III.—*The Innuits of our Arctic Coast.*

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I.

Among the many Indian tribes of the west, northwest and north, of which, on the fifteenth day of July, 1870, the Dominion of Canada assumed the wardenship, there were none more remote, less known and more interesting from an anthropological point of view than the aborigines of our northern coast and of the islands of our arctic archipelago. Such meagre knowledge as we possessed of the interesting people, who, from Melville Peninsula to Herchel Island, inhabited these icy coasts and islands, was principally derived from such incidental records of their pursuits, habits and character as were to be found in the journals of those courageous and indefatigable searchers for a northwest passage, to whom, except in some notable cases, all else, save that supposed waterway, was of little moment. Hence we find, as is usual when only one side of the narrative of rencontres is told, the impression created that these isolated savages deserved, in a measure, the character which had, in the early years of Norwegian and Icelandic discovery, been given them by voyagers who, if we may believe their own records, murdered some of them in sheer wantonness, and carried off others to die from home-sickness for the barren rocks whence they had been taken, or drowned in vain attempts to reach their native shores by flight in improvised kayacks.

So much new light regarding this strange people has come to us of late years from missionaries, Danish and Hudson's Bay traders and other sources, such as the cruise of the U. S. steamer "Thetis," that the time has, I think, come for a reconsideration of the estimate which has been formed of a people so homogeneous in appearance, language and in their habits and mode of life, who occupy a region more extended than that of any of the aboriginal tribes of North or South America, and who differ so much from all other savages of the new or old world.

An examination of such records as are available brings us in contact with them at a very early period on the eastern borders of the five thousand miles of coast line which they are known at one time to have occupied, and although this takes us beyond the strict limits of the title of this paper, yet it may be admissible, in view of their apparently common origin and the remarkable homogeneity of which I have spoken.

The story of "Lief," the son of "Eric the Red," with his companion "Biorn," and their discovery of Vinland, or Wine Land, is too well known to need recapitulation. "Thorwald," Lief's brother, eager for further discovery, is said to have sailed with Lief's crew the following year, examining the country to the westward of what was probably the

straits of Belle-Isle, and in the third summer, to quote an early narrator, "They explored the island, but as their vessel unfortunately bulged against a headland, they were obliged to spend the greater part of the season in repairing her. The old keel being useless, they erected it as a monument on the top of the cape, to which they gave the name of 'Kiaelarnes.'"

Having refitted the ship, they again reconnoitered the east side of the country, where they fell in with three small boats covered with skins, with three men in each. These they seized, with the exception of one man, who escaped, and killed them in mere wantonness. Shortly after they were attacked by a multitude of the same savages in their boats, but they were so well screened from the shower of Eskimo arrows by the boards which guarded the ship's sides, and defended themselves with such vigour that after an hour's skirmish they compelled their assailants to seek safety in flight and unjustly enough after so arduous a contest bestowed upon these Indians the contemptuous appellation "Skraelings;" Thorwald alone, of all the crew, paid the forfeit of his barbarity with his life, having received a wound from an arrow in the skirmish from which he soon died.

It would seem from this narrative that the first Skraelings seen by Europeans were met on the northeastern coast of Newfoundland or the southeastern coast of Labrador in the earliest years of the eleventh century, and their own record of the occurrence reflects little credit on the European barbarians who were the victors and murderers in these first encounters between the people of the east and west.

No satisfactory evidence is to be found that Greenland at this time was inhabited, save by the Norwegian and Icelandic colonists who settled upon its east and west coast; indeed the most ancient Icelandic writers, of whom Saemund Frede, Arius Polihistor, Snorro Sturlesen and others, who wrote as early as the twelfth century, relate that, although pieces of broken oars were sometimes found on the strand, no human beings were ever seen, either on the east or west coasts.

