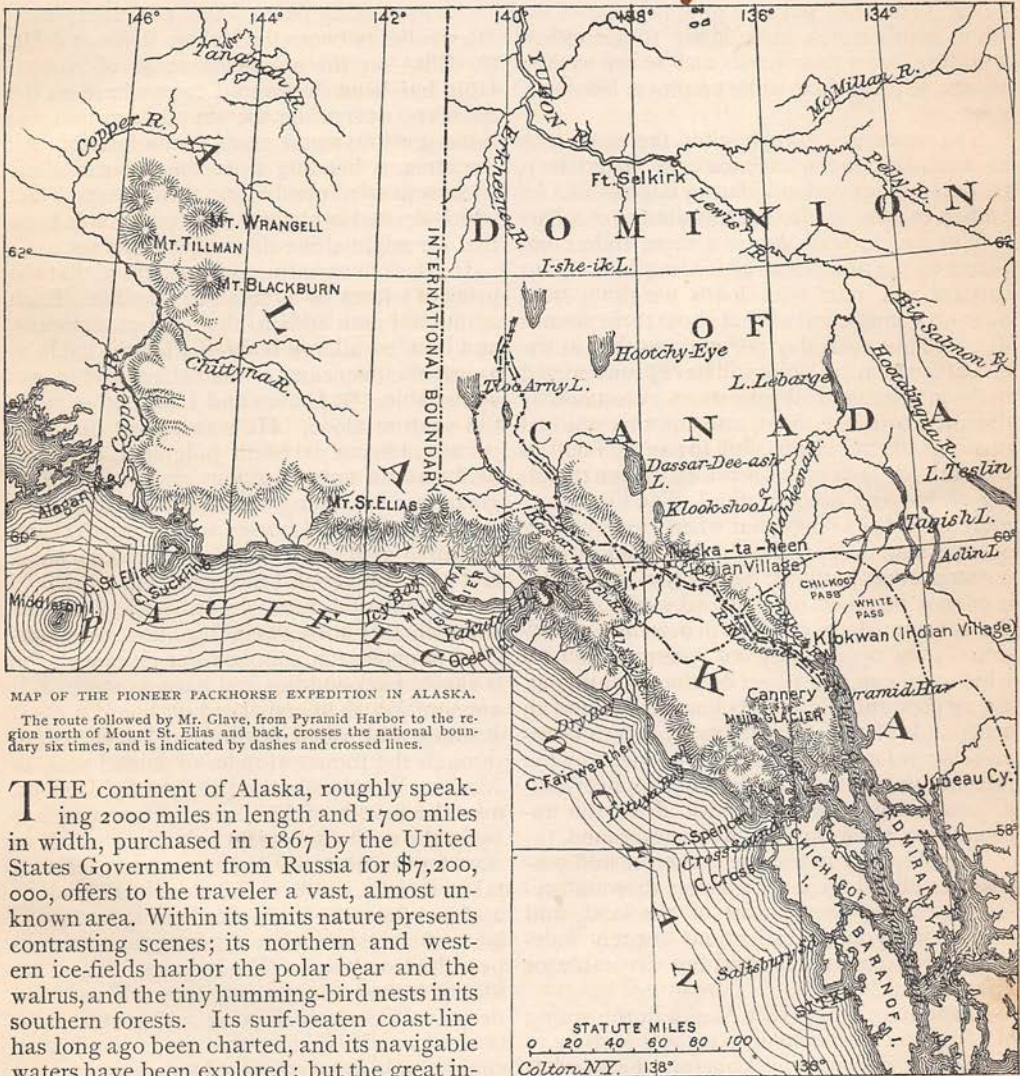


PIONEER PACKHORSES IN ALASKA.

WITH PICTURES FROM SKETCHES AND PHOTOGRAPHS BY THE AUTHOR.

I. THE ADVANCE.



THE continent of Alaska, roughly speaking 2000 miles in length and 1700 miles in width, purchased in 1867 by the United States Government from Russia for \$7,200,000, offers to the traveler a vast, almost unknown area. Within its limits nature presents contrasting scenes; its northern and western ice-fields harbor the polar bear and the walrus, and the tiny humming-bird nests in its southern forests. Its surf-beaten coast-line has long ago been charted, and its navigable waters have been explored; but the great interior, unapproached by waterways, is almost unknown.

A journey which I made in central Alaska in 1890, as a member of an exploring expedition, assured me beyond doubt that defective transport was the sole reason for the undeveloped and unexplored state of the land. The Indian carrier was the only means of transportation; he controlled the situation, and com-

manded most exorbitant pay. Moreover, his arrogance, inconsistency, cunning, and general unreliability are ever on the alert to thwart the white man. No matter how important your mission, your Indian carriers, though they have duly contracted to accompany you, will delay your departure till it suits their convenience, and any exhibition of impatience on your part

will only remind them of your utter dependence upon them; and then intrigue for increase of pay will at once begin. When *en route* they will prolong the journey by camping on the trail for two or three weeks, tempted by good hunting or fishing. In a land where the open season is so short, and the ways are so long, such delay is a tremendous drawback. Often the Indians will carry their loads some part of the way agreed upon, then demand an extravagant increase of pay or a goodly share of the white man's stores, and, failing to get either, will fling down their packs and return to their village, leaving their white employer helplessly stranded.

The expense of Indian labor, therefore, with its attendant inconvenience and uncertainty, renders a long overland journey impossible. An Indian cannot be hired at less than two dollars a day, which, however, is a mere trifle compared to the obligation of feeding him. Your carriers will start with loads weighing from 80 to 90 pounds, and will eat about three pounds dead-weight each day per man, so that at the end of the month a point will have been reached in the interior, and all your stores consumed by the men carrying them, and for this unusual privilege the traveler has still to pay sixty dollars a month for each man's services. When traveling on his own account, the Indian lives sparingly on dried salmon, but when employed by a white man his appetite at once assumes bo-constrictor proportions. Game is so scarce that it cannot be relied on to afford much relief to the constant drain on your provisions. Occasionally an opportunity will present itself by which you can bag a bear or a mountain-goat, a very pleasant addition to your larder, and an acceptable change from the monotonous bean-and-bacon fare; but you cannot depend on the rifle for food; without a plentiful supply of provisions, misery and hunger will drive you unceremoniously from your working-ground.

The only way to test the resources and possibilities of Alaska is by making thorough research through every part of the land, and conducting your investigations entirely independent of native report either favorable or discouraging.

I determined to revisit Alaska in the spring of 1891, and to endeavor to make a journey to the far interior with packhorses. From what he had already seen of the land, John Dalton, who accompanied me on the previous journey, was equally convinced with myself of the feasibility of such an undertaking. As I was about to make what I thought to be rather an important experiment, I ventured to ask some slight assistance from the geographical departments of the United States and Canadian governments, such as the loan of a few instruments,

which otherwise would lie idle in some Government office, in return for which privilege I promised a rough map of an enormous area of unknown land; but my suggestions failed to obtain a favorable hearing. Failing to awaken interest in my experiment through different channels, I decided to go at my own expense. Dalton had agreed to aid me; in fact, without the promise of his valuable services I should have hesitated to make the attempt.

An interesting part of this vast unexplored interior lies between the Yukon River and Mt. St. Elias on the southeast coast of Alaska. Gold has been discovered everywhere on the outskirts, warranting the supposition that the same precious metal exists in the interior. All the streams heading from this quarter show specimens of mineral along their shores, a fact which created in our minds the reasonable hope that we might strike the supply at its source.

In Alaskan expeditions it is essential that the party of whites be as small as possible. Each additional man adds to the need of transport, and besides, a large body of whites is liable to arouse the suspicions of the natives and to create trouble. So Dalton and I decided to make the venture alone. He was a most desirable partner, having excellent judgment, cool and deliberate in time of danger, and possessed of great tact in dealing with Indians. He thoroughly understood horses, was as good as any Indian in a cottonwood dugout or skin canoe, and as a camp cook I never met his equal.

We equipped ourselves at Seattle with four short, chunky horses weighing about nine hundred pounds each, supplied ourselves with the requisite pack-saddles and harness, stores and ammunition, then embarked on board a coast steamer, and sailed north from Puget Sound, through the thousand miles of inland seas, to Alaska. We disembarked at Pyramid Harbor, near the mouth of the Chilkat River, which is by far the most convenient point from which to start for the interior. No horses had ever been taken into the country, and old miners, traders, and prospectors openly pitied our ignorance in imagining the possibility of taking pack-animals over the coast-range. The Indians ridiculed the idea of such an experiment; they told us of the deep, swift streams flowing across our path, the rocky paths so steep that the Indian hunter could climb in safety only by creeping on his hands and knees. Finding that their discouraging reports failed to influence us, the Chilkat Indians, foreseeing that our venture, if successful, would greatly injure their interests by establishing a dangerous competition against their present monopoly, held meetings on the subject, and rumor reached us that our further advance would be resisted. However, when we were ready, we saddled up, buckled on

our pistol-belts, and proceeded on our journey without any attempt at hindrance save by verbal demonstration.

Upon our arrival at the coast-range we were compelled to suffer delay owing to the backwardness of the season. The mountains were still deeply buried in snow; on the higher slopes the topmost tufts on the tall spruce and hemlock just peered through their wintry mantling. During the daytime the thermometer rose to 54° above freezing-point, but each night the mercury dropped a few degrees below. The rapidly increasing heat of the sun, heralding the approach of summer, was ousting winter from its frigid sway, and furnishing the land with a gentler climate.

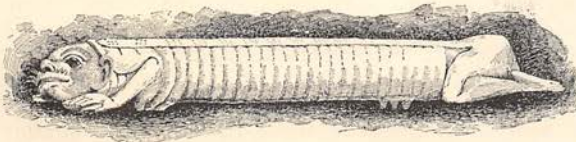


CHILKAT PILLAR RECORDING LEGEND OF RAVEN FAMILY.

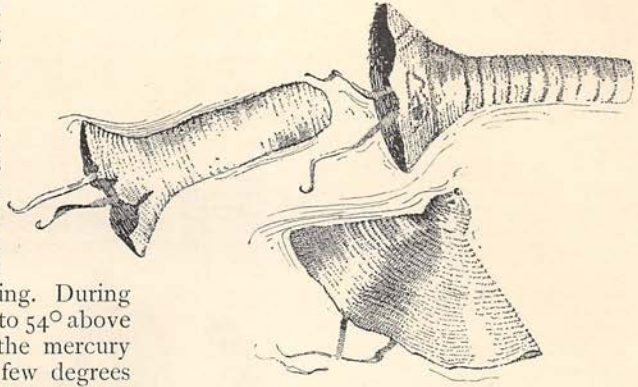
A short distance from the coast the snow lay deep, even in the valley lands. We found a fine patch of grass, however, around the village of Klokwan, twenty-five miles up the Chilkat River, which would maintain our horses in good condition till the season opened sufficiently to permit a further

advance. At this Indian settlement there are about twenty houses constructed of heavy planking, roofed with rudely hewn boards, each having an immense aperture for the escape of smoke. On all sides these dwellings are loop-holed for muskets. Many a stubborn fight has been decided around this village, the planking being pitted with slugshot. Most of these huts are occupied by three or four families; some of greater dimensions, however, will shelter sixty Indians.

