

BATTLING WITH HARD LUCK ON AN ALASKAN TORRENT.

Thrilling Adventures of Daring Prospectors, Who Tried to Reach the Gold Fields on the Upper Sushetna River.

Special Correspondence of The Sunday Call.

SUNRISE CITY, Cooks Inlet, June 21, 1897.

THE tide of humanity which has been pouring into Cooks Inlet all summer long has finally reached the flood and already the current has turned, and day by day grows broader and swifter. The first to set the tide homeward bound are those who have come with scant outfits and little or no plans for practical work.

The great majority belong to this class. Conditions are so vastly different from what they were pictured in the newspaper reports that nine cases in ten those who have come here find that they improperly provided themselves, either for living in the country or for prospecting it. Even the most carefully laid and well regulated plans have fallen through, and company after company have broken up, leaving their dredging and hydraulic machinery lying on the beach or selling it for next to nothing. The great majority have come prepared to prospect through the summer and return home in the fall. But when they arrived here and began to learn some facts about the country from the old timers, they find that there are only three months in the year during which successful prospecting can be done, and that is from October 1 until January 1. In the early summer they must wait about two months for the snow to melt away. They must wait another month for that melted snow to run out of the creeks so they can be traveled.

Even if they could get into the interior sooner the water would be too high in the creeks to allow of prospect-

ing. Absolutely nothing can be done here, or ever has been done, according to the old-time miners' report, except from the time the ground freezes until the snow is too deep to work through. But of course no one who is busy hurrying hither and thither to get his outfit ready and his passage secured on some boat that is just about to leave, and after which there will be no earthly chance to secure passage on any boat—such a crowd of busy, hopeful prospectors have no time to stop and think of a little bit of detail like this. They know that the summers up here are fine and long and that the gold is here waiting to be washed out, and all they want is a chance to get on the ground and they will find means to prospect, etc.

But just the same, it is the failure to keep a close account of these little details that has misled so many. And great is the suffering from loss and disappointment. I know personally of many cases of men who have mortgaged their homes, sold out lucrative businesses or made other great sacrifices in order to outfit themselves and get here, only to turn back and sell their outfits for enough money to get home on after less than a month's stay in the inlet.

Some have even gone back home without even getting off the boat they came on.

Those returning home now are called "backs," weak hearts, etc., but are they cowardly after all? What else can they do? They have miscalculated and are utterly unprepared for a stay through the coming winter, and in order to stay for the short prospecting season they must remain through the winter.

But some are showing less good sense and are staying and trying to get up the dangerous rivers at blind hazards.

The Big Sushetna River is the center of excitement now. It is a great whirling torrent, ten miles across in places and narrowing down to rushing rapids at other places. It leads back from the head of Cooks Inlet into the mountains over toward the Copper River country, going through swampy valleys, winding around rolling hills and mountain peaks, spitting into thousands of small tributaries and larger streams, draining the immense water shed to the north and northeast of Cooks Inlet. Like the Yukon River, the Sushetna is full of islands and shifting sandbars. At this season of the year it is swelled to its utmost and the banks are continually caving in, bringing great spruce trees crashing into its swift current. As this drift goes down and passes through some narrow channel between two islands it jams and shifts the current to another channel. By and by it will break loose and go tumbling down the river, carrying everything before it.

There seems to be an underground current at places, for at times, where the stream is flowing along comparatively smooth, they will suddenly burst up on the sandy bottom a roaring spring that sets the water to boiling and swirling like the Niagara River. These are the odds to be met by those who go up the river now.

The method of ascending is for two men to walk along the beach or scramble along the precipitous and marshy banks, as the case may be, towing a small boat, while a third sits in the boat and steers.

The farthest up any party has been this summer is eighty miles. A party of three with eighteen months' supplies had gained this distance after twelve days' work from 8 in the morning until 12 midnight. The hardships and dangers they bore are indescribably

ble. The mosquitoes and moose flies "are simply hell."

At the end of the twelve days a floating log swung around and capsized the boat, and their complete outfit, with the exception of a sack of flour and a bag of smoking tobacco, went to the bottom.

They had been working in their underclothes and were left without clothing to wear.

They got in their boat and the swift current took them back to the mouth of the river in seven hours.

