

IN THE SHADOW OF SHISHALDIN.

by

Irene Finley

(2)

The camp was peaceful under the dreamy whiteness of Shishaldin, a magnificent cone with a glowing crater like a fish's mouth upturned to the heavens and the ever moving, misty clouds. Although the sun had set long ago, it was still so near that it illumined the sky and put out the stars. The tents rested on a bed of sedge grass in the bend of the little river. A wind blew out to sea where the yacht, Westward, rocked at anchor half a mile away in the Bering. In the evening calm we could hear the crash of the breakers just beyond the turn of the river where it spread its silver fingers across the wide beach to join the sea.

As I sat in the tent door with a cosy fire at my back, the ~~dim~~ distances of the moss barrena and rolling hills pulsed with secrecy as if concealing shadowy forms and watchful eyes. It was for a glimpse of the wandering caribou and great brown bear that we had sought out this remote and little known island. But for tonight the mountain had spread a pale cloak of invisibility about them. Just now ^{too} it had hidden behind the fog. Intermittantly the white veil partially brushed away and there, lifted aloft, was the lighted tip of a candle resting upon billowy clouds. For a few minutes the pointed cone hung suspended in the sky, then was blotted out again, and the fog snuffed out the light. And out of this veil came the lark-like notes of the Alaskan longspur. Now from the top of the hill above the river they sounded, now from across the flat marshland in answering cheer against the muffling mystery of the coming night.

It was a brave effort in this far northern country, but I doubt if the longspur felt any loneliness even up here at the top of the

world. Over the gentle solitudes of the tundra, through the hours of the day and into the long twilight, the longspurs, one after another, skyrocketed from the tussocks of grass here, there, in all directions. Up, up into the sky the birds launched, floated there for a minute, pointing the tips of the wings upward, then wavering lightly down on the wind like little kites, they spilled their tinkling notes as they dropped. When not hanging in the air, the birds were zigzagging over the fields feeding on the abundant weed seeds. And they were as jaunty in dress as in song, - black breast in sharp contrast to grayish-white under parts, a white line from the eye to the neck, back streaked irregularly with black, brown, buffy and gray, wings also streaked, and noticeable even from the field a deep rufous collar around the back of the head. He gets his name from the long, nearly straight hind claw which may be used as a scratching instrument. His heavy, ~~beak~~ bill is distinctly yellow.

Longspur doesn't live long on the northern tundras. Coming as far as he does for his honeymoon and home making, he must live like mad to get through and flee on the long journey south before winter catches him. His summer home extends along the Alaska Peninsula out on this chain of islands, and even as far to the north in the Bering Sea. Before the snows fall and his food is covered up, he migrates to the prairies and treeless plains of Colorado and Kansas, and even to Texas. As I gazed out into the misty twilight, my eyes hovered over a spot some fifty yards in front of the tent where I knew longspur had a nest in a bunch of grass. It was cupped under with a half covered top and finely lined with woven grasses and feathers. Already there were three eggs in it, speckled with brown on a pale greenish background. As I sat listening, I heard his last notes for the night, far away and sweet like a spirit of the mist.

Perhaps it is hard for a bird to sing with no bough of a tree on which to perch. It may be that he must sit high above the hills and the fields that he loves in order to express to them and his companions his vibrant exuberance. Thus are the birds that live on these far, treeless islands hard pressed for perches. One late afternoon I wandered up the bed of a noisy, flashing little stream that came bounding around the base of a steep, high cliff not far back on the island. Its banks were as bare as a wave-washed beach except that the thick carpet of moss overhung its edges like a soft, rounded padding. Even the face of the cliff was old and moss-grown, dripping green splotches of color where persistent grass clung. It was damp and the wind drew cold around its corners. All at once high above my head, from a crevice of the crumbling rock, a white form touched with black, flashed up and up. This was another singer that perched in the air, I thought. It was the bunting or snowflake, a showy bird that summers as far north as the Arctic islands surrounded by an icy sea. Like the longspur, he ascended like a shooting star to shower his notes as he wafted down to earth. As I was watching this bird, another one with a bright head-dress swung out from the cliff. The Aleutian rosy finch or leucosticte was a neighbor of the snowflake on the face of the rock, making a bulky nest of grasses and stalks with a lining of feathers in which were five glossy-white eggs. Both the bunting and the finch tucked her nest so high and so neatly in the cracks that they were hard to see and harder to reach. A prying fox had no chance at them. In the rocky paths of the Aleut villages the sociable rosy finches were as much at home as the natives and as numerous as the English sparrows in a city street, at home.

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The next morning a gale was blowing, bending the coarse grass and tipping the tents toward the stream that gurgled by their doors. A

white dew dropped by the fog of the night, lay spread out like a glistening sea as far as the eye could reach. I felt as if the clouds had fallen and flattened, and I was wading in them. Under foot in the wet moss white strawberry blossoms and blue violets were bedded with a myriad of other flowers,- spring beauty, purple primrose and saxifrage, and pale clusters of orchids. They were all too timid to stretch above the shelter of the wiry grass and the dwarfed willows that clung as persistently as if they were anchored to the foundations of the islands. And they do have to be fore-sighted and rock-rooted to keep their footing in these wide, rolling reaches that are continually swept by tormenting winds. For this would be called a lonely land off here on the narrow, volcanic fence that stretches far to the westward between two stormy oceans.

"This is the right time to stalk caribou," broke in Campbell, as he laid down the axe and took off his hat to scan the horizon for moving objects.

"How about a bear?" I said. "A big brown fellow ought to be eating his breakfast just over that little rise," and I pointed to a rounded mound across the river a hundred yards away. All eyes turned quickly and felt their way up the slope. But it was not a caribou, nor a brown bear that occupied the rim of that ridge. The frosty sun lighted up the reddish coat of a fox sitting straight and slim watching the crowd in camp. His ears loomed large against the light which flared a burnished band about him. He was curious. His whole attention was fixed on these newcomers with their caravan of accoutrements and tents flapping in the wind.

The camera man sauntered out from the group and walked up a little knoll almost facing the red watcher. How close could he get? At the same time, with his little movie camera under his arm, Cam skirted the hill on the opposite bank of the river to come up behind the fox's lookout.

But a seventh sense of danger guards the wild things from surprise and before Cam's cap had hardly tipped the rise, the fox spied it. He turned his back on the other one, although nearer. Caution in every line, he sat on his haunches ready to spring away. Cam moved slowly into view of the bushy-tailed, red form. Instead of scaring him, this reassured him. He merely awaited the approach of the intruder with the air that he could attend to him when the time came.

And so he could. When Cam came close, the fox got up and trotted on ahead of him, looking over his shoulder casually as if leading this good fellow on. Sly old fox! He wasn't aware that the camera was shooting him like a repeating gun, edging nearer at every step, getting new pictures as he took different positions, or stopped to scratch his ear. The game now pleased them both and left a pretty morning record on the film. But suddenly it ended. A noise startled the fox, and under the very eyes of the camp watchers the spot on the slope where he had been became vacant. The empty grass waved in the wind.

"That's the way of a fox for you," mused Cam. "She leads you on and then gives you the slip."

Two evenings before when the camp crowd was out for a walk, we had wandered along the ridge of one of the inevitable high sand-dunes that broke off into deep, grassy hollows, when down at the very bottom a red fox rushed out of a hole and bolted up the slope as if a demon was after her. Over the top she leaped, and later when we followed her tracks up the ridge and looked over the brink, which being on the sea side was a wind-blown face of soft sand, we found the trail of her wild escape in a straight streak down across the next swale and into a little gap between two hills where it was swallowed by sedge grass. It was the evidence of a heart that was beating as fast as her feet.

But why such a hurry to get out of the country? We pondered over fox philosophy and concluded that she had been caught too near her den. Then the den must hold something precious. What cute pets little red foxes would make with their bright eyes and cunning tricks! Forthwith we raced down to the bottom again to sniff the air at the mouth of the black hole where not even a scraggly bush dissembled its whereabouts. Pheu! What a musky smell! Foxes in there somewhere! The shovel began to work. The channel started gradually downward, going along in an encouraging incline for some eight feet in soft, black sand, then it dropped suddenly as if the bottom had fallen out of it. After an hour's digging the shovel lagged in its heavings, although it had changed hands frequently. The serpentine tunnel now wound like a crooked, underground river and finally returned not far from the main entrance, but far below. It looked like an antedeluvian lizard. When finally the shovel broke through and almost disappeared in the dark depths, that ended it. We didn't want any fox pets, and started home with smutty faces.

"Well, foxes are only foxes. Let's be off for some real game," suggested Campbell, the father of Cam.