The Chilkat nation is divided into sections, each named after some living thing. There are the Ravens, Wolves, Eagles, Snails,

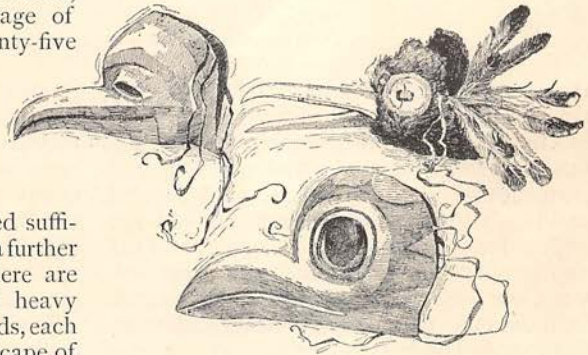


BANQUET DISH, 14 FEET LONG, 14 INCHES WIDE, AND 15 INCHES DEEP.



PLAITED FIBER DANCING-BONNETS.

Bears, etc., and the houses of the principal men are ornamented with large, grotesquely carved tablets, which signify by their particular design the legend or history of the respective family. These people have no written language. In former days every event of consequence was duly chronicled by some design, suggestive of the occurrence, chiseled upon a wooden pillar, such designs being placed in succession till an immense log was entirely



WOODEN DANCING-MASKS, CROW NATION.

taken up with a strange medley of exaggerated figures. Most of these carvings are very old, and their legends and historical references have been distorted by constant repetition. Only the oldest men attempt to interpret the puzzling designs produced by their ancestors. Formerly powerful chieftains held court here with barbaric pomp, and terrorized the neighboring peoples. They were bucaneeers and pirates. The chief, Klenta Koosh, has a strange collection of old firearms, and outside his house two iron cannons defend the approach with threatening array—all stolen from a Russian ship which stranded on the Alaskan shore in former days. Slavery was then in general practice; prisoners became the serfs of



DRAWN BY W. TABER.

TOWING HORSES ACROSS THE CHILKAT RIVER.

their captors, and, as in central Africa to-day, constituted the principal source of wealth.

The old-time Chilkat, dressed in skins and furs obtained from the inland tribes, had his garments picturesquely fringed, and tasseled, and beaded, and woven in with stained swan-quills. He wore bracelets of copper, and carried copper spears, knives, and arrows. He was a warrior, and lived but to perish in battle. In those days no ceremony was complete unless attended by human sacrifice; execution of slaves was of frequent occurrence, for superstitious belief deemed disaster and illness the doing of angry spirits, only to be appeased by the shedding of human blood. Tribal wars and hand-to-hand fights followed from the slightest disagreement.

It was the custom then for all the young men in the village to plunge each morning, winter and summer, into the chilly stream, stay in the icy waters till benumbed with cold, and then to thrash one another with stout-thonged whips till circulation and animation were thoroughly restored. This novel apprenticeship is said to have had the effect of creating unusual stamina, producing the ability to withstand cold and hunger, and deadening feeling. The Indians say that a warrior thus trained, though mortally wounded, would face his foe and cut and stab while life remained. In such duels they

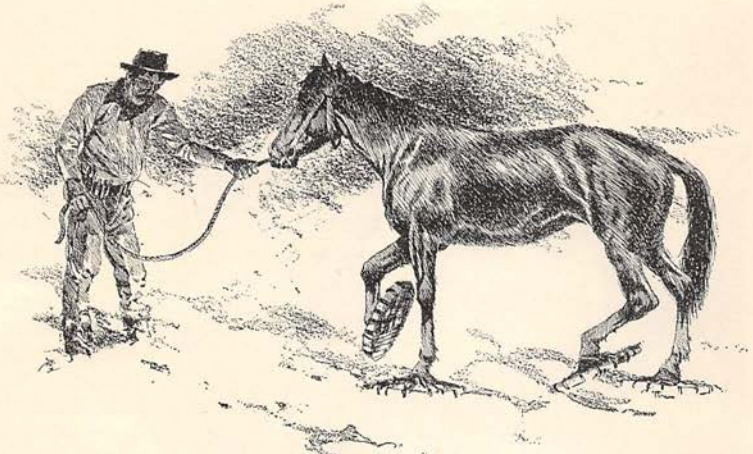
protected their heads with wooden helmets, shaped in design according to their nation; they also wore buckskin shirts, and bound their arms with strips of leather. Gormandizing competitions used to be a popular form of entertainment; an immense trough, called Klook-Ook-Tsik, 14 feet long, 14 inches in width, and 15 in depth, was filled with meats, bear and mountain-goat, fish, berries, and oil. Then families vied with one another as to who could eat the most, and many serious fights have resulted from the jealousy of the losers.

The present generation of Chilkat Indians is fast relinquishing tribal customs and ceremonies, and is taking but little interest in the history of its ancestors. Dances are no longer held in which family head-dresses and costumes are worn. The great wooden banqueting-trough is now embedded in moss and in grass that grows between the floor-boards in the house where once old "Kay Tsou" assembled his followers by drum-beat, despatched them on the trail for war or trade, declared the guilty and the innocent, and condemned to death as he willed. At the present day there are a few men in the villages known as "ankow," or chief, but they have only feeble power.

In character these Indians are a strange composition—unemotional, morose, unsympathetic, superstitious, indifferent to death,

without the slightest idea of gratitude, and having an astonishing respect for the property of others. When on a trading-journey, or out hunting, they will leave their belongings hanging on bushes all along the trail; and snow-shoes, sometimes a musket, blankets, a leg of smoked bear, a dried salmon, are frequently noticed along an Indian path. No one thinks of touching any of these things, and they have not the power of the police to enforce honesty by intimidation.

An incident happened to us which demonstrates their utter want of feeling for the interests of others. While at one of our camps a party of Indians returned from a journey to the interior which they had made on snow-shoes. I noticed that their chief, Klenta Koosh, was not with them on their return, and I asked of one of the Indians, "Kusu Klenta Koosh" ("Where is Klenta Koosh")? "Klake sekoo, klake setteen" ("I don't know. I have not seen him"). Then he explained that he had not seen the chief for three days. While crossing the mountains they were caught in a dense fog; the party kept together for a time by calling constantly to one another, but finally the voice of the chief grew fainter and fainter, and then could no longer be heard. In the same breath with this explanation the Indian asked me, "Have the salmon started to run up our river?" I ignored his



DRAWN BY W. TABER.

"MARY" ON SNOWSHOES.

question, and asked again, "But where is Klenta Koosh?" As if disgusted at my interest in such a trivial matter, the man answered quite snappishly, "I don't know; either he has been killed by a bear or drowned crossing one of the swollen streams."

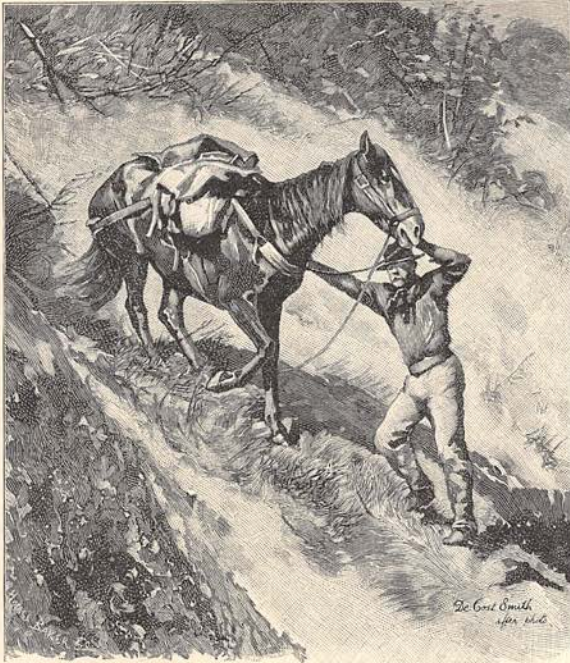
During our stay at the Indian village of Klokwan our horses remained in splendid condition. The natives themselves were too scared at the strange animals to annoy them. Their dogs at first made a noisy attack, but a few kicks from the horses warned them that it was more comfortable to howl at a distance.

Toward the end of May the summer warmth had rid the valleys of their winter snow; so we saddled up and moved on toward the interior. Our road from Klokwan lay along the course of the Kleeheenee, which heads away from a glacier, and, flowing from the westward, enters the Chilkat River just above the village. In crossing the parent river, now swollen by its



DRAWN BY W. TABER.

CROSSING A HARDENED SNOWFIELD.



DRAWN BY DE COST SMITH.

ENGRAVED BY HORACE BAKER.

THE APPROACH TO A CAÑON.

tribute from melting snows into a deep, swift stream, we towed each of our horses across with a canoe, with which we also carried our supplies as far as navigation permitted. We then harnessed up again, and, riding on the pack-saddles, proceeded on our way along the stony valley of the Kleeheenee, which we had to swim several times on horseback, where the precipitous bluffs on one bank stopped our advance and compelled us to cross. At one place I had a bad fall. The horse I was riding sank into a small bed of quicksand, and, struggling to free himself, reared and fell backward. Fortunately I was thrown off a sufficient distance to be safe from his plunging and kicking, and finally Dalton and I helped him out. This stream, though at places not more than 100 yards in width, is a treacherous torrent. Only last year a man lost his life while attempting to descend it on a raft. After proceeding twenty miles from our last camp, another halt became necessary. The valleys were free from snow, but the mountain slopes seemed loath to discard their winter mantling.

We were compelled to pitch our tent again, and to wait till summer gained full power. At this camp both we and our horses were tormented most unmercifully by mosquitos and a hideous assortment of teasing insects. A liberal daubing of bacon fat and

pitch around the eyes and ears of our animals kept those sensitive parts free from the pests, and when my head grew so bumpy I could not get my hat on I applied the remedy to my own anatomy with a good deal of success. When not feeding, our horses would leave the sheltered places and seek the open stone flats to avail themselves of whatever breeze was blowing; they would then stand in couples so that each had the benefit of the other's tail as a swish. We had three horses, and one little mare, who was the pet of the band; she would often stand behind two horses, and thus enjoy a monopoly of the fly-brushes.

Our Indian guide was most anxious to ride on horseback, and an opportunity presented itself to indulge him while we were shifting camp a few miles. We had loaded our horses very lightly and were riding on the packs, and while thus occupied our Indian suffered a sudden change in his usually uninteresting and phlegmatic course of life. He was riding the little mare. Close to our camp

there was a broad, deep ditch, with steep banks on each side; we had always walked our horses down one side and up the other. The Indian had no reason to suppose that the mare would depart from that custom; but he had no time for any meditation on the subject, for upon arriving at the brink the little mare sprang over the ditch. The copper-colored rider was pitched into the air. He sat dazed until returning reason convinced him that it was too serious a mishap to be a dream.

