

CHAPTER XXVIII.

NEAR THE NORTH POLE.

Animal Life and Vegetation of Grinnell Land—Major Greely's Journeys into the Interior of Grinnell Land—Wonderful Natural Phenomena—A Glacier Bursts—Journalism Near the North Pole—The Arctic Moon—Amusements and Pastimes of the Explorers.

ANIMAL life was abundant, with scant vegetation similar to that met with in Grinnell Land. Traces of hares, lemmings, ptarmigan and snow bunting, and the tracks of a bear, were seen, and droppings of the musk ox as far as twenty miles north of Cape Britannia. Looking to the northeastward from an elevation of about two thousand feet, the land was seen for about fifteen miles, the farthest point, Cape Robert Lincoln, being in about latitude 83 deg. 35 min., and longitude 38 degrees west. Although the weather was unusually clear, no other land could be seen, the horizon being examined carefully to the northward and northwestward. On the 15th they started south, picking up *en route* the union jack and sextant left by Lieutenant Beaumont, of the Nares expedition, during his extraordinary retreat with a scurvy-stricken party in 1875, and, rejoining the three men who had remained at Cape Summer, Newman Bay, the combined party returned to Fort Conger, where they arrived on June 1st, after an absence of fifty-nine days, all in good condition, except that two of the supporting party were snow-blind and had to be led into camp.

Game was abundant, more than one hundred musk oxen being seen, besides hares and birds. From the summit of Mount Arthur Major Greely, who was alone able to make the ascent, was satisfied from the trend of the mountains and the appearance of the country that Grinnell Land ended but a short distance to the westward, and that its coast line must run nearly southwest from the extreme point reached by Lieutenant Aldrich, Royal Navy, in 1876. The sledging season over, travelling by land was almost impracticable, but early in August Major Greely went to Cape Defosse in the

steam launch and found Kennedy Channel perfectly clear of ice throughout its whole extent.

The following is a statement of the game killed by Lieutenant Greely's party in the region adjacent to Lady Franklin Bay during their long stay in the frozen North:

August, 1881—16 musk oxen, 1 hare, 1 ptarmigan.

September, 1881—5 wolves, 10 musk oxen, 1 seal.

February, 1882—7 hares.

March, 1882—1 lemming, 4 hares.

April, 1882—1 fox.

May, 1882—2 lemmings, 3 musk oxen, 5 seals, 1 hare.

June, 1882—1 wolf, 4 lemmings, 18 musk oxen, 1 seal, 11 hares, 17 king ducks, 6 long-tailed ducks, 20 dovekins, 2 burgomaster gulls, 1 Arctic fox, 20 sknas, 5 brent geese, 7 ptarmigans, 7 turnstones.

July, 1882—4 ermines, 10 musk oxen, 2 hares, 3 long-tailed ducks, 19 eider ducks, 1 Sabine gull, 5 Arctic terns, 118 sknas, 27 brent geese, 6 turnstones, 1 sand piper, 14 owls.

August, 1882—2 ermines, 33 musk oxen, 2 seals, 11 hares, 5 king ducks, 6 long-tailed ducks, 7 eider ducks, 13 dovekins, 1 burgomaster gull, 3 Arctic terns, 40 sknas, 37 brent geese, 32 ptarmigans, 54 turnstones, 1 sandling, 16 knots, 2 ringed plover, 2 owls, 1 walrus.

September, 1882—3 foxes, 1 ermine, 1 musk ox, 3 seals, 2 hares, 1 raven, 3 ptarmigans, 1 turnstone and 1 owl.

November, 1882—1 fox and 1 musk ox.

December, 1882—1 seal.

February, 1883—1 hare.

March, 1883—1 ermine and 3 hares.

April, 1883—2 hares and 4 ptarmigans.

May, 1883—3 musk oxen, 2 seals, 7 hares and 11 turnstones.

