

Rex Beach Short Stories



Continued from Last Week

while they felt it sag beneath their feet. It is had in the dark to ride the ice of an overflow, for one may crash through ankle deep to the solid body beneath or plunge to the armpits.

They skated over the yielding surface toward safety till, without warning, Crowley smashed in halfway to his hips. He fell forward bodily, and the ice let him through till he rolled in the water. Buck skinned over more lightly and, when they had reached the solid footing, helped him wring out his garments. Straightway the cloth whitened under the frost and cracked when they resumed their march, but there was no time for fires, and by vigorous action Crowley could keep the cold from striking in.

They had threaded up into the region where spring was further advanced and within half an hour encountered another overflow. Climbing



Crowley Smashed In.

the steep bank, they wallowed through thickets waist deep in snow. Beneath the crust, which cut knife-like, it was wet and soggy, so they emerged saturated. Then, debouching on to the glare ice, the boy had a nasty fall, for he slipped and his loose lung pack flung him suddenly. Nothing is more wicked than a pack on smooth ice. The surface had frozen glass smooth, and constant difficulty beset their progress. Their slick soled footwear refused to grip it, so that often they fell, always awkwardly, occasionally crushing through into the icy water beneath.

Without warning Buck found that he was very tired. He also found that his pack had grown soggy and quadrupled in weight, tugging sullenly at his aching shoulders.

As daylight showed they slipped harness and, hurriedly gathering twigs, boiled a pot of tea. They took time to prepare nothing else, yet, even though the kettle sang speedily, as they drank from around the bend below came voices. Crowley straightened with a curse and, snatching his pack, fled up the stream, followed by his companion. They ran till Buck's knees failed him. Thereupon the former removed a portion of the youngster's burden, adding it to his own, and they hurried on for hours, till they fell exhausted upon a dry moss hummock. Here they exchanged footwear, as Buck now found his feet were paining him acutely, owing to the tightness of his rubber boots. They proved too small for Crowley as well, and in a few hours his feet were likewise rutted.

Noon found them limping among the bald hills of the river's source. Here timber was sparse, and the snows had likewise thinned, so to avoid the convolutions of the stream they cut across points, floundering among "nigger heads"—quaint bobbly hummocks of grass—being thrown repeatedly by their packs, which had developed a malicious devilry. This footing was infinitely worse than the reeking ice, but it saved time, so they took it.

Now, under their stiff mackinaws they perspired freely as the sun mounted until their heavy garments chafed them beneath arms and legs. Moreover, mosquitoes, which in this latitude breed within arm's length of snow drifts, continually whined in a vicious cloud before their features.

Human nerves will weather great strains, but wearing, maddening, unending trivialities will break them down, and so, although their journey in miles had been inconsiderable, the dragging packs, the driving panic, the lack of food and firm footing had trebled it.

Scaling the moss capped saddle, they labored painfully, a hundred yards at a time. Back of them the valley unrolled, its stream winding away like a gleaming ribbon, stretching through dark banks of fir down to the Yukon. After incredible effort they reached the

credit and gazed dully out to the southward over a limitless jungle of peaks on, on, to a blue veiled valley leagues and leagues across. Many square miles lay under them in the black of unbroken forests. It was their first glimpse of the Tanana. Far beyond from a groveling group of foothills a solitary giant peak soared grandly, standing aloof, serene, terrible in its proportions. Even in their fatigue they exclaimed aloud:

"It's Mount McKinley!"

"Yep! Tallest wart on the face of the continent. There's the creek we go down, see!" Crowley indicated a water course which meandered away through canyons and broad reaches. "We follow it to yonder cross valley; then east to there." To Buck's mind his gesture included a tinted realm as farreaching as a state.

Stretched upon the bare schist, comb manding the back stretch, they munch ed slices of raw bacon.

Directly out toward the mountain's foot two figures crawled.

"There they come!" And Crowley red, stumbling, sliding, into the strange valley.

As this was the south and early side of the range they found the hills more barren of snow. Water seeped into the gulches till the creek ice was worn and rotted.

