MAGAZINE SECTION THREE

The Oregon Journal

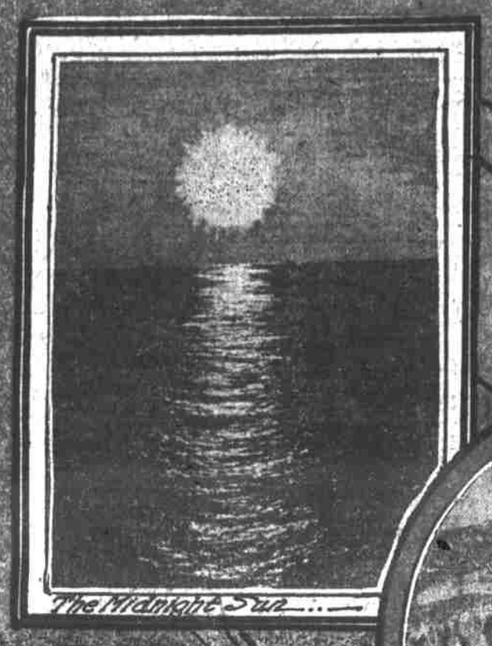
SUNDAY

SHE RUNS HER OWN WIRES

MAGAZINE SECTION THREE

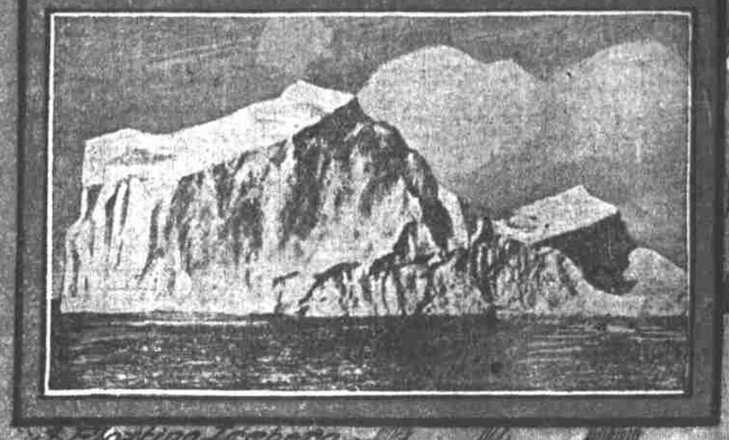
PORTLAND, OREGON, SUNDAY MORNING, AUGUST 16, 1908

"THE WINTER WE SPENT in the ARCTIC."



The Midnight Sun...

On the Homeward Journey— Sailing Over the Ice Caps.



Breaking Icebergs...

Eskimo Girls in Front of Igloo Hat.

A Walrus Hunt on the Ice...

The Story of Scientists Who Went on Peary's First Expedition

WHEN Commander Robert E. Peary left a short time ago again to brave the perils of the North in his quest of the elusive pole, he took with him on his staunch little ship, the Roosevelt, a small, specially constructed billiard table, several bushels of new music rolls, an automatic piano, several dozen decks of cards and a miscellaneous litter of recent fiction and magazines.

On the face of it such an item of news does not seem important. That is, to persons who have not been on an Arctic exploration. But if one pauses to think of the long nights of such a voyage, the interminable periods when time seems dead; when the stars craze one with their monotony in the gloom of evening, and when the vast sheets of ice reflect a ceaseless white glare under sunlight, he will realize the value of an automatic piano and books of fiction.

Of the daily life of the Arctic explorer, the little incidents which relieve the tedium of the journey, of the adventures, unimportant in themselves, but blending into romances of life afar North, little has been written. And yet to the northbound adventurer the daily life may be athrill with excitement or it may almost weary one into melancholia.

What is the daily life of such explorers? What do they witness day by day as they arise? How do they amuse themselves?

From a point of novelty few northern explorations equal the first expedition of Peary in the Kite, known as the North Greenland Expedition of 1891 and 1892, and the West Greenland Expedition of 1891. The West Greenland Expedition was composed of a number of men who accompanied Peary to McCormick bay, where a house was built and where the winter was spent. These men had never been in the North, and their experiences were novel and interesting.

IT WAS in 1886 that Lieutenant Peary, then of the engineering department of the United States Navy, securing a leave of absence, took a trip to the head of Baffin bay in a whaling vessel, and traveled about a hundred miles inland.

For the first time he viewed the comparatively even country, and came to the conclusion that to reach the most northern point the best means was to travel overland. The expedition which was projected some years later was sent under the auspices of the Academy of Natural Sciences of Philadelphia.

There were with Peary his wife, Langdon Gibson, chief assistant; Eivard Astrup, John M. Verhoeff, mineralogist, of Louisville, Ky.; Dr. F. A. Cook, surgeon, of New York, and Matthew Hensen, a Philadelphia negro, who has accompanied Peary on all his subsequent trips.

On the same boat the men who characterized themselves as the West Greenland Expedition were Professor Angelo Heilprin, then executive curator of the Academy of Natural Sciences; Professor Benjamin Sharp, corresponding secretary of the academy, and expert in invertebrate zoology; Professor J. F. Holt, of the Central High School, Philadelphia, zoologist; Dr. William F. Hughes, of Philadelphia, ornithologist; Levi W. Mengel, of Reading, Pa., entomologist; the late Dr. William H. Burk, botanist; Dr. Robert N. Keely, surgeon of the expedition, and the late Frazer Ashhurst, of Philadelphia, and Alexander C. Kenealy, a newspaper correspondent.