June, 1883—1 wolf, 2 foxes, 8 musk oxen, 3 seals, 14 king ducks, 27 long-tailed ducks, 1 eider duck, 21 dovekins, 1 diver, 3 burgomaster geese, 12 Arctic terns, 12 brent geese, 15 ptarmigans, 28 turnstones, 8 knots, 1 owl and 1 philarope.

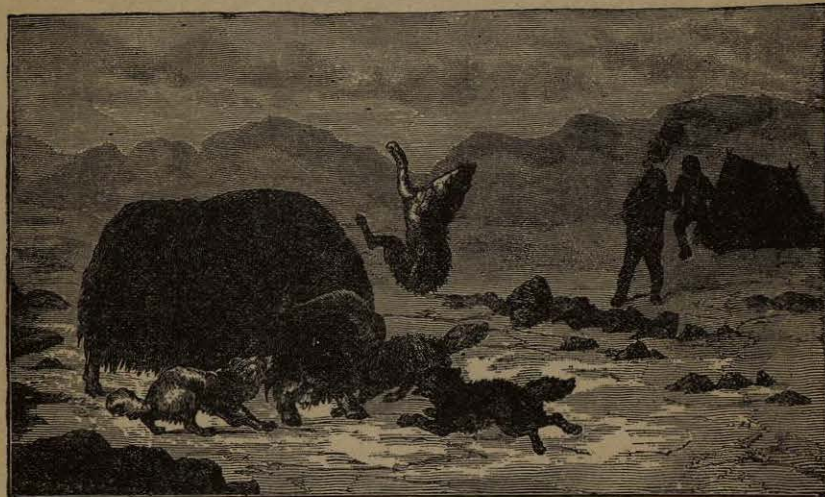
July, 1883—1 lemming, 3 hares, 8 king ducks, 5 long-tailed ducks, 2 brent geese, 3 turnstones, 2 knots and 1 philarope.

August, 1883—3 seals, 6 long-tailed ducks, 3 eider ducks, 6 dovekins, 1 brent goose, 1 turnstone and 1 knot.

A summary of the above gives a total of all game killed as follows: 7 wolves, 7 foxes, 8 ermines, 8 lemmings, 103

musk oxen, 19 seals, 57 hares, 44 king ducks, 53 long-tailed ducks, 30 eider ducks, 60 dovekins, 1 diver, 6 burgomaster gulls, 1 Sabine gull, 21 Arctic terns, 178 skuas, 84 brent geese, 1 raven, 79 ptarmigans, 100 turnstones, 1 sandpiper, 1 sandling, 27 knots, 2 ringed plovers, 18 owls, 2 phalaropes and 1 walrus.

The above statement of the game found by the Lady Franklin Bay expedition, which was prepared by Sergeant Brainard, is of interest as showing what species of birds and animals frequent Grinnell Land, and at what season of the year the migratory birds return to that region. No game was killed during the months of October, November and



MUSK OX HUNTING IN THE ARCTIC REGIONS.

December, 1881; January and October, 1882, and January, 1883, when hunting was impossible on account of the darkness and cold. The solitary musk ox killed in November, 1882, was found by the party which was sent during that month to Carl Ritter Bay, though there can be no doubt that it is resident throughout the year, subsisting during the winter season on saxifrage and the scant grass, to find which it removes the snow with its hoofs. The number of these animals seen disproves the theory advanced by Major Feilden in his paper on mammalia (see "Voyage to the Polar Sea," volume ii., page 201, Nares) "that the number of musk oxen in Grinnell Land is extremely limited," and was well nigh exhausted by the onslaught made by the Nares expedition during the winter of 1875-76.

