EXPLORING IN ELLESMERE LAND

THE DISAPPOINTMENTS, SUSPENSE AND ANXIETY OF TWO YEARS IN THE ARCTIC.

DR. ROBERT STEIN'S ACCOUNT OF HIS ADVENTURES.

Dr. Robert Stein, of the United States Geological Survey, went with two companions to the Arctic in 1899, and they were landed at Cape Sabine, a projection from Bedford Pym Island. Their winter camp was named Fort Magnesia. Dr. Stein's object was to explore Ellesmere Land. Inability to secure sufficient food for his dogs thwarted his ambition the first season. Early in the spring of 1900, therefore, the trio crossed the channel to Greenland, and worked their way down to Cape York, at the entrance of Smith Sound. They arrived May 12. Peary, who had wintered at Etah, visited Stein before the latter left Fort Magnesia, and gave him private assurances which encouraged him to stay north another year. One of Stein's companions, Kann, sailed for Europe on a Dundee whaler, which arrived opportunely at Cape York. Another member of the party, Warmbath, returned to Cape Sabine before Stein did.

The Windward, carrying Mrs. Peary and letters and supplies from this country, touched at Cape York on August 17, 1900, and took Stein on board. On reaching Etah it was found that Peary had then gone to Fort Conger, up close to the eighty-second parallel. The ship tried to follow, but the ice forbade. Shelter was found in Payer Harbor, on the south side of Bedford Pim Island, close to Cape Sabine. She remained there from August 30, 1900, till July 3, 1901. Peary, having failed to reach the Pole by way of Grinnell Land this last spring, came south. He reached Cape Sabine May 6 and directed that the Windward should proceed homeward when she could get out of the ice.

Stein experienced more trouble in getting dog food last winter and spring. This and the Windward's proposed return compelled him to abandon his chief mission. But the story which he sends is full of popular and scientific interest. It mentions Peary and his wife, queer customs of the Esquimaus, arctic vegetation and strange geological formations on the plateau near Cape York, besides modestly recounting the writer's own perilous adventures. The narrative was dispatched by the Erik, whose arrival the Windward awaited near Northumberland Island, in Whale Sound, during August, and which preceded the Windward southward.

Northumberland Island,
North Greenland, August 15, 1901.

I am sitting outside the tent, facing southward, in the direction of civilization. The sky is cloudless, the sun bright, the air almost absolutely calm. The thermometer registers 47 degrees in the shade, 64 degrees in the sun. This is such a day as might make one wish to remain in the arctic all his life, if it were not for the memory of days of different character. Such a memory, unfortunately, is vivid with us now. Last Saturday the steamer Windward left here to go to Academy Bay. We had been gladdened by the assurance of ten days more on this island, and were planning how to spend them to best advantage. Imagine our feelings when on getting up next morning we found the ground covered with an inch of snow and the flakes still falling fast. For three days we were kept imprisoned in the tent, the wind meantime threatening to deprive us of our shelter. Such a surprise may here be expected any day, even in midsummer. Last year at Cape York snow fell several times in July.

Going out this morning, I found ice a quarter of an inch thick on a lake behind the tent. On small pools it is thicker. The dwarf willow, whose bright green was so conspicuous during the brief summer weeks, is now turning yellow. The little auks have reared their young, and are beginning to move southward. Autumn evidently is upon us. And the sun does not yet set at midnight! When we arrived here, on July 5, the plants were just beginning to burst into bloom. All the wet, sandy places were dotted with the brilliant purple of the serwausa, the earliest flowering plant in this region. I do not know its English name. The peaty edges of rills and pools were gay with buttercups; the bright gold of the poppy began to gleam here and there on gravelly slopes and on the shelves of rock faces. A week later everything was in full bloom. I was especially delighted to find quite a colony of an old acquaintance—dandelion. It may give an idea of arctic plant growth to say that the colony of some hundred specimens occupied a piece of ground of about two acres (sharing it with grasses, mosses, willow, etc.). The ground slopes very gently southward, the surface is diversified by ridges of rock with gentle slope northeastward and vertical faces (about a foot high) southeastward. At the foot of these vertical faces, in a soft bed of peat and mould, nestle the dandelions, often intertwining their roots with the dwarf willow. Now the dandelion has committed its tufted seeds to the wind, most of the poppies have wilted or turned green; hardly a flower is to be seen. Six weeks of what in New-York could be called October weather, interrupted by an occasional snowfall—that is the arctic summer. The record would be a gloomy one if the winter temperature was correspondingly low. Fortunately, the process which lowers the summer temperature, namely, the absorption of heat by the melting of snow and ice, is reversed later on; the freezing of water and vapor sets free enough latent heat to keep the temperature, at least in this region, almost always above —40, and generally above —20. In other words, the winter of Smith Sound is, on the whole (with the exception of seventy-five days of complete darkness), not much different from that of Dakota.

The story of our second year's stay will be more intelligible if prefaced by a brief account of the first year.

Our plan was to establish a station on the west side of Alexandra Haven, in Kane Basin, and from there proceed westward, either overland or through any channel that might exist, and thereupon explore the west shore of Ellesmere Land as far south as possible. Several circumstances interfered with this plan. We learned on arriving here that the Fram had been detained in that very vicinity, and had most likely done all the work we proposed. Later on we found that Peary, too, had done a large part of it. The steamer Diana did not return to Cape Sabine with eight walrus, according to promise, so that our ten dogs slowly died of starvation. Finally, in January, we learned by a letter from Peary that owing to a change in his plan the Windward would not return south the following summer, so that we should have no means of getting home that year, nor, perhaps, the next year. As all our arrangements were made for one year only, Dr. Kann and I decided to go to Upernavik and from there to Denmark by a Danish vessel. As Peary, however, on his visit on March 6 expressed the opinion that the Fram party had probably left considerable work for us to do, I finally determined that if at Upernavik I learned definitely what the Fram had done, and that some of our proposed work remained undone, I would return and try to do the work the following spring.