My field partner and I slung our knapsacks on our backs filled with cameras, lenses, film and field-glasses - always field-glasses- and were ready to strike out toward the mountain, for over there were the ragged ravines of the great bear and the slopes where the restless caribou ranged. We followed the two Campbells. The thick moss under foot was a soundless carpet as we padded along in rubber packs and warm, light-weight Filson jackets. The sun had eaten off the dew leaving a green surface waving away into the distance. As we topped a rise a myriad of little lakes lay linked in a valley below us, like pools of light in green beds. All eyes were straight ahead, and the field-glasses came up.

"On your knees!" whispered the camera man. "The sun is glinting on some animal down the slope!" All four dropped to the moss and crept inch by inch nearer the rim of the knoll. Through a fringe of marsh grass that looked as big as bayonets to our excited eyes, off near the first lake border we beheld an indistinct soft outline of something with bent head grazing in the gray-green, silvering expanse. It was made out to be a bull caribou. There must be a herd nearby! All four of us were flattened on our stomachs in the deep moss which was in the condition of a perpetually saturated sponge. This is the tundra which covers such great expanses of the fog-blown coastline of Alaska. Further north only the upper surface ever thaws out. By this time other members from camp had crawled up behind us, hitching along to get a look. We were in the lee of the wind which could carry no tales of our presence to the caribou. But that same secretive wind whizzed over the top into our faces like a stinging whip. Lying motionless most of the time for fear of detection, the cold and campiness soon bit through our clothing. But any discomfort was only a stimulant to the exhilaration of trailing wild game on this misty morning in the land of the Aleuts.

The field-glasses soon picked up other tawny forms lying immovable and indistinct on the slope beyond. Only the tell-tale sun lighting up their yellow coats betrayed them. After looking at the lay of the land from all points, the situation didn't appear promising. It seemed impossible to get near enough to picture them, as there wasn't even a dwarf willow between our ambush and the animals. The foreground was the dip of a big open hollow that sloped evenly off to the lake shore. The herd had risen and was munching peacefully toward the water two or three miles away. Finally Campbell volunteered to maneuver around a big hill that formed one rim of the valley. There might be an approach by low ground

or intervening mounds beyond the grazing herd. But this was only a chance as it would bring him where the wind would instantly spread the news. The camera crowd crouched behind the knoll to await his signal if the venture was feasible. We envied him the long walk. It is the way to keep warm on these marshy plains. Deeper into our soggy beds we sank, pulling our coats around our noses for a long wait.

The caribou had seen us. In keeping sentinel over the top of the rise, a hat or a head had been discovered. The animals were alert to pick up any strange object or movement even at a long distance. The wind told them nothing, however, so they were not frightened, but merely uneasy. Two of them lay down with heads pointed toward the eaves-droppers, eyes on the watch, noses to test the breeze. They were suspicious and curious about what lay behind our hill-top. They might have rested easy: there was not a gun in the crowd.

But something else was happening. A watchful old cow had levelled her eyes off toward the hill near the end of the lake. It was from this direction that we were impatiently awaiting a sign from Campbell. Slowly and dimly a lumbering object loomed up in the distance, moving straight out into the open toward the caribou. It was a brown bear! But where was Campbell? What had happened? There was a tense silence behind the knoll. Down the slope the two caribou also lay quiet with eyes riveted on the bear. The rest of the herd had grazed off to a higher level. On came the bear deliberately stopping once in a while. The caribou guards got up liesurely, but with an evident purpose, and began feeding slowly back toward the main herd, keeping their eyes on the clumsy bear. Soon they dipped over the rim of the knoll and were out of sight and danger. Then the bear stood up and walked toward the astonished crowd. It was Campbell.

But there was no time to be lost. The camera man and I jumped up

and made a dash for the next hill beyond which our game had disappeared. Now, running over the tundra with its surface like a bubbling sea of nigger-heads or hummocks, constantly hopping up and down with packs jolting on our backs, felt almost like a hobby-horse race. We were working hard against the deep mat of moss which pulled our feet back at every step, and the long grass which frequently caught and tripped us. When we reached the next stopping place we were winded and ready to drop down for another vigil. In this way by relays, we made the next hill where we stretched out to hunt up the caribou again.

There they were, sixteen of them now, some lying down, others feeding on the moss, lichens and dwarf browse. They were a pale golden-brown as if bleached by the sun and wind on these treeless, open moors. The old bull stood grazing not far away. He was a stocky, heavy-bodied animal with thick, cow-like legs and a large head with ungraceful antlers. Even the females have adopted this masculine adornment and wear slender horns. His broad-spreading, split hoofs with sharp, cup-shaped edges furnish him a flat footing for travelling over the soft tundra in summer, and a steady step on the slippery ice and snow of winter. Well is he called the barren ground caribou as he and his relatives range the desolate Arctic barrens and marshes beyond the tree line, even to the northernmost limit of land, where in early days his herds were like waves moving over the plains. Altogether he looked slow-witted and little fitted for self-preservation in a land of human and animal enemies. Else why should he stand there looking into the muzzles of our guns, which by accident were cameras? Campbell spoke quietly as he squinted through the glasses. "There is only one way to get near this herd in its present position, as they are on high ground and can see every object below them. Your only chance is to skulk along in the hollows on your hands and knees down to the lake

shore where a cut-bank borders it and leads around to their lookout. In this way you may come around a point square upon them. Then stand up and pump your gun for all the pictures you can get in the few minutes that they will stand for it." So saying, he departed for camp.

The camera man and I were alone. We still stared over the top of the knoll, contemplating the long caterpillar crawl over the no-man's-land which lay spread before us. We tightened our hats against the push of the wind, settled our packs and made the break. Taking a slow gait, we moved our hands and knees methodically up and down in the wet moss. I thrilled as if we were creeping along under the eyes of an enemy, expecting to be picked off any moment. It seemed an endless, blind going before we reached the top of the bank and dropped over the edge to lie limp and oblivious to everything for a space.

Pintail
When I looked up we were in a new world. Wind-blown tundra and rolling hills alike were gone. At our feet lay the wide, flat, marshy margin of the lake, and those who lived there were not bears nor caribou. We looked down upon a clear spring bubbling out of the bank. A pair of pintails flushed with excited eyes and movements out into the tall marsh grass. They didn't go far, but for some minutes sidled around in the tiny tricklets of water that threaded in and out of the bogs, eyeing us sideways and suspiciously as if they couldn't make out what we were. Certainly we had no business there. This peaceful nook by their spring had never been found by humans before. Anyway, the best thing to do was to fade away before our eyes so we might be deceived about that nest that lay cuddled in a cool corner of the bank. So all at once they were gone with no noise, not even a tell-tale ripple of the water nor rustle of the grass.

But still the broad marshland bubbled and breathed with life.

Least sandpipers by the dozens, always in pairs, were so busy courting that they couldn't pay any attention to other folks. They, like the ~~leucophaea~~ of the mossy slopes, soared up like little sky-rockets and floated back to earth, pouring forth a plaintive, ecstatic song of love. The morning in the marsh was musical with rippling whistles as here and there in quick succession the delirious sprites shot into the air.

I sat silent and half smothered in sedge under the bank. Two little lovers fluttered up and settled just in front of me. With gentle eyes they looked me over, but finding me quite inconsequential they bent their heads close over a tempting tussock of grass, twittering confidentially as to whether this might not be the very time to commence building. They bowed, and whispered, and considered. But no, it was early. They must not be too hasty. And away they went again out over the waving marsh grass to commence their courting all over. And so the days would go until they must settle down to the serious problems of nursery life.

But we must go on to bigger game than ducks and sandpipers.

Haltingly we lifted our packs and started off, picking our way along the steep bank just below the top to be out of sight of sharp eyes ahead. Peeking around a point, we found that the caribou on the hill had separated, a few lying down while eleven had straggled out on the marsh to feed. This was a puzzle. We could hardly avoid detection by both bunches, and once seen, one group of animals would undoubtedly convey its fright to the rest and stampede the whole herd. But the chance had to be taken.

It was the bear trick or nothing now. With heads bent, the two of us moved close together like a shaggy old fellow. We plodded out toward the foot of the hill where five or six animals lay resting. They eyed this approaching object in surprise for a scant few minutes, then all got up nervously and began to mill around in indecision. They were afraid of

*Least
sandpipers*

this ominous thing. They started quartering down the slope and coming to their usual trail, they lost control and tore straight toward us. This was their line of escape, or they thought to take the shortest cut to the rest of the herd beyond us. It looked like a head-on collision. We threw discretion to the winds, straightened out of our bear figures and ran head-long for the oncoming animals. By good fortune we hit the main trail ahead of them, which seemed to bewilder them. They stopped short and stared, not at a bear, but at human beings! The three bulls with flaring antlers took the lead, standing defiantly close together, a cow and calf behind. The cameras were grinding away unmindful of anything but a fine shot. All at once the big leaders bolted squarely down upon us, barely swerving where we stood in the trail, as they dashed by. Circling around to get our wind, they flared their rump patches and furnished broadsides as they raced across the marsh bottom and up onto the tundra. By this time they had a full whiff of the enemies' scent. As soon as they felt they were out of range, they paused in battle array on the ridge top, outlined against the sky and the white clouds. The excitement was over. They trailed on with that long, shambling gait that covers so much ground, frequently stopping to stare down wonderingly at those queer disturbers of their island peace. Had we been gunners, we would have had all three big stags in our bags.