Soon after the return of Sergeant Rice, Dr. Pavy and the Esquimaux Jens, Lieutenant Greely came back to Fort Conger after an exploration of eleven days in the interior of Grinnell Land to the westward of the station. They arrived on the evening of May 7th, 1882. Lieutenant Greely expected to be gone a much longer time and his appearance was a surprise. The following sketch of his discoveries and the adventures of the party is from the graphic pen of Sergeant Rice, as recorded in his diary:

The commander started from Fort Conger on April 26th with the purpose of travelling westward over the country until, if possible, the western coast of Grinnell Land should be reached. He was accompanied by Sergeants Cross and Long and Privates Connell, Bender and Whistler. Cross and Long were supporting, and returned after two days. The party visited the English cache at Stony Point and appropriated such of the contents as they required, and then proceeded up Conybear Bay. This opening had not been explored by the English and was found much deeper than they supposed. Lieutenant Archer passed the mouth of the bay and has mapped out its entrance very correctly, but our travellers found it to be thirty miles deep instead of ten. At the head of the bay three valleys were found leading into it, but none were practicable for travelling. On April 28th they opened out a new fiord, which they entered and found to be about three miles wide and fifteen to twenty long, running north-northwest. It was surrounded and enclosed by lofty, frowning cliffs, strangely imposing and picturesque. In the valleys before mentioned musk oxen and wolves were seen. Into the fiord, afterward named after Captain Howgate, there emptied a river, on the icy surface of which they travelled some distance before its character was discovered. The ice running together it was difficult to observe where the fiord ended and the river began; but as they advanced the evidences of its being fresh water, and not an arm of the sea, multiplied. They noticed that the water forced up in the cracks was brackish, and gradually grew fresher. Farther on Lieutenant Greely found the stream to be open, with evidences of its having remained so all the year round.

The travelling was now of the finest description. The fresh water from the open channel of the stream inundated the ice that covered the shallower parts abutting the banks

and over which the party was travelling. This thin sheet of water freezing without any inequalities gave to their icy highways the appearance of a waxed floor or a plain covered with laminated steel. It was almost too smooth, for it was no easy matter to keep the footing. The great reflective qualities of the polished ice also caused much inconvenience from snow-blindness, with which one member of the party (Whistler) was especially affected. But these were slight drawbacks compared with the great advantages they were enjoying. Probably no Arctic travellers were ever so favored as these. The sledges glided over the ice without requiring the least exertion to draw them. In fact, it was difficult to keep in advance of them. At one time the commander judged that four and a half miles were made in one hour. He arrived at this conclusion from counting his steps, which were measured. After meeting with the open water of the stream a few steps to the edge of the ice furnished them with a delicious draught of pure ice water—a boon which no mortal except an Arctic traveller or perhaps a wanderer in the deserts of Africa can fully appreciate.

A small island in the river was next discovered and the source of the river soon reached. It proved to be a large lake, from fifty to seventy-five miles long and about seven broad. It was open at the point from which it fed the river, where the accelerated movement of the water wore away the ice by attrition or prevented it from forming at all. The stream also starting out with great rapidity was open for about three miles, and, as already stated, had the appearance of remaining so all the year round. The depth of the river at its head was three and a half feet, width fifty yards in its narrowest part, increasing to about three miles at its estuary. Along the valley thus drained the party found enough driftwood, of the ground willow, to serve for fuel. Abundant traces of game—musk oxen, hares and foxes—were seen in all directions, and they were led to believe that these animals had not migrated during the winter. The traces bore the stamp of continuous occupation of the ground, and, as nearly as I could learn, resembled those seen by Dr. Pavy and the writer near Lincoln Bay. Small fish, resembling minnows, were seen at the head of the stream. Lieutenant Greely and his party now pushed on over the lake, following its south side for a short distance. Here the snow was found to lie very

deep and the party found good use for their snow shoes. They soon left the shores of the lake and started across for its west side, having for their objective point the mouth of a valley through which the commander hoped to continue westward.

