

# My Quest in the Arctic

BY VILHJÄLMUR STEFÁNSSON

SIXTH PAPER

THE summer spent with the Copper Eskimos between Bear Lake and the Coppermine River passed pleasantly for me and profitably. From the first they had accepted me as one of them—they had not known that I was a white man until I told them so. My life was exactly as theirs, in that I followed the game and hunted for a living. Even my rifle did not differentiate me from them, because they looked upon its performances as my magic, differing in no way essentially from their magic. I spoke the Mackenzie Eskimo dialect and made no attempt to learn theirs, for it was not necessary for convenience' sake, and it would have thoroughly confused me to try to keep two so similar dialects separate in my mind. Sometimes in meeting an utter stranger I found a little difficulty; not that it was difficult for me to understand him, for he spoke very much like all the others that I had dealt with, but he at first would have some difficulty in adjusting himself to the sort of language spoken by myself and my companions.

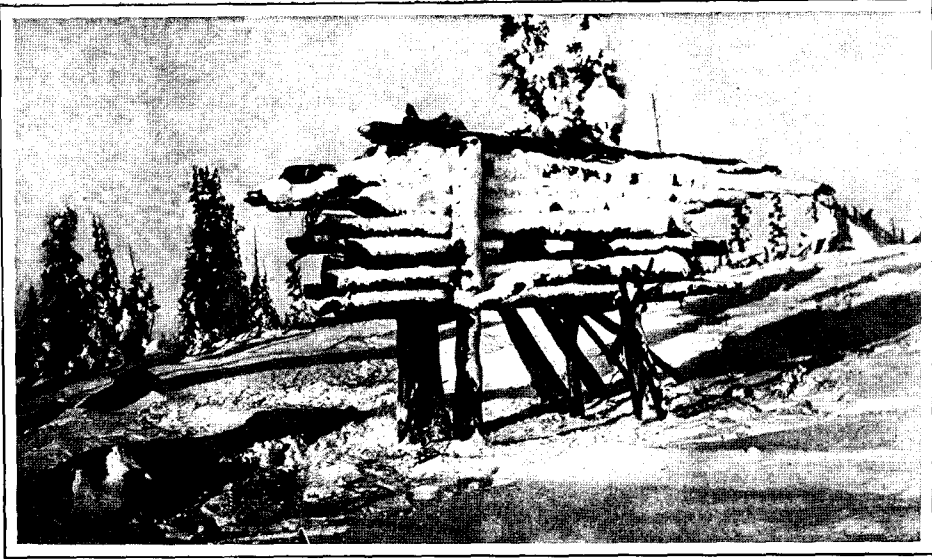
By August the caribou skins were suitable for clothing. Up to that time we had killed only for food and had eaten each animal before moving to where the next was killed, so that our baggage had not increased; but now we had to begin saving the skins against the winter, and by the latter part of August we had a bundle of something like forty of the soft, short-haired pelts, so that our movements began to be hampered by the bulk and weight of our back-loads. We therefore chose a large dead spruce, the trunk of which was free of bark and limbs, and fifteen feet up it we suspended our bundle of skins. This we did for fear of the wolverines, for the Indians say that the wolverine cannot climb a smooth tree-trunk if the tree be so stout that it is unable to reach half around it with its legs in trying to climb. In this I have not much faith, because I have seen so many caches made which the Indians

and Eskimos say are perfectly safe, and later when the cache is found to be rifled the natives are invariably astounded and assure you that they never heard of such a thing before. We tied our bundle with thongs to the trunk of the tree, and three weeks later when we came back it turned out that the first wolverine had just that day climbed up and eaten some of the thongs. Apparently it was mere accident that protected our clothing materials, and had we come a day later we might have found the skins destroyed.

The summer had been one of continuous sunshine, but that changed with the month of September, and the mists and fogs were then almost as continuous as the sunshine had been. The rutting season had commenced, and the bull caribou, which were numerous in summer in all the wood fringe northeast of Bear Lake, had moved out in the open country, and the hunting had become more difficult. Finally, by the end of September the caribou had become very few in number.

The Eskimos had all summer been making sledges, wooden snow-shovels, bows and spear handles, and other articles of wood. All these things and a good supply of caribou meat were stored at a spot which we called the "sled-making place," but which the Slaveys of Bear Lake, who know the country well and visit it in winter, call "Big Stick Island." This is a clump of large spruce trees on the southeast branch of the Dease River. The Eskimos were now waiting for the first snow of the year so they could hitch their dogs to the sleds they had made, load their provisions upon them, and move north toward the coast where they expected to spend the winter in sealing. But starvation began to threaten, so that finally, on September 25, the last party started toward the coast, carrying their sleds on their backs, for the first snow had not yet fallen.

I wanted very much to accompany them,



A "WOLVERINE-PROOF" MEAT CACHE OF TWELVE-INCH SPRUCE LOGS

to become as familiar with their winter life as I already was with their summer habits, but it did not seem a safe thing to try, for their only source of food in winter is the seal, and these must be hunted, under the peculiar Coronation Gulf conditions, by methods unfamiliar to my companions and myself. Of course, we could have learned their hunting methods readily enough, but they told us that almost every winter, in spite of the most assiduous care in hunting, they are reduced to the verge of starvation. Frequently (and it turned out to be so that winter) they have to eat the caribou sinew they have saved up to use as sewing-thread, the skins they have intended for clothing, and often their clothing, too, while about one year in three some of their dogs die of hunger; a few years ago about half of one of the larger tribes starved to death. It was both fear of actual want and fear that if want came their superstition would blame us for it that kept us from going to the sea-coast with them. We decided, therefore, to winter on the head-waters of the Dease River, where the woodland throws an arm far out into the Barren Ground; to try to lay up there sufficient stores of food for the winter; to pass there the period of the absence of the sun; and to join the Coronation Gulf Eskimos in March, when abundance of hunting-light would make it safer

to go into a country poorly stocked with game.

