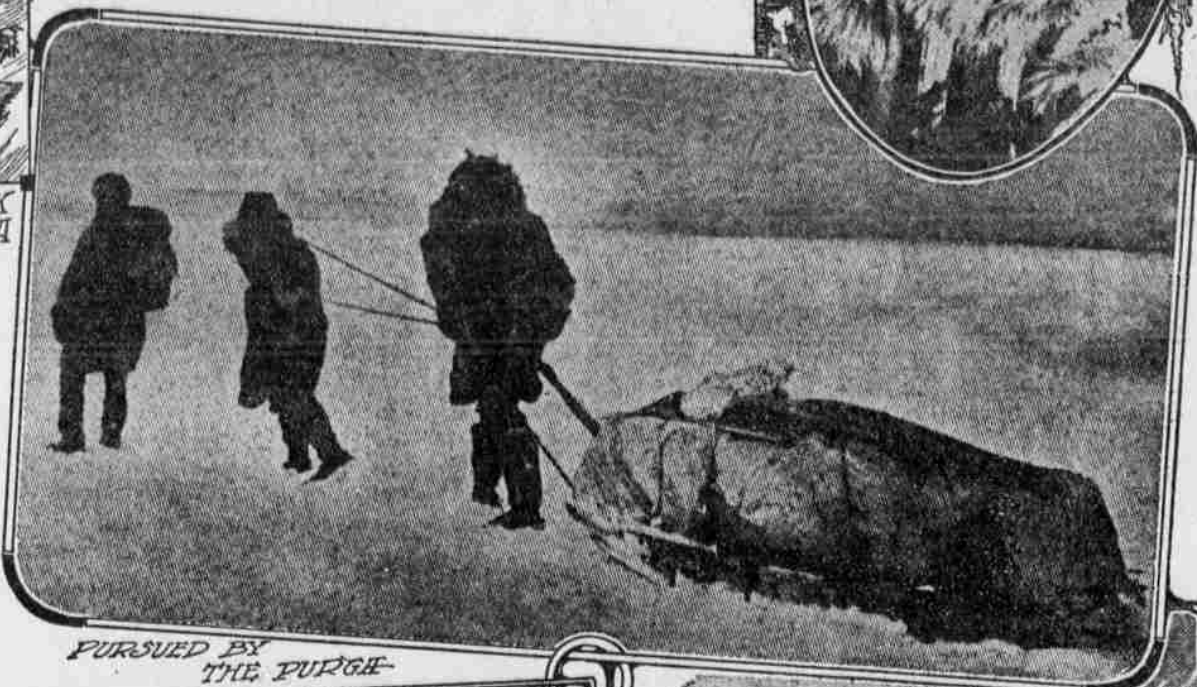


The Lure of the Lone Trail

BENNO ALEXANDER

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SIBERIA'S first gold placers were discovered about the middle of the eighteenth century in the rugged fastnesses of the Ural Mountains, frowning along the borders of Europe and Asia. Primeval forests and pathless tundras revealed but reluctantly their long hidden secrets. Nevertheless, some forty years ago, Russian miners, ever intrepid in their eastward quest of the precious metal, had reached the auriferous drifts in the valley of the mighty Amur that rolls from the heart of China grandly down to the lonely Okhotsk sea.

After the wonderful Klondike excitement of gold deposits throughout Siberia's over-responding latitudes of similar geological formations lent additional strength to the old tradition that the gold-bearing zone extended from Northwestern America to Northwestern Asia and that consequently the further shores of Bering Sea were well worth prospecting.

The first short-lived and barbaric, but, oh! so glorious splendors of Dawson and Nome had begun to pale, when a persistent and seemingly well-authenticated rumor of valuable nuggets having been found along the shores of Northeastern Kamchatka, fanned our smouldering imagination into brightest flames.

There's a race of men that don't fit in; they are always tired of things that be; they want the strange and the new and they don't know how to rest. My dear old "pard," Austin, and I belong to this legion of forelopers, never enlisted and never discharged. The fond hope that we were going to be numbered amongst the original "Forty-Niners" of a new California over yonder, "cross the bay," lured us from the Yukon even to Siberia—to Vladivostok.

There we were joined by a kindred spirit, a young Russian mining engineer, Ivan Ivanovitch—soon enough he became plain Jack—fresh from an American college and ready for adventure.

Kamchatka, dependency of the maritime province and administrative district of Petropavlovsk, has been a Russian colony for over 200 years. From Cape Lopatka, the large peninsula's south-most point, lofty mountains, overtopped by many active and more extinct volcanoes, stretch northward far into the Arctic waste.

On the northeast coast, there where the mountain chain recedes over thirty miles from the low littoral, the Pankara enters the sea, opposite to the large island of Karaginsk. A gloomily beautiful thundercloud overshadowed the densely wooded shores when we landed at Ola, the little Koryak hamlet near the Pankara's mouth. In the course of a few hours our steamer, "Primorsk," had discharged our earthly possessions and the cargo consigned to the local agent of the Russian Chartered Company, who holds the furring privileges of Northeastern Siberia.

