

energy necessary to go to the Pole again, but there should be expeditions sent from the islands now known toward the Pole from all directions up to 85 degrees latitude in order to ascertain whether there are islands in or about those latitudes, and to indicate the direction of the drift ice. When our party on the Jeannette rested a week at Bennett Island, we observed regular tides east and west along the coast of Siberia. To observe how far north these tidal currents flow is a problem for the future.

"The party on board the Jeannette passed through Bering Strait to the Pacific Ocean, moving to the Northwest until our ship was crushed in the ice. This was the first indication of a drift. Nansen followed this idea and when near the position of the Jeannette when she was broken up, he prepared his ship for a long drift, knowing that if the vessel held together she would drift to the Atlantic Ocean between Greenland and Spitzbergen. The Bryant drift casks have confirmed this theory."

The De Long expedition was commanded by Lt. Commander De Long, U. S. N. The speaker accompanied the expedition and was one of the survivors. Out of 66 men in the Jeannette 2 were lost, among them being De Long himself.

Elsewhere in this volume will be found the records of not only this, but also all other important expeditions Poleward.

CHAPTER XII.

PATHOS IN LIVES OF EXPLORERS' WIVES.

From Pictures of Faith and Love—Heart Calls up Ghostly Honors—A Delirium of Delight at Success—A Patient Wife's Story as Revealed to visitors—Seedy Men Solicit Aid—Women under the Guise of Congratulations Plead for Help—Driven in Seclusion to Escape Interviewers and Mendicants—A Talk in Chair Car with Mrs. Peary—Expresses Faith in the Ultimate Success of Her Husband's Search for the Pole—Insists that Now He must Give up Explorations.

Two pictures are etched deep on the heart by the human side of the discovery of the North Pole. They are companion pictures, two sides of the shield achievement. And they are pictures of faith and love.

One is set in a field of endless ice, overspread by a bitter sky, where the stars glitter like frozen diamonds. It is cold with the cold of eternity. And through this barren desolation, where God seems a mockery and nature has raised her last ramparts of inaccessible ice, crawls a tiny human train. It is made up of a single white man, a few Eskimos, a handful of dogs. It stumbles and staggers to the North, always to the North.

The second picture is of a little home, where a woman sits with her children. For years she has seen her husband but a few months at a time when he returned from one more daring, hazardous trip of exploration. Each time he has declared "This will be the last," and each time his pride and his courage have sent him back to risk death in search of everlasting fame. And though her heart yearned to have him with her always she accepted his choice with a woman's heroic courage. Without a word she has accepted woman's tragic destiny—waiting.

Now she has not heard from him for a year, two years. He may have died long since; he may be even now starving alone on the relentless ice. Her heart calls up a score of ghostly horrors. She can do nothing; she can know nothing. She can only wait—and hope. Through her tears she sees

the tiny figures crawling across the white battleground. She follows each day's journey on the map; she endures and she sends the message of faith and love to the uttermost end of the world. And who shall say that the message did not help to send her husband on to victory?

It is well that the world thinks of what the discovery of the Pole has meant to the wives of Robert E. Peary and Frederick A. Cook. There is a lesson of love and faith there that means more than the discovery itself, standing out above petty jealousy and momentary conflict.

What do these wives and mothers say?

"I am only his wife. What can I say except to tell how proud I am of him?" These were Mrs. Cook's words. She had forgotten the waiting in the joy of success.

"I was simply crazy with delight." This was the reward of Peary's wife for eighteen years of waiting.

HOME DUTIES OF MRS. PEARY AND MRS. COOK.

These two women, Mrs. Peary and Mrs. Cook, have been father and mother to their children. They have known the love that passes understanding; they have been helpmates in all the beautiful fulness of the word; but, better than all of this, they have kept the wife spirit and the home spirit burning clear in their hearts. And when their husbands return flushed with triumph and full of honors from courts and kings they will find the welcome that means more than aught else in the world.

Listen how these women put this feeling into simply human words: "I am really sort of panicstricken. All I can think of is the time Fred will be home, and then he can tell it himself." And "I always say, now that I have waited so long, I want to have him home and wait on him all the rest of our lives."

So you who have sometimes doubted whether love and faith and endurance were any longer to be found in our homes read these stories of the women who have been waiting—just waiting—and be convinced.

Here is the story Peggy Van Braam tells of a visit to Mrs. Cook, just after the story of her husband's triumph came to her.