When we had decided upon this, I left my Eskimos to build a winter hut, while I walked alone down to the mouth of the Dease River, a distance of about thirty miles, to where my friends Melvill and Hornby were going to have their winter camp. I found there also Mr. Joseph Hodgson with his family, consisting of his wife, son, daughter, and nephew. Mr. Hodgson is a retired officer of the Hudson Bay Company, who through the many years of his service on the Mackenzie River had had a longing to get out of the beaten track of the fur-trader. For many years, he told me, it had been his special dream to spend the winter on the Dease River, and he had now come to do it. The mouth of the Dease is a picturesque spot, and although the Indians told Mr. Hodgson that it was "no good" as a fishing-place or as a location for hunting or trapping, he nevertheless stuck to his original intention and built his house there.

Both Mr. Hodgson and the Englishmen who lived about three miles away from him had a small store of white men's food, such as flour, sugar, tea, salt, and the like. But these were articles we did completely without, and even to the others they were merely luxuries, for they had to get the

main part of their food supply from the caribou of the land and the trout of Bear Lake. In spite of the little they had they offered me a share, a thing that I much appreciated, both because it shows the spirit of the north and because my Eskimos were immeasurably gladdened by a little flour, a thing they had not expected and without which they can get along very well, but the possession of which they feel marks them off definitely from the poor trash who cannot afford such things.

Melville and Hornby had built their house on Bear Lake itself, about half a mile east of the old site of Fort Confidence, which had been built by Dease and Simpson in the thirties and occupied again by Richardson and Rac in the forties of the last century. The fort was a group of log buildings, which stood until a few years ago, when some Indians set fire to them, and now only the huge stone chimneys are standing, like the monoliths of Salisbury Plain, monuments of a bygone time.

The firewood chopped by Richardson's men, and piled up methodically after the nature of Englishmen, looked as if it had been chopped last year—a striking proof of the fact that in the northern regions decay is very slow. Some months before on the Arctic coast west of Cape Bexley I had seen wood that had been chopped with sharp axes. Now we knew that no one with a sharp ax had been there since Richardson in 1848, and yet these chips looked nearly fresh. The weathering of wood seems greater in one season in the latitude of 45 degrees north than in twenty years in the latitude of 70 degrees.

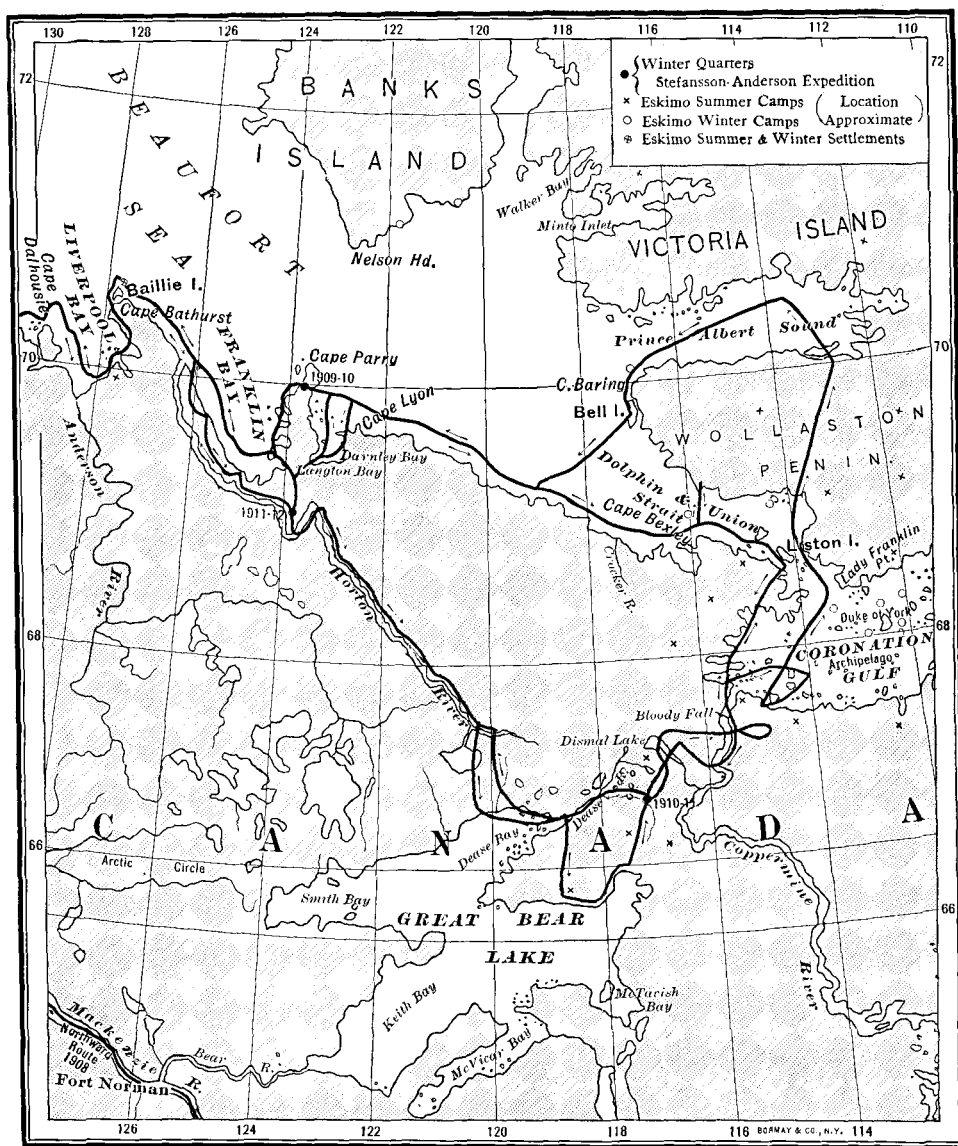
I spent two weeks with my friends on Bear Lake, writing letters which it was expected some Slavey Indians would take to Fort Norman at Christmas-time. In ordinary years no Indians winter on the east end of Bear Lake, but this time a few families were there, attracted by the presence of the white men; and they would, of course, being good Catholics, have to go to Fort Norman to celebrate Christmas as well as to trade with the Hudson Bay Company and with the "Free Traders." These two weeks passed very pleasantly for me, yet in a way I regretted them, for I missed seeing the one big herd of caribou that came into our territory in the year. I have often seen five hundred caribou in a band, and sometimes a thousand, but the herd that

