

And when the shot and shell began to penetrate the unarmored parts and to come on board, he felt just a little like ducking as the pieces came his way. Why not? Even an admiral has been known to dodge a shot. The scene became very lively. Boats were stove in; skylights were smashed; rigging, stanchions, and ladders carried away; glass, splinters, and pieces of exploded shell flew about in every direction. Now and then would come awful crashes, when shells burst in the different cabins. A shell with its fuse burnt down almost to the powder rolled to Docket's feet, when quick as thought a brave fellow caught it in his arms and threw it overboard. One man was killed very near to Docket, and several more were wounded. More than sixty times the ship was struck. Twenty-four shot and shell penetrated her hull, causing the damage above mentioned. The wonder was that the casualties were so few. Docket would have been an unnatural kind of boy not to have wished a dozen times, amid all this din and danger, that he were safe on board his own ship; but this did not keep him from fighting as gallantly as any man or boy on board. When all the forts had been silenced and cheer after cheer went up from the English fleet, nobody was prouder of the achievement and nobody cheered more lustily than Master Docket.

The bombardment of Alexandria is a matter of history. Our only concern now is to know how it fared with our Dromios. Of course the hoax was very soon detected on board both ships. At first the English sailors regarded it as a piece of sharp practice on Harry's part. He was known to be a

great admirer of the United States navy. But Docket would not allow this piece of injustice. He knew well enough that Harry had done his best to get back, and that he must have felt terribly chagrined over the outcome, especially at being away from his ship during the fight. Docket stood up for his friend very stoutly, and he was right. Harry had even gone to the officer of the deck and begged to be sent back; but this was impossible, as all the boats were busy in bringing off people who were fleeing from the city.

One morning, after everything had quieted down, a boat flying American colors pulled alongside the "Alexandra," and Master Harry stepped out after the midshipman in charge and followed him rather sheepishly up the gangway. The affair was explained to the officer of the watch, who, of course, knew all about it, and Harry and Docket were sent below to shift uniforms once more. How the men laughed, and what they said as the boys went below, will not be described, but there was considerable fun over the affair. Docket did n't regret it, for it was the most natural thing in the world that he should receive all the glory. As Docket left the ship the men gave a cheer for the boy who had fought as gallantly under the British flag as he would have done under his own.

It is only necessary to add that so grave an offense could not be wholly overlooked by naval discipline, and each boy was "quarantined," or confined to the ship, for a month. This did not, however, prove a severe punishment, since no one in the fleet went ashore at Alexandria simply for pleasure at that particular period.

DOWNHILL WITH A VENGEANCE.

BY W. H. GILDER.



HERE is in Siberia a mountain-pass which in the sharpness of its declivity is, I think, without an equal among all other known roads. Perhaps I should not use the word "road" when referring to this trail, over which the Russian traders carry their merchandise even to the shores of the Arctic ocean, and by which they return laden with the furs received in exchange. It was early in the month of May,

1882, while *en route* from the Lena Delta to Irkootsk, in Southern Siberia, that I had to cross the Werchojansk mountains over the steep pass mentioned, and the passage was so remarkable an experience that it made a deep and lasting impression on my mind. Two circumstances united to make my journey at this time particularly disagreeable. The sun was rapidly coming north while I was just as rapidly pushing south, so that summer seemed to have suddenly jumped into the lap of spring; and the snows everywhere melting, and the swollen rivers bursting from their icy bonds, so

flooded the land that traveling was fraught with great difficulty and danger.

There is always in that country at the season of the year at which I was traveling a period of from eight to ten days when intercommunication is entirely cut off, and it is the aim of the unfortunate traveler to reach some place where food and shelter can be obtained. For this reason, it was my object to arrive at the Aldan river, the largest branch of the mighty Lena, and to cross to the southern side, where there was an occupied post-station, before the ice in the river was broken.