Good Persistence is the greatest virtue in this country where walking, and more walking is the only method of transportation. The best of the day remained, for the eleven caribou on the marsh bottom grazed on oblivious that a battle of wits had just been waged around the corner. We crawled stealthily up the steep ridge that dropped down to the marsh, and flattened behind a hummock. As the caribou ranged further along the lake shore, we kept pace on our hands and knees above them. We were at the top now. Aiming over the rim with the long lens, the camera man was blissfully shooting his prey below, when suddenly we caught a movement of some

object coming down the long ridge opposite. It came out into the light,-- an Alaska brown bear ambling solemnly down the mountain. There was no mistake this time. The caribou below saw him also, for they stood with raised heads and all eyes up the hill. We were somewhat abashed to come upon this great hermit of the hills whose ghost had so lately concealed us.

I knew that men had been killed by this great grizzly. And here ^{we} were with a suspicious looking gun which carried film for bullets, and only the open hills and the heavens to protect us. We had been warned that this largest of living carnivores was a dangerous animal to meet at close quarters and that we should never tramp the tundra without a rifle. But starting out in the morning from the bustling camp for a mere reconnoiter in the vicinity could hardly boast the serious purpose of a real hunt backed by Mannlichers or Mousers. So we had quietly departed with the usual arsenal of Eyemos and Eastmans. These to us had seemed undeniably peaceful and reassuring. But now six miles from home, and pointing that same blunt-nosed camera down on Bruin suddenly brought upon me the almost sure conviction that he would interpret quite differently our attitude and intentions. We had to admit that we had been looking for him and were eager to meet him,-- a short time before. I wanted to believe that he would play true to the code of all wild creatures that I had met before, to live and let live unless some belligerent move was made on our part. This was our first sight of the great Alaska bear,-- and he was so great that I was shaking in my shoes.

I took a good look through the glasses. Old Bruin was lumbering lieisurely down, stopping here and there to paw out a squirrel hole, usually to his own discomfiture, for he seemed to be an indifferent digger. We were now close enough to stamp his picture on our eyes. It was true that he was a surly, unfriendly looking fellow with the melancholy manner

of one who prefers to go his way alone, and I judged he was given a wide berth by the other wild folks of these hills. Heavy of head and shoulder, with an awesome breadth of chest and a great, loose-jointed, shambling frame, I could plainly see that the Kadiak bear was made for massive power and high speed, if he felt inclined. But it was when I looked into his face that I shuddered and knew him for what he was. That bulging hulk of a skull with a jaw as forbidding as an ox's, from which protruded disgusting, gnarled snags of teeth which had spent themselves in crunching the bones of his own kind in the eternal battles, told something of his brutish life. His eyes were small and piggish, and gleamed green with hatred. One look chilled and paralyzed.

Then things happened so suddenly and so rapidly that all speculation about the temper of the Kadiak bear was settled without argument. I crouched close to the tundra on top of the hill with my eyes glued to that tawny figure that calmly held the fort on the opposite ridge against all comers. He was shuffling on again. The camera man was ahead of me, bending down and running low to head the bear off at the foot of the slope. He carried his little camera in his hand ready to shoot when he came close enough, or jump for safety. Following the camera, I saw Bruin reach the bottom of the hill and disappear over the bank. The camera man stood up and made a dash for it. He reached the top soon after the bear, and I saw him duck down behind some tussocks of tall grass,- or perhaps he went over, too. Everybody was out of sight. The landscape was empty from where I labored on down with the pack-sack. No, not quite. The caribou below, frightened by the imminent disaster which I knew they were beholding, were in full flight around the end of the lake.

I was out of the field of action and could only guess what was going on. It would have been easier to see it. All was still, except for

the wind following the racing caribou. Why had the camera man rushed pell-mell into a situation that he knew nothing of, and where was he now? Was he down there with the bear? What was happening? The silence and great space around me were oppressing. I couldn't stand it any longer, so I began to hurry toward that brink where man and bear had been swallowed up. I crept to the edge and looked over. Fifty yards away, the bear was leaning over the lake rim, drinking and splashing in the water. Just then, immediately below me the camera man raised up. The motor of the movie was humming. Both of us were now in plain sight. At the sound, the bear turned, startled. What would he do? The camera man was too close. That enormous, shaggy form rose slowly on its hind feet; his head lowered ominously and his neck bowed up under his heavy mane. The camera buzzed on. I was petrified. I could not make a sound. All at once that great, lumbering hulk bolted straight up the hill upon us and passed swiftly, loping like a fast horse. As he rolled up and down one knoll after another, he looked back over his shoulder to see if the demons still pursued him. At last I came to life. I waved my hand to him as I watched him drop over the last rise. Then it seemed as if the bottom had dropped out of things, it was so still. Far in the distance at the end of the lake against the white slopes of the mountain, the herd of caribou grazed peacefully again.

That night before I went to bed, I stepped to the door of the tent to take a last look at Shishaldin. The little river rippled at my side. Above the top of the bank the moon hung. The dim reaches of the tundra melted into the white night, and there like a pale amethyst in the sky stood the mountain glowing with the reflection of its burning heart. Somewhere at its feet the caribou lay asleep: somewhere the big brown bear munched about in the moonlight.

Facing a Kodiak Bear
IN THE SHADOW OF SHISHALDIN.

by

Irene Finley

*Admiral
Longspur*

Our

The camp was peaceful under the dreamy whiteness of Shishaldin, a magnificent cone with a glowing crater like a fish's mouth upturned to the heavens and the ever moving, misty clouds. Although the sun had set long ago, it was still so near that it illumined the sky and put out the stars. The tents rested on a bed of sedge grass in the bend of the little river. A wind blew out to sea where the yacht, Westward, rocked at anchor half a mile away in the Bering. In the evening calm we could hear the crash of the breakers just beyond the turn of the river where it spread its silver fingers across the wide beach to join the sea.

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white dew dropped by the fog of the night, lay spread out like a glistening sea as far as the eye could reach. I felt as if the clouds had fallen and flattened, and I was wading in them. Under foot in the wet moss white strawberry blossoms and blue violets were bedded with a myriad of other flowers,- spring beauty, purple primrose and saxifrage, and pale clusters of orchids. They were all too timid to stretch above the shelter of the wiry grass and the dwarfed willows that clung as persistently as if they were anchored to the foundations of the islands. And they do have to be fore-sighted and rock-rooted to keep their footing in these wide, rolling reaches that are continually swept by tormenting winds. For this would be called a lonely land off here on the narrow, volcanic fence that stretches far to the westward between two stormy oceans.

"This is the right time to stalk caribou," broke in Campbell, as he laid down the axe and took off his hat to scan the horizon for moving objects.

"How about a bear?" I said. "A big brown fellow ought to be eating his breakfast just over that little rise," and I pointed to a rounded mound across the river a hundred yards away. All eyes turned quickly and felt their way up the slope. But it was not a caribou, nor a brown bear that occupied the rim of that ridge. The frosty sun lighted up the reddish coat of a fox sitting straight and slim watching ^{us} (the crowd) in camp. His ears loomed large against the light which flared a burnished band about him. He was curious. His whole attention was fixed on these newcomers with their caravan of accoutrements and tents flapping in the wind.

My companion sauntered out from the group and walked up a little knoll almost facing the red watcher. How close could he get? At the same time, Cam, son of Campbell, skirted the hill

on the opposite bank of the river to come up behind the fox's lookout.

But a seventh sense of danger guards the wild things from surprise and before Cam's cap had hardly tipped the rise, the fox spied it. He turned his back on the other one, although nearer. Caution in every line, he sat on his haunches ready to spring away. Cam moved slowly into view of the bushy-tailed, red form. Instead of scaring him, this reassured him. He merely awaited the approach of the intruder with the air that he could attend to him when the time came.

And so he could. When Cam came too close, the fox got up and trotted on ahead of him, looking over his shoulder casually as if leading this good fellow on. Sly old fox! The game now pleased them both. But suddenly it ended. A noise startled the fox, and under the very eyes of the camp watchers the spot on the slope where he had been became vacant. The empty grass waved in the wind.

"That's the way of a fox for you," mused Cam. "She leads you on and then gives you the slip."

