

THE CONQUEST OF THE POLE

By Dr. FREDERICK A. COOK

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[The Cook expedition was equipped at Gloucester, Mass., and was ready to start on July 2, 1907. Dr. Cook and Rudolph Franke were put ashore at Annotok, Greenland, with ample stores and during the winter made preparations for the polar dash. On Feb. 19, 1908, the main expedition started for the pole with eleven men, 25 dogs and eleven heavily loaded sleds. Going a little north of west, the party on March 18 reached the northern end of Heberg island. There the expedition divided, six men returning. The real race to the pole now began. On March 18 twenty-six miles were made and the next day twenty-one. Then two more of the men returned, leaving only two young Eskimos to accompany Dr. Cook, with two loaded sleds and twenty-six dogs. On March 20 sixteen miles were covered, twenty-nine miles on the 21st, twenty-two the following day and afterward for several days an average of seventeen or eighteen. Near the northern edge of Grant Land a great open lead was encountered, which was crossed with some peril on the young ice. Some days later after a severe storm the ice split open under the igloo, and Dr. Cook in his sleeping bag sank into the crevice, being dragged to safety by the young Eskimos. The advance was halted by storms, in one of which the dogs were buried and in another the men themselves. To the west a new land, named Bradley Land by Cook, was sighted, extending from 84 degrees 20 minutes to 85 degrees 31 minutes and close to the one hundred and second meridian. Dr. Cook's own account of his dash from Bradley Land to the pole is given below.]

OVER the newly discovered coast lines was written Bradley Land, in honor of John R. Bradley, the benefactor of the expedition. As we passed north of this land there was nothing substantial upon which to fix the eye.

There was at no time a perfectly clear horizon, but the weather was good enough to permit frequent nautical observations.

Thus day after day the marches were forced, the accidents and the positions were recorded, but the adventures were promptly forgotten in the mental bleache of the next day's effort. The night of April 7 was made notable by the swing of the sun at midnight. For a number of nights it made grim faces at us in its setting. A teasing mist, drawn as a curtain over the northern sea at midnight, had given



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curious advantages for celestial stargazing; setting into this haze, we were unable to determine sharply the advent of the midnight sun.

Now the great bulk was drawn out egg shaped, with horizontal lines drawn through it. Again it was pressed into a basin with flaming fires, burning behind a curtain of frosts; blue at other times, it appeared like a huge vase, and it required very little imagination to see purple and violet flowers.

The change was often like magic, but the last display was invariably a face-distorted faces of men or animals were made to suit our fancy.

We had therefore followed the sun's northward advance—from its first peep at midday above the south ice of the polar gateway to its sweep of the northern ice at midnight. From the end of the polar night late in February to the first of the double days and midnight suns we had forced a trail through darkness, blood hardening temperature and over leg breaking irregularities of an unknown world of ice to an area 200 miles from the pole.

Now we had the sun unmistakably at midnight, and its new glory was quite an incentive to our life of shivers. Observations on April 8 placed camp at latitude 80 degrees 36 minutes, longitude 94 degrees 2 minutes. In spite of what seemed like long marches we had advanced only 106 miles in nine days. Much of our hard work was lost in circuitous twists around troublesome pressure lines and high, irregular fields of very old ice. The drift ice was throwing us to the east with sufficient force to give us some anxiety, but with eyes closed to danger and hardships the double days of fatigue and glitter quickly followed one another.

The temperature, ranging between 26 and 40 degrees below zero F., kept persistently near the freezing point of mercury, and, though the perpetual sun gave light and color to the cheerless wastes, we were not impressed with any appreciable sense of warmth.

Bradley Land Passed—Steam From Frozen Seas—Half the Food Allowance Used—Maddening Effect of Polar Glitter—Despair of Ahwelah, "Beyond Is Impossible"

Indeed, the sunbeams seemed to make the frost of the air pierce with a more painful sting.

There was a weird play of colors, seemingly most impressive at this time—clouds of steam rose from the frozen seas. In marching over the golden glitter snow scalds the face, while the nose is bleached with frost.

In camp a grip of the knife left painful burns from cold metal. To the frozen finger the water was hot. With wine spirits the fire was lighted, while oil delighted the stomach. In dreams heaven was hot, the other place was cold.

All nature was false. We seemed to be hearing the chilled flame of a new hades. In our hard life there was nothing genuinely warm. The congenial appearances were all deception, but death offered only cold comfort. There was no advantage in suicide.

We should have enjoyed this curious experience, but with endless bodily discomforts, combined in aching muscles and an overbearing languor, there could be no real joys from the glories of nature. The pleasure was reserved for a later retrospect.

We now changed our working hours from day to night, beginning usually at 10 and ending at 7. The big marches and prolonged hours of travel with which fortune favored us earlier were no longer possible. Weather conditions were more important in determining the day's run than the hands of the chronometers.

When the storms threatened the start was delayed, and in strong blows the march was shortened, but in one way or another we usually found a few hours in each turn of the dial during which a march could be forced between winds. It mattered little whether we traveled night or day—all hours and all days were alike to us—for we had no accustomed time of rest, no Sundays, no holidays, no landmarks or alleys to pass. To advance and expend the energy accumulated during one sleep at the cost of our pound of pemmican was the one sole aim in life.