If the treatment accorded by Thorwald to the Skraelings was a fair example of that which was accorded them when afterwards met with by other adventurers on the Atlantic and St. Lawrence coasts of Labrador, we may well surmise that the name and ill-fame of the eastern intruders would be carried from the seal tents of the Labrador coast to the snow houses of their countrymen on the far-off northern coasts of islands to the westward of the wide and treacherous sea, now known as Baffin's Bay, and its inlet, Davis's Strait, and have engendered that racial hostility which, aided by the plague or black death of Europe, was, three centuries later to sweep away from Greenland their eastern enemies with a destruction so complete as to leave no living man, and scarcely a monument of the occupation of the colonizing race.

From the date of the recolonization of Greenland we have a better knowledge of the "Innuits" or Eskimo who then possessed the land, and who, on the whole, having forgotten the old feud, or perhaps deemed it wiped out in blood, received their visitors in peace. From the records of the factors of the royal Danish fur trade and the devout missionaries who, led on first by the devoted Hans Egede, have, with their successors, the Moravian brethren, spread the light of the gospel from the home of the Aurora to the Straits of Belle-Isle, along the Greenland and Labrador coast, we learn much to dispel the prejudice against the "Skraelings" (shrivelled chips of creatures) engendered by descriptions of them written over eight hundred years ago, and certainly the kindly savages whom Richardson, Parry

and others visited and described, and who seem not to have molested Franklin's fated band, and, indeed, aided when they could, other arctic expeditions in time of their direst need, deserve no such treatment at our hands.

The early voyagers called them "Skraelings;" the Indians proper ("Abenaki") of inland southeastern Labrador called them "Eskimo," meaning "raw fish eaters:" the early French voyagers to the gulf, Esquimaux, from the Indian word, and by these latter names they are generally known to-day, their own proud title of "Innuit"—the people—being seldom heard save among themselves.

It will be in order after their name or names, to describe briefly the country they occupy within and without the Dominion of Canada. Our Canadian Eskimo may be said to occupy a country about two thousand miles long by eight hundred miles broad, while the "Innuit" nation extends along the Asiatic coast four hundred miles west of Behring Straits, along the northern coast of Alaska, and down the Asiatic and American coasts of Behring Sea for some distance, where, however, they have become mixed with the coast Indian tribes, the east and west coast of Greenland, and down the Labrador coast to latitude sixty, occupying also both shores of Hudson's Bay down to about the same latitude. Throughout this vast region they have never shown any inclination to leave the sea-coast of the continent or the islands off of it, and when they do so, it is merely a summer excursion to supplement their diet of seal, whale, walrus, mussels and sea fish with the flesh of the reindeer and the salmon of districts not far from their favourite arctic haunts, and to procure the reindeer skins to provide the lighter part of the dress of the winter and summer months. The seal is to the Eskimo what the buffalo once was to the Indians of the western prairie; food, clothing and material for his house. Indeed, it is more, for the fat is his winter fuel and without the seal there would be no Innuit nation, as no savages, less well fed on oleaginous foods, could possibly resist and face, as the Eskimo have to resist and face, the intense cold of an arctic winter: eating quantities of it, as well as of whale's blubber, which we would doubt the tales of were they not vouched for by arctic voyagers and missionaries whose accuracy cannot be impugned; they tell us that a successful hunter will lie on his back and devour twelve or fourteen pounds of blubber in a day, and an Eskimo boy is described by a painstaking and doubtless wondering arctic voyager, as eating, in twenty-four hours, eight and a-half pounds of seal meat, half frozen and half cooked, one pound two ounces of bread, one pint and a-half of thick soup, and washing all this down with three wine-glassfuls of schnapps, a tumbler of grog and five pints of water. To use an old expression "All seems fish that comes to their net," and the arctic fox, hare, wolf and leeming are used as food, cooked slightly, if where drift wood or twigs can be found, or frozen or half putrid if a little train oil may be had as a sauce for these rather "high" dainties.