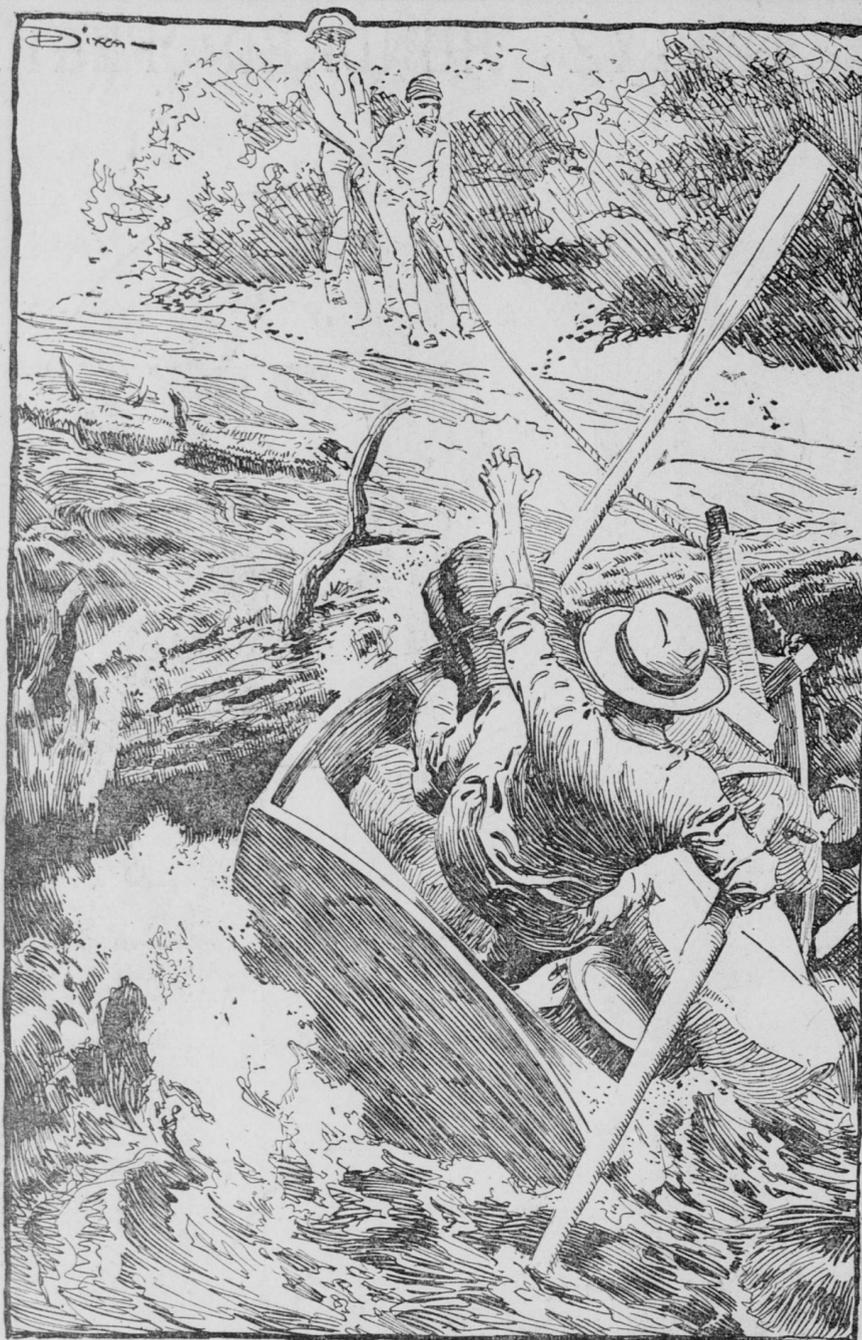
The general average of progress of outfits up the river is about two or three miles a day.

The steam schooner L. J. Perry, which has been the "carry-all" for three years from point to point, in the inlet, is preparing for an attempt to ascend the river. Her owner, Mr. Lathrop, is one of the pioneers of Cooks Inlet, and thoroughly understands the currents of the stream. By starting up at flood tide he expects to make the first run of twenty miles. Then he will anchor or ground his vessel and wait for advantageous winds. In this way he expects to ascend a hundred and fifty miles. If he succeeds he will convey miners up as far as possible, which will be by far the quickest and cheapest way for them.