Open-mouthed natives gaped curiously and a thousand hostile-looking dogs snarled viciously. The Natchalnik, however, having minutely scrutinized our papers, received us with open arms, and Father Juvenal, the Pope, offered us the hospitality of his log cabin. We learned many interesting facts about this out-of-the-way neck of the woods that night. The peninsula's mongoloid aborigines, the rapidly decreasing Kamchadales proper—mostly fishermen—dwell around the water courses to the southward.

Their northern neighbors, our friends, the "dog Koryaks," mighty hunters and trappers, live in log cabins, dug-outs or skin tents. They belong largely to the orthodox church—at least nominally—are good natured and hospitable, but their notions of cleanliness are more than questionable. The occasional sight of our toothbrushes once caused a riot of an amazed mob. Both the women and the almost beardless men alike, braid their hair into two plaits, smoke the cheap Moharka tobacco, intermixed with birch bark, and wear nearly identical dresses of pelts or—in summer—gaudy calico.

Further on and up to Kamchatka's border, the strictly nomadic "reindeer Koryaks," addicted to weird shamanism, pitch their yurts wherever good feeding grounds attract their herds. Beyond their territory we find, in the interior, Tungus tribes, along the seaboard the unconquered race of the Tchukches, that stoutly refuse the Yassak to this day.

The Pankara has a length of about 90 miles. The advanced season and a preliminary examination of accessible rock formation, combined with encouraging reports of white and native residents, prompted us to prospect the upper valley without delay. The Natchalnik placed the only three pack horses at our disposal, rather shaggy, but hardy Irkutsk ponies, able to shift for themselves even in winter. As guide and helper we engaged the Koryak, Peter, nicknamed Petruschka-Parsley—from his fondness for this wild plant. Petruschka of course was speedily pared down to Pete, as Ivan has surrendered to Jack long ago.

The village of Ola is happy. A sweet fragrance of fish and blubber permeates the air, for seal and salmon were plentiful.

Pete, very busy, very important, helps us with our preparations for the prospecting expedition. The Natchalnik invites us to a farewell dinner (deer tongue, ptarmigan, smoked and salted fish, much tea and more vodka) and on the 17th day of August we set out.

On the third night we are encamped in the foothills.

Even here, at the threshold of boreal dreariness, nature unfolds an almost pathetic beauty. Im-

mediately before us are seen the snow-dademed mountain monarchs, robed in majestically flowing folds of glacial ermine—far behind the heaving billows of the ocean, aglitter in the evening sun—while all around is Siberia's virgin forest, the taiga, silent, untrodden, mysterious.

Owing to widely divergent conditions Siberia's fauna is not uniformly distributed, but within their chosen haunts animals are abundant. Of big game we have on the Pankara the agile, keen-eyed mountain sheep and the powerful brown bear.

Rocky mountain sheep are here replaced by congeners of slighter build, more slender horns and pure white color. Their hands spend most of the time above timber, remaining even during the severe Kamchatka winter amongst the heights whose irregularities of cliffs and gorges afford opportunity for shelter and exposed food supply. Sometimes when we had nearly stalked them the warning whistle of the watchful marmot would drive them to headlong flight. Their flesh is very palatable; when cold weather set in we killed and froze enough to last all winter.

The brown bears are of immense size, greatly exceeding the grizzlies of the western hemisphere. Their front claws are shorter, thicker and more abruptly curved than in grizzlies. As a rule they give us a wide berth; in close quarters, however, or when wounded, they are veritable fiends from hell. But Pete attacks them, boldly and unhesitatingly, with his formidable spear.

Tradition and training make all natives marksmen of the first order with firearms, bolts and arrows. Even small ermines and arctic squirrels stand no chance of escape at seventy-five yards; and the Koryaks have to shoot them in the head, at that, or their skins would be worthless.

The ground was frostbound nearly to the surface, and bedrock, reached by thawing through the icy gravels, was ten to fifteen feet deep. Keeping three fires aglow, for which Pete rustled the wood, we made good headway. Lack of leverage, however, makes the Russian shovel, which has no bend at its neck, a most unwieldy and exasperating utensil. At the beginning we struck encouraging colors in addition to quartz, iron pyrites; often in the form of mispickel and all the products of its decomposition such as magnetic oxide and hematite. Despite these fair prospects we had worked our way up to the veriest headwaters without tangible results early in November. Near the source the soil was not frozen, due to warm volcanic springs, and sinking to bedrock became impossible. Therefore we crossed the divide leading southward to the Russakoff river to examine its course down to the sea and finally to sled to headquarters along the shore. On the Russakoff we found the same conditions; tepid springs above, a few colors below, paydirt nowhere.

Winter is now upon us in good earnest; in December our thermometer sinks to 57 below. The sheep are safe beyond the snowdrifts; bear, marmot and porcupine have retired for their long sleep; only willow grouse and rock ptarmigan remain with us.

