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WHEN SUMMER CAME WE PROCEEDED EAST ALONG THE COAST
Dogs towing the *umiak* in calm weather

My Quest in the Arctic

BY VILHJÁLMUR STEFÁNSSON

FIRST PAPER

THIS is to be the story of an undertaking the reason for which was the belief that there might exist on the north shore of the American continent people who had never seen a white man. The scientific importance of finding and studying such a tribe, if any existed, need not be argued here any more than it needed to be argued before the governing boards of scientific institutions in the autumn of 1907, when their financial support of the project was first sought. The only question was, did any such isolated people exist? The

American Museum of Natural History of New York, and the Geological Survey of Canada, decided that the matter was worth looking into. These two institutions, therefore, joined hands in the scientific indorsement of what came to be known as the Stefánsson-Anderson Arctic Expedition. The chief burden of expense fell upon the Museum.

We hoped we should find people who had never seen a white man, and we found several hundreds of them eventually; but what no one hoped (or shall I say feared?) was that the expedition

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would one day come to attract world-wide interest, and became the subject, in many lands, of praise, debate, and denunciations; through the simple circumstance that we found some of these people to be of a fairer complexion than one expects to meet with among aborigines of the American continent. As yet no one officially connected with the expedition has declared his adherence to any theory, to the exclusion of all others, that shall explain why it is that we found so many blond individuals where we should have expected to find none. I have been denounced in print and in many languages, both in America and abroad, for not adopting at once the particular theories which to the writers seem self-evidently true. No doubt I shall some time (when our scientific data shall have been computed out and digested) adopt a theory that more or less satisfies me, and this, together with the facts on which it is based, I shall at the proper time have the pleasure of presenting to the readers of *Harper's Magazine*. Meantime we turn to a brief narrative of the events which finally brought us in contact with the people in question—the Eskimos of Dolphin and Union Strait and Coronation Gulf.

The story of how our expedition was planned can be touched on only briefly. The essential feature that set our venture apart from the typical arctic expedition was that we expected to dispense with the large stores of food and

complicated paraphernalia that are commonly considered essential. We were not looking for the pole, nor for any waste countries; we hoped to discover people, and to live with them a year or so to find out what manner of men they are who as yet have no acquaintance with the "blessings of civilization." Evidently, then, we reasoned, we need take no food along with us, but merely the implements for getting food; for where the Eskimos, armed as they must be with bows and arrows only, can live and provide sufficient food for themselves and their children, there, surely, we too could live in comfort, if armed with modern rifles. With the courage of our convictions we therefore went into the field with an outfit that could be carried in two thirty-foot boats.

Our first year in the arctic was not devoid of incident nor barren of results, but a detailed account of it is not intended to form a part of the present narrative. My own winter headquarters were near the mouth of the Colville in northern Alaska, while Dr. Anderson spent the sunless period in the Endicott Mountains, a hundred miles to the eastward. During this time he and his party of four Eskimos lived on caribou, mountain-sheep, and ptarmigan, and he had his first experience of going without such luxuries as flour and salt.

Most people are in the habit of looking upon the articles of our accustomed diet, and especially upon salt, as necessities.



BRINGING ASHORE A BEARDED SEAL, LANGTON BAY

We have not found them so. The longer you go without grain foods and vegetables the less you long for them. Salt I have found to behave like a narcotic poison—in other words, it is hard to break off its use, as it is hard to stop the use of tobacco, but after you have been a month or so without salt you cease to long for it, and after six months I have found the taste of meat boiled in salt water distinctly disagreeable. In the case of such a necessary element of food as fat, on the other hand, I have found that the longer you are without it the more you long for it, until the craving becomes much more intense than is the hunger of a man who fasts. (The symptoms of starvation are those of a disease rather than of being hungry.)

Among the uncivilized Eskimos the dislike of salt is so strong that a saltiness imperceptible to me would prevent them from eating at all. This circumstance was often useful to me, for whenever our Eskimo visitors threatened to eat us out of house and home we could put in a little pinch of salt, and thus husband our resources without seeming inhospitable. A man who tasted anything salty at our table would quickly bethink him that he had plenty of more palatable fare in his own house.

