

North of Fifty.

[BY HENRICH] Copyright by McClure, Phillips & Co.

Big GEORGE was drinking and the activities of the little arctic mining camp were paralyzed. Events invariably ceased their progress and marked time when George became excessive, and now nothing of public consequence stirred except the quicksilver, which was retiring fearfully into its bulb at the song of the wind which came racing over the lonesome, bitter, northward waste of tundra.

He held the center of the door at the Northern club and proclaimed his modest virtues in a voice as pleasant as the cough of a bull walrus.

"Yes, me—little George! I did it. I've licked 'em all from Herschel Island to Dutch Harbor, big uns and little uns. When they didn't suit I made 'em over. I'm the boss carpenter of the arctic, and I own this camp; don't it, Slim? Hey? Answer me!" he roared at the emaciated bearer of the title, whose attention seemed wandering from the inventory of George's startling traits toward a card game.

"Sure ye do," nervously smiled Slim, frightened out of a heart solo as he returned to his surroundings.

"Well, then, listen to what I'm saying. I'm the big chief of the village, and when I'm stimulated and happy them fellows I don't like hides out and lets me and nature operate things. Ain't that right?" He gazed inquiringly at his friends.

Red, the proprietor, explained over the bar in a whisper to Captain, the new man from Dawson: "That's Big George, the whaler. He's a squaw man an' sort of a bully—see? When he's sober he's on the level strictly, an' we all likes him fine, but when he gets to fighting the pain killer he ain't altogether a gentleman. Will be fight—oh, will he fight? Say, he's there with chimes, he is! Why, Doc Miller's made a grub stake rebuilding fellers that's had a lingering doubt caved away about that, an' now when he gets the booze up his nose them patched up guys comes away an' hibernates till the gas dies out in him. Afterward he's sore on himself an' apologizes to everybody. Don't get into no trouble with him, 'cause he's two checks past the limit. They don't make 'em as bad as him any more. He busted the mold."

George turned and, spying the newcomer, approached, eyeing him with critical disfavor.

Captain saw a beaklike figure, clad cap-a-pie in native fashion, in leathern pants, with the hair inside, clothed legs like rock pillars, while out of the loose squirrel parka a corded neck rose, brown and strong, above which darkly gleamed a rugged face seamed and scarred by the hate of arctic winters. He had kicked off his deerskin socks and stood barefooted on the cold and drafty floor, while the poison he had imbibed showed only in his heated face. Silently he extended a cracked and hardened hand, which closed like the armored claw of a crustacean and tightened on the crunching fingers of the other. Captain's expression remained unchanged, and gradually slackening his grip, the sailor roughly inquired:

"Where'd you come from?"

"Just got in from Dawson yesterday," politely responded the stranger.

"Well, what're you going to do now you're here?" he demanded.

"Stake some claims and go to prospecting, I guess. You see, I wanted to get in early before the rush next spring."

"Oh, I s'pose you're going to jump some of our ground, hey? Well, you ain't! We don't want no claim jumpers here," disapprovingly continued the seaman. "We won't stand for it. This is my camp—see? I own it, and these is my little children." Then, as the other refused to debate with him, he resumed, groping for a new ground of attack.

"Say! I'll bet you're one of them educated dudes, too, ain't you? You talk like a feller that had been to college," and, as the other assented, he scornfully called to his friends, saying: "Look here, fellers. Pipe the felly-fish! I never see one of these here animals that was worth a cuss. They plays football and smokes cigarettes at school; then when they're weaned they come off up here and jump our claims 'cause we can't write a location notice proper. They ain't no good, I guess I'll stop it!"

Captain moved toward the door, but the whaler threw his bulky frame against it and scowlingly blocked the way.

"No, you don't. You ain't going to run away till I've had the next dance, Mister Education! Hump! I ain't begun to tell you yet what a useless little barnacle you are."

Red interposed, saying: "Look 'ere, George, this guy ain't no playmate of yours. We'll all have a joint of this disturbance promoter and call it off."

Then, as the others approached, he winked at Captain and jerked his head slightly toward the door.