In their extensive habitat the physical conditions do not vary much; in nearly all cases they are far beyond the tree line of the continent, and while, no doubt, the extensive deposits of driftwood brought to the icy sea by the rivers of Siberia, and our own great Mackenzie supply them in some parts with the coveted lance handles and sled runners, summer fuel and material for their houses, yet these drifts seldom occur where other conditions are favourable to a full food supply, and as the seal is his principal food, furnishing him as well with light, warmth, clothing, implements of the chase, harness for his dogs, material for his canoe and his summer as well as part of his winter house, all other considerations give way before it. The appearance of the Eskimo along their extensive coast line

does not, except in height, vary much, from where the Norse discoverers first saw them, to their extreme western limit in Siberia; at a distance, when clad in their winter dress, they look the best fed people in the world, which idea their fat faces and rowly powly figures does not dispel on a nearer view, their dress making them look shorter and broader than they really are. Stripped of their vestments, however, they show figures possessed of much agility, and except that nearly all are pot-bellied, they are of very fair proportions. In some parts, near the centre of the vast coast line they inhabit, the men reach five feet nine, ten and even eleven inches in height, but near their eastern and western limit, six inches below these heights would be the general limit. Although, to resist arctic cold the muscles have an adipose covering greater than that of other Indians and whites, yet in their muscular development, in the direction which their labours or recreations necessitate, they are the equals of the average white and superior to many of the Indian tribes. Expert and enduring wrestlers and paddlers, they are yet poor walkers and lifters of heavy weights, and owing to their precarious food supply, dripping houses and the bad weather of the climatic interregnum between winter and spring, they are short lived, and the men more so than the women, owing to casualties attendant upon their difficult and dangerous summer method of taking the seal.

Everywhere they are found the facial expression is the same: broad and flat, with a nose so low that various explorers have laid a straight edge across the cheeks of an arctic belle without touching it, while across the upper part of it the skin was stretched as tightly as a drum. The eye is small and black and, particularly in the women, the lower lid points downward like the Chinese, giving the face a peculiar expression. The skin, when divested of its aggregation of fat and lamp soot, is lighter than that of the sub-arctic Indian tribes, and the bodies of their children at birth are nearly as white as those of Europeans. Their hands and feet are small and delicately shaped, the hair black and coarse, and like the Indians south of them, they carefully extract the few straggling hairs from chin and face.

The dress of the Eskimo, unlike the defective covering of other savages, is unique in its appearance as it is in its perfectness of adaptation to their wants, their climate and occupations admitting nothing but the lightest, warmest and driest of coverings. These ends they have accomplished with a degree of perfection and skill, which would rank them superior among savages, even if we had not, in addition, their rare adaptation of limited means to an end, in their weapons, houses and canoes. The outer portion of the garments of both sexes is much the same, the skirts of the smock-shaped outer coat worn by the women being longer and more peaked than that of the men; the hood is also larger, for the accommodation of the inevitable baby, and the boots much wider. The upper garments in winter are chiefly of the skins of the reindeer, tanned with the hair on, and these are doubled so that the hair touches the skin, and is as well, the outer covering, the skin of the seal being employed for their waterproof boots, which are also doubled, with the additional warmth of soft slippers for the feet intervening. The dress, especially of the women, is often ornamented with fringes of down or strips of light coloured skins, making a pleasing contrast to the rich, dark colour of their clothing. The dress described is that made by them with bone needles and thread of sinew. Contact with Europeans has brought them steel needles and ordinary thread, but no increase of comfort or of appearance, their clothes being many times warmer and far more suited to their needs than the best of the white

man's fabrics. In the heat of summer the ordinary upper dress is discarded, formerly for a light covering of the skins of ducks, and now of some cheap European material.

