

WELLMAN'S AIRSHIP STARTING FOR THE NORTH POLE

October, 1907, a letter from Dr. Cook, dated at Etah, August 26, gave this information:

"I find that I have a good opportunity to try for the Pole, and therefore I will stay here for a year. I hope to get to the Explorers' Club in September, 1908, with the record of the Pole. I plan to cross Ellesmere Land and reach the Polar Sea by Nansen Strait. I hope you can induce some of the members of the club to come and meet me at Cape York. Here's for the Pole with the flag!"

About the same time Herbert L. Bridgman, of Brooklyn, received this letter from Cook, similarly dated:

"I have hit upon a new route to the North Pole, and I will stay to try it. By way of Buchanan Bay and Ellesmere Land, and northward through Nansen Strait over the Polar Sea, seems to me to be a very good route. There will be game to the eighty-second degree, and there are natives and dogs for the task. So here is for the Pole. Mr. Bradley will tell you the rest. Kind regards to all."

HOW THE EXPEDITION STARTED.

That is how the expedition started. It is all the more marvellous that he should have succeeded, when years of preparation by others met only utter failure, and his only successful rival was beaten in point of time.

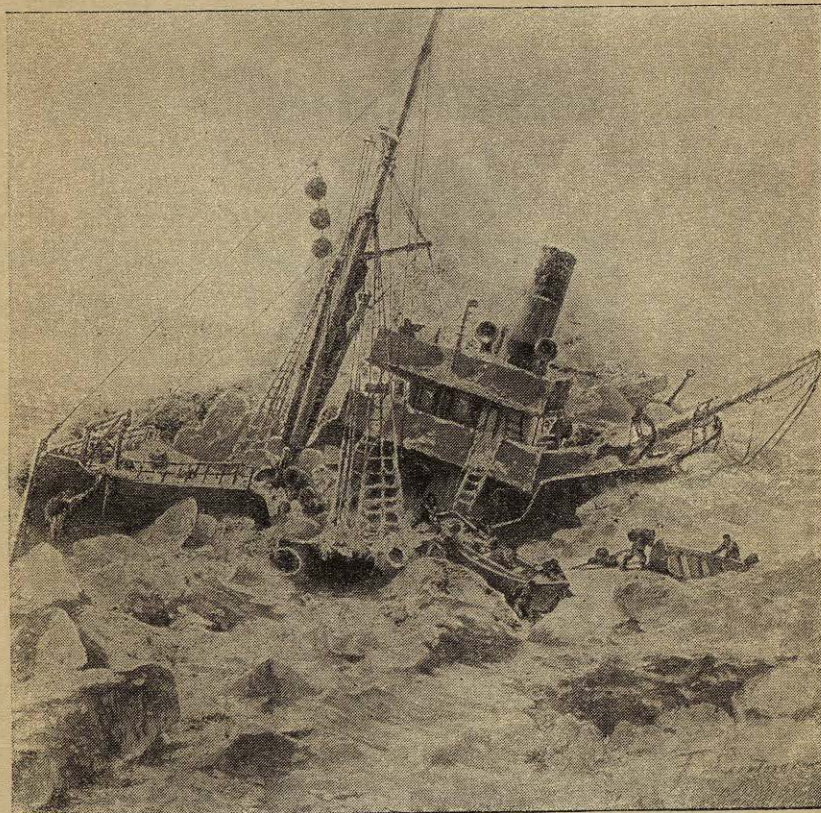
But a word about the gallant ship that carried him to within a few hundred miles of the Pole, and to the spot whence he began his desperate dash that was to win eternal laurels for himself and his country.

As before stated, the expedition which ended in Dr. Cook's trip across the polar seas set out from Gloucester on July 4, 1907, in the schooner John R. Bradley. It was organized primarily as a hunting and fishing trip to Labrador and Greenland by John R. Bradley, a friend of the explorer. Dr. Cook persuaded Mr. Bradley that by spending a few additional thousands in supplies and equipment suitable provision might be made for a polar expedition, and the schooner sailed laden with stores to maintain several men for two years.