The observations of April 11 gave latitude 87 degrees 20 minutes, longitude 95 minutes 19 seconds. The pack disturbance of Bradley Land was less and less noted in the northward movement. The fields became heavier, larger and less crevassed.

We had now passed the highest reaches of all our predecessors and had gained the inspiration of the farthest north for ourselves. The time was at hand, however, to consider seriously the necessity of an early return.

Nearly half of the food allowance had been used. In the long marches supplies had been more liberally used than anticipated, and now our dog teams were much reduced in numbers. A hard necessity had forced the cruel law of the survival of the fittest, for the less useful dogs were fed to the steady working survivors. Owing to the food limits and the advancing season we could not prudently continue the outward march a fortnight longer.

We had dragged ourselves 300 miles over the polar sea in twenty-four days, including delays and detours, this gave an average of nearly thirteen miles daily on an air line in our course. There remained an unknown line of 100 miles before our ambitions could be satisfied. The same average advance which we had made on the pack would take us to the pole in thirteen days. There were food and fuel enough to risk this adventure.

In the diary of the succeeding days' doings there appear numerous tabulations of work and observations. In the new cracks the thickness of the ice was measured. The water was examined for life. Atmospheric, surface water and ice temperatures were taken, the barometer was noted, the cloud formations, weather conditions and ice drifts were tabulated.

I watched daily for possible signs of dangerous failure in strength, for serious disability now meant a fatal termination.

A disabled man could neither continue nor return, but every examination gave another reason to push human endurance to the limit of the strain of every fiber and cell. The hard work which followed, under an occasional burst of burning sunbeams, brought intense thirst.

Forcing the habit of the camel, we managed to take enough water before starting to keep sufficient liquid in the veins for the day's march, but it was difficult to await the melting of the ice at camping time.

In two sittings— evening and morning—each took an average of three quarts of water daily. This included the tea and also the luxury of an occasional soup. There was water about everywhere in heaps, but it was in crystals, and before the thirst could be quenched several ounces of precious fuel, which had been carried thousands of miles, must be used. And still this water, so expensive and so necessary to us, ultimately became the greatest bane to comfort. It escaped through the pores of the skin, saturated the boots, forced a band of ice under the knee and a belt of frost about the waist, while the face was

nearly always incased in a mask of icicles from the breath—a necessary part of our hard lot in life, and we learned to take the torture philosophically.

From the eighty-seventh to the eighty-eighth parallel we passed for two days over old ice without pressure lines or hummocks. There was no discernible line of demarcation for the fields, and it was quite impossible to determine if we were on land or sea ice. The barometer indicated no elevation, but the ice had the hard, waving surface of glacial ice, with only superficial crevasses. The water obtained from this was not salty, but all of the upper surface of the ice of the polar sea makes similar water. The nautical observations did not seem to indicate a drift, but nevertheless the combined tabulations do not warrant the positive assertion of either land or sea for this area.

The ice gave a cheering prospect. A plain of purple and blue ran in easy undulations to the limits of vision.



DR. COOK IN ARCTIC COSTUME.

without the usual barriers of uplifted blocks. Over it a direct air line course was possible. Progress, however, was quite as difficult as over the irregular pack. The snow was crusted with large crystals. An increased friction reduced the speed, while the surface, too hard for snowshoes, was also too weak to give a secure footing. The loneliness, the monotony, the hardship of steady, unrelieved travel were now keenly felt.

It is not often that man's horsepower is put to the test as ours was. We were compelled to develop a working energy to the limit of animal capacity. Day after day we had pushed along at the same steady pace over plains of frost and through a mental desert.

As the eye opened at the end of an icy slumber the fire was lighted little by little, the stomach was filled with liquids and solids, mostly cold—enough to last for the day, for there could be no halt or waste of fuel for midday feeding. We next got into harness and paced off the day's pull under the lash of duty. We worked until standing became impossible—longer in light winds, shorter in strong winds, but always until the feet became numb and heavy.

Then came the arduous task of building a snow house. In this the eyes, no longer able to wink, closed, but soon the empty stomach complained, and it was filled up again—not with things that pleased the palate, only hard fuel to feed the inner fires, while the ear sought the soft side of ice to dispel fatigue; no pleasure in mental recreation, nothing to arouse the soul from its icy inclosure.

To eat, to sleep, to press one foot ahead of the other, was our steady vocation, like the horse to the cart, but we had not his advantage of an agreeable climate and a comfortable stable at night.

Words and pictures cannot adequately describe the maddening influence of this sameness of polar glitter, combined with bitter winds, extreme cold and an overworked body. To me there was always the inspiration of anticipation of the outcome of ultimate success, but for my young savage companions it was a torment almost beyond endurance. Their weariness was made evident by a lax use of the whip and an indifferent urging of the dogs. They were, however, brave and faithful to the bitter end, seldom allowing selfish ambitions or uncontrollable passions seriously to interfere with the main effort of the expedition.

On the morning of April 13 a strain of agitating torment reached a breaking point. For days there had been a steady cutting wind from the west, which drove despair to its lowest reaches.