No discoveries of any note have been made this season as yet. In fact, no prospecting has been done. But there will be several hundred who will get up inland and put in the fall season of prospecting and remain hermit during the winter, and it is expected that many new discoveries will be reported from this work early next summer.

Only four or five cases of drowning have occurred here this season, which is considered low for the average.

J. BURGOYNE ELY.



A LOG CRASHED INTO THE BOAT AND OVERTURNED IT.

These three miners spent twelve days hauling and poling their boat loaded with all they possessed up the river for seventy miles. On the last morning a floating log upset the boat, their eighteen months' supplies, except a sack of flour and a package of smoking tobacco, were lost and they were left standing on the bank with nothing but their underclothes. They had been twelve days in climbing the river; the torrent took them back in seven hours.

HUGE MODEL OF THE EARTH

THE celebrated French geographer, Professor Elisee Reclus, is specially coming over from Paris to lay before the Royal Geographical Society particulars of his project for a gigantic model of the earth.

Professor Reclus' idea is to construct a globe on a scale of eight miles to the inch, this being the smallest sized sphere on which it would be possible to show, correct to scale, the depth of every river and the height of every hill on the earth's surface.

This exact replica of the world would measure roughly eighty-four feet in diameter, or half the size of the dome of St. Paul's. This would mean a distance of thirty feet between New York and London, and Paris and London would be about three feet apart.

The scheme is not exactly a new one. Professor Reclus having had it in mind for some years, and, as a matter of fact, the Commune Council of Paris had promised a large sum of money toward the construction of such a globe for the Paris exhibition of 1900, but unfor-

tunately difficulties arose and the money was not forthcoming.

The primary object of Professor Reclus' visit to London is to interest people over here in the scheme, with a view to raising the necessary capital to carry it out in this country. But, among other things, he wants to obtain the opinions of experts as to the most suitable and least expensive mode of construction.

The globe would either have to be supported on an axis, in a similar manner to the ordinary wooden globes, or, and this seems likely to prove the most convenient arrangement—floated in an immense bath, so as to be easily turned round.

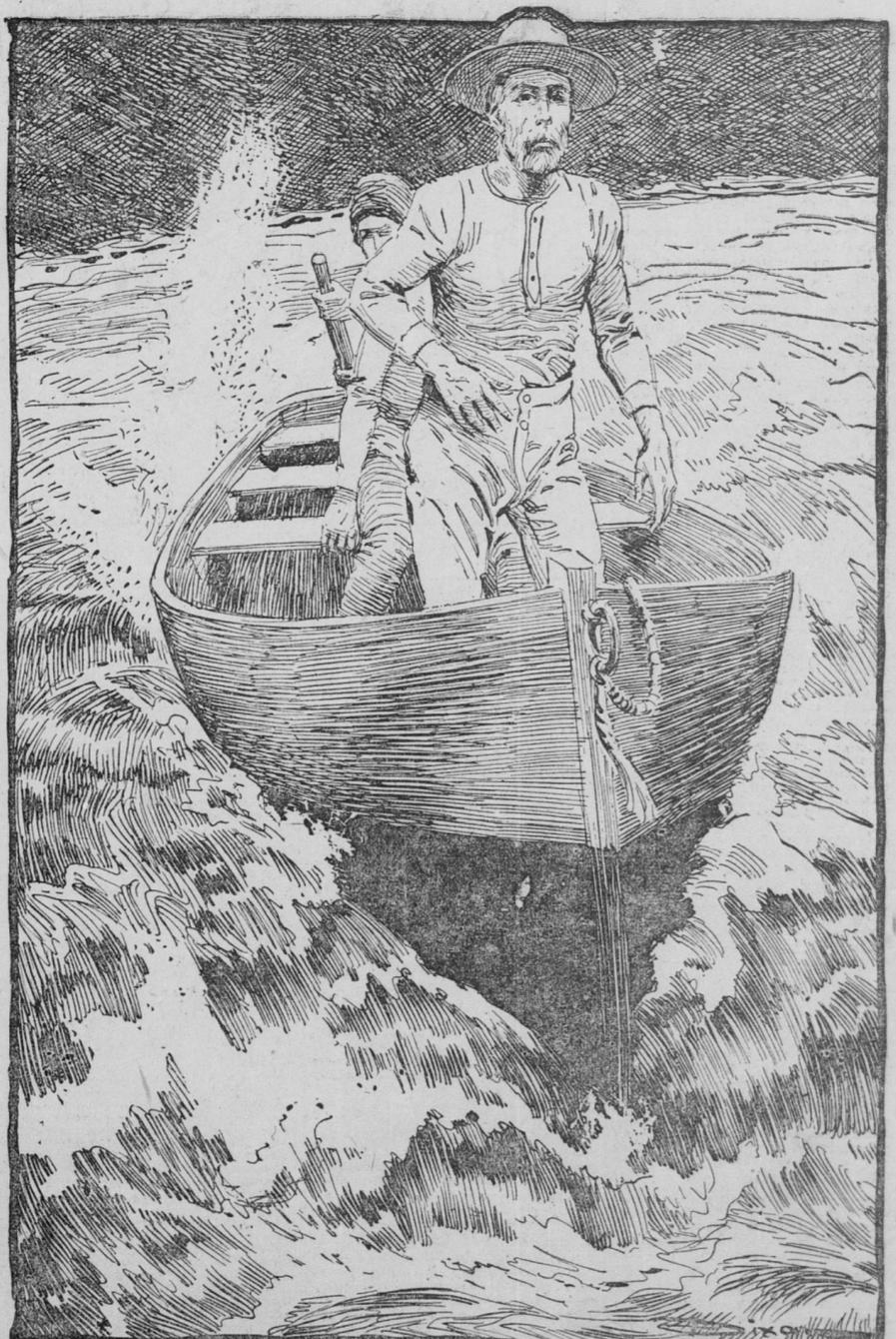
When Professor Reclus first made his project public an eminent English scientist suggested that the surface of the earth be molded on the inside instead of the outside of the sphere, so that the center of the globe could easily examine any part of it. This idea, however, did not meet with approval, except that it was suggested that if the globe was given a rotary motion a visit to