crossed the eastern headwaters of Dease River going south from the 10th to the 14th of October certainly numbered a great many hundreds of thousands, and probably millions.

The two Eskimos had gone off on what they intended as a day's prospecting trip to the eastward from our camp in search of a fishing-lake. They took with them their rifles, of course; but, not having seen any caribou the last few days, they had now, as they had done the previous spring, made up their minds that no caribou were coming into our country any more, and they had therefore taken with them only about twenty cartridges, saying as they started that they felt sure they would catch enough fish so that they would not have to shoot ptarmigan. When they got down to the fishing-lake they saw, to their surprise, a few caribou near its eastern end. The wind was blowing from the north, and when they were approaching these caribou they noticed a strange stench which they hardly knew how to interpret. The big herd must have been a few miles to the north, and they had smelled it as one might smell a barnyard on close approach.

That day they wasted most of the cartridges on the few caribou in sight, skinned half a dozen or so, and camped overnight. When the big herd came the next morning they were nearly without cartridges. They were awakened by the tramp of caribou marching past in solid columns, two, three, or more abreast, and the columns anywhere from a few yards to a quarter of a mile apart. Sometimes the herd walked, but generally they proceeded on a trot. Such a sight as this had never been seen by my Eskimos, and it dumfounded them. Natusiak, who always did the thinking for the two of them, decided immediately that he would, with the few cartridges they had, sit down and try to shoot two or three caribou with each bullet, while Tannaumirk was to go back the short eight miles to our camp to get ammunition.

Tannaumirk accordingly started, but when he got a mile or so on his way he saw a place where the caribou were crossing the frozen river, coming down a steep cut-bank. As they did so it occurred to him that if he were to hide under the cut-bank he would be able to stab the caribou as they passed. The animals were too quick for him, however; and al-

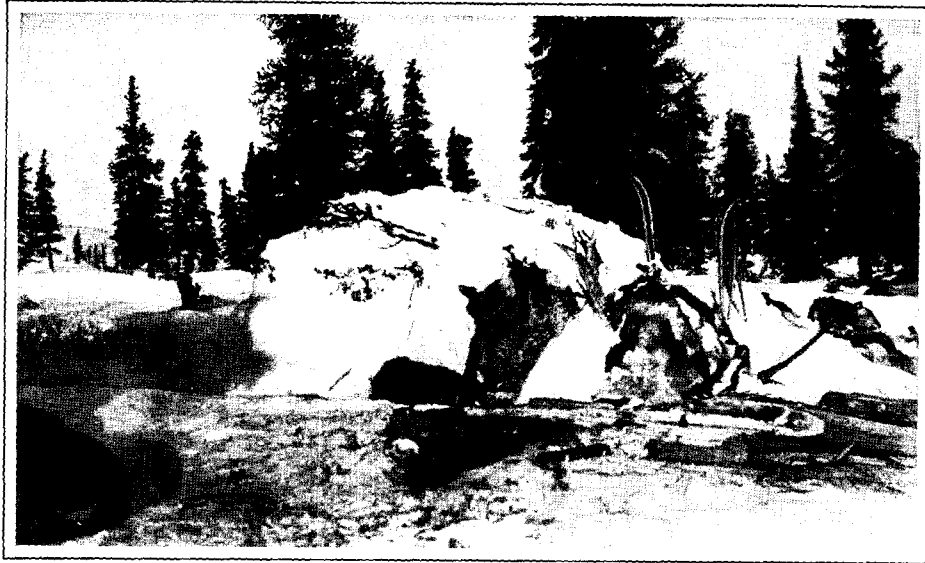


though, according to his own story, he was several times able to touch them with the point of his knife, he was unable to kill any. He then went and cut down a stout willow and made a long spear-handle for his knife. He is very sure that had he done this in the first place he would have killed a good many caribou, but when he took up his position afresh under the cut-bank the caribou had ceased coming over that spot. Nevertheless, he spent the entire day skulking under

other cut-banks trying to stab caribou as they passed. Finally, when he was pretty well tired out, there was only daylight enough left for him to reach home.