"This'll be fierce," the Irishman remarked. "If she breaks on us we'll be hung up in the hills and starve before the creeks lower enough to get home."

Small streams freeze solidly to the bottom, and the spring waters wear downward from the surface. Thus they found the creek awash, and, following farther, it became necessary to wade in many places. They came to a box canyon where the winter snow had packed, forming a dam, and, as there was no way of avoiding it with out retreating a mile and climbing the ragged bluff, they floundered through their packs aloft, the slushy water arm pit deep.

"We'd ought 'a' took the ridges," Buck chattered. Language slips forth phonetically with fatigue.

"No! Feller's apt to get lost. Drop into the wrong creek—come out fifty miles away."

"I bet the others do anyhow," Buck held stubbornly. "It's lots easier going."

"Wish Sully would, but he's too wise. No such luck for me." A long pause. "I reckon I'll have to kill him before he gets back." Again they relaxed into miles of silence.

Crowley's fancy fed on vengeance, hatred livening his work worn faculties. He nursed carefully the memory of their quarrel, for it helped him travel and took his mind from the agony of movement and this aching sleep hunger.

The feet of both men felt like fearful, shapeless masses. Their packs lashed backward sullenly, chafing raw shoulder sores, and always the ravenous mosquitoes stung and stung and whined and whined.

At an exclamation the leader turned. Miles back, silhouetted far above on the comb of the ridge, they deserted two tiny figures.

"That's what we'd ought 'a' done. They'll beat us in."

"No, they won't. They'll have to camp tonight or get lost, while we can keep goin'. We can't go wrong down here, can't do no more than drown."

Buck groaned at the thought of the night hours. He couldn't stand it; that was all. Enough is enough of anything, and he had gone the limit. Just one more mile and he would quit. Yet he did not.

All through that endless phantom night they floundered, incased in freezing garments, numb and heavy with sleep, but morning found them at the banks of the main stream.

"You look like h—!" said Buck, laughing weakly. His mirth relaxed his nerves suddenly till he giggled and hiccupped hysterically. Nor could he stop for many minutes, the while Crowley stared at him apathetically from a lined and shrunken countenance, his features standing out skeleton-like. The younger man evidenced the strain even more severely, for his flesh was tender, and he had traveled the last hours on pure nerve. His jaws were locked and corded, however, while his drooping eyes shone unquenchably.

Eventually they rounded a bluff on to a cabin nesting at the mouth of a dark valley. Near it men were working with a windlass; so, stumbling to them, they spoke huskily.

"Sorry we ain't got room inside," the stranger replied, "but three of the boys is down with scurvy, and we're all cramped up. Plenty more folks coming. I's'pose, eh?"

The two had sunk on to the wet ground and did not answer. Buck fell with his pack still on, utterly lost, and the miner was forced to drag the bundle from his shoulders. As he rolled

... was sleeping heavily.

Crowley awakened while the sun was still golden, his joints aching excruciatingly. They had slept four hours. He boiled tea on the miners' stove and fried a pan of salt pork, but was too tired to prepare anything else, so they drank the warm bacon grease clear with their tea.

As Buck strove to arise his limbs gave way weakly so that he fell, and it took him many moments to recover their use.

"Where's the best chance, pardner?" they queried of the men on the dump.

"Well, there ain't none very close by. We've got things pretty well covered."

"How's that? There's only six of you. You can't hold but six claims besides discovery."

"Oh, yes we can. We've got powers of attorney; got 'em last fall in St. Michael; got 'em recorded too."

Crowley's sunken eyes blazed.

"Them's no good. We don't reckon 'em in this district. One claim is enough for any man if it's good and too much if it's bad."

"What district you alludin' at?" questioned the other brusquely.

"You're in the Skookum district now. It takes six men to organize. Well, we organized. We made laws. We elected a recorder. I'm it. If you don't like our rules yonder is the divide. We've got the U. S. government back of us. See?"

Crowley's language became purely local, but the other continued unruffled.

"We knew you-all was coming, so we sort of loaded up. If there's any ground hereabout that we ain't got blanketed it's purely an oversight. There's plenty left farther out, though," and he swept them a mocking gesture.