Two evenings before when the crowd was out for a walk, we had wandered along the ridge of one of the inevitable high sand-dunes that broke off into deep, grassy hollows, when down at the very bottom a red fox rushed out of a hole and bolted up the slope as if a demon was after her. Over the top she leaped, and later when we followed her tracks up the ridge and peered over the brink, which being on the sea side was a wind-blown face of soft sand, we found the trail of her wild escape in a straight streak down across the next swale and into a little gap between two hills where it was swallowed by sedge grass. It was the evidence of a heart that was beating as fast as her feet.

But why such a hurry to get out of the country? We pondered over fox philosophy and concluded that she had been caught too near her den. Then the den must hold something precious. What "cute" pets little red foxes would make with their bright eyes and cunning tricks! Forthwith we raced down to the bottom again to sniff the air at the mouth of the black hole where not even a scraggly bush dissembled its whereabouts. Pheu! What a musky smell! Foxes in there somewhere! The shovel began to work. The channel started gradually downward, going along in an encouraging incline for some eight feet in soft, black sand, then it dropped suddenly as if the bottom had fallen out of it. After an hour's digging the shovel began to lag in its heavings, although it had changed hands frequently. The serpentine tunnel now wound like a crooked, underground river and finally returned not far from the main entrance, but far below. It looked like an antedeluvian lizard. When at last the shovel broke through and almost disappeared in the dark depths, that ended it. We didn't want any fox pets, and started home with smutty faces.

"Well, foxes are only foxes, Let's be off for some real game," suggested Campbell.

My field partner and I slung our knapsacks on our backs, with field-glasses, light lunch, etc, and were ready to strike out toward the mountain, for over there were the ragged ravines of the great bear and the slopes where the restless caribou ranged. We followed the two Campbells. The thick moss under foot was a soundless carpet as we padded along in rubber packs and warm, light-weight Filson jackets. The sun had eaten off the dew leaving a green surface waving away into the distance. As we topped a rise a myriad of little lakes lay linked in a valley below us, like pools of light in green beds. All eyes were straight ahead, and the field-glasses came up.

"On your knees!" whispered the leader. "The sun is glinting on some animal down the slope!" All four dropped to the moss and crept inch by inch nearer the rim of the knoll. Through a fringe of marsh grass that looked as big as bayonets to our excited eyes, off near the first lake border we beheld an indistinct soft outline of something with bent head grazing in the gray-green, silvering expanse. It was made out to be a bull caribou. There must be a herd nearby! All four of us were flattened on our stomachs in the deep moss which was in the condition of a perpetually saturated sponge. This is the tundra which covers such great expanses of the fog-blown coastline of Alaska. Further north only the upper surface ever thaws out. By this time other members from camp had crawled up behind us, hitching along to get a look. We were in the lee of the wind which could carry no tales of our presence to the caribou. But that same secretive wind whizzed over the top into our faces like a stinging whip. Lying motionless most of the time for fear of detection, the cold and dampness soon bit through our clothing. But any discomfort was only a stimulant to the exhilaration of trailing wild game on this misty morning in the land of the Aleuts.

The field-glasses soon picked up other tawny forms lying immovable and indistinct on the slope beyond. Only the tell-tale sun lighting up their yellow coats betrayed them. After looking at the lay of the land from all points, the situation didn't appear promising. It seemed impossible to get near ~~enough to strike~~ them, as there wasn't even a dwarf willow between our ambush and the animals. The foreground was the dip of a big open hollow that sloped evenly off to the lake shore. The herd had risen and was munching peacefully toward the water two or three miles away. Finally Campbell volunteered to maneuver around a big hill that formed one rim of the valley. There might be an approach by low ground

or intervening mounds beyond the grazing herd. But this was only a chance as it would bring him where the wind would instantly spread the news. The crowd crouched behind the knoll to await his signal if the venture was feasible. We envied him the long walk. It is the way to keep warm on these marshy plains. Deeper into our soggy beds we sank, pulling our coats around our noses for a long wait.

The caribou had seen us. In keeping sentinel over the top of the rise, a hat or a head had been discovered. The animals were alert to pick up any strange object or movement even at a long distance. The wind told them nothing, however, so they were not frightened, but merely uneasy. Two of them lay down with heads pointed toward the eaves-droppers, eyes on the watch, noses to test the breeze. They were suspicious and curious about what lay behind our hill-top. They might have rested easy: there was not a gun in the crowd.

But something else was happening. A watchful old cow had levelled her eyes off toward the hill near the end of the lake. It was from this direction that we were impatiently awaiting a sign from Campbell. Slowly and dimly a lumbering object loomed up in the distance, moving straight out into the open toward the caribou. It was a brown bear! But where was Campbell? What had happened? There was a tense silence behind the knoll. Down the slope the two caribou also lay quiet with eyes riveted on the bear. The rest of the herd had grazed off to a higher level. On came the bear deliberately stopping once in a while. The caribou guards got up liesurely, but with an evident purpose, and began feeding slowly back toward the main herd, keeping their eyes on the clumsy bear. Soon they dipped over the rim of the knoll and were out of sight and danger. Then the bear stood up and walked toward the astonished crowd. It was Campbell.

But there was no time to be lost. My companion and I jumped up

and made a dash for the next hill beyond which our game had disappeared. Now, running over the tundra with its surface like a bubbling sea of nigger-heads or hummocks, constantly hopping up and down with packs jolting on our backs, felt almost like a hobby-horse race. We were working hard against the deep mat of moss which pulled our feet back at every step, and the long grass which frequently caught and tripped us. When we reached the next stopping place we were winded and ready to drop down for another vigil. In this way by relays, we made the next hill where we stretched out to hunt up the caribou again.

There they were, sixteen of them now, some lying down, others feeding on the moss, lichens and dwarf browse. They were a pale golden-brown as if bleached by the sun and wind on these treeless, open moors. The old bull stood grazing not far away. He was a stocky, heavy-bodied animal with thick, cow-like legs and a large head with ungraceful antlers. Even the females have adopted this masculine adornment and wear slender horns. His broad-spreading, split hoofs with sharp, cup-shaped edges furnish him a flat footing for travelling over the soft tundra in summer, and a steady step on the slippery ice and snow of winter. Well is he called the barren ground caribou as he and his relatives range the desolate Arctic barrens and marshes beyond the tree line, even to the northernmost limit of land, where in early days his herds were like waves moving over the plains. Altogether he looked slow-witted and little fitted for self-preservation in a land of human and animal enemies. Else why should he stand there looking into our faces?

Campbell spoke quietly as he squinted through the glasses. "There is only one way to get near this herd in its present position, as they are on high ground and can see every object below them. Your only chance is to skulk along in the hollows on your hands and knees down to the lake

shore where a cut-bank borders it and leads around to their lookout. In this way you may come around a point square upon them!" So saying he *and the rest* departed for camp.

with packtrails full of cameras.
The two of us were alone, We still stared over the top of the knoll, contemplating the long caterpillar crawl over the no-man's-land which lay spread before us. We tightened our hats against the push of the wind, settled our packs and made the break. Taking a slow gait, we moved our hands and knees methodically up and down in the wet moss. I thrilled as if we were creeping along under the eyes of an enemy, expecting to be picked off any minute. It seemed an endless, blind going before we reached the top of the bank and dropped over the edge to lie limp and oblivious to everything for a space.

When I looked up we were in a new world. Wind-blown tundra and rolling hills alike were gone. At our feet lay the wide, flat, marshy margin of the lake, and those who lived there were not bears or caribou. We looked down upon a clear spring bubbling out of the bank. A pair of pintails flushed with excited eyes and movements out into the tall marsh grass. They didn't go far, but for some minutes sidled around in the tiny tricklets of water that threaded in and out of the bogs, eyeing us sideways and suspiciously, as if they couldn't make out what we were. Certainly we had no business there. This peaceful nook by their spring had never been found by human beings before. Anyway, the best thing to do was to fade away before our eyes so we might be deceived about that nest that lay cuddled in a cool corner of the bank. So all at once they were gone with no noise, not even a tell-tale ripple of the water nor rustle of the grass.

But still the broad marshland bubbled and breathed with life.

Least sandpipers by the dozens, always in pairs, were so busy courting that they couldn't pay any attention to other folks. They, like the longspurs of the mossy slopes, soared up like little sky-rockets and floated back to earth, pouring forth a plaintive, ecstatic song of love. The morning in the marsh was musical with rippling whistles as here and there in quick succession the delirious sprites shot into the air.

I sat silent and half smothered in sedge under the bank. Two little lovers fluttered up and settled just in front of me. With gentle eyes they looked me over, but finding me quite inconsequential they bent their heads close over a tempting tussock of grass, twittering confidentially as to whether this might not be the very time to commence building. They bowed, and whispered, and considered. But no, it was early. They must not be too hasty. And away they went again out over the waving marsh grass to commence their courting all over. And so the days would go until they must settle down to the serious problems of nursery life.