The latter, heeding the signal, started out, but George leaped after him and, seizing an arm, whirled him back, roaring:

"Well, of all the cussed impudence I ever see! You're too high toned to drink with us, are you? You don't get out of here now till you take a licking like a man."

He reached over his head and, grasping the hood of his fur shirt, with one movement he stripped it from him, exposing a massive naked body whose muscles swelled and knotted beneath

a skin as clear as a maiden's, while a map of angry scars strayed across the heavy chest.

As the shirt sailed through the air Red lightly vaulted to the bar and, diving at George's naked middle, tackled beautifully, crying to Captain: "Get out quick! We'll hold him!"

Others rushed forward and grasped the bulky sailor, but Captain's voice replied: "I sort of like this place, and I guess I'll stay awhile. Turn him loose."

"Why, man, he'll kill ye," excitedly cried Slim. "Get out!"

The captive buried his peace-makers from him and, shaking off the clinging arms, drove furiously at the insolent stranger.

In the cramped limits of the corner where he stood Captain was unable to avoid the big man, who swept him with a crash against the plank door at his back, grasping hungrily at his throat. As his shoulders struck, however, he dropped to his knees, and before the raging George could seize him he avoided a blow which would have strained the rivets of a strength tester and ducked under the other's arms, leaping to the cleared center of the floor.

Seldom had the big man's rush been avoided, and, whirling, he swung a boomlike arm at the agile stranger. Before it reached Captain stepped in to meet his adversary and, with the weight of his body behind the blow, drove a clinched and bony fist crashing into the other's face. The big head with its blazing shock of hair snapped backward, and the whaler dropped to his knees at the other's feet.

The drunken flush of victory swept over Captain as he stood above the swaying figure, then suddenly he felt the great bare arms close about his waist with a painful grip. He struck at the bleeding face below him and wrenched at the circling bands which wheezed the breath from his lungs, but the whaler squeezed him writhing to his breast and, rising unsteadily, wheeled across the floor and in a shiver of broken glass fell crashing against the bar and to the floor.

As the struggling men writhed upon the planks the door opened at the hurried entrance of an excited group, which paused at the sight of the ruin; then, rushing forward, tore the men apart.

The panting Berserker strained at the arms about his glistening body, while Captain, with sobbing sobs, relieved his aching lungs and watched his enemy, who trotted at the interference.

"It was George's fault," explained Slim to the questions of the arrivals. "This feller tried to make a getaway, but George had to have his amusement."

A newcomer addressed the squaw man in a voice as cold as the wind. "Cut this out, George! This is a friend

of mine. You're making this camp a regular hell for strangers, and now I'm going to tap your little snap. Cool off—see?"

Jones' reputation as a bad gun man went hand in hand with his name as a good gambler, and his scanty remarks invariably evoked attentive answers, so George explained: "I don't like him, Jones, and I was just making him over to look like a man. I'll do it yet, too. He fashed wrathfully at his quiet antagonist.

"Pears to me like he's took a hand in the remodeling himself," replied the gambler, "but if you're looking for something to do here's your chance. Windy Jim just drove in and says Barton and Kid Sullivan are drift on the ice."

"What's that?" questioned eager voices, and, forgetting the recent trouble at the news, the crowd pressed forward anxiously.

"They was crossing the bay and got carried out by the offshore gale," explained Jones. "Windy was following 'em when the ice ahead parted and begun moving out. He tried to yell to 'em, but they was too far away to hear in the storm. He managed to get back to the land and followed the shore ice around. He's over at Hunter's cabin now, most dead, face and hands froze pretty bad."

A torrent of questions followed and many suggestions as to the fate of the men.

"They'll freeze before they can get ashore," said one.

"The ice pack'll break up in this

wind," added another, "and if they don't drown they'll freeze before the ice comes in close enough for them to land."

From the first announcement of his friends' peril Captain had been thinking rapidly. His body, sore from his long trip and aching from the huz of his recent encounter, cried wofully for rest, but his voice rose calm and clear. "We've got to get them off," he said. "Who will go with me? Three is enough."

The clamoring voices ceased, and the men wheeled at the sound, gazing incredulously at the speaker. "What! In this storm? You're crazy!" many voices said.