The next morning when he was about to return to Natkusiak with the ammunition he saw a band of bull caribou near the camp. Of course, no one with brains would have done such a thing as he had done the day before, nor would any one have stayed to follow three or four bulls when he knew that the





HOUSE ON DEASE RIVER IN MIDWINTER

march of the big herd was in progress to the east; but Tannaumirk was never very bright, and he spent the entire day in stalking and shooting three bulls. While he was skinning them he happened to see some wolves, and made up his mind that it was important that he carry the meat home to camp. This took him several hours of the third day, and it was nearly evening on that day when he finally got back to Natkusiak with the cartridges.

Meantime Natkusiak had used his four or five bullets so well that he averaged killing two deer with each one, but when Tannaumirk got back, the herd had passed and only a few stragglers remained. For two days the herd had been moving south, past the west end of our fishing-lake, and when I came home a few days later I found a belt of country several miles in breadth so trampled down by the feet of the caribou that it might be spoken of as one continuous trail. Had I been there myself, I don't think there would have been any possibility of making even an approximate count of the herd. As it was, I merely agree with the Eskimos that the numbers were beyond comprehension. We got only twenty-nine animals out of it, however, while with any management at all we should have been able to kill at one spot enough meat to last us the whole winter.

It will be remembered that I had left Dr. Anderson and some of our Eskimos behind at Langton Bay, and it seemed to me wise now to try to connect with him, because I knew he would already be worrying about what had happened to us. His Eskimos, I felt sure, would take it for granted that we were long since dead, and I thought it likely—as, indeed, was the case—that Dr. Anderson would have in mind starting a search expedition for us. It seemed evidently much easier for us to find him (for we knew where he was) than for him to find us. Besides, the largest unexplored area on the continent lay between us on Bear Lake and his location on Franklin Bay, and this I was anxious to explore. The previous winter had been spent by us on the lower reaches of Horton River. When Richardson first saw the mouth of Horton River in 1826 he gave it a name; he also gave names in that immediate neighborhood to two other rivers—Ellice and Jardine—and the charts in no way indicate that one of these is larger than the other. The mouths of all are set down, but nothing else is shown. Now we found in the winter 1909-10 that the rivers Ellice and Jardine were creeks that you could jump across and not over six miles in length, while we had that same year explored some two hundred and fifty miles



THE SAME HOUSE IN SPRING

of the lower reaches of Horton River, and we had found it to have all the earmarks of a big river. It seemed as wide at two hundred and fifty miles up-stream as it was twenty-five miles from the sea, and it came from the direction of Bear Lake.

Now that we were on Bear Lake, I thought that by taking a course north-west true from the northeast corner of the lake for Langton Bay I should not only reach Langton Bay, but, incidentally, should probably find and be able to chart the upper reaches of Horton River. On this journey Natkusiak would of course go with me, while Tannaumirk and Pannigabluk remained behind on Dease River at our winter camp; but it seemed advisable to get also a Slavey Indian companion, for the Slaveys claim to know the country far to the north of Bear Lake, and one man in particular, known as Johnny Sanderson, said he knew all about it for a distance of several days' travel. Besides, we had no toboggans of our own, and our runner-sled was unsuitable on the tundra, so I hired Johnny with two toboggans and one dog-team.

On November 8, 1910, we started from the mouth of Dease River on our journey toward Franklin Bay; for two or three days before that we had been engaged in putting the finishing touches on our equipment,

which meant making dog-harness and packing up dry caribou meat. Both at this time and on the two or three other occasions when we had come to Dease River Mr. Hodgson entertained us hospitably and helped us in every way. For the first forty miles after leaving his house we followed the shore of Bear Lake north-westward, and then struck inland, traveling west by compass, which here means north-west true. We had only about six days' provisions with us, for among other things Johnny had told us that there would be plenty of caribou as soon as we got away from the fringe of woods about Bear Lake. I have often started upon a longer trip than the three weeks we anticipated for this one, with less than six days' provisions, but in this case we could easily have taken more, for Mr. Hodgson generously offered to supply us with as much as we wanted to haul. Johnny regarded himself, apparently, as quite infallible, and succeeded in impressing me with the probability that he was nearly so; but few men I have dealt with have panned out so poorly as Johnny Sanderson.

Going in a northwesterly direction, it takes about forty miles of traveling to reach the edge of the Barren Ground, and for all this distance we saw plenty of caribou tracks, but Johnny told us it would

not be worth while following them and delaying our journey by a hunt in the woods, because, he said, "the Indians call the treeless country the Caribou Ground, and that is because it is always covered with caribou." A few miles after we had left the trees behind us and entered upon what we called the Barren Ground (but what Johnny called the Caribou Ground) we crossed the tracks of half a dozen or so animals, and after that for two hundred miles we never saw another track.

Johnny was proud of his varied experiences as a traveler, and told how this and that great man of the Hudson Bay Company had employed him as head guide, and how they always placed implicit reliance in him. He said there were few places he did not know, and that even where he was a stranger his judgment was so good that he was seldom at fault.