"While a mighty army of the curious, armed cap-a-pie,

with audacity and persistence, are beleaguering the homes of her friends, demanding to get a glimpse of her, Mrs. Frederick A. Cook, wife of the 'discoverer of the North Pole,' is living quietly at a hotel in the heart of New York.

"And while the great searchlight of a world's interest is flashing across the continents, throwing a flare upon all those connected with her, Mrs. Cook, with laughter in her eyes, goes her way undiscovered, often walking demurely through groups of the persons who are looking for her.

"Yet she is by no means an insignificant personality. Tall and beautifully built, with wavy black hair, parted and brushed into a great soft knot at the back of her head, and with wide dark eyes shaded by long lashes, she is one of the handsomest women of Brooklyn, yet so closely has she kept in the background during the years of her husband's explorations and public life that only her friends are familiar with her beauty and charm.

PATIENTLY AWAITING HUSBAND'S RETURN.

"To her these days are only so many long hours to be passed with so much patience as possible, because each one brings nearer the day when her husband will reach home, bringing his laurels to lay at her feet.

"That hundreds of eager persons should be pleading to see her fills her with surprise.

"'I am only his wife,' she says. 'What can I say except how proud I am of him? Wait until he is home, then he can tell you all about it.'

"He cannot tell of those weary years when the charming wife, playing the inevitable woman's role, sat home praying for his safety and hoping for his success. Dr. Cook cannot tell of the many hours of study as his wife pored over books about the Arctic region striving to follow him as far as man's knowledge ran into those vast fields of shimmering, endless ice.

"Nor can he tell of the nights when loving eyes saw in dreams those lonely sledges moving steadily northward or record the sacrifices made to help him and the tender lessons taught the children of their absent father, who is indeed a parent to both, although Ruth, the 10-year-old daughter, is a child of Mrs. Cook by a former marriage.

"Friends have told of these things, and the whole world is in consequence doing homage to Mrs. Cook, although she is too absorbed in watching for her husband to be aware of the fact.

"'Favver's found de Norf Pole,' lisp little Helen to the few friends who have found their retreat in the hotel on Forty-second Street. 'An' he's coming home soon. We'll soon know.' To the children, like the mother, the red letter day of the month will be when the steamship docks and Dr. Cook steps ashore to receive into his arms those who have been separated from him for more than two years.

"The storm that is sweeping the country spreading invective and accusations regarding the question as to who first found the Pole has passed by Mrs. Cook, for nothing can touch the perfect faith that she has in her husband's achievement.

"'I know that my husband will be able to give proofs of his wonderful discovery,' she said, 'and I know, too, that he never gives up what he starts to do till he has succeeded. I am proud of him, and oh! so glad that he has come home safe, with his life's dream fulfilled.'

MRS. COOK REMAINS RETICENT.

"Beyond these trite phrases, Mrs. Cook has refused to discuss the affair, and to her friends has said over and over, 'I am really sort of panicstricken; I don't know just what to do; all I can think of is of the time Fred will be home, and then he can tell about it himself.' So with her two little daughters and Mrs. 'Georgie' Sullivan, a widow from Portland, Maine, she is living quietly at the hotel, a little shopping, an occasional taxi ride and the collection of the various clippings about her husband filling in the long days.

"About the home of Mrs. Robert Davidson, at 693 Bushwick Avenue, Brooklyn, who is perhaps the closest friend of Mrs. Cook, and who received the first cablegram telling of the finding of the Pole, a siege is laid.

"Driven almost desperate by the unending demands of the thousands of visitors, Mrs. Davidson has been forced to refuse to answer the phone, the front door bell is left unanswered and extra servants are kept busy watching the entrances to the house. Curious men, women and children

demand admittance, while the list of those with schemes is endless.

"Seedy men, who declare that they, too, once dreamt of reaching the Pole, beg for aid, while women under the guise of congratulations also plead for help, the hundreds of persons with 'ideas for sale,' make up the army that, led by the newspaper men, virtually is holding the Davidsons prisoners in their own home and is keeping Mrs. Cook away.

"Across the street from the Davidson home stands the big house where the Cooks formerly lived. It is closed and boarded up now, but within a few weeks its doors will again be thrown open to receive the little family separated for so long.

"Many of its treasures are now at Mrs. Davidson's for safe keeping, while trophies of Dr. Cook's former trips out into the unknown worlds add their mute testimony to the affection which exists between the Cooks and the Davidsons.

FLAG OF BELGIUM ANTARCTIC EXPEDITION.

