

cannot get to them. The boats trap some in the winter when they can catch more fish than they need, they sell the fish and run to the river town stores, or rather trade them for the few supplies they need.

The most of the Indian villages are very old. The log cabins are rotting down and vegetation grows a foot high from the dirt roofs. They live in horribly filthy conditions. The boats never stop at the Indian towns.

The purser told me that the boat would go thru Five Finger Rapids and Hell's Pass at about two o'clock in the morning, so I set my mental alarm clock for that hour and was on deck. I wanted to see these two dreadful spots where so many men lost their outfits and lives during the mad rush down the river to Nome, when news of the big strike came up.

It was light at two o'clock—in fact it is always light above Dawson in mid-summer—and I stood at the head of the steamer (we were pushing a scow) and had a fine view of the rapids before we reached them.

They are rightly named, for they spread out like the fingers of a hand. Four of the channels mean rocks and wreck. One of them, the thumb, is safe. And I thought of the days when gold-mad men came down the river in a continuous string, riding frail boats, rafts—anything that would float. And they carried with them their all, the grub stake and the few necessary tools and bedding. Few of them knew anything about the dangerous rapids, few even knew they were there until they were onto them, and then in a minute they must decide on which channel—and take the chance. However, the most of them instinctively saw that the thumb, the big channel, was the safest pass, and if they got their boats full in the current they were safe. If they did not, they were dashed against the rocks, and they tell me few ever came out alive who were overturned.

Then came Hell's Pass—a place where the Yukon runs down hill for a short distance. It was a seamy rapids to look at even from a steamer's deck. There were no dreaded rocks, but I marveled that any small boat could go thru this whirling, foaming race and not capsize. But they did thousands of them.

And after I had seen these two rapids (and by the way, the only ones between White Horse and Nome, 2200 miles) I quit finding fault with the mosquitoes and the slow eight-mile speed of the boat.

About every twenty-four hours the boat tied up at a wood camp for wood, and it takes a long time for the deck hands to carry enough of the four-foot sticks on board to last to the next camp.

At Woodchoppers' creek, about 50 miles over the line in Alaska, we stopped early in the morning to "wood up" and wait for the fog to lift. I was about the only passenger up. The captain told me the boat would be there for two hours at least and if I wanted to stretch my legs I would find a good trail back of the wood pile that led to a deserted cabin, half a mile down. I hiked.

It was a miner's cabin logs with floor of whipsawed lumber. The old stove was there, the rough benches, table, bunk and other odds and ends. It was at the end of a draw, where a little stream ran down the valley and emptied into the Yukon. The deserted mine was back from the shore and I did not have time to go to it.

And now for the story—the captain told it to me. Two prospectors struck a prospect in the summer that looked good, so they built the cabin, caught fish and prepared for winter. It was late in summer before they had winter preparations made, and would go on with the prospect. They struck bed rock at 100 feet and found a wonderfully rich pocket. They worked it out, hauled down other notes, but never another sign of color, the case of them being taken away, abandoned the place and returned to Dawson.

Now for the rest of the story—or rather the other version.

As the boat passed the deserted cabin, a lady pointed to a peculiar looking cache on top of a platform just below the cabin and asked a miner what it was. In the fog I had not noticed this when I was at the cabin. It looked from the boat as if a kyaek (skin canoe) had been put up there and wound with an old tent. But the miner said it was a dead body, now only a skeleton, and had been there four or five years. He said the sick man died in camp, his partner put him on the meat cache and beat it down the ice.

I afterwards asked the pilot of the story was true. "That's the tale; I don't know. But it is the truth that you can't get an Indian woodchopper to get anywhere near the cabin," he answered.

I have no doubt but that it was true, and that under that old canvass is the skeleton remains of a man, and that some father or mother outside is waiting and hoping for news of a venturesome boy—news that will never come. Alaska is full of such tragedies.

Anywhere there is a white man the boat will stop—that is if he has sent out for a box of freight-grub. Often his cabin will be where the river is shallow, then he has to row out with a boat and get it.

At one place we stopped and tied up to put ashore a little bunch of provisions. There was one lonesome cabin, new, a half dozen "husky" dogs and the usual meat house. A man and his wife lived there, and they were mining right on the river bank. He was about 45, she about 60. They had cut down a piece about 30 feet square to the water's level. They had a rocker and a sluice. The dirt was shoveled in and then water dipped up from the river and poured in—one of the hardest and slowest possible ways of mining.

