

liminary report upon the flora and fauna of the new United States territory of Alaska I dispatched to you by the last Bremen steamer. I trust it will prove satisfactory. My reason for remaining behind a few months, in this city, will I hope be held sufficient, when I assure you that the special cause of my detention will not delay the writing out in full of the abundant notes I have taken, nor the proper preparation of the specimens for the university cabinet, which are numerous and valuable, and many of them wholly novel. I have the best assistance in both these duties, and confidently expect to present myself to you in March with my work completed, and its results in good condition for your inspection.

I must beg you to consider confidential the disclosure I am about to make as to the matter that has induced me to remain here for the winter, since I wish nothing published in relation to it until I am ready to make a full announcement. The facts I will state as briefly as possible.

While at Kodiak Island, off the south coast of the promontory of Alaska, whence I wrote you, I made the acquaintance of the widow of a German hunter named Zockler, who, after she came to understand my character and business in the country, confided to me that she had come into possession of a MS., that she believed to be important, written in a language unknown to her, and which had been entrusted to her by a stranger when at the point of death, under a solemn promise that she would keep it until she could find some man of education who would undertake to decipher and publish it to the world. I could make nothing of the document, after several examinations, as the characters imperfectly written with a lead pencil, were entirely unknown to me. But, at the earnest solicitation of the woman, who seemed to feel its custody to be a burden, and to harbor some superstitious notion in respect to it, I consented to take it with me, and to use every means to acquire a knowledge of its contents. The widow Zockler's account, which I have no reason to discredit, is that the man who gave her the MS. drifted ashore in a boat much battered by ice, some three years before. He was nearly famished when she took him from the boat, with the assistance of a neighbor, and carried him to her hut, and was only so far recovered by the stimulants she administered as to utter the injunction in regard to the MS., when he sank back and expired. Madame Zockler seemed to feel the fulfillment of the dying wish of her unknown countryman, revealed to her in such peculiar circumstances, to be essential to the peace of his soul.

It was not till I reached New York, in July, that I found time to look again at the manuscript, and might not have done so then had I not turned it over while taking some specimens from my large chest to show to a scientific visitor; and as I lifted the bundle of MS., which was closely written upon the unused spaces of leaves from a ship's log and other odd scraps of paper, a small sheet dropped from it, more freshly written than the rest, which I saw was in very fair German, though somewhat misspelled and evidently written by an illiterate person. After my visitor had left I returned at once to this scrap, which I found to my delight furnished a key to the whole MS. The MS. was written in a crude but compact and comprehensive stenography, devised by the author. The German note also gave me the astounding information that the writer was a sailor, lost from a ship in the Northern ocean near Spitzbergen, and that he had drifted to an arctic continent, or island, which he found inhabited by a peculiar race of men, and had remained there some ten years, until weary of a meagre and monotonous life, and pining for home, he had boldly put out upon the Northern sea again, in the same small boat in which he had reached the polar country. How long he had drifted or by what currents and winds his frail vessel had been brought around through the narrow Straits which separate the eastern and western continents, unfortunately he did not live to tell. This is the more to be regretted, as his memoranda are very defective, and doubtless a scientific questioner might have obtained from him many important facts that he did not think it worth while to record. That he survived, however, long enough to reach the outskirts of civilization, and was able to confide the brief account of his remarkable adventures and discoveries to safe hands, is matter for wonder and gratitude. To be the medium for making these interesting discoveries of another known to the scientific world I count great honor and good fortune;

and I feel confident that under the stimulus to discovery thus furnished to arctic explorers, the statements of this MS. will soon be verified, and a new and most unique country be made accessible to scientific research. So greatly interested have I become in the subject while laboriously translating the sailor's MS. into German, and aiding Mr. Brown, my capable American assistant, in rendering it into English, that I have fully determined to resign my connection with the university and embark with the next arctic expedition from Bremen, if I can induce Professor Petermann, its conductor to accept my services. Or I should prefer to join his expedition as the representative of our university, if this can be arranged. I have scarcely a doubt that I shall be able, at the end of three or four years, to give to the world an accurate and complete account of the Polar continent, of which we for the first time obtain a glimpse in the document I have the good fortune to possess.

The MS. is nearly translated, and the translation will be printed in a few weeks. I shall take pleasure in sending copies to you. The German copy I shall transmit or carry for publication at Bonn.

With many good wishes for Madame Gerok and your fair daughter, whom I regret that I shall not meet at Christmas, I remain your friend and pupil.

ADOLPH BERTFRIED.

FORSSMAN'S NARRATIVE.

ADRIFT ON THE ARCTIC SEA.

My name is Karl Forssman. I was born at Gluckstadt on the Elbe, upon the 10th of January, 1814. My father, Otto Forssman, and my mother, Margarit Weigell Forssman, still remain at Gluckstadt. I do not doubt, if God spares them to their children; and if what I now write shall ever reach them, as I can but little hope, let them know that I have thus set down my history that they may with certainty identify their lost son Karl; and let them surely believe, if I see them no more, that my love to them has survived long separation and distance, and great peril and suffering; and let them convey the same to my true wife Gertrude, and by her to forgive my single and most regretted wrong to her.