Their implements of the chase, till the partial adoption of firearms, were equally novel and well adapted to their wants, consisting mainly of lances and harpoons of various sizes and shapes, the bow and arrow, and slings, the two latter, however, being much less frequently used than the former, and the sling, indeed, scarcely at all, being made in the usual way, and used with stone missiles; their bows were formed with difficulty, owing to the scarcity of suitable wood, generally of pieces of bone fastened together with nails, where these could be got, and their chief power derived from sinewy strings drawn across them; on their missile darts, however, they mainly depended, and these were formed with an ingenuity, and made with a skill hardly to be expected, considering the scarcity of wood and iron, and remembering the clumsy and intractable character of bone. With these weapons, however, they fearlessly attack the polar bear, musk ox and wolf, and kill the whale, walrus and seal. Their harpoon dart, of which the length is about six feet and the diameter an inch and a-half, has in all cases an inflated bag attached to it. The upper part is fitted with a movable joint of bone headed with the harpoon, which is also of bone and about five inches long, barbed and pointed with iron. At the butt-end of the shaft are two pieces of whalebone about nine inches long to carry it more steadily in its flight. To these is fixed the *rest* about two feet long and notched on both sides to procure a firm hold for the thumb and forefinger. A cord about fifty feet long hangs from the harpoon, which, after passing through a ring of bone in the middle of the shaft, lies in coils or on a roller on the fore part of the kayack, and is fastened to a bladder or seal skin bag behind the Eskimo in the other end of the kayack. The construction of this dart shows an extreme ingenuity which is not easily described. If the weapon were of one entire piece it would immediately be snapped in two by the wounded animal; the harpoon, therefore, is made to fly out of the shaft, which is left floating on the surface while the seal plunges with the harpoon under water, the handle or rest, after imparting a violent impulse to the harpoon, remaining in the hand of the thrower. Their large lance, also about six feet long, is nearly the same as the harpoon, but without the barbs, so that it can be drawn out at once for another stroke. A small lance is used also with a long swordlike point, and another missile dart is used for birds; this is six feet long also, but lighter and with a point which has only one barb, further down the shaft however, several jagged ribs of bone project which often catch the bird the point has missed.

The same simple but successful ingenuity is shown in the manufacture of their boats, which are of two kinds, the larger and the smaller; the large or women's boat "omiak" is sometimes from thirty to forty feet long, from four to five broad and three deep and is narrowed to a point at each extremity, with a flat bottom. It is made of slender bent laths about two inches wide, with longitudinal ribs of whalebone and covered with tanned seal-skin, the ribs run along the sides parallel to the keel, meeting together at the bow and stern and across this light flooring heavier beams are fastened in. Short posts are then fitted to the ribs to support the gunwale; and as they are liable to be forced outward by the pressure of the transverse seats for the rowers, of which there are ten or twelve, they are bound on the outside by two gunwale ribs and the timbers are not fastened with iron nails, which would soon rust and fret holes in the skin covering, but by wooden pins or whalebone. The Eskimo performs this work without a line or square, taking the proportions with his eye with great accuracy. The only tools which he employs for this and nearly every other

kind of work are a small saw, a chisel which when fastened to a wooden handle serves him for a hatchet, a small gimlet and a sharp pointed knife; as soon as the skeleton of the boat is completed the woman covers it with thick seals' leather still soft from the dressing, and calks the interstices with old hard fat, so that these boats are much less leaky than many wooden ones, the seams swelling in the water, but they require recovering almost every year; they are rowed by the women, commonly four at a time, while one takes the helm, at the head of the boat. Till European sail cloth could be had, they spread a sail of gutskins sewed together, six feet high and nine feet broad. Rich Eskimo near trading stations often make their sails of white linen striped with red, but their boats can only sail with the wind on the quarter or astern and even then cannot keep pace with an European boat; they have, however, this advantage, that from their lightness and shape they can make headway faster with their oars in contrary winds or a calm. In these boats they undertake voyages of many hundred miles along the coast, with their tents, dogs and all their goods, carrying besides ten to twenty persons. The men, however, keep them company in kayacks, breaking the force of the waves when they run high, and in case of necessity holding the sides of the boat in equilibrium with their hands. They usually travel thus thirty miles a day and in their nightly encampments on the shore they unload the boat, turn it upside down and cover it with stones to secure it from the violence of the wind or a sudden rise of the tide and if the state of the weather prevents their travelling by sea six or eight of them carry the boat overland on their heads to more navigable waters. Europeans have sometimes built boats on their model and find them on many occasions for arctic progress more serviceable than their own heavy ones.