He gazed appealingly at the faces before him. Brave and adventurous men he knew them to be, jesting with death and tempered to perils in this land where hardship rises with the dawn, but they shook their ragged heads hopelessly.

"We must save them!" resumed Captain hotly. "Barton and I played as children together, and if there's not a man among you who's got the nerve to follow me I'll go alone, by heavens!"

In the silence of the room he pulled the cap about his ears and, trying it snugly under his chin, drew on his huge fur mittens. Then, with a scornful laugh, he turned toward the door.

He paused as his eye caught the swollen face of Big George. Blood had stiffened in the heavy creases of his face like rusted stringers in a ledge, while his mashed and discolored lips protruded thickly. His hair gleamed red, and the sweat had dried upon his naked shoulders, streaked with dirt and flecked with spots of blood, yet the battered features shone with the unconquered, fearless light of a rough, strong man.

Captain strode to him with outstretched hand. "You're a man," he said. "You've got the nerve, George, and you'll go with me, won't you?"

"What! Me?" questioned the sailor vaguely. His wondering glance fell on Captain and drifted round the circle of shamed and silent faces. Then he straightened stiffly and cried: "Will I go with you? Certainly! I'll go to— with you."

Ready hands harnessed the dogs, dragged from protected nooks where they sought cover from the storm which moaned and whistled round the low houses. Endless ragged folds of sleep-whirled out of the north, then writhed and twisted past, vanishing into the gray veil which shrouded the landscape in a twilight gloom.

The fierce wind sank the cold into the aching flesh like a knife and stiffened the face to a whitening mask, while a fusillade of frozen ice particles beat against the eyeballs with blinding fury.

As Captain emerged from his cabin, furred and hooded, he found a long train of crouching, whining animals harnessed and waiting, while muffled figures stocked the sled with robes and food and stimulants.

Big George approached through the whirling white, a great, squat figure, with fluttering squirrel tails blowing from his parka, and at his heels trailed a figure skin clad and dainty.

"It's my wife," he explained briefly to Captain. "She won't let me go alone."

They gravely bade farewell to all, and the little crowd cheered lustily against the whine of the blizzard as, with cracking whip and hoarse shouts, they were wrapped in the cloudy winding sheet of snow.

Arctic storms have an even sameness—the intense cold, the heartless wind, which augments tenfold the chill of the temperature; the air thick and dark, with stinging flakes rushing by in an endless cloud, a drifting, freezing, shifting eternity of snow, driven by a ravaging gale, which sweeps the desolate, bald wastes of the northland.

The little party toiled through the smother till they reached the igloos under the breast of the tall coast bluffs, where coughing Eskimos drilled patiently at ivory tusks and gambled the furs from their backs at stud horse poker.

To George's inquiries they answered that their largest canoe was the three holed bidarka on the cache outside. Owing to the small circular openings in its deck, this was capable of holding but three passengers, and Captain said: "We'll have to make two trips, George."

"Two trips, eh?" answered the other. "We'll be doing well if we last through one, I'm thinking."

Lashing the unwieldy burden upon the sled, they fought their way along the coast again till George declared that they were opposite the point where their friends went adrift. They slid their light craft through the ragged wall of ice hummocks guarding the shore pack and dimly saw in the gray beyond them a stretch of angry waters mottled by drifting cakes and floes.

George spoke earnestly to his wife, instructing her to keep the team in constant motion up and down the coast a rifle shot in either direction and to listen for a signal of the return. Then he picked her up as he would a babe, and she kissed his storm-beaten face.

"She's been a good squaw to me," he said as they pushed their dancing craft out into the breath of the gale, "and I've always done the square thing by her. I s'pose she'll go back to her people now, though."

The wind hurried them out from land, while it drove the sea water in freezing spray over their backs and changed their fur garments into scaly armor as they worked through the ice cakes, peering with strained eyes for a sign of their friends.

The sailor with deft strokes raised them between the grinding bergs, raising his voice in long signals like the weird cry of a stren.

Twisting back and forth through the

flows they held to their quest now floating with the wind now padding desperately in a race with some drifting mass which dimly towered above them and splintered hungrily against its neighbor close in their wake.