This confidence in himself had been so often justified in the past that the fact of its being seldom justified on the present trip evidently seemed to him an exception scarcely worthy of note. We struck the Barren Ground on the morning of our fourth day, and toward evening we had a blizzard. When it came time to camp we searched for a small lake, because the ice at this season was not much more than a foot thick and fuel was scarce,

so we wanted to get water for cooking. When we got to the shore of a small pond I stopped the sled. The selection did not suit Johnny, however; he said that no one who knew anything about traveling would ever pick such a place for a camp. Half a mile back, he said, he had seen a cut-bank under the shelter of which we could have pitched our tent, and even now he could see, only a little way ahead of us, a round hill with a steep slope to leeward that would be a fine place under which to camp, for the hill would break the wind.

Now my idea and Natkusiak's did not coincide with Johnny's, because to us it was clear that if we camped in the lee of an obstruction the drifting snow would in the night cover up our tent and place us in danger of being smothered even were the tent not to cave in with the weight of the snow. No man of any winter experience in the open will pitch his tent in a shelter where there is the possibility of a blizzard. Johnny's ideas were all gained in the forested country, where it is wise, of course, to choose the most sheltered spots, and it seemed to him that we were little better than insane. He announced, therefore, that he would take the matter into his own hands and pitch the camp in the shelter of the hill, and he told me incidentally that I was the first white man he had ever seen who did not



ON THE NORTHWARD JOURNEY



A HUNTING-CAMP NORTH OF GREAT BEAR LAKE

know enough to understand that an Indian knows more than a white man about how to make camp. Of course, the obvious answer was that now that he had the opportunity he had better watch carefully people who had different ideas from his and see what the result would be.

Natkusiak and I had to take Johnny's own sled away from him by a show of force, and had the pleasure of listening to his comments while we, without any help from him, put up the tent. During that time, and at various other times thereafter, Johnny told us much of a party of the Geological Survey of Canada which had been commanded by a white man who was my superior in every way, and who, while he was inexperienced, had the good sense to defer to Johnny in everything. Among other things Johnny had said that we would all probably freeze to death during the night, but we banked up the tent so well, Eskimo fashion, that we had not been inside of it more than an hour or so before Johnny began to complain that it was too warm, and that he was getting wet through the snow in his clothes melting and soaking in. He had been so sure that the tent was going to be so cold—nothing could melt in it—that he had not thought it worth while to brush the snow off his fur coat.

We made no fire, for Natkusiak and I

agreed that digging heather for fuel from underneath the snow was not worth the bother; we ate frozen raw caribou meat and drank cold water, at all of which Johnny complained bitterly. We could, he pointed out, have used the ordinary forethought of sane men; we could have hauled a load of dry spruce wood from the Bear Lake woods and could have made ourselves comfortable with a fire and a warm meal. To this we answered that our dogs agreed with us in considering the sleds heavy enough without piling a cord of wood on top of them, and that there was no need for special effort toward making us comfortable, for we were comfortable already.

The next morning we started early. Fortunately for us, the blizzard was from the southeast, and, although it was still blowing a little, it only helped us on. But with the southeast wind in this district there usually comes a fog, and so it was now. We got into some very hilly country—mountainous it seemed—and although we made a long day, we had to camp without finding any trees or sign of a river. I was expecting to find Horton River about here, and hoping that if we found it we should find spruce, or at least willows, in the valley bottom. It turned out that on our second Barren Ground day we camped just a little too soon, for the next morning early





A CAMP NEAR THE TREE-LINE NORTH OF GREAT BEAR LAKE

we struck a river about one hundred yards wide coming in from the east and flowing sluggishly through level country with scarcely the vestige of a valley. We followed it west about six miles; then the conformation of the country began to indicate that the stream probably made a large curve, first southwest, and later west, north, and a little back again east. Anyway, our destination was Franklin Bay, which lay northwest true, so we abandoned the stream and struck northwest again about eighteen miles. Here we came upon the river again, and found it, much to our satisfaction, to be fairly well timbered with black spruce, while at the point where we struck it in the morning there had been nothing but willows.

From this point on for six days we followed the winding course of the stream. There were rapids here and there and stretches of open water, but we always found a thoroughfare past these difficulties along one bank or the other. In some places the valley is fairly wide; in others the river plunges through narrow limestone cañons, and everywhere it is crooked, but when you once commit yourself to the river you must follow it, for the country through which it runs is, much of it, hills of solid rock, the tops of which are swept clean of snow by the fierce winter winds, and across them there is consequently no practicable road. Sleds such as we had would be worn out on the rocky surface in half a day, and

even steel-shod sleds could not last more than a day or so. One must consequently follow the ice of some river.

Compared with many of our other trips, this one looks easy on the map, but it was really the most difficult we ever made. We had expected to find plenty of game, and found none at all, not even ptarmigan. After leaving the woods of Bear Lake we had begun to save our food; when we entered the river we had already eaten up all the meat which we took along from Bear Lake, but Melvill and Hornby had given me ten pounds of flour, and Mr. Hodgson some caribou tallow. We used these for making soup, our ration being four tablespoonfuls of flour and an eighth of a pound of tallow per man per day. We gave each of our dogs about as much tallow as we took ourselves, and divided up among them some long-haired caribou skins to give them something of bulk in their stomachs. It is our practice to feed the dogs as long as we do ourselves, for the speed of the party depends upon the strength of the dogs, and it would be bad generalship to hoard food to the disadvantage of the dog-team when speed is the one thing to be desired; besides, the dogs deserve this for the faithful service of many years.