the interior might prove a permanent cure for delirium tremens.

People may be inclined to think that such a globe as described would be of small practical utility. But, apart from its many and important scientific uses, it is computed that the thousands of the working classes who would visit such an object would probably learn more geography in a few minutes' contemplation of the earth's surface than in months spent over maps.—London Mail.

PETS IN THE PHILIPPINES

If the Philippines ultimately become a possession of the United States, and Americans flock thither to establish new homes, they will have to include snakes and lizards among their family pets. In an article on "Life in Manila" in the Youth's Companion Charles B. Howard says: "Our household included three or four Chinese 'chow' dogs, with thick, orange-colored fur and coal-black tongues and Pedro, the house snake, a small python, which traveled about inside the canvas walls and kept us free from rats and mice. Pedro never came out, and we were not disturbed at all by his proximity. We slept on strips of matting, spread over cane-seated co' hes, the legs of which rested in bowls of water to prevent visits from centipedes.



SHOOTING DOWN THE BIG SUSHETNA RIVER.

This party spent twelve days hauling and poling their boat loaded with supplies up the Big Sushetna River. Then the boat upset and they lost everything. The current bore them back to their starting point in seven hours.

From a sketch of the men as they came in sight of the starting camp.

THE NEW AMERICA--HER ARMY AND NAVY

By Henry Norman, Commissioner of the London Chronicle.

LONDON, June 30.—The vision of a new heaven and a new earth is still unfulfilled, but there is a new America. The second American Revolution has occurred, and its consequences may be as great as those of the first. I have waited till the end of my visit before putting my impressions on paper, for it is easy to be mistaken about popular sentiment in this country. The American people are as sensitive to emotional or intellectual stimulus as a photographic film is to light, but they are also, to a remarkable degree, a people of second thoughts. Their nerves are quick, but their convictions are slow. The apparent change was so great and so unexpected that at first I could not bring myself to believe in its reality or its endurance. Unless all signs fail, however, or I fail to interpret them, the old America, the America obedient to the traditions of the founders of the republic, is passing away, and a new America, an America standing armed, alert and existent in the arena of the world-struggle, is taking its place.