Fearing that we might have a lot of soft snow to cross on the summit, we constructed sets of four snow-shoes for our horses. We trimmed

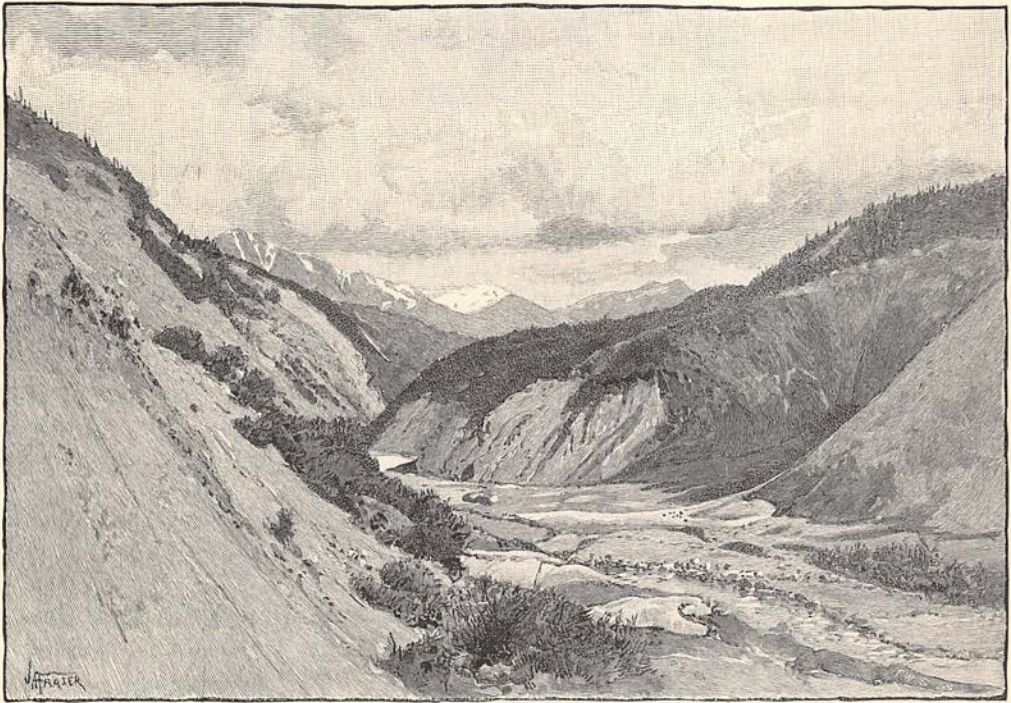


DRAWN BY DE COST SMITH.

A ROUGH BIT OF CLIMBING.

some stout young spruce saplings, then lashed these into hoops fourteen inches in diameter, and filled them in with plaited rope, each, when finished, resembling the exaggerated head of a lawn-tennis racket. The horse's hoof was placed in a pad in the center of the shoe, and a series of loops drawn up and laced round the fetlock kept it in place. When first experimenting with these, a horse would snort and tremble upon lifting his feet. Then he would make the most vigorous efforts to shake them off. Standing on his hind-legs, he would savagely paw the air, then quickly tumble on to his fore-legs and kick frantically. We gave them daily instruction in this novel accomplishment till each horse was an

we found covered with a dense growth of brittle shrub and coarse grass, and, on the extreme heights, snow-fields and moss-covered rock. We had made several reconnoitering trips to select the best ways, and we reached the summit, 4750 feet elevation, by slow and careful ascent, without any serious mishap. On the extreme heights of the divide a giant table-land extends for several miles in all directions. The air was cold, and the view cheerless, all lower lands were out of sight, and a distant circle of snowy peaks penciled out the horizon with glistening ruggedness. Everywhere on the high levels we crossed over immense patches of snow, in most places packed so hard that



DRAWN BY J. A. FRASER.

A PICTURESQUE RAVINE.

ENGRAVED BY F. W. SUTHERLAND.

expert; but our precaution proved unnecessary, for all the snow we crossed during the season was packed hard.

At last we set forth in earnest. Gradually we had been following the receding snow, and had now reached the foot of the Rocky Mountains, forming the divide or coast-range. The dreaded wall of towering heights, which had kept the land so long unknown, was ahead of us. Thus far our march had been over stony valleys along the Chilkat and the Klecheenee rivers. We now left the rivers and struck northward. On the lower slopes of the mountains we had to cut a trail through forests of spruce and hemlock. The steep hillsides of the higher levels

our horses' iron shoes made but little impression. Occasionally, however, the crisp surface would break through, and let us and our animals into deep, soft snow. While leading the little mare across one gulch, the hardened crust collapsed, and I and my horse tumbled out of sight into an icy stream coursing through its snowy tunnel beneath. By this time my mare had become quite philosophical in her acceptance of such incidents; she remained quiet, and looked at me as if inquiring what I meant to do under the circumstances. So I clambered out, and, giving her plenty of rope, urged and coaxed her to follow. The opposite bank of the gulch being only a few yards distant, by

energetic plunging she broke her way through and climbed out.

Everywhere the surface of the land had been deeply scarred by glacial violence into hollows and deep, dark cañons. It needed the greatest caution to descend and climb the treacherous cuttings, banked on each side by ragged, rocky walls, rising steep and threatening from the dank depths beneath, choked with boulders, and hemming in an angry torrent. Sometimes the ap-

proach was down a steep face of slippery granite, and the horses would slide several feet before getting foothold; in other places loosened rocks would give way. But our plucky little animals would struggle and spring into safety, and obtain respite from the threatened accident. Many of the cuttings grooved out are shallow, with low grass banks sloping gracefully to the beds of tiny streamlets beneath.

From the Kleheenee River to the summit and over the divide our course had been almost due north. When once beyond the coast-range, which took up two days' hard traveling,

we gradually descended to a lower level, and struck away to the westward into a great valley, reaching as far as the eye could see, and walled on each side by a lofty line of mountains, thickly wooded to the snow-line. Avalanche and torrent had hewn the hillsides into deep ravines, and moving ice-fields had forced a way through the rocky wall. In the valleys beneath a rapid stream coursed along to the west, gaining volume on the way as tributaries from lakes and of melting snow flowed into it through the mountain gorges. As the lower levels were choked with timber-lands, we struck to the left, and found a better way along the

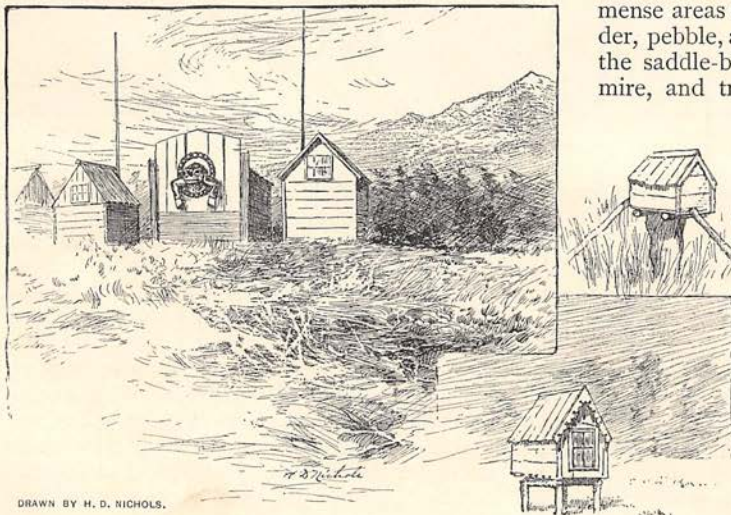
crests of the foot-hills; we crossed immense areas of glacial deposit,—boulder, pebble, and sand,—floundered to the saddle-blankets in spongy quagmire, and tramped through pasture-

lands clothed in the richest grasses. Several times our horses sank deep into the treacherous bog, which threatened to engulf them, but by taking off their heavy packs, unsaddling them, and aiding their own efforts by lifting and hauling, we were always able to get them out into safety again. After encountering any such mishap, we made it a rule to prospect for another way, so as to avoid the bad places



DRAWN BY H. D. NICHOLS.

THE CHIEF'S HUT, AND GROUP OF GOONENAR NATIVES.



DRAWN BY H. D. NICHOLS.

CHILKAT GRAVEYARD, SHOWING HOUSE OF FROG NATION.
GOONENAR GRAVES, ANCIENT AND MODERN.

on any future journey. Even on the heights we found lakes and marsh-lands, which owed their origin to waters from melting snow, imprisoned in hollows, without an outlet.

After two more days of hard traveling we reached a wooded bluff overlooking an Indian village. Descending to the banks of a river the course of which we had been following, we fired a couple of rifle-shots, which is the Indian signal of approach. Soon a crowd appeared on the opposite bank, and shoved their dugouts into the stream; we unsaddled our horses, and swam them across the river, and the Indians carried our belongings over in their canoes. We loaded up again, and a few minutes' walk took us to the Indian village of Neska-ta-heen. Dal-

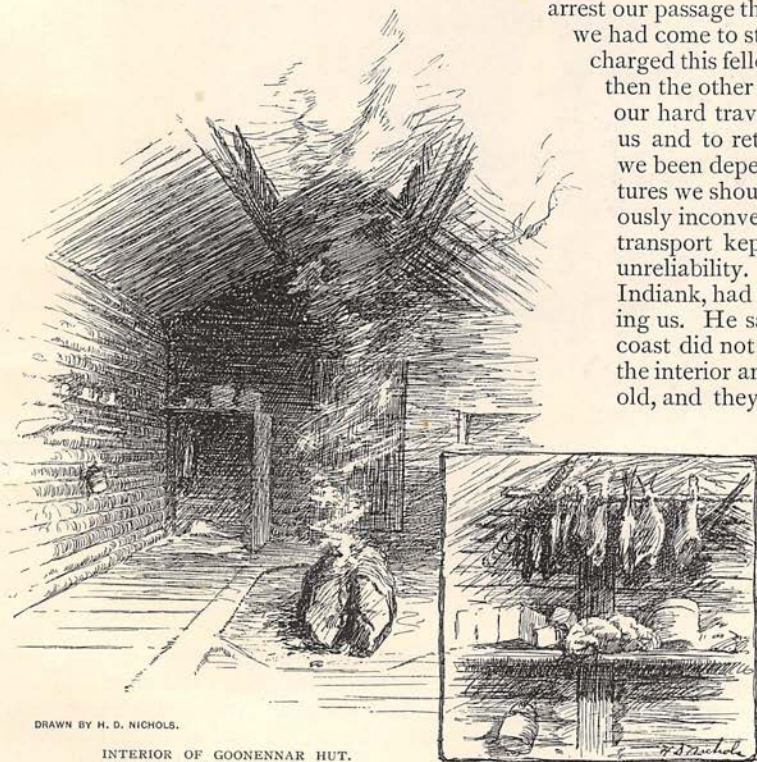
guides, hired at two dollars a day and their board. This precaution is absolutely necessary in pioneer travel; those who follow in an explorer's footsteps can dispense with it. These men took us over the most difficult trails, endeavoring by all means in their power to make our experiment a failure. In fact, they had accompanied us in order to have the opportunity of disheartening us in their own interest. We carried their blankets, and everything they had, on our horses, so that they had to keep up with our pace. However, being paid by the day, they tried to delay us; but it was to our advantage to make long marches. On our arrival one of these men, Shauk, an Indian doctor of the Chilkat tribe, began at once to intrigue with the interior Indians, persuading them to arrest our passage through their country, as we had come to steal their land. We discharged this fellow at very short notice;

then the other two, who did not relish our hard traveling, decided to leave us and to return to the coast. Had we been dependent upon these creatures we should have been most seriously inconvenienced, but our horse-transport kept us safe against their unreliability. One of the guides, old Indiank, had a novel excuse for leaving us. He said his relatives on the coast did not wish him to travel into the interior any more; he was getting old, and they feared that some day

he would drop down dead on the trail. They promised him that, if he would remain with them, they would supply him with all the dried salmon he needed, and agreed, when he died, to put a little fence around his final resting-place. He gave us to understand that it would indeed

be sad should he die away from home and forfeit that little fence.