It was on the morning of the seventh day on the river that we saw some caribou tracks. My Eskimo got along with Johnny Sanderson even worse than I did myself,

and while, under ordinary circumstances, I did the hunting, in this case I let my Eskimo follow the caribou tracks and went ahead with Johnny and the two sleds down the river. We made a fair day, but in the evening Natkusiak came home empty-handed. He had seen plenty of tracks, but no caribou. Up to this time I had been uncertain whether the river we were on was really Horton River and whether it would lead us eventually to Franklin Bay, where we had some reason to think that Dr. Anderson would be waiting for us in a camp which we hoped would turn out well stocked with deer-meat. During this last day, however, the character of the river had changed so much and had become so familiar to me that I felt sure it could not be long until I should finally recognize the most southerly spot reached by us the previous winter. Natkusiak had not been with me on my longest southeasterly journey the year before, so that the following day I let him and the Indian proceed with the sleds and hunted myself, with the idea that I should probably find myself on familiar ground. This turned out to be true. We were now in the district in which we had found caribou fairly abundant just a year before, and, as good luck would have it, they were fairly abundant still. I saw several bands and shot two animals before mid-afternoon. Hard times were therefore over, for I knew that it would take no more than three or four days more to reach the coast. Both ourselves and our dogs had lost a little flesh, and poor Johnny had, before we reached this district of plenty, wasted considerable time bemoaning the evil day upon which he had joined such an expedition as ours.

The traveler's best motto is, "It is better to be safe than sorry." Acting on this principle, I decided to camp right where we were for a few days, to hunt caribou, since we had found them, and to dry the meat. We feared

we possibly might not, after all, find Dr. Anderson on Franklin Bay, for not only is human life proverbially uncertain, but Anderson had gone on so long a journey to the west the previous summer that I was not sure that he would have been able to return; and even had he returned, I was not sure how successful his autumn hunt had been, and had no guarantee that we should find his camp well stocked with food. We did not have very good luck with the hunting. Johnny hunted one day, with no success at all, and Natkusiak and I between us killed seven. After half drying the meat over a camp-fire we cached it for our return journey and proceeded north. Everything was familiar now, for this was the district in which we had hunted a good deal and starved a little the year before. I took a six-mile walk one day to revisit our camp of the year before, and in the half-darkness of the winter noon I sat awhile looking at the ruins of what had been a comfortable shelter from many a storm. I had



A STORE OF DEER-MEAT AND SKINS AT THE WINTER HOUSE

advised Dr. Anderson to make his winter camp here this year, too, but to my disappointment I found no sign of him.

When we reached the point directly south of Langton Bay, which is the southeast corner of Franklin Bay, we struck overland a distance of about fifteen miles. The country here is a high plateau from which there is a steep descent of about two thousand feet when one comes within about three miles of the ocean. As we approached this descent we walked into a terrific local gale blowing off the plateau. These local gales on Franklin Bay are a regular feature of the early winter months. The explanation seems to be that the ocean outside is free of ice and the air over it is therefore warm, while the high plateau inland is intensely cold. The heavy cold air of the plateau therefore rushes down like an invisible Niagara, pouring down into the vacuum caused by the upward currents of air over the sea. We reached the coast two miles west of the Langton Bay Harbor, where our scientific collections of the two previous years were stored, and where I knew I should find some message from Anderson if he were not there himself. It was a time of considerable suspense, for the trip from Bear Lake had been so difficult that none of us liked the idea of returning at once without a little chance to rest; and this we knew we should have to do if Dr. Anderson proved to be absent, for at this time of the year Langton Bay is devoid of game, and any one living there must depend on stores gathered the previous summer.

Before quite reaching Langton Bay Har-

bor, however, we came upon sled tracks, and at the harbor itself we found Dr. Anderson and our Eskimos safe, comfortably housed and fairly well supplied with food. The main part of the food was whale, the carcass of which had drifted in to the beach just before the freeze-up in the fall. This animal had been freshly killed when he drifted ashore, and furnished us, therefore, a supply of food which was not only abundant but also palatable. I found here waiting for me some mail, to get which Dr. Anderson had had to make a thousand-mile trip the previous summer west to the whaling-station at Herschel Island. My most recent letter had been written on the 13th of May, 1910, and it was now the 4th of December.