The lateness of the season and the deep snow prevented us from getting further than Cape York. There we lived—first in a native stone hut and afterward in native tents—from May 12 to June 9, waiting for the Scotch whalers. Our own provisions soon gave out and we had to live entirely on native fare. Our worst trouble, however, was the uncertainty of the whalers' arrival. At last, on June 9, the suspense was broken. Igyengwa, the most sharp sighted boy at Cape York, came running down in breathless haste, crying, "Umiahsoa! Umiahsoa!" (a steamer! a steamer!) In a few minutes the sledges were ready, and the whole colony dashed over the ice toward the open water. Not a sign of smoke did either of us see anywhere, but the Esquimaus, when asked where the steamer was, pointed confidently southeastward. Arrived at the edge of the ice, we had the satisfaction of seeing three steamers approaching rapidly. Soon the first one, the Eclipse, made fast to the ice, and in another minute we were on board. We learned that the Fram had not been heard of. This confirmed me in the resolution, which had been pretty well settled before, to return to Cape Sabine. Nothing could exceed the kindness of the captains (Milne, Adams and Guy) toward us. Provisions and other supplies for my continued stay at Cape York were furnished with the greatest liberality, and again and again the question was asked, "Is there anything else that you would like?" After enjoying an ample civilized meal on the Eclipse we moved to the Diana, where wine and music awaited us. The toast which I offered—"To the Anglo-American alliance!"—was not rendered less sincere by the impressions of the moment. The captains were all deeply interested in international questions, and in the course of an hour we remade the map of Europe in a most satisfactory way—an appropriate occupation in No Man's Land. We were distressed to learn of the South African conflict between two Germanic nations, but delighted to hear of the way in which Americans had expressed their Anglo-Saxon sympathy—by sending the hospital ship Maine to the scene of war.

When finally the ships moved away and I was left alone on the ice among the Esquimaus I distributed my supplies among four sledges and we moved leisurely landward. When the four loads were assembled at my future tent place the Esquimaus, forming a circle around the stately pile, looked at it in mute astonishment, and I thought I could read in their faces the reflection: "How much kinder these white men are to their own people than they are to us!" Not that the captains had been niggardly toward them—the lumber, knives, needles, thimbles, barrels and pots they had given the natives, almost all gratuitously, were positive wealth to them. The captains assured me that they always stop to give the natives a few trifles.

Two days later the whaler Esquimau passed by, and her master, Captain MacKay (the same who discovered the relics of Björling's expedition on the Carey Islands), was not behind his predecessors in kindness. From him I obtained a large tarpaulin, which, with a smaller piece, enabled me to construct a good sized tent, an oar serving for the ridge pole. I could now look forward in comfort to the arrival of Peary's steamer.

Ten weeks followed, which I spent alone at Cape York with the Esquimaus. The settlement comprised three large tents and two smaller ones, inhabited by fifteen persons. In the largest lived Angutibluahsu, his wife, Siudlekâtu, and their boy Irving. It also gave shelter to the three children of Angutibluahsu's dead brother—namely, Publa, a young man; Kuvaping, a girl of fifteen, and Adlekatya, a boy of about five years; also Igyengwa, a boy of fourteen, son of Siudlekâtu by a former husband. In the next tent lived Kayota, his wife Niwikengwa, and Kayota's three boys, Tautyengwa, Maksa and Kayoangwa. In the third tent lived an aged couple, Tauyungina and his wife Simia. Adjoining was a smaller tent, occupied by Igia, who, with his brother, Kukong, was to have been our driver to Upernavik. The smallest tent of all was occupied by an old woman, Atuhsa, who lived on the charity of the others. Angatibluahsu's tent being too small to hold its seven inmates all at one time, they took turns in sleeping. In rainy weather, of course, they had to huddle together as best they could.

It did not take me long to ascertain a good deal of the family history of these people. Atangana, the only child of Tauyungina and Simia, had been Kayota's wife some time previously, and was the mother of his three children. Unfortunately another man, Maya, coveted his neighbor Kayota's wife, wrestled with him according to Esquimau custom, and, having overthrown him, ran away with his wife, Atangana, leaving him instead his own wife, Niwikengwa, the one who was then living with Kayota and taking care of his children, very affectionately indeed. I was informed that Kayota expressed his dissatisfaction by driving a knife into Maya's abdomen, which caused the latter considerable trouble. Kayota, who is one of the most gentlemanly Esquimaus I have met, was very loath to talk about the subject. I may add that I met Kayota on the Windward last Saturday. He proudly led me to a board platform in the 'tween decks, to show me his recovered wife, Atangana, sleeping beside two of her children. I learned that the second exchange had been effected peacefully; the two families had met and the two men had agreed, amid great hilarity, to take back their former wives. The latter, of course, had not been consulted.

As is well known, these people have no government whatever. They have a word, nalegahsoa, meaning chief, but wherein the chief's authority consists it would be hard to discover. I asked Igia, "Who is chief at Cape York?" "I don't know," he said. "Perhaps Tauyungina." Nevertheless, they have laws with a strictness which sometimes appears ludicrous. No doubt the opponents of the Deceased Wife's Sister bill in the British Parliament will find their position greatly strengthened on learning that that kind of marriage is unheard of among the Esquimaus. In fact, any relationship whatever within their memory seems to be a bar to marriage. Happily their memory does not extend very far back, or they could not marry at all, for with constant marriage outside of known relationship it is evident that the whole tribe (of some two hundred and fifty) must be related probably no more than four or five generations back.

On the maps the native name for Cape York is given as Imagen. The real pronunciation of this word was for some time a puzzle to me. At first I wrote it Imnarne, next Imnarene, Imnagane, etc. Finally I ascertained that the puzzling sound in the second syllable was a nasal, and that there is a faint nasal also at the end, so that the true spelling is Imnanganeng. It is derived from imna, meaning a steep rock face, and refers to the precipitous cliffs on the east side of the cape, above the stone huts (iglus). The point where the tents were located is the southernmost projection of the cape and bears the name Serwarmiun, meaning place of guillemots. A little to the west of this is another cape, Upengawihsoa, from upenga, meaning springtime—probably so called because there the grass grows earliest. When Ku Kong, Igia and I went there on May 12 to get grass for bedding we found the young sprouts peeping lustily from under the gray bunches of the previous year. The location of the various points is shown on the accompanying sketch map, which, being drawn from memory, makes no pretension to accuracy.

