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On our final approach to the islands, which we had been observing for some time, we saw
birds of the auks, murres, and gulls, flying over the water. They were almost constantly
enveloped in mist, and we could not see anything of the land. The air was charged with
the smell of the sea, and there was a blinding mist all around. The wind was blowing strong
from the south, and the waves were breaking against the rocks with great force.

We knew that we were nearing the islands, and we began to prepare our small boat for
the journey. We had provisions for several days, and we were determined to explore the
land, if only to see what the vegetation was like.

As we approached, we saw that the islands were covered with thick vegetation, and
there were many small plants and flowers growing on the cliffs. The air was filled with
the sweet smell of the flowers, and we could hear the sound of the waves breaking against
the rocks.

We decided to land and explore the islands, and we rowed our boat to the shore. We
were greeted by a group of the locals, who were friendly and welcoming. They showed
us around the island, and we were amazed by the beauty of the place.

The island was covered in thick vegetation, and there were many small plants and
flowers growing on the cliffs. The air was filled with the sweet smell of the flowers, and
we could hear the sound of the waves breaking against the rocks.
A LONG HUNTING TRIP...  
On cloudy nights it is dark now at midnight. The sun sets before eight o'clock, but because it shines only a few degrees below the horizon, the twilight lasts nearly all night. In a week or two, however, we shall have seven or eight hours of real night, for, of course, the transition from equinox day to day and night is very rapid in these high latitudes. This new order of things will be delightful. A few days ago we saw stars in the twilight, which no so was an exceedingly interesting event after months of starless sky. The glories of the midnight sun in this mysterious polar world are truly enchanting, but not nearly so much as the glories of the real-day sun. Lower latitudes, succeeded by the glories of the north, the deep sky of stars and the grateful change and repose they bring.

THE COURSE IN A BALE.  
After passing through the Strait we had two gray, howling days, with hard winds and rains, and thick fog, through which the Corwin beat her way, or was held lying to, heaving and rolling somewhere between St. Lawrence Island and the Bering, as near as could be made out at the time by dead reckoning, and judging the speed of the northerly current. Living in a gale, enveloped in old fog—that is, fogs that have lasted a long time and prevented the taking of observations for the position of the ship—and with little sea-coons, and variable currents, is anything but pleasant; to say nothing of the tedious discomforts caused by the movements of the vessel, the unceasing sea-caw, reeking, pitching, and complaining. At such times only the gulls, those light-winged rivers of the sea, appear to be patient and comfortable as they gracefully drift and glide over the wild-tossing wave, or circle on easy wing about the ship, tending deftly from side to side, and wavering up and down through the gray, heavy gloom.

RESULTS OF THE NORTHERLY CURRENT.  
On the morning of the 4th, when the fog lifted, we found ourselves far north of our supposed position; the flow of the current to the northward during the two preceding days having been nearly eighty miles. We arrived here about P.M.

THE POINT BARROW-SIGNAL SERVICE CORPS.  
Entering the harbor, we discovered the schooner Golden Fleece lying at anchor, and shortly after a party from her came aboard. The Corwin, which proved to be Lieutenant Bay and his company of Signal Service officers on their way to establish a station at Point Barrow—an island in all. Mr. Bay seems to be the right man for the place. He hopes to be able to get his buildings up and everything put in order before the coming on of winter, making a home in that stern wilderness for three years. Point Barrow is a low, barren spit pointing into the icy ocean, and, before the discovery of Wrangell Land, the northernmost point of the territory of the United States. For many years it was believed to be the north extrem of the American Continent, but the extreme point of the peninsula of Boothia proves to be a few miles farther north than this. At first sight it would seem a lonely time to look forward to—three years in so remote and so severely cold and forbidding a region, generally regarded as the topmost frosted, frigid sled of creation.

ADVENTURE OPPORTUNITIES PRESENTED TO THE ADVENTUROUS SIGNAL SERVICE MEN.  
But, amid all the disadvantages of position, these men have much in their lot that they might well be envied by people dwelling in sultry climates. There is the freshness of their field of research in natural history, the immense number of wild birds that visit this region to molt and rear their young; the fine opportunities they have to study the habits of the reindeer on the tundras, and the magnificent bear among the ice—the master animal of the north. Then there is the chance they have to study the little-known species Equinmus, of which there is a village on the point, numbering about 200 persons. Advantage, too, as I am told, will be taken of the opportunity offered to explore the Colville and Inland Rivers, both of them large streams, the one flowing into the ocean about 128 miles to the east of Point Barrow, the other into Bering Sea through Chatham Inlet and Kotzebue Sound. They are almost entirely unexplored. Some of their upper branches must approach each other, as the Kuparuk meets the Colville and, making a portage, descends the Inland River to Chatham Inlet every year in trade, or at the portage most unites from the other river and trade there. The exploration of these rivers is a very interesting piece of work, and Mr. Bay tells me that he intends making an effort to accomplish it in the coming opportunity. Furthermore, by the way of new discoveries he is ambitious to make something of the Polar Ocean to the northward of his station.
Now, from the fact that a current sets northward past Herald Island, and keeps a long line reaching far beyond Herald Island every summer, while the ice remains jamb ed only a few miles off Point Barrow and Cape Jakut, Siberia, and some years does not leave the shore at all, it would seem that there is a land lying to the east of Wrangel Island, making a strait up which the northerly current flows, while the unknown land prevents any great movement in the ice immediately to the north of the American Continent. As Wrangel Island does the ice opposite Cape Jakut and the coast in its vicinity. Again, migratory birds in large flocks have been seen flying north from Point Barrow in the spring, and returning in the fall. Besides, certain vague reports which claim that land in fact have been in circulation to the effect that land in this direction has been actually seen by a whaler, who was well off shore to the northeastward from Barrow, in an exceptionally open season.

**Intended Exploration for the Undiscovered Land.**

Possibly, with the experience that he will gain among the ice at Point Barrow, and the resources at command in the way of good assistants, skilled native travelers, with good dogs and sleds, etc., Mr. Ray may be able to cross over the ice to this land, if land there be. In any case, whatever journeys may be made, over the ice or over the land, in summer or in winter, some new facts will surely be gained well worth the pains, for no portion of the world is so bare as to yield a rich and precious harvest of divine truth.

**WINTER IN THE ARCTIC—A PRIVILEGED POSTURE.**

Nor will these men be likely to suffer greatly. The winter cold, when salubriously met, in soft hair and fur, is not hard to bear, while in summer it is so warm the Esquimaux children run about naked. The piling up of the ice on the shore in winter and spring must make a magnificent border for a home, and the auroral curtains and the deep northern nights, lasting for weeks, must be glorious.

The Corwin towed the Golden Fleece to sea this morning, and we hope to finish coaling, etc., in a day or two, and set out once more to the shores of Wrangel Island.