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End of the Corwin’s Cruise in the Arctic Ocean.

Elephant Point—A Fossil Glacier and its Exuberant Vegetation.

Shipwrecked Prospects—An Alaskan Silver Mine and Glaciation Scenery.

**VOLUME LIII-NUMBER 13**

**HOMEWARD BOUND.**

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Read by the author, Oct. 31, 1881.

On the home voyage, all the hard, Arctic work done, the Corwin stopped one week at the head of Kotzebue Sound, near Grinnell Island, to seek a fresh supply of water and wood, some needed repairs and observations, during which time I had a capital opportunity to examine the curious and interesting ice formations of the shores of Eyakhoa Bay. I found ice in some form or other at intervals of from a mile to a few yards across on the tide-rashed face of the shore-ice on both sides of the bay, a distance of about fifty miles. But it is only the most conspicuous ones forming a shingle, as at Elephant Point, on the south side of the bay, that seems to have been observed historically, or attracted much attention.

Elephant Point—Strategic Position.

This Elephant Point, so called from the four elephant tusk bugs found here, is a bluff of solid ice, 140 feet high, covered on the top with a dense growth of ordinary tundra vegetation, and with tall crags on the terrace and shelving portions of the face wherever the slope is sufficiently steep for relaying and rolling of the round ice to rest upon. It is a solid piece of a fossil fragment of a glacier, facing against the north side of a hill mostly in shadow, and covered lightly with glacial drift from the hill-slopes above it, over which the tundra vegetation has gradually been extended, and which eventually forms a thick, felt-like protection against waste during the summer. Thus it has lasted until now, wasting only on the exposed face facing the bay, which is being constantly undermined by the wave and vegetation on top being precipitated over the face, melting on the ice and washed away by the tide. Were it not that its base is swept by this current, the accumulation of tundra moss and peat would finally rupture the front and check further waste. As it is, the formation will not last much longer—probably not more than a thousand or fifteen hundred years. Its present age is perhaps more than this.

Walking along the base of the formation, which is about a mile or so in length, unlike one's way over piles of rotten humus and through slippery bog mud of the accumulation of watery porous, mixed with houses of elephants, bullocks and muck moss, etc., lies a closely packed, glittering sheet of a glacier, with its jagged projecting ridges, and eddies, and winding dipping windings, that it is not easy to realize that it is not one to ordinary action. Mingle with the true glacier ice we notice masses of dirty stratified ice, made up of thin layers alternating with pieces of moss and sand, and mixed with bits of humus and sphagnum, and of iness and stems of the various plants growing on the sward above. This dirty ice of peculiar stratification never blends into the glacier ice, but is simply frozen upon it, filling cavities or spreading over slopes here and there. It is formed by the freezing of slimy war and dirty water from the broken edge of the ice, in a process going on every spring and autumn, when frosts and thaws succeed each other rapidly and continually, cloudy days and rainy days. This, of course, is of comparatively recent age, even the oldest of it.

**BARENESS-GROWTH OF VEGETATION.**

A striking result of the thawing up and air drying of the tundra soil is seen on the face of the ice slopes and terraces. When the undisturbed tundra material falls down upon portions of the ice front where it can come to rest, it is well bedded and stained, and frequently lies upright down as if turned with a spade. Here it is well drained through cutting into melting ice, and though not more than a foot or two in thickness, it produces a remarkably close and tall growth of grass, from one to two feet high, and such as had been used as hay by the farmer's field. Cut for hay it would make about four or five tons per acre. Only a few other plants that would be called weeds are found growing among the grass, mostly a sandhue and astrantia, both tall and exuberant, showing the effects of this way of cultivation on this strange soil. The vegetation on top of the bluff is the most beautiful that I have yet seen, not rank and cultivated, looking like ferns on the face slopes, but growing the best and most delicate bony of wildness, in forms, combinations and colors of leaf, stem and fruit; there were red, and yellow dwarf thistle, and asters, and willow, and purple heathberry, with lovely grasses and sedges. The natural state of the heaths are intensely beautiful: not a square yard but would make a charming picture, and not a particle of dust on it, as pure and fresh as if not crowded.
with shaded sides like apples, put on its diastole the end of shilling glassy
alabaster, with delicate blue bloom on their
cheeks; black cranberries and minute bear
berries in large clusters, the young nearly one
and grown, wandering over the fruitful wilderness
and reveling in abundance.