Not long after returning from the last whaler the Esquimaus moved their tents from Serwarmiun to Imnanganeng, for the reason that the ice near the cape broke up, preventing them from catching seal on the ice, while near the head of the bay the ice remained fit for sledging almost to the day the ship arrived (August 18). I did not move with them because I expected that the ship would arrive soon and I wished to have my baggage ready to be taken aboard without delay. Assuming that she left on July 1, she ought to be at Cape York about July 15. The Esquimaus asked me almost every day: "How many sleeps before Peary's ship comes?" I told them the number, and expected to gain great credit among them when my prediction proved accurate. Alas! this turned out to be one of those best laid plans that "gang aft agley."

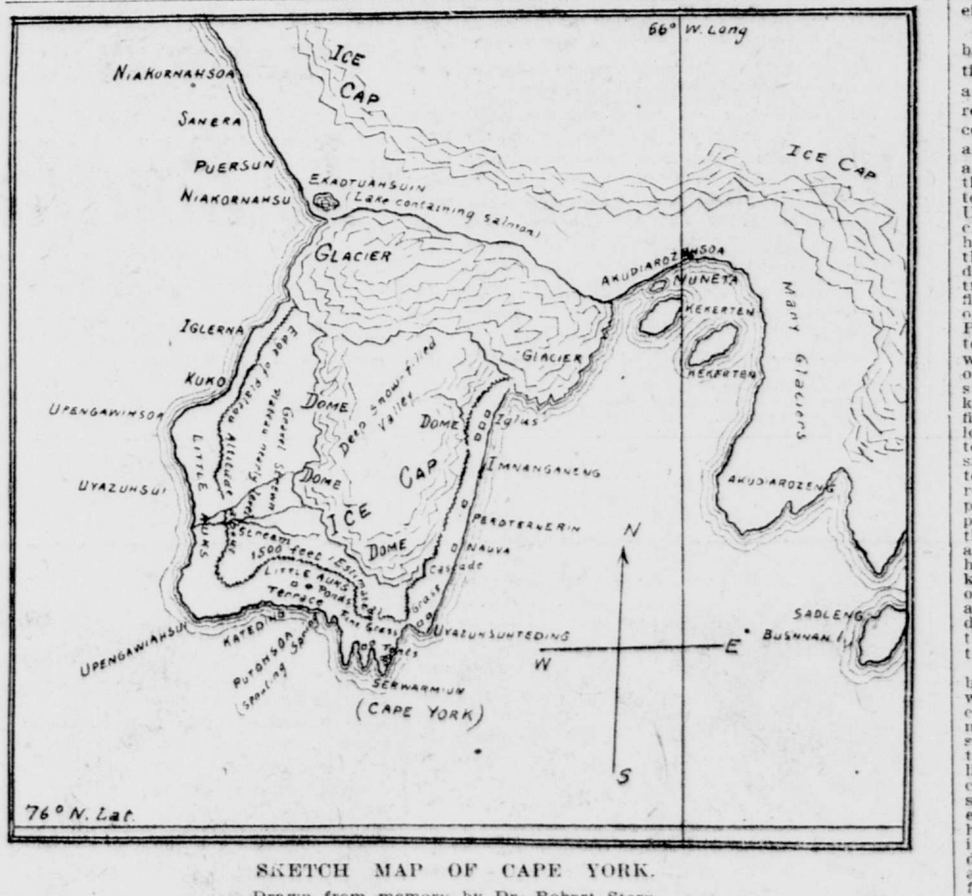
Thus for about a month I was the sole inhabitant of Cape York, the nearest human abodes being about two miles away. Yet at night when I lay down I felt myself actually more secure than at home in civilization; no danger from fire, explosions, burglars, riots, tornadoes, lightning or wild beasts; nothing but an earthquake could disturb my security. As for the Esquimaus, I felt assured that not only my life was absolutely secure among them, but also my property, so long as I kept it in sight. On the other hand, I felt equally certain that if I left my tent for any great length of time I should on my return find my stores considerably diminished. This prevented me from undertaking any long trips, for, not being quite sure of communicating with Peary's ship, I felt that I must husband my supplies to last till late in October, when I might travel northward by sledge.

The only occasions when I remained away for more than a day were when the entire colony had moved from their tents to Upengawihsoa to get little auks. I then climbed up the steep slopes and rock precipices above the tents and rambled over the ice cap and the snow free plateau on top. (For the benefit of any future visitor I will add that there is a particularly easy ascent at the point indicated by the second t in the word "estimated" on the map.) I shall not easily forget my surprise when on reaching the edge of the plateau I found before me not a wilderness of bowlders such as I had expected, where walking is a veritable sword dance between sharp crags, but a nearly level plain, strewn with fine angular gravel (here and there sand), smoothed by some natural agency (doubtless a former ice cap) as efficiently as by a steam roller. I was constantly struck by its close resemblance to a macadamized road, a gravel path in a park or the metalled surface of a street before the asphalt is laid on. A few tracts, indeed, were covered with larger fragments, resembling the clods of a ploughed field; elsewhere, again, there were rounded bowlders. Here and there I found curious natural formations consisting of circles of stones slightly raised above the surface, inclosing a ring of clay, slightly depressed (say three inches), which in turn enclosed a central mound of stones.

I thought of the "giants' kettles" of glacial geology, but will not venture to say that the phenomena are identical. A circular figure can hardly be conceived as produced by any but a circular movement; but how a circular movement, in other words an eddy, can originate on a practically level surface is difficult to imagine. Some specialist may perhaps think it worth while to suggest a theory.

The ice cap was in most places composed of hard snow, unyielding to the foot, affording very easy walking. Occasionally the surface was slushy, and in some places the crust broke under me. Long crevasses seamed the inner slopes of the horseshoe shaped ridge inclosing the deep valley that opens northward toward the double glacier, discharging east and west, that divides Cape York peninsula from the mainland. At first I kept at a respectable distance from these crevasses, remembering the ominous record of their relatives in the Alps. Gradually I found that I could stand at their edges with impunity, and finally I jumped over them without hesitation. A nightmare comes over me now and then, however, in the wee small hours, when imagination pictures the fate that awaited me had I fallen into one of these cracks; and I then make half a resolution not to attempt such feats again unless provided with a long pole, or, better yet, with a companion and a rope. When relating my experience to the natives, Aneutikluahsu told me that the year before, when he drove his sledge over the glacier, one of his dogs fell into a crevasse, slipped out of his harness, and was never seen again.