Captain emptied his six shooter till his numbed fingers grew rigid as the trigger, and always at his back swelled the deep shouts of the sailor, who, with practiced eye and mighty strokes forced their way through the closing lanes between the jaws of the ice pack.

At last, beaten and tossed, they rested, disheartened and hopeless. Then, as they drifted, a sound struggled to them against the wind—a faint cry, illusive and fleeting as a dream voice—and, still doubting, they heard it again.

"Thank God! We'll save 'em yet!" cried Captain, and they drove the canoe bolting toward the sound.

Barton and Sullivan had fought the cold and wind stoutly hour after hour till they found their great foe was breaking up in the heaving waters.

Then the horror of it had struck the Kid till he raved and cursed up and down their little island as it dwindled gradually to a small acre.

He had finally yielded to the weight of the cold, which crushed resistance out of him, and, settling, despairing and listless, upon the ice, Barton dragged him to his feet and forced him round their rocking prison, begging him to brace up, to fight it out like a man, till the other insisted on resting and dropped to his seat again.

The older man struck deliberately at the whitening face of his freezing companion, who recognized the well meant insult and refused to be roused into activity. Then to their ears and came the faint cries of George, and in answer to their screams through the gloom they beheld a long covered skin canoe and the anxious faces of their friends.

Captain rose from his cramped seat, and, ripping his crackling garments from the boat where they had frozen, he wriggled out of the hole in the deck and grasped the weeping Barton.

"Come, come, old boy! It's all right now," he said.

"Oh, Charlie, Charlie!" cried the other. "I might have known you'd try to save us. You're just in time, though, for the Kid's about all in."

Sullivan apathetically nodded and sat down again.

"Hurry up there. This ain't no G. A. R. encampment, and you ain't got no time to spare," said George, who had dragged the canoe out and with a paddle broke the sheets of ice which covered it. "It'll be too dark to see anything in half an hour."

The night, hastened by the storm, was closing rapidly, and they realized another need of haste, for even as they spoke a crack had crawled through the ice floe where they stood and, widening as it went, left but a heaving cake supporting them.

George spoke quietly to Captain, while Barton strove to animate the Kid. "You and Barton must take him ashore and hurry him down to the village. He's most gone now."

"But you?" questioned the other. "We'll have to come back for you as soon as we put him ashore."

"Never mind me," roughly interrupted George. "It's too late to get back here. When you get ashore it'll be dark. Besides, Sullivan's freezing, and you'll have to rush him through quick. I'll stay here."

"No, no, George," cried the other as the meaning of it bore in upon him. "I got you into this, and it's my place to stay here. You must go!"

But the big man had hurried to Sullivan and forced him to a seat in the middle opening of the canoe.

"Come, come," he cried to the others; "you can't spend all night here! If you want to save the Kid you've got to hurry. You take the front seat there, Barton," and as he did so George turned to the protesting Captain. "Shut up, curse you, and get in!"

"I won't do it," rebelled the other. "I can't let you try down your life in this way when I made you come."

George thrust a cold face within an inch of the other's and grimly said: "If they hadn't stopped me I'd beat you into dog meat this morning, and if you don't quit this sniveling I'll do it yet. Now, get in there and paddle to beat h—l or you'll never make it back, Quick!"

"I'll come back for you then, George, if I live to the shore," Captain cried, while the other slid the burdened canoe into the icy waters.

As they drove the boat into the storm Captain realized the difficulty of working their way against the gale. On him fell the added burden of holding their course into the wind and avoiding the churning ice cakes. The spray whipped into his face like shot and froze as it clung to his features. He strained at his paddle till the sweat soaked out of him and the cold air filled his aching lungs.

Unceasingly the merciless frost cut his face like a keen blade till he felt the numb paralysis which told him his features were hardening under the touch of the cold.

An arm's length ahead the shoulders of the Kid protruded from the deck hole where he had sunk again into the death sleep, while Barton, in the forward seat, leaned wearily on his ice clogged paddle, moaning as he strove to shelter his face from the sting of the blizzard.

An endless time they battled with the storm, slowly gaining foot by foot, till in the darkness ahead they saw the wall of shore ice and swung into its partial shelter.

