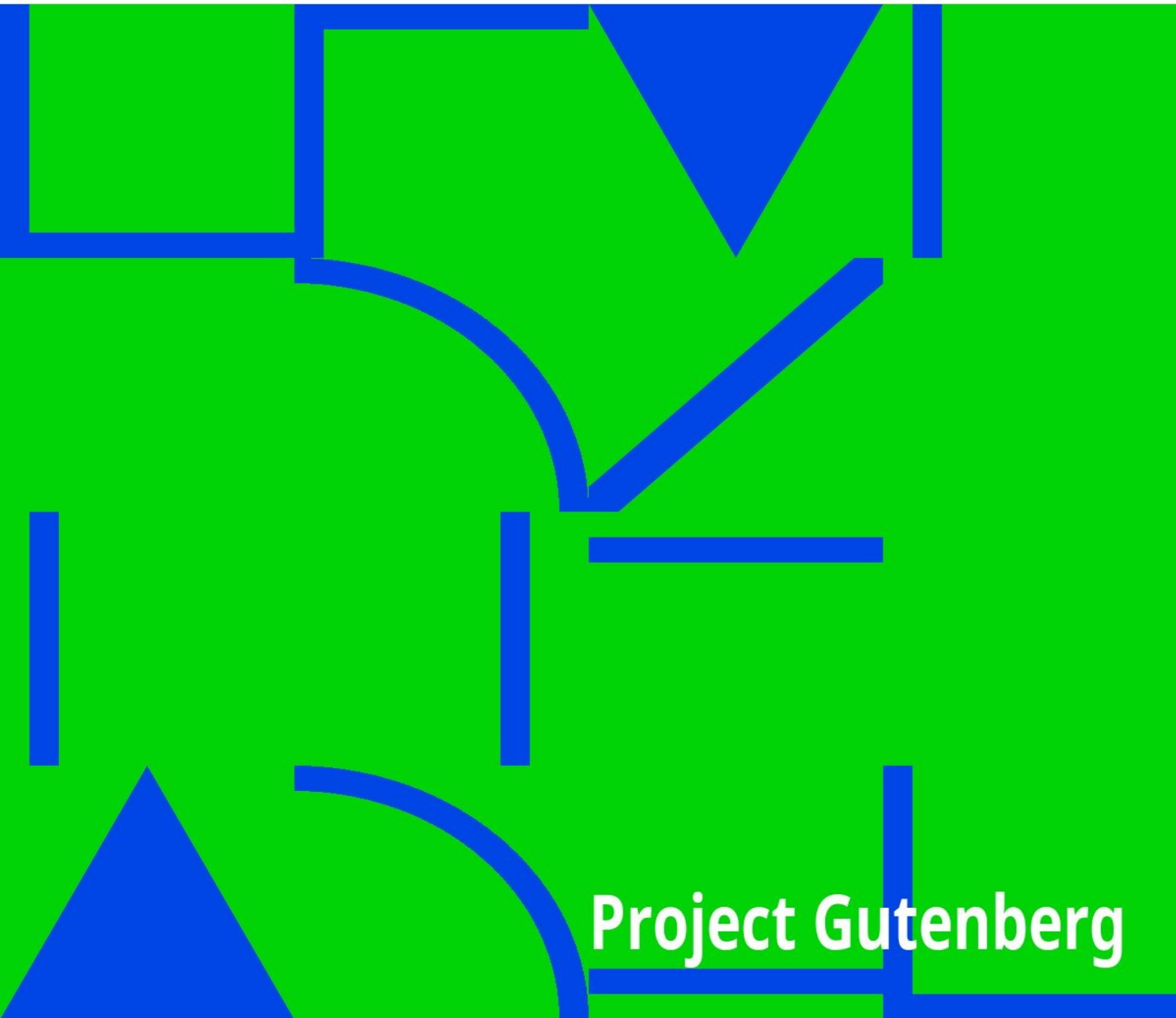
Lost in the Air

Roy J. Snell



Title: Lost In The Air

Author: Roy J. Snell

Release Date: January 5, 2004 [EBook #10599]

Language: English

MYSTERY STORIES FOR BOYS

Lost in the Air

By ROY J. SNELL

1920

CONTENTS

CHAPTER I

WHO IS THE MAJOR?

"Let's get a breath of fresh air." Bruce Manning yawned and stretched, then slid off his high stool at the bookkeeping desk. Barney Menter followed his example.

They had been together only a few days, these two, but already they were pals. This was not to be wondered at, for both had been discharged recently from army aviation service—Bruce in Canada and Barney in the United States. Each had served his country well. Now they were employed in the work of developing the wilds of Northern Canada near Hudson Bay. And there are no regions more romantic than this with all its half-gleaned history and its million secrets of wonder, wealth and beauty.

As they stood in the doorway, gazing at the forest-lined river and distant bluffs, hearing the clang of steel on steel, as construction work went forward, catching the roar of cataracts in Nelson River, and tingling with the keen air of the northern summer, life seemed a new creation, so different was it from the days of war.

"What's this?" Bruce was looking at a file containing bills-of-lading, a messenger had handed him.

"Car 564963, C. P. R., consigned to Major A. Bronson. Airplane and supplies." He read it aloud and whistled. Barney jumped to snatch it from him.

"Stand back! Give me air," Bruce gasped. "An airplane at the present end of the Hudson Bay Railroad! What's doing now? What are they up to? Going to quit construction here and use planes the rest of the way? Fancy freighting wheat, fish, furs and whale blubber by airplanes!" Both lads laughed at the idea.

"I don't wish his pilot any bad luck," said Barney. "But if he must die by breaking his neck, or something, I hope he does it before he reaches the Hudson Bay terminus. I'd like to take his place in that big air-bird. Say, wouldn't it be glorious!"

"You've stolen my thunder," replied Bruce, laughing. "I'm taking that job myself."

"Tell you what! I'll fight you for it. What weapons do you choose? Rope-handed spiking hammers or pick-axes?"

"Let's go down and see if it's here. Like as not it's a machine neither of us would risk his neck in; some old junk-pile the government's sold to the chap for a hundred and fifty or so."

That this idea was not taken seriously by either was shown by the double-quick at which they went down the line, and over the half-laid tracks to where the accommodation train was standing.

Thorough inspection of car numbers convinced them that No. 564963 C.P.R. had not arrived.

"Oh, well! Perhaps to-morrow she'll be in. Then we'll see what we see," yawned Bruce, as he turned back toward the roughly-built log shack where work awaited them.

"What's that?" Bruce, who was in the lead, stopped before the trunk of a scraggly spruce tree. On its barkless trunk a sheet of white paper had been tacked. The two boys read it eagerly:

NOTICE!

To Trappers, Hunters, Campers and Prospectors.

$500 Reward Will be paid

To any person locating anywhere within the bounds of the Canadian Northlands at any point North of 55° North, a wireless station, operated without license or permit.

The notice, signed by the provincial authorities, was enough to quicken their keen minds.

"What do you suppose they want to know that for?" asked Barney. "The war's over."

"Perhaps further intrigue by our former enemy. Perhaps smugglers. Perhaps—well, do your own perhapsing. But say!" Bruce exclaimed, "wouldn't it be great to take packs, rifles and mosquito-bar netting and go hunting that fellow in that Northern wilderness?"

"Great sport, all right," grinned Barney. "But you'd have about as much chance of finding him as you would of locating German U boat M. 71 by walking the bottom of the Atlantic."

"That's true, all right," said Bruce thoughtfully. "But just think of that wilderness! Lakes no white man has seen; rivers no canoe has traveled; mountain tops no human ever looked from! Say! I've lived in Canada all my life and up to now I've been content to let that wilderness just be wild. But the war came and I guess it shook me out of myself. Now that wilderness calls to me, and, the first chance that offers, I'm going to turn explorer. The wireless station offers an excuse, don't you see?"

Barney grinned. He was a hard-headed, practical Yankee boy; the kind who count the cost and appraise the possible results.

"If you are talking of hunting, fishing, and a general good time in the woods, then I'm with you; but if you are talking of a search for that wireless, then, I say, give me some speedier way of travel than tramping. Give me—" he hesitated, then he blurted out: "Give me an airplane."

The boys stared at one another as if they had discovered a state secret.
Then Bruce voiced their thoughts:

"Do you suppose this Major What-you-may-call-him is bringing up his plane for some commission like that?"

"I don't know," said Barney. "But if he is," he said the words slowly, "if he is, then all I've got to say is, that it's mighty important; something affecting the government."

"I believe you're right about that," said Bruce, "but what it is I haven't the least shadow of a notion. And what complicates it still more is, the Major comes from down in the States."

"Maybe it's something international," suggested Barney.

"Yes," grinned Bruce, suddenly awaking from these wild speculations, "and maybe he's just some sort of bloomin' sport coming up here to take moving pictures of caribou herds, or to shoot white whale in Hudson Bay! Guess we better get back to work."

"Ye'll pardon an old man's foolish questions?"

Both boys turned at the words. An old man with bent shoulders, sunken chest and trembling hand stood beside them. There was an eager, questioning look in his kindly eyes, as he said in quaint Scotch accent:

"Ye'll noo be goin' to the woods a' soon?"

"I don't know," said Bruce, in a friendly tone. He was puzzled by the old man's question, having recognized him as a second cook for the steel-laying gang.

"Fer if ye be," continued the man, "ye's be keepin' a lookout fer Timmie noo, wouldn't ye though?"

"Who's Timmie?" asked Bruce.

"Timmie? Hae ye never hearn o' Timmie? Timmie; the boy it was, seventeen he was then. But 'twas twelve years ago it was, lad. He'd be a man noo. I sent him fer the bag wi' the pay-roll in it, an' he never coom back. It was the money thet done it, fer mind ye, I'm tellin' ye, he was jest a boy, seventeen. He went away to the woods wi' it, and then was shamed to coom back, I know. So if ye'll be goin' to the woods ye'll be watchin' noo, won't ye?"

"Was he your boy?"

"No, not mine. But 'twas I was to blame; sendin' him fer th' pay; an' him so young. Five thousand seven hundred and twenty-four dollars it was, of the logging company's money; a month's pay fer the men. An' if ye see him tell him I was all to blame. Tell him to coom back; the Province'll fergive him."

"And the company?" asked Bruce.

"Partners both dead. Died poor. No. 'Twasn't the loss of thet money. They had many losses. Contractin's a fearfu' uncertain business; fearfu' uncertain." The old man shook his head slowly.

"Any heirs?" asked Bruce.

"Heirs? To the partners? Yes, one. A girl, noo. Ye'll be kenin' the lass thet helps in the boardin' shack where you and the bosses eat?" "La Vaune?" grinned Barney, poking Bruce in the ribs. "Do you *know* her?" La Vaune, the little black-eyed French Canadian, had taken quite a liking to her handsome young fellow-countryman, Bruce.

"Well, noo," said the old Scotchman. "Thet's the lass noo. An' should you find the money noo, it will all be hers. An' ye'll be lookin' fer it noo, won't ye? Many's the time I took a wee snack and a blanket an' made a wee pack an' gone into the woods to find him. But I hae never seen track o' him. He'll nae be by Lake Athapapukskow, fer there's folks there; not by Lake Weskusko neither, fer I been there, but som'ers in the woods Timmie is, an' if he's dead his shack'll be there an' the money, fer he never coom out o' th' woods again, thet shamed he was."

The boys promised to keep an eye out for Timmie, if ever they went into the unknown wilderness, and left the old man with a new hope shining in his eyes.

For a long time after reaching the office the boys worked in silence. At last Barney straightened his tired shoulders and glanced at Bruce. He was in a brown study.

"What's on your mind, Bruce?" he asked. "That money?"

"Thinking what it would do for La Vaune; five thousand seven hundred and twenty-four dollars." Bruce rolled the words out slowly. Though they said no more about it, the old man's story was the inspiration of many a wild plan. The truth is, it was destined to play an important part in shaping their future.

* * * * *

"He's here! She's—it's here!"

Bruce burst into the office all excitement and half out of breath.

"Who's he, she, it?" grinned Barney, slipping his pen behind his ear.

"The Major and the airplane! And the plane's a hummer!"

It was Barney's turn to get excited now. He jumped from his stool so suddenly that his pen went clattering.

"Let's have a look at her." He grabbed his cap and dashed out, Bruce at his heels.

Some Greek freight handlers were unloading the car when they reached the track. The work was being done under the direction of a rather tall man, erect and dignified. He, the boys felt sure, was the Major. His face bore some peculiar scars, not deep but wide, and as he walked he limped slightly.

"Might be he's lost some toes," muttered Barney. "Had a cousin who limped that way."

"The machine's a Handley-Page bombing plane, made over for some purpose or other," said Bruce, with a keen eye for every detail. "That's the plane that would have bombed Berlin if the war had lasted long enough. They're carrying mail from Paris to Rome in 'em now. Those machines carried four engines and developed a thousand horse-power. This one is a lighter model and carries two engines. One's a Rolls-Royce and one a Liberty motor. The fellow that planned the Major's trip for him has selected his equipment well. They don't make them any better."

"Just look at the sweep of the planes," exclaimed Barney. "They were made for high altitude work—up where the air's thin. No one would be coming up here for a high altitude test, would he?"

"Surely not; there's no particular advantage at this point for that."

The boys watched the unloading with eager and experienced eyes. As Barney put it, "Makes me feel like some shipwrecked gob on a desert island when he sees a launch coming ashore."

"Yes," grinned Bruce, "and soon you'll be feeling like your gob would when the launch came about and put out to sea again. No chance for you on that boat,

Barney."

"Guess you're right," groaned Barney. "Little enough we'll have to do with that bird."

As he spoke several of the men recklessly jerked a plane to free it from its wrappings. The Major, his back to them, was superintending the unloading of the Liberty motor.

"Hey, you! Go easy there!" Barney sprang forward impulsively and showed the workmen how to handle the plane. When the job was done he stepped back with an apologetic air. The Major had turned and was watching him.

"You seem to understand such matters," he smiled.

"I've worked with them a bit," said Barney.

"Would you mind letting me know where you are located?" asked the Major. "My aviator and mechanic have disappointed me so far. You might be of some assistance to me."

"We're over at the bookkeeping shack—the office of the construction company," said Barney, red with embarrassment. "He—that is, my bunkie here, knows more about those boats than I do. Say, if we can be any help to you, we'll jump at the chance. Won't we, Bruce?"

"Surest thing," grinned Bruce, as they turned regretfully toward the dull office and duller work.

"Say, you don't suppose," exclaimed Barney that night at supper—"you remember those awful wide planes of the Major's? You don't suppose he's starting for—" Barney hesitated.

"You don't mean?—" Bruce hesitated in turn.

"Sure! The Pole; you don't suppose he'd try it?"

"Of course not," exclaimed Bruce, the conservative. "Who ever thought of going to the Pole in a plane through Canada?"

"Bartlett's got a plan of going to the Pole in a plane."

"But he's going from Greenland," said Bruce. "That's different."

"Why"

"Steamboat. Farthest point of land north and everything."

"That's just it," exclaimed Barney disgustedly. "Steamboat and everything. You're not a real explorer unless some society backs you up with somebody's money to the tune of fifty thousand or so; till you've got together a group of scholars and seamen for the voyage. Then the proper thing to do is to get caught in the ice, you are all but lost. But—the ice clears at the crucial moment, you push on and on for two years; you live on seal meat and whale blubber. Half your seamen get scurvy and die; your dogs go mad; your Eskimos prove treacherous, you shoot one or more. You take long sled journeys, you freeze, you starve, you erect cairns at your farthest point north, or west, or whatever it is. Then, if you're lucky, you lose your ship in an ice-jam and walk home, ragged and emaciated. A man that does it that way gets publicity; writes a book, gets to be somebody.

"You see," he went on, "we've sort of got in the way of thinking that it takes a big expedition to do exploring. But, after all, what good does a big expedition do? Peary didn't need one. He landed at the Pole with two Eskimos and a negro. Well, now it ought to be easy as nothing for two or three men in a plane, like that one of the Major's, to go to the Pole from here. There's a fort and trading post on Great Bear Lake with, maybe, a power-boat and gasoline. Then, if there happened to be a whaler, or something, to give you a second lift, why there you are!"

"Sounds pretty good," admitted Bruce. "But nobody would ever attempt it."

"Of course not," retorted Barney. "It's too simple."

The two following days the boys found themselves taking morning and evening walks down the track to the airplane, which still lay piled in sections by the track. They were surprised to see that no effort was being made to assemble it. The reason for the delay was made clear to them by an unexpected encounter on the evening of the second day.

Finding the Major pacing up and down before the machine, his slight limp aggravated by his very evident irritation, they were about to pass as if they didn't know there was a plane within a hundred miles, when they were halted by the upraised hand of the Major.

Immediately both boys clicked heels and saluted. Then they felt foolish for saluting in "civies."

"I see you are military all right," smiled the Major. "But how much do you really know about airplanes?"

"Oh," said Barney, with exaggerated indifference, "Bruce, here, knows a little and I know a little, too. Between us we might be able to assemble your machine, if that's what you want." In spite of his heroic attempts at self-control, his voice betrayed his eagerness. Truth was, his fingers itched for pliers and wrenches.

"That's part of what I want, but not all," the Major said briskly. "I am not an aviator myself, and my man has failed me at the last moment; had a trifling smash which resulted in a dislocated thigh. Out of service for the season. I need an aviator and a good one. He says there's only one other not attached to military units that he could recommend—a Canadian. But the plague of it is, the man can't be located."

"Might I ask the nature of your proposed trip?" asked Bruce—then bit his lip a second too late.

"You might not" The Major snapped out the words. Then in a kindlier tone, "My secret is not entirely my own. I can say, however, that it is not an exceedingly long trip, nor a dangerous one, as aviation goes, but it is an important one, and besides, if it comes out well, and I believe it will, I might wish to go on a more hazardous journey. In that case, of course, you can see I should wish a veteran pilot at the wheel and one who will take a chance."

He turned to Bruce. "You are a Canadian, are you not?"

"Yes, sir."

"Then perhaps you can tell me of the whereabouts of this young Canadian aviator. His name is—" the Major stopped to think. "His name is—ah! I have it! It's Manning—Bruce Manning."

Bruce's jaw dropped in astonishment. He was too surprised to speak. It was Barney who, almost shouting in his excitement, said:

"He's Bruce Manning, Major."

"What?" The Major stood back and looked at Bruce. "You? Oh come; you are hardly more than a boy!"

"Yes," said Barney, "he's hardly more than a boy, but some of the best flyers the Allies had were hardly more than boys. They were boys when they went into it over there, but the boys who went up after the Germans two or three times came down men, Major. Don't forget that."

"You're right—and I beg your pardon," said the Major, bowing to them. "I spoke thoughtlessly. So then I have the good fortune to be speaking to the very man I seek?" he went on, turning to Bruce. "Now I suppose the remaining questions are: Will you be at liberty to take up aviation again and—do you want to?"

"That," said Bruce, struggling to keep his voice steady, "will depend upon at least one thing: If you will answer one question now, we will promise you a definite answer to-morrow morning at seven o'clock."

"The question?"

"My friend here, Barney Menter, is quite as skilled an aviator as I am. If I go, he goes. What there is in it in pay or peril we will share equally."

Barney stepped forward to protest, but Bruce held him back and continued: "Your machine is equipped for two men besides yourself. Will you take us both?"

"Most certainly," said the Major heartily. "In case you decide to accompany me, I shall wire the mechanic not to come and you two may divide the work between you as you may see fit.

"I might say," he added, "that the pay will be double that which you are now receiving, and the journey will consume the remainder of the season. Should we decide on something more hazardous, the pay will be in proportion, and there is, besides, a substantial, I might even say a rich reward offered, for the successful completion of this latter task. However, enough of that for the present. You can

give me your decision in the morning, and I hope you accept." He bowed and strode away.

"Now, why didn't you say 'Yes' on the spot?" demanded Barney, impatiently. "We are required to give only a week's notice to the company and the nights and mornings of that week we can use getting the machine together and taking a trial flight."

"I always sleep over a thing," answered Bruce. "It's a habit I inherited from my father." Long after, in quite different circumstances, Barney was to remember this remark, and bless Bruce's inheritance.

Mail had been delivered during their absence. Barney found a letter on his desk. He puzzled over the postmark, which was from some Pacific port. He tore the envelope open, glanced at the letter, then read it with sudden eagerness.

"Bruce," he exclaimed, "listen to this. It's from an old pal of mine, David Tower; entered the navy same time I did the army." And he read aloud:

"Dear Barney:

"I'm off for somewhere far North; guess not the Pole, but pretty well up that way. Second officer on a U. S. Sub. She's loaned to a queer old chap they call Doctor. No particulars yet. Hope this finds you 'up in the air,' as per usual.

"DAVE." "That *is* a coincidence," said Bruce. "Perhaps we'll meet him up there somewhere among the icebergs."

"I'll suggest it!" exclaimed Barney, reaching for his pen.

"Dear Dave," he wrote. "Am thinking of a little trip North myself. Our ship's a 500 HP Handley-Page. Bring your guitar and oboe along. My partner and I are bringing saxophone and mandolin. We'll have a little jazz. Till we meet, as ever,

"**BARNEY.**"

If the boy had known under what strange conditions this particular jazz performance would be given, he might have felt queer sensations creeping up his spinal column.

"I say!" exclaimed Bruce suddenly, "who's this Major chap, anyway? I've a notion he's something rather big, maybe the biggest—"

"You don't mean?—"

"I'm not saying anything," protested Bruce, "but this other man I'm thinking of left a toe or two in the Arctic, and his face has freeze scars on it. His name's—well, you know it as well as I do."

"Shucks! It couldn't be," exclaimed Barney. "He wouldn't be up here alone this way."

"No, I guess not," sighed Bruce. "But it would be great sport if it were he, after all."

Ten days later, a girl in her late teens stood shading her eyes watching a tiny object against the sky. It might have been a hawk, but it was not; it was an airplane—the Handley-Page, with the two young pilots and the Major on board. The girl was La Vaune. She stood there watching till the plane had dwindled to a dot, and the dot had disappeared. Holding her apron to her eyes to hide her tears, she walked blindly into the house.

The adventurers were well on their way.

CHAPTER II

THE STRANGE LANDING

"I don't like the way the Rolls-Royce is acting," Bruce grumbled through his telephone to Barney, for, though they were not four feet apart, not a word could they hear, so great was the din of their two powerful engines.

"Same here," answered Barney. "Old Major ought to have given us more time to try 'em out. Brand new."

"Barren Lands far away. Forced to land in tree-tops. Good-night!"

After that there came only the monotonous roar of the engines. The Major's orders had been "Due north by west," and now, though they had put fully two hundred miles between themselves and the last sign of civilization, they were still holding to their course. They also had been directed to fly as low as was safe. Three times the Major had barked an order into the receiver; always to circle some spot, while he swept the earth with a binocular as powerful as could be used in an airplane. Three times he had given a second order to resume their course.

"He seems to be looking for something," Barney said to himself, and at once he began wondering what it could be. Mines of fabulous wealth were said to be hidden away in the hills and forests over which they were passing—rich outcroppings of gold, silver and copper. Perhaps the Major was trying to locate them from the air. Here and there they passed over broad stretches of prairie, the grass of which would feed numberless herds of cattle. Perhaps, too, the Major was examining these with an eye to future gain. Then, again Barney thought of the illegal wireless station and he idly speculated on how it could be so important now that the war was over. There was little to do but think as they scudded away, now racing a cloud, then plunging through the masses of vapor, to

reappear suddenly in the sunshine beyond. Barney had always keenly enjoyed watching the land slip by beneath him as he flew, but on this journey there was the added joy of sailing over lands unknown. His reflections were suddenly cut short by a strange jarring rattle from the Rolls-Royce. Instantly the thunder was cut in half, as also was their power. Bruce had stopped the big motor. If now something went wrong with the Liberty, they must make a forced landing. This, with the level stretches of prairie giving place to rough, rolling swells covered with scrub timber, was not a pleasant thing to think of and even less pleasant to attempt.

The sun, sending a last yellow glow across the land, sank from sight, and soon the moon, with silvery light and black bands of shadow, was playing strange tricks with the stolid world beneath them.

All day, when duties permitted, Bruce had kept an eye open for a cabin hidden among the pines. Now he shouted through the telephone to Barney;

"What'll I do if I catch a square of light below?"

Barney knew he was thinking of the boy, Timmie, and La Vaune's money he carried into the woods. A square of light, of course, would have been a cabin window.

"Kill your engine if you see a chance to light, and explain later," he shouted back.

But no square of light appeared, and soon the thought of it was driven from their minds, for, of a sudden, the plane shuddered like a man with a chill. It was the second engine. Bruce threw off the power. Then, with a sput-sput-sput, started it again. Once more came the shudder. Again he tried with no better results. Half its power was gone; something was seriously wrong. He turned to the other engine. It would not start at all. Here was trouble. They were passing over ridge after ridge, and all were roughly timbered. Surely, here was no landing-place. And if the second engine stopped altogether,—Bruce's heart lost a beat at thought of it.

He gave the engine more gas and headed the plane upward. She climbed slowly, sluggishly, like a tired bird, but at length the keener air told him they were a safer distance above the earth.

"Better chance to pick a landing-place from here," thought Barney.

They had scarcely reached this higher level when the engine stopped. No efforts of the pilot availed to start it. His companions silently watched Bruce's mute struggles. The Major, a perfect sport, sat stoically in his place. Barney, knowing that suggestions were useless, also was silent. So they volplaned slowly downward, every eye strained for a safe landing-place. They knew what a crash would mean at such a place. Loss of life perhaps; a wrecked plane at least, then a struggle through the woods till starvation ended it. They were four hundred miles from the last trace of white man's habitation.

They had come down to three thousand feet when it became evident that only rough ridges lay beneath them. No landing-place here, certainly. They could only hang on as long as possible in the hope the ridges would give way to level ground. Bruce thanked their luck for the wide-spreading wings which would impede their fall.

A moment later he groaned, for just ahead of them he saw a rocky ridge higher than any they had passed over. Here then was the end, he thought. But the tricky moonlight had deceived him. They cleared those rocks by a hundred feet and just beyond Bruce gasped and looked again.

"A miracle!" murmured Barney.

"Or a mirage," whispered Bruce.

Before them lay a square of level land, green,—in the moonlight. All about the square the land was black with trees, but there was a landing place. It was as if their trip had been long planned, their coming anticipated, and that a level field was cleared for them.

It was only a matter of moments till they were bumping along over the ground. Soon they were standing free from their harnesses and silently shaking hands.

Barney was the first to speak.

"Say, do you know," he said, "we're in somebody's wheat-field!"

"Impossible!" exclaimed the Major.

"See for yourself," The boy held before their astonished eyes a handful of almost ripened heads of wheat.

"Then what's happened?" demanded the Major. "Have you gone due south by west instead of north by west?"

"Unless my compass lied, and it has never done so before, we have gone north by west since we started, and we are—or ought to be at this moment—four hundred miles from what the white man calls civilization."

"Well," said the Major, "since we are here, wherever that is, I suggest that we unpack our blankets and get out of the man's wheat-field, whoever he may be. The mystery will keep until morning."

This they proceeded to do.