Our arrival at Neska-ta-heen created excitement among the natives; our horses, of course, were of far more interest than ourselves. They had never seen such animals before, and, for the want of a better name, called them "harklane ketl" (big dogs). This village looked as we had left it twelve months before; there was the same stifling atmosphere, and the natives themselves were wearing the same unwashed garments stiffened with fat and dirt. They received us good-naturedly, and the old

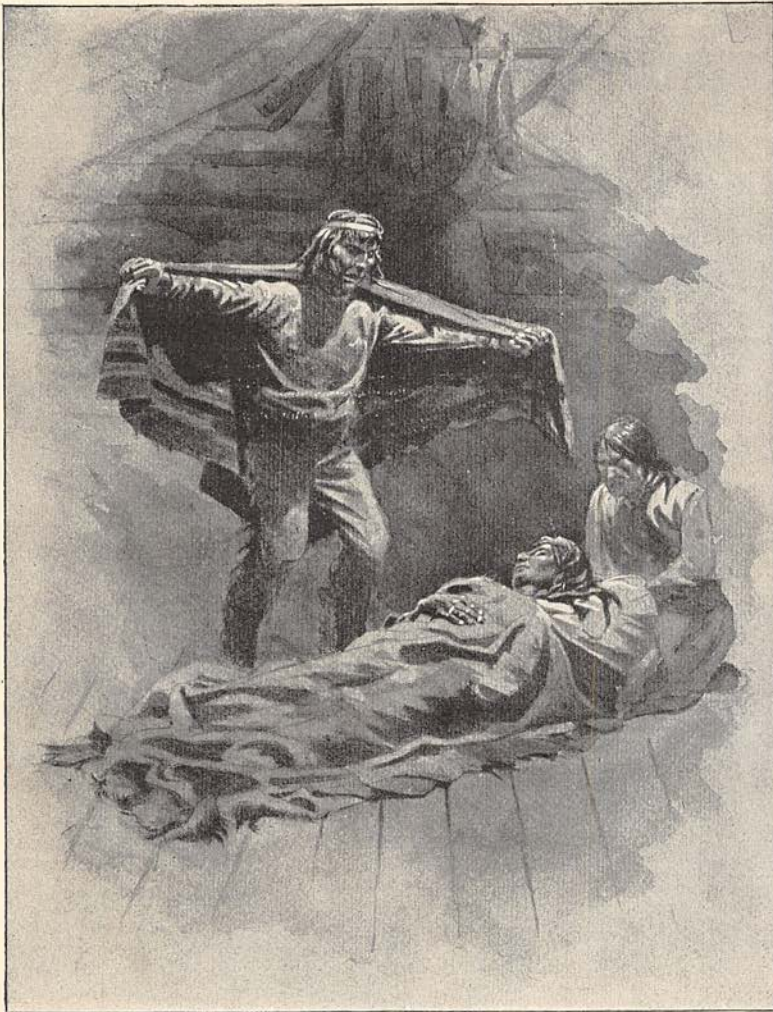


DRAWN BY H. D. NICHOLS.

INTERIOR OF GOONNAR HUT.

ton and I had met these people during the journey of the previous summer; we then approached this settlement from the north on our way down the Alseck River to the Pacific Ocean. The road over which we had now traveled was the direct way from the coast. No glaciers or insurmountable difficulties obstruct this route. Our arrival at this point with the pioneer band of horses is a most important event in Alaskan history, destined in the near future to receive due recognition.

We had been accompanied thus far by three coast Indians, one as interpreter, and two as



DRAWN BY W. TABER.

THE SONG OF THE CROW.

chief Warsaine portioned off a corner of his hut for us and our supplies, and the chief's wife consented to be photographed. One young fellow had learned from a Chilkat Indian a few English words. As we reached the place at mid-day, we were naturally astonished to be loudly hailed by "Good-night!" This youth used the expression "too late" with varied meaning; it described a tear in a shirt or a death. I was commenting on the pest of mosquitos, and he remarked, "E-koo-gwink kon sissa hit takar too late," meaning, "A little fire in the tent and the mosquitos will be 'too late.'"

Our poor horses suffered severely from the mosquitos; such crowds surrounded them that at times it was difficult at a little distance to make out the definite outline of the animals. Any future travelers should supply their horses with thick canvas cloaks, covering securely the

bodies and heads, and leaving only the eyes, nose, and mouth exposed. The continual pestering which the poor brutes suffer keeps them in poor condition; they cannot feed or lie down in comfort. We kept them hobbled all the season when not at work; a necessary precaution, for if seriously startled or frenzied by torment from insects, they might stampede a hundred miles before being overtaken.

The village of Neska-ta-heen is the principal settlement of the Goonnar Indians, the tribe inhabiting that part of Alaska bordered on the north and east by the Yukon, on the south by the coast-range, and on the west by the Copper River. They speak a language somewhat resembling the sing-song tongue of the Chinese, and entirely different from that of the coast natives, which is composed of harsh, raspy sounds, obtained by trying to cork up the throat

with the roots of the tongue. Throughout their conversation peculiar clicking sounds are heard, resembling the sudden rending of a new piece of calico. They are peaceably inclined, but are always weak-minded enough to be influenced and controlled by the Chilkat Indians, whom they instinctively acknowledge as their superiors. They are a strangely cold-natured people. They have no ways or words of greeting. A friend from a far-distant land arrives, and without any exchange of salutation with the villagers, whom he has not seen for many months, he divests himself of his pack and arms, draws his blanket round his shoulders, and squats before the fire till his host acknowledges his presence by offering him a pot of fish and game and a big horn spoon. When stimulated and refreshed by the appetizing dish, he will gradually and deliberately unburden himself of news, dilating fully upon hunting and trapping, but passing over deaths and accidents with but slight reference; for the price which an Indian obtains for his black-bear or fox-skin is of more concern than his mother's death.

The gastronomic taste of these people has an extended range. I have seen an Indian harpoon a salmon, bite a mouthful from just above the nose, then fling it back into the stream. Strange to say, the fish swims off as though the loss of that part of its anatomy were no inconvenience. I remember at one time visiting a little rocky island which had been taken possession of by a flock of gulls, and we gathered a lot of eggs. It was a little late in the season, however, and only a few were really fresh. An old Indian we had with us at the time watched us with disdainful gaze as we selected the good and discarded the bad. Then, as if to rebuke our fastidiousness and lack of economy, he broke half a dozen in his pan; good, bad, and indifferent were then all mixed up in an omelet to his liking. It is a crude palate that enjoys the delicious wild strawberry served in rancid fat, yet to the Indian this fruit is insipid unless thus dressed. Antiquated fish-heads are a favorite dish; they are kept in wooden troughs for several weeks before they are thought to be fit for eating. This dish is produced only upon some important occasion warranting a banquet. When eating meat they toast it in big long strips, then stuff as much as possible into their mouths, and cut off each bite close to the lips with their knives. No people in the world are more addicted to the use of tobacco; they are incessantly indulging in the narcotic in some form or other. They smoke, chew, and plaster their teeth and gums with a paste made of dampened snuff and ashes; they even sleep with tobacco in their mouths. Men and women are equally devoted to the weed, and a child seven

or eight years old will never lose a chance of enjoying a few whiffs from its father's pipe.

In the disposal of their dead there is an element of precaution highly commendable. The departed one is laid on a pile of dried logs that have been smeared with grease; a fire is then started, and the few charred remains gathered up, tied in a small bundle, and stowed away in one of the neat, brightly painted little houses at the back of the village. On the coast each family has its own grave; in the interior they are not so particular. It is seldom that one finds people, even among the most savage, who do not have some respect for their dead, excepting, of course, the cannibal tribes of Africa. In making a short trip within a few miles of this settlement, we were attracted to a little clearing by a loud buzzing of flies, and found an Indian lying dead with only a few branches rudely thrown over him. The man was poor, and left behind no furs, or guns, or blankets to compensate any one for the trouble of disposing of the body according to tribal custom, so he was left where he died on the trail, although his own brother was in the party at the time of his death.

The dog plays a big part in Indian life. In summer he accompanies his master on the trail, and is harnessed with two little pack-bags in which is stored away about twenty-five pounds' weight, generally of shot, so that in crossing the stream no damage can be done. In the winter they draw the sleighs. These poor animals are very badly treated at all times. When an Indian child is out of temper he attacks a dog, pinches him, screws his ears round, or beats him with a stick. Only during a few months in the summer do the dogs get enough to eat. When the salmon are running they live on raw fish, but during the remainder of the year they have to be contented with scraps of skin and bone. When in good condition they are fine-looking animals, with a wolfish head and body, and a coat resembling that of a collie. As a rule want of food and hard treatment keep them very lean. They are equipped with strange digestive organs; at one time one of them ate at one meal three courses, which deprived us of our only piece of soap, the remains of a towel, and a goodly slice of Dalton's hat. On another occasion the leathers of our oars, thickly studded with copper tacks, were torn off and eaten by a dog.

While at Neska-ta-heen I witnessed the ceremony of the medicine-man expelling from a sick woman the evil spirit which was attacking her. He was dressed in beaded buckskins liberally fringed, and wore a blanket around his shoulders; a few little charms hung about his neck, and he held a wooden rattle. The patient was lying on a robe of sheepskins in the center of the hut, and a crowd of natives were sitting

at the sides. All were smoking, and a big fire was blazing, creating an atmosphere more to be dreaded than the evil spirit. The medicine-man approached the woman and uttered incantations, at first slowly and deliberately; but his speech and actions became more and more excited as he danced and hopped about, imitating birds and animals. He looked truly dramatic as he leaned over the woman, and, clutching fiercely with one hand at some unseen object, pointed tremblingly with the other to the aperture in the roof, as if grabbing the evil spirit and suggesting a means of exit. At intervals he would sing, accompanied by the beating of a drum and the voices of his audience. His first song referred to a raven, and while he sang he spread his blanket across his shoulders and hopped about and "cawed" in a way very suggestive of that bird. The chorus of this song ran thus:

Ann joo chay na tay na koo na hee;
Ah ah ah, yeah; yeah, ah ah ah;

the meaning of which is that he has hunted throughout the village and has found no one practising witchcraft. His actions and incantations increased in violence till they became a veritable frenzy, and he fell groaning to the earth. This finale suggested that he had succeeded in ridding the sick woman's body of the evil one—and the audience went away. The medicine-man plays a big part in the life of the natives, and on account of his power he is the most dangerous influence with which a white traveler has to contend. The credulous natives have confidence in his power. They will give him skins and furs, which they have been gathering for months during the winter, in return for some paltry charm to protect them against the ills which beset mankind. A fever or a swelling will disappear if he only blows on the sufferer, and an ugly gash from a bear's claw will heal at once under the same treatment. It is a form of faith-cure. They believe their medicine-man obtains control over birds and animals, extracts their cunning, and allies this with his own ability, thus forming a powerful combination which they credit with supernatural power.

Neska-ta-heen is a most important rendezvous. During the winter the natives of the interior roam over all the land in small parties, hunting and trapping, but return here with their spoils of black and brown bear, black, cross, gray, white, and red fox, wolverine, land-otter, mink, lynx, beaver, etc., and exchange them for blankets, guns, powder, and tobacco, which the Chilkat Indians bring to them from the coast. The latter have always enjoyed a monopoly of this trade, and the natives of the

interior have been prevented by them from going to the coast.

From this point valleys of comparatively open country stretch away to the four quarters of the compass: to the east lies the way we had just traveled over; the valley of the Alseck River runs south to the Pacific Ocean; to the west there is a way to the back of Mt. St. Elias, and lakes Dassar-Dee-Ash and I-She-Ik lie to the north. Future research must tell what treasures lie concealed in these unknown regions.

From the coast to Neska-ta-heen we had taken the Indian trail as a basis, following it when good, and, as far as possible, avoiding its bad features. After that experience, we concluded that we could take a fully loaded pack-train from the sea to this village in seven days. Our successful experiment wrests from the Chilkat Indians the control of the road to the interior; the bolted gate hitherto guarded by them, to the exclusion of enterprise and progress, has swung back at the approach of the packhorse.