It was, however, my misfortune, owing to a lack of animals at the post-stations, and to the difficulties of the road in consequence of the melting of the snows, to reach the northern bank of that river the very day the ice broke up, and to see the huge hummocks and fields of ice rushing down-stream at the rate of ten miles an hour. It was just at dark when this unwelcome sight burst upon our anxious gaze, and to return to the hut, which we left in the morning, over a route that had been barely possible by daylight, was not to be thought of at night. In the morning my guide found that the water had risen around us so rapidly that retreat was cut off; and there, in the woods, without food and without shelter, other than what we could improvise from brush and twigs cut with our knives, we had to wait during the eight or ten days required for the rapid current to clear the river of ice.

On the other side of the Aldan, which is here two miles broad, we could see the smoke curling up from the log-hut that served as a post-station, and could almost smell the cooking beef, bread, and tea that we might have shared had we been there, while we had really nothing. We were not in danger of starvation, and after selecting the highest piece of land we could find, we encamped. There we had to remain for nine days until the river cleared sufficiently for us to cross in a boat that came from the other side. But in the mean time we had seen the water come up around us and into the little brush hut which, covered with the skin of the dead horse, had been our only shelter. It had put out our fire, and once had so covered every part of the land that it was only by putting our feet on the trunk of a fallen tree that we could keep them out of the water. There we sat and gazed with ill-concealed anxiety at the ancient water-marks, four or five feet from the ground, on the trunks of the trees around us, and wondered how long it would take the flood to reach that height. We were not, however, doomed to be drowned, for in about an hour and a half the waters began to subside, and continued to do so until the day when we crossed the river. All over

the land was a deposit of mud, so thick that our effects were easily drawn to the river bank on a bull-sled which had been brought over in the boat for the purpose.

It was to avoid all this unpleasant experience that my anxiety on the road to have the broken ice of the Aldan behind me had been so great, and that is why I had made every exertion to reach that point in time. I had succeeded in covering two stretches of post-road with reindeer, after leaving the town of Werchojansk; but, from there onward we were dependent upon horses for transportation, and often we had to pick them up on the tundra,* and drive them ahead of us as far as the next station, in order to continue our journey.

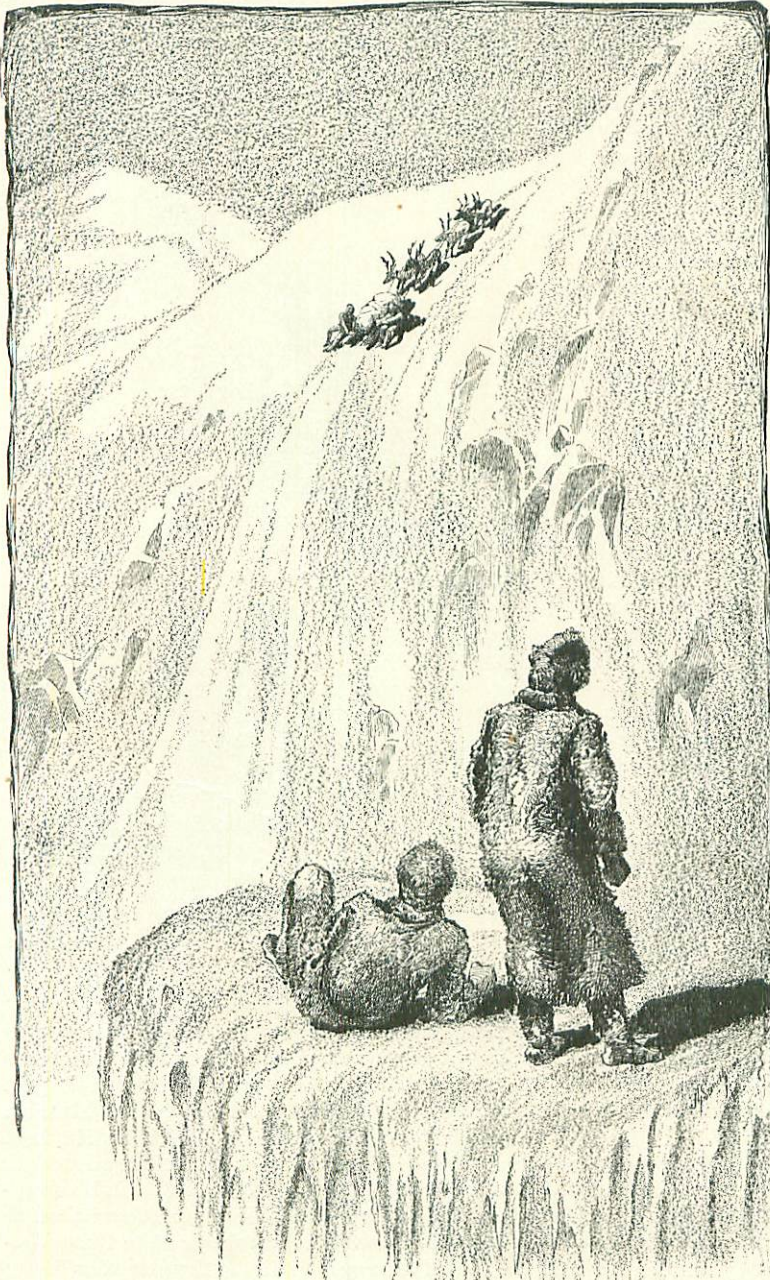
Arrived at Kingyorak, the last station north of the Werchojansk pass, I was disgusted to find not only neither horses nor reindeer, but even no inhabitants. Time was pressing and delays were exceedingly dangerous at this juncture, so I induced one of my drivers, by a liberal offer in money, to hunt up some of the savages who live scattered around ten or twenty miles from the station. Before evening some of them came, and I made a bargain with an old Yakoot starosta † to take me forward on my journey. It was about ten o'clock that night when he arrived at the station hut, with five sleds and fifteen reindeer, and we set out at once for the foot of the mountain, about ten versts (almost seven miles) distant. All that night we were trudging slowly along, the drivers walking ahead of their teams, and sounding with long poles to find the beaten track. The snow in the valley was about eighteen or twenty feet deep, and under the rays of the sun, which were every day increasing in power, it became so soft that it was impossible to proceed except in the track that had been beaten down and packed by the winter's travel.