A clump of stubby, heavy-stemmed spruce trees offered them shelter from the chill night wind, and there, rolled in blankets, they prepared to sleep.

But Bruce could not sleep. Driving a plane through clouds, mist and sunshine for hours had made every nerve alert. And the strain of that last sagging slide through the air was not to be relieved instantly. So he lay there in his blankets, a tumult of ideas in his mind. This wheat-field now? Had he really been misdirected by the compass on the plane? To prove that he had not, he drew from his pocket a small compass, and placing it in a spot of moonlight, took the relative direction of the last ridge over which they had passed and the plane in the wheat-field. He was right; the compass had been true. They were four hundred miles northwest of the last mile of track laid on the Hudson Bay Railroad, deep in a wilderness, over which they had traveled for hours without sighting a single sign of white man's habitation. Yet, here they were at the edge of a wheat-field.

What was the answer? Had some Indian tribe taken to farming? With the forests alive with game, the streams with fish, this seemed impossible. Of a sudden, the boy started. It was, of course—

The sudden snapping of a twig in the underbrush brought his mind back with a jerk to their present plight. He wished they had brought the rifles from the plane. Some animal was lurking there in the shadows. Wolves, grizzlies, some unknown terror, perhaps?

Then, in another second his eyes bulged. In an open space, between two spruce trees, where the moon shone brightly, had appeared for a moment a patch of white. Then, amid the crashing of small twigs, the thing was gone. In childhood, Bruce had been told many stories of ghosts and goblins by his Irish nurse. He had never overcome his dread of them. But it was with the utmost difficulty that he suppressed a shout. Then he laughed softly, for the crackling twigs told him he had seen a creature of flesh and blood, no ghost. He chuckled again and far in the dark a hoot-owl seemed to answer him and his company was a source of comfort.

Yet, here was, after all, another problem: What was this white-coated creature? Of all the wild things of the forest, none was white save the Arctic wolf. It was doubtful if he roamed so far south, especially in summer, and besides, this creature was too large and heavy to be a wolf. Bruce thought of all the animals he knew and gave it up. It might have been a cow. Cows in this wilderness did not seem more improbable than a wheat-field, but the creature had been too light of tread for that. Could it have been an Indian dressed in white, tanned deerskin? He was inclined to take this for the right solution, and wondered if he should awaken his companions. He could not tell what danger threatened. Finally he decided to let them sleep. He would keep watch. The three of them could do no more.

Once more his mind turned to the problem of the wheat. What was it that he had just concluded? Oh, yes, Timmie! Why might not Timmie have camped here and planted this wheat? But twelve years? How had he lived? Whence had come the seed wheat? There were a hundred questions connected with such a solution. Ah, well, morning would tell. There would be a cabin somewhere on the edge of the field and they would eat. Eat? For the first time Bruce realized that he had not eaten for hours; was very hungry. Securing some malted-milk tablets, carried for emergency rations, he dissolved them in his mouth. A wonderfully soothing effect they had. Propping himself against the trees, he closed his eyes for a second, and before he could pry them open again, he, too, was fast asleep.

When he awoke it was broad daylight and his companions were already astir.

"Did you fellows wake up last night?" he asked, rubbing his eyes sleepily.

Barney and the Major shook their heads.

"Then you didn't see it?"

"See what?"

"The white thing."

Barney stared. The Major's face was noncommittal.

Bruce told them of his experience.

"He's been seeing a ghost," declared Barney, with a laugh.

"On the contrary," said the Major slowly, "I think he hasn't. There are white creatures in the Arctic; just such ones as he has described. I have seen them myself. No, not white bears, either. But I have never seen them this far South. I will not say now what I think Bruce saw but I will say I do not think it was an Indian."

"Look!" exclaimed Barney suddenly in a whisper.

He pointed to a thin column of smoke that was rising over the tree-tops, to the left of the wheat-field.

"Listen!" whispered Bruce. "Somebody's chopping wood." The freshening wind brought the sound of the axe plainly to their ears. A second later they heard the distant laugh of a child.

"Come on," said the Major, throwing his roll of blankets at the foot of a tree. "Where there's children there's no danger. Maybe they'll have hot-cakes for breakfast!"

A moment later found the three of them stealing silently through the forest.

What they saw as they peered into the clearing brought them up standing. A man wielded an axe before a cabin. He was tall and strong, smooth-shaven and clean. No Indian, but a white man. His clothing was of white-tanned buckskin. The cabin was of logs, but large, with a comfortable porch and several windows. The panes of the windows seemed near-glass. It was impossible to tell, from where they stood, whether the two laughing children who played by the door were white or half-breeds. The appearance at that door of a neatly-dressed Indian

woman seemed to settle that question.

The three men had gone half-way across the narrow clearing, before the man, looking up from his work, saw them. Instantly his face blanched. With a quick step backward, he reached for a rifle that stood by the door. Then the arm fell limp by his side.

"Well, you've come!" he said in a lifeless tone. "I could have killed you, one or two of you, but I won't. I may be a thief, but not a murderer. Besides, there are probably more of you back there in the trees."

"On the contrary," smiled the Major, "we are only three. We are not armed. So you see you might easily kill us all. But why you should want to, and why you expected us, when the last thing we thought to do was to land in your wheat-field last night, is more than I can guess."

"Landed?" The man's face showed his bewilderment.

"I know," exclaimed Bruce impulsively, "I'll explain. You're Timmie—Timmie —" he hesitated. "Well, anyway, that's your first name. I know all about you—"

Again the man's trembling hand half-reached for the rifle.

"Then—then you have—come for me," he choked.

Bruce, realizing his mistake, hastened to correct it.

"You're mistaken," he said quickly. "We haven't come for you in the way you mean. You won't need to go a step with us unless that is your wish. Timmie, we're here to help you; to tell you that you were forgiven long ago."

"Is—is that true?" The man faltered. "The logging company?"

"The partners are dead. Their only heir, La Vaune, forgives you."
"And the Province, the Red Riders?"

"The Province forgot the case years ago."

"Thank—thank God!" The man choked, then turned to hide his face. He faced them again in a moment and spoke steadily. "I've got the money here in the

cabin, every cent of it. God knows I didn't mean to do it. But the temptation was too great. And—and once I had done it, I was afraid to go back. I would have died in prison. How did you come? Are you going back? Will you take the money to the little girl, La Vaune?"

"We're going farther," smiled Bruce, happy in the realization of what all this meant to the maid in the camp. "We're going on. We flew here and will fly back —or try to." "And we'll be more than glad to return the money," he wished to add, but remembering that he would not have that to decide, he ended, "La Vaune is no little girl now, but quite a young lady. She needs the money, too. And—and," he laughed sheepishly, "she's rather a good friend of mine."

Timmie drew his hand across his eyes, as if to brush away the vision of long years. Then, with a smile, he said briskly:

"Of course, you'll have breakfast? We're having hot-cakes."

"What did I tell you?" chuckled the Major, slapping Barney on the back.

Eager as the visitors were to hear the strange story of this man of the wilderness, they were willing that breakfast should come first.

As they stepped upon the porch, the keen eye of the Major fell on some white and spotted skins hanging over a beam. A close observer might have noticed a slight nod of his head, as if he said, "I thought so." But the boys were following the scent of browning griddle-cakes and saw neither the skins nor the Major's nod.

But Barney, missing a familiar pungent odor that should go with such a breakfast in a wilderness, hurried back to the plane to return with a coffee pot and a sack of coffee.

Within the cabin they found everything scrupulously clean. Strange cooking utensils of copper and stone caught their eye, while the translucent window-panes puzzled them. But all this was forgotten when they sat down to a polished table of white wood, and attacked a towering stack of cakes which vied with cups of coffee in sending a column of steam toward the rafters.

With memories stirred by draughts of long untasted coffee, it was not difficult for Timmie to tell his Story.

"When I left the settlement," he began, as he turned his mooseskin, hammock-like chair toward the open fireplace, and invited his guests to do likewise, "I struck straight into the wilderness. I had a little food, a small rifle and fishing-tackle. To me a summer in the woods with such equipment was no problem at all. I meant to go northwest for, perhaps, two hundred miles, camp there for the summer, then work my way back by going southwest. I would then be far from my crime and would be safe. That is what I meant to do. But once in the silent woods, I began to think of the wrong I had done. I would have given worlds to be back. But it was too late. I had to keep going. Fording rivers, creeping through underbrush, climbing ridges, crossing swampy beaver-meadows, fighting the awful swarms of mosquitoes, I got through the summer, living on fish, game and berries. You see, I had become terribly afraid of the Red Riders—the mounted police. I had heard that sooner or later they always got a man. I was determined they would not get me.

"At last, snow-fall warned me to prepare for winter. I was in this valley that day, and I've been here ever since. If I had ever got any pleasure from that stolen money, which I haven't, I would have paid for that pleasure a hundred times that first winter. Fortune favored me in one thing: the caribou came by in great droves, and, before my ammunition was exhausted, I had secured plenty of meat. But at that, I came near dying before I learned that one who lives upon a strictly meat diet must measure carefully the proportions of lean and fat. Someway, I learned. And somehow, starving, freezing, half-mad of lonesomeness, I got through the winter, but I am glad you did not see me when the first wild geese came north. If ever there was a wild man, dressed in skins and dancing in the sun, it was I."

"But the wheat?" asked Barney. "How did that happen?"

"I am coming to that," smiled his host. "Early that spring," he continued, passing his hand across his forehead, as if to brush away the memory of that terrible winter, "the Indians came. They came from the Dismal Lake region. Driven south by forest fires, they were starving. I had a little caribou meat and shared it with them; that made them my everlasting friends."

"And you got the wheat from them?" interposed Barney.

"Hardly. I doubt if they had ever seen a grain of wheat.

"Well, we lived together that summer. But I am getting ahead of my story. Shortly before they arrived, I noticed some strange-looking caribou in the clearing. I had no ammunition, so could not shoot them. Anyway, they were skin-poor and would be of little use to me. But they seemed strangely tame, coming close to my cabin at night. They were company, and I was careful not to frighten them away. One night, in the moonlight, I caught a glistening flash from the ear of the oldest doe. Then, too, I noticed that one of them had unnaturally short antlers. A closer look told me that these antlers had been cut off.

"Then came the wonderful discovery: these were not caribou, but reindeer escaped from some herd in Alaska.

"Right then I decided to capture and use them. I would put them in pound until their rightful owners came for them, which would be never." He smiled.

"Well, I tried making a lasso of caribou skin. For a long time I could not come near enough to reach them with the lasso. But one night, while they rested, I crept up to them and my lasso caught one by the antlers. Then there was a battle, and all the while I was thinking that now I should have milk, butter and cheese, meat and clothing. And then there was a snap; the skin-rope broke and away went the reindeer—and my hopes.

"I then hit on the plan of building a corral and driving them into it. This was a pretty big job for one man, but with trees lining both sides of a narrow run, where the deer went to drink, I managed to weave willow branches into the spruce trees and make a stout barrier. Well—one morning, I found myself with six reindeer in pound—a bull, three does, a yearling and an old sled-deer. Not long after, the herd was increased by four fawns.

"By good luck, just at this time, the Indians came. They were all for killing the reindeer, but I stopped that. We fed, as I said before, on my caribou meat, and then came the wild-fowl and the streams opened up for fishing.

"It was fortunate that the Indians came. They helped me to build corrals, big enough to give the reindeer plenty of pasturage and pretty soon they were fat and sleek."

"Pardon me," interrupted the Major, "but were some of the reindeer white?"

"Two of them were milk-white. And now I have many of them running free in

the forest."

Barney grinned, and Bruce poked him in the ribs. "My ghost," he whispered.

"The wheat," said the host, "was no great mystery, after all. The bank cashier had put into the money-sack two samples of wheat and one of beans which he wanted to have tried in this north country. I have tried them; with what luck, you can see. I don't need to fence my reindeer now, for in winter when the moss is buried deep under the snow I turn them in on stacks of wheat hay. Finally when the Indians went back North the following winter they left me a wife, as you see." He smiled toward his dusky mate, who was industriously scouring a copper griddle.

There was silence for some time. Then the Major spoke:

"The thing that interests me is how you manage to keep up your standards of neatness and cleanliness."

"It is not so hard," said Timmie. "I came of a good old Scotch family. When I was a boy my mother taught me that 'cleanliness is next to godliness,' and I made up my mind that—well, that I would at least be clean. That was all there was left for me to be, you know."

"I think you may call yourself both," said the Major stoutly. "You have paid well for your mistake by twelve years of exile, and as for the money, we'll take that back with us."

Timmie smiled. "I'll be happy for the first time in twelve years when it's gone," he said.

"I say, Major," exclaimed Bruce, "I've been thinking of those white reindeer. Don't you suppose that solves the problem of Peary's white reindeer?"

There was a peculiar twinkle in the Major's eye, as he asked: "How do you make that out?"

"Well, there had been reindeer in Alaska for twenty-five years when Peary discovered his on the eastern coast of our continent. There are many white ones among the domestic herds, and they are constantly wandering away, or being driven away, by packs of wolves. If they wandered this far, might they not easily

have gone on to the other side of the continent?"

"Possibly. Possibly," The twinkle in the Major's eye grew brighter, but he said no more. Presently he rose and stepped outside.

"Say!" exclaimed Barney, "I feel like turning right around and going back."

Bruce knew that he was thinking of La Vaune's money. "But we can't," he sighed. "It's not our plane nor our expedition. We're bound by agreement to go on. Besides, there's no real need of going back. La Vaune's all right for the winter. I arranged for her at my old college at Brandon; she will attend the academy and help in the dining-room."

"Well, then," said Barney, "I guess it's us for union-alls and at those engines."

They were soon at their task. But, as Bruce worked that day, he thought often of the mysterious twinkle he had seen in the Major's gray eyes, as he spoke of the white reindeer. Who was this Major, anyway? And where were they going? The Major alone could tell, and apparently he had no intention of doing so.

CHAPTER III

IN THE MIDST OF THE PACK

"I think," said the Major, on the third morning after their strange landing, "that we would make a great mistake to set out again at this time. We are not likely to have the luck of our last landing a second time. Then too, if we remain here until the lakes and rivers are frozen over, we can find a safe landing place every few miles.

"And now," the Major continued, stirring the fire thoughtfully, "now I think it would be right that I tell you something of the purpose of this journey."

The boys leaned forward, eager for the story.

"Even now," he said slowly, "I do not feel like confiding to you what I may consider my great secret plans—plans for which this journey is but a trial-trip into the frozen North. That may follow in good time. But, as for this present journey, you are perhaps aware that an illegal wireless station has been operating somewhere in these woods and hills?"

"Yes—yes; we saw the offer of reward!" exclaimed Barney.

"The reward is a small matter," smiled the Major. "Should we be so fortunate as to capture the culprit, or be able to certify to his death, I will gladly turn over the reward to you boys."

"Thanks," said Barney, who already had his share of the prize in his purse.

"First I shall tell you the purpose of that wireless and why it is so important to locate it," the Major went on. "It is one of the links in a chain around the world —a chain that threatens to bind civilization to a burning stake of sedition,

anarchy and bloodshed. The operator is an anarchist, or, at least, belongs to an allied organization, and these, one and all, have for their purpose the destruction of the present order of things. Now, there is not one of us but believes that there are many evils possible—yes, and put in operation under the present order, but we do not believe that matters are going to be bettered by a world-revolution. We believe that in time justice will come very much nearer being done under the old system; therefore, we are fighting to maintain it. That is why I volunteered to attempt to hunt out and if possible destroy this powerful wireless station, which is relaying revolutionary messages direct from Russia to all important points in North America. My long experience in the North seemed to fit me for that task; and it is a task that I am determined to accomplish.

"It is my theory that this wireless is located on the shores of Great Bear Lake. In fact, I believe it is run by an independent trader operating at the east end of that lake, on Conjurer's Bay. A year ago he brought in a small electric plant, to light his trading post, he said. Now this plant is capable of producing an almost unlimited amount of electrical power, provided only time is given. Batteries of great power might easily be produced on the spot. Chemicals for producing acids are found in abundance; so also are copper and zinc for the plate. All he would have to do then would be to make wooden boxes for the chemicals, erect his wires—he could string them from spruce poles—and the thing is done. It was impossible to reach the station by water after I had guessed its location, and there was of course the possibility that I was wrong, that it was nearer civilization. In that case I might be able to locate it, providing I made the trip by plane."

"That explains why we circled three times during our first day's flight? You were looking—"

"For the wireless tower," smiled the Major.

"And now," he went on, "I think we will just rest easy on our wings for a few weeks. You will get the engines in shape; take a few trial flights, if you wish, but be careful to conserve gasoline. We must have enough to carry us to Great Bear Lake. There we will find a sufficient supply to carry us on any other journey we may decide on. The trader uses gasoline to run his electric plant and will have a supply. It will not be of very high test, but with two engines I think we will make it answer our purpose. If we find that my theory regarding the location of the tower is not correct, we will buy a supply from him, and if it *is* correct—" He did

not finish, but smiled and poked the fire again.

"Take it all in all," said Barney to Bruce some time later, "I think our trip promises to be dangerous enough to satisfy even a bloodthirsty young savage from the Canadian army."

"Or a young Cherokee from the wilds of Boston Commons," laughed Bruce, heaving a wrench in the general direction of his companion.

But, though they went about their work in a playful mood, they did it with great care. After they had taken the two little Timmies for several rides, they declared the airship quite ready for further voyaging. "And as for gasoline," said Bruce, "we still have two hundred and forty gallons in the tank which will give us a-plenty for the trip, and several hours to spare; but coming back—that's another matter."

Barney realized that this was, indeed, another matter, and, though he shared the Major's hope of securing a supply at the trading station, his face grew grave at thought of being stranded more than a thousand miles from civilization at the beginning of winter, and with only a few days' supply of provisions. What if this trading station was one of those myths that float down from the North? Or, what if it had been abandoned?

Barney shook himself free from these thoughts, and seizing his mandolin, went to join Bruce and Timmie on saxophone and rudely-devised Indian kettledrums in a wild-woods symphony, while the children danced wild steps the boys had never seen.

* * * * *

"Well, we're off!" Barney said this, as he buckled on his harness and touched the starting lever. The wheels of the starting gear bumped over the thin-crusted snow and jolted through Timmie's wheat stubble, then the great bird began to rise.

Winter had set in. Now they glided over dark forests of spruce, and now swept above great stretches of barren lands. The air was biting cold. They were thankful enough for their face-protectors, their electric hand and foot warmers, their fur-lined leather union-alls. But best of all was the glorious freedom of it. Soaring on and on over untrodden wildernesses, with no thought of dangers known and unknown, made them feel like explorers of a new world. The engines

worked in perfect harmony. A gentle breeze from the south urged them on their way. The sun soon set and a long night began, but what of that? The moon and snow lighted the earth as if by day, and with a silvery glory. And now the Northern Lights began to flicker, flash and shoot across the sky.

Now they passed over a wide expanse of white, which they knew to be Dismal Lake. This was frozen over; then surely Great Bear Lake, two hundred miles farther north, would be frozen, too. Their safe landing would be assured.

But as they neared their goal the boys' minds could scarcely escape misgivings. If the Major's suppositions were correct; if, indeed, this trader was the hired agent of a fanatical clan, would he not be armed and on the alert? Would he not, perhaps, have Indians and half-breeds hired to help guard his secret? They were but three. The enemy might number a score. As Barney thought of all this, he was thankful for one thing: by some strange chance, a small machine-gun and two thousand rounds of ammunition had been shipped north with the plane. Their first thought had been to leave this behind, but after a discussion, they had decided to bring it; and there it was now, hanging in its swivel before him. In an emergency there remained but to load it and go into action. But it was quite an unexpected emergency that soon made him bless that bit of equipment.

They were now well into the Arctic. The air cut like a knife and chilled them to the marrow. Barney began to long for warmth, food and sleep. He held his electric glove to the glass of the small clock before him. When the frost had thawed he noted the hour.

"Twelve o'clock! Midnight!" he muttered. "And no landing in sight yet."

There remained but to "carry on."

But what was this? Far to the North there showed a small, red ball of light. And it was not the Aurora Borealis! They were traveling fast. The ball of fire seemed to roll toward them along the earth at terrific speed, growing larger and more lurid. And now, beside it, wafting from it, like the tail to a comet, they could discern a swirling cloud, black in the moonlight.

"It's a fire!" Bruce gasped through his mouthpiece.

"But what?—" began Barney.

Just at that moment he caught the faint white line that marked the shore of Great Bear Lake. They were, then, nearing their destination. Tilting the plane upward, that they might get a better panorama of the region, and so direct their course, Barney gave the great engine more gas. On they swept. Presently the outlines of bays and frozen streams, of scrub forests and barren lands were plainly visible. A map under glass was just before him. Brushing the frost from it, Barney examined it by the light of a small electric bulb. Then he looked away at the fire which was now clearly visible. His heart sank. The trading post was, indeed, a reality, or had been. At the present moment it was a ball of fire.

"It's the trading post!" He barked to the Major.

"'Fraid so," grumbled the Major, hoarsely.

"And the gasoline for our return—"

"There it goes," sang Bruce, with a note of despair.

At that instant the whole ball of fire seemed to rise in air to burst like some gigantic rocket. There was no question in the boys' minds but that the supply of gasoline had been reached by the flames.

After the great flash came blackness. The fire seemed for a time to have been extinguished. Gradually here and there, far below, bits of burning tinder gleamed, fiery stars in an inverted heaven. Soon the ruins were again blazing. They soared close, but high, avoiding the dangerous pockets of smoke gas. Did they see dark figures dancing about the ruins? Or was it merely the flickering shadows of posts and tree stumps.

"Indians!" murmured Barney.

Instantly his mind mirrored to him pictures he had seen in histories of painted savages burning a settler's cabin. His blood ran cold. Here they were, three men in the frozen wilderness, with little gasoline for their machine, with scant provisions and ammunition, and rushing toward perils they could not even guess. To kill and to escape would both be easy for these desperadoes.

"Go along down the lake and back again. Use as little gas as possible, but keep in the air. We better not land at present." The very steadiness of the Major's tone told Barney that this experienced man of the North expected the worst.

As they rushed down the white expanse, many thoughts raced through Barney's mind. It seemed that hunger and cold grew upon him with every whirl of the engine-shaft. He thought of Bruce and La Vaune. Would they ever return to La Vaune with the money which was rightfully hers? And Timmie? Would they ever be able to help him blot the stain from his name? Barney's friend, Dave Tower, who had gone North in a submarine on a mission as mysterious as their own; would they ever meet?

They had now turned and were making their way slowly back. The fire had burned down to a dull red glow. The forest about had escaped the flames, and this was fortunate. Should the Indians leave them unmolested, they might possibly find a means of sustaining life by hunting and trapping.

"When we get to the bay, might as well land," grumbled the Major. "It's mighty tough up here!"

Barney assured him that it certainly was tough. He was glad they were to land, being very sure that if an Indian did shoot him he would not feel it, so thoroughly benumbed was he with cold.

Then, suddenly, he gave a cry of surprise. They were nearing a point where Conjurer's Bay should appear. Instead of the bay he saw what appeared to be merely a broad shoulder of frozen water, and beyond that, perhaps two miles, was a small lake lined by the forest. It was on the edge of this small lake that the fire smouldered. The boy rubbed his eyes, then looked again. Had the cold benumbed his senses? Was he seeing things? Was he asleep and dreaming?

Apparently not, for from Bruce through the receiver came a groan, then;

"What's happened? The whole shape of the lake has changed within an hour!"

Barney shut off the engines. In the welcome silence which followed, as they drifted downward in a slow spiral, not a man spoke. Their eyes were focused upon the earth.

But now there came to their ears a sound like the distant rush of many waters. This grew rapidly louder, and finally divided itself into rattling and snapping sounds.

Presently the Major let out a roar of laughter.

"Caribou!" he exploded. "They pass south from the barren lands in herds of hundreds of thousands, so thick they look like land! Tip her nose up for another circle. See! There is the end of the herd away there in the distance. We'll be able to land where they have passed in fifteen minutes, an ideal landing-place—tramped hard."

With a grin Barney obeyed orders, and, as his engines began to revolve, felt himself shooting skyward.

"Now it's clear," roared the Major.

Barney did not respond on the instant. He was thinking of something he had read about the "camp-followers of the barren-ground caribou." A chill not of the wind and cold crept into his heart. But what was to be done? He felt that another hour aloft would so benumb his senses that a crash would be inevitable. To land at a point other than that trampled by the caribou involved great risk, for there was undoubtedly a thick coating of drifted snow on the lake's surface. So he stopped the engines and they spiraled once more toward the earth.

Now they were nearing the surface of the lake. The distance was a thousand feet; now eight hundred. Did he see shadows flitting across the ice? At five hundred feet he was sure that he did. He said nothing. So intent on landing was he that no risk seemed too great. At three hundred feet he saw them distinctly—gray streaks scooting across the trodden snow or resting on haunches, their shadows stretching before them.

"Great Scott!" he muttered, "must be hundreds of them! Oh well, they're cowards!" He tilted the machine for the final glide. There came a sudden exclamation from the Major, then from Bruce. They, too, had seen. It was too late now, for their landing wheels were almost touching the surface as they glided on. And now, strangely enough, some of the gray streaks began to chase the plane. As if imagining it a bird with flesh to eat and bones to gnaw, they came on. Then, all at once, Barney realized what they followed—the scent of fresh meat. Timmie had killed a reindeer in honor of their departure and had presented them with a hind-quarter. This was now roped on the fuselage behind the Major. They would have a fight. He knew that now. He thought of their weapons—two rifles. They were almost useless against five hundred gaunt, hungry wolves. And they were gaunt; he could see that as he flew by them. Evidently camp-following this year had not given them an over-abundant supply

of food. The season's calves were fleet and strong by now, and every herd had its thousands of antlered bulls that formed bristling hedges to defend their own.

Bump! The plane struck the ice and bounded, then struck again. Barney's mind was now working fast. Yes, there were other weapons—the oxy-acetylene torch—yes, the machine-gun. He shouted to Bruce to get the torch, and, as soon as the plane slowed down, freed his hands from his gloves and began fumbling at the gun before him. The Major was unstrapping the two rifles. The wolf-pack was crowding around in a grinning circle. Barney caught his breath as his eyes swept the circle. Five hundred if one, dripping-jawed, red-eyed, gray creatures-of-prey, they waited, as ever, for the coward's chance to fight with great odds in their favor.

"Don't shoot until forced to," said Bruce, turning to the Major. "If you do you may bring the whole pack down upon us."

In this emergency, Bruce took the lead, and, assuredly, that was the wise plan; for, reared as he had been in the forests and plains of the Northland, he knew wolves. Just now he was dragging from their hiding-place in the fuselage two iron tubes, perhaps eighteen inches long and six in diameter. One tube contained oxygen, the other acetylene gas. The tubes were connected by a set of registering valves. To these, in turn, was fastened a wire-wound rubber hose with a long brass nozzle. Once the valves were turned, the acetylene gas forced out by a pressure of a thousand pounds and united with oxygen as an accelerator would produce a shooting flame that burned metals as if they were sun-dried pulp.

