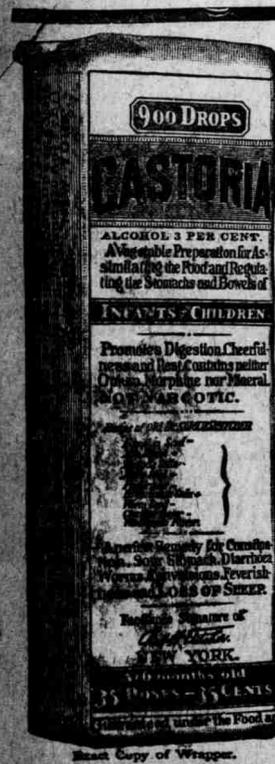


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THE ALTENBURG CASE

By GEORGE DYRE ELDRIDGE

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(Continued.) "I've been a meanin' to come to town, doctor, an' give you a part o' that money."

"I'm not a doctor an' I'm not here for money," Grimbleshaw interrupted, hastily and somewhat roughly. "You've never seen me before and you'll never see me again! My friend here wants to get over the line, and without attractin' too much attention."

"Well, you have been, and you're going to do this job and do it right," Grimbleshaw said to him. "You've got to hold in reserve to the very last the sugar-coating he felt he could give his brusqueness."

"There isn't any 'wont' about it," said the doctor. "You're going to do it!" "You think you've got me," said the man, trying to look defiant and succeeding only in showing more clearly his fear."

"I know I've got you," he said, in a low tone that Calden could not catch the words. "I know I've got you, and I don't need to betray any professional confidence to put Russell on your track for—"

"I'd just as lief go up an' be done with it as be under your thumb all my life!" "Do what I ask and I forget I ever knew it," Grimbleshaw, who felt with bitterness the part he was called to play, yet knew the danger of failure so great as to warrant the most desperate means, retorted.

"The man stood silent so long that Grimbleshaw began to taste the bitterness of a defeat, which would be deepened for all time by the sense of unmanliness involved in making the threat he had. Finally, however, the man raised his head and said, still speaking sullenly:

"I 'posse I've got to trust somebody, an' you saved my life, anyway. I'll see him through, but I'll be d—d if you or anybody else ever git me to do it again, so don't ax!"

"Where will you draw the line?" she asked, almost in the tone of one who loses interest in a hopeless issue. "Can you remember a face once seen so that you know it when seen again, while you only 'gues' at a resemblance in voice?"

as he spoke these ordinary words that any one could dream for a moment that this girl, here with him in this narrow space, had aught of association with the terrible tragedy that had occurred so close at hand? To take the precautions they were taking, as if any one could doubt her or hers for a moment was the height of absurdity.

"Oh, yes," she said, with a show of bitter impatience, "that's a dodge to gain a day or two, or at most a week, but what does it amount to? What's to be done when dodges won't work any longer?"

"It was the question he had constantly asked himself as he drove through the night, and to which he had found no answer, but it was on this thing to make the admission to himself and another to own up with this girl watching his face and hanging on his words, as if the question of life and death turned on his answer."

"We've got to tire Trafford out," he said, feebly. "It's only a question of time."

"It's only a question of time," she repeated, with strong emphasis, "but not in firing Trafford out. He's not that kind."

"No, he was not that kind, and Grimbleshaw seemed to know it as he had never known anything before in his life. He felt him, as it were, a merciless, untrifling fate, watching, waiting, strong because he could wait, but by no chance ever tiring. All the more, who could be saved should be, and with Calden out of reaching distance, why was it not possible to save this girl, who at the most must know little, and who, probably, simply guessed at things of which she knew nothing, so far as the law of evidence, gained knowledge. Concerning these things she had merely to hold her tongue and nothing could be extorted. As to her presence at the farm, there was not a shred of evidence that she had been there until a substantial time later than the actual commission of the murder. She could only guess, therefore, who was the doer of the deed, and guesses were not and could not be made evidence."