The change is threefold:

1. The United States is about to take its place among the great armed powers of the world.
2. By the seizure and retention of territory not only not contiguous to the borders of the republic, but remote from them, the United States becomes a colonizing nation, and enters the field of international rivalries.
3. The growth of good will and mutual understanding between Great Britain and the United States and the settlement of all pending disputes between Canada and America, now virtually assured, constitute a working union of the English speaking people against the rest of the world for common ends, whether any moral agreement is reached or not.

Viewed in the light of the events it may conceivably bring forth, this trio of changes may be described without exaggeration as the event of the century. There is little to say about it that has not already been said, but as a subject for comment it has this advantage, that there is little mystery about it. One great element of uncertainty of course remains—the final direction taken by American public opinion, but with that exception one may speak as a witness and not as a prophet.

First, then, with regard to the future army and navy of the United States. The war has taught this country a severe lesson. A few weeks before the outbreak of hostilities I read in a leading New York paper a carefully detailed estimate, based upon returns from every State in the Union, showing that an army of 10,000,000 men could be promptly raised. This ludicrous notion undoubtedly corresponded to the popular view of the country's capabilities. Anybody who remembers certain statements made during the Venezuelan dispute will not think this remark extravagant. It was known that the patriotism of the people was equal to the supply of any number of volunteers, the resources of the country were known to be limitless—the

combination of innumerable men with limitless resources is all that is required for a vast army. Such was the reasoning. But nobody is misled by it to-day. The President has called out 200,000 men, and they have responded with extraordinary promptitude. But in a few days two months will have elapsed and the whole force is yet far from ready to take the field. Fifteen thousand men—nearly all regulars—have gone with General Shafter to Santiago; a few thousand are to be sent to reinforce him as quickly as possible; about 7000 have gone to Manila; 20,000 are wanted for Porto Rico and are not available while the main army of Cuban invasion will hardly be ready, should suppose, for another month yet. A month ago it was commonly said that 75,000 men were going at once to Cuba. The United States could not dispatch half that number of equipped soldiers then, although she had over 100,000 men with the colors. The statement remains true a month later.

Remember one thing always: The war took everybody by surprise. It was not desired, it was not expected; it was, therefore, not prepared for. If the Maine had not been blown up there would be peace to-day. Forty-eight hours before the rupture a leading New York capitalist, who had gone to Washington to discover the exact situation, returned and reported that he had absolutely certain knowledge, from official sources, that there would be no war. Thus the Government was called upon to create and equip an army from foundation to coping. The regular army was small in number, scattered all over the country; it had never been collected since the rebellion; officers of different companies in the same regiment were often strangers to one another; brigade drills, and even regimental drill, was unheard of. The National Guard, of which so much was expected, had, in many cases, neither clothing nor arms. A few were "ready, aye ready," but the response of most of them has been described as a mixture of tragedy and opera buffa. When I visited Camp Alger I found one regiment of 500 men with 200 rifles, and several had from 30 to 40 per cent of new recruits—men who had never fired a rifle. Then, again, the War Department had not the aid from the States that it had confidently expected. A hundred thousand men, quickly followed by nearly 75,000 more, were delivered to it, needing almost everything. They have been transported vast distances with one—only one—trifling accident; two weeks hence, General Alger has assumed, me every man will be equipped, down to two suits of uniform for the tropics; the "hardships" they have suffered are not such as a soldier should talk much about; 32,000 tons of material have been provided for them; fifty transports have been chartered and fitted out; besides all this, the War Department has laid 1500 submarine mines, set up forty searchlights, and armed a large number of forts—often building them first. After admitting every reasonable criticism, it is a triumph of organization.

