

DE LONG'S STORY.

Account of the Last Jeannette Commander's Two Years' Adventures in the Arctic Region.

The record addressed to the secretary of the navy, which Lieutenant De Long wrote during the two years of the Jeannette's drift, contains 102 closely-written foolscap pages. The following extract gives his reasons for entering the icepack, and outlines his plans and hopes:

"As the commander of a polar expedition, my chief desire was to get north, and I had already come so far to the westward, in carrying out the department's orders, that the sooner I started in a northerly direction seemed the better for the object in view. Additional time would be lost were I to attempt to get a more easterly position before heading to the northward, particularly as from the experience of American whalers and the ships of the English Franklin relief expedition, there was nothing to indicate there a better chance of progress. On the other hand, we were within 220 miles of Wrangell Land, which though seen had never been landed on. With land so near us offering a chance of exploration, and a winter harbor from which a higher latitude might be attained by sledges, and perhaps presenting what was naturally to be expected—land-water along its eastern coast—in which case a good northing might be made by the ship herself before any exploration or sledge journey might be undertaken, I concluded that I was exercising good judgment in considering that land as a kind of support for the first winter's campaign, and I accordingly shaped a course north by west, true, proceeding with all speed."

De Long then tells how the ship made her way north through floating ice until she reached a point forty miles east-southeast of Herald Island, where she was stopped by what seemed to be impenetrable pack ice. That night a promising lead opened to the westward, and De Long decided to enter it. He says:

"Believing that the best chance for an advance would be by land-water extending along the eastern coast of Wrangell Land, and hoping that the promising lead to the westward would conduct us to it, I concluded to enter it as soon as there was sufficient daylight the next morning."

He entered the lead and steamed five hours, when the ship was stopped by heavy ice ten or fifteen feet thick. Wrangell Land was in sight to the westward. The record continues:

"At that time I hoped we were destined to reach this land. Though our lead had abruptly terminated at a wall of ice, the surface of the floes was cut up here and there by ponds and small lakes, which any movement of the ice might unite in a lane of navigable water. Instead of opening, however, the ice closed, and on the following day the Jeannette was beset. Unless something like a gale of wind occurred to break up the ice, our advance was no longer to be guided or controlled by any power from within the ship. We had gone as far to the northward as the heavy pack ice had permitted, and we had followed up the only water lane presenting itself, and had come to the end of that. My choice of plans was limited to the surroundings. To advance was impossible. To retreat was disagreeable (even if a chance existed of doing so), and holding our present location meant wintering in the pack and drifting we knew not where. The land-water of Kallet Land was now as unattainable as the land water of Greenland, so far as any power of our own could be effective; the ocean we had left behind was as much out of our reach as if a continent had intervened, and there seemed nothing left but to make a virtue of necessity and stay where we were."

The Jeannette's officers at once began preparations for the winter. Foreseeing that the ship might be stranded by the constantly moving ice, De Long had everything in readiness for abandoning her and retreating on sledges to Herald Island, Wrangell Land or the Siberian coast. Upon this subject he says:

"On October 27, 1879, in order to be prepared for any emergency not then to be foreseen, our party was told off into sledging crews, commanded respectively by the five commissioned officers attached to the ship, and upon five sledges were packed forty days' rations for men and dogs. A detail was made of duties to be performed by each individual in event of disaster bringing about an abandonment of the ship. Our sleeping bags, tents and other traveling gear were overhauled and made ready for use, and the loaded sledges on the poop deck were arranged with reference to the most convenient manner for getting them to the ice. All these preparations completed, we could merely await the future, satisfied of our powerlessness to do more."

"November 11 was a day of much anxiety and care. At 6 A. M. the trembling and creaking of the ship gave notice that our ice procession had resumed its march. Going out on what little was left of our level ice, we were confronted by a fearful spectacle. The pressures and movements of the previous day were feeble in comparison with what was now going on. Large blocks, seventy-five feet in length, seven feet in thickness, and in breadth from six to 200 feet, were rearing up on ends to which they advanced, crushing similar pieces to small lumps or tossing over and breaking themselves into all kinds of shapes and sizes, and all this with the most horrible noise, such as can hardly be described. The rumbling of a railroad train in a tunnel, the shrieks of a thousand steam whistles, and the crash of a falling house all combined, would make the nearest approach to the noise which deafened us for more than four hours."

SELECT SIFTINGS.

There were twenty-two oracles of Apollo in different parts of Greece. The most famous was at Delphi.