When summer came we proceeded by ice and water east along the coast, and the following winter our headquarters were near Cape Parry. We were now on the threshold of the unknown country. The coast-line to the eastward as far as Cape Krusenstern had indeed been mapped by Richardson in 1826, but of the people who might or might not inhabit the country nothing

was known, for Richardson had seen none, though he had seen traces of them here and there. None of the Baillie Islands or western Eskimos had within the memory of living men come in contact with any people to the eastward. They knew, however, that there once had been such, but the opinion was current that they no longer existed. And if they existed, it was said, they were probably like their forefathers, with whom the Baillie Islands people had had dealings—treacherous, wicked, even cannibalistic people who killed all strangers. Besides, the country that lay between them and the Baillie Islanders was devoid of game, and any one who went into it would starve. At this time we had six Eskimos



VILHJÁLMUR STEFÁNSSON

in our employ. We had hired them a year before, and from the first they had been pledged to accompany us into the unknown country to the eastward to look for "new people." When now they heard the terrible character given by the Baillie Islanders both to the country itself and to the people who might or might not inhabit it, they quickly lost all enthusiasm for the undertaking.

The winter of 1909-10 proved the least pleasant of our four in the arctic. During the summer our party had been divided; Dr. Anderson with a thirty-foot wooden boat and four Eskimo companions had been left behind near Herschel Island, and though I myself and two Eskimos in our *umiak* reached Langton Bay early in September, Anderson was unable to get to us until after the sea had frozen over.

On arrival at Langton Bay we immediately set about making preparations



ESKIMO AND DOGS CARRYING PACKS ON A CARIBOU HUNT

for winter. My Eskimos, Natkusiak and Pannigabluk (both natives of Alaska), were resourceful and good companions for such a task as we now had before us. Although talkative by nature, Pannigabluk did not mind being alone for a day, so we left her to make camp while Natkusiak hunted southeast and I southwest in the hope of finding caribou.

At Langton Bay the Melville Mountains, about a thousand feet high, are three miles inland. They are really the sea front of a plateau that slopes almost imperceptibly south from their crest to Horton River, ten miles farther inland. Each of us climbed the mountains by a separate ravine, and each reached a commanding peak at about the same time. We were three miles apart, but could see each other clearly with the glasses. It was evident to me that Natkusiak soon got his eye on game to the south of him, for he spent but little time on his peak—there is always something decisive and unmistakable about a hunter's actions when he sets out toward a distant band of caribou. I read the signs clearly and with satisfaction, but I knew my man and that he needed no help, so, although I saw nothing from my point of vantage (except scenery, which at the approach of an arctic winter has no attractiveness except as a fitting back-

ground for caribou), I started southwest in the hope of picking up something.

The afternoon developed for me into a profitless twenty-mile tramp over the spongy tundra. There were few tracks of caribou, none very fresh, and all going east—evidently we were a little too late to intercept the few animals that had spent the summer toward Liverpool Bay and were now moving to other pastures. I had given up hope of game for the day and had turned home, for the dusk of the short night was approaching, when I saw over a small ridge what I took to be the flutter of a raven. A little farther on, and I thought I saw four ravens. They were not quite in my line of march down the mountain toward the sea, so I turned my glasses on them, thinking to see if it was the carcass of a caribou they were feeding on. It was fortunate for me and for the American Museum that I was inquisitive, for this proved my first sight of the Barren Ground grizzly, *Ursus arctos richardsoni*, perhaps the rarest of the large land carnivore of the world in museums and the least known scientifically; but my inquisitiveness was unlucky for the bear, for he became the nucleus of our collection, which finally grew to number nineteen specimens. It was his four paws I

had taken for four ravens; for he had been lying on his back, pawing the air like a fat puppy—and fat he was, in truth. On the rump the blubber layer was about four inches thick, for he was an old male almost ready for hibernation. In the hurry of skinning him, a good deal of the fat remained with the hide; I allowed the paws and head to go with the skin for mounting purposes, and the matted, woolly hair was wet, all of which went toward making that skin one of the heaviest back-loads I ever carried to camp—it must have weighed considerably over a hundred pounds. I found that Natkusiak had seen several deer, but had been able to approach only three before it became too dark to shoot. He got those three, all fairly fat. In an arctic existence ordered as ours the necessities of life are meat and skins, the luxuries are fat, caribou meat, and short-haired summer caribou-skins. We had, therefore, begun well. In one day we had secured meat enough for perhaps three weeks, skins enough for one suit of outer clothes, and oil enough for light for a month.