And look at the display of American patriotism. When the volunteers were

summoned by the President they walked on the scene as if they had been waiting in the wings. They were subjected to a physical examination as searching as that of a life insurance company. A man was rejected for two or three filled teeth. They came from all ranks of life: Young lawyers, doctors, bankers, well-paid clerks are marching by thousands in the ranks. The first surgeon to be killed at Guantanamo left a New York practice of \$10,000 a year to volunteer. As I was standing on the steps of the Arlington Hotel one evening a tall, thin man, carrying a large suit case, walked out and got on the street car for the railway station on his way to Tampa. It was John Jacob Astor, the possessor of a hundred millions of dollars. Theodore Roosevelt's Rough Riders contain a number of the smartest young men in New York society. A Harvard class-mate of mine, a rising young lawyer, is working like a laborer at the Brooklyn Navy Yard, not knowing when he may be ordered to Cuba or Manila. He is a Naval Reserve man and sent in his application for any post "from the stokehole upward." The same is true of women. When I called to say good-bye to Mrs. John Addison Porter, the wife of the secretary to the President, whose charming hospitality I had enjoyed, she had gone to Tampa to ship as a nurse on the Red Cross steamer for the coast of Cuba. And all this, he it remembered, is for a war in which the country is not in the remotest danger, and when the ultimate summons of patriotism is unspoken. Finally, consider the reference to the war loan. A New York syndicate offered to take half of it at a premium which would have given the Government a clear profit of \$1,000,000. But the loan was wisely offered to the people, and the small investor gets all he can buy before the capitalist is even permitted to invest. And from Canada to the Gulf, from Long Island to Seattle, the money of the people is pouring in. As I write, it is said the loan will be all taken up in small amounts.

It is true that soldiers in Florida should not be fed on pork and beans, and that campaigners in Cuba should not wear thick cloth uniforms. But while these truths may be remembered, another should not be forgotten—that the American people have responded to their country's call with instant and flawless patriotism.

The lesson they have learned is that patriotism alone will not fight battles. How far will that lesson carry them? Will it build up a great army and navy? The question requires a two-fold answer. In the United States there is a curious antipathy to a large standing army. The masses of the people dread such a centralization of power. Nothing excites more hostility than the employment of Federal troops to settle State difficulties—witness the outcry when President Cleveland sent regulars to quell labor disturbances in Chicago. It is feared that a large standing army might lead to aggressive campaigns abroad, but a hundredfold greater is the fear that it might become an instrument of oppression at home. So strong is this sentiment that the army will assuredly not be increased to any great extent. Hitherto its strength has been nominally 25,000 men—actually perhaps 15,000. Congress has recently authorized a total of

60,000—a tiny force for 70,000,000 people, according to European standards. But a result of the war the local regiments will gain vastly in popularity, and they will probably be kept up to full strength with capable men and complete equipment. Moreover, there are signs that the famous Seventh Regiment of New York will not have thinned its ranks in the war, and in future every local regiment will probably be allowed to go to the front as a unit and will not be dependent for its separate existence upon the whim of the Governor of its State. Therefore, the American land forces will be largely increased in reality, though not nominally.

With the navy, however, the case is different. It cannot be used by the executive for oppression at home; the need of it for defense is universally recognized; it has always been the popular arm; it has covered itself with glory during the war. The war of an aggressive policy, it is true, has influenced past naval estimates also. It has always been easy to get money for coast defense ships, and difficult to get it for sea-going battle-ships and cruisers. But this will be less the case now that America has possessions overseas. Already one significant fact has shown what may be expected. Not only was the last naval vote by far the largest since the rebellion, but Congress positively made great additions to the shipbuilding recommended by the Naval Construction Committee—a course without parallel in American history. The official recommendation was for one battle-ship and four torpedo-boats; what Congress authorized on May 4 was three battle-ships, of 11,500 tons; four monitors, of 2700 tons, for harbor defense; sixteen torpedo-boat destroyers, of 400 tons; twelve torpedo-boats, of 150 tons, and one gunboat to replace the Michigan upon the lakes, if an arrangement with Great Britain permitting this is reached. The bids for all these ships are to be opened in August and September. I have compiled the following table, comprising ships afloat, building and authorized, including those purchased for this war, one of these not yet launched at Armstrong's, to show that a powerful American navy is already an accomplished fact:

	Author-ized	Total
First-class battleships	4	5
Second-class battleships	1	1
Monitors	6	4
Torpedo-boat destroyers	16	2
Protected cruisers	14	1
Unprotected cruisers	14	10
Torpedo boats	16	15
Torpedo boat destroyers	16	15

This list comprises only first-rate modern vessels; it does not include a number of gunboats, the monitors built for harbor defense, the Vesuvius and the Katahdin.

With no further increase, therefore, the American navy takes an important comparative place upon the seas, but its increase is certain. Its admirable record during the war, as regards both material and personnel; the voyage of the Oregon; the Russian summons to her builder and the Russian order to Cramp & Sons.

HENRY NORMAN.

Copyrighted, 1898.