But we must go on to bigger game than ducks and sandpipers. Haltingly we lifted our packs and started off, picking our way along the steep bank just below the top to be out of sight of sharp eyes ahead. Peeking around a point, we found that the caribou on the hill had separated, a few lying down while eleven had straggled out on the marsh to feed. This was a puzzle. We could hardly avoid detection by both bunches, and once seen, one group of animals would undoubtedly convey its fright to the rest and stampede the whole herd. But the chance had to be taken.

It was the bear trick or nothing now. With heads bent, the two of us moved close together like a shaggy old fellow. We plodded out toward the foot of the hill where five or six animals lay resting. They eyed this approaching object in surprise for a scant few minutes, then all got up nervously and began to mill around in indecision. They were afraid of

this ominous thing. They started quartering down the slope and coming to their usual trail, they lost control and tore straight toward us. This was their line of escape, or they thought to take the shortest cut to the rest of the herd beyond us. It looked like a head-on collision. We threw discretion to the winds, straightened out of our bear figures and ran headlong for the oncoming animals. By good fortune we hit the main trail ahead of them, which seemed to bewilder them. They stopped short and stared, not at a bear, but at human beings! The three bulls with flaring antlers took the lead, standing defiantly close together, a cow and calf behind. The cameras were grinding away unmindful of anything but a fine shot. All at once the big leaders bolted squarely down upon us, barely swerving where we stood in the trail, as they dashed by. Circling around to get our wind, they flared their rump patches and furnished broadsides as they raced across the marsh bottom and up onto the tundra. By this time they had a full whiff of the enemies' scent. As soon as they felt they were out of range, they paused in battle array on the ridge top, outlined against the sky and the white clouds. The excitement was over. They trailed on with that long, shambling gait that covers so much ground, frequently stopping to stare down wonderingly at those queer disturbers of their island peace. Had we been gunners, we would have had all three big stags in our bags.

Persistence is the greatest virtue in this country where walking, and more walking is the only method of transportation. The best of the day remained, for the eleven caribou on the marsh bottom grazed on oblivious that a battle of wits had just been waged around the corner. We crawled stealthily up the steep ridge that dropped down to the marsh, and flattened behind a hummock. As the caribou ranged further along the lake shore, we kept pace on our hands and knees above them. We were at the top now. Blissfully spying on our prey below, suddenly we caught a move-

ment of some object coming down the long ridge opposite. It came out into the light,- an Alaska brown bear ambling solemnly down the mountain. There was no mistake this time. The caribou below saw him also, for they stood with raised heads and all eyes up the hill. We were somewhat abashed to come upon this great hermit of the hills whose ghost had so lately concealed us.

I knew that men had been killed by this great grizzly. And here were we with only the open hills and the heavens to protect us. We had been warned that this largest of living carnivores was a dangerous animal to meet at close quarters and that we should never tramp the tundra without a rifle. But starting out in the morning from the bustling camp for a mere reconnoiter in the vicinity could hardly boast the serious purpose of a real hunt backed by Mannlichers or Mousers. We considered ourselves undeniably peaceful and reassuring. But now six miles from home and face to face with Bruin suddenly brought upon me the almost sure conviction that he would interpret quite differently our attitude and intentions. We had to admit that we had been looking for him and were eager to meet him,-- a short time before. I wanted to believe that he would play true to the code of all wild creatures that I had met before, to live and let live unless some belligerent move was made on our part. This was our first sight of the great Alaska bear,-- and he was so great that I was shaking in my shoes.

I took a good look through the glasses. Old Bruin was lumbering liesurely down, stopping here and there to paw out a squirrel hole, usually to his own discomfiture, for he seemed to be an indifferent digger. We were now close enough to stamp his picture on our eyes. It was true that he was a surly, unfriendly looking fellow with the melancholy manner of one who prefers to go his way alone, and I judged he was given a wide berth by the other wild folks of these hills. Heavy of head and shoulder,

with an awesome breadth of chest and a great, loose-jointed, shambling frame, I could plainly see that the Kadiak bear was made for massive power and high speed, if he felt inclined. But it was when I looked into his face that I shuddered and knew him for what he was. That bulging hulk of a skull with a jowl as forbidding as an ox's, from which protruded disgusting, gnarled snags of teeth which had spent themselves in crunching the bones of his own kind in the eternal battles, told something of his brutish life. His eyes were small and piggish, and gleamed green with hatred. One look chilled and paralyzed.

Then things happened so suddenly and so rapidly that all speculation about the temper of the Kadiak bear was settled without argument. I crouched close to the tundra on top of the hill with my eyes glued to that tawny figure that calmly held the fort on the opposite ridge against all comers. He was shuffling on again. My companion was ahead of me, bending down and running low to head the bear off at the foot of the slope. Following on the run, I saw Bruin reach the bottom of the hill and disappear over the bank. His pursuer stood up and made a dash for it. He reached the top soon after the bear, and I saw him duck down behind some tussocks of tall grass,-- or perhaps he went over, too. Everybody was out of sight. The landscape was empty from where I labored on down with the pack-sack. No, not quite. The caribou below, frightened by the imminent disaster which I knew they were beholding, were in full flight around the end of the lake.

I was out of the field of action and could only guess what was going on. It would have been easier to see it. All was still, except for the wind following the racing caribou. Why had we rushed pell-mell into a situation that we knew nothing of, and where was my companion now? Was he down there with the bear? What was happening? The silence and great space around me were oppressing. I couldn't stand it any longer, so I began to

hurry toward that brink where man and bear had been swallowed up. I crept to the edge and looked over. Fifty yards away the bear was leaning over the lake rim, drinking and splashing in the water. Just then immediately below me, the man raised up. Both of us were now in plain sight. At a sound, the bear turned, startled. What would he do? The man below me was too close. That enormous, shaggy form at the edge of the water rose slowly on its hind feet; his head lowered ominously and his neck bowed up under his shaggy mane. I was petrified. I could not make a sound. All at once that great, lumbering hulk bolted straight up the hill upon us, and passed swiftly, loping like a fast horse. As he rolled up and down one knoll after another, he looked back over his shoulder to see if the demons still pursued him. At last I came to life. I waved my hand to him as I watched him drop over the last rise. Then it seemed as if the bottom had dropped out of things, it was so still. Far in the distance at the end of the lake against the white slopes of the mountain, the herd of caribou grazed peacefully again.

That night before I went to bed, I stepped to the door of the tent to take a last look at Shishaldin. The little river rippled at my side. Above the top of the bank the moon hung. The dim reaches of the tundra melted into the white night, and there like a pale amethyst in the sky stood the mountain glowing with the reflection of its burning heart. Somewhere at its feet the caribou lay asleep: somewhere the big brown bear mounded about in the moonlight.

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UNDER THE SHADOW OF SHISHALDIN.

The camp on the bend of the little river was peaceful in the pale evening light. Although the sun had set long ago, it was still so near that it illumined the sky and put out the stars. The tents rested on a bed of sedge grass almost under the dreamy whiteness of Shishaldin, a magnificent cone with a glowing crater like a fish's mouth upturned to the heavens and the ever moving, misty clouds. A wind blew out to sea where the little yacht, Westward, rocked at anchor half a mile ^{away} out in the Bering. In the evening calm we could hear the crash of the breakers just beyond the turn of the river where it spread its silver fingers across the wide beach to join the sea.

As I sat in the tent door with a cosy fire at my back, the mountain had hidden behind the fog. ^{Intermittently} brushed away and there, lifted aloft, was the lighted tip of a candle resting upon billowy clouds. For a few minutes the pointed cone hung suspended in the sky, then was blotted out again, ^{as} and the fog snuffed out the light. And out of this veil came the lark-like notes of the Alaskan longspur. Now from the top of the hill above the river they sounded, now from across the flat marshland in answering cheer against the muffling ^{mystery} murkiness of the coming night.

It was a brave effort in this far northern country, but I doubt if the longspur felt any loneliness even up here at the top of the world. Over the gentle solitudes of the tundra, through the hours of the day and into the long twilight, the longspurs, one after another in ^{here, there, in all} different directions, sky-rocketed from the tussocks of grass. Up, up into the sky the birds launched, floated there for a minute, pointing the tips of the wings upward, then wavering lightly down on the wind like little kites, they spilled their tinkling notes as they dropped. When not hanging in the air, the birds were zigzagging over the fields feeding on the abundant weed seeds. And they were as jaunty in dress as in song, - black breast in sharp contrast to grayish-white under parts, a white line from the eye to the neck, back streaked irregularly

with black, brown, buffy and gray, wings also streaked, and noticeable even from the field a deep rufous collar around the back of the head. He gets his name from the long, nearly straight hind claw which may be used as a scratching instrument. His heavy, pointed bill was distinctly yellow.

