running, never overfrozen creeks may take you away for ever. I especially remember three Russian Fins, fine specimen of manhood, with a number of interior dogs. They left us in the morning hearty, hopeful and strong, and never returned. Those days of hard work and danger created a friendship among us that was entirely unknown later on under the wild spring-rush. The above mentioned snowstorm covered up the lakes and turned back most of our friends. Only a few went together and decided to go further with the intention of taking all our belongings to Tagish lake and stay there till March, when the southern wind (the Chinook) would allow us on sleighs with big sails to take sufficient provisions further with ease. Each man had about 1,400 pounds, and it was impossible for a man and two dogs to take bigger load than 350 pounds, which means that for every ten miles we had to go 70. Several of the boys gave it up and only nine, two English mining engineers, one American, a

Harvard graduate, two Swedish hunters and trappers, one old Danish miner, two Russian Fins and I were left.

Lake Linderman, Lake Bennett and Caraboo crossing are embedded between tall mountains, all covered with glittering snow, patches of wood are running for miles up in deep gulches cut out by powerful mountain streams. After getting away from the coast range we only had one severe wind storm, lasting five days, with a temperature of 47 deg. below zero. The lowest temperature was 57 deg., but the weather was then calm, and we did not feel it very much and were able to work outside the tents right along. Those who had expected to find game were sadly disappointed. Our whole winter result was a few squirrels, tamagans, snowshoe rabbits and one timber-wolf. The last one was tempted by our dogs to run close up to our tents. We lived on bacon, beans, flour, rice, cornmeal and dried fruit, and consumed quantities that were really astonishing, but our health was excellent and only a few accidents stopped the men from working. We had read in the papers, before leaving, about the horrors of an arctic night, but I must admit never to have seen anything so beautiful and grand as an arctic night with the northern light shining over the picturesque mountains and over our small camp of white tents and sparkling camp-fires. Several of us soon turned out to be expert cooks—and pies and doughnuts were not uncommon, although I am afraid they were heavy enough to be used as deadly weapons in a fight.

A mandolin belonging to one of the crowd gathered us often together round the fire and was only disturbed by the howling of the dogs that did not appreciate this symptom of civilization.

When about five miles from Takish post, we got information that Canada's governor, Major Walch, who had tried with horses and dog-team to make Dawson City, had failed and was returning, giving at the same time the order that nobody should be allowed to go further with less than 1,000 pounds of eatable provisions. Although, apparently, without any legal right, he forced his order through, and our last hope was gone. Nobody was able to carry that amount over the ice without covering the road several times. We, therefore, either turned back or went into permanent camp at Takish to build boats and wait for the coming spring.

From the middle of December we met several Yukoners coming out light with just provisions enough for the road and with 7 or 8 splendid interior dogs each, and through conversation with them, we got an impression of the land of gold somewhat different from the newspaper stories. This is the report, "in nuce": All Yukoners coming out before the middle of January were entirely ignorant of the excitement in the world at large and were not able to see any reason for it. Of course there was gold in the interior and new strikes every year, but that had been known for years, and the amount of hard work, hardships, sufferings and dangers a man had to go through for reaching those placers with provisions enough to last from one year to the next were so immense, that only a rich gold mine was a suitable recompense, and lots of them thought that even gold could be bought too dear. All Yukoners coming out later were either "boomers" or men who came to take in their usual spring supply. Furthermore, the Canadian government has made life pretty unendurable for the Americans. Besides the duty, they collect taxes on everything. A man has to pay tax for the permit to build a log cabin and for the right to cut timber. For every foot of lumber in the sluice boxes there is a tax. The claims are

reduced to 100 feet and the royalty is 20 per cent, which gives, in fact, the miner a mighty poor show to make anything.

On my coming back I met on the coast side of the Chilcoot Pass the wild spring rush of people. Sheep Camp, Canyon City and Dyea, peaceful, small towns, were just wild with excitement, especially Sheep Camp, which in fact is only the last place in the pass where timber is plentiful, was booming. Real estate was out of sight. About 1,000 men were camping on the snow, and I doubt the world before has seen a bigger camp of tents in the snow region. Even on the frozen creek were pitched tents, and sometimes the inhabitants were surprised to find a natural well under the snow, formed by the melting ice. Gambling houses and saloons were running freely and in full daylight. Shell games and any kind of "sure thing" game could not be stopped. A man killed his partner and friend in cold blood right in the tent next to me; stealing and fights were an every day occurrence. Every morning started the gang of men with horses, dogs, burrows, billygoats, oxen and human teams to drag their provisions up to the scales, and there was a string of human beings three miles long, all fighting, swearing and laughing, and all inspired by the goldthirst that always has and always will set the world crazy.

I had recovered from the Klondike fever and was able to see how very few of those men were really fit for the trip and stood any show to succeed, but advice and warning were just as useless on them, as five months previous they would have been to me.

Talia and Skaguay were grown considerably since I was there and although the houses were very poorly constructed, they were grown up in an immense number. Looking back on the excitement that now is a story of the past, I don't think very many made money. The boom was too short to justify the investments necessary for a start. When the boom was going down, the travelers got away and only the gambling houses, saloons and prostitutes were left. I don't think there ever was a more God-forsaken place on earth and a place more unfit for civilized beings. I don't doubt that thousands of people will be going over to St. Michaels, and the first treasure vessel coming out with gold will again start some people crazy, if not this war, in which every patriotic citizen is interested with his whole soul, is able to shake people up and show them that gold is not everything.

Finally, only a short story about the Indians, those poor, sickly, ignored beings who are hardly recognized as human. I met on Lake Bennett a small tribe trotting along with their children and dogs, and bought a few curiosities from a middle-aged woman. Two days after they crossed the Chilcoot pass in a snow storm, and in spite of their old precaution to tie the gang together with a rope, the same woman with the pappoose on her back got lost. Coming down to Sheep Camp, they first missed her and a gang of miners was organized and went up after her. She was found frozen to death, but had taken all her clothing off and wrapped around her little pappoose, who still was in pretty good spirits. This heroic deed of motherly love worked on the gold hunters' more powerful than the best sermon, and they all united and gave the Indian woman a royal funeral. When the report reached us on the other side our small camp lighted a campfire and my young American friend from Harvard made a song in honor of the poor Indian mother.

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