As they neared the shore, which they reached the next day, they saw that a glacier of great size and magnificence filled the valley and abutted on the lake. On the examination which a closer proximity afforded they found the glacier facing the lake with a perpendicular front of from one hundred to two hundred feet in height, back of which the ice rapidly inclined to a greater elevation, increasing to at least six hundred feet at a distance of only one hundred yards from its face. Farther up the valley it wound its way, receding from view in the dim perspective in milky, undulating folds. The frowning front of this magnificent *mer de glace* was awe-inspiring in its grandeur and dazzling in its beauty. The sun scintillating and glistening on the crystal points, the strange freaks of color that the direct and reflected light made in playing among the blocks and protuberances adhering to the irregular front of this frozen Niagara since the last great segments of ice had fallen away and dropped like a glass mask at its feet, giving to some the appearance of green chalcedony and to others that of pure, transparent crystal, added to the enchanting spectacle. The glacier, which Lieutenant Greely has honored with the name of his wife, was two miles wide at its face. A moraine was formed at the margin of the lake—since called after the chief signal officer—about one hundred yards from the glacier's present face, and proves that in forcing the debris to that position it must at some time have extended that far.

The most glorious spectacle was afforded, however, by the "calving" or breaking away of a portion of the ice. It was a sight which has been vouchsafed to but few. Dr. Hayes was so fortunate as to witness a similar process of nature at one of the Greenland fiords and has left a graphic description of the same. Our party have rhapsodized considerably over that which they now saw, and all agree that no idea of its beauty and sublimity can be conveyed. They were encamped within safe distance and had their attention attracted by the crackling noise which attended the disruption of the ice as the mass—so huge and immense in itself, but so small compared

to the great body of the ice stream—was detached. The noise as the ice in hundreds of thousands of tons came crushing down was immense. The tottering blocks and columns of crystal were played upon by the sunlight, which turned them into masses of flashing silver as they trembled and a cataract of diamonds as they fell. Over the scene of demolition there then arose a cloud of the icy particles which, ascending, veiled the spot. The sun, playing through the sparkling mist, gave to it the most beautiful tints of color, among which a pink, rosy hue predominated.

Our commander, finding that the glacier completely occupied the valley and offered no chance for ascending to its upper surface—the perpendicular front was insurmountable—and also that no other opening to the westward presented itself now, determined to give up his project and return. He started to return with his party on May 3d. Retracing their steps over the river, they found it breaking up; in many places the ice which they had travelled over when outward-bound was broken away. The only episode of interest that occurred on the return journey was the circumstance of Bender losing his companions for five hours in a fog. He had separated from the party to obtain a view from some elevated position, and, a dense fog settling down, he wandered astray. The party arrived at the home station on May 7th in excellent spirits. Their short journey appears to have introduced them into an Arctic paradise not far from our vicinity. It will almost do for the use of those visionary theorists who have accepted Symmes' eccentric, or rather concentric, conception of the polar regions. The farthest point reached by Lieutenant Greely was but sixty miles west and ten north of Discovery Harbor; but the tortuous route makes the distance travelled—so he thinks—300 miles.

In the last days of May Israel and a companion were at the "Bellows" doing some surveying, and killed three of a herd of musk-oxen. When brought in the carcasses proved very light and poor. It was apparently too early in the season to allow the animals a chance to get in better condition. The scanty vegetation was not far enough advanced.

The mean temperature for the month of May at Fort Conger was +17.41; maximum, +33.4; minimum, +1.1. Snow fell during 143 hours. The temperature rose above the freezing point for the first time on May 28th, after 271 succes-

sive days. The new ice on the harbor was found to be still nearly four and a half feet thick on June 1st.

At the time Major Greely made his journeys into the interior of Grinnell Land the relief ship Neptune was struggling with an impassable barrier of ice in Kane Sea.