Dragging the now unconscious Sullivan from the boat, Captain rolled and thrashed him, while Barton, too weak and exhausted to assist, feebly strove to warm his stiffened limbs.

In answer to their signals the team

appeared maddened by the lash of the squaw. Then they wrapped Sullivan in warm robes and forced scorching brandy down his throat till he coughed weakly and begged them to let him rest.

"You must hurry him to the Indian village," directed Captain. "He'll only lose some fingers and toes now, maybe, but you've got to hurry!"

"Aren't you coming, too?" queried Barton. "We'll hire some Eskimos to go after George. I'll pay 'em anything."

"No; I'm going back to him now. He'd freeze before we could send help,

and, besides, they wouldn't come out in the storm and the dark."

"But you can't work that big canoe alone. If you get out there and don't find him you'll never get back, Charlie, let me go, too," he said, then apologized. "I am afraid I won't last, though; I'm too weak."

The squaw, who had questioned not at the absence of her lord, now touched Captain's arm. "Come," she said; "I go with you." Then, addressing Barton: "You quick go Indian house; white man die, mebbe. Quick! I go Big George."

"Ah, Charlie, I'm afraid you'll never make it," cried Barton, and, wringing his friend's hand, he staggered into the darkness behind the sled wherein lay the fur bundled Sullivan.

Captain felt a horror of the starving waters rise up in him, and a panic shook him fiercely till he saw the silent squaw waiting for him at the ice edge. He shivered as the wind searched through his dampened parka and hardened the wet clothing next to his body, but he took his place and dug the paddle fiercely into the water till the waves licked the hair of his gauntlets.

The memory of that scudding trip through the darkness was always cloudy and visioned. Periods of keen alertness alternated with moments when his weariness bore upon him till he stiffly bent to his work, wondering what it all meant.

It was the woman's sharpened ear which caught the first answering cry and her hands which steered the intricate course to the heaving berg where the sailor crouched, for at their approach Captain had yielded to the drowse of weariness and, in his relief at the finding, the blade floated from his listless hands.

He dreamed quaint dreams, broken by the chilling lash of spray from the strokes of the others as they drove the craft back against the wind, and he only partly awoke from his lethargy when George wrenched him from his seat and forced him down the rough trail toward warmth and safety.

Soon, however, the stagnant blood tingled through his veins, and under the shelter of the bluffs they reached the village, where they found the anxious men waiting.

Skillful natives had worked the frost from Sullivan's members, and the stimulants in the sled had put new life into Barton as well. So, as the three crawled wearily through the fog filled tunnel of the igloo, they were met by two wet eyed and thankful men.

When they had been depolled of their frozen furs and the welcome heat of whisky and fire had met in their blood Captain approached the whaler, who, rested beside his mate:

"George, you're the bravest man I ever knew, and your woman is worthy of you," he said. He continued slowly. "I'm sorry about the fight this morning, too."

The big man rose and, crushing the extended palm in his grasp, said: "We'll just let that go double, partner. You're as game as I ever see." Then he added: "It was too bad them fellers interfered jest when they did, but we can fix it up whenever you say," and as the other smilingly shook his head he continued. "Well, I'm glad of it, 'cause you'd sure beat me the next time."

Cynical Foresight.

"That boy of yours may be president of the United States some day."

"Maybe," assented Farmer Corntossel. "But the chances are that he'll be one of the fellows who think they are lucky if they get appointed to be post-masters."—Washington Star.

Long and Short of It.

It is hard for a man to look dignified while standing upon his tiptoes to whisper into the ear of his sixteen-year-old son.—Chicago Record-Herald.

—The best Job Work done here.

(Continued on page 3, Col. 1.)

FROM INDIA.

By One on Medical Duty in that Far Eastern Country: The Drawbacks of Housekeeping Where Servants Refuse to Understand Orders. A Sunday Dress Parade. Tasteless Vegetables. American Articles at Home Prices.

Dear Home Folk:

JHANSI, SEPTEMBER 25th.

The rest of the family have gone out to the native church to service and I intend going to the English church, but it will be a little later so I am spending this half hour with you, although there is little or nothing new to talk about as hospital life like everywhere else has its full days, and then the dull follows.