Longspur doesn't live long on the northern tundras. Coming as far as he does for his honeymoon and home making, he must live like mad to get through and flee on the long journey south before winter catches him. His summer home extends along the Alaska Peninsula, ^{out on this chain of islands} ~~tharfar islands~~ and even far to the north in the Bering Sea. Before the snows fall and his food is covered up, he migrates to the prairies and treeless plains of Colorado and Kansas, and even to Texas. As I gazed out into the misty twilight, my eyes hovered over a spot some fifty yards in front of the tent where I knew longspur had a nest in a tussock of grass. It was cupped under with a half covered top and finely lined with woven grasses and feathers. Already there were three eggs in it, speckled with brown on a pale greenish background. As I sat listening, I heard his last notes for the night, ^{far away} ~~muffled~~ and sweet like a spirit of the mist.

Perhaps it is hard for a bird to sing with no bough of a tree on which to perch. It may be that he must sit high above the hills and the fields that he loves in order to express to them and his companions his vibrant exuberance. Thus are the birds that live on these far, treeless islands hard pressed for perches. One late afternoon I wandered up the bed of a noisy, flashing little stream that came bounding around the base of a steep, high cliff not far back on the island. Its banks were as bare as a wave-washed beach except that the thick carpet of moss overhung its edges like a soft, rounded padding. Even the face of the cliff was old and moss-grown, dripping green splotches of color where persistent grass clung. It was damp and the wind drew cold around its corners. All at once high above my head, from a crevice of the crumbling rock a white form, touched with black, flashed up and up. This was another singer that perched in the air, I thought. It was the bunting or snowflake, a showy bird of black

and white that summers as far north as the Arctic islands surrounded by an icy sea. Like the longspur, he ascended like a shooting star to shower his notes as he wafted down to earth. As I was watching this bird, another one with a bright head-dress swung out from the cliff. The Aleutian rosy finch^{or leucosticte} was a neighbor of the snowflake on the face of the rock, making a bulky nest of grasses and stalks with a lining of feathers in which were five glossy-white eggs. Both the bunting and the finch tucked her nest so high and so neatly in the cracks that they were hard to see and harder to reach. A prying fox had no chance at them. In the rocky ^{paths} streets of the Aleut villages, the sociable rosy finches were as much at home as the natives and as numerous as the English sparrows in a city street at home.

The next morning a gale was blowing, bending the coarse grass and tipping the tents toward the stream that gurgled by their doors. A white dew, dropped by the fog of the night, lay spread out like a glistening sea as far ^{I could see} as the eye could reach. I felt as if the clouds had fallen and flattened, and I was wading in them. Under foot in the wet moss, white strawberry blossoms and blue violets were bedded, with a myriad of other flowers, - spring beauty, purple primrose and saxifrage, ^{and pale clusters of orchids.} They were all too timid to stretch above the shelter of the wiry grass and the dwarfed willows that clung as persistently as if they were anchored to the foundations of the island. And they do have to be foresighted and rock-rooted to keep their footing in these wide, rolling reaches that are continually swept by tormenting winds. For this would be called a lonely land, off here on the narrow, volcanic fence that stretches far to the westward between two stormy oceans.

"This is the right time to stalk caribou," broke in Campbell, as he laid down the ax and took off his hat to scan the horizon for moving objects.

"How about a bear?" I said. "There is no one ~~here~~ ^{around} except the wild animals, and they don't know we are here yet. A big brown fellow ought to be eating breakfast right over that little rise," and I pointed to a rounded mound

across the river a hundred yards away. All eyes turned quickly and felt their way up the slope. But it was not a caribou, nor a brown bear that occupied the rim of that ridge. The ^{front} pale sun lighted up the reddish coat of a fox sitting straight and slim watching the crowd in camp. His ears loomed large against the light which flared a burnished band about him. He was curious. His whole attention was fixed on these newcomers with their caravan of accoutrements and tents flapping in the wind.

The camera man sauntered out from the group and walked up a little knoll almost facing the red watcher. How close could he get? At the same time, with his little movie camera under his arm, Cam skirted the hill on the opposite bank of the river to come up behind the fox's lookout. But a seventh sense of danger guards the wild things from surprise and before Cam's cap had hardly tipped the rise, the fox spied it. He turned his back on the other one, although nearer. Caution in every line, he sat on his haunches ready to spring away. Cam moved slowly into view of the bushy-tailed, red form, ^{Instead of scaring} ~~who now seemed~~ *him, this reassured him* to be more reassured than scared. He merely awaited the nearer approach of the intruder with the air that he could attend to him when the time came.

And so he could. When Cam came close, the fox got up and trotted on ahead of him, looking over his shoulder casually as if leading this good fellow on. Sly old fox! He wasn't aware that the camera was shooting him like a repeating gun, edging nearer at every step, getting new pictures as he took different positions, ^{or} ~~and as he~~ stopped a minute to scratch his ear. The game now pleased them both and left a pretty morning record on the film. But suddenly it ended. A noise startled the fox, and under the very eyes of the camp watchers the spot on the slope where he had been became vacant. The empty grass waved in the wind.

"That's the way of a fox for you," mused Cam. "She leads you on and then gives you the slip."

Two evenings before when the camp crowd was out for a walk, we wan- ^{had}

dered along the ridge of one of the inevitable high, sandy ^{dunes} ~~ridges~~ that break off into deep, grassy hollows, when down at the very bottom ~~of the hollow~~, a red fox rushed out of a hole and bolted up the ~~opposite~~ slope as if a demon was after her. Over the top she leaped and later when we followed her tracks up the ~~other~~ ridge, ^{and looked down over the brink,} which being on the sea side was a wind-blown face of soft sand, we found the trail of her wild leaps in ~~the~~ a straight streak down across the next swale and into a little gap between two hills where it was swallowed by sedge grass. It was the evidence of a heart that was beating as fast as her feet.

But why such a hurry to get ~~clear~~ out of the country? We pondered over fox philosophy and concluded that she had been caught too near her den. Then the den must hold something precious. What cute pets little red foxes would make with their bright eyes and cunning tricks! Forthwith we raced down to the bottom again to sniff the air at the mouth of the black hole ^{where} ~~with~~ not even a scraggly bush ~~to~~ dissembled its whereabouts. Pheu! What a musky smell! Foxes ^{down} there somewhere! The shovel began to work. The channel started gradually downward, going along in an encouraging incline for some eight feet in soft, black sand, then it dropped suddenly as if the bottom had fallen out of it. After an hour's digging, the shovel lagged in its heavings, although it had changed hands frequently. The serpentine tunnel now ~~wound~~ like a crooked, underground river and finally returned not far from the main entrance, but far below. It looked like an antedeluvian lizard. When finally the shovel broke through and nearly disappeared in the dark depths, that ended it. We didn't want any fox pets, and started home with smutty faces.

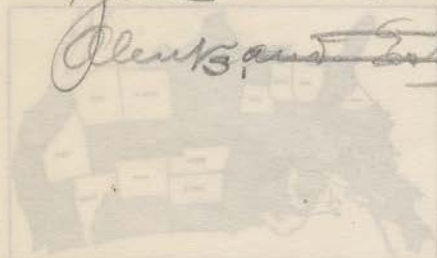
"Well, foxes are only foxes. Let's be off for some real game," suggested Campbell, the father of Cam.

My field partner and I slung our knapsacks on our backs filled with cameras, lenses, film and field-glasses - always field-glasses - and were ready to strike out toward the mountain, for over there were the ^{ragged} ~~rough~~ ravines of the great bear, and the (mossy) slopes where the restless caribou ranged. We followed the two Campbells. The thick moss under foot was a soundless carpet as we padded

along in rubber packs and warm, light weight Filson jackets. The sun had consumed ^{eaten off} the dew leaving a green surface waving away into the distance. As we topped a rise, a myriad of little lakes lay linked in a valley below us, like pools of light in green beds. All eyes were straight ahead, and the field-glasses came up.

"~~Down~~ on your knees!" whispered the camera man. "The sun is glinting on some animal moving down the slope!" All four dropped to the moss and crept inch by inch nearer the rim of the knoll. Through a fringe of marsh grass that looked as big as bayonets to our excited eyes, off near the first lake border we beheld an indistinct, soft outline of something with bent head grazing in the gray-green, silvering expanse. It was made out to be a buck ^{bull} caribou. There must be a herd nearby! All four of us were flattened on our stomachs in the deep moss which was in the condition of a perpetually saturated sponge. This is the tundra which covers such great spaces of the fog-blown coastline of Alaska. By this time other members from the camp had crawled up behind us, hitching along to get a better view. We were in the lee of the wind which could carry no tales of our presence to the caribou. But that same secretive wind whizzed over the top into our faces like a stinging whip. Lying motionless most of the time for fear of detection, the cold and dampness soon bit through our clothing. But there is no other way to stalk wild game on the open, treeless tundra except by this stoical method.) But ^{any discomfort} it was only

~~see a stimulus to~~ ^{a stimulus to} the civilization of trailing wild game on this misty morning in the land of the ~~Plains and Eskimos~~



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stoical Indian method.