"Help yourselves and pass up for more. I'll record 'em."

"What's the fee?"

"Ten dollars apiece."

Crowley swore more savagely.

"You done a fine job of hoggin', didn't you? It's \$2.50 everywhere else." But the recorder of the Skookum district laughed carelessly and resumed his windlass.

"Sorry you ain't pleased. Maybe you'll learn to like it."

As they turned away he continued: "I don't mind giving you a hunch, though. Tackle that big creek about five miles down yonder. She prospect ed good last fall, but you'll have to go clean to her head, cause we've got everything below."

Eight hours later by the guiding glare of the northern lights the two stumbled back into camp, utterly broken.

They had followed the stream for miles and miles to find it staked by the powers of attorney of the six. Coming to the gulch's head, to be sure, they found vacant ground, but refused to claim such unpromising territory. Then the endless homeward march through the darkness. Out of thickets and through drifts they burst, while fatigue settled on them like some horrid vampire from the darkness. Every step, being no longer involuntary, became a separate labor, requiring mental concentration. They were half dead in slumber as they walked, but their stubborn courage and smoldering rage at the men who had caused this drove them on. They suffered silently, because it takes effort to groan, and they hoarded every atom of endurance.

Many, many times Buck repeated a poem, timing his steps to its rhythm, rendering it over and over till it wore a rut through his brain, his eyes fixed dully upon the glaring fires above the hilltops. For years a faintness came over him with the memory of these lines:

Then dark they lie, and stark they lie,
Rookery, dune and foe,
And the northern lights came down o' nights to dance with the houseless snow.

Reaching the cabin, they found an army of men sleeping heavily upon the wet moss. Among them was the great form of Knute, but nowhere did they spy Sully.

With much effort they tore off the constricting boots and, using them for pillows, sank into a painful lethargy.

Awakened early by the others, they took their stiffly frozen footwear beneath the blankets to thaw against their warm bodies, but their feet were swollen to double size, and every joint had ossified rheumatically.

Eventually they hobbled about, preparing the first square meal since the start—two days and three nights.

Still they saw no Sully, though Crowley's eyes darted careful inquiry among the horde of stampedees which moved about the cabin. Later he seemed bent on some hidden design, so they crawled out of sight of the camp; then, commencing at the upper stake of discovery, he stepped off the claims from post to post.

It is customary to bias the boundaries of locations on tree trunks, but from topographical irregularities it is difficult to properly gauge these distances. Hence many rich fractions have been run over by the heedless, to fall to him who chained the ground.

Upon pacing the third one he showed excitement.

"You walk this one again. Mebbe I made a mistake."

Buck returned, crashing through the brush.

"I make it 1,700."

The claim above figured likewise, and they trembled with elation as they blazed their lines.

Returning to camp, they found the recorder in the cabin with the scurvy patients. Unfolding the location notices, his face went black as he read, while he snarled angrily:

"'Fraction between three and four' and 'fraction between four and five' eh? You're crazy!"

"I reckon not," said Crowley, lifting his lips at the corners characteristically.

"There ain't any fraction there," the other averred loudly. "We own them claims. I told you we had everything covered."

"You record them fractions!"

"I won't do it! I'll see you in"—

Crowley reached forth suddenly and strangled him as he sat. He buried his thumbs in his throat, forcing him roughly back against a bunk. Further and further he crushed him till the man lay platoned and writhing on his back. Then he knelt on him, shaking and worrying him like a great terrier.

At the first commotion the cripples

(Continued next week.)

Character in Reading

The Youth's Companion does more than entertain; it affords the reader a mental and moral tonic. Its stories are not only well told, contributed by the best writers of stories, but they maintain the standards, reflect the ideals of the best homes. They do not throw a false glamour over the tawdry things of life. Rather do they depict the courageous, the helpful, the simple—the true life of the greater number with their adventures, their conflict of temperament, their failures and successes.