To my surprise, I saw two foxes on the ice cap. One of them was profitably employed in digging a dead little auk out of the hole into which the process of melting had caused it to descend (how the bird got there I am at a loss to say); the other was without visible occupation or purpose. It seems that the foxes have a predilection for the plateau, for the edge of it was lined with numerous stone fox traps (pudleng), consisting simply of a chamber about two feet long, eight inches wide and eight inches high, formed by stones. A sealskin thong (kemlenga) passes over the roof from the front backward (but well covered in). At the rear it descends into the chamber and is fastened by a loop to a projecting stone. The bait is attached to the line at the rear. The front end of the line holds a thin slab (midlia), suspended above the entrance. In summer, when little auks are plentiful, the fox treats this work of human craft with contempt, but in winter, when he has to resort to the droppings left by the birds, he begins to meditate on the merits of the odoriferous blubber in the trap. Casting prudence to the wind, he finally enters and pulls at the bait; the loop slips from the projecting spur; the line, released from its hold, no longer upholds the trapdoor in front, which falls and closes the entrance, being held in position by upright stones, between which it slides. The fox then has to wait till the owner of the trap comes and "releases" him.



SKETCH MAP OF CAPE YORK.
Drawn from memory by Dr. Robert Stern.

Besides the two foxes, I saw several snow buntings and a few tiny gnats; otherwise the plateau was devoid of life. The streams running westward from the ice cap are lined with patches of moss of beautiful velvety appearance, a handsome brown when alive, a soft black when dead. A fine lichen, green above, pink below, completes the "flora" of the plateau.

This scarcity of life on the plateau is in marked contrast with the exuberance of life on the slopes below. Near my tent was a patch of fat green grass, a foot and more in height, which could readily have been cut with the scythe. Such patches dot the entire southern face of the cape as well as the western. A herd of, say, ten to fifteen goats could easily find food there from the beginning of June to the middle of September. Reindeer used to exist there, but the natives have killed them off. Within five minutes' walk were four snow buntings' nests, and their merry twitter could be heard all day. The raven's metallic note (his love call) rang from the rocks above; the magnificent white burgomaster gulls kept sailing overhead, now and then alighting on a ridge just west of us, and eying the fat morsels lying about the tents. On the day the Esquimaus moved away some twenty or thirty of these birds swooped down, and gorged themselves on the offal. All these, however, were insignificant in number compared to the little auks, the akpadliahsus of the natives, a bird a little larger than the robin.

Though Cape York is by no means their favorite breeding ground, yet their number even there must be reckoned by hundreds of thousands. From the end of May to the end of August their ceaseless cries give one the impression of a vast poultry farm. Such, in fact, it is to the Esquimaus. The method by which they obtain the birds has often been described, but when seen for the first time it fails not to strike one as an extraordinary spectacle. The birds would be practically secure from capture were it not for a foolish habit they have of flying in large flocks, close to the ground, past the talus slopes, in whose recesses their nests are hidden; then out to sea and back again to where they started, keeping up this circular movement all day long, under certain conditions of weather. This exercise, probably a mere sport, is to many of them the broad road that leadeth to destruction. Seated at a point where the birds are apt to pass most frequently and closest to the ground is a man with a net of sealskin thongs fastened to a circular hoop about eighteen inches in diameter, which is fixed obliquely on a thin, light wooden handle some ten feet long.

On each side of him he has built a wall about two feet high, called taluten. A little further away he has set up a stone or two on edge, to invite the birds to settle on them. This is called nuyahsaun. Between the two walls he crouches as low as possible, the net thrust forward and resting on the ground. A flock of birds approaches; at the opportune moment up goes the net, directly in the path of the victim selected; it is entangled in the meshes; before it has time to escape the man has drawn in the net; he twists the poor creature's wings one above the other, presses its heart for a few seconds between his fingers, and with a piteous little chirp its life is ended; it is now only so much meat and skin—a commodity. In this way I have repeatedly seen a man or even a boy catch about one hundred birds an hour. I tried it at Cape York, and caught one in the course of an hour. Two weeks ago I tried it on Hakluyt Island, and caught four in half an hour, and let them go. The proper name for the net is kaglun, though the Esquimaus often talk of catching the birds with the ipu (handle). The word for "dimple" sounds so closely alike to kaglun that I am not certain whether there is a real difference. Supposing them to be identical, I invite the reader's admiration for the deep philosophy which defines a dimple as "a net to catch unwary birds."

But I must hasten to a conclusion, or this paper will not be ready before the Erik leaves. It may be imagined that my thoughts, many times a day, turned to Peary's steamer that was to carry me back to Cape Sabine. Like Alexander Ypsilanti: "An des Mittags Horizonteshing sein Auge unverwandt."

During part of June and July, Melville Bay was tolerably free from ice, but later on it was generally filled with a dense pack, through which a ship's progress would be laborious. Fog shut out the sight of land and seas for days together, and the ship might perhaps slip past on such an occasion, and then not find it worth while to return. Finally I was not absolutely sure whether she had instructions to touch at Cape York. About August 10 I gave up the hope of seeing her, and began to negotiate with the natives about sledging north. They declared it to be impossible to go overland by way of the ice cap to Etah; the furthest they could go that way was Umana, in Wolstenholme Sound (North Star Bay). Kayota promised to take me to Cape Sabine as soon as the ice was fit, which would be "when the sun was nearly gone," or about the middle of October.

I was fast asleep in my tent on August 17, when Kayota woke me with the information that the steamer had arrived, and that Mrs. Peary and her daughter Marie were on board. As I walked out of the tent, the steamer was just coming around the eastern corner. When abreast of the cape a boat was sent ashore, and soon I was aboard. To my surprise, I learned that the ship, though provisioned for two years, expected to return south the same season, to come up again the following summer. This at once raised the question whether it would not be wise to return with her at once. Not knowing what had taken place at our station meantime, I left the question undecided.