During the whole night I had watched my drivers, too much interested to sleep, and every now and then would see one or the other of them disappear when a false step took him out of the path and into the deep snow. It seemed to me that since leaving the line of the woods we had been traveling along a high white wall, and now it seemed directly in front. Presently, near the top of this wall, I saw three or four long black objects that seemed to be centipedes moving slowly down, and suddenly it flashed upon me that this wall must be the snow-covered mountain far away and towering up into the blue sky; while the "centipedes" were, in all probability, sleds descending toward us. On inquiring I found my supposition to be correct. Very soon the sleds were beside us, and we learned that the road on the other side of the mountain was simply indescribable; a little later we found it to be so by actual experience.

* A rude cart. † A village-official, a bailiff.

It was not long before the ascent became very abrupt; I also had to go afoot with the others. It was hard labor to climb that mountain, but the

mit. It had been impossible for me to advance more than seven or eight steps without resting. The snow was soft, and at every step I had to lift



"IT SEEMED AS IF THE SLEDS AND MEN WERE LYING FLAT AGAINST A PERPENDICULAR WALL."

one foot and plant it in front of me, and then throw my weight upon that and drag the other foot to the front, and so on until I would drop in my tracks from sheer exhaustion. On arriving at the crest of the mountain, I found it to be not more than ten or twelve paces broad. The wind was blowing with such force that I really feared that I would be blown off bodily, and I sat down to avoid so unpleasant an accident. My guide called me to his side, where he stood on the edge of the descent, and indicated by gestures his wish that we should go ahead. I looked down the slope, and it was so steep that it made me giddy. About one hundred and fifty yards below it seemed to end abruptly in a precipice, and I was absolutely afraid to try the descent until, after giving me a stick to be used as a brake in case my velocity increased too rapidly, the guide took another and showed me how to apply it. Sitting down, he began to move himself along very slowly, burying his heels in the soft snow at the side of the sled track, which was harder and more slippery, and consequently, all the more dangerous. I soon found myself moving along rapidly and approaching that point