I asked the old lady how it was panning out. "Oh, just fair," she replied, but it is worth \$18 an ounce." And then she looked at me a minute and exclaimed: "Oh, it is so lonesome, so lonesome here." And if ever I felt heart-felt sorrow and sincere pity, I experienced it when the boat pulled out and I saw this pitiful old lady standing on the bank with a great wish in her heart—a yearning for her kind.

Five years ago rabbits were so thick all over Alaska one could kill them with stones. To-day not a one will be seen in a week's travel. Why, none can tell. Some say they were all frozen to death. And with the disappearance of the rabbits, the owls, eagles, wolves and other animals and birds they preyed on for food, have disappeared, and with the exception of the bear, the North Land woods are silent of animal and bird life—silent of any kind of life, depopulated, dead.

The next letter will be from Fort Yukon, north of the Arctic Circle in the Land of the Midnight Sun.

Sign Boards on the Up-road

By Hamilton B. Williams

Religion Is Friendship

Hardly any autobiography will have as much interest for students of religious and social progress as "Recollections," by Rev. Washington Gladden, D. D. At the close of the book Dr. Gladden sums up the lessons of this exceptionally comprehensive experience of life in these somewhat striking words: "I am fain to believe that the time is drawing near when the Christian Church will be able to discern and declare the simple truth that religion is nothing but friendship; friendship with God and with men."

"Dr. Gladden has here put in concise statement what has been in our minds for a long time, that religion is a relationship, rather than an intellectual assent. Theology must move in the realm of thought and intellect, for it is a science, a noble science, the noblest there is. It is the unification of our knowledge thru experience of God. But religion itself is a relationship between God and man; and man and man. The difference between Calvin's Institutes and the Gospels lies right here. The first is theology; that is, it is an attempt to interpret the experience of God in scientific form and unity. The latter is religion; that is, the Gospels are simply the story of a relationship existing between God and man, and man and his brothers."

"All religions are based on relationships. The thing that differentiates Christianity from all the others is the nature of this relationship and the broadening of its scope. The Greek was related to God as subject to a pitiless monarch. The Hebrew was related to God as a glad servant of a just and merciful judge, a great step upward in religion. But Christianity went immeasurably further, and lifted the relationship up on to the

plane of friendship between God and man. As Jesus, who was the visible symbol of God to His disciples, said to them, in words that mark the birth of a new religion, "Henceforth I call you not servants, for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth, but I have called you friends." But Christianity went a step further, and extended this relationship to cover all human intercourse. Religion is friendship between man and man as much as between God and man. The sermon on the Mount is as explicit on one side as the other. Half of it deals with God and man; the other half with man and man. Indeed, that the new relationship shall cover man's attitude toward his fellow-man is a corollary of the new relationship to God. One who is a subject of God may not feel bound to other men, for they are only subjects. But one who becomes a friend of God must, in the nature of the case, be friends with his brothers. For they, too, are friends of God; therefore his friends. Therefore the moment Jesus says, "Henceforth ye are my friends," he says that they must love one another.

"Religion, then, is relationship, not creed. Christianity is friendship with God and man. How simple it all is! Who does not know what it is to be a friend and have a friend. Now, to be a Christian is simply to accept God's offer of his friendship and extend one's own friendship thru-out all human relationships, till one has good-will to all men. To be a Christian is to work all one's life in company with the Great Companion, the Good Comrade, the Unchanging Lover of our souls, who is nearer than nearest friend, who inspires our noblest impulses, and smiles upon our heroic endeavor. To be a Christian is to have the same friendship toward him he has to us, to be in harmony with all his purposes, to

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make his will our own, to take every new step in conscious fellowship with him. How simple, but how divine. Can anyone feel that religion to Jesus was anything but this, this friendship with his Father? Turning to the manward side, to be a Christian is to be friends with everybody and undertake every human relationship in the spirit of friendship.

"We are greatly hoping that the churches are going to soon return to this simple conception of religion given it by its Founder, as friendship between God and man, and man and man. We believe that means the tenfold increased power of the church in the world, and the winning to it now outside its walls. We also believe that when the church begins emphasizing this truth, which is ethical, instead of doctrinalism, to which, while true, are fundamental-

ally philosophical or rather than ethical, there is a great revival of religion, we see some of the logical implications of this truth. Such will pass away, for then of membership is going to relationship which is based on which there will be complete unanimity. An friendship with God and that differences have ever

Everybody is agreed on ship. The moment they become friendship they hold the same religion, differences would make. Then would come the power natural to a united and the energy now spent in denominationalism would be turned into promoting between God and man, and men, and the united would face the evil world irresistible body. It is aationalism that keeps out good men."

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