We tried our hardest to get guides at Neska-ta-heen to pilot us to the far interior, but they would not seriously entertain our proposal, though we offered most generous remuneration. They dared not go to the White River, which we wished to reach; the Indians of that region being always on the war-path. In former days the latter had made raids on this settlement and killed off the natives; in fact the present small population of about a hundred at Neska-ta-heen was attributed to fights with the Yookay Donner people dwelling on the banks of the White River. They pictured to us a frightful list of hideous obstacles to overcome—hostile natives, bottomless swamps, cañons, glaciers, and swollen torrents. Should we continue our course, we might possibly reach this far-away land and then be killed by the hostile Indians, and it was so far that we could not get back over the divide to the coast before winter set in, and we and our horses would perish. They begged us to change our plans and to make a journey through some safer part of the land, and to avail ourselves of their considerate guidance at two dollars a day and board.

I was able to extract a lot of crude topographical information from these natives; the novelty of pencil and paper and judicious little donations of tobacco threw them off their guard. By this means I gained a knowledge of their trails that proved of the utmost value to us in our advance. I cross-questioned them most fully, and learned of unmistakable landmarks and bearings; and when the natives refused to accompany us as guides, their scribbings of valleys, hills, and lakes availed to keep us on our course to the far interior of Alaska.

Sweet Nature's trick? Is Music's dying fall
 Less finely blent with strains antiphonal
 Because within a harp's quick vibratings
 We count the tremor of the spirit's wings?
 There is a path by Science yet untrod
 Where with closed eyes we walk to find out God.
 Still, still, the unattained ideal lures,
 The spell evades, the splendor yet endures;
 False sang the poet,—there is no good in rest,
 And Truth still leads us to a deeper quest.

For one, I believe that the best age of imaginative production is not past; that poetry is to retain, as of old, its literary import, and from time to time to prove itself a force in national life; that the Concord optimist and poet was sane in declaring that "the arts, as we know them, are but initial," that "sooner or later that which is now life shall be poetry, and every fair and manly trait shall add a richer strain to the song."

AND NOW, after all that has been said in our consideration of the nature of poetry, and although this has been restricted closely to its primal elements, I am sensible of having merely touched upon an inexhaustible theme; that my comments have been only "words along the way." Meanwhile the press teems with criticism, our time is alert with debate in countless private and public assemblies re-

specting almost every verse of all renowned poets, ancient or contemporary; texts and editions, even if relatively less in number, compared with the varied mass of publications, are multiplied as never before, and readers—say what you may—are tenfold as many as in the prime of the elder American minstrels. The study of poetry has stimulated other literary researches. Yet the best thing that I or any one can say to you under these conditions is that a breath of true poetry is worth a breeze of comment; that one must in the end make his own acquaintance with its examples and form his judgment of them. Read the best; not the imitations of imitations. Each of you will find that with which he himself is most in touch, and therewith a motive and a legend—*petere altiora*. The poet's verse is more than all the learned scholia upon it. He makes it by direct warrant; he produces, and we stand by and often too complacently measure his productions. In no wise can I forget that we are regarding even the lowliest poets from our still lower station; we are like earth-dwellers viewing, comparing, mapping out the stars. Whatsoever their shortcomings, their gift is their own; they bring music and delight and inspiration. A singer may fail in this or that, but when he dies the charm of his distinctive voice is gone forever.

Edmund Clarence Stedman.

PIONEER PACKHORSES IN ALASKA.

WITH PICTURES FROM SKETCHES AND PHOTOGRAPHS BY THE AUTHOR.

II. THE RETURN TO THE COAST.

IN summer, when vales and hillsides are rid of winter snows, and ice no longer spans the lakes and streams, central Alaska looks almost tropical. Then Neska-ta-heen receives most bounteous care from nature: an abundance of salmon stems the Alseck current and passes the very doors of the Indian huts; the land abounds in wild berries; and the native hunter, who knows the haunt of every beast, can rely on finding game. But other bands of the Goonennar, or Stick, nation, living around the northern lakes I-she-ik and Hootchy-Eye, have no such plenteous supply; so when winter is gone they take the trail and move to this southern settlement, and there recuperate on the fatted fish. At the time of our visit to Neska-ta-heen there was already a crowd of these people here, all busy plying

the gaff among the salmon. Some of these men were willing to engage with us as guides, but the chief and the medicine-man, Shah Shah, jealous that strangers should earn the rich pay we offered, forbade their northern friends to accompany us. The medicine-man was our most influential opponent. Reputed to possess supernatural power, his word was law; the credulous natives, wanting in ambition and pluck, inherit a fear and respect for this expeller of evil spirits and general wonder-worker. They assured us they were willing to enter our service, but they dared not risk the anger of Shah Shah, who had threatened, should they disobey him, to surround their future lives with a catalogue of dire calamities, and to visit upon all members of their families sickness, accident, and death.

To our faces the medicine-man and the old chief, Warsaine, feigned geniality itself; we,

however, were not to be gulled by their dissimulation, but warned them that we were aware of their conspiracies. Assuming a great deal of dignity and force, we informed them that if they continued to hinder us and to thwart our progress we would put them in irons and take them to the coast. This was hardly a modest oration, considering our feeble strength. Being convinced at last that no one would accompany us, we determined to start out alone. We should have been absolutely at the mercy of these people without our horses; but with our own transport, and the old scribbled chart crudely penciled by the natives themselves, aided by compass and sextant, we concluded that we had the means to make the trip we had planned.

As we saddled and made ready for a start, the whole crowd squatted in a ring, and watched us sullenly. The medicine-man had a self-satisfied grin on his face; he imagined that because we were denied a pilot we would give in at the last moment, and alter our route to some district with which he was acquainted, so as to have the privilege of his guidance and society at \$2.50 a day. When we had completed saddling, without exchanging a word with these Indians we led our horses out through an astonished and discontented throng, and threaded our way along the trail which zigzags at first up a thickly wooded hill overlooking the settlement. Upon arriving on the summit, the path ran through forests of spruce, tamarack, and cottonwood. In exposed positions the wind had swept down acres and acres of timber, and piled it in tangled heaps across the path, rendering travel extremely tedious; but we gradually left these higher lands, ascended the mountain-slopes, and, after tramping along the shores of a small lake, continued our course over an extensive valley, which, though in places boggy, nourished everywhere a luxuriant crop of grass.

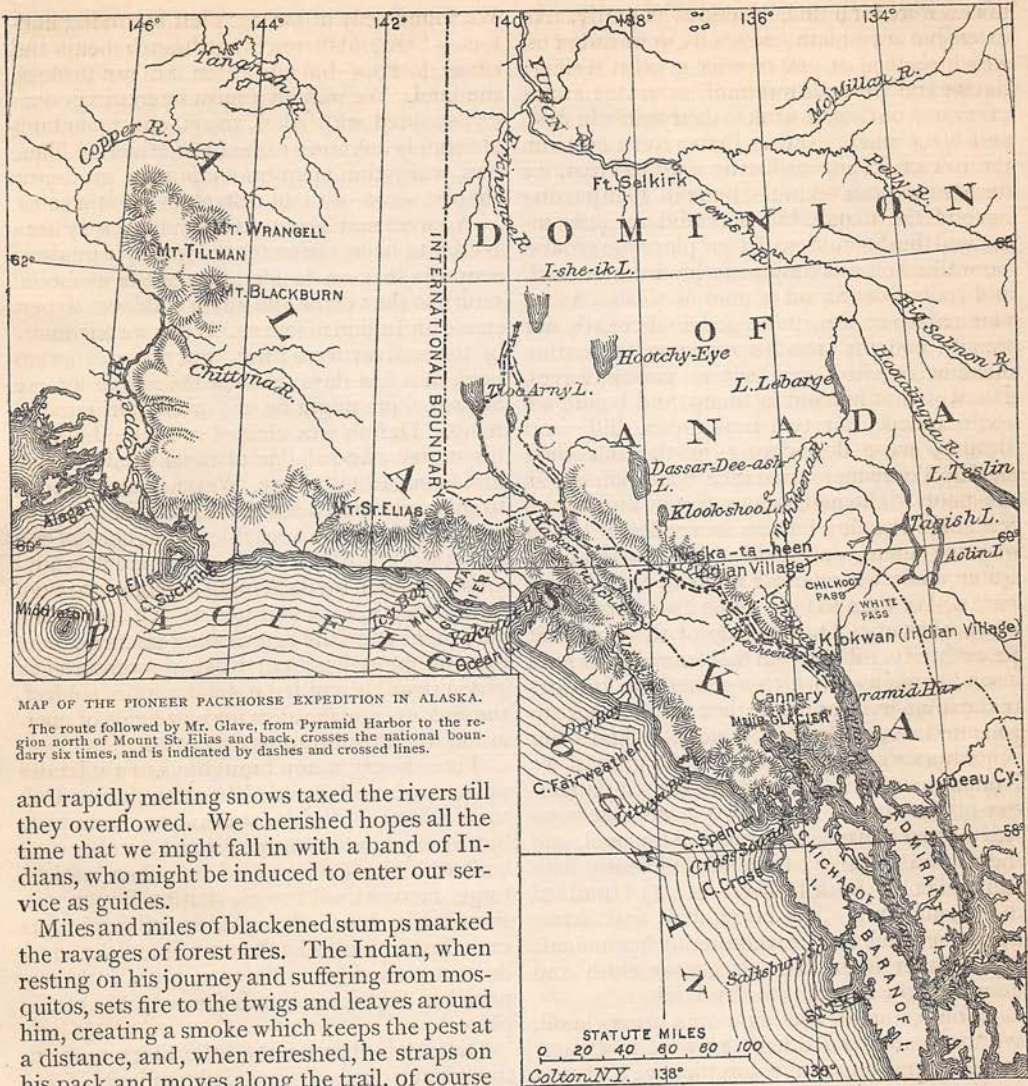
Over intricate parts of the land the Indians follow a beaten track, though they make no decided ways when crossing an open country; but as most of their conveying is done in winter on snow-shoes and with sledges, the trails through this land are extremely difficult to find anywhere.

When the natives, like so many little children, sprawled on the ground, and clumsily penciled out the position of mountains and lakes, they were utterly unconscious of the aid they rendered us. John Dalton's ability as an efficient backwoodsman and his wonderful knowledge of trails proved most serviceable to us at this season. When once he had traveled through a land he could always go over the road again, no matter how long or intricate it might be. This faculty of an experienced scout resembled some-

what the talent of a gifted musician who hears a new piece only once, and then repeats the whole without difficulty, note for note. Such men as Dalton have memories peculiarly sensitive to matters of locality. Each scene along the trail is impressed upon the mind. Lakes, hills, cañons, and points of timber rudely mark the direction, and peculiarities of stones or trees serve to define the path. When following a trail he has previously known, if by accident he leaves it, he is at once made aware of it by the changed signs along the road, which create discord with those stored in his memory. But the presence of an expert local guide would have been of the utmost service to us at this time, in saving us the time and trouble of searching out the trail, as we were hunting about sometimes for hours looking for some sign to suggest the way, until the discovery of an old camp-fire, a few wood shavings, or the print of a moccasin, would give a clue to the trail.