northern side I found to be nothing in comparison with the southern slope. After the most fatiguing climb I ever remember, I at last reached the sum-

mit. where the road seemed to terminate in a precipice; but before I could arrest my progress I slid over it, not far behind Michaila, who had already disap-

peared from view. I found, however, that this was not a precipice, but simply a steeper place in the road, which was here almost perpendicular. My speed was accelerated most uncomfortably, and I found myself gaining momentum so that it almost took my breath away. I knew that from the crest of the mountain to the valley on the southern side was ten versts (nearly seven miles), and when I saw what was before me my hair stood on end with terror. But just then I saw Michaila, the guide, come to a halt on a sort of platform at the side of the road. This resting place appeared to have been devised by man or furnished by nature to avert collision with a big black rock that lay right in the path, contact with which would probably prove fatal.

From this level I could not see the top of the mountain, where the drivers were preparing to descend with the sleds and deer; but, from a second level, some distance below, I could see them quite plainly, though they were a long way off. They had lashed the sleds together, side by side, and fastened all the reindeer behind. The drivers placed themselves on either side of the sleds and held back with all their might, planting their heels in the snow, and the sure-footed reindeer also held the sleds back, being fastened behind them. From where I sat looking up, it seemed exactly as if the sleds and men were lying flat against a perpendicular wall and that the reindeer were standing on their heads on the back ends of the sleds.

It took the guide and myself only three-quarters of an hour to reach a part of the descent where we could walk or run; but the sleds required nearly twice that time. We were still a long distance from the foot of the mountain, but the descent was so steep that when we again took our places on the sleds the animals were forced into a gallop to keep out of our way. When I looked back at the road, even from the bottom of the valley below, it seemed impossible that I could have come down the mountain-side along that way.

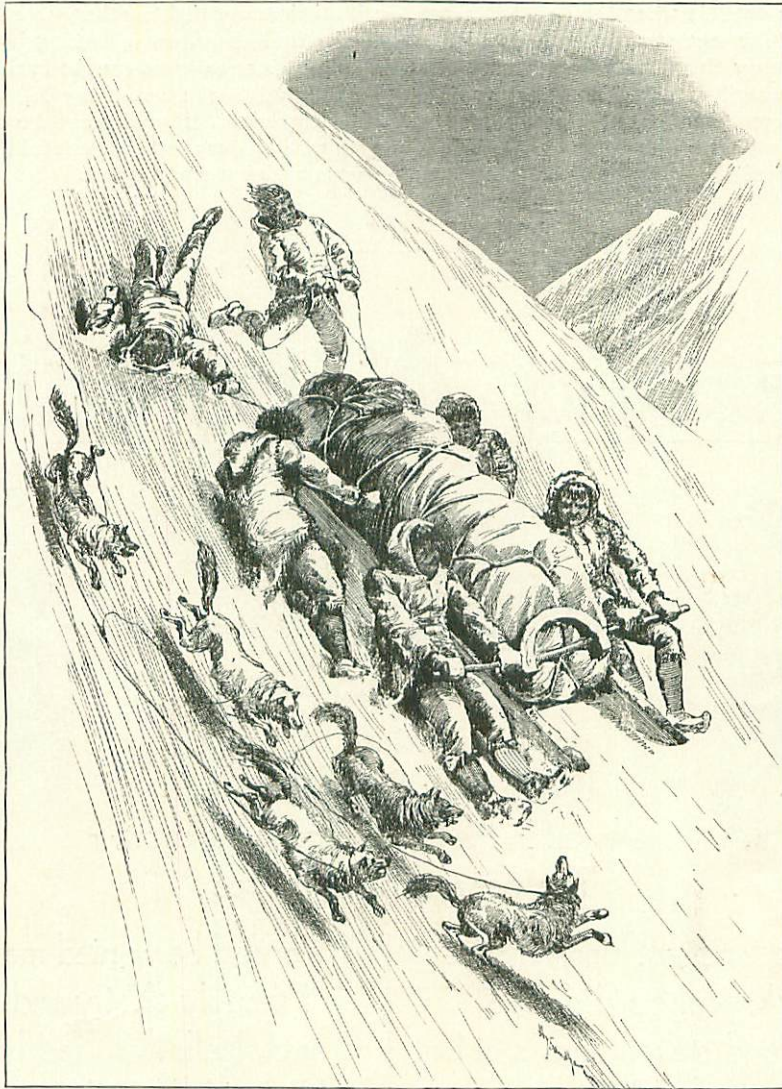
I had heard of this pass before leaving the Lena Delta from Bartlett, the assistant engineer of the "Jeannette," who, with the other survivors of that ill-fated vessel, had crossed it on the road to Yakootsk during the winter just passed. He said that his party consisted of himself and Inguin, the big Esquimau hunter, one of those taken aboard the "Jeannette" at St. Michael's, in Alaska. The road at the time they crossed was harder and much more slippery than when I passed over it. On ar-