The next day Natkusiak and I hunted together. There were no caribou near the coast, but about ten miles inland we saw seven, all of which we shot. Ten caribou and a bear made a pretty good showing for the first two days

of hunting, but we found that we had come to the end of our rope. The animals we had secured had been the rear-guard of the east-moving herd, and it soon became evident that we could reach no more game from a hunting-base on the seacoast. We therefore cached the meat of the bear and the three deer first killed at Langton Bay, and moved camp about ten miles inland to where we had buried the meat of the seven caribou—buried with the double idea of keeping it fresh in the cool ground until the freeze-up (which was now only a few days distant) and of protecting it from foxes.

The second day after moving camp inland I had one of the pleasantest surprises of my traveling experience. The general topography of the country led me to believe there should be a river at a greater or less distance to the southwest. To ascertain the truth of this I had gone about five miles southwest, when I suddenly came upon a deep ravine. Looking down this for half a mile to where it had its mouth into another and deeper ravine, I saw a small band of little Christmas trees straggling up the steep bank. I have never been half so glad to see the sun after its midwinter absence. I had intended to make an all-day hunt, but the news was too good to keep—the Eskimos were at home, I knew, and I



THE WINTER HOUSE IN THE VALLEY OF HORTON RIVER, ABOUT FORTY MILES SOUTH OF LANGTON BAY

had to go and tell them about it. The branch of evergreen I took to them carried an invitation not to be resisted. None of us had suspected that trees were anywhere near. We had been using small green willow twigs for fire. It was already autumn; ice formed every night on the ponds, and the drizzling rains of the season made comfort impossible on the shelterless barren ground. There were no two opinions, therefore, about moving camp, and the following night found us sitting by a crackling fire of dry wood in a sheltered spruce grove in my creek-bottom. This creek proved to be a branch of Horton River, a stream about the size of the Hudson that it has been our privilege to add to the map of North America.

This was the harvest season on the arctic tundra; the caribou were still short-haired, and their skins, therefore, suitable for clothing; they were still fat, and their meat, therefore, good eating; but we knew that the approach of cold weather was about to change all that. We expected every day that Anderson's party would come to join ours, in which case—between men and dogs—our supply of meat would last less than a month. A whaling-ship had, it was true, landed about three months' supplies for us, besides ammunition and other gear, at Cape Parry, about seventy-five miles to the north, but these supplies we

hoped not to be forced to touch for a long time, for we had several years—it turned out to be three—of work ahead of us, and could count on no reinforcements. We hunted, therefore, energetically every day from dawn till dark, but saw no caribou. One day, however, I picked up two more grizzlies. We were in the habit of considering a full-grown grizzly equal in food value to about two large bull caribou. I also shot a fat white wolf, which gave us a good seventy-five pounds of excellent meat.

On September 29th we had the first heavy snowfall of the year. The snow and ice are one's best friends in the North, for they make travel easy. Up to this time we had been forced to make beasts of burden both of ourselves and our three dogs; we carried our camp-gear on our backs from place to place, and whenever we killed an animal we had to pack the meat and skin home. Carrying a hundred-pound back-load of meat ten or fifteen miles home over boggy ground is more like work than sport, especially after an all-day hunt, when darkness overtakes you while you are skinning your game or cutting up the meat. So soon, therefore, as there was sufficient snow on the ground we made a trip to Langton Bay to get our sled, and then proceeded southeast up Horton River in the hope of overtaking the caribou which, as we knew by their tracks, had gone in



CAMPING ON THE EDGE OF THE BARREN GROUND

that direction about three weeks before.