"On the wall in the hall hangs the flag carried by the Belgium antarctic expedition, which came close to the South Pole in 1898, and which was given to Miss Lotta Davidson because her birthday falls upon Flag Day, while on the walls of the long, narrow drawing room hang strange photographs of groups of birds squatting on the ice, pictures of snowy polar bears and of quaintly garbed Eskimos. Many of them bear Dr. Cook's clear signature and his description of how the pictures were taken.

"And it is from Mrs. Davidson that the side lights upon the character of the woman now in the public eye come, and although they may be biased by a deep affection, they are also born of a keen insight and a strong knowledge of the eternal feminine.

"'Ours has been a friendship of many years,' she said, 'and I can tell you for no one else would I have stood the strain of these last few weeks. One cannot help doing things for Marie. She has that magnetic charm that makes every one fond of her.'

"Mrs. Davidson tells how pluckily the young wife bore the long separation and how bravely she worked in her endeavors to help him on, spurring his ambition by her courage and

interest, even while her woman's heart was torn with a desire to plead with him to stay by her side instead of wooing glory and danger across the 'purple ice.'

"Mrs. Cook's early training in the business world, when as Miss Marie Fidele she worked in an office in Camden, N. J., has stood her in good stead in her work for her husband. Her ability as a stenographer, her quick grasp of whatever detail is laid before her, and her readiness to work have made her invaluable as a secretary, as well as a wife and companion.

"Mrs. Cook was a widow when she married Dr. Cook, and their wooing was begun in the midst of sorrow, it is said, when the doctor was mourning the death of his fiancee, a sister of Mrs. Cook, whose husband, Dr. Hunt, had also recently died.

"They were married in Brooklyn on June 10, 1902, and ever since that date have made their home there, at the big red house at Bushwick Avenue, now become the mecca of the curious.

"Within its walls centers the whole fabric of Mrs. Cook's dreams, for she is essentially a 'home body.' Despite the fact that she has cast her lot with a man whose life and ambitions lie in the vast territory still unexplored by man, the minor duties of the household and the care of her children comes first in her heart.

ADORED BY HER CHILDREN.

"Her children adore her and are her constant companions wherever she goes. Ruth, now nearly ten years old, with great serious eyes, resembles her mother strongly, while the dimpled five-year-old Helen has 'her father's features.'

"The three are like children together, and this summer up in Maine spent many happy hours playing games in daisy dotted fields, their laughter ringing like music through the summer air.

"For never once, according to friends and relatives, has Mrs. Cook let her anxiety or fears overshadow the lives of the girls.

"Now that he has succeeded, now that the years of waiting are over, and the strain has been broken by a rush of pride and joy, a loneliness has assailed her that has driven her into seclusion.

"Smitten with a pitiful stage fright she is afraid to walk out into the limelight and applause, until her husband is at her side. With him she is afraid of nothing, without him she is 'only a woman.'

"'I can't realize that it is really over,' she said to a friend. 'I wake sometimes with a confused feeling that he is still out there in the north, and I can't grasp the fact that he is really back, and successful.' She never doubts the reality of that success, and scorns to have anything to say regarding the present controversy.

FAITH IN HER HUSBAND'S ACHIEVEMENT.

"'What could I say that would add anything of value to the affair,' she said. 'I believe what my husband says, and I know that he will be able to prove it all. I am proud of him, but I do not feel it is my place to go out before the world and talk about it.'

"So Mrs. Davidson, with a patience that has won admiration from those who know her, is standing between the world and the dark-eyed wife of the explorer.

"With never failing courtesy she repeats the little formula that Mrs. Cook has 'nothing to say.' But much of the strain showed when she turned to me to-day, and, putting her hand in mine, said quickly:

"'I would do anything in the world for Marie, but I feel almost as if I couldn't bear this any more. I'm worse than any prisoner in a beleagued city. I must be a diplomat, a mouth piece for others, a patient listener, and I don't know what all. But we feel, my husband and I, that we have a part in Dr. Cook's success, for we have followed so many of his expeditions with our thoughts and hopes.

"It is that so much as my affection for Mrs. Cook that make me try to keep my sense of humor uppermost. For humor is all that saves the situation.

"Other friends of Mrs. Cook's with whom I talked, display the same loyal affection. The magnetic charm of her personality has won her a place that the fame of her celebrated husband never could have gained for her. Added to this she is musical, not merely fond of melody, but a fine musician, and this has been an added bond between her and Miss Lotta Davidson, whose violin playing has won her fame on two continents.