Everywhere we found convenient camping-places, with good water and plenty of feed for our horses, which, although incessantly worried by mosquitos and other flies, remained in good condition. We nursed the little band of horses with the greatest care, attended at once to any soreness or lameness, and loaded very lightly any animal at all unwell. We used them simply for packing our belongings; each of us took charge of two of them, which were led tied one behind the other. Through this wild land the management of four horses proved ample employment for us, combined with our other duties, which consisted of striking camp in the morning, loading up the pack-bags, and saddling up, searching out the trail, cutting roads through timber lands, and at night pitching tent, unharnessing, stacking away supplies, cooking, and maintaining a constant lookout for our horses.

For the first two days after leaving Neska-teen we followed an immense valley stretching to the northwest, and roughly furrowing a pass through the towering uplands flanking it on each side. Everywhere the land was clothed with luxuriant vegetation. Meadows of bluetop, redtop, and bunch-grass delicately tinted with wild flowers are interlaid with forests of evergreens, which reach down from the mountain-slopes and spread over the land in darkened patches, the whole valley being richly watered by chains of lakes and streams. But the ways are intricate and difficult. In places we had to chop a passage for our packhorses through forests of spruce and tamarack, and many of the pastures were only sticky quagmires. Our advance brought us face to face with deep ravines which could be passed only by climbing down their treacherous banks,



MAP OF THE PIONEER PACKHORSE EXPEDITION IN ALASKA.

The route followed by Mr. Glave, from Pyramid Harbor to the region north of Mount St. Elias and back, crosses the national boundary six times, and is indicated by dashes and crossed lines.

and rapidly melting snows taxed the rivers till they overflowed. We cherished hopes all the time that we might fall in with a band of Indians, who might be induced to enter our service as guides.

Miles and miles of blackened stumps marked the ravages of forest fires. The Indian, when resting on his journey and suffering from mosquitos, sets fire to the twigs and leaves around him, creating a smoke which keeps the pest at a distance, and, when refreshed, he straps on his pack and moves along the trail, of course without extinguishing his fire; when announcing his approach to friends at a distance, he sets fire to a half-dead spruce- or tamarack-tree, and the column of thick, black smoke is the signal, to be acknowledged in the same manner by those who see it, so as to direct the traveler to their camping-grounds. In the summer everything is crisp and dry, and the timber is saturated with turpentine. The trees left to smolder are fanned into flame by the slightest breeze; the flames creep among the resinous trees, and spread till whole forests are destroyed. These forest fires and the mosquitos account for the scarcity of game. Over the vast untraveled region that we visited, there was a remarkable scarcity of wild animals. We saw only a few ground-squirrels and some grouse and ptarmigan. The Indians say that all the larger animals retreat in summer to the hilltops, where, ex-

posed to a constant breeze, they are free from the torments of insects.

As we penetrated farther into the interior, the climate grew milder and the vegetation more prolific, and the mountains appeared to be in groups and short ranges overshadowing immense, well-watered valleys. On the third day a break in the mountains disclosed to the left of us a crescent of whitened heights with steep wooded slopes reaching abruptly down to the shores of a big lake, and valleys stretched away to the north and south. The mountain-pass that we traversed was 6000 feet above sea-level, but the ascent and descent were gradual, and, following a cañon-bottom, we soon emerged again into open valley lands.

In crossing one of the many swamps that spanned the valley from hill to hill, two of our

horses were for a time in serious jeopardy. An extensive grass plain stretched out ahead of us, which seemed at first to offer good traveling; but the land proved thoroughly saturated, and at every step our horses sank to their bellies in slush and black mud. Rather than return and run the risk of finding no better way to cross, we decided to push on in the hope of soon passing beyond the marsh, but our advance only increased the difficulties. In one place the ground we walked on was only a muddy cake of earth and roots floating on a pool of slush. As we plunged over this, it sagged in beneath our weight, and the treacherous crust of floating meadow, rocked into slimy, grassy waves, gaped with a hideous opening, and before we could escape, our two trail-horses, Billy and Bronco, were floundering in the darkened slush. To render assistance was difficult, as the poor frightened brutes threw themselves from side to side; but we succeeded at last in quieting them, and held their heads above water while we relieved them of their heavy packs. We then led our other two horses to a place of safety. On one side of the pool that threatened to rob us of our best animals we found a solid bank, upon which we lifted the fore legs of the submerged animals; then with a long lash-roped tied around their necks and attached to our other horses on comparatively solid ground, we hauled them by sheer force from their dangerous predicament. It was two hours before we had gained their release from the icy pool, and they stood in safety, trembling violently with fear and cold. Both Dalton and I had tumbled in several times while controlling and aiding our horses, and we were thoroughly benumbed; but another hour through greasy slush and mire brought us again to dry land.

At our camp for the night on a grassy knoll, the mosquitos and other flies were in greater numbers and more ravenous than we had ever previously experienced them. The whole insect world seemed to hail our arrival with the same relish that reservation Indians welcome Government rations. Their attacks were fierce and incessant; our poor brutes, tortured into a frenzy, though hobbled, stampeded back, and sought escape from the torment by sinking into the swamp through which we had labored only a few hours before. The next morning, however, afforded us a delightful rest, for a stiff breeze from the southward swept the air clear of the pests, and granted man and horse a short respite. When plagued by flies, our leader, who wore a brass bell, would create a continual tinkling, but when unmolested, the band would seek a soft patch of grass and go soundly to sleep, profiting by the unusual lull.

A thorough search throughout the district rewarded us with no clue to a direct course.

We found only a few signs left by roving hunters,—here and there a rough branch shelter and camp debris,—but no beaten trail ran through the land. We were in a most interesting country, studded with lakes, rivers, and mountains absolutely unknown to the outside world. Time had worn the giant mounds into grotesque shapes, some of them resembling castle ruins.

We were now about seventy miles away from Neska-ta-heen, but we felt the want of a guide so seriously that we decided that one of us should return to the village and again endeavor to persuade an Indian to join us. When we left, many of the natives were away, but were expected back in a few days; among the whole lot, we argued, there might be one in a better frame of mind. Dalton was elected to make this trip; his superior knowledge of trails would enable him to make better time. We decided, however, to shift our camp before he started, for our present position was a veritable stronghold of the insect world. All kinds of tormenting flies hovered around in myriads night and day; they got into our eyes, ears, and noses. We could pass judgment upon the aggravating circumstances only by mental notice; when we ventured to give a strongly worded opinion on this subject, the flies, ever on the alert for new fields of operation, would sail into our mouths.

Three hours' tramp brought us to a splendid pasture, where I decided to camp during Dalton's absence. To the southward, mountains buried in perpetual snows formed a strong contrast with the land around us, where violets, forget-me-nots, wild roses, daisies, buttercups, snowdrops, bluebells, and dwarf sunflowers crouched in mossy banks and tinted the meadows in varied hue. We were not a little surprised to find some bumblebees' honey at this place.

Dalton's return on the little black mare to the village caused no small amount of excitement; he feigned that he had come to get some tools which he had left in the chief's hut, and broached the subject of a guide only incidentally; but finally an offer of \$2.50 a day induced an Indian to start. He was a great powerful fellow, over six feet in height, but it was soon apparent that our mode of travel would not suit his ideas of serving the white man in ease and comfort. When a native is working on his own account he will stagger along the trail with 150 pounds, but when in the employ of the white man, though he eats as much beans and bacon as should satisfy three men, his frame, so poorly nourished, utterly collapses; he cannot even bear the weight of his own blankets. Half the way on the return journey the Indian guide was so fatigued that he rode the mare, and Dalton walked ahead and led her over the trail; and upon their

arrival at the camp from which my partner had started, the copper-colored individual complained sorrowfully of his deplorable fate. "Ee sharn hut," he said, which means, "I am to be pitied." "Too woo oo nook" ("I am very ill"), he mumbled in a half-crying voice, and tenderly touched his head, chest, arms,

south to trade off their winter furs with the coast Indians, and were returning home with weighty packs of blankets, powder, and shot. Their arrival was most opportune for our plans. We found they were bound over the same trail as ourselves, and we had no difficulty in persuading them to travel in company with us. Each



DRAWN BY W. TABER.

ENGRAVED BY J. W. EVANS.

A ROCKY STRETCH OF TRAIL OVERLOOKING THE KASKAR WURLCH RIVER.

and knees to signify that the terrible hardships he had undergone had racked his whole body. Obtaining no consolation from us on that score, he attempted to conjure up other grievances for our sympathetic notice. He said again, "Ee sharn hut" ("I am to be pitied"); "hut-klake duish, klake duik" ("I have only one mother and one father"). We felt sure that these sorrowful explanations formed the preliminary to some decisive action, and we were not at all surprised to wake up next morning and to find that he had returned to his lonely parents. Such are the annoyances attendant upon a pioneer journey. Once more we saddled our little band of horses and plodded along alone, feeling decidedly disheartened. But two days after this, good fortune came to our aid: two Indians from Lake Hootchy-Eye came into camp. They had been down

party would equally profit by the combination. In consideration of their showing the way and helping us to cut roads through the timber-lands, we agreed to carry their heavy packs on our horses. The old man, Nanchay by name, was carrying about eighty pounds, and his son T'sook had a load weighing about fifty pounds. To be relieved of these burdens was a great benefit to them, and our proposal was at once accepted. The additional weight on our horses made but little difference, as our pack-saddles were rapidly getting lighter as the season advanced. The presence of these Indians was a great privilege, for the conditions under which we obtained their services afforded them no means of deceiving or humbugging us in any way. They were homeward bound and under no pay from us, so to cause unnecessary delay would be no benefit whatever to them. With



DRAWN BY W. TABER.

CROSSING THE KASKAR WURLCH ON A RAFT.

old Nanchay and his son as guides, we made splendid headway. They were well acquainted with the lay of the land, and they were anxious to reach their destination, as the season's hunting had begun.

Twenty-five miles' traveling over grass-lands and thickly wooded foot-hills brought us to the shores of the Kaskar Wurlch River, a tributary of the Alseck, which enters the Pacific Ocean eighty miles to the eastward of Yakutat. We were now again in the vicinity of the ice-fields reaching northward from the Mount St. Elias range; a bitterly cold wind kept us close round the camp-fire till "turning-in" time, when a goodly pile of blankets felt very comfortable. The next morning all our belongings were stiffened with frost, and the ice-coated logs, handled with benumbed hands, offered no speedy prospect of breakfast, and our boots could not be worn till we had a fire to thaw them. "Roughing it," in the true sense of the expression, is a most cheerless undertaking, to my mind, commendable only as a necessity. During nine years of travel in wild and unfrequented places, my lodgings and board have been strangely varied; but when I can, I like

to have a comfortable room and to summon my breakfast by electric button.

Our further advance northward obliged us to cross the waters of the Kaskar Wurlch, a deep stream about a quarter of a mile wide, with a five-knot current; scattered around the rocky shores we found several big logs, which we towed together into shallow water with our horses, then lashed them into a good seaworthy raft, upon which we piled all our belongings, stores, and outfit. Dalton swam the stream on horseback, the remainder of the horses following, and breasting the torrent magnificently. I took charge of the raft, and with the aid of the two Indians ferried everything across without mishap; upon arriving at the other bank, we did not feel inclined to proceed farther that day. We had been working several hours in the cold water while constructing our raft, and had still a little work to do in securely staking our craft well out into the stream, so that in the fall the decreasing waters would not leave it high and dry on shore.