The field-glasses soon picked up other tawny forms lying immovable and indistinct on the slope beyond. Only the tell-tale sun lighting up their yellow coats betrayed them. After looking at the lay of the land from all points, the situation didn't appear promising. It seemed impossible to get ~~near~~ enough to picture them, as there wasn't even a dwarf willow between our ambush and the animals. The foreground was the dip of a big open hollow that sloped evenly off to the lake shore. The herd had risen and was munching peacefully toward the water two or three miles away. Finally Campbell volunteered to maneuver around a big hill that formed one rim of the valley. There might be an approach by low ground or intervening mounds beyond the grazing herd. But this was only a chance as it would bring him where the wind would instantly tell his whereabouts. The camera crowd crouched behind the knoll to await his signal if the venture was fessible. We envied him the long walk. It is the ~~only~~ way to keep warm on these marshy plains. Deeper into our soggy beds we sank, pulling our coats around our noses for a long wait.

The caribou had seen us. They were alert to pick up any strange object or movement even at a long distance. In keeping sentinel over the top of the rise, a hat or a head had been discovered. The wind told the animals nothing, however, so they were not frightened, but merely uneasy. (They grazed along, edging slowly away toward the lake.) Two of them lay down with heads in the direction of the eaves-droppers, eyes on the watch, noses to test the breeze. They were suspicious and curdousabout what lay behind that hill-top. They might have rested easy: there was not a gun in the crowd.

But something ~~new~~ ^{else} was happening. A watchful old cow had leveled her eyes off toward the hill near the end of the lake. It was from this direction that we were impatiently awaiting a sign from Campbell. Slowly and dimly a lumbering object loomed up in the distance, moving straight out into the open tundra

(85-)

toward the caribou. It was a big brown bear! But where was Campbell? Had he and the bear crossed tracks? What had happened? There was a tense silence ~~in the crowd~~ behind the knoll. Down the slope the two caribou also lay quiet with eyes riveted on the bear. The rest of the herd had grazed off to a higher level. On came the bear deliberately stopping once in a while. The ~~two~~ caribou guards got up ~~liesurely~~, but with an evident purpose, and began feeding slowly back toward the main herd, keeping their eyes on the clumsy bear. Soon they dipped over the rim of the knoll and were out of sight and danger. Then the bear stood up and walked toward the astonished crowd. It was Campbell.

But there was no time to be lost. The camera man and I jumped ^{up} and made a dash for the next little hill beyond which our game had disappeared. Now, running over the tundra with its surface like a bubbling sea of nigger-heads, or hummocks, constantly hopping up and down with packs jolting ~~up and down~~ on our backs felt almost like a hobby-horse race. We were working hard against the deep mat of moss which pulled our feet back at every step, and the long grass frequently caught and tripped us. ~~It was a spurt of energy and will power, and~~ when we got to the next stopping place we were winded and ready to drop down for another vigil. In this way by relays, we reached the next hill where we stretched out to hunt up the caribou again.

There they were, sixteen of them now, some lying down, others feeding on the moss, lichens and dwarf willow browse. They were a pale golden-brown as if bleached by the sun and wind on these treeless, open moors. The old buck ^{bull} stood grazing not far away. He was a stocky, heavy-bodied animal with thick, cow-like legs and a large head with ungraceful antlers. Even the females have adopted this masculine adornment and wear slender horns. His broad-spreading, split hoofs with sharp, cup-shaped edges furnish him a flat footing for traveling over the soft tundra in summer, and a steady step on the slippery ice and snow of winter. Well is he called the barren ground caribou, as he ranges the desolate Arctic barrens and marshes beyond the tree line, even to the

northernmost limit of land, where in early days his herds were like waves moving over the plains. Altogether he looked slow-witted and little fitted for self preservation in a land of human and animal enemies. Else why should he stand there looking into the muzzles of our guns, which by accident were cameras? Campbell spoke quietly as he squinted through the glasses. "There is only one way to get near this herd in its present position, as they are on high ground and can see every object on the plain. Your only chance is to skulk along in the hollows on your hands and knees down to the lake shore where a cut-bank borders it and leads around to their lookout. In this way you may come around a point square upon them. Then stand up and pump your gun for all the pictures you can get in the few minutes that they will stand for it." So saying, he departed for camp.

The camera man and I were alone. We still stared over the top of the knoll, contemplating the long caterpillar crawl over the no-man's-land which lay spread before us. We tightened our hats against the push of the wind, settled our packs and made the break. Taking a slow gait, we moved our hands and knees methodically up and down in the wet moss. I thrilled as if we were creeping *along* *under the eyes of* upon an enemy, expecting to be picked off any moment. It seemed an endless, blind going before we reached the top of the bank and dropped over the edge to lie limp and oblivious to everything for a space. When I looked up, we were rolling hills in a new world. Wind-blown tundra and ~~saxifrage~~ alike were gone. At our feet lay the wide, flat marshy margin of the lake, and those who lived there were not bears ~~and~~ *not* caribou. We looked down upon a clear spring bubbling out of the bank. A pair of pintails flushed with excited eyes and movements out into the tall marsh grass. They didn't go far, but for some minutes sidled around in the tiny tricklets of water that threaded in and out of the bogs, eyeing us sidewise and suspiciously as if they couldn't make out what we were. Certainly we had no business there. This peaceful nook by their spring had never been found by humans before. Anyway, the best thing to do was to fade away from

before our eyes so we might be deceived about that nest that lay cuddled in a cool corner of the bank. So all at once they were gone with no noise, not even a tell-tale ripple of the water nor rustle of the grass.

But still the broad marshland bubbled and breathed with life. ^{Least} Sand-
pipers by the dozens, always in pairs, were so busy courting that they couldn't pay any attention to other folks. They ^{like the dippers of the moss barrens,} also soared into the sky like little sky-rockets and floated back to earth, pouring forth a plaintive, ecstatic song of love. The morning in the marsh was musical with rippling whistles as here and there in quick succession the delirious sprites shot into the air.

I sat silent and half smothered in sedge under the bank. Two little lovers fluttered up and settled just in front of me. With gentle eyes, they looked me over, but finding me quite inconsequential, they bent their heads close over a tempting tussock of grass, twittering confidentially as to whether this might not be the very time to commence building. They bowed, and whispered, and considered. But no, it was early. They must not be too hasty. And away they went again out over the waving marsh grass, to commence their courting all over. And so the days would go until they must settle down to the serious problems of nursery life.

^{lifted} But we must go on to bigger game than ducks and sandpipers. Haltingly we picked up our packs and started off, picking our way along the steep bank just below the top to be out of sight. Peeking around a point, we found that the caribou herd on the hill had separated, a few lying down while eleven had straggled out on the marsh to feed. This was a puzzle. We could hardly avoid detection by both bunches, and once seen, one group of animals would undoubtedly convey its fright to the rest and stampede the whole herd. But the chance had to be taken.

It was the bear trick or nothing now. With heads bent, the two of us moved close together like a shaggy old fellow. Straight out into the open

We plodded ~~on~~ out

toward the foot of the hill ~~we waited~~ where five or six animals lay resting. Even those on the marsh had a clear view. The five on the hillside eyed the approaching object in surprise for a scant few minutes, then all got up nervously and began to mill around in indecision. They were afraid of this ominous object. They started quartering down the slope and coming to one of their usual trails, they lost control and tore ^{straight} ~~down~~ ^{is} toward the menacing thing. This was their line of escape, or they thought to take the shortest cut to the rest of the herd beyond us. It looked like a head-on collision. We three ~~at~~ discretion to the winds, straightened out of our bear figures and started headlong for the oncoming animals. By good fortune we hit the ^{main} trail ahead of them which seemed to bewilder them. They stopped short and stared, not at a bear, but at human beings! The three bulls with flaring antlers took the lead, standing defiantly close together, a cow and calf behind. The cameras were grinding away unmindful of anything but a fine shot. The big leaders all at once bolted squarely down upon us, barely swerving where we stood in the trail, as they dashed by. Circling ~~xxx~~ around to get our wind, ^{they flared their rump patches and} they furnished broadsides as they raced across the marsh bottom and up onto the tundra. By this time they had a full whiff of the enemies' scent. As soon as they felt they were out of range, they paused in battle array on the ridge top, outlined against the sky and the white clouds. The excitement was over. They trailed on with that long, shambling gait that covers so much ground, frequently stopping to stare down wonderingly at those queer disturbers of their island peace. Had we been gunners, we would have had all three big stags in our bags.

Persistence is the greatest virtue in this country where walking, and more walking is the only method of transportation. The best of the day remained, for the eleven caribou on the marsh bottom grazed ^{on} oblivious that a battle of wits had just been waged around the corner. We crawled stealthily up the steep ridge that dropped down to the marsh and flattened behind a hummock.