Through smooth water, but somewhat foggy weather, the ship now skirted the coast, whose main features, twice seen before, were now familiar to me. Next day, as we were approaching Wolstenholme Island, Mrs. Peary sent word to the captain that a bear was in sight. Sure enough, there he was on a large cake of ice not far away, eying the ship anxiously. Seeing it approach, however, he made for the water, apparently unhurt by three or four bullets fired at him. Finding that the ship gained on him, he swerved aside, and a cake of ice coming between he was presently far beyond rifle shot. Soon, however, the helm was turned in his direction again and a bullet or two stung him. His efforts to escape and his roar of agony on finding escape impossible were piteous to behold. His speed was little less than the ship's. Time and again he tried to dive, but this art, so useful to seal and duck, nature apparently has bestowed on the white giant very sparingly. We could see his long white body gleaming through a foot or two of greenish water for a few seconds, when he would be compelled to rise again. Blood was pouring from his nostrils, but still he swam with undiminished rapidity, when a bullet from the captain's Mauser rifle (one of those captured in Cuba) at the back of the head instantly turned him over lifeless. He proved to be a very old male, with teeth worn down to mere stumps. How many seals he must have devoured to grind down his enamel to that extent it would be difficult to calculate.

Mrs. Peary confidently expected to find her husband at Etah, and was in high hopes that he had returned successfully and would accompany her home. As we turned around Cape Alexander every eye was directed to the well known spot west of the majestic cliffs of Ikineng (I have no map here to look up the English name), where we knew Peary's house to be. As we came nearer it at once appeared that the explorer was not at the station, for there was no flag flying. Letters were found, however, with whose contents the world is familiar by this time.

The next day was spent in taking aboard most of the stores. I went ashore to botanize a bit, and in about an hour found perhaps ten times as many species as I had found at Cape York in three months, though the luxuriance of the few species at the latter place is far greater. From the Esquimaus I learned that Akomadingwa, the Esquimau whom I had sent to Mr. Warmbath from Piterarwi in April, had reached Cape Sabine with his family. The captain's instructions were to touch at Cape Sabine, if possible, and it may be imagined that I looked anxiously in that direction as soon as the ship turned around Littleton Island. At first the water was open enough, but soon we came to the edge of a dense pack, stretching all the way to Cape Sabine, while along the Greenland shore the open water continued.

I asked the captain what he proposed to do. "Follow the open water as far as I can, if it takes me to Fort Conger." That was a prospect, indeed! Interesting though it might be to see Greely's station, yet the idea of being even an unwilling intruder was by no means pleasant. That point, however, was settled in a few hours; the open water came to an end, and the captain was glad to escape from the rapidly closing pack and retreat to Littleton Island.

Next he decided to try the west side of Smith Sound, and steered for Cape Isabella. Time and again the ship had to lie idle for hours till the tide movement opened a few pools and lanes into which she might steam. Several times it seemed to my inexperienced eye that she was in imminent danger of being crushed between enormous floes. By constant battling for four days we at last got into a band of comparatively open water immediately south of Bedford Pim Island, and at last, on the night between August 29 and 30, steamed into Payer Harbor.

Human figures were soon made out on shore, and presently I had counted five, the requisite number, so I knew that no serious mishap had occurred. Mr. Warmbath received me with cordial welcome. I learned that he had been in Buchanan Bay, had reached the head of its northern arm, Flagler Bay, and cruised among the Weuprecht Islands; had killed six musk oxen and made a fine collection of birds, weasels, lemmings, plants and rocks; that Akomadingwa, his Esquimau, had killed a walrus, a bear and a dozen seals; that the large tent, with ample provisions, was set up near the entrance of Flagler Bay, while several caches of musk ox meat had been made at other points. Unfortunately, however, the hundreds of walrus that Peary had seen at that point in the autumn of the preceding year had not put in an appearance, so that the large store of walrus meat on which we counted for dog food for the following spring did not exist. The prospect for exploration was thus not very encouraging.

For some time the captain continued to plan a northward advance, but, finding the ice barrier impenetrable, he at last landed most of the stores on the moraine below our house, and now looked for a favorable wind to open an outlet from the harbor to enable him to sail home.

We now had to make one decision. I was resolved to stay until one important fact was brought to my notice, that, when the Windward came up the following year, she would remain two years, perhaps more! This would extend my absence from home to three years, whereas I had made arrangements for one only, and had taken considerable risk in remaining another year. Reluctantly I came to the conclusion that I must return. It was finally arranged that Mr. Warmbath was to stay, and that I was to send him fresh supplies the next year and make other arrangements for him at home.

Having thus been compelled to change my plans three times, I was presently to face another change. The favorable wind that was to let the ship out of the harbor delayed its arrival, and when it finally did come, the young ice had grown so thick that the ship could no longer break through it. She was compelled to remain, and lay in the harbor through the winter, 1,500 feet from our house. A regular road—Akosineng the Esquimaus called it—was soon established between the house and the ship, looking, when viewed from some elevation, like a thin black snake winding among the hummocks.

Our main need was dog food, and had we known our prospects definitely, we should have spent all our time in walrus hunting. As, however, the ship might leave any moment, we could not move from the station. The Esquimau, Akomadingwa, indeed, went out hunting nearly every day, but returned unsuccessful. Finally, when it became evident that the ship could not get away, we did row to Rosse Bay in a whaleboat and got one walrus, but the young ice, forming rapidly, prevented us from repeating the trip. The dog food they obtained was soon consumed. A bear shot by Akomadingwa shared the same fate. Having no other resource, we had to send our Esquimau family, with the exception of the eleven-year-old girl, Akatengwa, to Greenland, with orders to return with the sun.

