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Former Nebraskan Talks of Nome

H. P. King of Friend, Neb., returned recently from the mining district near Nome, Alaska, where he has spent nearly a year and a half prospecting for gold and locating claims. He arrived there before the rush and succeeded in securing a number of valuable properties in the richest part of the district. Mr. King came to Nebraska in 1870 and located on a homestead in Seward county, near Beaver Crossing. Later, for about seventeen years, he was engaged in the general merchandise business at Friend. He served as a member of the legislature in 1880 and again in 1886. The following story is given by him:

"When we arrived at Nome in the summer of 1899 it was a camp of about 2,000 people, who were living in tents and small wooden cabins, although many of the business houses were large, well-finished frame buildings. Lumber then was selling for \$250 per thousand and other things in proportion. The climate in summer is fine and in June daylight lasts from 1 a. m. to 11 p. m. In winter the days are short and the weather is intensely cold, with heavy snows. The people wear very heavy woolen underclothing, double socks and muk-luks (a hair seal boot), fur pants and a fur parka or coat with a hood or cap attached to the back of the collar which draws over the head. A waterproof garment and a substitute for a rubber coat is made by the natives out of the intestines of seals.

"Nome, like all new mining camps, has attracted a tough element of both men and women, but since martial law was established in June last the order has been far better. Saloons and gambling houses do a rushing business and run day and night. Still there are plenty of good people there, too. Organized churches have regular services and the fraternal societies are represented. The Masonic club of Nome was formed last winter with over 100 members. The Salvation army has arrived and commenced a warfare against vice. Hospitals have been built to care for the sick and altogether it is not the worst place on earth.

"The country there is a plain, without any timber, extending from the ocean back about five miles to the mountains. A great part of the plain is covered with a growth of moss about nine inches thick called 'tundra.' The tundra in summertime is a soft bog and with much of a load is almost impassable. Strange as it may seem, flowers in season grow in great profusion and carpet the tundra and valleys with beautiful blossoms. A coarse grass grows to a height of three feet and horses thrive upon it.

Fish is Plentiful.

"The streams are well supplied with fish; salmon trout in summer and in winter there is an abundance of tom-cods caught through holes cut in the ice. Geese and ducks are plentiful in warm weather and on lakes in the interior they hatch by thousands. A bird resembling the prairie chicken and called a ptarmigan is much esteemed for food. Their feet are similar to those of a rabbit and are covered with small feathers. While hunting ptarmigans last winter I shot and wounded one and undertook to run it down on my snow shoes. The result was I tripped and fell headlong, burying myself in about ten feet of snow, but by removing the snow shoes and using them as supports I finally recovered my gun and worked my way out, but failed to get the game.

"The Eskimos are a small people, with broad features, generally peaceable and friendly, and many a miner has found shelter from the storm and cold when out on the trail at an Eskimo's hut. They are generous and willingly divide with anyone in need. In warm weather they live in tents, but in winter they move to a hut built partly in the ground. They never allow a death to occur in their houses, and whenever a member of the family is about to die they are removed outside. When a child is born the mother, according to their custom, must remain nine days in a shack away from the home, no matter what the weather may be; and should the child die then the father must take the mother's place in the shack and stay nine days. Eskimo women always retain their maiden names, and upon marriage do not take the name of their husband. The death rate among the natives was exceptionally large last year, consumption being the disease most prevalent. General Randall, who was in command of the United States troops last summer, had large numbers of sick natives brought near the barracks so they could have treatment by the army surgeons.

"It is surprising what ridiculous ideas some people who went to Nome must have had of mining. One day I met four men returning from Anvil creek, thoroughly disgusted and ready to sail for home. They had gone out to stake claims on this famous creek and were sadly disappointed to find them all taken. This should not have surprised anyone, as the creek is only eight miles long, and only thirty claims, of a quarter mile each in length, could be staked. Another day, about four miles west of town, I met a portly, well dressed German, with patent leather shoes, stiff hat, gold spectacles, gold watch chain and diamond stud. He was carrying a small pack and had a miner's gold pan under one arm and a shovel on his shoulder. We got into a conversation and he said he came to Alaska to make a fortune, but gave it as his opinion that the country was not worth a —. He had just landed and had started out, no doubt, expecting to find the yellow

metal in such quantities that he could gather all he could carry, and perhaps return on the same steamer. There were hundreds who never went outside of Nome, who seemed to lack the courage to go out on a stampede. This class never washed a pan of dirt or set a stake, but they came back condemning the country.