VETERAN CAPTAIN PIKE

On June 6, 1891, the expedition left Brooklyn, N. Y. The boat returned to St. John's, where it had been chartered, on August 23. Peary's party landed at McCormick bay, in latitude 77 degrees 43 minutes north.

In charge of the crew of the ship was Captain Richard Pike, who had been master of the Proteus, which took the ill-starred Greely expedition to Fort Conger in 1881, and who also had charge of the relief expedition of 1883, when the boat was crushed in the ice near Cape Sabine. Captain Pike, during long hours of the journey, would thrill the company by telling of his harrowing experience.

The party left Sydney on June 12, and expected to pass the strait of Belle Isle and into the North Atlantic without running into ice. To their dismay, however, they met early one of the foes of Arctic traveling—an ice floe. In an account of the voyage, Dr. Keely says:

"We remembered the dreadful tales we had all read of the final outcome of so many Arctic expeditions, and thought of the number of faithful men who had lost their lives by such an accident as had overtaken our boat.

"Sentiment, however, had but little enduring place in such a practical company. We made our way toward the open water that skirted the ice floe, hoping by so doing to find a clear channel which would enable us to pass the strait and emerge on the open sea.

"The whole day was spent searching in vain for such a channel, going backward and forward from one side of the strait to the other; but nothing was accomplished except obtaining views of the lonely shores of Labrador and Newfoundland.

"One channel was found which appeared to lead to open water beyond, but, after following it a couple of miles we found ourselves blocked. The ice quickly closed in behind us, and we were unable to advance; our retreat was cut off, and there was but little prospect of our being able to escape for several days."

The boat was in the narrowest part of the strait of Belle Isle, and only 52 degrees north. Disconcerting as the impediment was, members of the party amused themselves taking photographs and shooting wild ducks. Finally the vessel drifted near to the coast of Newfoundland.

A boat came out from shore, struggling through the ice. It contained three fishermen. They came to plead for medicine. Over in the village, they declared, many people had died. The village was the victim of an epidemic similar to influenza. Medicine was given the men, who, in turn, took letters from the party, promising to mail them on a ship expected to arrive in ten days.

For several days the vessel was locked in the ice. Snowballing became the sport of the party. Out on the floe they would hold pitched battles. On deck, however, during the day, they could work without coats on, the air being so springlike. Fissures in the floe were also located and fishing engaged in. Many cod were caught.

Daylight at this time lasted from 2.30 A. M. until 9.30 P. M. Finally, breaking from the ice, the boat sailed into open water and through a choppy sea that washed the deck. On June 23 they caught sight of Greenland.

On June 25 the island of Discoe, seventy miles distant, was sighted, and Godhavn, located on this island, was visited. There, after visiting the Governor, the party made a tour of inspection among the Eskimos. This was filled with elements of novelty.

"The Eskimo dwellings," as described by Dr. Keely, "were huts built of turf, with a roof made of boards covered with the same material. They were about fifteen feet square, and usually built on the slope of a hill. They were entered by a tunnel about ten feet in length and two or three feet in height, running out from its side.

"Before entering, it is quite essential to call to some of the inmates, who then knock out two or three of the ugly-looking dogs which congregate in and about the openings of all the huts. After this precaution, one goes down on hands and knees and crawls through the tunnel."

Although the men were indescribably dirty, the women, the travelers found, were quite clean. "The married women," Dr. Keely wrote, "are distinguished from those who are single by having their hair twisted in the form of a roll, four or five inches in height, on the top of the head, and tightly wrapped with a cord. The single women dress their hair in various styles, as fancy dictates, the female children wearing it sometimes like that of their mothers.

FIDDLERS OF THE FAR NORTH

"I saw not a single slovenly looking woman, and, if they had not such an abominable odor of grease and rank fish oil about them, they would have been quite attractive."

At Godhavn the party whiled away much time taking pictures. Sunday was enlivened by a native dance. To the surprise of the visitors, the old Eskimo fiddlers played tunes resembling negro and Irish melodies. Dr. Keely secured his guitar from the ship and delighted the Eskimos by accompanying them.

Some members of the party explored the valley of the Red river. The water of this river was found to be actually red, being colored by mud carried down from red sandstone cliffs. The valley was blooming with yellow poppies and flowers of various colors. Yet from the valley in the distance the party could see icebergs floating in Discoe bay. And above them blazed the midnight sun. Mosquitoes were a reminder of home in this desolate region.

Among the Eskimos that visited the ship was one fat, pudgy fellow who had the reputation of being able to eat more than any other man in Godhavn. There was a story current to the effect that he and his wife killed a seal several miles from the village and began to eat it, gorging themselves to such an extent that they were unable to return to their homes for two days. An exhibition of this fellow's powers on the Kite convinced the amused party of the truth of the story.

Leaving Godhavn, the boat steered northward along the coast, and soon sighted Upernavik, 180 miles away. Upon their arrival, the party was visited by the Governor and his assistant, but the greeting, according to the se-

(CONTINUED ON INSIDE PAGE.)