Last night Dr. Maclellan and myself were invited out to a little dinner with a Mrs. Casson, whose husband is a captain in the English army. There were six of us there and it was not only a very pretty dinner but also a very delightful evening and I was sorry to come home, although when we came out into the moonlight (the moon is just about full) we both wished we had a drive of ten miles to take before reaching home, so perfect was this Eastern world in its shadings under the moonlight.

The day has been a hot one but I have spent it so lazily reading the home magazines, for which I am very thankful, that I had scarcely noticed that the thermometer registered about ninety degrees in my room, until I had to get up and have a bath, getting ready for tea. That will be one thing I will forget to order when I get back to the United States, since nothing again can force me to take my bath in the middle of a hot afternoon and then be dressed for the evening by four o'clock. As you know, the temperature hasn't dropped a little wee bit when that time comes around during the day; but the late dinner makes our evenings short so perhaps it is just as well that we do start the evening early or we would have no time at all for play or calling upon our friends.

I find that housekeeping in India has its drawbacks just the same as at home. Of course there are plenty of servants, but when one can't speak to them or make them understand or, understanding, they refuse to do the work the way you wish it done, I am reminded of those numerous tales of woe I used to have to listen to when a nervous woman would come into my office. I can't take those things to heart and merely shrugging my shoulders take them as I get them and try to forget how I really wanted the whole thing. It is a slack way of getting along but it don't rasp the nerves so I gain a bit anyway.

Just here the "dhole" arrived and I had to get him the laundry, and having on some clothes which I wished to send to the "ghats" have had to undress, a process which takes time, but funny a job I always enjoy since coming into India's heat.

Dispensary.—Several days have passed since I started this letter and this morning having wanted to see a patient came over very early. These people are sent to us without seeming to be very ill and in a few hours they develop the most desperate symptoms. One of these cases came in last night, I was over late to see how she was and found her absolutely comatose, when scarcely an hour before I had been laughing with this woman and she really was not very ill. In such a short time she changed and had I not known that she could not get a drug would have said that a big dose of opium had been given to her. She is better this morning and last night's mystery remains unsolved.

I do not mind the early rising as I used to at home for the sun comes up each morning so very red and shines right into my eyes (my bed is on the veranda) and then I hear the military bands playing. They begin drilling from five to five-thirty, and the bugles sound much sweeter and clearer early in the morning than at any other time. I will surely miss their pretty music when I leave here. That reminds me to tell you of the "parade service" as it is called, on Sunday morning. These English regiments must go to one service a day so at six o'clock each Sunday morning they are turned out in full dress parade, with full officer's staff and band. I have gone over frequently for it is a pretty service. I was greatly amused to see the band—the two men with their big bass drums; both have on long tiger skins over uniforms, to rest the drums against, and as there are at least a dozen small drums and their players are taught to raise their hands to the level of their shoulders with every stroke and always finish with hands high in the air—really above the shoulder—the effect is almost what would be given were they a band of wound-up mechanical toys. When finished, sticks are held straight and arms are extended high in the air; truly it is spectacular. Of course this is only on dress parade, but to my uninitiated eyes it surely looks as though a relic of barbarism, but in this interesting country only another of the strange sights one sees.

Patients, patients galore—they come in twos, they come in threes and they come by the dozen. Such a decrepit looking bunch of babies. One of the nurses remarked that they looked not only moth-eaten but mildewed besides, and I truly had to agree with her for after becoming stiff with dirt they developed all sorts of troubles and you can easily imagine what they look like when brought to us. Curiously enough those who have embraced christianity (and a

By One on Medical Duty in that Far Eastern Country: The Drawbacks of Housekeeping Where Servants Refuse to Understand Orders. A Sunday Dress Parade. Tasteless Vegetables. American Articles at Home Prices.

Dear Home Folk:

JHANSI, SEPTEMBER 25th.

The rest of the family have gone out to the native church to service and I intend going to the English church, but it will be a little later so I am spending this half hour with you, although there is little or nothing new to talk about as hospital life like everywhere else has its full days, and then the dull follows.



"Get in there and paddle to beat h—l!"



Drove a Bony Fist Crashing into the Other's Face.