Before starting we cached, as safely as we could, not only our store of meat, but most carefully of all the grizzly-bear skins, which we considered priceless scientifically. We took little meat with us, and the first night out one of our dogs stole half of that. On the third day of the up-river journey we supped on the half of an arctic fox I shot that day, and breakfasted on the other half. That morning, however, we came on the tracks of eight young bull caribou. Leaving Pannigabluk to pitch camp, Natkusiak and I followed these, overtook them about five miles away, and killed seven of the eight. We soon found that we had overtaken the rear-guard of the caribou, and as we were anxious that Dr. Anderson's party should overtake us as soon as possible, we built here a permanent house of wood, sod, and moss, and prepared to spend the winter. During the remainder of October we shot sixteen more caribou and hauled their meat safely to camp.

At this point we made the first serious mistake of the year. I myself did not worry much about Dr. Anderson's not turning up, for I considered that he had probably been unable to get any farther than the Mackenzie delta by open water, and that he was, therefore, hardly overdue; but my Eskimos were of the opinion that his Eskimos might possibly have "struck" and refused, on account of fear of hunger, to accompany him farther east than the most easterly Eskimo settlement (at the Baillie Islands). They therefore advised that we should make the 150-mile trip to the Baillie Islands to let the news get out that we had found caribou. If we did not actually meet Dr. Anderson there, they argued, the news would eventually get to his party, and his Eskimos would then be all eagerness to come and help us eat



AN ICE "PRESSURE RIDGE" ON THE OPEN SEA NEAR CAPE PARRY

our store of venison. I yielded to these persuasions unwisely; we should, of course, have stayed where we were to make hay while the sun shone—to kill more caribou while we yet had daylight enough for shooting purposes. Dr. Anderson was in no danger; for if he could not get his Eskimos to go where he wanted them to, he could always stay where they wanted to stay, as I had had to do myself on a former expedition—the winter of 1906 in the Mackenzie delta.

I let the arguments of my Eskimos prevail, and we accordingly left Pannigabluk to look after our camp and protect our meat caches from the wolverines while Natkusiak and I went to the coast to look for Dr. Anderson. We met him and his party on their way to join us; it was a pleasing thing to see him a fortnight earlier than we should have done; but this trip to the coast was the beginning of our misfortunes.

Inland on Horton River we were short of ammunition, tea, and tobacco—the first of which is a real necessity; the last two are considered necessities by the Mackenzie Eskimos. It was therefore decided that Dr. Anderson, Natkusiak, and Pikalu (a man who had at his own instance joined Dr. Anderson's party) should make a quick trip to Cape Parry for a supply of these necessities, while I returned to our hunting-camp up the river with the remaining five of Dr. Anderson's party.

When we parted with Dr. Anderson, November 23d, at the mouth of Horton River, we each had about two days' provisions. It was blowing a blizzard from the southwest and was very cold, but the wind was nearly fair for him, and he would be able, we thought, to make our meat cache at Langton Bay in three days (which he succeeded in doing). It would take us longer, we knew, to get home to our hunting-camp. It turned out that it took us thirteen days. The sun was gone, and there were blizzards more than half the time. We had counted on getting both ptarmigan and rabbits along the way, but on account of the snowstorms and darkness we got not a single rabbit and only seven ptarmigan.

On the coast, near the mouth of Horton River, we had discovered on the beach the carcass of a bowhead whale that had (we afterward learned) been dead four years. It would have been securely hidden from sight by the level three feet or so of snow that covered it,

had not the arctic foxes smelled it out and by their tracks and burrowings given us the clue. After working half a day to shovel off the snow, we got at the carcass at last, and chopped off from the tongue of the huge animal about a hundred pounds of what we intended for dog feed.

When fresh the tongue is mostly fat, but after four years of weathering there remained chiefly the connective tissues, so that what we cut off resembled more chunks of felt than pieces of meat. Of these one hundred pounds, Dr. Anderson and I each had taken half; he took no more because he expected to reach Langton Bay with its cache of caribou and bear-meat in three days; I took no more because I expected to find plenty of small game along Horton River as we ascended it toward our main camp.