I served with my father as fisherman on the Elbe and along the sea coast, until three years after I had reached manhood. But I longed for a more adventurous and exciting life, and in 1838 I went to Amsterdam and shipped for a sailor. I made voyages to Liverpool in England, to New York in America, and to several East Indian and Mediterranean ports, occasionally returning to Gluckstadt for a few weeks at a time. It was during one of these visits, in the winter of 1842, that I was happily joined in wedlock to Gertrude Spluyt, who had been my favorite playmate since I recollect anything. The twelve years we lived together as man and wife were very happy, though I was absent from home most of the time, and Providence gave us no offspring. In the spring of 1851 I was induced by the hope of large gains to ship as second mate for a whaling voyage to the northern seas. My wife and parents remonstrated till they saw that I could not be moved from my purpose, and then dismissed me with blessings and tears. They felt it to be the final parting, and I have now reason to think their forboding will prove true. My ship was the Von Raumer, Captain Schulz—a staunch craft and worthy commander.

The voyage was unlike any other former experience to me, and when we reached the waters where the whale abounds, below Spitzbergen, the chase of these sea monsters became very exciting, especially as I had a personal interest in the number taken. We had excellent luck, and were likely to get our full cargo of oil in less than the usual time, when I was accidentally separated from my messmates and ship and sent alone upon a strange voyage, from which I fear there will be no return. We had gone in the small boat to Edges Island, on a bright Sunday morning, as was our custom, to hunt the eggs of the eider duck, which were abundant among the rocks. Having filled my pouch with eggs, I returned first to the boat, and while waiting the arrival of my comrades, laid myself down in the boat and fell asleep. When I awoke I found that I was adrift upon the ocean, alone. The rope had evidently slipped from under the large stone put upon it to hold it, and the boat had already drifted so far that in the dim light I could but just see the islands in the distance, and could discover no vessel. A great horror then came over me.

I cannot tell the agony of that moment. As soon as I could in some measure control myself, I tried to make out the direction the boat was taking. As near as I could judge it was a little east of north, and a high wind conspired with the current to make my course rapid. This suggested the only thought in which I could find comfort, that if I must perish of cold, the sooner I should reach the region of perpetual ice the briefer my sufferings would be.

I had no sail in the boat, and but one oar. I was utterly at the mercy of winds and waves, and I lay down in the bottom of the boat in a stupor, which was less like sleep than the lethargy of despair. I did not invoke the saints, for I had been taught that the great God does not entrust the government of his universe to finite beings; and I did not pray for miraculous deliverance at His hand, for my mother, a devotee follower of Luther, had told me that the age of miracles closed long ago, and that now inflexible law controls all things; and if it were not so, I could not feel that I was of sufficient consequence to be made the subject of miraculous interposition. No doubt I might have found reasons enough for praying, in spite of the inflexibility of natural law, if I had been in the mood, as I was not. My only thoughts were of home and the friends whose expostulations I had disregarded. I longed to make known to them my terrible fate, for I did not think escape from death possible.

When I next aroused myself the boat was moving more slowly; there was no wind, and I was astonished to find the air milder than at Spitzbergen. I began to hope that I might really be drifting southward. But I soon saw the sun was moving in a lower circuit, and was convinced that my hopes were delusive. I cannot tell how long I drifted in this way. After I had exhausted my small stock of duck's eggs, I had neither food nor drink, but the sense of hunger was soon lost in that of thirst. I should think it might have been about the sixth day after I left Edges Island that I lay down, utterly exhausted and disheartened, whispered a brief prayer, and resigned myself to die.

ASHORE AT THE POLE.

How long I remained insensible I cannot tell. I only know that I was aroused by a sudden shock, and had reason enough left to infer that the boat had struck a rock. I tried to lift my head but was not strong enough. Soon after there were sounds of voices, as of children near me, and I thought it only a dream. But I opened my eyes, and beheld a group of strange creatures around the boat, children in size and features, but evidently men in age, who were gazing earnestly at me, with curiosity and some alarm. Weakness and thirst were too strong in me to give way to other emotions, and I tried to make signs to these people that I needed water. They were long in comprehending me, or so it seemed to my impatience; but at length one brought me a small vessel of water, and I drank it eagerly and beckoned for more. In a few minutes I felt greatly refreshed and endeavored to rise, but I had overestimated my strength and dropped back from weakness. The strange little men were evidently consulting as to what they should do with me, which I made out by their gestures and movements, though their language was wholly unintelligible. They soon rigged a rough litter of sticks, upon which they gently placed me, and eight of them lifted it and bore me away from the shore. I had not strength to notice the appearance of the place where I had landed, but I was so anxious for the safety of my boat that I succeeded in impressing the idea upon my unknown hosts, and had the satisfaction to see several of them at work upon it, attempting to draw it into a narrow cove between the rocks. My bearers took me along very carefully, while I slept most of the time, and was only conscious that we went a long way up a steep hill and then descended more gradually into a deep valley, musical with running streams and singing birds. When we halted at last I was lifted upon a soft couch of moss, and various articles of simple drink and food were administered to me in small installments. None of them were familiar to my taste, but all grateful and restorative. I was still too weak to notice much, and my dreamy thoughts were troubled with questions, whether the creatures into whose hands I had fallen were cannibals, whether they would fat me before putting me on the spit, and whether I might not hope to get strong enough to kill a score or two of the puny things and so escape.

(To be continued.)

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NOTICE!

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JOHN VAN COTT,
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S. L. City, Jan. 13, 1869.

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To Whom it may Concern:

THE United States Surveyor General's Office for the Territory of Utah, established by Act of Congress approved July 16, 1863, and located by order of the Secretary of the Interior at Salt Lake City, has been organized and is now open for the transaction of business. Surveyor General's Office, Salt Lake City, Utah, November 17, 1868.

JOHN A. CLARK,
Surveyor General of Utah.

w42 3m