"Miss Calden," he said, speaking earnestly under conception of the demands of the situation, "why you were here that night I don't know, but I do know it could have had nothing to do with this crime. Why, then, can't you speak out and tell just what you saw? It will clear up the atmosphere tremendously, while the real danger is in all these wild guesses—"

"He knew he had lost the point of what he was trying to say even before he caught the frightened expression of her face, which completed his demonstration and caused him to stop with his sentence unfinished. On the instant she leaned forward, with her hand pressed on his arm, whispered, so that even he could not hear, so that even he could not hear, so that even he could not hear."

"Nothing!" This time he spoke with assured confidence. "I've accounted for every minute of time and every event from my reaching the house until Malbon got here."

"To be Continued.)"

DR. COOK'S OWN STORY OF THE CONQUEST OF THE POLE

In the Heart of a Storm--New Land Sighted--Mid-Polar Basin a Lifeless World.

(EIGHTH ARTICLE)

By Dr. Frederick A. Cook, First White Man to Reach the North Pole

URING two days of chilly bluster the sleds were forced along with encouraging results, and on the evening of March 26, with a pedometer and other method of dead reckoning for position, we were placed at latitude 84 degrees 53 minutes. The western horizon remained persistently undisturbed. A brisk storm, it seemed, was gathering, but it was a long time in coming eastward. On the evening of the 26th we prepared for the blast and built the igloo stronger than usual, hoping that the horizon would be cleared by a good blow on the morrow and afford us a day of rest. The long, steady marches, without time for recuperation, had begun to check our enthusiasm.

In the daily monotony of hardship we had learned to appreciate, more and more the joy of the "sleeping bag." It was the only animal comfort which afforded a relief to our life of frigid, and with it we tried to force upon the weary body in the long marches a pleasing anticipation.

In the evening, after the blocks of snow walled a dome in which we could

breath a quiet air, the blue flame lamp sang the notes of gastronomical delights. A heaven given drink of ice water was first indulged in to quench the chronic thirst, and then the process of disrobing began, one at a time, for there was not room for all to act at once.

The fur stuffed boots were pulled, and the bearskin pants were stripped. Then half of the body was quickly pushed into the bag. A brick of pemmican was next taken out, and the teeth were set to the grind of this bone-like substance. The appetite was always large, but a half pound of cold withered beef and tallow changes a hungry man's thoughts effectually.

The tea, an hour in making, was now ready, and we rose on elbows to take it. Under the influence of the warm drink the fur coat with its mask of ice was removed. Next the shirt, with its ring of ice about the waist, came off, giving the last sense of shivers. Pushing farther into the bag, the hood was pulled over the face, and we were lost to the world of ice.

The warm sense of mental and physical pleasure which follows is an interesting study. The movement of others, the sting of the air, the noise of torturing winds, the blinding rays of a heatless sun, the pains of driving snows and all the bitter elements were absent. The mind, freed of the agitation of frost, wandered to home and better things under these peculiar circumstances; there comes a pleasing sense with the touch of one's own warm skin, while the companionship of the arms and legs, freed of their cumbersome furs, makes a new discovery in the art of getting next to oneself.

In the Heart of a Storm. On March 27 it blew a half gale at night, but at noon on the following day the wind ceased. The bright sun and rising temperature were too tempting to remain quiescent, and, though the west was still darkened by threatening clouds, the dogs were put to the sleds and off they went among the wind swept hummocks. We had not gone many miles before the first rush of a storm struck us.

Throwing ourselves over the sleds, we waited the passing of the icy blast. There was no suitable snow near to begin the erection of a shelter, but a few paces northward was a promising area of camp, and to this we hoped to take ourselves after a few moments' rest. The squall soon spent its force, and in the wind which followed good progress was made without suffering severely. The temperature was 41 degrees below zero F., and the barometer 29.05.

Once in moving order, the drivers required very little encouragement to prolong the effort to a fair day's march in spite of the weather. As the sun settled in the western gloom the wind increased its fury and forced us into camp. Before the gloom was finished a steady, rasping wind brushed the hummocks and piled up the snow in large dunes like the sands of home shores.