iving at the crest of the mountain, Bartlett's guide gave him a stick and by motions showed him how he was to use it as a brake, and told him to go on. In obedience to the instructions, he sat down and started; but, finding himself to be going too rapidly, he attempted to apply his brake, whereupon the stick flew from his hand, and away he went, staring with dismay at the big black rock which seemed certain to seal his fate in a few sec-



"LOOKING AROUND, HE SAW INGUIN COMING LIKE THE WIND."

onds! Just then, however, he slid easily out upon the first platform as if he had been switched off on a side-track. Looking around, he saw Inguin coming like the wind. He too had lost his stick, and his speed was something frightful. His head was bare and his long black hair streamed straight out behind. Both elbows were level with his shoulders and his eyes and mouth were stretched to their full extent. Bartlett prepared to throw himself out of the way to avoid the threatened collision; but the frightened savage kept right on to the second level, his speed increasing every second until it seemed only by a miracle that he reached the lower platform in safety. There Bartlett soon joined him and forgot his own fears in the recol-



ESKIMAUX DESCENDING A HILL WITH A HEAVILY LOADED SLED.

lection of the comical spectacle presented by Iniguin's terrified countenance as he flashed past on his frightful slide.

"How do you like that sort of traveling, Iniguin?" said Bartlett.

"Me no likee," was the reply. "Too muchee quick!—too muchee burnem! No *can* likee."

Down ordinary descents, and quite steep ones, too, it is the custom to allow the reindeer to trot and increase the rapidity of their motion as the sled pushes upon their heels, until at last they gallop at the top of their speed. Near Bulun, which is two days' journey from the mouth of the Lena river, there are several very steep grades, and the reindeer scampering down like the wind,

the drivers shouting at the top of their voices, and the sleds bounding over the rough places make up a scene well worth witnessing.

The Eskimaux of North America, on land journeys, often encounter hills where it would be very dangerous to attempt a descent with a heavily loaded sled drawn by dogs. When such a place is reached, they unhitch the dogs and let the sled descend by its own weight. All the men act as brakes to prevent, if possible, a descent so rapid as to land the equipage a complete wreck at the bottom. The two strongest of the drivers take their places on the sides at the front of the sled, and the others hold on where they can; all pull back

as strongly as possible when the speed increases. Some plant their feet straight in front of them and send the snow flying as if from a snow-plow. Others find themselves taking leaps that would astonish a kangaroo, are dragged furiously along, or, maybe, come rolling to the bottom after the sled. The dogs regard the whole affair as a joke, and

with their traces tied together come dashing along in the wild chase, some barking joyously, others yelping distressedly as, caught in the traces, they are dragged to the foot of the hill by their reckless companions. It often seemed a wonder when, even with all our exertions, we could land sled and party at the bottom in safety.

Getting Acquainted



By Sydney Dayre.

"I got acquainted very quick
With Teddy Brown, when he
Moved in the house across the street,
The nearest one you see.

"I climbed and sat upon a post
To look, and so did he;
I stared and stared across at him
And he stared back at me.

"I s'posed he wanted me to speak
I thought I'd try and see—
I said, 'Hello!' to Teddy Brown
He said, 'Hello!' to me."