THE WIFE OF ONE OF OUR ESKIMOS

After Dr. Anderson left us we were kept in camp two days by a blizzard so violent that our dogs would not face it. Whether your dogs will or will not face the wind is the test of fit and unfit traveling weather in the arctic, for a properly dressed man will face a wind that is too much for the Eskimo dog. These two storm-bound days used up most of our ordinary food, and on the first day of actual travel we were on half-allowance. The second day out we boiled up some sealskin that we had intended for boots; the third day we ate some more skins and boiled a little of the whale tongue. This last all of us found unpalatable, for the tongue had been so long awash

on the beach that it had become thoroughly impregnated with sea salts (other than sodium chloride). No doubt it was these salts, too, that made us sick, so that two or three days farther on our journey, when—between men and dogs—we had finished the whale tongue, we were really better off than while we had it. We had tried slicing it thin and boiling it twice and even three times, but it seemed impossible to get rid of the quinine-like bitterness of the stuff.

I must not give the impression that we were really starving, or even suffering much from hunger. We had plenty of seal-oil—a sealskin bag full of it—and of this we ate all we wanted. All of us found, however, that we could not take much of it “straight”—the stomach needs bulky food; it craves to be filled with something. For this reason we used to eat the oil soaked up in tea leaves, ptarmigan feathers, or caribou hair. Most commonly we used to take long-haired caribou-skin, cut it in small pieces, dip the pieces in oil, and eat them that way. This is, too, the method we used in feeding oil to dogs in an emergency; on this trip, as on many other occasions, we and our dogs fared exactly alike.

The tenth day out (December 4th) we camped near the place where two months before we had cached our grizzly-bear skins. I had then been so profoundly impressed with their value to science that I had spent a day in burying them safely in frozen ground; now their food value impressed us so strongly that we spent a day in digging them up to eat the heads and paws, though we destroyed thereby the scientific value of the skins. There was one ham of caribou cached at the same place, but that and the heads and paws of the bears all went in one day, our dogs getting a share, of course. They were now so weak that we had to pull most of the weight of the sleds ourselves, though we were a little weak, too. I have noticed—and Dr. Anderson’s experience has been the same as mine—that on a diet of fats alone one gradually loses strength, but that this symptom of malnutrition is not so conspicuous as sleepiness and a mental inability to call quickly into action such strength as one has.

After a day of high living on the one caribou ham and eight bear paws we were down to a diet of skins and oil again. We also ate our snow-shoe lashings and several fathoms of other rawhide thongs—fresh rawhide is good eating; it reminds one of pig’s feet, if well boiled. It occurs to one in this connection (seriously speaking) that one of the material advantages of skin clothing over woollens in arctic exploration is that one can eat them in an emergency, or feed them to one’s dogs if the need is not quite so pressing. This puts actual starvation off by a week or so. As for eating one’s dogs, the very thought is an abomination. Not that I have any prejudice against dog-meat as such; it is probably very much like wolf, and wolf I know to be excellent. But on a long, hard sled trip the dogs become your friends; they work for you single-mindedly and uncomplainingly; they revel with you in prosperity and good fortune; they take starvation and hard knocks with an equanimity that says to you: “We have seen hard times together before, we shall see good times again; but if this be the last, you can count on us to the end.” To me the death of a dog that has stood by me in failure and helped me to success is the death of a comrade in arms; to eat him would be but a step removed from cannibalism.

After finishing our bear paws we had only two more days on deerskins and oil. We arrived at our home camp on the 7th of December, and found Pan-nigabluk well and most of our meat safe—in spite of her watchfulness (which was not quite as keen as it might have been) the wolverines had gotten off with some of our meat; they are animals with a genius for thievery and mischief. For the time our prospects were not bad, except for the fact that out of the six Eskimos I now had with me, three were more or less sick from the effects of the diet of deer hair and oil—or rather from the effects of overeating when they got to where meat was abundant.

We now had meat to do us about two months, we thought, but we were short of fat. Some blubber cached on the seacoast was one of the things that Dr. Anderson had gone to get. Had

everything gone moderately well with him he should have rejoined us by the middle of December, and we hoped he would come even sooner. After a diet of oil straight during our trip up the river, it was very hard on all of us to have to live on lean caribou meat alone—for the caribou had been killed too late in the season, and the meat we had was all poor. Those of my Eskimos who had been taken sick on coming home not only did not get better, but the others got sick, too, and by Christmas all of them were affected with what resembled dysentery. We had no oil for light, of course, and it must have been a dreary thing for the Eskimos, all of them more or less sick, to sit in the dark house all day around the little sheet-iron stove. I myself used to go out hunting every day, but there was only twilight at noon, and the caribou in the country were few. Four poor animals were all I was able to kill during the month of December.