The machine stopped and the pack crowded in. With an electric flash lamp in one hand and the rubber hose in the other, Bruce stood watching. With aching, clumsy fingers and bleared eyes, Barney worked on the machine-gun that, with oil fairly frozen in its parts, seemed about to refuse to respond.

"Hurry!" exclaimed Bruce, as a gaunt form with patches of brown, and double nose, telling of mixed blood, sprang forward, eager to drag the fresh meat from the fuselage.

Instead of firing, the Major beat the beast over the head, and with a snarl he resumed his place in the ever-narrowing circle.

And now the time for concerted action on the part of the pack seemed to have come; for, with one savage snarl, the first row rushed straight on. There came a

flash, then the hiss of a white-tongued fiery serpent. As the first wolf reared on his haunches, the smell of burning hair and roasting flesh halted the half-maddened pack, and, falling over one another, again they retreated.

It was a tense moment. Slapping his hands to warm them, Barney adjusted cartridges and swept the circle with an imaginary volley. What if the machine-gun jammed? There could be but one result. The torch would not long hold the beasts off. Besides, the gas would not last.

"Well, shoot if you can!" exclaimed Bruce. "This gas is precious stuff. We can't waste it."

At that, there came the staccato music of the machine-gun. With steady eye Barney swept the inner circle. They went down like grain before a gale. With strange wild snarls they bit at their wounds, at one another, at the snow. The gun swept again with its merciless fire. The furthermost members of the pack began to slink away. Then as Barney raised his gun and sent a rain of bullets pattering about them, the whole snarling pack fled in yelping confusion.

The battle was won. Bruce cut off the gas. Barney ceased his fire. The Major, loosing his harness, stood up and stretched himself. Then they looked at one another and laughed.

"Some fight!" exclaimed Barney.

"Some fight!" agreed Bruce.

"Some fight!" reechoed the Major. "And the next thing is to put the injured out of their misery. After that we must skin 'em and make a cache for the meat."

"Meat?" the boys questioned.

"Sure," smiled the Major. "Wolf meat isn't bad at all. You perhaps forget that we have not a hundred miles of gas in the tank. We may be here quite some time!"

CHAPTER IV

A MODERN BATTLE WITH CRIMINALS

When Dave Tower, Barney Menter's one-time pal, received the letter suggesting a bit of "jazz" somewhere within the Arctic Circle, he was on twelve-hour shore leave. They were to start on that mysterious subsea journey at high-tide next day. He grinned as he showed the note to Ensign Blake, his commander. Then he went around the corner and purchased a second-hand guitar and an oboe.

"Look!" he exclaimed, pointing to a pair of battered kettledrums in the corner. "There's the original pair—made by the Adam and Eve of the South Sea Islands, or wherever kettledrums originated. I'll buy 'em and teach some gob to drum. We'll have a whole band when we arrive."

A few hours later found them aboard the snug, shapely hull of U boat N. 12 of the U.S.A. submarine fleet. The sub was a small one, patterned after the most recent British model, known as the "K" class. Fleet as a flying-fish, she made twenty-two knots on the surface and ten knots when submerged. She presented a rather odd appearance, having a short, square funnel, which was swung over into a recess in the deck when the craft submerged.

Her gun and torpedoes had been removed. The weight of those had been replaced by an additional supply of oil and by quantities of provisions. The provisions, together with bales of skin clothing, were packed into every available space.

She made splendid progress as she left the harbor and wound her way in and out among the islands of Puget Sound, to emerge finally round Cape Flattery and strike away into the open sea.

It became evident at once that this was no coastwise journey. Further than that,

not even Ensign Blake knew its purpose.

The sub was registered at the Navy-yard as "off on detached duty." The crew of ten men were all volunteers for the trip. The expedition was under the direction of a doctor. A man past middle age, he sat in a wicker chair below, smoking innumerable cigars and saying nothing.

"Far's I can dope it out," Blake said to Dave, "the old fellow did some good service for the Government during the war. He's had plenty of experience in the North; has some theories he wants to work out about subs and the Arctic. The Government has some little trick they want pulled off up in that North country. The Doctor volunteers to lead the expedition, and here we are!"

"But what do you suppose—"

"Don't suppose a thing," said Blake, gazing astern at the last fading bit of land. "There's a lot of things that might be; but like as not none of my guesses is correct."

"Let's hear you guess."

"Well, first, you know, Uncle Sam has some valuable seal islands in the Aleutian group. Maybe, during the war the Japs or Russians have got careless about drifting around that way and carrying off a few hundred skins. Might be, you know.

"But I'm not saying that's it. A sub would be a mighty fine craft for watching that sort of game, though. And then, there's another thing I've thought of. There's gold in Russia, on the Kamchatkan peninsula; you know that, don't you?"

"No." Dave opened his eyes wide in surprise.

"Heaps of it. Tons and tons! Just waiting for the digging. And before we went into the war, when Russia was still with the Allies and needed money, our Government, or independent capitalists, I don't know which, furnished the Russians a lot of machinery for mining the gold; about a million dollars' worth, I guess. Then came the revolution in Russia. I doubt if a cent has been realized from the sale of machinery. Who's in possession of that peninsula at the present time? God alone knows. Japan would like to meddle there, I'm sure. Perhaps we're being sent up there to conduct an investigation.

"Those are my two guesses. Take 'em for what they're worth."

"You don't think," said Dave, "that we'd attempt the Pole?"

The ensign was silent for a time. "No," he said at last, "I don't. Of course, Stefansson has said that a 'sub' is the most practical way to go there; that ice-floes are never more than ten feet thick and twenty-five miles wide, and all that; but there are too many unsettled problems relating to such a trip."

"But say!" exclaimed Dave, "who is this doctor of ours, anyway?"

"Blamed if I know," said Blake, as he turned away to go below.

"Well, anyhow," Dave remarked, "whoever he is, he's going to take us where the white ice-floes are drifting. Look at the color of this craft; blue-white, like the ice itself."

The journey North, save for a storm, which they avoided by submerging, was uneventful until they found themselves in the company of scattered ice-cakes with the snow-capped ridges of the Aleutian Islands looming up before them.

In no time at all every man on the craft realized that on these islands was to be found one of the objects of their quest; for, once they had sighted the shores, the funnel was dropped, electric power applied, and watchers, dressed in white to match the color of the craft, set to scan the shores for signs of life. They stole through the water like some ghost craft.

"Believe it's that seal-fishery business?" asked Dave, as he and the ensign took their watch.

"No."

Dave was certain from the tone that the doctor had confided his secret to the ensign. He asked no more questions.

So they drifted on. The wind had dropped. The swell rolled their craft as it plowed along. Here and there a sea-lion thrust its ugly head from the water. Twice a seal attempted to climb upon the slippery hull for a rest, but, to the amusement of the boys, slid back into the water. An offer to assist the third one was not appreciated, and the ridiculously human-like head disappeared beneath

the water with great alacrity.

Dave had been searching the hills with his binoculars for some time when he suddenly gave the glass to the ensign.

"What's that tangle above the cliffs there?" he asked.

The ensign studied the cliffs for some time. Then he touched a button with his foot and they turned silently shoreward.

"That's it!" He said with an air of finality.

"What?" asked Dave eagerly.

"The wireless." Then the ensign explained to Dave the purpose of their journey. They had been sent into the Arctic to locate a wireless station, supposed to be placed in the Aleutian Islands; a station run by radical propagandists, part of a world-federation, which proposed to wreck all organized society. Had Dave realized that the missions of sub and airplane were alike he would have been startled. As it was, his face took on a tense, expectant look, his cheeks burned hot with excitement.

The Doctor was called to the conning-tower. After studying the contour of the island for some time, he said:

"Their shack, built of rocks and driftwood logs, is at the base of the cliff. That is good. We will divide into two parties. Four of us will go up the cliff and get above them, while four others will skirt the cliff and, under cover, await my signal. Our supporting party will take ropes, rifles and a machine-gun. I will go with the party to the top of the cliff. We will carry only rifles and some special instruments of attack which I have stored in canvas sacks below. Two men must remain on board. Head in close to those rocks before us. They are out of sight of the shack and there is ice stranded there—a straggler will scarcely tell our craft from it. I have no doubt there are a number of them and that they are hardy ruffians. We must proceed with great care.

"Hark!" He put his hand to his ear. "They are sending messages now.

"In the future," continued the Doctor, as he handed Dave two strange-looking spheres, the size of a man's head, "the work of sheriffs, policemen and other

officers of the law is not going to be quite so hazardous. When a criminal runs amuck, he will not kill a half-score of brave men before he is captured. The officers of the law will do what we will soon be doing, and a child can do the rest. Only," he continued, "watch your step going up that hill. It doesn't take much of a bump to get one of these funny little balls excited."

Dave had been detailed to assist the Doctor. Ensign Blake would lead the supporting party around the cliff, there to await the Doctor's signals.

Besides the sack in which Dave carried the large spheres, there was another carried by a seaman. This one gave forth a metallic clinking, as if it were full of iron eggs. With the Doctor and the other seaman carrying two rifles each, the four men made their way slowly around the rocky hillside and were soon advancing silently, single-file, up the surface of one of those perpetual snow-banks for which the islands are noted.

The rocks above were much larger than they had seemed from the sub. Twice, as he climbed over them, Dave's foot slipped and each time his heart was in his mouth. One stumbling misstep and all might be over for him. But he had the clear, cool head of a clean boy who had lived right, and an appreciation of the joy of living, which would take him far and keep him safe through many an adventure. So, safely, they reached the top of the cliff.

The Doctor motioned Dave to come back with him to a box-like edge of rock, which would give them a view of what lay some three hundred feet below. All was still. The moon, a great yellow ball, floated in the sky above and in the sea beneath. A lone sea-gull, awakened by the supporting party, sailed screaming away. Not a move, not a sound was to be detected below. Yet there, in a rocky cavern, were a number of world-criminals, and behind some crag were three jackies and their commander. Soon all this would be changed. Fighting, perhaps death, would end the quiet of that Arctic scene. Dave's hand trembled with excitement as he arranged the two sacks beside the Doctor. Even the Doctor's hand shook as he opened one sack and drew forth a number of small iron objects, the size and shape of a bicycle handle-bar grip. His face grew stern.

"Understand Mill's grenades?" he asked.

"Yes."

"All right. When I say 'Go' drop ten of these as fast as you can release the pins.

Drop 'em on their shack."

Dave's heart thumped violently. He had thrown Mill's grenades at manikin "enemies," but never had he hurled them where human flesh was the target. Slowly, mechanically, he arranged the ten grenades in a row.

"Go!" The word sang in his ears.

Ten seconds later from below came two sharp reports—his grenade and the Doctor's. They were off together. Crash followed crash in quick succession until the row was finished. Silence followed for a single second. Then came the cries and curses of men, as they staggered from their half-demolished shelter and began to scatter. Dave's heart thumped. There were fifteen, at least.

"Now!" exclaimed the Doctor, and lifting one of the large spheres he dropped it over the ledge's edge. Just as that instance Dave saw one of the rascals raise his rifle and fire. Immediately there came a cry of distress. Dave thought he recognized the voice and a lump rose in his throat.

But now there came a dull muffled explosion—the strange bomb. Instantly the men below began acting like madmen. Throwing away their rifles, they staggered about, tearing at their eyes, their throats, their clothing, and uttering wild cries of distress. At the same time three automatic pistols cracked, and Dave knew the doctor had given his signal.

To his surprise, he saw the three jackies emerge from hiding wearing gas masks. Quickly they overpowered the wild men, tied them and carried them around a point of land. As they did this the Doctor and his band kept guard above, rifles ready for any man who might, by some chance, recover sufficiently from the gas to shoot. But none did.

"It won't do them the least bit of harm," the Doctor said, as he noticed the look of surprise on Dave's face. "It's only chlorpicrin—a tear gas. It comes in liquid form, so must be associated with an explosive which transforms it into a gas and scatters it. You will see that our men are carrying them out of it as soon as they have them secured. It's a safe and harmless way of handling criminals. The war taught us that."

"But the ensign?" exclaimed Dave, as he saw the last ruffian in the hands of the jackies.

"Something must have happened to him," said the Doctor rising hastily.

"There was a shot," Dave reminded him.

Together they hastily made their way down the rough hillside. Slipping, sliding, falling, to rise again, they came to the lower surface and hurried around the point where the prisoners had been carried.

A strange scene awaited them. Sixteen men lying in a row, all tightly bound. And what a motley crew they were—Japs, Russians, Mexicans, Greeks, and even Americans, they had gathered here for a common purpose. But it is doubtful if one of them could have told what the next step would be, should their first task be accomplished.

Off to one side, lay Ensign Blake, white and still. One of the seamen was bending over him.

"Got an ugly one in the chest," he said simply. "Think we can save him?"

The Doctor bent over, and tearing away Blake's garments, made a thorough examination.

"He'll pull through," he said. "But we must get him to the mission hospital at Unalaska at once. Begin throwing those rascals aboard. There's a prison there for their accommodation."

At that moment the two other jackies appeared, carrying a moaning burden in the shape of a Jap radical.

"One's done in for good," the foremost man explained. "We searched the ruins. Maybe we can save this fellow."

"Take him aboard," said the Doctor. Then, turning, he directed the men who carried their fallen commander to the craft.

* * * * *

"Well, that about ends our present career in the Arctic." The Doctor was speaking to Dave, and emphasized his word with a sigh. "I had hoped we might do something really big, but Blake will not be out again this season. He'll get

around again all right, but it's a slow process."

Dave sat thinking. Suddenly he jumped to his feet.

"Doctor," he said eagerly, "there's a gob on board who is sure a wonder at navigation. Don't you think—think, he and I might manage the sub for you—your trip?"

"H—m." The Doctor grew thoughtful, but a flash of hope gleamed in his eye.

"Tell you what," he said presently, "there's a considerable ice-floe between the islands; the north wind brought it down last night. Have your crew ready for a try-out in the morning."

With a heart that ached from pure joy of anticipation, Dave hurried to an ancient sealer's bunk-house where his men were housed. "A try-out, try-out, try-out," kept ringing in his ears. What did it mean if they were successful? Something big, wonderful, he was sure. Russian gold? Charting Northeast Passage? North Pole? He did not know, but nothing seemed too difficult for his daring young heart.

And the next day the try-out came. And such an ordeal as it was! Gobs had surely never been put to a test like that in any navy-yard training station! For five long hours they dived and rose and dived again. They rose suddenly, rose slowly; they tipped, glided, shot through the water. They passed for miles beneath the ice-floe, to emerge at last and bump a cake, or lift themselves toward a dark spot not larger than the sub itself—a patch of open water in the midst of the floe.

With mind all in a whirl, Dave gave the final command to make for port.
It had been a great day.

That night, after "chow," the Doctor called Dave into his room at the hospital.

"Young man," he said, motioning the boy to a seat, "you and your crew have surprised me beyond belief. I feel that we shall be risking little in attempting what, to many, might seem the most difficult task ever undertaken by a submarine. I do not yet feel free to tell you what that trip will be; you'll have to take that on faith. I can only tell you that we will proceed from here directly to Nome, Alaska. There we will get more oil and provisions. We will then sail

through Behring Strait due North."

For a time the two sat in silence. The Doctor's face grew mellow, then sad at recollections of years that had gone.

"I don't mind telling you," he said after awhile, "that I am an explorer, you almost might say 'by profession;' that some years ago another explorer and I sought the same goal. We went from different points; both claimed to have reached it. But he got the honors."

"And you really reached—"

"Doesn't matter now what I did in the past," interrupted the Doctor quickly. "What I am to do in the future is all that counts, and the immediate future is big with possibilities."

"The crew will be with you to a man," Dave assured him, as he rose to go.

As he stepped into the cool night air, Dave found that his face was hot with excitement. There was left in his mind not one doubt as to their final destination: it was to be a try for the Pole. Only one thought saddened him; that his good friend, Blake, would not continue as one of the party.

Two days later they crossed over to the island of the illicit wireless station. They found the apparatus in perfect condition, and the Doctor at once began sending messages.

"I'm letting the world know of our purpose," he explained. "At least, trying to. Sending messages by code to a friend of mine in Chicago. Hope Seattle will pick it up, and if not, perhaps that radical operator who is supposed to be relaying messages to Canada and the States from the north-central portion of the Continent will catch it, and, thinking it one of his own messages in a new code, pass it on."

Had the doctor known what kind of radicals were in control of the station on Great Bear Lake at that moment, perhaps he would have been more careful what messages he sent.

"If you don't mind," said Dave, "for the sake of my friends, and especially of my mother, I wish you'd include my name in the message."

"It's already done," smiled the Doctor.

CHAPTER V

AN INFERNAL MACHINE

When Bruce, Barney and the Major found themselves stranded on the shore of a vast frozen lake at the beginning of an Arctic winter, they at once took steps to conserve all resources. Building a cache between three scrub spruce trees, they piled upon it their wolf meat and skins. To Barney the thought of eating "dog meat," as he called it, was most repulsive, but necessity gives man little choice in the Arctic, so he munched his roast wolf's back that night in silence. But at the same time, he vowed that, sure as the caribou had not all passed, he would dine on caribou roast before long.

Once the cache was completed, they began scouting the woods near the ruins of the burned trading station. There they found plain signs of Indians. A circle of beaten tracks made certain a pow-wow had been held there.

"Doesn't look very good to me," admitted the Major. "These Indians of the Little Sticks are a fierce and cruel people, full of superstitions, and living up to the old law of 'blood revenge.' There's only one thing in our favor: they have a superstition about a giant creature, known as the Thunder-bird. The stories of this terrible bird are known to almost all Indian tribes, but the Little Sticks believe them literally. From the tracks I should judge that they left in great haste. What could cause this fright, save the sound and sight of our plane hovering over them? Since it is almost certain that they have never seen an airplane, it seems likely that they considered it to be old Thunder-bird come to carry them off. If that is true, I shall not look for them back in a hurry."

"What puzzles me is, where's the remains of the fellow's generator and wireless?" said Barney. "Don't see anything down there in the ruins, do you?"

Instantly all eyes were turned toward the smouldering piles of ashes.

"The place was wired all right," said the Major, pointing to a mass of tangled lighting wire.

"Say! What's that out in the center?" exclaimed Barney. "Looks like the bones of a man?"

"So it does," said the Major, "and surely is. Well, there can't be any further doubt about the rascal being burned in the ruins of his own house."

Then there came a shout from Barney. He had been tracing out the masses of blackened wire.

"Look!" he exclaimed. "Here's where the lead-wires go into the ground. Must be a separate power-house. Three lead-wires instead of two. What do you suppose that means?"

He clipped the soft wires off with his heavy knife, and bent them apart to avoid short circuits; then, closely followed by the others, went plowing away through the snow to search out the point where the wires left the ground. They traced them through the scrub timber, and, almost at once, came upon a strange frame-like structure, ending in a tall pole, and having at its center a house built of logs. The whole affair was quite invisible outside the timber.

"It's his wireless station," breathed the Major. "No further doubt remains."

He stepped to the door and found himself gazing into a well-arranged room—electric generator, storage batteries in rows and instruments of every description along the walls and the floor.

But what caught Bruce's eye was two rows of ten-gallon cans piled in the rear. With a cry of joy he sprang toward them. But his joyful look changed to an anxious one, as he lifted can after can and found it empty. Only one contained gasoline, and that was but half-full.

"Not enough to give our Thunder-bird a drink," he groaned disgustedly.

"Well, at any rate," said the Major, "we've found a place that won't make a bad shelter from Arctic blizzards. I suggest that we bring the plane up to the edge of the woods nearest this point and camp here."

"What's that?" exclaimed Bruce in a startled whisper, as he detected some noise outside.

He pushed the door open fearlessly, then laughed. There stood a dog.

"Not a bad find," said the Major. "He may be a lot of help to us. And, look! There are four others! They're the trader's dogs. Ran away when the place burned, I haven't a doubt. Barney, run and get some wolf meat. We'll have a team at once. And we'll need it. Can't move the plane without it."

They were soon on good terms with the strange dogs. The Major, who appeared to know all there was to know about Arctic life, fashioned some Eskimo style harness from wolfskin, and before many hours they had their plane by the edge of the woods, and were settled in their new home.

That night, after they had enjoyed reindeer steak as a special treat, the Major rather playfully put the receiving piece of the wireless over his head and clicked the machine. Almost instantly, he exclaimed:

"Jove! I'm getting something! Give me a note-book and pencil."

For fifteen minutes he scratched strange dots and dashes across innumerable pages. At last he paused and removed the receiver.

"Guess that's about all for this time. Let's see what we've got."

Three heads bent over the message. But, after hours of study, the only conclusion they could come to was that the message had been sent in a secret code, which they might never be able to decipher.

"Well," said the Major, with a sigh. "Station's closed for to-night. Tell the gentleman to call again in the morning." At that he crept into his sleeping-bag and was soon snoring. The two boys gladly followed his example.

Barney made the first announcement in the morning. He was going caribou hunting. He had had quite enough "dog meat." Bruce offered to go with him, but, on second thought, decided to try fishing through the ice. Barney was soon lost in the wilderness of scrub spruce. But, though he hunted far, he found no fresh caribou tracks. It was on his return trip that he received the first surprise of the day. The wind was blowing fine snow along the surface and he found his out-

going trail half-buried. Then, suddenly, he came upon strange footprints. The person apparently had been going North, but upon seeing the white boy's track he had turned and retreated. The tracks were fresh and had been made by a heelless skin-shoe.

"Indian!" Barney gasped.

Even as he spoke he caught the gleam of a camp-fire through the trees; then another and another. Without a moment's delay Barney started for the camp two miles away.

He had reached the open space where the trading station had stood, had nearly crossed it, when out of the edge of the ruins there rose the form of a man, not an Indian but a white man. Barney's first thought was that it was Bruce or the Major. His second look brought action. He dropped flat behind some fire-blackened debris. The man wore a tomato-colored mackinaw, such as was not to be found in their outfit. Whoever he was, his back was turned and he had not seen the boy.

Creeping a little forward, Barney peered around the pile. What he saw set the cold chills chasing up his back. The man had torn two of the lead-wires from the frosted earth. Slowly he placed their points together. In that instant the boy understood. He knew now the reason for the three wires leading to the power-house. Two were for carrying light to the building. If the third one was connected with the right one of the lighting-wires, an infernal-machine would be set going, and the power-house, with all in it, would be blown to atoms. And, at this moment, Bruce and the Major were there. The man, whoever he was, had, since the wires were broken, found it necessary to test the pairs out. His first trial had been wrong. He was bending over for a second try when something struck him, bowling him over like a ten-pin. It was Barney.

The man was heavier than Barney, and evidently older. He was fit, too. One thing Barney had noticed—the gleam of an automatic in the man's hip-pocket. In his sudden attack he had managed to drag this out and drop it upon the snow.

The struggle which followed was furious. Holds were lost and won. Blood flecked the snow, arms were wrenched and faces bruised. Slowly, steadily, Barney felt his strength leaving him.

At last, with a gliding grip, the man's hand reached his throat. It was all over

now. Barney's senses reeled as the grip tightened. His lungs burned, his head seemed bursting. He was about to lose consciousness, when through his mind there flashed pictures of Bruce and the Major. He must! He must! With one last heroic effort, he threw the man half from him. Then, faintly, far distant, there seemed to echo a shot, a single shot; then all sensation left him.

When the boy felt himself coming back to consciousness, he hardly knew whether he was still in the land of the living. He dared not move or open his eyes. Where was he? What of the stranger? The Major and Bruce; had they been blown into eternity? Again and again these problems whirled through his dizzy mind.

Then all at once, he heard a voice.

"I think he's coming 'round," someone, very far off, was saying.

It was the gruff voice of the Major. Barney opened his eyes to find his companions bending over him.

"What happened?" he asked weakly, his eyes searching their faces.

"That's what we'd like to know," answered Bruce; "we heard a shot, and hurrying out here found you unconscious beside a dead man."

"Dead?" Barney sat up dizzily.

"Sure is. Did you shoot him?"

"Shoot—I shoot—" The boy tried to steady his whirling brain. "No, I didn't shoot him."

Gradually the world ceased whirling about him and he was able to think clearly. Then, together, they pieced out the story. Barney told what had happened, and you may be very sure it was a sober pair that listened.

"Well, my boy," said the Major solemnly, "we owe our lives to you; there's no doubt about that. As for him," he added, pointing to the dead man, "he must have rolled upon the automatic when you made your last effort, and accidentally discharged it. He has a bullet-hole in the back of his head where a pin-prick would have killed him. A case of pure Providence, I'd call it."

"Let's get out of here," said Barney, showing signs of weakness. "I've had quite enough of it."

With an arm on either of his comrades' shoulders, he made his way back to the station, where a bowl of hot reindeer broth completely revived him.

"The next thing," said Bruce, "is to hunt out that infernal contraption which threatens our lives."

It was a delicate and dangerous undertaking, but little by little, they traced out the wires and disconnected them. At last they found it in a small box which had been skillfully fitted into a beam.

"Innocent looking little thing," said Bruce, holding it up for inspection. "To-morrow I am going to take it out to the lake, hook it up with a couple of batteries and see if it's got any kick."

After a hearty meal, the three resumed their previous evening's occupation, attempting to decipher the strangely coded message.

"Here's a theory to try out," said Bruce. "A message is usually composed of nearly an equal number of words of one to three letters and of those having more than three. These are likely to be used alternately. If then, you find two or three words of four or more letters, it's likely to be a name. The man, whoever he is, has signed only a code name, but there may be more names in the body of the message. Look it over."

"Yes, here are two words together of five letters each," exclaimed Barney.

"Think of names you know that are spelled with five letters," said Bruce excitedly.

Instantly there came into Barney's mind the name of his former pal.

"There's Dave Tower," he said. "He'd sign it David, of course."

"Just fits," exclaimed Bruce, more excited than ever. "And by all that's Canadian, the first and last letters of the first name are the same, just as they are here. I believe we're on the right track."

"But what would his pal have to do with it?" asked the astonished Major.

"He went North about the time we started." Barney danced over the floor in his excitement.

While the boys were too excited to do further deciphering, the Major's cooler brain was busy. Soon he rose and began pacing rapidly back and forth across the room. His face wore anything but a pleased expression, and his limp was greatly increased by his irritation.

"Did you get it?" asked Barney.

"I should say I did!" exclaimed the Major. "Right in the neck! And to think," he sputtered, "here we are without gasoline to carry us a hundred miles, and he starting with everything in his favor. If we just had gas for three hundred miles. There's plenty on the schooner, Gussie Brown. I called Nome yesterday and found that out. But they can't bring it to us, and we can't go to them. We're stuck; stuck right here! And he's starting to-morrow!"

The boys stared in speechless amazement, as the Major, dropping into a chair, covered his face with his hands.

It was many minutes before he was calm enough to tell them the simple truth of the matter, which was, of course, that the wireless message was that one sent by the Doctor on the Aleutian Islands, telling of his intended journey Northward; also that this same doctor was a hated rival explorer, whom he had beaten a few years before; that he had not intended going North at this time, but this action of his rival made it imperative that he do so now. Finally, that the trading gasoline schooner, Gussie Brown, was frozen in the ice three hundred miles north of Conjurer's Bay and Great Bear Lake, and had an ample supply of gasoline.