The Bradley was originally a Gloucester fisherman, and had been equipped with an auxiliary gas engine. Besides the two explorers she carried a crew of seven men, two from

Gloucester and five from Newfoundland, and all familiar with the Labrador seas. The master was Captain Moses Bartlett, who had been north with Peary in the Roosevelt.

The schooner fought her way up through thick fogs and unusually heavy ice drifts and made land at last at North Star bay, in Greenland. Here the hunting came practically to an end, and preparations for the polar trip began in



CAUGHT AND WRECKED IN A FLOE OF ARCTIC ICE.

earnest. The schooner pushed on to Etah, on the west coast, where a small house was built to accommodate the men and supplies. One man, Rudolph Francke, the German-American cook of the schooner, was to go with Dr. Cook. Provisions for eighteen months were left with them, with hardware for trading with the Eskimos, sledges, two canvas boats and other necessities.

The Bradley sailed on her return late in August, 1907. The next tidings of the explorer came in the letter to Mrs.

Cook dated at Omanui, Westenholme Sound, December 6, 1907. He then hoped to make a start late in January, and told of having one hundred dogs and fifteen Eskimos.

The most novel feature of Dr. Cook's plan was that he meant to push across the polar sea in the dead of winter, instead of waiting, as other explorers had always done, for summer weather, when the cold was less severe. His reasoning was that the ice pack was frozen far more solidly during the winter months and that the increase in cold and the dark of the winter night were not great enough hindrances to balance the gain in having firm footing. The lanes of the open water in the ice packs have always proved of delay to such expeditions.

COOK ESTABLISHES A SECONDARY BASE.

From Annoatok, twenty miles north of Etah, where he established a secondary base, his route was to lie westward along the Bache Peninsula, over Ellesmere Land, and then north over Nansen Sound and the Polar Sea. The return was to be by way of Kennedy Channel, which runs between Ellesmere Land and Greenland, taking advantage of a drift in that direction. If no ship arrived at Annoatok or Etah he was to make his way to Cape York or Upernavik to put himself in the way of whaling ships. The start was made with eight Eskimos, four sledges and twelve dog teams.

The last word from the explorer was brought back by Rudolph Francke, who was rescued by the Roosevelt, the Peary ship, on her return in the summer of 1908. It was a letter dated "The Polar Sea, North of Cape Hubbard, March 17, 1908." It read, in part:

"Thus far all has gone well, but the weather has been awfully cold. If we are lucky we will take a short cut back and get to Annoatok by the end of May. Up to the present I have seen nothing of Cocker Land and I am taking a straight course for the Pole. The boys are doing well, and I have plenty of dogs. I hope to succeed. At any rate, I will make a desperate attempt. I wish you to get ready to go to Acponie, the island off North Star where the whalers' steamers come, by the fifth of June, and if I am not back go home with the whalers. Goodbye, and now for the Pole."

Letters, cancelled checks and vouchers shown later by John

R. Bradley, who financed Dr. Cook's expedition, abundantly demonstrate, despite the cry of critics, that it was for a polar quest as well as for a pleasure excursion that the yacht which went from Gloucester was fitted. These interesting bits of evidence indicate how well the expedition was financed and prepared. Mr. Bradley, the explorer, traveler and big game hunter, the animating power of the dash to the frozen north, smiled as he commented upon the statement made by the captious that from \$100,000 to \$200,000 was required to properly equip those who sought the Pole.