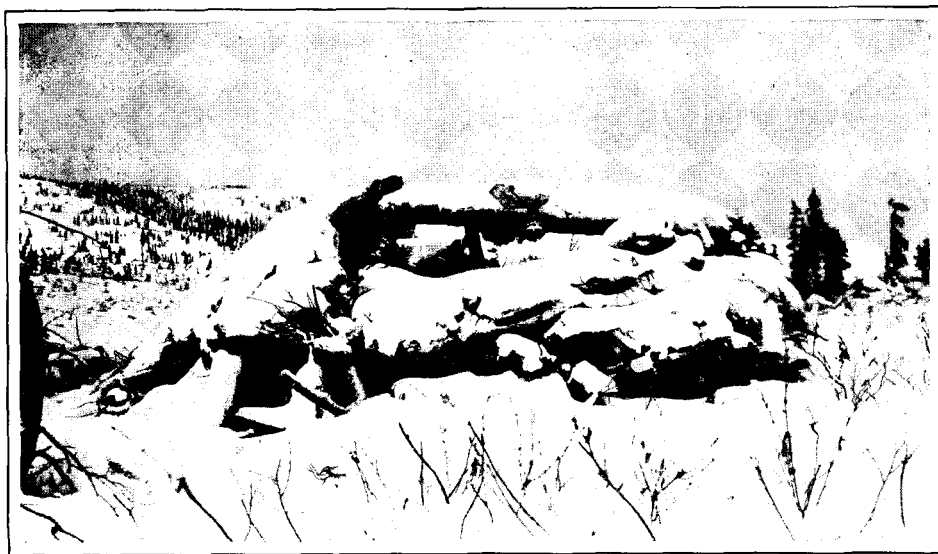
After resting about two weeks we started back toward Bear Lake, leaving the same four Eskimos behind, although Dr. Anderson accompanied us. Knowing the character of the country, and having plenty of food at Langton Bay, we loaded the sleds with provisions, which, together with the caribou meat we had cached inland, would be equal to about twenty-five days' full rations. Had everything on the homeward road been as it was on the north-westward journey, this would have been ample, for we had come from Bear Lake to the sea in twenty-six days, but we were now a month later in the season; the sun had long ago gone away and we had only twilight at noon, and the snow lay thick and soft in many places in the river where on the way north there was glare ice. Our progress southward was therefore very slow, and by the time we reached that point of

Horton River where one begins the portage to Bear Lake we were on short rations again. In our two days' crossing of the Barren Ground we again had a blizzard, but again it happened to be blowing at our backs and rather helped than hindered us, although we could see practically nothing of the country through which we traveled.

On our second day in the Barren Ground we had the last and



OUR FOOD SUPPLY IN WINTER



RUIN OF THE HOUSE OCCUPIED BY STEFANSSON'S PARTY IN 1909

most striking proof of Johnny's infallibility. We had come to perhaps a dozen trees, and I said to Johnny, "Well, this is fine; now we are back in your Bear Lake woods again." No, that was not so, he said. There were two ranges of hills on the Barren Ground. One of these was right in the middle of the Barren Ground, and on the southerly slope of this range were a few trees. It was at these trees we now were, and if we left them it would take us another whole day of travel before we came to the next. He told us, therefore, that unless we wanted to camp without firewood we must camp here. Dr. Anderson and I talked this over, and we agreed that Johnny had never in the past proved right in anything; but still it seemed better to do as he advised, for, after all, this was his own country, and he ought to know something about it. The blizzard was still blowing, and it was intensely cold. If we had pitched camp where there were no trees we should have made a small tent, Eskimo fashion, and it would have taken us only a few moments to do so; but now that we had trees we put up an Indian-style tepee, a difficult thing to do in a storm, and a matter of two hours or so of hard work during which all of us froze our faces several times and suffered other minor inconveniences. My idea had been, on seeing these few trees, that we were now on the edge of

the forest, and that a few miles more of travel would bring us into the thick of woods where no wind can stir the snow; and in the morning when we awoke and looked out, sure enough, there was the edge of the forest only a few hundred yards away, with the woods stretching black and unbroken toward Bear Lake. But for the wisdom of Johnny Sanderson we might have camped in its shelter and escaped one of the most disagreeable camp-making experiences we ever had.

The next day we had traveled only a few miles before we came upon the tracks of caribou. Our thermometer had broken some time before, and so I speak without the book, but there is little doubt that the temperature was considerably below 50 degrees Fahrenheit. There was not a breath of air stirring. While the other three proceeded with the sled I struck out to one side to look for caribou. First I saw a band that had been frightened by our main party. There were only a few clearings in the woods, but wherever the animals were you could discover their presence by the clouds of steam that rose from them high above the tops of the trees.

There are few things one sees in the north so nearly beyond belief as certain of the phenomena of intense cold as I saw and heard them that day. It turned out that the woods were full of caribou, and



wherever a band was running you could not only see the steam rising from it and revealing its presence, even on the other side of a fairly high hill, but, more remarkable still, the air was so calm that where an animal ran past rapidly he left behind him a cloud of steam hovering over his trail and marking it out plainly for a mile behind him. When you stopped to listen you could hear the tramp of marching caribou all around you. On such days as this I have watched caribou bands a full mile away whose walking I could hear distinctly although there was no crust on the snow; and as for them, they could not only hear me walking, but could even tell the difference in the sounds of my footsteps from those of the hundreds of caribou that were walking about at the same time.

My first opportunity to shoot came through my hearing the approach of a small band. I stopped still and waited for them. I was not nervous, but rather absent-minded. In other words, my mind was more fully occupied than it should have been with the importance of getting those particular caribou. I always carry the magazine of my rifle full but the chamber empty, and as the animals approached I drew back the bolt to throw a cartridge into the chamber, but when I tried to shove the bolt forward it stuck fast. This is the only time in four years of hard usage that anything has interfered with the perfect working of my Mannlicher-Schoenauer. The caribou were moving past without seeing me, and I became a bit excited. I knew the rifle was strong, and I hammered on the end of the bolt with the palm of my hand, but it would not move. When the caribou were finally out of range, and when nothing more could be done, I for the first time took a good look at the rifle to try to discover the trouble, and saw that one side of the bolt had something frozen fast to it. It turned out that when I had drawn the bolt back to load the rifle I had carelessly allowed the palm of my bare hand to rest against the bolt, and a piece of skin about an inch long and a quarter of an inch wide had frozen fast to the bolt and been torn away from my hand without my noticing it. It took but a few moments scraping with my hunting-knife to remove the blood from the bolt, and the rifle was in good working order again.

