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## IN AN INDIAN VILLAGE

### TWELVE MILES AN HOUR DOWN A MOUNTAIN RIVER.

**A Hydraulic Hurdle Race to a Canoe Bottom Boat—A Day of Dangers Long to be Remembered Being a Continual Run of Rough Rapids.**

[Ills. (4 International Press Association.]

ATNA INDIAN VILLAGE OF TANAI, Alaska, August 12, 1891.—August 8, we came to the conclusion to build a light canoe boat from the coverings of our packs and descend the river. At this point the current was very rapid and the shores, waves running a foot or two in height, but there was a noticeable improvement over the violent torrent even near the glacier and if the ratio continued, as we hoped, another four or five miles might be let us out of dangerous water. We had fish lines for timed to snare with, a camp ax, knives and hatching knives and pocket thimbles as field parties usually have. The framework was of wood, lashed with sprace and the ribs of alder. The keel was fourteen feet long and nearly five feet in beam, a good form for the choppy waves of the rapids. A bit of lard, religiously saved for such a contingency, was mixed with spruce gum collected from the trees to waterproof the boat's bottom. The 4th Russell and Dr. Hayes built the framework while I gathered gum. My diary for that day closes with "We are nearly down to rawhide and raw flour but our new boat will now swamp or carry us in a short time." Next night the boat was done, except a little more gum coaking, and that was finished early the morning of the 10th; and we stood ready for our trip. We practically stripped to our underclothing to meet any accident. At 11 we were all ready to try our tissue paper transportation, every one jumped in and the boat leaped forward at a gait of from ten to twelve miles an hour, the islands fairly whirling by us. It was dangerous to stay, so we dashed through breakers that were better than barber's stalls for raising hair. Russell, aloft in the stern to see what harbor in Hades we were heading for, was sent spinning by an unusual lurch and it was active work to get back to our normal status. Both Russell and the doctor were pitched out in stopping the boat to inspect an ominous outlook ahead now alone in the world. Tortured out at a speed that promised to land us in San Pedro Bay, we stopping if nothing interfered. I considered myself lucky . . . I made a gravel bar not far below, and awaited the two wrecked to look across the swift channels between us. The channels outside of either party were roaring harrowingly that Leander could not have crossed. It was just noon when we stripped the first hole, lurched minutes, dumped Russell overboard, and came near rolling over and over down the steep shoots as a wrecked expedition. An hour was used in repairing damages. We made twenty miles by lunch time. In about two hours, having been in and out the boat a dozen times to inspect threatening outlooks, or wave through out by the plunging craft itself. How the balloon-like boat stood the banging was the greatest mystery of all. The outlook now was very black, the great river of a mile in width at places was ahead, narrowing into a colossal canyon and its roar sounded ominously like a cataract. Russell spent nearly two hours ahead on the north wall inspecting it but he could find no fall, though the rapids in places were almost cataract. While he was gone signal smokes were made to attract any Indians idlers enough to not this country populated. It was a hydraulic hurdle race for five miles and we could hardly tell half the time whether we were under the water, on top of it, or flying through the spray. The wide foot made it impossible for us to paddle in the center without adding danger to the already great peril and the work fell to the others. No better relief, however, could have been devised in such startling places than quietly sculling ashore. It looked so very bad at 4:30 another inspection was made. The canyon was so black, narrow, and turned so sharply it seemed as if the whole foaming mass plunged into an abyss out of sight. We were not yet clear of glacial country and it was not impossible we might disappear in a tunnel of ice if one was met. Thus, we tore the side out and came near sinking before a bar could be made. We got away at 7 in exceedingly heavy water and at 7:30, seeing the canyon ahead apparently cluttered in the black shadows, we stopped on a bar and camped, with thirty-six miles in our favor. My diary closes "A day of dangers long to be remembered, being a continuous run of rough rapids, with waves often four and five feet high and coming in all directions." We now had but one day's full ration of flour, and yet we often were now passing portions our companions on the board during some rapids. Russell even passed one on a bowsprit (not sea it) (the up a sea, and then passed it. We up a sea, and then passed it. We up a sea, and then passed it. We