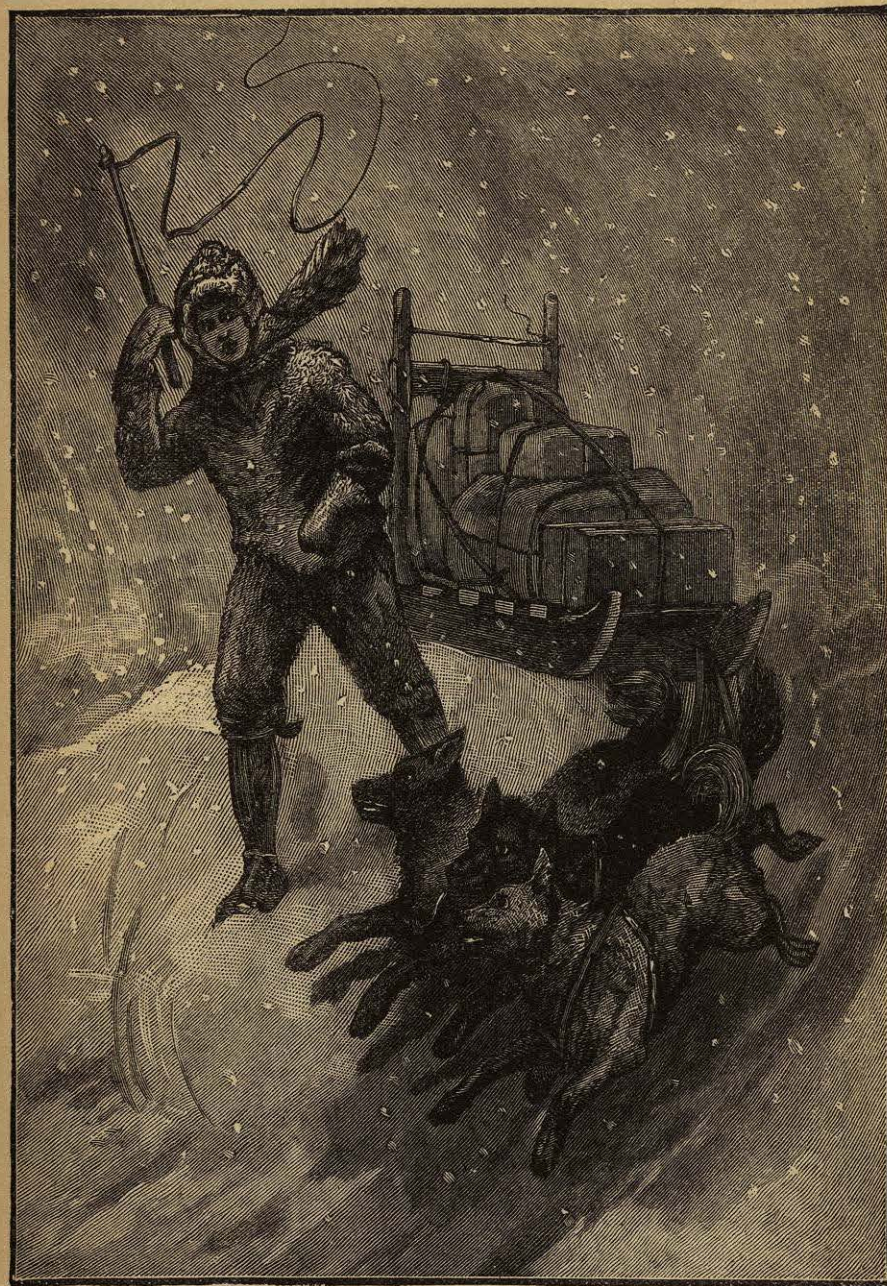
He declared that the cost of the expedition was considerably less than \$50,000, including supplies, presents and luxuries for the Eskimos, wages and fares back to the United States. The letters are illuminating at this time, also as showing what was in the minds of those who had secretly mapped out this wonderfully successful enterprise.

FINANCING THE EXPEDITION.

One of the letters was written by Dr. Cook in August, 1907, and showed that it was Dr. Cook's intention to make for the North Pole. The other letter written in December of the same year, and which was entrusted by Dr. Cook to a young Danish explorer, who was returning to civilization, showed the progress of the expedition up to that date.