I found the shore bight towards the mouth of the
Brocklebank River—about from force to sixty
feet high, with a regular slope of about thirty
degrees, and covered with willows and alders,
some of them five or six feet high, and long
grassy and patches of ice here and there, but
absolutely no large masses. The soil is a fine
blue clay, with water-worn gravel, pebbles and sand above it, like that of the oppo-
site side of the bay, and evidently brought
down by the river streams when the ice of the
glaciers that once covered this river region and that
of the Kickakat was melting.

THE PORTIONS OF A HABITAT.

The ice that I found here and on the opposite
side of the bay, especially where the tundra is
low and flat, vary forty or fifty feet above the
sea, and covered with pools and strips of water,
is not glacier ice, but ice derived from water
freezing in pools and vales and hollows and overgrown with mosses, rhizomes, etc., and after-
wards exposed as fenstones on the surface face
of the tundra where it is being wasted by the
action of the sea. The tundra has been
cracked in every direction, and in looking over
its surface, slight depressions, or some differ-
ence in the vegetation, indicate the location
and extent of the fissures and when these are
traced forward to the edge of the tundra bluff, a cross-section of ice is seen perhaps from two
to four or five feet wide. The larger sections
are simply the exposed sides of those ice vales
that chance to trend in a direction parallel in the
face of the bluff. Besides these I found several
other kinds of ice, differing in origin from the,
freezing, but which can hardly be described in a
mere letter, however interesting at the present

WEATHER PROSPECTORS AT GALLOU BAY.

At St. Michael's we found a party of wrecked
prospectors from Galloo Bay, who were anx-
iously awaiting the arrival of the Corwin, as
she would be the last vessel leaving for Cali-
forlia this year. This prospecting party consisted
of ten persons, some with genuine Yankee enterprise, and pushed bold
way into the wild wilderness beyond the Yukon
to seek for silver. Specimens of bright ex citing
ores, assaying a hundred and fifty dollars to the
ton, had been exhibited in Oakland, brought
from a mine said to be located near tide-races
at Galloo Bay, Alaska, and so easily worked
that large ships could be loaded with the
ore cheaply about as readily as with common
ballast. Therefore a company, called the
Alaska Mining Company, was organized, the
subsidiary W. F. Marcus chartered, and with the
necessary supplies a party of ten sailed (from
San Francisco May 5, 1883), for Galloo Bay to
explore this mine in particular, and the region in general, and intending to return this fall with
a cargo of ore.

They arrived in Galloo Bay June 1884; lost
their vessel in a gale on the north side of the
bay August 1885, and arrived by twenty-one
days at St. Michael's in canoes and a boat that
was saved from the wreck. They found the
mines as rich as represented, but far less acces-
sible; it is said to be about thirty miles from
tide-water. All feel confident that they have a
valuable mine. Two or three of the party were
away at the time of the disaster, prospecting for
minerals on the Bazaruto, and are said to be
hunting to pass the winter as best they may at
some of the trading stations.

OUR TWO WEEKS' STAY AT GALLINA.

Our two weeks' stay at Gallaiana has been
pleasant and restful after our long craggy—four-
ten thousand miles altogether up to this point.
The hill slopes and mountains are richly clothed
and fooded looking, and the views about the
harbor, at the close and beginning of storms,
when clouds are writhing, the alpine summits,
are very beautiful.

A few days ago I made an excursion to the
top of a well-rounded volcanic cone at the
mouth of a picturesque glacial flexed, about
eight miles from here, commanding a magnificent
view of the mountains of Gallaiana, Alaska. and adjacent islands.

In the middle of this kil. on Makahaka, 4,000
feet feet high, and laden with glaciers, a grand
sight, far surpassing what I had been led to ex-
pect. An extensive expanse was wrapped
in white clouds, and from beneath those the gla-
ciers were seen descending impressively into
the sun-slate to which a thousand of fifteen
hundred feet of the sea might. This fine moun-
tain, cluttering in its snowy mantle of snow and
ice, and a tangled islet peaks dipping into the
waste sky, and every one of them telling the
work of ice or fire in their forms and sculptures
and the sparkling sea, and long, branching
inches. It is a noble picture to add to the thousand
pictures which have whetted our lives this sum-
mer in the great Northland. Zeno Morning

"Corwin"