The old Indian, Nanchay, emphatically objected to the delay. He said he was anxious

to reach his family again, and he endeavored to convince us that his wife and children would be mourning at his prolonged absence. We tried to coax the old fellow, but he remained obdurate, and asked for his pack, so that he might go on alone. We then appealed to his appetite, and promised if he would stay there the remainder of the day, and start at the earliest break of dawn, we would prepare him a well-filled pot of bacon and beans. Still he remained unmoved; but finally the offer of two silver dollars deprived him of all inclination to march on ahead. He took his old flint-lock musket, and loped away to the hillside in search of game, returning after a few hours with one rabbit and a ground-squirrel, both of which, after duly frizzling them on wooden spits, he ate up entirely. I noticed that the rabbit's ears appealed to his taste; he did not cook these, but merely held them in the flames till the hair was singed off, then nibbled them up close to the animal's skull. Nanchay was only a little man, but he was the possessor of the ordinary Indian appetite, which is regulated solely by circumstances. Though he had eaten these two animals, he did not deny himself the liberal allowance which he received each meal from our mess.

For the next three days we tramped over valleys of rocks, threaded a way amidst a labyrinth of pools and lakes and swamps, crossed fertile grass-lands, and finally ascended to a table-land, and tramped along a ridge of thickly wooded foot-hills, through which in places we had to cut a trail. This part of the land is known to the Indians as Shak-wak, being an immense valley running northwest from Lake Kusu-ah almost to the eastern arm of the Copper River. This low-lying area has within its limits ranges of hills, forests, swamps, lakes, and streams, and throughout its whole extent traveling is tedious and difficult. We saw but very few signs of Indians here. The land is seldom visited even by them. There is actually no definite trail. Indians wandering in search of game adopt roads as their judgment guides them. Here and there an old fox-trap could be seen, and a few rude huts of tamarack boughs used as winter camps by hunters and trappers, and stumps of timber ten or twelve feet high cut when the snow was deep. Every time we reached exposed positions our Indians would set fire to trees, but no answering column of smoke replied to the signal; we were the sole occupants of this vast region. Nanchay was a capable guide, he knew every inch of the land, but he was very glum and uncommunicative, and when possible always substituted for conversation a mere grunt. On the trail he trudged



DRAWN BY W. TABER.

ENGRAVED BY T. SCHUSSLER.

SOME OF NANCHAY'S RELATIVES.

along at a deliberate pace, continually examining the ground for fresh tracks of game, and casting his eye every now and then to the mountain heights, scanning the hillsides in hopes of seeing a goat or a mountain sheep. He always carried his old flint-lock, but, with the exception of a few tiny ground-squirrels not worth the powder and shot, he killed nothing. He began to get concerned that no signal could be obtained conveying tidings of his friends. At the next camp, though we had had a hard day's travel, he decided to go on, leaving his son Tsook behind with us, and also intrusting us with the transportation of his belongings. After a few hours' travel next day, we caught up to the old Indian again. He had left us the night before, professing that he was unable to rest till he was again in the midst of his sorrowing family, but on the way he had discovered a small stream well stocked with trout, and forgot at once connubial anxiety at the prospect of a good catch of fish. By the time we arrived he had a lot of them spread out to dry in the sun, and a pile of heads, tails, and fins showed signs of sumptuous banqueting. He lashed up his newly acquired supplies,



DRAWN BY W. TABER.
OUR HUNTER.

which we tied to a pack-saddle, and started on our way. He said his wife had moved camp from where he had left her, and really he did not know where she was. He began an incessant signaling by burning trees, and by and by the keen eyes of Tsookspied a faint curl of smoke creeping up from the wooded brow of a hill about ten miles away, which told of the whereabouts of the missing family. Our pace was now quickened over the trail, which ran through a big stretch of rich grass-land of finer quality and more prolific growth than any we had yet seen, where hay sufficient to winter a whole pack-train could be put up without difficulty.

When we reached the Indian hunting-camp we naturally expected to witness a scene of joy and some expression of feeling at the return of the

husband and father after a long and hazardous journey; but no one displayed the slightest concern at his presence. Our arrival with the strange, big animals they had never seen before created a great commotion, but Nanchay entered the family circle unnoticed. When the wife's curiosity at seeing our horses had subsided, without exchange of greeting with her husband she continued dressing the moose-hide she was engaged on when we arrived, and the dogs and children slunk away, and eyed our movements through the bushes. There were at the camp a score of Indians, natives of lakes Hootchy-Eye and I-she-ik, this number including only two men besides Nanchay and his son. In some ways they were very objectionable, but they were very kind to us, and behaved more hospitably and reasonably than any other natives I have met in that land. They were extremely poor, and small gifts of fish-hooks, beads, and needles induced them to display a friendly disposition.

They were living under rude shelters of branches strewn round as a wall, with a layer of tamarack boughs thrown over a few cross-sticks and hoisted on props above their heads, which served also for drying fish and game. They were all busy collecting and preparing

a supply for the long winter months ahead; already their roofed platform sagged and creaked and threatened to topple over with its weight of caribou, moose, mountain sheep, rabbits, squirrels, and fish, the fat from which, subjected to a smoky fire and the sun above, was melting, and kept up a constant dripping on the occupants below. All the big game had been killed by one young hunter; the other Indian, Goo-shoon-tar, was his grandfather, a gaunt old fellow, dressed in buckskin trousers and shirt begrimed to a serviceable thickness with blackened grease. The trapping and snaring department was managed entirely by the women and children. While at this camp the natives kept us well supplied with game, and delicious moose-steaks, mutton cutlets, and sun-dried rabbits reinforced our usual insipid fare.

The natives do not cultivate the ground in any way. They are essentially meat-eaters, though in the summer they gather a great many berries, which they mix up with fat. During our journey we saw blackberries, raspberries, gooseberries, pokeberries, juniper-berries, and other small fruits, and also a species of blackberry about the size of buckshot, of a watery, tasteless consistency, quenching to the thirst.

In the beginning of August these natives begin to hunt for their winter supply of meat and fish. They make camps such as the one we were visiting, then branch out from these, and scour the land in all directions. All the meat, when dried by smoke and sun, is lashed into convenient bundles, and the hides are dressed and carefully folded. When they have killed off or frightened away all the game from a district, they shift their quarters to a new hunting-field. Late in the fall, when the snows are hard, they construct snow-shoes of poplar and thongs of leather, and carry their supplies back to headquarters on sledges. At each camp, when operations are complete, the accu-



DRAWN BY W. TABER.
OLD GOO-SHOON-TAR.

mulation of meat and fish is cached in rocky caverns, in the forks of trees, and in little log storehouses built on tall piles out of reach of wild animals.

Some of this provision is left for winter excursions, for the Indians will be roaming over the land again a few months hence, trapping the fur-bearing animals, and a supply of food at different points of the land relieves them of the necessity of transporting it. In the spring they go south to Neska-tah-teen, and there meet the Chilkat Indians, with whom they trade their skins and furs. Some, however, take the northern trail, and barter their winter catch with the white traders on the Yukon River. We learned from the Indians here that we could reach that stream in six or seven days, but the season was now too far advanced for the undertaking. To the southwest of our position, about a hundred miles away, was the Mount St. Elias region; to the north of us the natives told of two very large lakes, Hootchy-Eye and I-she-ik, which we deeply regretted it was not in our power to visit. To the west was another big lake, Tloo Army.

There were a few muskets among the Indians we met in the interior, but they killed a great deal of their game with bows and arrows, some of which were pointed with iron and copper, and others with bone. Even the little boys were very expert with these weapons. These Indians were the lightest-hearted that we met during the whole season. Comforted by a generous supply of food, they appeared to be in good spirits; the boys, when not required to carry loads of meat from the hunting-ground back to camp, competed with one another in wrestling, throwing stones, shooting arrows, running, and jumping, and they amused themselves once or twice by throwing one another up on a moose-hide. A big skin was selected, and slits cut all round its edges with which they could get a good hold with their hands; then all the bigger members of the band would form a circle and stretch the skin taut, holding it about four feet from the ground. One boy would stand on this, and they would endeavor to throw him off his feet by violently jerking him in the air; some of them were tumbled off in a most unmerciful way to the rocks around, but though they got badly bruised, they never complained. Many of the boys were very expert, and the wielders of the moose-hide failed to throw them off their feet. Their agility was

remarkable; they would appear in the air in all kinds of positions, but managed to alight on their feet again. I succeeded in getting an instantaneous picture of one of them in mid-air. There were always a lot of these youngsters around our camp, apparently interested



DRAWN BY MALCOLM FRASER.

HOOTCHY-EYE STOREHOUSE.

in our doings and strange belongings, but they never stole the smallest thing from us.

At different times samples of native copper have reached the coast. These interior Indians have bartered it with other tribes, some of whom have taken it down the Copper River to the trading-posts on the sea, and the white men have had brought to them pieces of the pure metal weighing several pounds, and showing signs of having been hacked off a solid block. All the coast tribes refer traditionally and historically to the Copper Mountains of the interior. In former days the weapons and utensils were beaten out of this metal. Old Khay Tsoo, the powerful Chilkat warrior, despatched his slaves far inland with loads of seal fat to exchange for copper, but the warlike tribes living on the head waters of the White and Copper rivers attacked them so fiercely and persistently that the traffic ceased. The Indians at Nanchay's camp gave most encouraging accounts of the rich deposits of the metal away to the northwest of our position; they assured us that boulders of solid copper were piled at the bases of the mountains, from which they chopped off all they needed. Of course their information

was highly colored for our edification, though they had several little nuggets with them which they carried for repairing purposes. The old man had a band of it strapped around the bowl of his pipe, and the young hunter used barbed arrow-heads beaten from the metal in its natural state. They told us that they had several lumps in the village, each as much as a man could carry.

A few days' march from that camp, a big stream heading from a group of mountains flowed to the north; on the map it is charted as the White River, on account of the milky color of its glacial waters, but to the natives it is known as "Eark Heene" (Copper River). The whereabouts of these copper mines is a mystery, but the combination of traditional reference and of fact, though exaggerated, convinces me that the problem could be solved, and that a well-planned research would be rewarded by the discovery of rich mineral deposits. We tried hard to get Nanchay or some of his people to pilot us to the interesting region, but they were all too jealous of their precious possessions to divulge the secret of location, and they emphatically declined, saying that the land was far away and the trails bad. Nanchay tried to console us with the promise that should we return another season, he would guide us to the place; but he wished to assure us that the present summer was too far advanced, and soon the winter snows would begin to fly.

A few days after our arrival the band of Indians divided into two parties and took the trail for new hunting-grounds. Nanchay was going in search of moose in the grassy hilltops to the north. He marched off at the head of a cavalcade of women, boys, and girls, all carrying heavy loads of blankets, old cooking-tins, fish-nets and poles, parcels and baskets of dried meat and fish, bundles of hides, and a goodly sprinkling of babies lashed securely on the packs. Nanchay himself carried a very light load, and was the only man in the procession, which included two wives, three daughters, various mothers, mothers-in-law, grandmothers, aunts, and nine dusky youngsters of different shapes and sizes, with about sufficient apparel distributed among them to render one ordinary human being decent. The remainder of the band were going to hunt sheep on the mountains around Lake Tloo Army, which lay to the southwest, and we agreed to carry their loads for them so as to benefit by their guidance. These Indian bundles were very undesirable freight, being composed of semi-dried meat, stale fish, unwashed rags, and rancid fat. The natives were shrewd enough to take advantage of circumstances; they marched slowly, snared small animals *en route*, and gathered armfuls of herbs and roots, all of which we piled on our horses. By the time we reached

the big lake, each of our animals was loaded down with their rubbish.