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Notice

Notice is hereby given that the partnership business heretofore conducted by Harry Julian and Wilbur Julian, as Julian Brothers, in the town of Lents, Oregon, is this day dissolved by mutual consent of the parties thereto. Hereafter Harry Julian will run 15c store at same location.

Pendleton Normal School Proven Necessity

(Copied from Portland Oregonian.)

MONMOUTH, Ore., June 26.—The Oregon Normal school opened this week . . . students enrolled 785, largest on record for state Normal in Oregon . . . how to care for large student body a problem . . . 800 being crowded into auditorium with seating capacity of 550. Galleries filled with extra chairs in aisles. More than 150 students seated on platform. New boarding houses completed, additions to rooming houses built and tents used. One hundred girls sleep on upper floor of school.

The official school report gives 150 grade pupils in Monmouth, for teacher practice.

Read what those you have elected to handle the affairs of your state and who are thoroughly informed regarding school conditions in Oregon have to say concerning measure 308 on the ballot at the coming election:

- By James Withycombe, Governor of Oregon:
"Oregon is unquestionably in need of more normal school work and Pendleton is the logical place for a school of this class in Eastern Oregon."
- By J. A. Churchill, State Superintendent of Public Instruction:
"I trust that the voters of the State will assist in raising the standard of our schools by establishing a State Normal School at Pendleton."
- By P. L. Campbell, President of the University of Oregon:
"At least one additional Normal School is urgently needed in Oregon."
- By W. J. Kerr, President of the Oregon Agricultural College:
"Since the people of Pendleton are initiating a measure for the establishment of a Normal School at that place, it will give me pleasure to support this measure."
- By J. H. Ackerman, President Oregon Normal School, at Monmouth:
"A careful analysis of the situation will convince any one that Oregon needs a Normal School in Eastern Oregon and Pendleton fills all the government requirements."
- By the County School Superintendents of Oregon:
"Resolved, that it is the sense of the County School Superintendents of the State of Oregon, in convention assembled, that the best interests of the schools of the State demand increased facilities for the training of teachers, and that we, therefore, endorse the initiative measure to establish a Normal School at Pendleton."
- By Mrs. Charles H. Caetner, President of the Oregon Federation of Women's Clubs:
"I most heartily endorse the location of said Normal School at Pendleton."
- Prof. Robert C. French, Farmer President of the Normal School Located at Weston:
"An immediate establishment of such a school at some central point such as Pendleton would prove a great asset to the State of Oregon."
- B. F. Mulkey, Ex-President Southern Oregon Normal School:
"I shall support the location of an Eastern Oregon Normal School at Pendleton."

State Board of Regents of Oregon Normal School declares that "the necessity for additional Normal school facilities in Oregon is apparent."

Portland Chamber of Commerce endorses measure 308 and say Pendleton most logical location for Normal school in Eastern Oregon.

308 X YES IS A VOTE FOR YOUR CHILDREN

Eastern Oregon State Normal School Committee.
By J. H. Gwin, Secy., Pendleton, Ore.

Don't Let Skin Troubles Spread

Trivial blemishes are sometimes the first warning of serious skin diseases. Neglected skin troubles grow. Dr. Hobson's Eczema Ointment promptly stops the progress of eczema, heals stubborn cases of pimples, acne, blotchy, red and scaly skin. The anti-septic qualities of Dr. Hobson's Eczema Ointment kill the germ and prevent the spread of the trouble. For cold sores or chapped hands, Dr. Hobson's Eczema Ointment offers prompt relief. At your Druggist, 50c.

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At The Churches

Arleta Baptist Church
9:45 a. m. Bible School.
11 a. m. Preaching service.
8:00 p. m. Evening service.
7:00 p. m. B. Y. P. U. meeting.
8:00 Thursday Prayer meeting.
Everybody welcome to any and all of these services.
W. T. S. Spriggs, pastor.

Millard Avenue Presbyterian Church
10 a. m. Sabbath School.
11 a. m. Morning worship.
7:30 p. m. Y. P. S. C. E.
7:45 p. m. Evening worship.
7:30 p. m. Thursday, midweek service.
8 p. m. Thursday, choir practice.
Rev. Wm. H. Amos, Pastor.