"But after all, I guess we're beaten," said the Major wearily. "If we succeed in getting out of this scrape alive we'll be fortunate."

"Cheer up! The worst is yet to come," smiled Barney. "Let's turn in."

Two interesting problems awaited the party in the morning. Was the man who had been accidentally shot the night before the anarchist trader? If so, who was the person whose bones lay in the ruins? Was the infernal-machine a genuine affair, and if so, would it explode? While the Major was still brooding over his

disappointment, the boys were so eager for these investigations that they quite forgot the affair of the wireless message.

The identity of the dead man was soon established by papers found in his pockets. He was the trader. The skull found in the ruins was unmistakably that of an Indian. A break in this skull showed that the person had died a violent death and had not been caught by the fire. The conclusion the boys arrived at was that the trader had killed the Indian and had fled to the woods. The Indians in revenge had burned his trading station. That he had intended to destroy the explorers was beyond question. He had, therefore, met a well-deserved fate. His body was buried, Eskimo-style, on top of the ground, with stones piled over it to protect it from wolves.

When this work had been completed, the two boys took the infernal-machine down to the frozen surface of the lake where there could be no danger from an explosion, and connected it with wires which they laid along the surface from the steep, snow-buried shore.

"Must be twenty feet of snow in there!" exclaimed Bruce, as for the third time he lost his footing and slid to the bottom of the slope.

Presently they were well behind the ridge in the forest, and out of range of any flying splinters of machine or ice.

"I feel as I used to when I was a schoolboy, and hid with the rest of the gang out in the woods and shot off charges of gunpowder in a gas-pipe bomb," grinned Barney, as he screwed one wire to a post of a battery.

"Now we'll—" he exclaimed breathlessly.

His last word was lost in the roar of a tremendous explosion. The shores of the bay took up the sound and sent it echoing and reechoing through the forest. Fine bits of ice came rattling down through the trees, while a great cloud of smoke and mist floated lazily over their heads.

"Whew! Some explosion!" murmured Barney.

Bruce was silent. His face was white.

"What's up?" asked Barney.

"Nothing. I'm all right," Bruce smiled grimly. "I was only thinking what might have happened yesterday."

"Forget it," grumbled Barney. "C'mon, let's see the ruins."

"Fish!" exclaimed Bruce, as they emerged from the forest. And assuredly there were fish in abundance. The thirty-foot wide pool, from which the ice had been blown, was white with them. There were salmon, salmon-trout, white-fish, lake-trout, flounders, and others the boys did not know. Hundreds and hundreds of them, stunned by the explosion, floated on the surface only waiting to be harvested.

"We'll have to work carefully," said Barney, starting forward. "The ice is pretty well shattered. A plunge in that water, and the temperature at thirty below, wouldn't be pleasant, but I believe we can save every one of them. Get a pole." He began cutting a large branch from a spruce tree. Bruce followed his example.

"Now!" Barney exclaimed, preparing to slide down the bank. But he paused in surprise. The snow-bank, shattered by the blast, had gone tumbling down to the surface of the lake. And what was that protruding above what remained of the snow? It was dark and V-shaped, like the gable of a roof.

Barney was for investigating at once, but Bruce was more practical; the fish must be secured immediately. This food might yet stand between them and starvation.

They were soon whipping the pool with their poles, and, as the fish came to the ice edge, they gathered them in. Some were monsters, two or three feet in length. It was, indeed, a great haul. They piled them on the ice like cord-wood. Already they were freezing; they would remain fresh for months.

CHAPTER VI

THE RACE IS ON

"And now for the lakeside secret," exclaimed Barney, tossing the last fish upon the pile, and throwing his frosty pole aside.

Eagerly Bruce sprang to his feet. Together they raced around the pool. Clambering over the tumbled avalanches of snow, they were soon within sight of the strange triangle. Barney's heart beat fast. What was it? Could it be only a bit of bent timber lodged there on the log-roof of a long-abandoned Indian shack? Or was it—was it what he knew Bruce hoped it might be—a supply-house for gasoline, or perhaps a motor-boat with a supply of gasoline on board?

Excitedly they attacked the piles of snow. Lacking shovels, they worked with hands and feet. Hope grew with every kick and scoop. This was no mere bit of timber, nor yet an abandoned shack; it was too recently built to leave a doubt about that. And now they had reached the top of the door.

"I say we've found it," panted Bruce, redoubling his efforts.

"Wait. Don't hope too much," gasped Barney, tossing aside snow like a dog burrowing for a rabbit.

The door had a spring padlock on it. Barney, hurrying to the lake for some pieces of ice, cracked the lock as he would a nut between stones. Then, prying the door open a bit at the top, he tried to peer in.

"Dark," he muttered. "Can't see a thing."

Breathlessly they resumed work.

And now the door was free to the very bottom. It was Bruce's turn. Forcing the

door open a foot, he took one good look, then let out a whoop.

"Gasoline!" he shouted. "Bedons of it!"

"May be empty," suggested Barney.

"I'll see," said Bruce. An instant more, and having crowded himself through the narrow space, he struck a hundred-gallon steel bedon with his fist. No hollow sound came from it.

"Full," he exclaimed, and, the strain over, sank to the floor with a sigh of relief.

The more hardy Barney began to explore the place. To the back was a small gasoline launch, apparently in perfect condition. Ranged along the right wall were the bedons, five of them, all full but one, and each containing a hundred gallons.

"Well," said Barney, sitting on a bedon, and kicking his heels against its steel side, "now we can take the Major to the moon, or any other did place he wishes to go; that is, if we want to."

For a long time Bruce was silent. Now that the excitement was over he realized he was homesick. Then, too, the dangers of yesterday had shaken his nerves. He was thinking, also, of La Vaune working her way through the academy when money, much money, belonging to her lay idle; and of Timmie, who awaited their return to assist him in the retrieving of his good name. But there came the after-thought: had it not been for the Major's trust in him and in Barney, none of these things would have been possible. Yes, they owed a debt to the Major and that debt must be paid.

"And I guess we want to take him where he wants to go," said he, straightening up as he looked his friend in the eye.

"Good!" exclaimed Barney. "I was going to leave it to you, but I knew you'd do it. It's the chance of our lives. I'm sure he means the Pole—the North Pole! Think of it! And, then, there's the reward!"

"Guess we'd better squeeze out of here and go break the glad news," said Bruce, "He's up there fairly eating his heart out."

"The race is on," muttered Barney, as they hurried up the bank.

"The race is on," echoed the Major, a few minutes later, as he walked the floor in high glee.

"Yes, sir, it is," said Barney, "and a good clean race it will be if Dave Tower is skipper of that submarine. I never knew a squarer fellow."

The Major, limbering up his wireless instruments, sent a message snap-snapping across the frozen expanse.

"What you doing?" asked Barney.

"Just letting that foxy old rival of mine know I got his message and that I'm on the job," chuckled the Major. "I'll get off other messages every three hours for a time."

"Would you mind mentioning my name in the message?" asked Barney. "You see, I've got a date for a little jazz with Dave up at the Pole, and I'd like him to know I'm planning to keep the appointment."

The Major chuckled again, and included this in his message:

"Barney Menter, pilot."

The party at the Aleutian station caught the Major's second sending of the message. The Doctor's face grew gray, as he realized its meaning.

"Great Providence!" he exclaimed. "Will he beat me again?" Then striking the table with his fist. "He will not! We're crippled by the loss of an important member of our party. He has the swiftest conveyance, but it is not the surest. We will win! We start to-morrow. The race is on!"

As for Dave, he was more than glad at the prospect of meeting Barney at the Pole. He was confident that both expeditions would succeed. The only question in his optimistic young mind was, which would arrive first? If his trying could decide it, the sub would get there first. He and Barney had been chums since boyhood, but they had been keen competitors in all their play, study and work. Now their wits were once more fairly matched.

"It's the army and the navy!" he exclaimed. "A fair, square race. And may the best one win."

"I might say," remarked the Doctor, "that there is a bountiful prize offered to the first person who next reaches the Pole, and who brings back three witnesses who can make readings of latitude and longitude to testify to the facts. Should we win, the prize will go to you and the crew."

"I'll go tell them," said Dave, donning his cap. A moment later the Doctor heard cheers which sounded like:

"Rah! Rah! Rah for Doctor! Rah! Rah! Rah for the North Pole!"

The race was on!

Her secret service days over for the present, the "sub" had been given a coat of black paint. Now, as she scudded through the dark waters of Behring Sea, Dave, standing in the conning-tower, thought how much she must resemble a whale. During the war many a leviathan of the deep had met death because he resembled a submarine. Now, in peace times, in this feeding ground of the greatest of all prey, the tables might be turned, the submarine taken for whale.

The race was on. Across Behring Sea they sped through foam-flecked waves and driving mists. Pausing only a day at Nome, they pushed on past Port Clarence, rounded Cape Prince of Wales, and entered boldly into the great unknown, the Arctic Ocean. A million wild fowl, returning to the Southland, shot away over their heads. Here and there they saw little brown seals bob out of the water to stare at them. Once they ran a race with a great white bear, and again they sighted a school of whales. They gave these a wide berth, for should they grow friendly and mix their great flippers with the sub's propeller, trouble would follow. Walrus, too, were avoided, for they had a playful habit of bumping the under-surface of any craft they might chance to meet.

At last, far to the North there appeared a glaring white line. They had reached the ice. Their days of merry sailing on the surface were well-nigh over. From this time on life would be spent in stuffy, steel-lined, electric-lighted compartments. But for all that, it would not be so bad. Openings in the floes would offer them opportunities to rise for a breath of fresh air, and dangers seemed few enough, since the ocean everywhere was deep, and ice-bergs, sinking dangerously to a great depth below the surface, were few. Only the piles of ice and great six-foot-

thick pans would make a white roof to the ocean, which was not without its advantage, for here the water would always be delightfully calm.

Shutting off the engines, dropping the funnel, closing the hatch, they sank quickly beneath the water's surface, and were soon passing below a marvelous panorama of lights and shadow. Through the thick glass of the observation windows there flooded tints varying from pale-blue to ultramarine and deep purple. No sunset could vie with the color schemes that kaleidoscoped above them. Here a great pile of ancient ice gave the whole a reddish tinge; and here a broad pan of transparent new ice cast down the deep-blue of the sky; and again a thicker floe admitted a light as mellow as expert decorators could have devised.

"It's wonderful!" murmured the Doctor.

CHAPTER VII

A STRANGE PEOPLE

Ten hours after the start of the submarine, Dave Tower's eye anxiously watched the dial which indicated a rapidly lessening supply of oxygen, while his keenly appraising mind measured time in terms of oxygen supply. They were still scudding along beneath that continuous kaleidoscopic panorama of green and blue lights and shadows, but no one noticed the beauty of it now. All eyes were strained on the plate-glass windows above, and they looked but for one thing—a spot, black as night itself, which would mean open water above.

"There it is to starboard!" exclaimed the Doctor. Careful backing and steering to starboard brought merely the disclosure that the Doctor's eye-strain had developed to the point where it produced optical illusions.

The oxygen was all this time dwindling. To avoid further waste of time, Dave told his first mate to close his eyes for three minutes while he kept watch, then to open them and "spell" him at the watch.

"Straight ahead! Quick!" muttered the mate, as the dial hung fluttering at zero.

Seizing a lever here and there, watching this gauge, then that one, Dave sent the

craft slanting upward. Like some dark sea monster seeking air, the "sub" shot toward the opening.

And now—now the prow tilted through space. Another lever and another, and she balanced for a second on the surface. For a second only, then came a crash. Too much eagerness, too great haste, had sent the conning-tower against the solid six-foot floe.

With lips straight and white Dave grasped two levers at once. The craft shot backward. There followed a sickening grind which could only tell of interference with the propeller. Too quick a reverse had sent it against the ice astern. Shutting off all power, Dave allowed her to rise silently to the surface. Then, as silently, one member of the crew opened the hatch and they all filed out.

"Propeller's still there," breathed one of the gobs in relief.

"'Fraid that won't help," said Dave.

"Jarvis," he said, turning to the engineer, "go below and start her up at lowest speed."

In a moment there followed a jangling grind.

The engineer reappeared.

"As I feared, sir," he reported. "It's the shaft, sir. She'll have to go to shore for repairs. Only a hot fire and heavy hammering can fix her. Can't be done on board or on the ice."

"Ashore!" Dave rubbed his forehead, pulled his forelock, and tried to imagine which way land might be after ten hours of travel in the uncharted waters of the great Arctic sea.

"I'll leave it to you, Jarvis," he smiled. "If you can locate land, and show us how to get there across these piles of ice with a disabled submarine, you shall have a medal from the National Geographic Society."

The engineer was not a gob, strictly speaking. He was an old English seaman, who had often sailed the Arctic in a whaler. Now he went below with the words:

"I'll find the nearest land, right enough, me lad; but as to gittin' there, that's quite another matter."

Thereafter the engineer might be seen from time to time dashing up the hatchway to take an observation, then back to the chart-table, where he examined first this chart, then that one. Some of the charts were new, just from the hands of the hydrographic bureau. These belonged to the craft. Others were soiled and torn; patched here and there, or reinforced by cloth from a discarded shirt. These belonged to Jarvis, himself; had been with him on many a journey and were now most often consulted.

"Near's h'I can make it, sir," he said, at last, "we're some two hundred miles from Point Hope on the Alaska shores and a bit farther from a point on the Russian shore, which the natives call On-na-tak, though what the place is like h'I can't say, never 'aving been there. Far's h'I know, no white man's been there, h'either; leastwise, not in our generation."

He studied the charts and made one further observation:

"Far's h'I can tell, sir," he smiled, "On-na-tak's h'our only chance. Current sets that way h'at three knots an hour. That means we'll drift there in four or five days. There'll be driftwood on the beach, and, with good luck, we can fix 'er up there. Mayhap there's coal in the banks by the sea, and that's greater luck for us if there is."

The Doctor, who had sat all this time in silence, smoking his black cigars, now rose and began pacing the deck.

"Four or five days? Four or five, did you say? Great Creation! That will mean the losing of the race!"

Jarvis nodded his head.

"H'anything less would mean that and more," said the old engineer. "Going down with such a shaft would mean death to all of us."

The Doctor sighed. "We can't help it, I suppose—but it's a cruel blow."

"There's many a break in a long airplane voyage anywhere," he consoled himself, "and I think the chances for accidents in the Arctic are about trebled. I

don't wish our rivals any fatal catastrophe, but a little tough luck—say a wing demolished; or an engine burned out—might not be so much to my displeasure."

The days that followed were spent in various ways. Hunting seals and polar bears was something of an out-the-way pleasure for seafaring men. Then there were checkers and cards, besides the daily guess as to their position at noon.

Strangely enough, for once in the history of Arctic currents, they found themselves being carried where they wanted to go, in a direct line for Point On-na-tak, and during the entire four days and a half there was hardly a point's deviation from the course. On the evening of the fourth day, Dave thought he sighted land, and the midnight watch reported definitely that there was land to the port bow; two points, one more easily discerned than the other. This news brought the whole crew on deck. And for two hours there was wild speculation as to the nature of the country ahead of them; the possibility of inhabitants and their treatment of strangers. Azazruk, the Eskimo, thought that he had heard from an old man of his tribe that the point was inhabited by a people who spoke a different language from that spoken by the Chukches of East Cape and Whaling, on the Russian side of Behring Strait. But of this he could not be sure. If the old engineer knew anything of these shores other than the facts he had already stated concerning wood and coal, he did not venture to say. And no one asked.

So they drifted on until the bleak, snow-capped peaks showed plainly. Morning revealed a bay lying between the two points. Toward the entrance to this bay they were drifting. One obstacle remained between them and land. A half mile of the floe in which they were drifting lay between them and the black stretch of open water which extended to the edge of the solid shore ice, upon which the submarine might be dragged and over which the shaft might be carried to land. But how was that stretch of tumbled icefloe to be crossed? This, indeed, was a problem.

It was finally decided that Dave and the old engineer should spend the forenoon exploring the ice to landward for a possible narrow channel that would open a way to the water beyond. For this journey they took only field-glasses, alpine staffs and a lunch in a sealskin sack. Had they known better the nature of the land they were about to visit, they might have gone more fully equipped.

"H'I don't mind tell' y', lad, that we was 'eaded for this point way back some'ers

in the late nineties," said the engineer, "but there come a Nor'wester, an' the cap'in, 'e lost 'is 'ead and turned to run. We'd froze in for the winter, but we'd a seen things if we 'ad. We'd a seen 'um."

They were struggling over some pressure ridges and neither had breath to spare for further talk just then. But presently, as they paused on a high ridge of ice for a survey of their surroundings, Jarvis said:

"H'I said back there they might be coal in the banks. There is, an' other minerals there are 'ere, too. H'it's a rich land, an' now we're 'ere we'd make our fortunes if that daffy doctor wasn't 'eaded straight fer the Pole, an' nobody 'ere to stop 'im."

"What do you make of it?" Dave, who had been studying the shore with the glass, handed it to Jarvis: "Do you see something like a village?"

"Sure I do!" exclaimed the other excitedly. "Sure, there's a village, a 'ole 'eap of bloomin' 'eathen live up 'ere, h'only they hain't dull and stupid like them down below."

"It's a strange-looking village."

"Sure, it is. Made all of reindeer skins and walrus pelts. Sure it's different. Them natives up 'ere 'ave got reindeer, 'erds and 'erds of 'em."

"I suppose they've got walrus ivory, too," said Dave, warming to the subject.

"Ho, yes, walrus h'ivory a-plenty, them 'eathen 'ave got. But walrus h'ivory hain't so much. Too 'eavy to make a good cargo, an' not 'alf so good as h'elephant h'ivory. But there's minerals, 'eaps of minerals, an' we'd all be rich men an' it wasn't for the bloomin' doctor."

No channel to the shore having appeared, they were now making their way along the edge of the open water. Suddenly the old engineer started:

"Did you see 'im?" he whispered.

"What? Where?" Dave stared at the old man, thinking he had suddenly lost his head.

"H'it was a man. 'E popped 'is 'ead out, then beat it. One o' them bloomin'

'eathens."

"Probably we'd better turn back."

"Huh!" sniffed the old man. "'Oo cares for the bloomin' 'eathen? 'Armless they is, 'armless as babies."

They continued their travel, but the old man seemed distinctly uneasy. He saw heads here and there. And soon, Dave, who did not have the trained eye of the seaman, saw one also. At once he decided that they must turn back to the submarine.

Hardly had they taken this course, when heads seemed to be peering out at them from every ice-pile. It was when they were crossing a broad, flat pan that matters came to a crisis. Suddenly brown, fur-clad figures emerged from the piles at the edge of the pan and approached them. Their soft, rawhide boots made no sound on the ice. Their lips were ominously silent. There was a sinister gleam to the spears which they bore.

Half-way to the men, at a sign from the leader, they all paused. Then a little knot gathered about the leader. Three men did the greater part of the talking. They appeared to be urging the leader to action.

Dave, who knew that the old seaman was acquainted with several native dialects, said:

"What do you make of it?"

"Can't get 'em straight," said Jarvis. "But them three 'eathen that's talkin' loudest, them's 'eathen from another tribe 'er somethin'. They're not the right color. Their eyes hain't right an' they don't speak the language right. I think they got it in their 'eads that we h'ought ter be pinched fer trespassin' 'er somethin' the like. But we'll fight the bloomin' 'eathen, we will, h'if they start a bloomin' rumpus."

"What with?" smiled Dave.

The old seaman looked nonplused for a moment.

"Ho, well," he grinned, then. "Can't be any 'arm in goin' with the bloomin' idgits a piece, h'if they request it."

The horde of natives did, at last, request it in a rather forceful and threatening way. The three men, whom Jarvis had singled out as "'eathen from another tribe," became so insulting that Dave could scarcely restrain Jarvis from braining their leader on the spot.

They were led to the edge of the ice-floe where, hidden in a remote corner, was an oomiak, a native boat of skins.

From here they were quickly paddled over to the shore. They were then led up a steep bank, down a street lined with innumerable dome-like houses covered with walrus-skin, and were finally dragged into the largest of these houses and rudely thrust into an inner room. The door slammed, and Jarvis laughed.

"Humph!" he chuckled. "Fancy putting a man in a bloomin' jail made of deer skin. Much 'ead as the bloomin' 'eathen 'ave. Let's 'ave a look at 'er."

He scratched a match and the look of astonishment that Dave found on his face, as he stared about the inclosure, caused him to laugh, in spite of their dilemma.

"H'ivory, walrus h'ivory! Walls, floor and ceilin' all h'ivory. Who'd ever thought of that!" muttered the old seaman. "Wood'll burn and iron'll rust; but h'ivory! h'ivory! Who'd ever thought of that for a prison?"

CHAPTER VIII

THE WALRUS HUNT

Meanwhile, on the ice-locked shores of Great Bear Lake, preparations for departure were being made by the airplane party. The gasoline must all be strained through a chamois-skin to insure them against water in the engines, and this, with the temperature at thirty to forty below, was no mean task. There was a careful selection of foodstuffs to be taken along. It was decided also that the five dogs should go, for they would provide transportation, in case of accident, and could be killed and eaten as a last resort. The entire equipment was given a thorough overhauling. All this took three days of arduous toil.

When, at last, all was in readiness, and the earth began to drop away beneath them, the dogs put their noses in the air and chorused a canine Arctic dirge. But their howls were lost in the noise of the engines.

As for the boys, their cheeks burned. Truly, this was to be their greatest adventure—"An adventure quite worthy the heart of a true soldier," as the Major had expressed it. Many problems they left behind unsolved, but these were quite crowded out of their minds by the one supreme problem: Would they reach the Pole, and would they reach it first?

Somewhere on the shores of Melville Bay, near the banks of Melville Island, frozen in the ice for the winter, was the little gasoline schooner which had engaged to furnish them fuel for the last lap of the journey north and the return. The gas would cost a pretty penny, to be sure, for it would compel the trader to return to Nome earlier than he had intended doing, but money seemed no object to the zealous explorer.

Setting their course a little east of north, they shot directly away. Bruce, who was driving, settled back easily in his place. The machine was soaring beautifully.

The engines worked in perfect time. Everything promised a safe and speedy trip. Now and again a belated flock of snow-geese, as if drawn by an invisible thread, shot by them; and now, far below, they caught sight of moving brown specks, which told of caribou still passing southward from the summer pasture in the unexplored lands far to the North. The fleeting panorama was of constantly changing interest and beauty.

Soon they left the land behind. They were passing over Prince Albert Sound. Its surface was already white with ice. Land again, then Melville Sound—last lap on this three hundred mile journey. Bruce found himself unable to believe they were over a great body of salt water. Surely these squares, rising from the surface, white and glistening in the moonlight, were village roofs covered with snow. Surely, these other squares lying flat upon the surface were town lots, and the broader ones stretches of field and meadow, where grain would ripen in summer and flowers bloom. And the spots of open water, made black by the whiteness about them, were fishing-ponds where one might lazily dip his line and dream.

But as he shook himself back into reality, a startling question had come to him. His lips put it in words.

"How are we going to tell that schooner when we see it?" he barked through the Major's telephone. "Won't she be buried in snow?"

"Probably will," admitted the Major, "but there's sure to be a native village near by, and though their houses are built of snow, they always have a litter of black things about—sleds, hunting implements, skins, and the like. We can't miss it."

"Natives. M-m-m," Bruce mumbled. "Nagyuktogmiut, or something like that. Hope the white man happens to be about when we land. I've read Stefansson's account of them. They treated him all right, but when old Thunderbird, his own self, brings them some white men, they may not be so glad to see them, and those chaps have copper-pointed spears and arrows, not to speak of rifles."

"The Indians didn't bother us," phoned back the Major.

"That's right. Well, I hope this is our lucky day." Bruce again gave his whole attention to driving. Then, as they made out in the distance some high elevations, that might be land or might be clouds, he dropped to a lower level and scanned the surface of the ice for a black spot which would tell of human habitations. The

village, he knew, might be fifty miles from land, for these Eskimos lived on the ocean's roof during the entire winter and hunted seal and great-seal, moving only now and again when game became scarce.

"There they are, over to the right," he exclaimed presently. He set his machine in the general direction indicated. Soon a black patch began to appear among the lights and shadows. Surely here was the village they sought. The realization set his heart thumping violently.

"Drop in close and look for a landing."

The Major twisted in his seat and scanned the ice narrowly as he spoke. "Just beyond them seems to be a broad flat pan. Looks safe. Try it"

Bruce cut off his engines and began circling down. It was the dead of night. Apparently every person about the village was asleep. Now he could distinguish sleds and skins hung on ice-piles to dry. Now he located the double rows of dome houses. They were going to pass right over these, but high enough to miss them.

Then, rapidly, things happened. A vagrant current of wind seized them and they "bumped" in air. The next instant it was evident that a crash was inevitable. They were swooping straight down upon a row of snow-domes. But the machine was heavy, the snow-houses, mere shells, without the sign of a shock, yielding to the compact, went spinning away in little bits, revealing scores of sleepers snug beneath their deerskins. They had awakened Bedlam. Men shouted, women and children screamed, dogs barked.

"Like knocking over a bee-hive," chuckled Barney.

Bruce, with a remarkably cool head, brought his machine to the smooth surface beyond. In a moment she was slowing up to a perfect landing. "Quick! The machine-gun!" exclaimed Barney.

Bruce gave one startled look behind them, then began working feverishly. Already Barney and the Major were unstrapping themselves.

Across the ice in the vague moonlight a motley throng, a hundred strong, was charging down upon them. Half-naked, their brown arms gleaming, they seemed the inhabitants of some South Sea isle rather than Eskimos of the Farthest North.

Copper-pointed spears gleamed yellow and gold, while here and there the dark barrel of a hunting rifle was to be seen.

"Go slow," warned the Major. "Remember it's men, women and children instead of wolves this time. They're wild, but they're human. Send a volley into the ice-piles at the left. Show 'em what you've got and they'll stop—perhaps."

As Bruce turned the barrel of his deadly weapon, he caught the low rumble of many voices. The natives were chanting a witching song to destroy the power of evil spirits.

"Tat-tat-tat-tat." The machine-gun spoke. Bits of ice flew wildly. The mob halted for a moment, then plunged on, still chanting that maddening song.

Just at the moment when a massacre seemed inevitable, there came a roar from the right. Turning, Bruce saw the form of a bearded man apparently rising from a hole in a giant ice-cake. At the sound the wild mob halted.

"Hey! You fellows!" the stranger bellowed. "What's the matter with you?" Then he turned to the natives and began to harangue them in a tongue quite unknown even to the Major.

The instant Bruce saw the red-whiskered giant rise, seemingly from the ocean, his hand relaxed on the machine-gun and he stood in ready expectation. The Eskimos appeared to understand the words which the stranger flung at them, for, though they continued their weird incantation, they lowered their weapons and did not attempt to approach nearer the white men.

Presently their weapons began clattering to the ice. Taking this as a sign of friendliness, the explorers stepped out to meet them. Seeing this, the natives gathered into a compact group, their song rising to a wild humming howl, but they made no move to attack. When the strangers were quite close, one native, braver than his companions, stepped forward. Still chanting, he handed each explorer a small cube of whale blubber. One cube remained in his own hand. This he proceeded to swallow, indicating at the same time that the strangers were to follow his example.