Three days later we reached the house

of Melvill and Hornby on Bear Lake, thirty-three days after leaving Langton Bay. After a short visit with them and Mr. Hodgson we proceeded up the Dease River and found Tannaumirk and Pannig-abluk well, although getting short of food, for Tannaumirk was not a hunter of much enterprise.

No caribou were just then to be found near our winter quarters, so Dr. Anderson, one of the Eskimos, and myself struck out south to look for them. On the second day we found them near the northeast corner of Bear Lake, but had hard luck that day on account of variable faint airs that continually gave the animals our wind. The next day, however, we got sixteen, and within the next twenty days thereafter fifty-two more, which was plenty of meat for the rest of the winter.

March 21 we left Dease River to go north and join the Eskimos again on Coronation Gulf. The days were long now and the caribou already moving north, so we judged it safe to do so too. It proved safe. With the Eskimos our experiences were largely a duplication of those of the spring before, except that they were now all old friends. We found they had starved considerably, but none of them had died of hunger, though a few of the dogs had. Our coming was especially useful to those who had been forced to eat their caribou sinew and consequently had no thread to sew clothes or to mend with.

The journey westward, too, was largely a duplication of our eastward journey a year before. We started from Coronation Gulf April 30th, went north across it to the south shore of Victoria Island, west through Dolphin and Union straits to Simpson Bay, then north again across southwestern Victoria Island to Prince Albert Sound, west along the sound, and southwest again across the straits to the mainland, and thence west along the coast to our home camp at Langton Bay, which we reached June 22, 1911, just fourteen months after leaving it. On our journey west we visited groups of Eskimos numbering perhaps five hundred persons, but we had also passed stretches of uninhabited country which it took us five weeks at a time to get through. On this homeward journey we lived on the game we shot, as we had done during the remainder of our fourteen months of absence in the country of the Copper Eskimos.

# Mr. Munro's Doctrine

BY CLARENCE DAY, JR.

MRS. MUNRO shrugged her shoulders to find the rooms empty. Julius was always late. "Manning," she said, summoning the butler, "remind Mr. Munro we are having people to dinner." Her eyes caught a brilliant glimpse of her image in the mirror, and she paused to bask before it in her soft rose dinner gown, soothed by the consciousness of being so prettily incased. Only, her husband would never notice it. What was there one could do about Julius? Observing that the deep-green sofa cushions would be a becoming background, she sat herself stoically among them; and Julius Munro as he entered found her bending over a favorite bracelet.

Approval tinged with amusement was in his absent-minded look. The approval rose both from her effectiveness and his regard for her: she had her qualities. On the other hand, she was such a curious, plump, pigeony little woman, always making her brain be the footman and her heart the tsar; and his amusement was fed by her surrenders to this primeval side of her. Some further evolution would be needed before Emma ranked as human. She, when her feelings lacked outlets, thought of him in a similar strain. "An intellectual old dear, but so undeveloped humanly," her wail was. They each pondered plans at odd moments for making the other perfect.

Looking up, on a wave of fondness, to meet only the appraising smile, she fixed cool eyes on his collar, breathing languidly, "Again?" His hand, hoisted to the spot, found there no necktie. The smile faded. "Don't go up-stairs," she said, patiently, as he marched toward the door; "it is hanging down your back, dear." He clutched at his back. And now the mirror reflected a statesmanlike form, whose lips moved soundlessly as he struggled at a task not always performed to advantage when a critic is watching.

"The Hanburys are quarreling," she said, presently. "He came at eleven this morning and stayed to luncheon with me."

"Ah-hum!" with absolute indifference.

"He didn't quite take to staying at first, but I told him I expected you in at any minute, and he saw I didn't, so he did."

"Eh? Oh. . . . Ah-hum! . . . I was working at the library."

Emma Munro stretched forward and surveyed a silk-clad foot. "You're always at the library," she sighed, "buried up to your neck in your aboriginal indecencies. Julius, aren't you overdoing it? It is one thing to take a passing interest in the Caraway-Islanders, and quite another to devote your whole life to the creatures. When you retired from business—"

"When I retired so early from business," he answered, "it wasn't to sit down and play the piano with you, my dear Emma. I need fresh mental pursuits to keep from deteriorating. We won't discuss it. Ethnology is a study we have all neglected, and while I don't in the least intend to devote my whole life to the people you charmingly describe as the Caraway-Islanders, I do intend to study ethnology. You speak of indecencies, alluding, I assume, to tribes that do not practise concealment of their bodily functions or of their bodies. Now among the Dyaks—"

"Please, please, Julius," snapped Mrs. Munro, "don't blacken my mind any further with their revolting customs. What you told me yesterday morning about your Dyaks made me squirmish all day. Besides, it isn't your studying ethnology that I object to; you miss my point. It is your spending even more of your time on it than you used to spend on business. Though I do think some less awful subject—geography or hydraulics—"

The butler appeared in the doorway