Of the checks, one for \$5,000, Mr. Bradley made payable to Benjamin D. Smith, being on account of the purchase of the vessel. The second check for \$5,000 was given to Dr. Cook to be used as a letter of credit en route and on his return trip, and the check for \$1,000 was for cash given to Dr. Cook for the expedition. Mr. Bradley called attention to these checks as showing that the trip was something more than a mere fishing excursion.

At the base of supplies at Annoatok, on the northwest coast of Greenland, Bradley says, Cook had enough provisions to last three years. There were tons of pemmican, sugar, tea, coffee, canned goods, dried meats, great quantities of hickory for sled building, hardware, iron, steel, copper, cooking utensils of all kinds, 150 feet of stovepipe, 10,000 boxes of matches, bales of biscuits, 120,000 cans of food, 150 gallons of alcohol, barrels of rice and flour, guns for trading



PERILOUS SLEDGE JOURNEY OVER MOUNTAINS OF ICE.

with the natives, beads and trinkets of all kinds and several boxes of the finest scientific apparatus.

"I wish I had an inventory of the supplies," said Bradley, "for then you could see just how extensive our preparations were. It took thirteen hours to land our supplies, including forty tons of coal."

As to the scientific instruments carried by Dr. Cook, Bradley said he was hardly competent to speak, as he knew nothing about their quality.

"I paid the bills for them," he said, "and judged by what they cost they evidently were the best that could be had. The whole matter was left to Dr. Cook, and he had several boxes of instruments. As to what the expedition cost, that is a private matter, but there is absolutely no basis for the charge that it was cheaply conducted. It cost thousands and thousands of dollars."

Mr. Bradley talked very enthusiastically of Dr. Cook's achievement, explaining how it was mapped out by him and Dr. Cook, and added some interesting details of life among the Eskimo, their character and their habits.

A SELF-EXPLANATORY LETTER.

"The letter written by Dr. Cook to me, dated August 27, 1907," said Mr. Bradley, "is a letter that was simply intended to show when we reached civilization that the Doctor's intention was to make for the Pole. The letter in that respect explains itself.

"The letter dated in December, 1907, is a letter sent out from winter quarters by Dr. Cook to me to show the progress of the expedition up to that date. It is unusual to be able to get a letter out of the Arctic, but a young Danish explorer who happened to be wintering there and who intended to cross the ice from Melville Bay and reach Upernavik during the early spring of 1908 and whom I had met while going North, no doubt took the letter with him and saw that it reached civilization. Very likely when this young Dane was leaving Dr. Cook took advantage of the opportunity and entrusted him with the letter. The postmarks speak for themselves."

Mr. Bradley, commenting further upon the feat of Dr. Cook, smiled when he referred to the remarks of those

questioning critics who believed that Dr. Cook had not been sufficiently well prepared for his undertaking.

"They don't know," said he, "and we took care that no one should know how we were prepared for the enterprise. Now that the thing has been done there are those who do not know what to make of it all because the plans were not formed on the traditional lines. There never was a better equipped expedition.

"It had many new features and it was laid out on strictly modern lines, but because we did not leave a ship to be frozen in, but had a house on shore there are those who do not seem to think that it was according to the way the book described that Arctic expeditions should be conducted. All the others failed; this one succeeded. It is a difference worth noting.

"Our ship was as well equipped for an Arctic journey as any that ever left this country, yet there are some persons who seem to think that I started for a fishing trip and that the physician went up to the pole and back in a straw hat. We never made a move but what we knew just what we were about.

"I had 'Bob' Bartlett, commander of the Roosevelt, Peary's ship, which was then lying in dock here in New York, go with me to Gloucester and look over our ship. 'Bob' considered it as safe a ship as ever left for the Arctic. I engaged as captain his nephew, Moses Bartlett, who had been first officer on the Roosevelt.