Glorious winter stars, clear, large, unapproachable, glitter on the firmament. At midnight the Pleiades of Job and Homer flame from the zenith and then the Northern Lights, violet, silvery and rose come down and dance with the houseless snow.

Christmas eve finds us near the Russakoff's mouth and on New Year's day we drag our sled into Ola. Just in time; already midwinter sundogs loom ghost-like through the frost-mist in the south; for far to the northward the weather-witch of the Yaga-Baba Pass has been brewing her dread purga, the Siberian snow storm.

The blizzard's fury raged forty-eight hours, burying the roofs of the lowly cabins under mountainous drifts.

Quickly the late orthodox Christmas-tide approaches. In the morning the entire population—and with them we—attended church, Father Juvenal officiating in full canonicals of black and gold. Before the Russian New Year we were up and away once more.

Business Education

High School Tries to Make a Man of Student

By JOHN BRAYLE BRUCE



UNLESS one intends to study law or medicine a high-school education is unnecessary, according to a writer. I cannot agree.

It is true that certain studies are taught that are preparatory to these professions, but we have also a commercial course, such as bookkeeping, penmanship, stenography, commercial geography, commercial law, political economy and many similar studies in our high-school course.

Does not a good knowledge of German (not merely knowing how to say "Wie gehts" or "Guten morgen") come in handy in business life? Studies like algebra and geometry are not only of interest, but they develop quick thinking and sound judgment.

Of course, nine times out of ten, algebra or geometry will never be used in business, but it is the results of such study that count.

The statement that high-school chaps lower the wage scale is not only wrong but absurd.

A high-school graduate will not work for lower (let alone as low) wages than many boys who have not his education. He knows his ability and expects to be paid wages accordingly.

A high-school graduate certainly is not "satisfied with cigarette money" and it can be readily seen that few of them, comparatively, smoke cigarettes.

Now, aside from the business education of high school, there are other things, and are there not other things in life than merely a business education?

In conversation does not one like to be a little informed on all topics, whether historical, scientific or on any other?

A business man must know a little more than the mere facts relating to his business.

A salesman, to be successful, must know of other things to talk about than his wares.

I do not mean by this to imply that a grammar-school graduate will not succeed. It depends on him. But a good education combined with good natural qualities must of necessity fetch the better results.

The high school tries to teach and make a man out of every student who has the will to exert himself.

So we see that a high-school education is very good for the one of moderate as well as of small means, that it is essential for business as well as for professions and that it certainly should be encouraged.



How Clerks Treat Many Fancy Post Cards

By J. L. DOUGHERTY

An inquiry was made recently concerning treatment of fancy post cards by post-office clerks.

Now, this is certain: No cards are destroyed by the clerks and none is sent to the dead letter office for destruction unless it is of such nature that it cannot, according to the rules of the department, be forwarded.

But many pretty cards never reach their destination. This is because of the carelessness or ignorance of the sender. Cards with nice tinsel and glass on them must be inclosed in sealed envelopes. Many do not know this.

A tissue paper envelope is like any other envelope and a card inside with writing on it requires postage at the rate of two cents an ounce or fraction.

The postage stamp must always be on the envelope, not on the card below.

Any card bearing some material other than paper fastened to it must have the regular first-class postage if it contains a message.

Besides being lost because of violating these rules, many cards are not delivered because of careless addressing by the sender.

Would Banish All Canines In Cities

By DR. CHAS. W. DUDLEY

In looking over the columns of a morning paper I noted where during the previous twenty-four hours five or six people in a certain locality had been more or less severely bitten by dogs, some of which were in the category of pets.

My view is that the time is now at hand when dogs will be considered as much out of place in cities as hogs or cattle.

As a matter of fact, the ideal urban community will not give shelter to any dumb animal with the possible exception of the horse, and even its presence is extremely objectionable on sanitary grounds, for if there were no stables crusades against the filthy housefly would be unnecessary.

As far as dogs are concerned there is not a single tenable argument for their retention in towns; in the unpoliced rural districts they are unquestionably of value in driving off the predatory tramp.

Any man who has witnessed the awful laceration of little children by ferocious brutes or watched the death agonies of those in whom hydrophobia developed, will hail the day when it will be an offense against the law to keep a dog inside the limits of a city.

Escape Hay Fever In Far East

By SUMERI NAGASHIO

If hay fever is caused by the dust why does not every one have it?

Why does it always come in the fall of the year and stay until the first frost, instead of the early summer, when dust is even more plentiful?

Why do we have hay fever worse in some states than in others, and in some not at all?

And why do we have it worse in the country where the air is free from dust, but filled with the poisons thrown from the dry dog weeds, rag weeds and jimson weeds?

I have had hay fever 22 years. While living in Japan, where there is plenty of dust, but no weeds to die in the fall, I did not have it at all, but made up for that lost time on returning to America.