After two or three weeks without fat the situation began to get serious. All of us ate ravenously of lean meat, yet we were always hungry; at the end of a meal one might feel like bursting with the amount he had swallowed, and still the hunger persisted. It was so with the dogs; we fed them more than twice as much meat as dogs need when they have fat to eat also, yet they all became as skeletons. Although I was never actually sick, I felt uncomfortable, and was growing gradually weaker.

By the first of January (1910) Anderson was a full two weeks overdue by my calculations, and we all became seriously worried. January 8th I made my first diary entry after December 28th, for the women had pounded up a large quantity of caribou bones and had been able to boil a little fat out of them, most of which we ate, but a little we used for light to enable me to write and them to sew. Four days later while out hunting I spied three men on top of a hill several miles to the north. One of the Eskimos had gone out with me this day, and we at once gave up our search for caribou and hurried to meet what both of us thought to be Anderson's party. These men, however, turned out to be Eskimos who had come from the

Baillie Islands to visit us, and who could tell us nothing of Anderson or his party. They were old friends of ours, and I was glad to see them for many reasons. They were able to give us a little seal-oil, and I found I could get them to stay with my sick and badly discouraged people while one of them and a boy of my own party went with me to the sea-coast to look for Dr. Anderson and to get blubber. Langton Bay, where we had some blubber and bear fat cached, was about three days' journey north, and Cape Parry, where Anderson had gone, was two days farther still.

At Langton Bay we not only discovered no traces of Anderson, but found our cache rifled of most of its stores of fat by a wolverine that we caught at his stealing and later ate for supper. Much worried about Dr. Anderson's safety, we naturally proceeded at once to Cape Parry, where (January 21st) we found Dr. Anderson and Pikalu both convalescing from what seems to have been a mild attack of pneumonia. Pikalu had been taken sick the evening before they intended to start for Horton River. A few days later Dr. Anderson himself had been taken sick. The misfortune of illness would have been much more serious had it overtaken them anywhere but at Cape Parry, where we had our stores, such as they were. At any other place a situation serious enough as it was, might have become a tragedy.

Dr. Anderson had not yet recovered enough to travel, and naturally I did not care to leave him while he was not fully recovered; I therefore sent Natkusiak back inland with a load of blubber and other necessities, and remained behind myself at Cape Parry.

Dr. Anderson recovered steadily, and by early March was able to travel. Meantime our Eskimos inland had been through difficult times. They had been unable to kill caribou in sufficient number, and had been forced to eat most of the skins of the animals Natkusiak and I had killed in the fall, including those that had been intended for scientific purposes. These hard times while in our service were in marked contrast with the easy lives they were used to on the whaling-ships at Herschel Island, and now all of them wanted to go west. They had no desire



SUMMER TRAVEL BY SEA-ICE WHEN THE LAND IS BARE OF SNOW
A seal intended for supper is being dragged behind the sled

to find new people to the eastward, and they did not see why I should have any—in fact, they could not see why any sensible man should. We would all surely die of starvation if we went still farther east—we had been too far east as it was, and see the result: we had nearly starved to death. Quite as serious as the discontent of our natives, and adding materially to it, was the fact that most of our dogs, and all the best dogs, had died during the winter.

Nevertheless, Dr. Anderson quite agreed with me that our plans had to be carried out irrespective of whether or not we had good excuse for failing, for failure can never be so excused as to be the equivalent of success. We had been two years gone from New York, and the Eskimos uncontaminated by civilization were still as problematic as when we left home. We had faith, however, that they were somewhere along the coast less than three hundred miles to the east. A five-hundred-mile trip to the westward to meet supplies of ammunition, and of photographic and writing materials shipped by whaler to Herschel Island, had to be made by one of us. Dr. Anderson volunteered to make this trip without any dogs at all, suggesting that I could then have a six-dog team for my forlorn hope to the eastward, and leave the remaining four to those of our Eskimos who would stay behind near Langton Bay. They were to look after our gear there, and to try to kill caribou and seal against the

coming winter, so that I should have some place to retreat if things went badly in the Coronation Gulf district.