The first cargo of slaves brought from Africa was taken from Lagos in 1444, by Prince Henry, of Portugal.

In 1760 the various religious societies of the United States protested against the use of alcoholic beverages at funerals.

A recent trial has elicited the fact that many German girls cultivate their hair for sale. Really fine hair fetches some \$5 an ounce.

Under old European law the crew and passengers of wrecked vessels could be imprisoned and enslaved, their property reverting to the lord of the coast or to the crown.

During the reign of Henry IV., which lasted eighteen years, 6000 French gentlemen perished by the sword, and the king gave 14,000 pardons to those who had broken the law by dueling.

The granddaddy of all the sweet potatoes was on exhibition recently at a store in Waco, Texas. It was a yam, and when dug weighed thirty-two pounds. Sweet potatoes weigh about sixty pounds to the bushel, so that this one was a little over half a bushel of solid potato.

High French authorities have found by experiments on animals that while small doses of arsenic seemed to do good at first, they resulted ultimately in poverty of blood, and that a post-mortem disclosed in the liver, lungs and kidneys the characteristics of fatty degeneration.

Some years ago there was a cat-corn held in Paris. It was called "Concert Mautant," from the mewing of the felines. They were trained by having their tails pulled every time a certain note was struck and the unpleasant remembrance caused each one to mew each time that he heard the sound again.

The servile war in Sicily was brought about by the inhumanity of the masters, who, slaves being very abundant on account of the great number of prisoners taken in war, found it easier to prefer to camp on ice, and I can conceive of no greater "forlorn hope" than an attempt to reach Siberia (say 240 miles distant) over the ice that surrounds us and with the winter's cold sapping one's life at every step. Of course if we were to lose our ship we would make the effort to get there, but our chances of success would be extremely problematical."

The last entry is dated December 31, 1880, and is as follows:

"Minstrels and ringing in the new year in latitude seventy-three degrees forty-eight minutes north, longitude 177 degrees thirty-two minutes east. During the past sixteen months we have drifted 1,300 miles, far enough if it had been in a straight line to carry us to and beyond the pole, but we are yet only 200 miles northwest of where we were first beset. We have suffered injury, and danger has often confronted us. We have been squeezed and jammed, tossed and tumbled; we have pumped a leaking ship for a year; but we are not yet daunted, and are as ready to dare everything as we ever were. And we face the new year firmly, hoping to do something worthy of ourselves, of Bennett's enterprise and the flag above us."

Within ten months after these words were written the Jeannette was at the bottom of the ocean and De Long lay dead in the Lena delta.

SCIENTIFIC NOTES.

In the course of a recent cyclone which struck Iowa the mainsprings of watches were broken in extraordinary numbers all along the track of the storm for thirty miles wide, which goes to show that electricity had something to do in causing the disturbance.

The enormous power of modern great guns is well indicated in the statement that the largest on board of the vessels of the British fleet is capable of throwing a projectile weighing 1,700 pounds at a velocity of over a mile in four seconds, equal to 27,213 tons of metal falling a distance of one foot on an object.

In Eschershausen a farm, the soil of which is rich in alkalis, has for twenty years been manured only with artificial fertilizers. The crops have always been good, and only a falling off in straw has been noticed when "silica" plants were grown for four or five years in succession, but the original yield has been obtained when a "lime" plant had been introduced into the rotation.

It is reported that an unusually large number of seals had lately appeared in the Baltic sea a few miles north of the Samland coast. The salmon fishers have become alarmed lest the seals should play havoc with their industry, as they have done from time to time with the fisheries in other places, and at present the damage caused by seals is very great in Pommerania.

These are the conclusions of Professor E. Wollny on the physical properties of the soil in a dense and loose state. When it is desired to increase the proportion of water in a soil density is to be aimed at, but a loose condition should be maintained when the contrary state is found needful. The more densely the particles of the soil are packed together the more such soil will vary in temperature.

A House of Iron.

George L. Huston is building at Parkersburg, Penn., a residence wholly of iron, on a foundation of solid rock. The floors will be of polished cast-iron tiles, in which different qualities of the metal will be used to produce a variety of colors. All the partitions, as well as the outer walls, will be of iron surface, but so painted and ornamented as to look like wood. In the library will be a cabinet for the exhibition of iron specimens. This will be constructed of magnetized iron, so that the specimens will adhere to it by magnetic attraction.

It is claimed that medicinal plants and flowers for perfumery can be grown in greater perfection in Australia than in any other part of the world.

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