No torment could be worse than that never ceasing rush of icy air. Ahwelah bent over his sled and refused to move.

His dogs turned and looked inquiringly. I walked over and stood by his side. Etukiskuk came near and stood motionless, staring blankly at the southern skies. Large tears fell from Ahwelah's eyes and paled a little frost of sadness in the blue of his own shadow for several minutes. Not a word was uttered, but I knew that each felt that the time had come to free the fetters of human passions. Slowly Ahwelah said, "Uune slid pa-ooah-tonle to-doria" ("It is well to die—beyond is impossible").

Notes and Comment

Of Interest to Women Readers

NEW NIGHT-DRESS SACHET.

To Be Suspended by Ribbons from the Head of the Bed.

A very novel idea for a night-dress sachet is shown in our illustration, which gives a suggestion for a shape which will make a change from the more ordinary one which folds over and fastens with a flap.

The sachet stretched is made in the form of a deep pocket, and it is in-



tended that it should be suspended by wide satin ribbons from the head of the bed, so that it may serve a more decorative purpose than has hitherto been the case. The sachet itself is of white satin, embroidered with a wild rose and foliage design, worked in very delicate shades of pink and green, with a border of silk cord to edge the sachet throughout in a delicate shade of turquoise blue. Many other pretty floral designs might be used in place of wild roses, and on grounds of various colors. Sprays of apple-blossom would be effective, for instance, on a pale blue ground, or clusters of dark violets on white or green. They should, of course, be chosen to suit the draperies, etc., in the room.

Give B. by Water.

A baby, like an adult, needs water as regularly as it needs food. The milk that it gets, though a liquor, does not satisfy its thirst. It should be given water at least three times a day, and this water should be nearly, if not quite, free of organisms. The water that comes from the average city main or country spring is alive with microscopic plants and animals, even when it seems clear and sparkling. These minute organisms, as a rule, are harmless to adults, but in the delicate stomach of the baby they are apt to cause disturbances, and so they must be eliminated. The best way to get rid of them is to allow the water to boil twenty minutes. After that, let it cool and store it in clean, well-corked bottles which have been previously immersed in boiling water for five minutes. Glass stoppers are better than corks.

Boiled water is tasteless and insipid because of the absence of air-bubbles, but the baby seldom notices it. It is best drunk out of a thoroughly clean nursing-bottle. Offer water to the infant every four hours, and let it drink as much as it wants. The supply for each day should be holed in the morning. Under no circumstances should water be kept more than a day.

Memorials for Housekeepers.

There are few servants who become fixtures in families in this country. It is different in Europe, where there is a class raised to expect nothing above domestic drudgery, and it is in this fact lies the reason for the comparative absence of a servant girl problem in the Old World. They value good servants over there, too, as is shown by the placing of a tablet in St. Helen's, Bishopsgate, England, in memory of a nurse, who spent thirty-nine years in the service of a family named Wigram. Beside this tablet is another set up sixty years ago to commemorate the forty-one years' service of a housekeeper in the same family. Forty-one years a servant? Is it not better with us in democratic America?

Music That Made a Song.

Lady Laurie of Maxwellton House, Dumfries, Scotland, is dead in the home which was the birthplace of Annie Laurie, who was given to the immortals by the song woven around her name. Annie Laurie was the daughter of the first baronet, and she was born in Maxwellton House in 1682. The words of the song were composed by a love-lack youth named Douglas of England, and the music more than a century afterward by John Spotswood.

Pretty Curtains.

Beautiful curtains for the den and living room are shown in craftsman effects. The fabrics are Russian crash, linen, and also a canvas composed of jute and linen. The material used for the draperies adds greatly to the beauty of the stencils. The effective and simple designs are dainty and conventional. A pair of curtains recently exhibited were of gray, with a stenciled border done in old green.

Children's Sleep.

As a general rule the lad at school between the ages of 3 and 16 requires nine to ten hours sleep. Growing boys need a large amount of sleep, and when this is denied them, neither their bodies nor their minds can develop properly. An English authority points out this lack of hours of rest falls most heavily on the clever boys.

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Beware of Counterfeits.

An Italian was arrested in Hazleton last Friday who had passed several counterfeit five dollar bills on unsuspecting dealers. They were of the series of 1907 and were so well executed that they easily passed ordinary inspection. Some of the same kind may be in Bloomsburg this week. Look out for them.

Don You Want to Know What You Swallow.

There is a growing sentiment in this country in favor of MEDICINES OF KNOWN COMPOSITION. It is but natural that one should have some interest in the composition of that which he or she is expected to swallow, whether it be food, drink or medicine.

Recognizing this growing disposition on the part of the public, and satisfied that the fullest publicity can only add to the well-earned reputation of his medicines, Dr. R. V. Pierce, of Buffalo, N. Y., has "taken time by the forelock," as it were, and is publishing broadcast a list of all the ingredients entering into his medicines, "Golden Medical Discovery," the popular liver invigorator, stomach tonic, blood-purifier and heart regulator; also of his "Favorite Prescription" for weak, over-worked, broken-down, nervous and invalid women.

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