"I can tell you but little about Mrs. Cook after all," said Mrs. Davidson with a smile when I was ready to leave. "I can only go on saying over and over what has been said so many times before, that she never lost faith in her husband's ultimate success. I never failed to respond to his enthusiasm, and bore his absence and her loneliness with bravery and patience. And I feel, too, that there is little she could say about this trip to the Pole. Despite her study, she knows little of the scientific side of all this, woman like, it is the other side which has filled her mind. His danger, his suffering, his return and his success are more to her than the Pole."

"Dr. and Mrs. Cook had been married only a year when the explorer set off on his now famous trip to Mount McKinley, and it was 1906 before he was home again permanently, then after a few months (so pitifully short to the loving and loyal wife), the doctor started again on his long trip, this time pushing his way finally to the 'top of the world,' where he set the Stars and Stripes to flutter in a wondering wind, beneath the flare of the northern lights.

DEVOTED TO HER HUSBAND'S LIFE WORK.

"And even now she has told her friends that if he determines to discover the South Pole she will let him go, for she realizes that he belongs as much to the world of science as to her.

"It is a hard thing for a woman to learn a lesson of life that cuts deeply, yet once learned it sweeps away forever all the narrowness of a woman's love, and this is what makes the bond between Dr. Cook and his young wife so strong and fine.

"Besides the honors conferred upon the doctor, he has received several decorations, including the Order of Leopold from Belgium, the gold medal of the Royal Society of Belgium, and a silver medal from the Royal Geographical Society of the same country.

"These are precious possessions in the household of the Cooks, and the greatest treat of the girls is to coax their mother to show them the treasures, while she tells in her deep contralto voice the heart stirring tales of how 'papa' went in funny little sleds drawn by shaggy dogs across big fields, made of ice, where polar bears live, and beyond which Santa Claus has his home."

James Hay, Jr., about the same time, interviewed the devoted wife of Commander Peary.

Here is what he said of that memorable meeting:

"Yes, it has always been my ambition that Bert should find the Pole. He has never failed in anything that he has undertaken, and somehow he and I could not persuade ourselves that he would fail in this."

"That is how Mrs. Robert E. Peary expressed to me her faith and Peary's confidence in the success that ultimately would crown his twenty-three years of striving.

"She talked to me as we sat in a chair car of the express out of Portsmouth to Sydney, where she was to see her husband's ship, the Roosevelt, come into port. There was in her talk not only the revelation of the heroism she had shown all her life in the hardships endured, but the proof of her exquisite womanliness and gentleness.

"I WAS SIMPLY CRAZY WITH DELIGHT."

"How did you feel when you got the news that Mr Peary had been successful?" she was asked.

"I was simply crazy with delight," she replied.

"The words came with schoolgirl simplicity, almost tempting her hearer to forget that here was the woman who, more than any other woman in the world, had helped to reach the frozen goal for which men had sought in vain 400 years.

"She had lived above the Arctic circle, and had studied the world of ice and snow which Peary was in the end to conquer. She had learned the language of the Eskimos and had spent three winters looking at the perpetual barrier of whiteness which had rebuffed brave hearts and killed strong men.

"What was still harder for her, she had once gone sixteen months without hearing any news of her husband while he tried in vain to reach the goal for which they had hoped and prayed. But, as she told of it, there was no hint of any belief that she had done great things.

"To her that tortuous highway of great things had been a pleasant duty, and all memory of trials had been wiped out by the glory of ultimate success. Her faith had kept her to the path in spite of the face of failure, and she was content.

"I am so pleased," she said, "that I couldn't even pack. Why, I packed just like a man, throwing things into the trunk

haphazard, and I'm afraid I jumped on them to press them down. I brought only one trunk, I was in such a hurry to get to Sydney.'

"On three of his trips,' she explained, 'I went with Mr. Peary. Once the relief ship caught in the ice and I had to spend two winters and a summer up there. In the winter of 1891-92 I cooked for seven men. I'd never done a lick of it before, but all seven of them survived. So I don't suppose it was so very bad.'

"You know housekeeping in the Arctic regions has its advantages. You don't have to bother about the butcher forgetting to send the beef, and there is no milkman to get the order wrong. You have everything with you, and all you have to do is to get it ready.'

"But the next time we went we took a cook, and I had nothing to do but run the house. In 1891 we lived in a splendid house on the shores of McCormick Bay. It isn't there now, for the natives pulled it down as soon as we left. They wanted the wood to make sledges.'

MRS. PEARY IN THE FROZEN NORTH.

"When I was up there it wasn't so bad. You see, Mr. Peary was never gone more than five months, and every six weeks some of the runners would return to the camp with news from him. That was much better than waiting sixteen months, as I have done without a word from him. And it was all interesting. Up there was the field of his life's work, and I liked to see it and to study it.'