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As the animals ranged further along the lake shore, we kept pace on our hands and knees, ^{above them.} We were at the top now. Aiming over the rim with the long lens, the

Sp. camera man was ⁵blissfully shooting his prey below, when suddenly we caught a movement of some object coming down the long ridge opposite. It came out into the light, -
an Alaska brown bear ambling solemnly down the mountain. ^{There was no mistake this time!} The caribou on the

plain below saw him also, for they stood with raised heads and all eyes up the hill.

^{We were somewhat abashed}
~~It was somewhat of a shock~~ to come upon this great hermit of the hills whose ghost
had so lately concealed us.

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was aided by a movement a little ahead, and there about thirty feet away, a big, shaggy, brown face with beady eyes was peering at him through the leaves. He was face to face with the big fellow he had been hunting for days and weeks. And his camera was rocking peacefully on the yacht out in the bay! There he stood, hatless and gunless, with a bouquet of wild flowers in his hand. The bear stared intently at him for a moment, then dropped down and was gone. The disconcerted wanderer back-tracked on his own trail. ^{What?} After all, it goes back to individuality. It occurred to the listener at the door of the woods that perhaps a bunch of wild flowers was about as appropriate as anything else to stalk bear with. *end sentence*

I took a good look through the glasses. Old bruin was lumbering lieisurely down, stopping here and there to paw out a squirrel hole, usually to his own discomfiture, for he seemed to be an indifferent digger. ^{we were now close enough to stamp his picture on our eyes.} It was true that he was a surly, unfriendly looking fellow with the melancholy manner of one who prefers to go his way alone, and naturally I judged he was given a wide berth by the other wild folks of these fields and hills. Heavy of head and shoulder with an awesome breadth of chest, and a great, loose-jointed, shambling frame, I could plainly see that the Kadiak bear was made for massive power and ^{high} lightning speed, ^{if he felt inclined.} Rumor said that he lived up to his looks. But it was when I looked into his face that I shuddered and knew him for what he was. That bulging hulk of a skull with a jowl as forbidding as an ox's, from which protruded disgusting, gnarled snags of teeth which had spent themselves in crunching the bones of his own kind in the eternal battles, told something of his brutish life. His eyes were small and piggish, and gleamed green with hatred. One look chilled and paralyzed.

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13-14
Mrs - that this ~~greatest~~ largest of living
gerrivores was a dangerous animal
to meet ~~at close quarters~~ and that
knew that men had been

killed by this great grizzly. And here
were we with a suspicious
looking gun which carried ~~only~~
film ~~for~~ ^{and only the} bullets, ^{the} ~~it~~ ^{we should} ~~it~~ ^{had} ~~been~~
learned ~~never to~~ tramp the tundra
without a rifle. But starting out
in the morning ~~for our~~ from the bustling
and populous camp for a first
reconnoiter in the vicinity could
hardly boast the serious purpose of a

the necessity to protect us.

real hunt backed by Maunkichers or
Mousers. So we had quietly departed
with the usual arsenal of Gyemox
and Eastmans. These to us had seemed
undeniably peaceful and reassuring.
But now six miles from home and
pointing the game blunt-nosed Casara
down on Bruin suddenly flashed
upon me that the almost sure
conviction that he would interpret
quite differently our attitude and
intentions. We had to admit that
we had been looking for him and

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were eager to meet him - a
short time before. I wanted to
believe that he would stay true
to the code of all wild creatures
that I had met before, to live and
let live unless some belligerent
move was made on ^{our} part.
This was our first sight of the
great Alaska brown bear - and
he was so great that I was
shaking in my shoes.

But it was all bosh, I assured myself. I had worked with wild beasts for twenty years, and they had always met me more than half way. I took a good look through the glasses. The old bruin was lumbering lieisurely down, stopping here and there to paw out a squirrel home, usually to his own discomfiture, for he seemed to be an indifferent digger. It was true that he was a surly, unfriendly looking fellow with the melancholy manner of one who prefers to go his way alone, and naturally I judged he was given a wide berth by most of the wild folks of the fields and hills. Heavy of head and shoulder with an awesome breadth of chest, and a great, loose-jointed, shambling frame, I could plainly see that the Kadiak bear was made for massive power and lightening speed. And he probably lived up to his looks. But it was when I looked into his face that I shuddered and knew him for what he was. That great, bulging hulk of a skull with a jowl as forbidding as an ox's, from which protruded disgusting, gnarled snags of teeth which had spent themselves in tearing great trees asunder, or crunching the bones of his own kind in the eternal battles, told something of his brutish life. His eyes were small and piggish, and gleamed green with hatred. One look chilled and paralyzed.

But for all that, I thought, there might be some reason for this

great grizzly's hatred of human beings, if he really has any feeling in the

I knew that men had been killed by this great grizzly.

I was out of the field of action and could only guess what was going on. It would have been easier to see it. All was still, except for the wind following the racing caribou. Why had the camera man rushed pell-mell into a situation that he knew nothing of, and where was he now? Was he down there with that bear? What was going on? We had been told that it was never safe to roam the tundra without a gun. The silence and great space around me were oppressing. I couldn't stand it any longer, so I began to hurry down toward that brink where man and bear had been swallowed up. I crept to the edge and looked over. Fifty yards away, the bear was leaning over the lake rim, drinking and splashing in the water. Just then, immediately below me the camera man raised up. The motor of the movie was humming. Both of us were now in plain sight. At a sound, the bear turned, startled. What would he do? The camera man was too close. That enormous, shaggy form rose slowly on its hind

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his shaggy form rose slowly on its hind feet; his head lowered ominously and his neck bowed up under his heavy mane. The camera buzzed on. I was petrified. I could not make a sound. All at once that great, lumbering hulk bolted straight up the hill ~~past me~~ ^{upon us and passed swiftly,} loping like a fast horse. As he rolled up and down one knoll after another, he looked back over his shoulder to see if the demons still pursued him. At last I came to life. I waved my hand to him as I watched him drop over the last rise. ^{Then} It seemed as if the bottom had dropped out of things, it was so still. Far in the distance at the end of the lake, against the white slopes of the mountain, the herd of caribou grazed peacefully again.

That night before I went to bed, I stepped to the door of the tent to take a last look at Shishaldin. The little river rippled at my side. Above ~~to~~ the top of the bank the moon hung. The dim reaches of the tundra melted into the white night, and there like a pale amethyst in the sky stood the mountain with a candle lighted in its tip, ^{with the} the glowing reflection of its burning heart. Somewhere at its feet the caribou lay asleep; somewhere the big brown bear mounded about in the moonlight.

But
~~matter at all.~~ Those who have tramped the tundra and got glimpses of of this *him*
 rightful resident of the snowy ravines and rolling moss barrens have had it
 brought home to them that this largest of all living carnivores does not seek *usually*
 man out, is not looking for trouble, and in fact dodges his human trailers at ~~sw~~
 every turn even on his own hunting and fishing grounds. Man's mishap with this
 descendent of the great cave bears is usually brought upon himself by persistent
~~presumption and~~ persecution. If the wild thing is frightened and irritated by
 being trailed and tormented by a bunch of boasting hunters leveling an arsenal of
 Mousers and Mannlichers at him, and objects to stretching across some polished
 floor as "a magnificent trophy," is it any wonder that he turns into a towering
 demon of 1500 pounds of raging flesh and flashing claws? *Here we were with a*

Then things happened so suddenly and so rapidly that all speculations
 about the Kadiak bear were settled without argument. The golden form dawdled on *measuring*
 down hill and soon disappeared over the bank. *gun*
~~The camera man was ahead, running~~ *with*
~~low and crouching down to~~ We jumped up and made a run for it, the camera man *only*
 reaching the rim ahead of me. I saw him duck down behind some tussocks of ~~grass~~ *film*
 tall grass on the top of the bank, - or perhaps he went over, too. Everybody was *for*
 out of sight. *Of a sudden, had become* The landscape ~~was~~ empty from where I labored on with the knap-
 sack. No, not quite. The bunch of caribou, frightened by the imminent disaster
 which I knew they were beholding, were in full flight around the end of the lake. *bullets.*

The silence and great space around me were oppressing. I couldn't
 stand it any longer, so I began to hurry down toward that brink where man and
 bear had been swallowed up. Some insane frenzy seized me. My feet flew reckless-
 ly over protruding humps of grass as I bounded on like a wild thing in flight.
 At the top I dropped, crept to the edge and looked over. Fifty yards away, the
 bear was leaning over the lake rim, drinking and splashing in the water. Just
 then immediately below me the camera man raised up. The motor of the movie was
 humming. Both of us were now in plain sight. At a sound, the bear turned, startled.
 What would he do? The camera man was cornered, and too close. That enormous,