The snow house was not cemented with water. The tone of the wind did not seem to indicate danger, and, furthermore, we were beginning to realize the great need of fuel economy. We therefore did not deem it prudent to use oil for the fire to melt

the snow. They had entered the bag without undressing and half emerged with shirt and pants on, but without feet. After a little more digging their boots were uncovered, and then, with protected feet, the bag was freed and placed on the side of the igloo. Into it the boys crept in full dress, except coats. I rolled out to their side in my bag.

Moved on Refreshed. The air came in hissing spouts, like jets of steam from an engine, but soon after noon of the 29th the ice under our heads brightened. It became possible to breathe without being choked with floating crystals, and as the ice about the facial furs was broken a little blue was detected in the west.

The dogs were freed of snow entanglements and fed, and a shelter was made in which to melt snow and make tea. A double ration was eaten, and then the sleds began to move again. Soon the sun burst through the separating clouds and raised icy spires in towers of glitter. The wind then ceased entirely, and a scene of crystal fields was laid over the storm swept fields. With full stomachs, fair weather and a much needed rest, we moved with inspirations anew. Indeed, we felt refreshed as one does after a cold bath.

Not particularly anxious about the outcome of the storm and with senses blunted by overwork and benumbed with cold, we sought the comfort of the bags.

Buried Under the Snow. Awakened in the course of a few hours by drifts of snow about our feet, it was noted that the wind had burrowed holes in the weak spots through the snow wall. Still, we were bound not to be cheated out of a few hours' sleep, and with one eye open we turned over. Later I was awakened by falling snow blocks.

Forcing my head out of the ice I caught a hood, I saw that the dome had been swept away and that we were being buried under a dangerous weight of snow. In some way I had tossed about sufficiently during sleep to keep on top of the accumulating drift, but my companions were out of sight and did not respond to a loud call.

After a little search a blowhole was located, and in response to another call came Eskimo shouts. Violent efforts were made to free their bags, but the snow settled on them tighter with each tussle.

I was surprised a few moments later as I was digging their breathing place open to feel them burrowing through snow, except to quench thirst.

Every observation, however, indicated an easterly drift, and a westerly course must be continuously forced to counterbalance the movement. A curtain was drawn over the land in the afternoon of March 31, and we saw no more of it. Day after day we now pushed along in desperate northward efforts. Strong winds and fractured, irregular ice increased the difficulties. Progress was slow.

In one way or other we managed to gain a fair march between storms during each twenty-four hours. In an occasional spell of stillness mirages spread screens of fantasy and for our counterfeits. Curious cliffs, odd shaped mountains and inverted ice walls were displayed in attractive colors. Discoveries were made often, but with clearer horizon the deception was detected.

On April 3 the barometer remained steady and the thermometer sank. The weather became settled and clear. The pack became a more permanent glitter of color and joy. At noon there was now a dazzling light, while the sun at midnight sank for but a few moments under a persistent northerly haze, leaving the frosted blues bathed in noonday splendor.

In these days we made long marches. The ice steadily improved. Fields became larger and thicker, the pressure lines less frequent and less troublesome. Nothing changed materially. The horizon moved; our footing was seemingly a solid crust of ice, but it shifted eastward. All was in motion. Often we were too tired to build snow houses, and in sheer exhaustion we bivouacked in the lee of hummocks. Here the overworked body called for sleep, but the mind refused to close the eye.

In a Lifeless World. There was a weird attraction in the anomaly of our surroundings which aroused the spirits. We had passed beyond the range of all life. For many days we had not seen a suggestion of animated nature. There were no longer footprints to indicate other life; no breath spouts escaped from the frosted bosom of the sea.

Even the sea algae of the surface waters were no longer detected. We were alone, all alone, in a lifeless world. We had come to this mental blank in slow but progressive stages. As we sailed from the barren areas of the fisher folk along the outskirts of civilization the complex luxury of the metropolis was lost and the brain called for food.



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