The moment the cubes disappeared the wild chorus ceased and the natives crowded forward to extend a hearty welcome.

It was, however, a very long time before one of them was persuaded to come near the airplane.

"I haven't a doubt," said the Major, "that they still believe that we rode here on the back of old Thunder-bird himself. And why not? If we can build schooners many times as large as their largest skin-boats and run them by noise alone, if we can kill at a distance by a magic of great noises, why couldn't we tame the Thunder-bird himself and make him carry us? It is my firm conviction that if one of us were to return here in a year or two, he would hear the most outlandish tales of the Kabluna who rode the Thunder-bird."

The natives had returned to their camp to dress and to repair the damage done by the airplane. The white men were approaching what appeared to be the den of the bearded stranger, when the Major gave a cry of joy:

"Masts! Boys, we have finished the first lap of our journey. The den of the stranger is the cabin to his schooner. He is the trader who is to furnish us gasoline!"

The Major's surmise proved to be correct, and they were soon sitting happily around a rough galley table, sipping at steaming "mulligan"—a rich Arctic stew —and coffee.

"And now," said the Major, "for a few hours of sleep. After that your time is your own for twelve hours."

"Twelve hours!" exclaimed Bruce in surprise. "Don't we start for the Pole at once?"

"Young gentlemen," said the Major smiling, "your enthusiasm is gratifying in the extreme. But flying, especially in high latitudes, is very trying on the nerves—even such nerves as yours. Remember that in the Arctic, where anything at all is liable to happen at a moment's notice, we must always be at our best. So get some relaxation. What will you do with your twelve hours?"

"I heard a walrus barking a half-hour ago!" exclaimed Barney eagerly.

"I'm for a walrus hunt," agreed Bruce.

"Good! That will stretch your legs a bit," said the Major. "But don't go too far,

nor take too many chances. Remember you have a mission to accomplish here in the North."

The three adventurers were soon sleeping soundly in the bunks of the Gussie Brown, and far away, bobbing his head through a water-hole and shaking the icicles from his moustache, a great bull-walrus barked at the moon.

When they awoke from dreamless slumber, the boys' first thought was of the promised walrus hunt. They scrambled into their fur garments, and hurrying to the surface of the floe, listened for the hoarse call of their quarry, the walrus. They did not have to wait long.

"There he barks!" exclaimed Bruce, putting his hand to his ear.

"And again," Barney hurried below to secure a native harpoon and skin-rope. Bruce provided himself with a high-power magazine rifle.

"We're off!" Barney shouted joyously to the Major, as he gulped down a cup of steaming coffee and took a last bite of sour-dough bread.

"Good luck! And may you come back!" bantered the Major. Had he known how real was his jesting prophecy of danger, he would not have joked.

As a rule, walrus-hunting in the Arctic is not a sport, it is a task—the day's work of providing food for a village. It is as exciting as the "hog-killing day" of a middle-west farmer. The hog may run amuck of the farmer, and so may the walrus of the hunter; the chances are about equal. The walrus seldom shows fight. Before he is harpooned, he either is quite indifferent to the presence of the hunter, or slips away to the water at sight of him. If harpooned, he makes every effort to escape, and only in rare instances shows fight. The boys had been told all this by the trader over their coffee the night before.

It was evident, then, that they must slip up on their prey without being seen. This would be a comparatively simple matter, since the tumbled ridges of ice afforded ideal hiding-places. When close enough, Barney, who was the stronger of the two, was to drive the harpoon-point through the thick skin of the creature. This harpoon-point was fastened to a rawhide rope. He must instantly drive a copper-pointed lance into the ice, and wrapping the skin-rope about it, close to the ice-surface, hold on like grim death until Bruce dispatched the creature with his rifle. Wherever the beast was, in a small water-hole kept opened by himself, or a

larger one formed by the shifting floes, their success would depend on Barney's ability to keep the rope free from jagged edges which might cut it, and Bruce's skill at quickly getting in a fatal shot. At regular intervals the walrus must rise for air, and this would give the opportunity for Bruce to get in his work.

"He's a moose!" whispered Bruce, as they crept close to the rather broad waters-hole and eyed the creature through a crack between upended ice-cakes.

"Tusks two feet and a half long! Must weigh a ton and a half!" Already Barney felt his muscles ache from the strain.

"Well, here's for it!" He exclaimed, coiling his skin-rope. The next instant there came a loud thwack, which told that the boy's shaft had found its mark. Instantly there was a hoarse bellow and then a wild splashing in the water. Bruce was at the top of a pressure ridge, ready for action. Barney had made his shaft secure, but then there came a strain that made the veins stand out on his forehead. Suddenly the strain slackened.

"Be ready! He's coming—" Barney did not finish, for from the churning water the walrus thrust his massive head, snorting and foaming. The rifle cracked.

Silently the great creature sank, but this time the foaming water showed a fleck of red where the walrus disappeared.

"Got him!" cried Bruce triumphantly.

But this time the strain on the lance was redoubled.

"Try—try to hit a vital—vital spot," panted Barney, as the strain lessened once more. "Behind front flipper—in the eye."

Again the water foamed. Again the rifle cracked. More blood! Another plunge, and again the strain seemed redoubled.

"I—can't—hold much—longer," Barney gasped.

Springing down from the pinnacle, Bruce ran to the edge of the pool, and, leaping upon a floating ice-cake, waited again.

This time his aim was better.

The strain when the walrus sank was not so great.

"Doing fine," breathed Barney. "Next time we'll—"

Again he did not finish, for, unexpectedly, his friend shot up in the air, to fall sprawling upon the cake of ice and cling there while it tilted to an angle of forty-five degrees. The walrus had risen beneath the cake and split it in two. Bruce was stunned by his fall, but Barney's warning cry roused him. One glance revealed his perilous position. The piece of ice to which he clung had been thrust toward the center of the pool. Even now the gap was too wide for him to leap. To plunge into the water, with the thermometer forty below, was to court death.

While he hesitated, the walrus rose to the surface. With a bellow that sprayed bloody foam about him, he charged the cake of ice. If ever there was need for a cool brain, it was now. Bruce, gripping his rifle, crouched and waited. Reaching the cake, the walrus hooked his tusks over its edge till it tilted to a perilous angle. Bruce's feet shot from under him, but by a quick movement he caught the upper edge of the ice. Pulling himself up till he could brace his feet, he took steady aim at the beast's wild and bloodshot eye. It was a perfect shot. The walrus, crumpling, began to sink into the water. Seeing this, Bruce clung to the cake until the tusk slipped off. In another moment the uncertain raft was at rest.

"Well, we got him," he panted, sitting limply on the ice. "But for mine in the future, give me the cozy dangers of aviation. I don't see much relaxation in this game."

The ice-cake soon drifted so that Bruce could jump ashore. With their combined efforts the boys were able to draw the dead walrus close in and tie him securely to the ice edge. Then they returned to camp to send a happy band of natives out for the meat and blubber.

"That head will make a fine trophy to hang in the front parlor of that five-room bungalow," laughed Barney, as a native brought it in that night.

"You may have it for your den," said Bruce with a shiver. "I never want to look a walrus in the face again."

"To-morrow," said the Major, as they prepared to retire, "the race will be resumed."

CHAPTER IX

FIGHTING THEIR WAY OUT

A careful examination of their "ivory jail" showed Dave and the submarine engineer that they were in a narrow chamber completely lined with walrus tusks. The tusks had been so ingeniously cut and fitted that only the grain of the glistening surface told where one tusk joined another. As for the door, so closely was it fitted that it was not to be located at all. In two corners were seal-oil lamps. These had feed-pipes of some form of dried sea-weeds. They could thus be fed from without. Two narrow openings, strongly barred with ivory tusks, one in the floor and one in the ceiling, permitted air to enter, but one peered through them into utter darkness.

"Tain't no wonder they left us our knives," grumbled Jarvis. "The bloomin' 'eathen knowed we'd wear 'em away before we made any h'impression on that ivory. But mind you, lad, this hain't the work of no bloomin' 'eathen—not no regular 'eathen it hain't. 'E hain't smart enough for that, your regular 'eathen hain't. 'Twas some one else, it was. Shouldn't be surprised if it was them three strangers."

As for Dave, he was worried less about himself than about his companions out in the bay. Knowing the growing impatience of the Doctor, he was prepared to expect him to attempt anything in case of their prolonged absence. Should he try to submerge the craft to bring her to land under the ice, it was an even chance every one on board would perish miserably—caught in the sunken "sub."

That he and Jarvis might be kept prisoners indefinitely seemed certain, for after some five or six hours, food was thrust in to them and they were left, apparently for the night. The food consisted of boiled fish and liver, probably walrus liver, soaked in rank seal oil. They ate a little fish and thrust the liver through the opening in the floor, the better to escape its nauseating odor.

"H'I'd die before h'I'd h'eat 'is bloomin' victuals," snarled Jarvis contemptuously, "that bloomin' 'eathen!"

He began poking about the narrow confines of the jail. Not being able to see to suit himself, he struck a match and touched it to the mass, placed on the edge of a brimming seal-oil lamp, in lieu of a wick. Immediately a line of fire was kindled and its light, reflected again and again by the dazzling whiteness of their prison walls, made the whole place as light as day. At once Jarvis gave a cry of surprise and began crawling toward the farthest side.

"H'I told you there was minerals," he exclaimed. "E's a rich un, this bloomin' 'eathen. H'it's gold, h'I'll be blowed!"

He began digging away with his knife at some yellow spots in the ivory. They were bits of inlaid gold.

"What's the idea?" asked Dave in surprise. "Are all prisons up here made of ivory inlaid with gold?"

"Y' can't tell, lad. 'E's a queer one, the bloomin' 'eathen, and if h'I be 'anged," sputtered Jarvis, "what's one pole more or less, when you've gold calling to come and take it. What—"

He paused, his mouth agape, words unsaid. The door of the ivory den had been softly opened, and framed in it were the dark, crafty faces of the three natives who had brought about their captivity and imprisonment. In their hands gleamed knives with long blades of a curious oriental type.

* * * * *

But we must return to the Doctor and his crew of gobs who had been left on the submarine.

When the young captain and his chief engineer did not return at sunset, deep concern for their safety was felt. Three searching parties were sent out, while, from time to time, flares were lighted to show them the way to the submarine, should they chance to have lost their directions on the ice-floe. The flares guided the searching parties back to the boat, but so far as finding trace of the missing ones was concerned, neither flares nor searchers were of any avail.

In the meantime, the Doctor paced the deck anxiously. They were losing valuable time. If only they could find a way to shore, the damaged shaft might be repaired and, during the interval, the captain and engineer would doubtless turn up.

At the first hint of dawn the watch discovered a lead half-way through the ice-floe. At once the Doctor ordered the submarine run into this narrow channel. The result was what might have been expected; the ice closed in and the "sub" was locked in the center of the floe. There remained but one way it could move—down, under the ice. Otherwise, it might drift indefinitely in this solid mass of ice. They would be carried away from the bay, away from their friends, and all hope of rescuing them would be lost. It was, indeed, a terrible plight.

Just at this time a bright young gob, Tom Rainey, came forward with an ingenious scheme. The "sub" carried a sufficient length of steel cable to reach to the farther edge of the ice-floe. Why, he reasoned, might they not pole this cable beneath the rather loosely-joined ice masses until they reached the open water, then submerge the submarine and, with a capstan, drag it like a hooked trout to the channel. It was a wild scheme, but the doctor was in a mood for anything. The crew were set to work at once, cutting holes in the ice-floes here and there and passing the cable from opening to opening. It was slow and freezing work, but in time the job was done.

When the cable was ready, the Doctor insisted that a sufficient crew be aboard the submarine when she submerged to man her in case she broke loose. This was, indeed, a hazardous mission, but volunteers were not lacking. And, with all speed, the trial was made.

The scheme worked better than they had dared to hope. When the "sub" passed from beneath the ice-floe, the second engineer in his superabundance of joy hazarded a few turns of the disabled shaft. This set the whole craft vibrating and drove her half-way across the narrow channel.

As the submarine rose to the surface the doctor saw a dark shadow pass over the glass window at the top. At the same time he felt a slight jar.

"Must have tilted a small cake of ice," he chuckled.

Then, as he lifted the hatch: "By Jove! No, it wasn't. It was a skin-boat full of natives! There they are in the water! Watch them scramble back into their boat.

If we had a safer power, we'd go to their rescue. But they'll be all right. Now, they're all aboard."

That the natives were in a frenzy of fear while in the water, the doctor attributed to their dread of attack by a walrus. But when they began paddling away at top speed, he opened his eyes in wonder.

"Ah, well!" he said, at last, "who'd marvel at that? Ships are not in the habit of coming up out of the sea in the Arctic. And now I wonder—I just wonder, did they have anything to do with the disappearance of our friend Dave and the engineer?"

When all hands were on board lunch was served. By the time this was over the submarine had drifted to the solid shore-ice. She was at once tied up with the aid of ice-anchors, and preparations made for dragging her out of the water.

"But first," said the Doctor, "let us visit our friends, 'the bloomin' 'eathen,' as Jarvis styles them."

It was a strange sight that met their gaze as they entered the village. Men, women and children, with a wild wail, threw themselves flat on their stomachs, uttering the most melancholy moans that ever came from human lips. Interspersed with the cries were apparent appeals addressed to the visitors.

"What's all this rumpus?" the Doctor demanded of Azazruk, the Eskimo. "Can you understand their jargon?"

"They say," said the Eskimo, showing his white teeth in a grin, "that they know we are spirits—spirits of dead whales, since we come out of a whale's back, that came up from under the sea. They say not kill them us please. They say this that one. They say, kill plenty whale that one chief native. They say, fire for spirit of dead whale not make that, them. They say that, this one native. But they say not kill them and for sure they make fire, sing song for spirit of dead whale."

The Doctor, who understood this to be one of the superstitions of the natives, and knew that they had taken the submarine for a whale, began to laugh. But at once he checked himself.

Turning a scowling face at the only two standing natives, one of whom had a fresh cut across his cheek, he stormed:

"And why have these fellows no shame? Tell them to fall down at once, or I will step on them."

Azazruk repeated the message, and, surprised and frightened, the two men obeyed.

The Doctor eyed the two curiously for a moment as they lay there squinting up at him, their slant eyes gleaming with suppressed anger.

"Look like they'd been in a fight," he remarked.

And so they did. The darker of the two had the cut on his cheek, before mentioned, his fur parka was torn half off him, displaying some ugly bruises. His companion had lost half a sleeve and his right hand was bleeding.

"They're surely rascals, but you must play the good Samaritan at all times," he said, as he bent over one of them. "Rainey, get my case from the locker, will you?"

Rainey hurried to the submarine, a half mile away, while the natives, still half sprawling on the frozen earth, eyed the hardier fellows, while the Doctor bent over them, as if expecting at any moment to see them drop dead as a result of the magic power of these great spirits from the belly of a whale.

It was Jarvis and Dave who were responsible for the condition of the two natives of the strange bearing. When Jarvis saw their ugly faces and gleaming knives at the door of the ivory prison he was ready for a fight. His face turned purple, as he muttered between clinched teeth:

"H'it's our chance. 'Ere's where h'I make a killin'. At 'em Dave!"

And, led by his sturdy engineer, Dave hove at them right royally.

Their knives were short but their arms long, and as for skill, there were no better trained men in the army than Dave and Jarvis.

They made quick work of it. The "bloomin' 'eathen," surprised by the sudden onslaught, were on their backs in a trice. Two of them fared as I have said, and as for the third, he came out with a head so badly pummeled by Jarvis' fist that he was content to crawl into a dark igloo and stay there.

Once outside the prison Jarvis and Dave glanced quickly about them for a hiding-place. Much to their surprise, they did not see a native about the village. Made bold by this, they skirted the rear of the last row of huts, and, dodging down a snowed-in ravine, hid at last in the ice-heaps not twenty rods from the submarine. Not being aware, however, that their friends had succeeded in reaching the shore-ice, they crouched in their icy shelter, their teeth chattering from cold and excitement.

Jarvis had an ugly slash on his right arm. Dave had just succeeded in binding this up when they heard footsteps approaching. Jamming themselves hard into a crevice of ice, Jarvis whispered:

"H'I'll fight t' a finish before h'I go back to that white prison of the bloomin' 'eathen."

Dave made no response.

The steps came nearer, then began to die away.

"Didn't sound like the bloomin' 'eathen," muttered Jarvis. "No near's soft and glidin'. 'Ere 'e comes back. H'I'll 'ave a look." Creeping close to a corner, he peered cautiously out, then with a roar:

"Blime me, it's Rainey!" He sprang from concealment, almost embracing the young gob in his delight.

It was a joyful meeting that took place between the united parties.

When Jarvis saw the Doctor working over the disabled natives he roared first with laughter, then with anger. His last desire was to put them out of the way at once.

"For, sir," he argued, "them hain't no natural, ordinary 'eathen, indeed not, sir. They are the very h'old Nick 'isself, sir."

But Dave suggested putting them in their own ivory prison, and this advice prevailed. After their wounds were dressed they were thrust in and the door barred from without. Wiser men than the "sub" crew have learned that a man is seldom safe in a prison of his own making, but the sailors never gave the prisoners another thought.

"Rainey," said the engineer, as he found himself alone with the young gob, "we'll all be rich men."

"How?" asked his companion.

"There's mineral! Mineral! Gold, me lad, tons of it!" The older man's wrinkled face caught the tints of the sunset and seemed to take on the hue of the metal of which he spoke.

CHAPTER X

TO THE TREASURE CITY

Once all the members of the submarine party were reunited, their one thought was to repair their damaged craft as soon as possible and start again on their way to the Pole. Perhaps the engineer wasted a thought now and again on the supposed great mineral wealth of that peninsula, but if he did, he said nothing.

The men were divided into three groups. The first, the mechanics, undertook the task of removing the shaft; the second guarded the craft against possible attack by the natives, while the third was dispatched up the beach to search for firewood which the mechanics must have.

The work of the guard seemed a joke. Not one of the natives could be induced to approach the dark "spirit-whale" which some of their comrades had seen rise from the water. Even after the steel shaft had been brought ashore as tangible evidence that the craft was a thing of metal, they could not be induced to approach it.

The wood hunters found their task a hard one, for, either there never had been much driftwood on these shores, or the natives had used it for summer camp-fires. They searched far down the bay without finding a sufficient quantity to make "a decent fire over which to roast 'hot-dogs'," as Rainey expressed it.

But as the engineer rounded a point, he suddenly exclaimed;

"There! Ain't h'I been sayin' hit! I 'ates to think 'ow jolly stupit som'ums of ye are."

He was pointing to the banks which overhung the sea. The men, who were looking only for driftwood, did not at first see the cause of his exclamation.

"Coal, my lads!" Jarvis exclaimed, half beside himself. "Coal cropping from the bank!"

It was true. A careful examination showed a four-foot vein of soft coal. It was not long until reindeer sleds, secured from the natives, were drawing quantities of the fuel to a point beneath a cliff, where a crude forge had been made out of granite rock.

While this work was going on, the engineer disappeared in the direction of the village. In a half-hour he came tearing back, his face red with rage.

"They're h'out!" he sputtered. "The bally, blithering unnatural 'eathen hev flew the h'ivory coops. T'was to be expected. I 'ates t' think what h'I'd a-done, 'ad h'I 'ad the say of it."

"Oh, well," said the Doctor, who was inclined to take Jarvis' quarrel with the natives rather lightly, "in twenty-four hours we'll be away from these shores never to return."

"Return?" exclaimed Jarvis. "H'I'll return, an' Dave 'ere'll return.
We'll be rich men, we'll be. I 'ates t' think 'ow rich 'im an' me'll be!"

But the Doctor was too busy hurrying the mechanics in their repairs to heed the words of the excited engineer.

Finally the forge was ready and as by the Arctic moonlight a black smoke rose higher and higher above the cliffs, and a fire blazed a thousand times larger and hotter than that black shore had ever known, the natives appeared to grow more and more certain that these men who came up from the depths of the sea were, indeed, the spirits of all the dead whales that they and their forefathers before them had killed. They looked on in silent awe.

It was with the greatest difficulty that Jarvis succeeded in finding one of them who was able to speak the Chukche language of Behring Strait, a language that was understood by Azazruk, the Eskimo. When, at last, he did find a man who knew Chukche and who was not too frightened to talk, he plied him with many questions.

"Who were the three strange-appearing natives who had attacked him and his companion in the jail? Where did they come from? What were they doing here?

How did they happen to have such a strange jail? How did they chance to have a jail at all? Where did the gold come from that had been used to inlay the ivory? Was there much of it to be found?"

These, and many other questions, the engineer put to the trembling native, while, with one eye, he watched the operations of the mechanics who labored by the fire.

The man did not know the exact place from which the three strangers had come; it was somewhere far South, known as Ki-yek-tuk. The three had been a long time in the village and had inspired all the people with a great dread by telling them of a giant race who wore fierce beards like the walrus; who killed with a great noise at long distances, and who would break any jail except one of ivory. They had said that probably one or two of these fierce men would come at first, and, perhaps, if these were made prisoners, no others would follow. Hence the jail. And hence, too, the imprisonment of Dave and Jarvis. The natives had felt sure that they were the advance guard of these wicked, cruel men who had come to rob and kill. But now, of course, they knew they were spirits of dead whales, and would do them no harm.

As for the tusks with the inlaid gold, the man said they had been traded for by a very old man who had made a journey with a reindeer, ten nights and days from their village, due west. There, beside a great river, he had found a numerous people, who lived in houses of logs, very large and warm. He said, too, that these people had great quantities of this yellow metal. Their houses were decorated with it; their fur garments glistened with it; their council house was encrusted with it.

"But," he added at the end, "the metal was too soft for spear points and arrowheads, too heavy for garments, and not good for food. As for houses, did they not have their deerskins and walrus-pelts? So the old man never went back for more."

Dave had been sitting by the old engineer as he secured this information bit by bit through the interpreter. His eyes sparkled with excitement when he spoke.

"Well," he asked, when the native had finished, "what do you make of it?"

"Make of it?" exclaimed the old man. "It's plain as the nose on your face. H'as h'I see it, there's gold in this land just h'as h'I said before, plenty of it. H'and this 'ere

tribe, way west there some'ers; they's been driven there by the Roosians, er by other tribes. Mayhaps they's Roosian h'exiles themselves. Mayhaps they's one of the seven lost tribes of h'Israel, what you read of in the Book. 'Owever that may be, it's there, and h'I 'ates to think 'ow rich you h'and h'I'd be h'if h'it wasn't fer this 'ere crazy Doctor's achin' to see th' Pole."

"Jarvis," Dave leaned forward eagerly, "we'll take the Doctor to the Pole, then we'll hire a submarine or a schooner and work our way back here."

"We will that, me lad," said the old man, gripping the boy's hand. "But then," he added more soberly, "maybe it won't be a bit o' use. Maybe the Japs will get it first."

"The Japs."

"Sure! The Japs. Ar' ye that blind? Don't ye know all the time the three rascals we well-nigh killed was Japs? Can't ye see 'ow they don't want the h'Americans or th' Roosians to git t' the treasure of this peninsula? Can't ye see 'ow bloomin' easy h'it'd be for 'em to put two or three spies in h'every bloomin' native village on the whole Roosian coast, and take the entire peninsula fer th' Jap Kaiser, or whatever they call 'im? Can't ye see 'ow th' thing'd work?"

Dave sat a long time in thought. At last he decided what to do.

"Perhaps you're right, Jarvis," he said finally, rising. "But our first job is the Pole. The shaft must be nearly fitted by now. Let's see how they're coming. Perhaps we'll be away in the morning."

As they rounded a block of ice by the shore, Jarvis gave a start and seized his companion by the arm.

"D'y' see 'im?" he whispered "'E was starin' h'at us from behint them ice-piles. 'E was a Jap. I'll swear it."

"Aw, you're seeing Japs to-night," laughed Dave.

"Ow is she?" Jarvis asked of a gob whom they met.

"Right as they make 'em—now. But I'll say it was some job that. The shaft was twisted something awful—like a corkscrew. But it was some steel, that shaft, and

we just het her up an' twisted her straight again. The Doc said he guessed it would be a bit short, but when we got her back in place she fitted like paint. Then we slid the old boat back in the water and tried her out and she runs like a watch."

"Grand. We're off in the mornin'."

Dave and Jarvis turned to make their way to the submarine where a single gob, pacing the white ice-surface, had laughed at his job of watching natives who could not be induced to come within a half-mile of him.

Suddenly the engineer jumped forward.

"Did y' see that?" Jarvis grabbed Dave by the arm and urged him into a run. "'E went down—the guard, I saw 'im," panted Jarvis. "I saw 'im, then h'I didn't. H'it's the Japs. Listen!"

There came distinctly the sound of a dragging hawser.

"H'it's the Japs; the blooming bloody 'eathen," Jarvis panted. "They're h'after the submarine!"

Dave dragged him behind an ice-covered boulder.

"Quick!" he whispered. "If the submarine goes, we go with her, inside or outside, somewhere. We've got to take the chance."

Darting from ice-pile to ice-pile, they soon reached the water's edge.
There lay the guard, unconscious, an ugly bruise on the side of his head.
And there lay the submarine, silent and closed.

"She's off!" breathed the engineer.

It was true. The craft already showed a line of dark water between her and the shore.

Without hesitation, the old engineer sprang upon her deck and crouched by the conning-tower. Instantly Dave followed him. Their soft skin-boots made no sound. And, as they crouched there, the submarine headed for the channel and then toward the west.

"To the treasure city, h'I'll be bound," whispered Jarvis.

CHAPTER XI

A BATTLE BENEATH THE ARCTIC MOON

"THE TREASURE CITY"

"We'll stick 'ere behint th' connin'-tower," the engineer explained to Dave, as the submarine, turning, put off up the dark channel which separated the solid shore-ice from the great drift of ice-floe that lay beyond.

"If they submerge," suggested Dave, "we'll have a slim chance."

"H'I doubt if they understant that much," mumbled the engineer between chattering teeth. "H'anyway, right 'ere's where h'I stick, h'and once th' bloomin' 'eathen show a 'ead above the 'atchway, h'I 'ates t' think what'll 'appen to 'im."

"Perhaps the channel will close in and drive them ashore," suggested Dave hopefully, as he drew his mackinaw more closely about him and crouched nearer to the conning-tower, that he might avoid the cutting air and icy spray which reached him from the prow of the submarine.

"Mayhap," mumbled the engineer, snuggling close.

But the channel did not close. Also, the submarine did not submerge; it plowed straight on through the dark waters of the channel.

Night passed and the pale Arctic sun revealed the two figures huddling, half-frozen, behind the conning-tower. Daylight brought little comfort, serving only to remind them that they had no coffee for breakfast; indeed, had no breakfast at all. This set the engineer to muttering threats against the stranger who had stolen the submarine, and caused him for the hundredth time to remark:

"H'I 'ates t' think what'll 'appen t' 'em, once h'I gets me 'ands on 'em."