The drier lands of the interior are perforated and tunneled in all directions by the small ground-squirrels, which keep up an incessant piping. These little creatures are about the size of an ordinary gray squirrel, but have only a short tail. When on the ground they appear to be about six inches long, but their anatomy seems to be telescopic; for, when standing on their hind legs on the alert at some one's approach, they lengthen out till they are half as long again. The expert efforts of a band of Indian women with their snares will hush a whole colony of these little animals in one day. The women leave camp at about five o'clock in the morning, and return home at night with several hundred squirrels, the skins of which are patched into robes, and the meat is one of their favorite luxuries.

Lake Tloo Army is a most important waterway; at its southern extremity it is seven miles wide, and stretches like a sea away to the northwest as far as the eye can reach. The Indians say that at its northern end a river drains into the Yukon; if such is the case, transportation can be carried on from this point by water. This immense sheet of water, along the shores of which the Indians say they sleep five nights traveling from one end to the other, is near the boundary line, and when the United States and Canadian governments do really decide to survey the limits of their respective possessions, the use of these waters will be a great aid to them. Streams draining the land around have grooved out ways from all points of the compass. The mountains around are rich in cinna-bar, and the cañons hewn out in the rocky uplands show signs of silver and gold; but though there is plenty of good quartz, still we found no free metal. The general formation was granite, slate, and quartz, which is a good combination for mineral prospects.

Having reached the lake, the Indians made their camp on the hillsides; we pitched our tent on the stone flats near Goo-shoon-tar's. The old Indian urged us to return to the coast. "Winter is near," he said, and, pointing to the freshly whitened mountain-tops, warned us that the snow would soon be falling in the valleys.

Hidden away in the bushes we found a small Indian dugout, and Dalton and I decided to repair this and make a few days' exploring journey in it on the lake. We left our horses securely hobbled on a fine patch of grass-land in the neighborhood, then loaded up our tiny craft, and pushed off. The water, which was perfectly calm when we started, became gradually ruffled; but we made good headway with the paddles until we were crossing a bight in

making a short cut to a rocky bluff ahead. A stiff northerly breeze was springing up, and the water was getting rougher every minute, and began to tumble in over our slight bulwarks. Despite my greatest efforts at baling, the water was gaining on us, the little craft was slowly settling, the breeze had grown to a squall,

this a big sea with a hissing crest swept us ashore, where, paralyzed with cold and battered almost senseless, we lay in a heap piled on the rocks with a splintered canoe. It was a cruel disaster, and deprived us of property not to be replaced. Our two rifles, ammunition, mining-tools, cooking outfit, provisions, Dalton's watch



DRAWN BY W. TABER.

OUR CAMP TO THE SOUTHWARD OF LAKE I-SHE-IK.

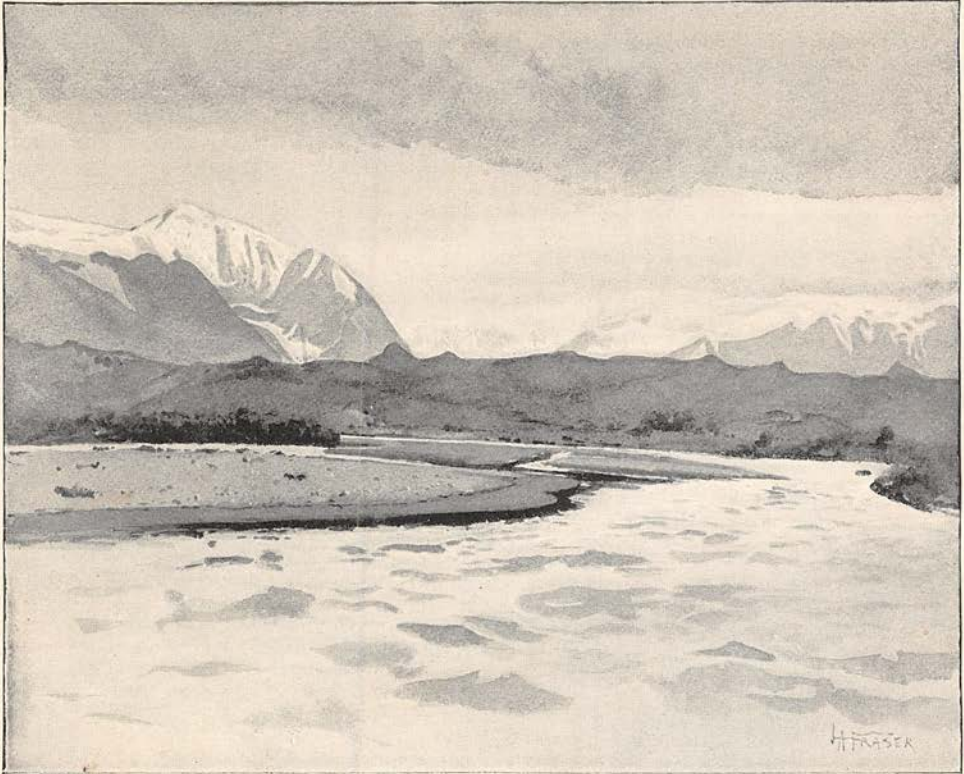
ENGRAVED BY C. SCHWARZBURGER.

and high waves rolled on all sides. Our canoe was rapidly sinking, and was already below the surface when Dalton and I, realizing that to save our own lives was all we could hope for, jumped into the water and quickly overturned the craft, spilling the contents into the lake. The cottonwood, relieved of its weight, floated bottom upward to the surface again. Then Dalton clung to the bow, and I to the stern, and we kept above water in this way. We swam toward the shore. Angry waves rolled over our heads, flinging us about as if trying to wrench away from us the upturned dugout, which alone could save us. The wind blowing along shore denied us aid, and the icy waters had chilled us till we were almost speechless; but we doggedly fought our way, and at last were nearing the shore. The prospect of saving ourselves was still a feeble one. On shore a bare wall of stone caving in at the water-line bordered the lake. We were rapidly carried on to this by the rolling breakers, which flung us against the rocky wall, or carried us in a surging foam into the hideous cave beneath. Each time we struck we propelled ourselves violently along the wall. Soon we found an opening, and when abreast of

and chain, scientific instruments, etc., sank in the depths of Lake Tloo Army. At the time we were so thankful to save our lives that neither of us thought for a moment about the loss of property. Our blankets and my camera and notebooks were fortunately secured; fastened in a big oil-sack to keep them dry, they floated on the surface, and when the storm had abated we picked them up none the worse for the mishap. I have had the contents of a flint-lock musket emptied at me at short range, and have experienced the comforting sensation as the bullet missed its mark; I have felt the satisfaction of stopping a charging buffalo; but I don't think I ever felt such heartfelt thankfulness as when I was out of reach of the angry waves on the rocky shores of Lake Tloo Army.

The head of Lake Tloo Army was the farthest point reached by us. I have made a rough chart of the land through which we passed since leaving the coast, but scientific instruments subject to the jolting and hard knocks attendant upon such a journey enabled me to record only a crude idea of the lay of the land.

During the whole season we saw but little game—a few bears out of reach and some



DRAWN BY JOHN A. FRASER.

DRAINING THE MOUNT ST. ELIAS RANGE.

mountain sheep on the heights. A small-bore rifle or a shot-gun is most serviceable in central Alaska, for there is a fair quantity of grouse, ptarmigan, squirrel, and duck.

Our season's travel took us over the entire basin of the Alseck, a river which drains an enormous territory. At the outset of our journey, having crossed the divide, we traced its eastern branch, the Tarjansini, which, gathering on its way waters from mountain torrent and snow-field, flows toward Neska-ta-heen. Fifty miles to the north of the Indian settlement another tributary of the Alseck heads from Lake Klook-Shoo, and, winding amidst the hill-lands, courses south and joins the Tarjansini, and these combined forces sweep across the rocky vale at Neska-ta-heen in a rapid torrent.

Then from the west, from an immense glacier and moraine near Lake Tloo Army, the Kaskar Wurlch begins its southern journey, and is swelled at once into a dangerous river by the muddy waters hurled into it through gorge and cañon crushed in the mountains by the moving ice-fields sloping from the Mount St. Elias range. This stream, flowing to the south and west, is joined by still another arm, which has its birthplace in Lake Dassar-Dee-ash, to the north in Shak-wak valley. These two waterways flow and eventually pour into the Alseck

itself, a wild, dangerous river which races along with an eight-knot current, its volume at times spread over the rocky valley in a dozen channels which combine in one deep torrent when the mountains close in and narrow the limits with their rocky walls. Along the banks of the Alseck old moraines slope to the river's edge, and active glaciers are pushed far out into the stream; the internal working of the ice-field maintains a continual rumble, and blocks of ice topple into the river, and whip the waters into a confused, seething mass. Eighty miles to the east of Yakutat, on the south coast of Alaska, the Alseck River plunges in one deep, angry torrent through a cañon of rock and ice, flows over the stony waste known as Dry Bay, and pours a muddy volume into the blue waters of the Pacific Ocean.

The nature of the whole land can be roughly divided into three conditions: Snow- and ice-fields bury the coast-range and choke up every hollow; to the immediate north the valleys are rocky and barren, but the vast interior beyond is richly clothed in luxuriant vegetation. Scientific authorities theoretically mapped out giant ice-fields as spreading over the entire land from the Fairweather and Mount St. Elias ranges north almost to the valley of the Yukon.

Colossal heights mantled in never-melting

snows tower thousands of feet in the air, but within the shadow of these mighty uplands, in the sheltered hollows beneath, lie immense valleys carpeted in richest grasses, and gracefully tinted with wild flowers. Here in the summer a genial clime is found, where strawberries and other wild fruits ripen to luxuriance, where there are four and a half months of summer and seven

third time, Dalton sprang off his back, and grabbed the tail of the horse I was riding, holding on to his horse's bridle with the other hand. My little mare was a powerful swimmer, and she was able to tow the strange procession to safety.

Upon our return to the coast, we took the same trail by which we had entered the land ;



GRASS VALLEY OF THE INTERIOR.

and a half of winter. In June and July the sun is lost below the horizon only for a few hours, and the temperature, though chilly at night, has an average of sixty-five degrees in the daytime.

We carried with us a supply of bacon, beans, flour, rice, and dried fruits, which lasted all the season, and when we arrived on the coast we had still a month's provisions left. We took extra horseshoes with us, but the difficult trails soon decreased our stock, and Dalton displayed great ability in shaping out a pair of shoes from an old English musket which we found in an Indian rubbish-heap.

Miners and prospectors have for many years been seeking a practicable way into the land through which we traveled, but the mountain-passes and want of transportation have kept them back. The trail is now broken and the way open to miners and Government agents.

When swimming the Kaskar Wurlch on our return journey, Dalton, together with one of our horses, had a narrow escape. In mid-stream the animal was attacked by cramps, and sank three times. Upon rising to the surface the



DRAWN BY W. G. FITLER.

VALLEY SCENE, CENTRAL ALASKA.

ENGRAVED BY R. C. COLLINS.

our horses were in splendid condition, and we rode them nearly all the way. The day we left Neska-ta-heen homeward-bound there were sixteen degrees of frost, and we passed through three snow-storms ; at one place it had drifted till it was four feet deep. We had heeded the old Indian's warning none too early. For winter makes an abrupt entry in this land, and begins its stern rule with but short preliminary. The gradual whitening of the hilltops heralds its approach. The warning screech of the water-lion tells that storms are nigh. Rapidly the dazzling curtain rolls down from the heights around, covers up cañon and gulch, buries the forests of spruce and tamarack, and spreads over the valleys below an unbroken field of snow. The roar of the summer torrent is hushed, and lake and stream are frozen hard.

E. J. Glave.