We both felt that my journey to the eastward might turn out seriously because of the handicap we were under. We still had faith in the belief that a white man can live on the country wherever an Eskimo can do so, but we did not know for certain that there were any Eskimos where we were going, for no one had ever—so far as I know—seen Eskimos on the mainland shore between Cape Parry and Cape Krusenstern, a stretch of coast which, as has been said, the Baillie Islands people believed destitute of game. As Dr. Anderson would have to take action and to answer questions in case we failed to return, I gave him written memoranda of what my plans were, gave him a date up to which he need not worry for our safety, and told him what efforts I expected him to make to reach me in case we overstayed our time limit, which I put at about nine months. Dr. Anderson started west toward Herschel Island, March 14th, accompanying a party of Mackenzie River Eskimos. When we parted we knew that before we should meet again our expedition would either have succeeded or failed. Five weeks later (April 21, 1910) I started toward Coronation Gulf with one sled, six dogs, three Eskimo companions, 960 rounds of ammunition, and a two weeks' supply of food, on what proved to be a year of living by our rifles only in the country of a strange people.

My Platonic Sweetheart

BY MARK TWAIN

NOTE.—Mark Twain was always interested in those psychic phenomena which we call dreams. His own sleep fancies were likely to be vivid, and it was his habit to recall them and to find interest, and sometimes amusement, in their detail. In the story which follows he set down, and not without some fidelity to circumstance—dream circumstance—a phase of what we call recurrent dreams. As the tale progressed he felt an inclination to treat the subject more fully—more philosophically—and eventually he laid the manuscript away. The time did not come when he was moved to rewrite it; and for the pure enjoyment of it as a delicate fancy it may be our good fortune that he left it unchanged.—A. B. P.

I MET her first when I was seventeen and she fifteen. It was in a dream. No, I did not meet her; I overtook her. It was in a Missourian village which I had never been in before, and was not in at that time, except dreamwise; in the flesh I was on the Atlantic seaboard ten or twelve hundred miles away. The thing was sudden, and without preparation—after the custom of dreams. There I was, crossing a wooden bridge that had a wooden rail and was untidy with scattered wisps of hay, and there she was, five steps in front of me; half a second previously neither of us was there. This was the exit of the village, which lay immediately behind us. Its last house was the blacksmith-shop; and the peaceful clinking of the hammers—a sound which nearly always seems remote, and is always touched with a spirit of loneliness and a feeling of soft regret for something, you don't know what—was wafted to my ear over my shoulder; in front of us was the winding country road, with woods on one side, and on the other a rail fence, with blackberry vines and hazel bushes crowding its angles; on an upper rail a bluebird, and scurrying toward him along the same rail a fox-squirrel with his tail bent high like a shepherd's crook; beyond the fence a rich field of grain, and far away a farmer in shirt-sleeves and straw hat wading knee-deep through it; no other representative of life, and no noise at all; everywhere a Sabbath stillness.

I remember it all—and the girl, too, and just how she walked, and how she

was dressed. In the first moment I was five steps behind her; in the next one I was at her side—without either stepping or gliding; it merely happened; the transfer ignored space. I noticed that, but not with any surprise; it seemed a natural process.

I was at her side. I put my arm around her waist and drew her close to me, for I loved her; and although I did not know her, my behavior seemed to me quite natural and right, and I had no misgivings about it. She showed no surprise, no distress, no displeasure, but put an arm around my waist, and turned up her face to mine with a happy welcome in it, and when I bent down to kiss her she received the kiss as if she was expecting it, and as if it was quite natural for me to offer it and her to take it and have pleasure in it. The affection which I felt for her and which she manifestly felt for me was a quite simple fact; but the quality of it was another matter. It was not the affection of brother and sister—it was closer than that, more clinging, more endearing, more reverent; and it was not the love of sweethearts, for there was no fire in it. It was somewhere between the two, and was finer than either, and more exquisite, more profoundly contenting. We often experience this strange and gracious thing in our dream-loves; and we remember it as a feature of our childhood-loves, too.

We strolled along, across the bridge and down the road, chatting like the oldest friends. She called me George, and that seemed natural and right, though