But the intruders stayed below while, slowly, the sun ran its brief course and then painted the ice-spires with shadows of deep purple. As the night came on, the two men were forced to move about to keep from freezing. Tip-toeing along, avoiding heavy glass windows, they conversed in low tones.

"We've been h'at h'it now goin' h'on twenty-four 'ours," murmured Jarvis. "H'it's two hundred h'an' forty miles, h'an' h'our course u'd be shorter than a reindeer's. H'if that bloomin' 'eathen that spoke of th' treasure city told truth, h'I'm one fer believin' we're nearin' th' spot."

Jarvis spoke more cheerfully than he had at any time during the strange journey. Dave smiled, as he wondered whether this was due to the fact their walk had warmed them somewhat, or his rising hopes that they would at least get to see the fabled treasure city.

"Tell me," Jarvis whispered, "do my h'old h'eyes deceive me, or h'is there a line of dark h'over t' th' right of y'?" His hand trembled as he pointed.

Dave looked long and earnestly. The moon shone very brightly. The snow brought out dark objects with such vividness that it would not be too much to expect to see large objects twenty miles away.

"I think your eyes are all right," he said slowly.

"Then that 'ud be th' forest by the river. Th' treasure city 'ud be just by the 'arbor h'at th' mouth of th' river, Dave. H'I 'ates t' think 'ow richer we'll be." The old man gripped Dave's hand.

As for Dave, he was silent. He was thinking first of the struggle that could not now be far distant. It would be a bitter fight, with odds in favor of the other party. However, he hoped the enemy had been weakened by the earlier combat. Then he thought of the men they had so unexpectedly left behind; of the Doctor who depended upon him, and of the gobs who had served under him, a boy, so faithfully. Such thoughts left him in no mood to think of treasure.

He was about to say as much to his companion when there came a rattle at the hatch of the sub.

Quickly he and the engineer crouched behind the conning-tower. Their breath coming hard, their hearts beating fast, they waited.

The throbbing of the engine stopped. The submarine glided silently on. The deathlike stillness was ended by the dull groan of a hatchway lifting. Armed each with a knife and a heavy ice-anchor, the two men waited.

* * * * *

In the meantime, during this twenty-four hours, so eventful to Dave and the engineer, other things were happening on the shore by the native village. When Rainey, who had been on guard at the time of the stealing of the "sub," had been found and brought back to consciousness, he could give no account of affairs, other than that he had been struck a violent blow on the head, and after that, remembered nothing.

For a single moment dark suspicion rested on Dave and the engineer. Some of the crew had heard them talking of the treasure city ten days' journey to the west, and had heard Jarvis remark that he "'ated t' think 'ow rich they'd be." Could it be possible they had seized the submarine and deserted the party for the sake of gain to themselves? For a moment faith wavered, then their better natures triumphed.

"Not them," they declared. "Not Dave and old Jarvis."

To this the Doctor heartily agreed. And, though his disappointment was great at having the expedition again delayed, and, perhaps, entirely thwarted, he turned his mind at once to matters of the hour.

Gathering his men about him, he outlined hastily a line of action for them in the present crisis. They were, he reasoned, in a perilous situation.

Several hundred miles west of any point reached by white whalers and traders, marooned with two hundred superstitious natives, who to-day worshipped them, but to-morrow, upon discovering the disappearance of the "spirit-whale," might turn upon them, they would be obliged to make use of every resource and every strategy to save their lives, should the submarine fail to return. His plan was, to deal fairly with the natives and keep their good will, if that were possible.

Fortunately, they had taken from the submarine ten good rifles with a hundred rounds of ammunition. Natives were seen at all hours of the day dragging behind them the carcasses of seal, oogrook (big-seal), and even polar bear. If these could be secured with the aid of such primitive weapons as harpoon and lance, they

with their rifles might hope to secure an ample supply of the meat. And it had been proved that even a white man could live the winter through on a diet of meat and blubber in right proportions. They might also, at times, be able to trade for reindeer meat.

They would remain at the village until no hope remained that the submarine would return, then they would endeavor to get a store of meat, some reindeer, and deerskin sleeping bags, and make their way east to some point reached in summer by traders.

Three of the large skin-houses had already been turned over to them by the natives. These would provide ample shelter. Two were at once arranged as bunk-houses and the third as cook-shack.

When this had been done, with two men on guard, they turned in and slept.

Next morning, at six o'clock, four hours before daylight, every man was called out and assigned duties. It was the custom of the natives to depart for the hunting-ground at that hour. They should follow the same custom. Dividing themselves into two parties, one to watch camp, the other to hunt, they immediately set about their tasks.

The first day's hunt was under the direction of Azazruk, the Eskimo. The results were more than gratifying. Two ringed seals, one oogrook, ten feet long, and one young polar bear were the bag for the day.

"A full week's supply of meat," smiled the Doctor, rubbing his hands in high glee. In his interest in this new game, he had for the moment quite forgotten his great disappointment at the loss of the sub.

It was while they were smacking their lips over a hamburger, made of bear meat, that they were surprised by a young native, who rushed into their tent without the accustomed shouted salutation, seemingly quite beside himself with fear.

For some time nothing intelligible could be gathered from his excited chatter. But finally Azazruk made out that only an hour before, as he watched the reindeer, a great hairy monster had dashed at the herd, scattering it far and wide, and carrying away a yearling buck as easily as if it had been a rabbit.

"Probably a white bear," suggested Rainey.

"Not probable," said the Doctor. "A bear would eat his prey where it was slain."

"A wolf?"

"Couldn't do it."

"Well, what then?"

All eyes were turned toward the Doctor.

"You will judge me insane if I tell you what I think it was," he answered. "But here you are; I think it was a tiger."

"A tiger?"

"Tiger?"

Every man voiced his unbelief.

"A tiger in the Arctic?"

"Impossible!"

"That's absurd."

For answer the Doctor drew from his notebook a newspaper clipping, bidding Rainey read it aloud. The article was entitled "THE RUSSIAN TIGER" and was an account of the slaying of a gigantic man-eater by an American officer when American troops were stationed at Vladivostok, in eastern Russia.

"At that point," explained the Doctor, "they have about eight months of winter with a thermometer that drops far below zero. It may well be considered a part of the Arctic. Yet, as you see, they have tigers there; indeed, I am told they are not at all uncommon. So why not up here?" No one had a ready answer, and at last the Doctor spoke again:

"In the meantime, what are we going to do about it? It would seem that the natives are appealing to us for aid."

Rainey at once sprang to his feet, exclaiming:

"Count me one to go hunt the beast, whatever it is."

At once the others were on their feet shouting their eagerness for the hunt.

The Doctor chose a gob named Thompson to accompany Rainey on his "tiger hunt," or whatever it might prove to be. Rainey was well pleased at the choice, for Thompson was a sure shot and a cool, nervy hand in time of danger.

"If I don't hear from you by morning," said the Doctor, "I shall send a relief expedition."

Rainey had fully recovered from the affair of the previous day. Both he and Thompson had been among the guarding party that day, so were fresh and keen for work. They found the moonlight making the wide stretches of ice and snow light as day.

" *Some* night and *some* game!" murmured Rainey, as they emerged from the tent.

* * * * *

When the men in native garb, who had stolen the submarine, lifted the hatch to take an observation, they were utterly unaware of the presence of two figures crouching behind the conning-tower. This, in spite of the fact that the men wore their long knives strapped to their waists, gave Dave and the engineer a decided advantage—an advantage they were not slow to make the most of.

Fortunately, the robbers crowded up the hatchway, all eager to catch a first view of the reputed gold valley, in which lay the treasure city.

As the third head peeped above the hatch, Jarvis sprang at them. Swinging his ice-anchor, an ugly cudgel of bent iron with a chilled steel point, he sent two of the villains sprawling at a single blow. Meanwhile, Dave, who had grappled with the third man, made a misstep and together they plunged down the hatchway. His opponent landed full on Dave's stomach, and so crushed the breath from him that for a second the lad could not move. But instantly, he realized that he must act. The man was attempting to draw his long knife. Thrusting out a hand, Dave gripped the point of the blade in its soft leather sheath so tightly that it could not be withdrawn.

Struggling with every ounce of strength, the two men were rolling over and over

on the deck. The stranger was heavier and evidently older than Dave, but the American had one advantage. He was dressed only in woolens. The heavy skin clothing of his antagonist hampered his action. In spite of this, Dave felt himself losing out in the battle. The stranger's hand was gripping closer and closer to his throat, and he felt his own hand losing its hold on the knife-blade, when he heard a welcome roar from the hatchway. It was Jarvis. With one leap he was at Dave's side. For an old man, he was surprisingly quick. Yet, he was not too quick, for the murderous knife was swinging above Dave's chest and a hand was at his throat, when Jarvis clove the assailant's skull with his ice-anchor.

With a groan the man collapsed. The knife clattered to the deck. Jarvis dropped to the floor panting.

"Are you hurt?" he gasped.

"No! Are you?"

"Not a scratch. Some jolly little weapon, them ice-h'anchors. H'I'll wear one of 'em h'in me belt from now on! H'I 'ates t' think 'ow cold th' water was when h'I pitched 'em h'in, them other two."

"Kill 'em?"

"Not that bad. But mebby they'll drown. H'I'll go see. H'I'd 'ate t' see 'em climbin' back."

He hurried up the hatchway, followed closely by Dave.

Not a sign of the two men was to be seen, either on the submarine, in the water or on the solid shore-ice, a few rods away.

"What d' y' think of that?" asked Jarvis, mopping his brow. "They're gone!"

"Perhaps they drowned."

"Mebbe drowned—mebby they're 'id h'in th' h'ice."

"Well, anyway, we're rid of them," said Dave. "We'll sew the dead one up in a blanket and throw him overboard; then we'll be going back. Think how all fussed up the Doctor will be." The boy chuckled.

"Going back?" Jarvis stared, as if unable to believe his ears. "Going back? And the treasure city within peep of h'our h'eyes. Going back, did y' say? H'I 'ates t' think 'ow rich we'll be, you an' me."

The sun was setting behind the dark line of timber. Some object at a point where the timber ended and the tundra began cast back the sunlight with a golden glow.

"D' y' see it, lad?" exclaimed the excited old man. "D'y'see it?
H'it's gold."

CHAPTER XII

THE RUSSIAN TIGER

When Rainey and Thompson, accompanied by the native, left the village to hunt the strange creature that was working havoc with the village reindeer herd, they walked directly away from the rows of deerskin houses toward the tundra at the foot of the hills where, some five miles away, the deer were herded.

The five miles were accomplished mostly in silence. Each man was busy with his own thoughts. As for the little native, he seemed quite without fear as long as he was with the powerful "spirits of dead whales."

When they approached the brown line of the herd that spread itself across the horizon, the boy led them around it to a point beyond where the beast attacked the young deer.

There, though the ground had been much trampled by the maddened herd, they found many traces of the attack. Splotches of blood stained the snow and made a well-defined trail where the creature had carried off its prey. Soon they were beyond the patches of trampled snow and then the native left them to follow the trail alone.

Faintly, from the distance, came the rattle and clatter of reindeer antlers as the herd moved about. Above them, in all its silver glory, shone the moon. Now and again the hunters gave a start, as a ptarmigan, roused from its slumbers, went whirring away. To them every purple shadow of rock or bush or snow-pile might be the beast crouching over his kill.

"The Doctor's right!" exclaimed Rainey, bending over the trail, which still showed a bloodspot here and there. "It's no polar bear—here's the scratch of his claws where he climbed this bank. Polar bears have no claws, only a sort of hard

lump on the end of each toe."

"No wolf, either," said Thompson, examining the tracks carefully. "The scratches are too long and too far apart. But, for that matter, who would even dream of a wolf large enough to carry off a two hundred pound deer?"

The beast's soft paws on the snow, hard-packed by Arctic winds, left a trail very difficult to follow. But, bit by bit, they traced it out.

At last the creature, having climbed a hill, had taken down a narrow ravine where scrub willows grew thick. And here they found unmistakable evidence that it had been some form of a great cat that had passed this way.

"Just like a cat's track," said Rainey. "And look at the size of 'em; must measure five inches across!"

They paused at the edge of the willows. They were brave men, but not fools. Only fools would venture into that thicket, where every advantage would be on the side of the lurking monster.

"There's a ridge up there running right along the side of this scrub," said Rainey. "We'll climb up there and walk along it. May get a glimpse of him. Then, again, he may have come out on the other side and gone on."

They climbed the bank and started along the ridge. Every yellow bunch of dead willow leaves at once became for the moment a crouching tiger, but each, in turn, was passed up. So they walked the ridge and had passed the willow clump, when Rainey gripped his companion's arm, whispering:

"What's that down there to the right? I think I saw it move."

Thompson gazed down the narrow pass for a moment, then whispered:

"C'mon. It's the very old chap. We can skirt the next bank of rocks and be right above him. We're in luck. It will be an easy shot!"

Creeping on hands and knees, with bated breath and nerves a-tingle, the boys came presently to a point above the half-hidden beast. As they peered down at him they could barely suppress exclamations of surprise. It was, indeed, a tiger. And such a tiger! Never, in any zoo or menagerie, had they seen his equal. He

was a monster, with massive head, deep chest and powerful limbs; and his thick fur—nature's protection against the Arctic cold—seemed to emphasize both his size and his savageness.

"You're the best shot," whispered Rainey. "Try him!"

Thompson lifted his rifle and with steady nerve aimed at a point back of the fore-leg.

The tiger, who up to this time had apparently neither heard nor scented them, but had been crouching half asleep beside his mangled prey, seemed suddenly to become aware of their presence. Just as the rifle cracked, he sprang up the bank. His deafening roar told that the bullet had found a mark, but it did not check his charge.

Then came a catastrophe. Rainey leaned too far forward, causing some rocks and loose snow to slide from beneath him, and, in another second he shot down a steep incline to what seemed certain death.

To his surprise, he found himself dropping straight down. A hidden cliff here jutted out over the drifted snow. To his much greater surprise, instead of being knocked senseless, he was immediately engulfed in what seemed an avalanche of snow leaping up to meet him. His alert mind told him what had happened. A blizzard of a few days previous had driven great quantities of snow against the cliff. This snow was not hard-packed, and he had been buried in it by the fall. The problem now was to avoid the tiger, who was sure to spring upon him at the first glimpse and tear him in pieces. Then, suddenly, there flashed through his mind a picture left over from his boyhood days. It was that of a cat endeavoring to catch a mole, which burrowed industriously beneath the snow, raising a ridge as he burrowed. Could he play the part of the mole, as the tiger was sure to play the part of the cat? It was his only chance. His companion would not dare to shoot until he knew where Rainey was.

Putting himself in the position of a swimmer, the sailor began pawing at the snow and kicking it with his feet. The snow was hard packed against his face and he thought his lungs would burst. But he was making progress. Now, he dared back off a trifle and take a long breath of air from the burrow he had made. Then a sound stirred him to renewed effort. It was the thud and jar of an impact. The tiger, having made his first leap, had missed. How many more times would he do

this? The boy once more jamming his head against the snow renewed his swimming motions. Again he was obliged to pause for breath. Again the tiger sprang; this time, seemingly, he was more accurate. Again the race was renewed. The boy's mind was in a whirl. Would his companion understand and risk a shot as the tiger prepared for another spring? He hoped so. Surely, he could not endure the strain much longer. One thing he was certain of, he could not hear the report of the rifle if a shot were fired. He must struggle on in ignorance of what was going on above him. The thought was maddening. The air in the narrow channel was stifling; yet, he burrowed on, and heard again the heavy impact.

He had burrowed his length and backed off again for breath, when he was forced to the realization that he could endure the air of the channel no longer. Apparently, the tiger's last leap had completely closed it.

Resolving to fight his way out, and then to trust all to flight, he thrust his hands upward and again began to burrow. With dizzy brain and wildly beating heart, he felt at length the fresh, frosty air upon his cheek.

But what was this that reached his ears? Surely not the roar of the tiger. Instead it was the joyous cry of his companion.

Dragging the snow from his eyes, Rainey stared about him. There, not five paces from him, lay the tiger with a bullet in his brain, while beside the body stood Thompson.

"Well," said the hunter with a grin, "you're sure some mouse!"

"And you're some shot!" said Rainey, floundering through the snow to his companion's side. "I guess that's the finest tiger skin in the world."

"It's yours as much as mine," answered Thompson. "We'll go share and share alike."

CHAPTER XIII

BRUCE AND THE BEAR

During this time of mishaps and adventures for the submarine party, what was happening to the boys and the Major in their airplane? With fair wind and weather they might well have been on the return journey from the Pole. But fair wind and weather are not for long in the Arctic. They were, indeed, on their way. As they shot away into the air from the native village near the trader's schooner, they heard the natives calling one word in unison. It was the Eskimo name for Thunder-bird.

The Major smiled happily at the boys as the plane soared upward.

Barney was again at the wheel. Two things he dreaded now: engine trouble, which might be brought on by poor gasoline, and an Arctic blizzard. If forced to land at any time, they would be in great danger of a crash, and a storm would double the danger.

But there could never have been a more wonderful day than that on which they left the little camp for the great adventure. Not a cloud whitened the blue dome of the sky, not a breath of air stirred. Soon the sun sank from sight, and twilight, strange and wonderful, lasting through three long hours, faded slowly into night. Then below them lay yellow lights and deep purple shadows, with here and there a stretch of black, which told of open water between floes.

The air grew colder as night came on, and speeding northward they saw the thermometer dropping degree by degree, and felt the chill creep through their garments in defiance of their electrical heating device. Barney began to worry about the effect of this intense cold on the tempered steel of his engines and the many-layered wood of his propellers; but as they sped on hour after hour, this restlessness left him.

But what was this? He found the machine shooting through space with greater freedom. One answer there was: a storm. They had been caught in the advance of a blizzard; how great and terrible, none could tell.

"Going to storm. Better land," telephoned the Major.

Obeying his orders, the boy dropped to a lower level. Here the wind was more intense and the air was filled with fine particles of snow which raced with them, only to glide away into the background. The whole ice-floe was already gray and indistinct from the drift. To pick a landing-place seemed impossible. For several moments of agonizing suspense they sped on; then, just as they were about to despair, there appeared before them a long expanse of white. Wide as three city boulevards, endless in extent, it appeared to offer just the opportunity they were seeking.

With a sign Barney shut off his engine, and, sailing on the wind, waited for a lull to give him a safe landing.

The lull came, then with a swoop, like a wild duck seeking water, they hovered, settled, then touched the surface.

The landing-wheels were shooting along over the snow with Barney's keen eyes strained ahead that he might avoid possible rough spots, when there came a cry of dismay from Bruce. With one startled glance about, Barney saw all. To the right and left of them the ice seemed to rise like the walls of an inverted tent. "Rubber-ice," his mind told him like a flash. They had attempted to land where the water had but recently frozen over, and was covered with a deceptive coating of snow. Only one hope remained: to rise again. Once the weak rubber-ice—thin, elastic salt-water ice—gave way, nothing could save them.

Tilting the planes and tail to their utmost capacity, Barney set first one engine in motion and then the other. But the yielding ice gave them no purchase. At the same time, it impeded their progress by offering them the slope of a mountain side to climb. One thing favored them. The peril of a moment before became a blessing. The wind freshened at every blast. At last, with a terrific swoop, it seized them and sent them whirling upward. In the down-swoop, they were all but crashed on a towering pile of ice, but escaping this fate, once more they were away.

Despite this near-catastrophe, Barney was determined to make a landing. The

chill of the storm was so benumbing to muscles and senses that further flying could only result in stupor, then death.

Again he sank low and scudded along on the wings of the wind. To his great joy, he soon saw that they were passing over flat stretches of white. There could be no mistake this time; they were ice-pans, perhaps a quarter-mile across, such pans as form in quiet bays, to float away and drift north in the spring. Again he stopped his engines, determined, if he must, to circle and return to the flats he had passed. This did not prove necessary, however, and, to their great relief, the three were soon threshing their arms and stamping their feet on a solid cake of ice, and so vast that it seemed they must be on land, not hundreds of miles from shore on the bosom of a great ocean, which might, at the very point they stood, be a half-mile in depth.

Their first concern was to make camp. This storm might rage for days, and already they saw white spots forming on one another's cheeks, telling of frost-bites.

"We can't camp here in the open," said the Major. "Have to carry our blankets and sleeping-bags to the rougher ice yonder, where we can build a house of snow."

The suggestion was no sooner made than the boys were delving into the inner recesses of the plane and dragging out equipment and supplies.

"Primus stove, dried potatoes, pemmican, evaporated eggs, pickled butter, hard-tack, chocolate, beef tea, coffee," Barney called off. "Not bad for near the Pole."

The dogs were hitched to the small sled and soon all were racing away before the wind to the spot chosen for the camp. In a short time they were busy constructing a rude shelter, and the airplane for the moment was forgotten.

In the meantime, the wind was increasing, and the wings of the plane, catching first this swirl, then that one, began making great gyrating circles, cutting the air with a crack and a burr that might be heard rods away. Though these sounds did not reach the men, busy with the snow-shack, they did reach listening ears—a great white bear, wandering the floes in search of some sleeping seal, stood first on all fours, then on his haunches, to listen. Then, with many a misgiving and many a pause, he made his cautious way to the edge of that particular ice-flat where the plane rested. Thence, after more misgivings, he trundled his awkward

body across the flat and took a position close to the plane, where, on his haunches, he stood and watched the apparently playful antics of the plane as if he thought it some great bird that had come to infest his domain.

Presently, when the plane nearest him seemed about to swoop down and touch the ice, he moved to a position beneath it, and, with tongue lolling, stood on his haunches again and swinging his giant paw to accompany the swing of the plane, struck out as it approached him. To his surprise, the plane did not come within twenty feet of the ice surface. He sank back on his haunches and awaited further developments.

When the snow-hut was completed, the first thought of the Major and the boys was of something to eat.

"Something hot!" exclaimed Barney, rattling away at the primus stove.
Then he sat up with a look of disgust on his face.

"The needles for the primus," he groaned. "They're still over in the plane!"

"I'll get them," said Bruce, beginning to draw on his heavy parka. Soon he was fighting the wind back to the position of the plane. He had not battled with the elements long before he began to realize that all would not be well if the plane were left in its present position, unanchored as it was. And when he caught the hum and whirr of the wind through the wings, he was more thoroughly convinced of the fact than ever. As he came near and could see the long tilting toss of the wings, he realized that something must be done and at once. For a second he hesitated; should he return and call his companions, or should he attempt to anchor the plane, temporarily at least, unaided? He decided upon the latter course, and went at once to the body of the plane where were stored light, strong ropes of silk, and ice-anchors. He did not see the bear sitting patiently on his haunches beneath the tip of the long wing. Indeed, the snow-fog made it impossible, and it was equally impossible for the bear to see him.

Having secured four ropes and four ice-anchors, Bruce took two of the ropes and began climbing out on the right wing of the plane. His plan was to attach the ropes to the extremity of the wing, cast them down to the surface where he would anchor them later in each direction away from the tip of the wing. He would repeat the operation with the other wing, and, drawing the ropes down snugly, thus make the plane tight and steady.

He had climbed quite to the extremity of the wing and was about to tie his first rope, when a fierce gust of wind threatened to tear him from the rigging and crash him to the ice, a dangerous distance below. With a quick clutch, he saved himself but lost the rope. It was with a grunt of disgust that he saw it wind and twirl toward the white surface below. Then it was, for the first time, that he saw the yellowish-white object huddled there on the ice waiting.

"A bear!" he groaned, and instinctively reached for his automatic.

But at that instant there came a fresh swoop of wind that set the plane gyrating more violently than ever.

Clinging grimly to the bars, Bruce felt the wing swing down, down, then in toward the bear, till it seemed it must crash into the great creature. Before the plane rose Bruce felt a chill run down his spine. Not ten feet beneath him was the savage face of the bear. All his gleaming white teeth showed in an ugly grin, as he stood on his haunches one mighty fore-paw raised in air, like a traffic policeman signaling a car to stop.

Then again the wing whirled to dizzy heights. Bruce was now quite ready to climb back the length of the wing and depart for camp to summon assistance. But to loosen his grip, even of one hand for an instant, was to court death. Again he felt the sickening sink of the plane, as if it were an elevator-car loosed from its cable. And this time, he felt instinctively, the wing would scrape the ice. And the bear, if he were still there? Well, there was going to be a crash and a general mix-up.

Bruce had been a football player in his day and was aware that there were times, if one were at the bottom of the heap, when relaxation was the play. As far as his position made it possible, he relaxed. And, in the meantime the plane swept downward.

For one fleeting instant he saw the white traffic cop of the Arctic wilderness still standing with paw upraised. Then everything was a blinding, deafening crash of ice and snow, wood, canvas and white bear.

Bruce gathered himself up some rods from the scene of the crash. Relaxed as he was, he had rolled like a football over the ice and had escaped with a few bruises. But the plane? As he caught a fleeting glimpse of it disappearing in the murky fog, he felt sure that it would take days, perhaps weeks, to repair it.

"And the worst is not yet! She's still swinging!" he groaned, rising stiffly.

But immediately his mind was turned to the white "cop." How had he fared? The boy felt for his automatic. Fortune favored him; it was still in his holster. This was well, for the white bear, very much shaken but still game, having wrought further havoc with the debris left by the demolished wing, was charging down upon him.

Standing his ground, Bruce waited until the bear was within six paces. One stroke from that giant paw would end the struggle. His aim must be true and certain. Suddenly his hand went to his side for a hip-shot. Put-put-put-put. Four bullets smashed into the bear, bringing him to a standstill. Put-put-put-put. With a roar, the bear sank to the ice. In a second he was dead.

It was with a feeling almost of regret that Bruce bent over the giant beast. But it was with a sense of new power that he noted that seven of his bullets had crashed through the Arctic Goliath's skull.

Again his mind was turned toward the plane. Cold and hungry as they were, he realized that he and his two companions must spend the next hour making their craft safe from further damage.

Three hours, indeed, elapsed before they were again seated in the snow-cabin. This time the primus stove was going and the coffee coming to a boil.

"Well," said the Major, "I'm glad we're all here. We'll be delayed for several days. We may have lost the race. But we won't give up. As long as our plane has wings we'll keep on. No race is ever lost until the goal is reached and passed. Let's eat."

"Anyway," said Barney, as he sipped his cup of hot coffee, "we won't run out of dog meat and hamburger soon. I'll bet Bruce's bear weighs a thousand pounds dressed."

"Fourteen inches between the ears," grinned Bruce proudly.

CHAPTER XIV

"BOMBED"

Standing silently beside the aged engineer, Dave Tower gazed thoughtfully at the golden dome that flashed, then slowly darkened in the setting sun. That yellow gleam did not lure him on, for the honor of helping to reach the Pole was more to him than money. But Jarvis? He perhaps had learned in his long years of labor that "the paths of glory lead but to the grave," and now that he was growing old wealth would mean escape from toil and worry. Perhaps, too, somewhere in the States a gray-haired wife awaited him to whom just a little of that gleaming gold would mean rest and peace as long as she might live.

So Dave looked at the golden dome and pondered what he ought to do. When at last, he spoke, his tone was kind:

"Jarvis," he began, "as you know, I am in command of this craft. The fact that it has been stolen and won back, more by your efforts than by anything I have done, does not change matters any. I am still commander."