Our main hope now lay in obtaining a supply of walrus meat from Greenland. As Mr. Warmbath desired to see something of Greenland and of Esquimau life, it was arranged that he should go over in the spring and induce as many natives as possible to come over with loads of walrus meat, making sure at the same time of the return of our own family. Having failed several times, he at last succeeded, after a most adventurous journey, during which he fell into the water and had to be driven in a wet sleeping bag, lashed to the sledge, for four hours to the nearest native hut, that of Utuniahsoa at Anoreto (Cape Inglefield). There he had to remain till his clothes were dried. Meantime the ice on which the sledge and supplies had been left broke up, carrying the sledge with it. Thus he was left without resources. He managed, however, to get to Serwading (Hayes Sorfalik), and finally to Piterarwi, and at last returned with quite a caravan of laden sledges.

With these he proceeded to Buchanan Bay to hunt musk oxen, hoping to increase the store of meat thereby. A single musk ox was obtained, and, owing to delays, the supply of meat brought from Greenland was consumed before the natives who brought it could be sent back. Seeing how uncertain was the prospect of exploration, and inferring, moreover, from additional facts gathered, that Sverdrup had almost certainly done all the work within reach of our limited means, I thought it best to devote my time to the study of the Esquimau language, and later on, to a detailed planetable survey of Payer Harbor.

Mr. Warmbath made another dash into Buchanan Bay, this time killing six musk oxen. Part of these was cooked, part eaten on the spot and part brought to the station. Thus spring came, and still we had no adequate depot of dog food in the bay. Seals began to appear on the ice, and the Esquimaus secured several, but these just sufficed to feed their families and dogs from day to day, or rather, in the case of the dogs, from week to week.

On May 6 the unexpected news came that Peary had arrived. He had vainly waited at Fort Conger for news from the ship, for, though repeated attempts were made to reach him, they proved uniformly unsuccessful. Having looked over the ground he quickly formulated his plans for future work, and this largely decided our own prospects. He informed us that he intended to leave for Greenland as soon as the ship could get out. From previous records we concluded that this might happen any day after June 21, and hence that must be the latest date of our return from the trip. By an arrangement made with him, our Esquimaus entered his service several times, to take loads of supplies to Cape D'Urville. This served to keep the dogs alive (which were fed with bacon from Peary's stores), but yet yielded no dog food for our trip. Finally, when one Esquimau, Visakepsa, brought in four seals at once, our chance seemed to have come at last, though very late. Mr. Warmbath, having to attend to various specimens, I started alone with Akomadingwa (Napsa and Uzaka escorting us about eight miles, to go seal hunting afterward).

This was on June 6. On June 21 we were to be back (in reality we got back on the 25th). Thus, the time of the expedition which I had planned so long and for which we had labored for two years, was reduced to nineteen days! In that short space we could not hope to cross Ellesmere Land. It was agreed that I was to assemble the various caches at the cape, between Flagler and Hilt bays, and there await the arrival of Mr. Warmbath, who was to be accompanied by Napsa, while Utunia and Uzaka remained to supply food for the women and children. When reunited we would run to the head of Flagler Bay, then to that of Hilt Bay, thence climb some distance on the ice cap and look down toward the west coast (if possible); then retreat along the south shore of Buchanan Bay. The first day the travelling was delightful. We made our first camp at the northwest corner of Bedford Pine Island, opposite Cocked Hat Island. There we took up the remnant of a seal left by Visakepsa, on which the natives made a merry meal. I strolled over the low ground adjoining, all covered with structures built by the ancient Esquimaus (siudlekatuin), meat caches (kengniwi), wind screens for fires (okota) and at least one house (igtu). While looking at these, Awia, Akomadingwa's wife, called to show me a circle of stones (peron), indicating the site of a tent. Her little boy, Niakautya, pointed to some bright colored bits of stone, laid in several rows on a smooth rock face, and remarked: "Mane pidlapadlu pingwangwakto!" (Here the children played). It is difficult to describe the feeling which this remark produced in my mind. Think of these ancient nomads, without iron or other metal, with hardly any wood, using sharp stones in place of knives, to carve their tools of ivory or bone, relying on bits of pyrite and moss to light their fires, and all this in a country where there are seventy-five days of complete darkness in the year! And yet their children played, and were probably as gay as those that romp in the parks at home.

The weather continued splendid, but the travelling became more and more difficult as we proceeded westward, owing to soft snow and upturned ice cakes, frozen fast in all imaginable positions. About noon I sent Uzaka and Napsa back. The rest of us slept some hours near a huge iceberg and proceeded toward a point where Mr. Warmbath had left a little tent, which I intended to pick up with its contents. Soon, however, the travelling became so bad that Akomadingwa had to proceed with an empty sledge to get the tent. After about four hours he returned with tent and contents, including a stove and oil, which enabled us to cook a delightful meal. We slept some hours in the tent and then made for Bache peninsula. The travelling for some twelve hours did not improve; the dogs were weak, having eaten nothing for several days. Seals were seen repeatedly, and Akomadingwa tried to crawl (aweakto) within gunshot, but they took alarm, and vanished into their holes (aglu). At last he succeeded in killing one, and I gave a sigh of relief, for my anxiety about dog food had become acute.

By this time, however, another trouble had arisen. Since morning my eyes had felt "sandy," and by noon I was hardly able to keep them open five minutes. I was getting snowblind. We had plenty of colored goggles at Fort Magnesia, but, having had no use for them the year before, I thought myself immune from that trouble. To sit on the heavy laden sledge was out of the question. Akomadingwa was suffering from the same trouble. He had to hold on to the upstanders of the sledge and take a peep at the dogs now and then to keep the direction. I walked some distance behind with eyes shut tight, watching every opportunity to catch my nerves off their guard to open one eye enough to get my bearings. Happily, the ice soon became smooth, so that I was able to sit on the sledge at least part of the time. At last we got within the shadow of Bache Peninsula, and never in my life did I experience an equal sense of relief. We slept on a cone of rounded bowlders, among which I was glad to find a bit of conglomerate, a pleasant change from the monotonous granite and gneiss of Cape Sabine and Cape York. The yellow beds at the top of Bache Peninsula looked like sandstone, and I should have been glad to climb up to get specimens, but the condition of my eyes made it requisite to hasten with all possible speed to the large tent where I might securely await my recovery. Favored by cloudy weather, we followed the shore of Bache Peninsula westward next day, the travelling being most of the time excellent. From time to time Akomadingwa stopped to pick up a guileless ptarmigan, which hardly ever escaped, or to try a long shot at a hare which, more alert, escaped to the rocks above. Late in the evening we arrived at the entrance of Flagler Bay, and I was startled to see a vast expanse of open water before me. Only by making a long detour could we get to the island where the large tent was. Overjoyed to escape from the maddening glare, I crept into my sleeping bag, allowing nothing but my nose to protrude.