"But on the trips when I've stayed in the United States it has been much worse. From September until August I knew I couldn't get a line from him. It was simply impossible, and I just had to resign myself to it. Yes, it was hard; but it was a part of the life. In August, although I knew it was foolish to expect news so early, I began to wait and listen. Every time the dog barked or a step sounded outside, I jumped in the hope that some message had come.'

"How did you feel when this last message came?' I asked.

"I didn't believe it at first. You see, it was so early for that news to come. For several days I had been bothered by crowds of newspaper men, who wanted me to give them an interview on the report that Dr. Cook had found the Pole.

"As a result of it all, last Sunday I had a sick headache, and Monday I was not feeling much better. The first word that came was a message that had been sent to a newspaper by Mr. Peary. A copy of it was brought across to Eagle Island, our home, from Portland by boat.

"I would not believe it, and was tempted to think it a—well—a 'fake.' But a few minutes later Mr. Peary's message to me came, and I knew the great thing had at last happened.

"I was simply crazy with delight.'

"So was I, mother!

"This came from Robert Peary, Jr., the six-year-old son of the explorer, who, with his sister, Marie, was going with the mother to Sydney. The faith she had she had taught the children. Ever since they have been able to talk they have said that father would 'come back with the Pole.' On the train Robert carried a big United States flag fastened with silver nails to a 'pole,' at the top of which was perched a white polar bear.

ONLY WHITE CHILD BORN ABOVE ARCTIC CIRCLE.

"Miss Marie Peary is the only white person born above the Arctic circle.

"Mrs. Peary, who was Miss Josephine Diobitsch, of Washington, was married in 1888. She explained that, even before she was married, she knew that Peary's great ambition was to find the Pole.

"O, yes; I knew it,' she said, laughingly, 'but it didn't frighten me very much. Two years before we were married he had made a preliminary trip of exploration to Greenland.'

"And you have always wanted him to go on these trips?'

"Oh, no, she said quickly. 'Every time he returned, I would say:

"Well, you won't go again, will you?'

"And his answer always was:

"No, not again.'

"But in a week we would be talking over the plans for another 'dash.' He would say:

"Now, if we had only known in advance what we know now, I could have found the Pole.'

"I would see that all that was true. So trip after trip was made, and every time he found new conditions in the Arctic regions. We had gone over everything before he set out on this last one and had decided that it was to be really the last and supreme effort. He had found so many varying conditions in the ice and weather and so on that we were certain he wouldn't strike anything new this time.

"If he hadn't been successful this time, he would never have tried again."

"No; I think not. Mr. Peary had never failed in anything he had undertaken, and, somehow, he and I could not persuade ourselves that he would fail in this. He always looked most carefully into anything before he started out on it, and, when he did start, he knew what was what. I have always been convinced that he would succeed.

"I always knew what a big thing it was, and now you can appreciate how happy I am."

"She was asked what her plans for the future were.

NO DEFINITE FUTURE PLANS.

"I don't know; haven't the faintest idea," she answered. "It depends on where Mr. Peary is stationed by the Navy Department. I have been married twenty-one years, and of that time I have spent practically all of eighteen years waiting for him to come back. I always say now that, as I have waited for him so long, I want to have him home and wait on him all the rest of our lives.

"The first three years after our marriage he was stationed in Philadelphia, and we really lived then. Since that time we've been merely existing. Why, last winter was the first opportunity I had to keep house in Washington. I have an apartment there, but I may have to give it up now. It seems funny that I haven't spent more time in Washington, for Marie is now a junior in the Western High School. She has lived there with my mother when Mr. Peary and I were wandering over the face of the earth."

"And you really think, Mrs. Peary, that your husband will give up exploration?"

"Oh, he must," she laughed, "simply must. He must stay at home and support his family. You see, the children are growing up and it costs more than it used to."

"It has been suggested that he might try to find the South Pole."

"I think not. He had not heard of Lieutenant Shackleton's exploit in getting so near the South Pole when he left. As for myself, I think it would be appropriate for an Englishman to find the south after an American has found the north. It would be a fair division of honors."

"To the suggestion that she deserved credit second only to that of Peary for the discovery which is being heralded through the whole civilized world she dissented, saying:

"After all, mine was only a waiting part. Of course it was hard at times, but I knew Mr. Peary would win. I have known it for more than twenty years."

"Every woman who reads this will realize the nobility of this woman's work, her constant encouragement of her husband, her unflinching confidence. And any woman will say she would rather live a different life."