Jarvis looked up with an impatient gesture, as if about to speak, but
Dave kept on:

"As captain of this submarine, I might order you below, and your refusal to do so would be mutiny. But from the time we came aboard this craft we have been more like pals than commander and engineer. I give you my word of honor I will never order you below. If you go, you go of your own free will."

Jarvis raised his face for a moment, and upon it was a look of growing hope.

"You know," Dave continued, "what our duty is. We shipped under the orders of the Doctor. Those orders still go. No matter how fine the chances are that we are

letting slip, we are bound to do as the Doctor wants.

"More than that, we have friends back there who had only two days' supply of food when we left them. They are living in a village of superstitious, treacherous savages, who may attack and murder them at any moment. Jarvis," he touched the old man's hand, "we are American seamen. Will you forget your flag and your shipmates for gold?"

For a second the old man stood in silence, then with a rush, he stumbled down the hatchway, and in another moment Dave heard him tinkering away at his engines.

Before Dave wrapped the dead stranger in his burial blanket, he searched the pockets of his clothing. There was no mistaking the garments; they were oriental in make. And had there remained any doubt, it would have been dispelled by two packets of papers taken from an inside pocket. These bore the official stamp of that oriental government which had been named by Jarvis.

"I must tell Jarvis," said the boy to himself. "It will please him to know that he was right."

And that night, while they glided silently back toward the native village they had left not many hours before, leaving the treasure city a mystery unexplained, he *did* tell Jarvis. As he finished, the old man's face lighted.

"The thing that's troublin' me just now," he said slowly, "is the question of th' two bloomin' 'eathen that faded from h'our h'eyes. H'I 'ates to think they live, an' h'I 'ates to trust my 'opes they're done for. If they're h'alive, they may get the treasure yet, an' h'I 'ates t' be beat by a bloody, bloomin' 'eathen."

"They're a long way from home base," said Dave with a grin. "They may find the treasure, but getting it home's another thing."

"I want you to know," he went on, huskily, "that I appreciate your standing by me, and if we get out of this alive, you and I, with our discharge papers, I promise I'll be your partner in this new enterprise—the quest for treasure; that is, if you'll take me on."

"Will h'I?" Jarvis sprang to his feet, a new glad light in his eye. "Will h'I? 'Ere, give us a 'and on that. H'and we'll win, lad; we'll win! An' that in spite of th'

bloomin' 'eathen!"

It was early the next morning that the Doctor, who was enjoying, with the gobs, the native festival of rejoicing over the killing of the great, and to them unknown, beast which had attacked their reindeer herds, he noticed a young native come running from the direction of the sea. He paused now and again to shout:

"Tomai! Tomai!" which was the native call for the arrival of a boat.

Instantly the crowd was thrown into commotion. Natives rushed hither and thither. But the white men realized at once that this could mean nothing less than the return of the submarine, and, while they did not at all understand it, they whooped their joy and rushed toward the shore to see a dark body rounding the point.

"The sub! The sub! Hurray! Hurray!" they shouted, tossing their caps high in air. And the submarine indeed it was. Dave and Jarvis were overjoyed to rejoin their companions.

The stories of adventure were soon told and then everyone was set to hustling the last bit of equipment on board. There would be neither meals nor sleep until everything was in readiness and they were away.

As the Doctor and Dave stood on deck watching the casting off of the ropes, the Doctor spoke of his plans.

"We may have lost the race," he remarked rather grimly, "but we're going to the Pole just the same. It will mean something to you boys, at least, to be able to say that you've been there. It was my purpose to lay our course directly for the Pole without establishing a base, but since we have been carried out of our way so far, and have used so much fuel, I feel that it will be wise to head for the farthest-north point of Alaska—Point Barrow.

"I was assured, in Nome, that there were two oil-burning whalers wintering near there, and I have no doubt that we can depend on them for extra fuel."

The hatches were lowered, the submarine sank from sight amid the "Ah-ne-ca's" and "Mat-na's" of the awe stricken natives who lined the cliffs a half-mile away. The sub, with all on board, was again on its way to enter the race for the Pole.

"The race is on," said Dave.

"I wonder?" smiled the Doctor.

Three times they rose in dark waterways for air. The fourth time it seemed they must be nearing land—

Yes, as the submarine bumped the edge of an ice-floe, a point of land showed plainly to port.

Dave, with field-glass in hand, sprang to the nearest ice-cake, then climbed to a pinnacle to take an observation.

"Clear water to the left of us," he reported.

"Too close ashore?" asked the Doctor.

"I think not," was Dave's answer. "We'll have to submerge for three or four miles; then we'll be clear of the ice."

Signal bells clanged, and again they were gliding under the ocean's armor of ice.

As he listened to the hum of the machinery, one question puzzled Dave. He had seen something along the end of that ice-floe. What was it? A sail? If so, it was a very strange one—half white and half black. He could not be sure it was a sail. But what else could it have been?

But now they had swept out from under the ice. It was time to rise. Instantly he pressed the button. The craft slowed again. Another press, and as before they rose. This time no white surface would interrupt them. A current coming from land caught them forward and tilted the craft. She slanted from fore to aft. This did not matter; she would right herself on the surface like a cork.

But what was this? As the point shot from the water, something rang out against the steel. This was followed immediately by what, in the narrow apartments, amounted to a deafening explosion; then came the sound of rushing waters.

"Great God! We're bombed!" shouted the Doctor.

Dave's cool head saved them for the moment. His hand seized an electric switch

and he pulled it desperately. The bow compartment was quickly closed, checking the rush of water into the rest of the "sub," Fortunately, no one had been forward at the time.

But now they were sinking rapidly. Then came the throb of the pumps forcing out the water from the compartments aft. Slowly the sickening sinking of their ship was checked.

"Will she rise again?" asked the Doctor, white-faced but cool.

"I think so, sir," responded Dave.

Dave watched a gauge with anxious eyes. The pumps were still working. Would the craft stand the test? Would she rise?

One, two, three minutes he watched the dial; then a fervent "Thank God!" escaped his lips. The sub was rising again.

But once more his brow was clouded. What awaited them on the surface?

"One more," he muttered, "just one more, and we are done for."

Every man aboard the submarine had a different explanation for the bomb which had disabled their craft. Jones, the electrician, had just finished reading the adventures of a young British gunner in these very waters somewhere back in the eighties. The story had to do with the defense of seal fisheries against the Japs, and Jones was sure that a Japanese seal-poaching boat had bombed them. McPherson, who had seen active service chasing German subs, was certain they had encountered one of the missing U boats. Wilder believed it had been a Russian cruiser, and, of course, Jarvis blamed it to the "bloomin' 'eathen."

The first and third of these theories could be discarded at once, since no craft was to be seen when last they submerged, and a cruiser or schooner of any size could scarcely have escaped their attention.

As for Dave, he had another theory, but was too busy to talk about it. He had read a great deal regarding the Eskimos and their methods of hunting.

Meanwhile the submarine was rising slowly toward the surface. She was coming up with her stern tilted high this time, for the water in her forward compartments

disturbed her balance. Every heart beat fast as the water above grew lighter.

"McPherson, be ready to throw open the hatch the minute we are clear," commanded Dave. "All life belts on?" he asked.

"Aye, aye, sir!" came in chorus.

"Rifles?"

"At hand, sir."

"Ready then."

There came a sudden burst of light, the creak of hinges, the thud of the hatch, then the thud of feet as the men rushed for the deck.

In another moment the crew found themselves outside clinging to the tilted and unsteady craft, blinking in the sunlight, and seeing—? Principally white ice and dark water. Off in the distance, indeed, was an innocent-looking native skin-boat. There were, perhaps, ten natives aboard.

"Thought so," chuckled Dave.

"You thought what?" demanded the Doctor. Every eye was turned on the young commander.

"Thought we'd been shot by natives with a whale-gun. Took us for a whale, don't you see? Whale-gun throws a bomb that explodes inside the whale and kills him. In this case, it exploded against us and raised the very old dickens. Here they come. You'll see I'm right."

And he was right. The crew of christianized natives were soon alongside, very humble in their apologies, and very anxious to assist in undoing the damage they had wrought.

"Have we any extra steel plate?" asked the Doctor.

"Yes, sir. Have to be shaped, though," replied Dave.

"Can we do it?"

"I think so, on shore."

"All right, then. Get these natives to give us a hand and we'll go on the sand-bar for repairs. Bad cess to the whaling industry of the Eskimos! It's lost us a full two days, and perhaps the race! But we must not give up. Things can happen to airplanes, as well."

It took a hard half-day's work to bring the craft to land, but at last the task was done and the mechanics were hammering merrily away on the steel with acetylene torch sputtering, and forty natives standing about open-mouthed, exclaiming at everything that happened, and offering profound explanations in their own droll way.

CHAPTER XV

THE MYSTERY CAVERN

Once their craft was repaired, the submarine party pushed northward at an average rate of ten miles an hour. It was two days before any further adventure crossed their path. But each hour of the journey had its new thrill and added charm. Now, with engine in full throb, they were scurrying along narrow channels of dark water, and now submerging for a sub-sea journey. Now, shadowy objects shot past them, and Dave uttered a prayer that they might not mix with the propeller—seal, walrus or white whale, whatever they might be. In his mind, at such times, he had visions of floating beneath the Arctic pack, powerless to go ahead or backward and as powerless to break through the ice to freedom.

Wonderful changing lights were ever filtering through ice and water to them, and, at times, as they drove slowly forward, the lights and shadows seemed to have a motion of their own, a restless shifting, like the play of sunlight and shadow beneath the trees. Dave knew this was no work of the imagination. He knew that the ice above them was the plaything of currents and winds; that great cakes, many yards wide and eight feet thick, were grinding and piling one upon another. Once more his brow wrinkled. "For," he said to himself, "it may be true enough that the average ice-floe is only twenty-five miles wide, but if the wind and current jams a lot of them together, what limit can there be to their extent? And if we were to find ourselves in the center of such a vast field of ice with oxygen exhausted, what chance would we have?"

Dave shuddered in answer to the question.

He was thinking of these things on the eve of the second day. They were plowing peacefully through the water when, of a sudden, there came a grating blow at the side of the craft. It was as if they had struck some solid object and glanced off.

"What was that?" exclaimed the boy. He cut the power, then turned to the Doctor:

"Ice or—"

"There it goes again!" exclaimed the Doctor.

This time the blow was heavier. It sent them against the side of the compartment.

"Ice beneath the ocean? Impossible!" exclaimed the Doctor. "Must be rocks!"

Another blow hurled them in the opposite direction. Both realized the gravity of this new peril. If one of these blows caught the craft squarely it would crush the sub like an egg-shell.

But the boat was slowing up. There was hope in that. Dave, attempting to look out of one of the portholes, was thrown to the floor by another shock. And this time the craft seemed to have stuck, for she did not move.

"Where can we be?" asked Dave, rubbing a bruised head.

It was a strange sight which met their eyes as they looked from the conning tower. On every side appeared to be giant pillars of ice. Between these were narrow water passages, while above they could make out a mass of ice far more opaque than any they had yet passed beneath.

"One of two things," said the Doctor. "We are beneath an iceberg or the end of a glacier. Probably a glacier, and the pillars which support it reach to the bottom, which must not be far below us."

"We have driven between two pillars and stuck there like a mouse in a trap," said Dave, "and if we cannot set ourselves free, we are—"

"It must be done!" exclaimed the Doctor. "Start the power slowly and see what the propeller will do."

Dave gave the signal. There followed a harsh, grating sound, but the boat did not move.

"Stuck!" muttered Dave.

"Not so fast." said the Doctor. "There's hope yet. Shut off the power and order all hands aft."

"Now," said the Doctor, when they were assembled. "We will go to the starboard side, then all together dash to port, and throw our weight against the side. Then turn and rush back—we want to make her roll. Are you ready? Go!"

The craft stirred a trifle at the shock. The second attempt seemed to promise still better. After they had repeated the operation half a dozen times, they were getting considerable side-wise movement out of the trapped submarine.

"Now," said the Doctor, "start the power slowly, engine reversed. The instant she is free, shut off the power. On the precision of this operation depends all our lives, for should the propeller strike one of those pillars it will be torn away and our hope of escape gone."

Dave's hand trembled as he moved the lever. For one second the propeller spun around. Then, with a shudder, the craft started backward. That instant Dave shut off the power. The submarine drifted free. So far, they were safe.

The Doctor consulted his watch.

"Time of low tide," he observed "Guess we should be able to rise and get some air. Try it."

Slowly they rose to the surface, and there the craft rested.

It was an eager throng that rushed from the conning-tower and it was a wonderful and awe-inspiring sight which met their gaze.

"Cathedral of the Polar Gods!" exclaimed the Doctor. And, indeed, so the great cavern seemed to be. Great pillars of ice, not yet worn away by the wash of water, supported giant arches of ice, blue as a mid-June night. The least echo was echoed and reechoed through the vast corridors. The murmur of distant waves seemed to come from everywhere.

"What I want to know," said Dave, "is, which way is out. The careless gods seemed to have neglected to mark the exits."

"We'll find an exit," said the Doctor, "and we'd better be about it, for it'll be

much easier at low-tide than at high."

The engine was started, and slowly they steered their way through countless aisles and broad halls, but the finding of the way out did not seem so easy after all. They had penetrated far enough into the cavern to hide them from the pale outer moonlight, and they were not certain that their course was not taking them farther from it.

Dave was thinking of turning about when the sub came to a stop with a suddenness which threatened to pitch the party into the sea.

"What now?" demanded the Doctor.

Ordering the power shut off, then flashing a light before them, Dave exclaimed: "A beach, a sandy beach!" Then, with the enthusiasm of a boy, he sprang forward, leaping into shallow water and wading ashore.

Once ashore he flashed his light about in the icy caverns which left but a narrow sandy beach. Then, with a cry of horror, he sprang backward. Before him towered an immense hairy monster, with tusks three times the length of a man's arm.

The instant the cry had left his lips, he knew the laugh was on him. But the cry had gone forth, echoing through the corridors. It brought the jackies and the Doctor splashing through the water to his rescue.

"Only a frozen mastodon," he grinned sheepishly, as they came to his side. "Guess he's been dead ten thousand years, to say the least. But honest, doesn't he look natural standing there in the ice?"

He flashed the light suddenly upon the ice-encased monster, and the jackies jumped, as if they, too, expected to be attacked.

"A beautiful corpse, I'd say," exclaimed one of them.

"A most remarkable specimen," commented the Doctor. "I've heard of cases like this, but never saw one before."

"Say!" exclaimed Jones. "If we could only get him out of here like that and put him down in alcohol, we'd have a side-show that would make Barnum jump out

of his grave!"

"Not a bad idea," said the Doctor. "The only hitch would be getting him out of here."

As Dave backed away for a better view, his foot struck something hard. Flashing his light upon it, he found it to be the skull and tusks of a walrus. They were as black as coal.

"I've made a find!" he exclaimed. "These tusks we may take with us, and old ivory is about as valuable as precious stones."

The discovery seemed to waken the Doctor to their peril.

"That walrus," he said, "wandered in here and was drowned by the rising tide. He can breathe under water, but cannot stay down over ten minutes. We can't breathe at all under water. The tide is setting in."

These words sent the crew scurrying back to the submarine. Already the tide had risen sufficiently to float the craft. All hands hastened to re-embark.

"If we set our course directly at right-angles to this beach and keep it there," said Dave, "it should bring us to safety."

This was done, and, after many a turn and twist, they caught a gleam of light. Submerging, they were soon beneath the ice-floe once more. With a sigh of relief, Dave gave the order to rise at the first water-hole. There they might take their bearings.

A half-hour later the party was gathered on the deck gazing away at an island above which there towered a snow-capped mountain. Down the side of the mountain might be distinguished the winding, blue course of a great glacier.

"Our glacier!" said Dave. "Some glacier, I'll say!"

"Our glacier!" repeated a jackie. "Long may she glide!"

The course was set at an angle to the island. This would carry them past any treacherous sand-bars. They would then take another tack and resume their former course.

At a few minutes before noon that day they rose far from the island. The sun, a pale yellow disk, shone through a thin haze close to the surface of the pack. And yet it was high noon. This was, perhaps, to be their last bearing taken by the light of the sun. Henceforth, the moon and the stars must guide them. Whereas all former polar expeditions were carried forward only during the summer months, when the sun shone night and day, they, as well as their rivals, must drive on straight into the deep mysteries of the dreaded Arctic night.

CHAPTER XVI

WRECKED

"All aboard! Change here for all way stations; our next stop is the Pole!"

Barney, the daring aviator, sang the words cheerfully, as he settled himself in his place at the wheel. He hardly felt the cheerfulness his tone implied. True, they had spent twelve days repairing the damage done to the plane by the wind and its collision with the white bear, but it was a rather patched-up affair now it was finished—as it needs must be with the few materials and tools at their command. As he had expressed it to Bruce only the night before: they had a crippled wing, and a bird with a broken pinion never soars so high again, even if it is a bird of fabric, wood and steel.

However, he was truly glad to be getting away on what they hoped might be their last lap. The grave-like silence of the Arctic, with its glistening whiteness everywhere, had gripped his nerves.

"Well, here's hoping," he murmured to Bruce, as the plane hopped off.

As for the Major, he sat with face fixed as a bronze statue. His gaze was toward the Pole.

For fourteen hours they soared steadily onward. Only the air, which grew crisper and more stinging as they advanced steadily northward, told them they were nearing the Pole. Observations from the plane were impossible. The sun, which had been appearing less and less each day, was now quite lost to them. Only the moon in all its glory tinted the blue ice-piles with wavering ghost colors. The wind for once was still. Not a bird appeared in the sky, not an animal met the gaze of their binoculars as they peered below. It was as if the whole Northern realm had become suddenly silent at the magnificent spectacle of three men

sailing alone over spaces never yet traveled by man, and where dangers lurked at every turn.

The plane, too, was surprising its driver. It answered his least touch on the lever controls. The engines were working perfectly. Only now and again he caught a faint lurch which told his practiced senses that some of the rudely improvised splices were working loose. Even these gave him no great alarm; at least, they did not seem sufficiently serious to warrant an immediate landing.

But suddenly, as they were soaring over the wildest, most treacherous-looking stretch of floe ice that eyes have ever rested upon, the plane gave a lurch. A shudder ran through her from wing to wing, and, with a plunge, she shot side-wise. The outer half of her right wing had doubled up on the inner half, like a blade to a jack-knife.

Bruce took in the situation at a glance. Before a hand could stop him, he had unbuckled his straps, and, creeping to the extremity of the remaining half of the wing, he clung there, thus adding his weight to its balancing power.

Already Barney had shut off the engines. With the added weight to the right the plane became steadier. Danger of a whirling spin to the ice-surface seemed for the time averted.

"What a landing-place!" groaned Barney, almost touching the starting lever in his eagerness to save the plane. But he stayed his hand; to start the engine under such conditions would be madness. Some form of landing they must make, even if it was but to "crash."

So they sped steadily downward, realizing that the goal they sought must now, with the aid of their dog-team, be easily within their grasp; yet realizing also that all means of returning was likely to be denied them, unless, indeed, one were to call five dogs a means of traveling over hundreds of miles of tangled, tumbling mountains of ice.

Suddenly, Barney's heart leaped for joy. Just before them, within possible area of landing, lay a perfectly level stretch of ice. It was not large, was, in fact, perilously small, yet it offered a possible landing.

Tilting the left plane to its utmost, adjusting the tail, Barney glided onward. With bated breath he saw the white plain rise to meet them. With trembling hand he

touched a lever here, a button there. Then—a jar—the landing-wheels had touched. They touched again. The moving plane fairly ate up the scant level space, yet she slowed and slowed until at last, with hardly a tremor, she rested against the outcropping ridge of ice at the floe's edge.

With a glowing smile the Major unstrapped himself to reach out his hands in thanks and congratulation to his pilots.

But—where were they? They had disappeared. He found them in front of the plane calling to him for assistance. Then he saw the danger their more practiced eyes had already noticed. The ice at this point was piling. At this moment the very cake against which they had stopped was beginning to rise. Within a space of moments, the plane, unless turned and thrust backward, would be crushed beneath hundreds of tons of ice. "If we can get her back we can save her!" panted Bruce.

"Swing her!" shouted Barney, throwing his whole strength against the right wing.

"Now she moves!" yelled Bruce joyously. "Now! Heave ho!"

The great craft turned slowly on her wheels. Now the plane was clearing the ice. Now—now in just a second—she would be safe.

But no—the right wheel caught in an ice-crevice. Three desperate efforts they made to free her, then, just as the giant cake towered, crumbling above them, the Major shouted the word of warning that sent them leaping back to safety but cost them their machine.

True, it stood there, still. The mechanism was perfect, the engines uninjured. But the right wing was completely demolished. Buried beneath tons and tons of ice, the craft that had carried them so far was crushed beyond all hope of repair.

With despair tugging at their hearts, the three stood looking at the wreckage. But they were not of the breed that quits.

"We'd better get our stuff and what's left of the plane out of the way of danger," said Bruce at length.

"The stuff—blankets, grub and the like, yes, but"—Barney smiled in spite of

himself—"why the plane? She's done for."

"Because," said Bruce, "you can never tell what will happen."

The pressure which was piling the ice diminished rapidly, and the back edge of the cake proved a safe place to make camp. Soon they were boiling tea over a small oil stove and discussing the future as calmly as they might have done had they been in the old office-shack back on the Hudson Bay Railroad.

"Now to find where we are," exclaimed the Major, knocking the tea leaves from his cup.

The interest in this project was keen. After working out his reckoning, estimating the speed of their flight and counting the hours they had been in the air, the Major laid down his pencil.

"Fifty miles southeast of the Pole," he said at last. "Shall we attempt to go on or turn back?"

The boys looked at one another. Bruce read in his companions' eyes the desire to attempt the return with the dog-team. At the same time, he realized that the real genius of an explorer lay in his desire to push on. The Major had that genius.

"As for me," Bruce said finally, "I never decide anything of great importance until I have slept over it."

Barney smiled in spite of his anxiety and weariness.

But the Major, seeing the strained expression in the boys' faces, realized that the ultimatum of Bruce was a good one.

Soon the three companions were snug in their sleeping-bags, dreaming of a land of grass and flowers far, far away.

* * * * *

As soon as the submarine was safely on its course after the glacier incident, Dave, who had not slept for many hours, turned in for "three winks." His three winks had stretched on into hours, when he was wakened by a sudden jarring that shook the craft from stem to stern. He was on his feet in the passage-way at

once.

"What happened?" he demanded of a sailor.

"Blamed if I know," said the other. He was white as a sheet.

One thing Dave made sure of as he hurried toward the wheel-room; they were drifting under the ice-floor of the ocean. Was the motor simply dead, or was the propeller gone? He had but an instant to wait. There came the purr of the motor, then the sudden sound of racing machinery, which told plainer than words that the worst had happened.

"I think it was a walrus, sir," said Rainey, who had been in charge of the wheel-room. "I had just caught sight of a dark blotch gliding by and reached for the power when the racket started."

"What were you making?" asked Dave quietly.

"Our usual ten knots."

The compartment they were in was filled with levers and adjusting wheels of all descriptions. The walls were lined with gauges and dials of many styles and sizes. A person on entering and taking the operator's position, might fancy himself in the center of a circle of gears and driving wheels of many automobiles.

Dave glanced at a gauge, then at another. He touched a wheel, and the hand on the second dial began to drop. They were now rising. As a usual thing, they traveled some forty feet below the surface. Icebergs were scarce in these waters, and the ordinary floe did not lie more than twenty feet below sea-level; still, it was safer lower down. But now—now their safety rested in gliding to a point beneath a water channel or hole, and, once they were under it, they must not fail to rise.

"No, not if it takes our conning-tower to do it!" Dave said savagely, as he finished explaining.

They were still drifting through the water at a rather rapid rate, but little by little a speed gauge was falling. Soon they would be lying motionless beneath the Arctic floe, as helpless as a dead whale; and should no dark water-hole appear

before that time came, they were doomed.

Dave wiped the cold perspiration from his brow, as the hand on the dial dropped lower and lower. He touched a wheel again, and they rose another ten feet. "Must be nearly bumping the ice by now; but at such a time as this one takes risks," he muttered.

What was that? Did he sense the dark shadow which always presaged open water? Surely, if walrus were about, there must be open water to give them air. And, yes—there it was; a hole in the floe!

His trembling hand again touched the wheel. The hand on the dial had dropped to nearly nothing. If the water-hole was narrow; if they missed it!

But no—up—up they shot, and in just another moment men were swarming from the conning-tower.

"Say!" exclaimed Dave, wiping his forehead. "Do you remember the obstacle-races they used to have at county fairs when you were a boy?"

The jackie he spoke to grinned and nodded.

"Well, this is an obstacle-race, and the worst I ever saw. The worst of it is, there are two prizes—one's the Pole and the other our own lives!"

The open water they had reached at so fortunate a moment proved to be a channel between floes. They were in no immediate danger now, but to repair the damage done to the shaft and adjust a new propeller, it was necessary that they drag the submarine to the surface of a broad ice-cake. This task was not as difficult as one might imagine. With the aid of ice-anchors, iron pulleys and cables, they without much delay harnessed their engine and finished the job all ship shape.

"Look!" said one of the seamen, pointing at the narrow stretch of water. "She's closin' in!"

As the men looked they knew it to be true; the channel was certainly narrower than when they first rose upon its surface.

Securing a light line, the Doctor attached it to a plummet. Throwing the plummet

across the space, he drew the line taut. He then marked the point where the ice-line crossed it. Then for five minutes he divided his attention between the line and his watch. As he rose he muttered;

"Two hours! Two hours! How long will it take to complete the repairs?"

"Four hours, at least," Dave replied calmly.

"Then we're defeated!" The Doctor began pacing the surface of the ice. "We're stuck—beaten! In two hours the channel will be closed, and there is not another patch of open water within five miles!"

If Dave seemed unnaturally calm on receipt of such news, it was because he had in his "bag of tricks" one of which the Doctor was not aware. While in Nome he had made the acquaintance of a former British seaman, who had cruised Arctic waters in the late eighties, when Japan was disputing the rights of Great Britain and the United States to close the seal fisheries. This man had told him how the gunboats had opened their way through the ice-floes. The idea had appealed to the young skipper. Consequently, on boarding the submarine, he had carried under his arm a package which he handled very carefully, and finally deposited in the very center of a great bale of fur clothing. There it still remained.

"I suppose I might tell him," he said to himself. "But I guess I won't. 'Blessed is he that expecteth nothing,' The trick might not work. I'll wait." He turned to where the mechanics were hard at work adjusting the new propeller.

The repairing had gone on for something over two hours. The water-channel had completely closed. The Doctor was pacing the ice, lost in reflection. Like a flash, there came into Dave's mind a new problem: would the current be content merely to close the channel, or would the ice soon begin to buckle and pile? With an uneasy mind, he urged the workmen to hasten, at the same time keeping an eye on the line of ice where the channel had so lately been.

CHAPTER XVII

"SO THIS IS THE POLE"

Many of the disasters which threaten us in this life pass us by. So it was with the impending disaster of piling ice near the submarine. It did not pile.