More than a day passed before I ventured to look at the surroundings. To the east all was ice; to the west, all water. I counted fifteen islands in sight, all belonging to the Weyprecht group. Niakautya and I walked around the island, finding the traces of the siudlekatnin, "the men who went before," all along the shore. Close to the tent I found an old spearhead, together with some objects not known to my companions. An old okota, or fire screen, was put to excellent use; the theory of rent does not seem to hold in this climate. Bones of musk oxen and traces of their recent visits were quite abundant. The purple serwansa, the earliest blooming flower, shone on ledges or peeped from crannies.

When my eyes were sufficiently rested, we went into Hilt Bay to get eleven pieces of musk ox meat left there by Mr. Warmbath. The outward trip was exhilarating in a high degree. The dogs were in good condition, the ice tolerably smooth, the air calm and comparatively mild, while the sun was not overbright. By laboring hard all day we got the meat from the cache, about three miles inland, down to the foot of a long and rather gentle slope about halfway up the bay, on its north side. After trying various devices, I adopted the Esquimau method of carrying, resting the load on my back between the shoulders and taking off part of the weight by a band passed around the head. A pair of thick mittens under the band saved my temples from being crushed in. This method of carrying is called nangmukto.

On our return to the tent the clouds dispersed and we were once more exposed to the pitiless glare of the sun and snow. At once my snowblindness returned, and I had to repeat the process of walking with eyes shut, getting my bearings by a peep every two or three minutes. Arriving near the island I saw fresh tracks from the east, and knew that Mr. Warmbath had arrived. Most fortunately he brought a pair of goggles, which at once relieved me.

The wretched travelling I had found on the south side of Buchanan Bay made it evident that, with heavy laden sledges, it would take us several days to reach home by that route. The circuitous route by Bache Peninsula would take quite as long, and there remained only four or five days. We therefore decided to abandon the thought of further advance and to retreat at once. Moving eastward, we made our next camp on the west side of Alexandra Haven, the "Arctic Paradise" of the British expedition of 1875. The abundance of life, both animal and vegetal, seemed to justify the appellation, and we were sorry that we had no chance of entering the "Paradise" at a later season, when it would be in full glory—say about the beginning of August.

The remainder of the trip was much easier than we expected, the crust of snow having been consolidated into ice by the melting from above. In Rice Strait there was open water, full of elder ducks and brant geese. We had to follow the ice fort, and had occasion to admire the ingenuity, skill and prompt resolution of the Esquimaus in getting over several exceptionally difficult places. At last the masts of the ship appeared above Staiknecht Island—we were not too late.

The next week was spent in packing, and finally we took up our quarters on the ship. Our house and remaining supplies were turned over to Mr. Peary, according to agreement made at the time of his first visit. Finally, on July 3, about noon, the ice saw and engine combined succeeded in their task; the ship moved, and was soon out of the harbor. Fort Magnesia dwindled rapidly and was presently hidden behind the huge bulk of Bravoort Island. The feelings with which we beheld the vanishing of this friendly shelter of nearly two years may readily be imagined.

July 4 was spent on Littleton Island, in the patriotic occupation of collecting elder ducks' eggs. In the evening we arrived at Etah, which was still icebound, so that communication had to be made by sledges. It might have been almost midnight when we passed Cape Alexander. Next morning, as we arose, Northumberland Island was close ahead, and about noon we anchored in the little bay at its northwest corner. After a cruise around the island, during which we passed by the settlements of Udluhsen on Herbert Island, Kiete on Northumberland Island, and Netidliw on Barden Bay, and finding them deserted, but finally discovering natives at Nasha, a few miles east of Barden Bay, we anchored off Hakluyt Island, and a party went ashore to get little auks and loons. Finally we were landed at the point we now occupy, and the ship went to Piterarwi on its walrus hunt.

Some time after we went to Hakluyt Island in our two boats to get little auks, loons, and, if possible, foxes. On a black slate crag at the southeast end of the island, at the edge of the plateau that forms its top, I found what appears to be a fossil—the only fossil in situ that I have seen during the two years.

We now expect the Erik in at most two days, and hope to enjoy the comforts of civilization in three weeks.

During the last two years I suffered absolutely no hardships, except considerable fatigue now and then in the early days of the trip to Cape York; a frostbite, making my ears grow purple and pendulous, like ripe plums, and finally the snowblindness above described. Except two days of indigestion, caused by a hot biscuit, and occasional twinges of rheumatism (the special arctic complaint), I enjoyed perfect health. The pleasure which I expected from the trip was largely realized, and would have been tenfold had it not been for the constant disappointment, suspense and anxiety.

Fort Magnesia, our station, was a snug little shelter, kept comfortably warm with twenty-five pounds of coal a day, being made coldproof by a double coat of Fay manila building paper, inclosing sheets of magnesia (the material found most efficient for covering boilers to prevent the escape of heat).