Mining is a Lottery.

"Of course mining is, to an extent, a lottery, and every prospector don't get rich, but in mining, like any other business, it takes labor to make a success of it. The millions taken out near Nome already has proved the wealth of the district, and the future will reveal many more hidden millions, but they won't be found by the fellows who start for that country and get 'cold feet.' Often last winter the camp would be aroused by the report of a rich 'strike' on some distant creek. Perhaps a hundred miners, in parties of two to four, would load their dog sleds and start at once for the new diggings to stake claims. On the trail a miner takes a small 'A' tent, a sleeping bag, a Nansen lamp and necessary provisions. Last April I went out on a stampede with Mr. Tom W. Draper of Lincoln. We went up on Mountain, Hungry and Oregon creeks, about thirty miles. The day we started the weather was nice, but the following night the mercury went down to 30 below zero, and, what was worse, along in the night the wind blew fearfully and took our tent off of us. We crawled out of our sleeping bags and made our way down to a neighboring tent, where they let us in. We staked some good claims the next day and felt repaid for the trouble.

"Two men from Seattle who were on the same trip failed to bring a tent, but took refuge in an Eskimo's old deserted tent, about half full of snow. They laid their bags on the snow and were soon sleeping. From the claims they located they have since taken out thousands upon thousands of dollars.

"January 1 is the date when claims are forfeited if the legal amount of assessment work is not done for the year previous. I found a valuable claim just below the original Discovery claim, on Anvil creek, that had not been worked, so on New Year's eve, taking a witness with me, I went out to relocate it for myself. We carried a lantern in a sack, until wanted for use, so that others would not follow. When we arrived on the claim we took the lantern from the sack so we could examine the notice posted on one of the stakes. As soon as our light appeared somebody, who no doubt was there for the same purpose as ourselves, commenced to shoot at us. We fired back in the direction from which the reports came, put out the light, and, as soon as we were sure it was after midnight, we posted our relocation notice in place of the one already there, which gave me the title to 'No. 14' below Discovery on Anvil creek. Discovery claim, which is the fourteenth claim above this one, yielded more than a million dollars worth of gold last season. A number of rich strikes were made late this season and when opened will pay their owners handsomely."

Genesis of Jingo

An Indian correspondent of Mr. Labouchere has furnished him with an etymology of "Jingo," which is printed in the current number of Truth, with additional light upon the subject from its editor:

"If you turn up the Persian dictionary,"

writes the Indian philologist, "you will find the word 'jang-jou, (pronounced 'jung-jo'), from 'jang, war or strife, and 'jo' one who follows after; the meaning of the full word being 'aggressive, offensive, litigious, contentious, quarrelsome.'"

"Unhappily," adds Mr. Labouchere, "I have not got a Persian dictionary; but if I may take this information on trust, it throws valuable light on a mooted point of etymology. The word written 'jang-jo,' and pronounced 'jung-jo' in Persian, has obviously become 'Jingo' in English, in which form it still means aggressive, offensive, contentious, quarrelsome." The fact that the last syllable was in the original 'jo' (sometimes no doubt written 'Joe') and that this Jo or Joe, in the sense of the follower of war or strife, has become merged in the English 'Jingo,' is a curious and interesting scientific discovery."

Horse Strangely Killed

Morris Zug of Iona, Pa., lost a valuable draft horse in a peculiar manner. The horse had been in the habit of pulling on the tying strap while standing in the stable and the owner tied him with a chain. One day recently while pulling hard on the chain it broke, which caused the horse to throw up his head with much force. In doing so he hit a beam above the stall and fractured his skull and dropped over dead.

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