St. Peter's Catholic Church
Sundays:
8 a. m. Low Mass.
10:30 a. m. High Mass.
10 a. m. Sunday School.
12 M. Choir rehearsal.
Week days: Mass at 8 a. m.

Seventh Day Adventist Church
10 a. m. Saturday Sabbath School.
11 a. m. Saturday preaching.
7:30 p. m. Wednesday. Prayer meeting.
7:45 p. m. Sunday preaching.

Kern Park Christian Church
Corner 88th St. and 46th Ave. S. E.
10 a. m. Bible School.
11 a. m. and 7:30 p. m. preaching service.
6:30 p. m. Christian Endeavor.
7:30 p. m. Thursday, mid-week prayer meeting.
A cordial welcome to all.
Rev. G. K. Berry, Pastor.

St. Pauls Episcopal Church
One block south of Woodmere station. Holy Communion the first Sunday of each month at 8 p. m. No other services that day.
Every other Sunday the regular services will be as usual.
Evening Prayer and sermon at 4 p. m. Sunday School meets at 3 p. m. B. Boatwright, Supt., L. Maffett, Sec.
Rev. O. W. Taylor Rector.

Lents Evangelical Church
Sermon by the Pastor, 11 a. m. and 7:15 p. m.
Sunday School 9:45 a. m., Albert Fankhauser, Superintendent.
Y. P. A. 6:45 p. m. Paul Bradford, President.
Prayer meeting Thursday 8 p. m.
A cordial welcome to all.
T. R. Hornschuch, Pastor.

Lents Friend's Church
9:45 a. m. Bible School, Clifford Barker Superintendent.
11:00 a. m. Preaching services.
6:25 p. m. Christian Endeavor.
7:30 p. m. Preaching Services.
8:00 p. m. Thursday, mid-week prayer meeting.
A cordial welcome to all these services.

John and Nettie Riley, Pastors.

Lents Baptist Church
Lord's Day, Bible School 9:45 a. m. Morning worship, 11 a. m. Elmo Heights Sunday School, 2:30 p. m.
B. Y. P. U., 6:30 p. m. Evening worship, 7:30 p. m.
A cordial welcome to these services.
J. M. Nelson, Pastor

Fifth Church of Christ
Fifth Church of Christ, Scientist of Portland, Ore. Myrtle Park Hall, Myrtle Park.
Services Sunday 11 a. m. Sunday School 9:30 and 11 a. m. Wednesday evening testimonial meeting 8 p. m.

Lents M. E. Church
Sunday School 9:45 a. m. Preaching 11:00 a. m. Bible Study Class, 5:30 p. m. Epworth League 6:30 p. m. Preaching 7:30 p. m. Prayer meeting Thursday evening at 7:30. F. M. Jasper, pastor. Residence 5708 83rd St.

Laurelwood M. E. Church
9:45 a. m. Sunday school.
11:00 a. m. preaching.
12:30 a. m. class meeting.
6:30 p. m. Epworth League.
7:30 p. m. preaching.
8:00 p. m. Thursday evening, prayer service.
Dr. C. R. Carlos, pastor.

German Evangelical Reformed Church
Corner Woodstock Ave., and 87th St. Rev. W. G. Lienkaemper, pastor.
Sunday School 10 a. m. Morning Worship, 11 a. m. Y. P. S. at 7:30 p. m. German School and Catechetical Class Saturday 10 a. m.

Free Methodist Church
Sunday School, 10 a. m. Preaching, 11 a. m. and 7:30 p. m. Prayer meeting, Wednesday 7:30 p. m. All are cordially invited to attend these services.
Robert H. Clark, pastor.

LODGE DIRECTORY
Magnolia Camp No. 4026, Royal Neighbors, meets regular Second and Fourth Wednesdays of each month at I. O. O. F. Hall, Second Wednesdays social meeting. Neighbors bring your families and friends. Fourth Wednesday, business. All Neighbors requested to come. By order of the Camp.
Toledo votes down a 12 mill special tax levy.
Richland will bond for a \$15,000 water system.