The only occasion in which I was in real danger occurred at Cape York, a few days after our arrival. I had climbed up the steep slope above the camp, intending to reach a crag from which I could get a more extended view. Not intending any lengthy ascent, I had started without any other appliance than a pocket knife. Tempted always by the next crag, I ascended higher and higher, till the ice cap was so close at hand as to offer an irresistible temptation. After about two hours I reached the verge of the topmost crag, and thence the ascent was easy by a gentle, even slope. Having spent some two hours on the ice cap, I turned to descend, not by the way I had come, which I thought too risky, but by a neighboring gorge, which seemed more inviting. Without a staff to test the ground in advance, the descent was a succession of venturesome steps from uncertain bowlder to doubtful snowbank. About half way down I found myself at the edge of a nearly vertical rock face, some fifteen feet high, traversing a narrow gorge. Below was a long snowdrift, extending down to a place whence progress promised to be comparatively safe. Could I but have known whether the snow below the rock wall was hard or soft there would have been no trouble; if soft, I would have jumped; if hard, I would have turned back, for to slide down the steep, long incline, arriving at the bottom with the speed of an express train, would mean to be cut to pieces by the sharp crags jutting out in all directions below. On the nearly vertical wall were little projections which promised to afford a foothold. Sliding down on my back, feet forward, bracing myself with both hands and feet against every little projection, I proceeded, when all at once I lost my hold, and knew in an instant that I could not stop myself. I gave an involuntary yell, for if the snow below was hard my destruction was certain. A second's suspense; my feet touched the snow; thank heaven, it was soft! I sank into it to my waist, and thought I had never lain in a finer bed. Only ten feet away the snow grew hard, affording no hold to the foot. With my pocket knife I had to cut steps down the middle of the frozen crust, sloping at an angle of 45 degrees, over a distance of some three hundred or four hundred feet. So slippery was the surface and so steep the slope that even when only twenty or thirty feet away from the bowlders at the bottom I felt that the loss of my foothold might easily mean death. At last I got down into safety, and never did I enjoy anything more keenly than the cup of coffee which Dr. Hann had got ready for my arrival.

ROBERT STEIN.

PRISONERS ON ASSASSINATION.

THEY LOATHE ANARCHY AND UTTER TRIBUTES TO PRESIDENT M'KINLEY.

The current number of the State prison paper, "The Star of Hope," has many articles from the press of its convict contributors on the subject of the assassination of President McKinley. A two-page article by "Sing Sing, No. 52,718," on "Historic Anarchical Atrocities," contains this paragraph:

There is only this to be said at the finish, and it is a pessimistic view at best, that there is no apparent way to absolutely protect a ruler, and that, as anarchy thrives best when opposed, there is no effective way to deal with the problems it presents. It is true that public opinion holds anarchists in abhorrence. But those who espouse the cause of anarchy are not of the people nor influenced by public opinion. There is no way to stamp out the anarchists. Silenced and driven out of sight, they thrive in secret. To the last awful crime there are two splendid signs which point out the detestation of the country for this class of crime, and emphasize the loyalty of the American people to their government. The sympathy which went out to the President from every citizen broke over every political barrier and showed clearly that this was one people, united in patriotism and faith.

"Auburn, No. 24,913," contributes a long article on "William McKinley as a Statesman," and "Napanock, No. 80,167," writes an equally long article on "William McKinley, Our President," in which he says:

Anarchists have always been looked upon by men in prison, when out in the world, as cowardly, harmless, unwashed vermin, vermin to be kicked into the gutter when met with. They have, in truth, shown their cowardice, but, alas, they have also shown their fangs—and he whom the whole nation loved, lies dead. They have struck! And their stroke was death—and now you, who can, strike back! And strike so your stroke means death, too. For anarchy must die!

The editor in chief, whose number and prison are not given, and the assistant editor have each contributed long articles on the subject of the assassination, and prisoners in all the institutions have furnished "Tributes" which are printed in a broad mourning border. Among them are the following:

In all the ways that men are great William McKinley was great. From his boyhood he was always in earnest. The duty of an hour was as serious business with him as the ambitions of his life. Industrious in school, a good soldier in the field, in the practice of law brilliant but careful, in politics shrewd, ambitious but honest, in statesmanship broadminded, farseeing and wise. In Congress he quickly took and easily held the first place. As Governor of his native State he gave evidences of those high executive abilities which as Chief Magistrate of the nation were gloriously confirmed.
SING SING, No. 52,718.

No temperate discussions of the kind of reasoning which impelled the murderer of President McKinley is possible to the average decent American just now. When the people of our country, watching and praying, saw the courage and fortitude, the innate kindness and courtesy of the victim, and, in dreadful contrast, the cold cruelty of his assassin, McKinley the soldier, the politician and the statesman was forgotten, and the land united in fervent supplication for the life of a brave man.
SING SING, No. 52,300.

When I heard that President McKinley had been shot I cried, and I am not ashamed to own it. I am not the only one here who cried, and if the cur who did the shooting had been in Auburn Prison that night he would have surely died.

When the news first came it was to the effect that President McKinley had been killed outright, and the whole prison was shocked into the most absolute silence after this dreadful news had been slipped from gallery to gallery. "Is it true?" I asked a passing guard. "It is," said he. "Did they get the dog?" I asked.

"Thank Almighty God that they did!" he answered as he passed on. But even then I felt miserable, for how could the lives of seventy-five million of such creatures make up for the loss of one good man? I am down on anarchy, and all that appertains to it, and when I am free if I ever hear anybody open their yawp to praise it or its doctrines I'll close it again with my fist.
AUBURN, No. 26,401.

Anarchy is the zero mark of civilization. The assassination of President McKinley should arouse the lawmakers to the drafting of some law that will effectually put an end to such dastardly deeds. Lincoln and Garfield, two of the greatest men our country ever produced, suffered by the hand of men with anarchistic tendencies, and this attempt on a man who has proved himself capable of meeting the difficult issues that presented themselves during his first administration, and who has continued to meet them in a manner to arouse the wonder of all foreign governments—a patriot and statesman, a humanitarian, and, above all, a true American—is enough to arouse even the coolest of men to the fact that lynch law is not wrong at times. This is a case where a rope is the only means to an end.
NAPANOCK, No. 80,128.

President Lincoln was assassinated on April 14, 1865, by a man who believed that he was avenging a lost cause. President Garfield was shot by a crank on July 2, 1881, and died on September 19, 1881, at Elberon, N. J. Booth killed Abraham Lincoln for revenge, and a disappointed office seeker, Guiteau, murdered James A. Garfield; but the crank who riddled President McKinley in the city of Buffalo had neither a reason to justify nor a motive to palliate the most defenceless murder of a public official that has ever been committed in the United States. The murder of Marat by Charlotte Corday was for the public good; the murder of Cæsar by Brutus was a necessity; for "the very people who wept for Cæsar slain, erected a monument to Brutus"; but the assassination of McKinley, under the guise of a cordial handshake, was the ne plus ultra of diabolism.
CLINTON, No. 5,135.