Later in August Lieutenant Lockwood made two journeys in the launch—on the first to the head of Archer Fiord, bringing back large quantities of game, and on the second he entered Weyprecht Fiord, but was unable to advance far on account of the ice. Much disappointment was felt at the non-arrival of the expected relief ship, with, first, stores, and above all news from home, and many were the conjectures as to the cause of her failure to come; but no discouragement was felt, and feeling a pardonable pride in their achievements of the past year they prepared to attempt even more in the next. The winter passed away more rapidly and pleasantly than would be supposed possible. There was plenty of reading matter. Major Greely and Dr. Pavy delivered occasional lectures, and holidays were celebrated as before. Another feature suggested by Major Greely did much to promote contentment and good feeling. Each man was allowed on his birthday to select the dinner, of which all partook—a privilege which was greatly appreciated and never abused.

Sergeant Rice's diary abounds in evidences of the attempt of the members of the Greely party to enliven each other's spirits during the long periods of desolation at Fort Conger. To judge from his notes and suggestions Sergeant Rice was himself no small contributor to the general amusement. They had a paper, which they printed on the polygraph, called *The Arctic Moon*, and some articles intended for it are found in the diary. Sergeant Rice also translated a French romance for the benefit of his comrades, their increasing interest being evidenced by the decreasing length of the chapters and the great condensation of the latter part, so anxious were they to reach the denouement quickly. Speeches and lectures appear to have formed part of their amusement. In one place Sergeant Rice has the following "suggestions for an humorous sketch:"

"Suppose the photographing of a baby which has been given to a couple whose motto for years has been 'hope.' Describe said baby a beautiful, innocent, dew-eyed darling—the preparation of the baby for the photographer's manipula-

tion. The baby is gorged by the mother as the Bedouin would a camel before starting on a desert journey, so that it would be quiet and content. Results in babe's indigestion. Then the attending troop of relatives. The photographer must await the arrival of some one who is said to charm the baby. Baby gets tired, but must be photographed smiling. He must vouchsafe a smile of benevolence, while in heart he desires to out-Herod Herod.

"The next subject is the beauty—or the faded beauty—who is, as are also her friends, dissatisfied with the photograph of her in the sere and yellow leaf. Or the young lady who resembles Mary Anderson or Adelaide Neilson. Or the ignorant lady, who will not tolerate a shadow under her chin. Or the general with the battle-scar, which his patriotic wife worships.

"Suggestions from cartes de visite. The social equality of the arrangement of photographs in a shop window—Henry Ward Beecher cheek by jowl with Pat Rooney.

"It is easy to recognize a photographer (unless he makes all his pictures by chance) by the manner in which the subject is posed and the arrangement of the light. A photographer has negatives in number equal to the population of a country town. Quote the criticism on Walter North's garden scene. The sense of beauty and best momentary pose of the body is a gift which cannot be picked up as a mechanical art can be, Instance among difficult subjects, the fat woman—'like heavenly pastures, large and fair.' The trials of the jail-photographer, the 'Bashful Sitter.' Custom House officers and dry plate. Speaking of troubles of photographing nature, writer might mention experience with a seal in the Arctic."

The following is one of Sergeant Rice's efforts in the poetical line:

"OH, WHAT'S THE TEMPERATURE?"

On the shores of an Arctic sea,
On the banks of Grinnell Land,
Where mortal man ne'er ought to be,
There dwells a little band.

This enterprising colony
Came without being sent,
Commanded by A. W. G.,
Who was on science bent.

With a shipload of thermometers,
And kegs of lime-juice many,
Anemometers, barometers,
But of shoes they hadn't any.

In their abode, 'mid ice and snow,
They at each other stare,
For while hourly wagging signal flags
They find they've nary a chair.

But they have other luxuries
That perhaps amount to much,
Immense amphibious "morphidites,"
Velocipedes and such.

And out into the frosty air
Two dozen iron beds
Have formed a most appropriate lair
On which to place the sleds.

Their Arctic home is fortified
Against the Polar bear;
Barometers on every side
And thermometers everywhere.

Secure within this safe retreat
Reposed A. W. G.,
And asked of one he chanced to meet,
"What's the frigidity?"