But there remained the problem of getting the submarine through that six-foot roof to the water beneath. How was it to be done?

The Doctor still paced back and forth, his unrest written in the furrows of his brow. The jackies, cheerful as ever, worked at their shift of repairing the craft, or, when not at work, played at "duck-on-rock" with chunks of ice. Once a seal appeared in a water-hole. Had he not departed promptly, there would have been fried seal steak and roast seal heart for supper. A lumbering bear, that had evidently never seen a human being before, was not so fortunate. His pelt was added to the trophies of the expedition, and his meat was ground into rather tough hamburger.

Finally the mechanics announced that the submarine was again in perfect condition. Now was the time to try Dave's last trick. Sending three men to stretch a hundred-fathom cable from the submarine, and to anchor its farther end to a great ice-pan, he dropped below to return at once with a package. Cautioning the men not to follow him, he walked away seventy-five yards, bent over the center of an ice-pan, seemingly to adjust certain things and put others in order. This done, he strung a black cord-like affair from his little pile of objects. He then measured off ten paces, and repeated these operations. He then lighted a small gasoline torch, and held the tip of the second cord-like affair to it, then raced to the other for the same purpose. When this was done, he sped away toward his companions. His actions were quickly understood by the watching crew. The furrows on the Doctor's brow had become mere lines. He was smiling hopefully. When Dave tripped over an ice boulder there was a cry of alarm, but he was up

in a second, and found shelter with his men. Instinctively everyone ducked. Then came two roaring explosions in quick succession. Bits of splintered ice fell around them like hail. Before the ice fragments had ceased falling, everyone was climbing to the top of the ice-pile. What they saw caused a shout of joy. Where the ice-pan had been was a long stretch of black water that slowly widened until it was quite large enough to float the submarine and allow it to submerge.

At once every man was at his task. The submarine moved slowly toward the water. There followed a dip, a great splash, a wild "Hurrah!" and five minutes later they were once more on their way to the Pole.

But, during this time, Dave's active mind had been working on another problem, which might appear to have been settled, but had not been: the drift of the floe. If the ice did not pile when the floes came together, why was it? It seemed to him there could be but one answer; other water-channels beyond the drift, under which they now traveled, were being closed by counter-currents. And if they closed, one after the other, more rapidly than the advance of the submarine, what was finally to become of the submarine crew? Would they not perish for lack of air? Dave did not share the cheerful mood of the Doctor and the crew; it was his turn to look worried.

Many hours later, his worst fears having been realized, he found himself again in the little room of many wheels and dials. Hour after hour they had shot beneath the varying surface of the floe, but not for one hopeful second had they caught the dark shadow of open water. As near as he could reckon, allowing for the ever-present currents, Dave believed they were nearing the Pole. But his brain was now throbbing as if a hundred trip-hammers were pounding upon it. Moments alone would tell the tale, for the oxygen in the air was exhausted. Already half the crew were unconscious; others were reeling like drunken men. The Doctor had been the first to succumb to the poison of polluted air.

In this crisis Dave was not alone at the wheel. The Eskimo boy, Azazruk, was by his side. It was for just such a time as this that he had taught the bright young native something of the control of the mechanism.

Each wheel of the operating devices was numbered. He had taught the Eskimo a formula by pains-taking repetition.

"If ever the time comes when all are sick, no one can move but you," he had said

many times, "and if at that time you see black waters above, act quickly. One—seven—ten—three—five, remember that. One wheel at a time, quickly but surely; one—seven—ten—three—five."

"One—seven—ten—three—five," the Eskimo boy had faithfully repeated after him, and rolled his eyes half in amusement and half in terror.

"Wheel one is for rise, seven for fans, ten to stop, three to lift the outer-hatch, five the inner-hatch," Dave had explained. "But you only need to remember one—seven—ten—three—five."

Somehow, Dave had come to believe that this hardy young Alaskan, reared as he had been, under perfect conditions of food, air, light and exercise, could, if the test ever came, survive his civilized companions.

Now, as he reeled and a great wave of dizzy sickness came over him, while he sank to the floor, Dave was glad he had taught Azazruk; for the boy, with a strange, strained look of terror in his eye, stood still at the wheel.

Dimly he felt, rather than saw, a dark shadow pass over them. As in a dream he whispered the magic formula:

"One—seven—ten—three—five."

Faintly he heard the grind of the wheels, felt the fan's breath on his cheek, then all was lost in unconsciousness.

* * * * *

After ten solid hours of sleep the airplane party awoke to find their dogs whining and pawing at the entrance to their shelter.

"Guess they're hungry," said Barney, rubbing his eyes sleepily. "Now if we could only locate a seal in some water-hole, it would help out our scanty supply of food."

"Suppose we try," said Bruce, slipping into his skin garments and looking to his rifle.

"All right," said Barney, and without delay they were hurrying to a pressure

ridge of ice from whose top they might hope to locate the nearest water-lead. This took them some distance from their camp, but since the air was still and the moon flooded everything with light as of day, this did not worry them.

They had reached the height, and were scanning the long lead of water something like a mile to the left of them, when Bruce gave a cry of surprise, and, pointing to the south end of the lead, exclaimed:

"What's that immense black thing rising from the water? Can't be a whale up here, can it?"

"Impossible! And, look! There's something rising from the center of it! It can't be—yes—it is! It's the submarine!"

Barney tumbled from the ice ridge and went sprinting away over the ice. His boyhood pal, Dave Tower, was on that submarine.

With greater deliberation, Bruce attracted the attention of the Major. Together they hurried after their companion.

The sight that met their eyes as they reached the edge of the water-channel filled them with consternation. The Eskimo boy and Barney were hurriedly carrying limp, motionless forms from the submarine into the outer air.

Their worst fears were groundless, however, for after two hours of faithful work they restored the last one of the crew to consciousness. The last to recover was the Doctor.

"Which goes to prove," smiled Dave, "that when you most need a doctor, that's the time he's most likely to be sick."

There was a moment of joyful reunion between the two pals, Barney and Dave. As for the explorers, after the danger had passed, they seemed to take little notice of one another.

The Doctor soon was able to rise unsteadily, and, supported by two of his men, he dragged himself back and forth across the ice. When, at last, he had full possession of his faculties, he suddenly darted into the submarine, reappearing a moment later with instruments.

At sight of these, the Major's attention once more turned to the task he had left. With backs turned, not twenty yards apart, the two great rivals began taking observations. Carefully they spread lines of mercury for an artificial horizon, and painstakingly adjusting their instruments, began to take readings. Then, turning to their nautical almanacs, they figured. For some time an awed silence fell on the little group. Presently the two men rose, facing one another. Smiles played about their lips. For a second they stood thus, then starting toward each other, they extended hands for a clasp—the grip of a mutual admiration.

"Gentlemen," said the Major, the huskiness in his voice betraying his emotion, "we are now within five miles of the Pole, and that is as close an observation as any man can hope to make."

"Might as well call it the Pole," smiled the Doctor. "I make it three miles."

For a time silence again reigned, then it was Dave who spoke.

"So this is the Pole!" he exclaimed. "Well, then, it's time for a bit of jazz. Bring on your instruments of torture."

Jazz always was imperfect music, and here, with untutored musicians and rude instruments, it was imperfection itself; but it is doubtful if any music ever soothed unstrung nerves as did this bit of jazz that rent the midnight silence at the top of the world.

The applause which followed awakened echoes among the ice-piles, and sent a lone doveky away into the shadows.

"Well," said the Doctor, as the echoes of the last burst of jazz died away, "Major, I suppose we are to have the pleasure of your company on our return journey. Am I right?"

"I am afraid so," the Major smiled a bit wanly. "Guess our plane is at last beyond repair."

"But I say," ejaculated Barney, "you can stow the remains of our plane somewhere below, can't you?"

"Why—er—yes," smiled the Doctor. "We've considerable space now, since using the fuel and food. But why freight the junk? What's the grand idea?"

"I think we can get a bunch of sled-timber and canvas from the whalers at Point Barrow and rig her up again."

"Why? You'll be welcome to come with us all the way."

"Bruce here, and I," began Barney, and Bruce grinned at the mention of his name, "have a very special mission that takes us cross-country rather than by water. Much as we should like to accept your kind invitation, our mission makes the other route imperative, if it is at all possible to take it."

He told them the story of La Vaune, of Timmie and the ancient pay-roll.

"That being the case," agreed the Doctor, "I shall be glad to assist you by freighting your plane to Point Barrow, and I now release my entire crew to help you in demounting it and bringing it to the submarine."

As the gobs joined the two young aviators in a wild race across the ice-floes, with Jarvis straining after them, the Major turned a smiling face toward the Doctor, as he remarked:

"As fine a bunch as I ever saw."

"You're right," said the Doctor, "and deserving of a rich reward."

"Speaking of rewards," said the Major quickly, "how about that ten thousand which comes to some of us? I had promised it to my boys, had I won."

"And I the same," smiled the Doctor.

"The puzzle is, who's won!"

"Suppose we split, fifty-fifty, and, following our original plan, each give his share to his boys."

"Splendid! Just the right thing!" exclaimed the Major.

"It's a go!" The Doctor grasped the Major's hand.

And this was the glad news that awaited the men as they returned, some dragging poles, some carrying rolls of canvas, while others urged, pushed and

pulled at the dog-team drawing a sled on which was loaded the Liberty motor. To the aviators was to go five thousand dollars; to the jackies, five thousand.

"Nothing of the kind!" exclaimed Bruce indignantly.

"I should say nix!" echoed Barney.

"Why, what could be fairer?" said the Doctor, a puzzled look on his face.

"Why," Barney declared, feeling sure he was also speaking for his partner; "we each get two thousand five hundred, and your men who have worked as hard and risked as much, each get a fraction of that sum. I say, nothing doing. Share and share alike, man for man, them's my sentiments. Get out your pencil and see how many times ten goes in ten thousand. A thousand times? A thousand apiece, that's something like! Enough to have a whale of a good time on, or buy a farm. Pay your money and take your choice. Step up, gents, and try your luck!"

When the gobs realized that this wild harangue meant that the aviators wished to split the whole reward with them, they were at first urgent in protest, and, when this availed them nothing, they went wild with cheers for the true sports of the aviation department.

Of course this all called for another burst of jazz, after which came the work of packing away the parts of the airplane, in which task the gobs showed an enthusiasm which told better than shouts what they thought of the young aviators.

After the stars and stripes had been planted on a high ice-pinnacle, a rather solemn supper was eaten in the lee of a giant ice-cake. Then, with the jazz band playing "Star Spangled Banner," the submarine sank and the homeward journey was begun.

A fortunate voyage brought them to Point Barrow in sixty-eight hours. There the aviators found the supplies they needed, and began at once preparing for the overland trip. The Doctor and the Major decided to proceed down the coast by dog-team to Cape Prince of Wales, where they would catch the first boat in the Spring. The submarine crew were put "on their own" and instructed to follow down the coast in a safe and leisurely fashion, to report their arrival at the naval station in Seattle.

Bruce and Barney succeeded in rigging out the plane in a very satisfactory manner, and one day in early Spring they again alighted in Timmie's stubble, much to the joy of the entire family. And a few days later they made a landing in the old athletic field of Brandon college, where a very happy girl, who had been watching the plane with a wistful eye, came rushing out to meet them.

When Bruce pressed into her hand a package, and told her of its contents, tears came to her eyes—tears of joy that her struggles were over, but also tears of thankfulness for the safe return of those who had done so much for her.

The submarine crew arrived in Seattle in due time. There, before they separated for a long leave, which was sure to be followed by honorable discharge, five of them agreed to pool their share of the prize money to charter a craft, preferably a submarine, and go in search of the treasure city of Siberia. There was talk, too, of an attempt to induce Bruce and Barney to join them on the expedition, as an airplane, which could be stowed in the submarine when not in use, would be of inestimable service to them.

Bruce and Barney in due time collected the reward offered for the destruction of the outlaw wireless station.

As for the Major and the Doctor, there is still much speculation in many quarters as to their identity. And, as for myself, I am not able to add any information on the subject.

* * * * *

The solving of the mystery of the City of Gold was, at last, left to David Tower and Jarvis. The story of this adventure will be told in the next volume of the Snell Mystery Stories for Boys series which will be entitled "Panther-Eye."

Produced by Juliet Sutherland, Mary Meehan and the Online Distributed Proofreading Team.

*** START: FULL LICENSE ***

THE FULL PROJECT GUTENBERG LICENSE PLEASE READ THIS BEFORE YOU DISTRIBUTE OR USE THIS WORK

To protect the Project Gutenberg-tm mission of promoting the free distribution of electronic works, by using or distributing this work (or any other work associated in any way with the phrase "Project Gutenberg"), you agree to comply with all the terms of the Full Project Gutenberg-tm License (available with this file or online at http://gutenberg.net/license).

Section 1. General Terms of Use and Redistributing Project Gutenberg-tm electronic works

1.A. By reading or using any part of this Project Gutenberg-tm electronic work, you indicate that you have read, understand, agree to and accept all the terms of this license and intellectual property (trademark/copyright) agreement. If you do not agree to abide by all the terms of this agreement, you must cease using and return or destroy all copies of Project Gutenberg-tm electronic works in your possession. If you paid a fee for obtaining a copy of or access to a Project Gutenberg-tm electronic work and you do not agree to be bound by the terms of this agreement, you may obtain a refund from the person or entity to whom you paid the fee as set forth in paragraph 1.E.8.

1.B. "Project Gutenberg" is a registered trademark. It may only be used on or associated in any way with an electronic work by people who agree to be bound by the terms of this agreement. There are a few things that you can do with most Project Gutenberg-tm electronic works even without complying with the full terms of this agreement. See paragraph 1.C below. There are a lot of things you can do with Project Gutenberg-tm electronic works if you follow the terms of this agreement and help preserve free future access to Project Gutenberg-tm electronic works. See paragraph 1.E below.

1.C. The Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation ("the Foundation" or PGLAF), owns a compilation copyright in the collection of Project Gutenberg-

tm electronic works. Nearly all the individual works in the collection are in the public domain in the United States. If an individual work is in the public domain in the United States and you are located in the United States, we do not claim a right to prevent you from copying, distributing, performing, displaying or creating derivative works based on the work as long as all references to Project Gutenberg are removed. Of course, we hope that you will support the Project Gutenberg-tm mission of promoting free access to electronic works by freely sharing Project Gutenberg-tm works in compliance with the terms of this agreement for keeping the Project Gutenberg-tm name associated with the work. You can easily comply with the terms of this agreement by keeping this work in the same format with its attached full Project Gutenberg-tm License when you share it without charge with others.

1.D. The copyright laws of the place where you are located also govern what you can do with this work. Copyright laws in most countries are in a constant state of change. If you are outside the United States, check the laws of your country in addition to the terms of this agreement before downloading, copying, displaying, performing, distributing or creating derivative works based on this work or any other Project Gutenberg-tm work. The Foundation makes no representations concerning the copyright status of any work in any country outside the United States.

1.E. Unless you have removed all references to Project Gutenberg:

1.E.1. The following sentence, with active links to, or other immediate access to, the full Project Gutenberg-tm License must appear prominently whenever any copy of a Project Gutenberg-tm work (any work on which the phrase "Project Gutenberg" appears, or with which the phrase "Project Gutenberg" is associated) is accessed, displayed, performed, viewed, copied or distributed:

This eBook is for the use of anyone anywhere at no cost and with almost no restrictions whatsoever. You may copy it, give it away or re-use it under the terms of the Project Gutenberg License included with this eBook or online at www.gutenberg.net

1.E.2. If an individual Project Gutenberg-tm electronic work is derived from the public domain (does not contain a notice indicating that it is posted with permission of the copyright holder), the work can be copied and distributed to anyone in the United States without paying any fees or charges. If you are

redistributing or providing access to a work with the phrase "Project Gutenberg" associated with or appearing on the work, you must comply either with the requirements of paragraphs 1.E.1 through 1.E.7 or obtain permission for the use of the work and the Project Gutenberg-tm trademark as set forth in paragraphs 1.E.8 or 1.E.9.

1.E.3. If an individual Project Gutenberg-tm electronic work is posted with the permission of the copyright holder, your use and distribution must comply with both paragraphs 1.E.1 through 1.E.7 and any additional terms imposed by the copyright holder. Additional terms will be linked to the Project Gutenberg-tm License for all works posted with the permission of the copyright holder found at the beginning of this work.

1.E.4. Do not unlink or detach or remove the full Project Gutenberg-tm License terms from this work, or any files containing a part of this work or any other work associated with Project Gutenberg-tm.

1.E.5. Do not copy, display, perform, distribute or redistribute this electronic work, or any part of this electronic work, without prominently displaying the sentence set forth in paragraph 1.E.1 with active links or immediate access to the full terms of the Project Gutenberg-tm License.

1.E.6. You may convert to and distribute this work in any binary, compressed, marked up, nonproprietary or proprietary form, including any word processing or hypertext form. However, if you provide access to or distribute copies of a Project Gutenberg-tm work in a format other than "Plain Vanilla ASCII" or other format used in the official version posted on the official Project Gutenberg-tm web site (www.gutenberg.net), you must, at no additional cost, fee or expense to the user, provide a copy, a means of exporting a copy, or a means of obtaining a copy upon request, of the work in its original "Plain Vanilla ASCII" or other form. Any alternate format must include the full Project Gutenberg-tm License as specified in paragraph 1.E.1.

1.E.7. Do not charge a fee for access to, viewing, displaying, performing, copying or distributing any Project Gutenberg-tm works unless you comply with paragraph 1.E.8 or 1.E.9.

1.E.8. You may charge a reasonable fee for copies of or providing access to or distributing Project Gutenberg-tm electronic works provided that

- You pay a royalty fee of 20% of the gross profits you derive from the use of Project Gutenberg-tm works calculated using the method you already use to calculate your applicable taxes. The fee is owed to the owner of the Project Gutenberg-tm trademark, but he has agreed to donate royalties under this paragraph to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation. Royalty payments must be paid within 60 days following each date on which you prepare (or are legally required to prepare) your periodic tax returns. Royalty payments should be clearly marked as such and sent to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation at the address specified in Section 4, "Information about donations to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation."

- You provide a full refund of any money paid by a user who notifies you in writing (or by e-mail) within 30 days of receipt that s/he does not agree to the terms of the full Project Gutenberg-tm License. You must require such a user to return or destroy all copies of the works possessed in a physical medium and discontinue all use of and all access to other copies of Project Gutenberg-tm works.

- You provide, in accordance with paragraph 1.F.3, a full refund of any money paid for a work or a replacement copy, if a defect in the electronic work is discovered and reported to you within 90 days of receipt of the work.

- You comply with all other terms of this agreement for free distribution of Project Gutenberg-tm works.

1.E.9. If you wish to charge a fee or distribute a Project Gutenberg-tm electronic work or group of works on different terms than are set forth in this agreement, you must obtain permission in writing from both the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation and Michael Hart, the owner of the Project Gutenberg-tm trademark. Contact the Foundation as set forth in Section 3 below.

1.F.

1.F.1. Project Gutenberg volunteers and employees expend considerable effort to identify, do copyright research on, transcribe and proofread public domain works in creating the Project Gutenberg-tm collection. Despite these efforts, Project Gutenberg-tm electronic works, and the medium on which they may be stored, may contain "Defects," such as, but not limited to, incomplete, inaccurate or corrupt data, transcription errors, a copyright or other intellectual property

infringement, a defective or damaged disk or other medium, a computer virus, or computer codes that damage or cannot be read by your equipment.

1.F.2. LIMITED WARRANTY, DISCLAIMER OF DAMAGES - Except for the "Right of Replacement or Refund" described in paragraph 1.F.3, the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation, the owner of the Project Gutenberg-tm trademark, and any other party distributing a Project Gutenberg-tm electronic work under this agreement, disclaim all liability to you for damages, costs and expenses, including legal fees. YOU AGREE THAT YOU HAVE NO REMEDIES FOR NEGLIGENCE, STRICT LIABILITY, BREACH OF WARRANTY OR BREACH OF CONTRACT EXCEPT THOSE PROVIDED IN PARAGRAPH F3. YOU AGREE THAT THE FOUNDATION, THE TRADEMARK OWNER, AND ANY DISTRIBUTOR UNDER THIS AGREEMENT WILL NOT BE LIABLE TO YOU FOR ACTUAL, DIRECT, INDIRECT, CONSEQUENTIAL, PUNITIVE OR INCIDENTAL DAMAGES EVEN IF YOU GIVE NOTICE OF THE POSSIBILITY OF SUCH DAMAGE.

1.F.3. LIMITED RIGHT OF REPLACEMENT OR REFUND - If you discover a defect in this electronic work within 90 days of receiving it, you can receive a refund of the money (if any) you paid for it by sending a written explanation to the person you received the work from. If you received the work on a physical medium, you must return the medium with your written explanation. The person or entity that provided you with the defective work may elect to provide a replacement copy in lieu of a refund. If you received the work electronically, the person or entity providing it to you may choose to give you a second opportunity to receive the work electronically in lieu of a refund. If the second copy is also defective, you may demand a refund in writing without further opportunities to fix the problem.

1.F.4. Except for the limited right of replacement or refund set forth in paragraph 1.F.3, this work is provided to you 'AS-IS," WITH NO OTHER WARRANTIES OF ANY KIND, EXPRESS OR IMPLIED, INCLUDING BUT NOT LIMITED TO WARRANTIES OF MERCHANTIBILITY OR FITNESS FOR ANY PURPOSE.

1.F.5. Some states do not allow disclaimers of certain implied warranties or the exclusion or limitation of certain types of damages. If any disclaimer or limitation set forth in this agreement violates the law of the state applicable to this agreement, the agreement shall be interpreted to make the maximum

disclaimer or limitation permitted by the applicable state law. The invalidity or unenforceability of any provision of this agreement shall not void the remaining provisions.

1.F.6. INDEMNITY - You agree to indemnify and hold the Foundation, the trademark owner, any agent or employee of the Foundation, anyone providing copies of Project Gutenberg-tm electronic works in accordance with this agreement, and any volunteers associated with the production, promotion and distribution of Project Gutenberg-tm electronic works, harmless from all liability, costs and expenses, including legal fees, that arise directly or indirectly from any of the following which you do or cause to occur: (a) distribution of this or any Project Gutenberg-tm work, (b) alteration, modification, or additions or deletions to any Project Gutenberg-tm work, and (c) any Defect you cause.

Section 2. Information about the Mission of Project Gutenberg-tm

Project Gutenberg-tm is synonymous with the free distribution of electronic works in formats readable by the widest variety of computers including obsolete, old, middle-aged and new computers. It exists because of the efforts of hundreds of volunteers and donations from people in all walks of life.

Volunteers and financial support to provide volunteers with the assistance they need, is critical to reaching Project Gutenberg-tm's goals and ensuring that the Project Gutenberg-tm collection will remain freely available for generations to come. In 2001, the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation was created to provide a secure and permanent future for Project Gutenberg-tm and future generations. To learn more about the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation and how your efforts and donations can help, see Sections 3 and 4 and the Foundation web page at http://www.pglaf.org.

Section 3. Information about the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation

The Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation is a non profit 501(c)(3) educational corporation organized under the laws of the state of Mississippi and granted tax exempt status by the Internal Revenue Service. The Foundation's EIN or federal tax identification number is 64-6221541. Its 501(c)(3) letter is

posted at http://pglaf.org/fundraising. Contributions to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation are tax deductible to the full extent permitted by U.S. federal laws and your state's laws.

The Foundation's principal office is located at 4557 Melan Dr. S. Fairbanks, AK, 99712., but its volunteers and employees are scattered throughout numerous locations. Its business office is located at 809 North 1500 West, Salt Lake City, UT 84116, (801) 596-1887, email business@pglaf.org. Email contact links and up to date contact information can be found at the Foundation's web site and official page at http://pglaf.org

For additional contact information:
Dr. Gregory B. Newby
Chief Executive and Director
gbnewby@pglaf.org

Section 4. Information about Donations to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation

Project Gutenberg-tm depends upon and cannot survive without wide spread public support and donations to carry out its mission of increasing the number of public domain and licensed works that can be freely distributed in machine readable form accessible by the widest array of equipment including outdated equipment. Many small donations ($1 to $5,000) are particularly important to maintaining tax exempt status with the IRS.

The Foundation is committed to complying with the laws regulating charities and charitable donations in all 50 states of the United States. Compliance requirements are not uniform and it takes a considerable effort, much paperwork and many fees to meet and keep up with these requirements. We do not solicit donations in locations where we have not received written confirmation of compliance. To SEND DONATIONS or determine the status of compliance for any particular state visit http://pglaf.org

While we cannot and do not solicit contributions from states where we have not met the solicitation requirements, we know of no prohibition against accepting unsolicited donations from donors in such states who approach us with offers to donate.

International donations are gratefully accepted, but we cannot make any

statements concerning tax treatment of donations received from outside the United States. U.S. laws alone swamp our small staff.

Please check the Project Gutenberg Web pages for current donation methods and addresses. Donations are accepted in a number of other ways including including checks, online payments and credit card donations. To donate, please visit: http://pglaf.org/donate

Section 5. General Information About Project Gutenberg-tm electronic works.

Professor Michael S. Hart is the originator of the Project Gutenberg-tm concept of a library of electronic works that could be freely shared with anyone. For thirty years, he produced and distributed Project Gutenberg-tm eBooks with only a loose network of volunteer support.

Project Gutenberg-tm eBooks are often created from several printed editions, all of which are confirmed as Public Domain in the U.S. unless a copyright notice is included. Thus, we do not necessarily keep eBooks in compliance with any particular paper edition.

Each eBook is in a subdirectory of the same number as the eBook's eBook number, often in several formats including plain vanilla ASCII, compressed (zipped), HTML and others.

Corrected EDITIONS of our eBooks replace the old file and take over the old filename and etext number. The replaced older file is renamed. VERSIONS based on separate sources are treated as new eBooks receiving new filenames and etext numbers.

Most people start at our Web site which has the main PG search facility:

http://www.gutenberg.net

This Web site includes information about Project Gutenberg-tm, including how to make donations to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation, how to help produce our new eBooks, and how to subscribe to our email newsletter to hear about new eBooks.

EBooks posted prior to November 2003, with eBook numbers BELOW #10000, are filed in directories based on their release date. If you want to download any of these eBooks directly, rather than using the regular search system you may utilize the following addresses and just download by the etext year.

http://www.gutenberg.net/etext06

(Or /etext 05, 04, 03, 02, 01, 00, 99,
98, 97, 96, 95, 94, 93, 92, 92, 91 or 90)

EBooks posted since November 2003, with etext numbers OVER #10000, are filed in a different way. The year of a release date is no longer part of the directory path. The path is based on the etext number (which is identical to the filename). The path to the file is made up of single digits corresponding to all but the last digit in the filename. For example an eBook of filename 10234 would be found at:

http://www.gutenberg.net/1/0/2/3/10234

or filename 24689 would be found at: http://www.gutenberg.net/2/4/6/8/24689

An alternative method of locating eBooks:
http://www.gutenberg.net/GUTINDEX.ALL