At every hour of all the day
Observers then were sure
Of having "Horace" to them say,
"Oh, what's the temperature?"

And when, upon their hourly tramp,
They'd chance to ope his door,
He'd look up from his student lamp—
"And what's the temperature?"

At evening, when relieving came,
Did he rest his weary head?
Oh, no, my friend; it was the same—
"What temperature?" he said.

If Roxy went but in the room
To look upon the fire,
A ghostly voice from out the gloom—
"Is the temperature any higher?"

When Israel midnight vigil kept,
He'd hardly close the door
Before a voice from a man who slept—
"Is the temperature any lower?"

At morning when the breakfast meals
Were on the table spread
A muffled tread through the doorway steals—
“How cold is it?” he said.

A question's heard through all the months
From the General, lank and lean—
A hundred times if he's asked it once—
“What is the monthly mean?”

The months roll by, a year is gone,
A voice comes through the door
From a tall, slim man, with a red cap on—
“Will the mean be minus four?”

The weary sledgers, tired and sore,
Come by which island way,
But hardly have they passed the door—
“How cold did you have it, pray?”

Should any of this poem tell,
Should it fall in other hands,
The poet sure will then catch h—ll
From the gentleman who commands.

Latitude 81° 44' north, December, 1882.

G. W. R.

“THE TIDOMETER.”

One more extract, to close this somewhat pathetic inspection of the dead explorer's diary. It is headed: “Doggerel notice stuck up to have myself awakened as usual to take tidal readings,” and is as follows:

In the stall among thermometers,
Barometers, hydrometers,
Along with the geographer
(Who is also the chronographer)
There sleeps the old photographer,
Who wants some one to jog him, for
When 10:40 by chronometer
He must go and read tidometer.

CHAPTER XXIX.

THE RESCUE.

The Voyage of the Relief Ships Thetis, Bear, and Alert to Lady Franklin Bay—Battling with the Ice—Looking out for the Greely Party—Finding the Survivors—A Terrible Sight—Relieving the Sufferers—Ten Graves—Homeward Bound—Meeting the Alert—Death of Elison—Interment of Frederick Christiansen.

THE United States government not having received any news concerning the Greely colony, in the spring of 1884 sent out another relief expedition, consisting of the steamers Thetis, Bear, and Alert.

The Bear, the first of the Greely Relief Expedition to leave New York, sailed shortly before four o'clock on the afternoon of April 23d. The officers and crew of the Bear were as follows: Lieutenant W. H. Emory, commander; Lieutenant F. H. Crosby, executive; Lieutenant John R. Colwell, navigator; Lieutenant N. R. Usher, ensign; L. K. Reynolds, passed assistant surgeon; H. E. Ames and Chief-Engineer John Lowe. Seamen, Jacob Johnson, Albert Jason, John Johnson, James F. Burke, James C. Coogan, James J. Campbell, Joel C. Evans, Hugh Brock, Ferdinand Boljohn, Carl J. Carlson, Arthur Lloyd, Francis Duryea, John Johnson, Jr., and Heinrich Krasburg; boatswain's mate, John Quevedo; carpenter, Joseph B. Freeman; ordinary seamen, Louis C. Smith, Charles H. McLeod, David H. Kiernan, and John Roberts; landsmen, Otto Shurz, Gustave Weber, and George Sovo; machinists, J. M. Beam and Henry Thomas; blacksmith, Thomas J. Warton; firemen, James Regan and Archie Currie; ice-pilot, Captain Ash.

The Bear was purchased by the United States government on January 31st, 1883, from W. Giuve, Son & Co., of St. John's, Newfoundland, for \$100,000. She was used as an Arctic sealer, and was considered one of the strongest vessels afloat. She was a three-masted vessel, barkentine rig, and was divided into two compartments. Her dimensions were: Length, 190½ feet; breadth of beam, 29½ feet; depth