The small canoe or kayack is, however, the Eskimo boat *par excellence*, and much more care is taken in making it, for the owner's life depends upon it in many cases, and from the nature of his avocations it has become almost a part of the Eskimo himself and he seems, as indeed he is, perfectly at home and in his element in it. It is generally about eighteen feet long, and shaped like a weaver's shuttle, with the ends turned up. At the middle it is about eighteen inches broad, and is scarcely a foot in depth; like the woman's boat, it is constructed of long, slender laths, with cross hoops secured with whalebone, and is covered with seal leather. Both ends are capped with bone, on account of the friction to which they are subjected among the rocks. In the middle of the skin covering of the kayack is a round hole with a raised ring of wood or bone, in which the Eskimo squats down on a soft fur, the ring or combing reaching up to his hips, and he tucks his water dress—the seal coat—so tightly about him that no water can enter the boat; this water coat is also fastened close around his neck and arms with bone buttons. The harpoon dart is strapped to the kayack at his side, and before him lies the coiled-up line, and behind him is the bladder. He grasps with both hands the middle of his paddle, which is made of solid wood, tipped with metal, and with bone along the sides, and swings it with rapid and regular strokes. Thus equipped he sets out to hunt seals or sea fowl, looking as proud almost as though he was the commander of the largest man-of-war.

An Eskimo in his kayack is indeed an object of admiration to those who see him in rough weather, and his sea dress, shining with rows of white bone buttons, gives him a splendid appearance. He attains great speed in this boat, and when doing duty as a despatch boat—carrying letters—will make forty-five to fifty miles a day. He dreads no storm, and as long as a ship can carry her top-sails he braves the largest billows, darting over them

like a bird, and even when completely buried among the waves he soon reappears skimming over the surface; if a breaker threatens to capsize him, he supports himself in an upright position with his paddle; or if he is actually upset, he regains his equilibrium with a single swing of his paddle; should he lose the paddle it is, however, almost certain death unless speedy succour is at hand.

Some Europeans have, after much effort, attained sufficient command of the kayack for a calm weather voyage, but they seldom venture to fish in it, and are totally helpless in dangerous situations. The Eskimo possess, in the management of this vessel, a dexterity peculiar to themselves, which excites an interest, not unmingled with fear, in the spectator, when he remembers that the exercise is connected with so much danger that the utmost skill cannot always save them from perishing in the pursuit of their food. It will be worth while to notice a few of the methods by which the young Eskimo are trained to this remarkable skill. Ten different exercises have been noticed, and there are probably several others which have escaped observation.

First, the paddler lies alternately with both sides of his body on the water, preserving his balance with his paddle to prevent a total upset, and again recovers his proper position; second, he overturns himself completely so that his head hangs perpendicularly downward, and by a swing of the paddle on either side regains his erect position. In capsizing accidents, which are the most common, and frequently occur in a stormy sea, the Eskimo is supposed to have the free use of his paddle, but in seal catching it might easily get entangled among the cordage, or even be entirely lost;—it is needful, then, to prepare the neophyte for these casualties; third, they accordingly run one end of the paddle among the cross straps of the kayack, upset it, and work themselves up with a quick motion of the other end; fourth, they take hold of one end in their mouths, moving the other with their hand, so as to raise themselves; fifth, they hold the paddle with both hands across the nape of the neck; or sixth, they hold it fast behind the back, upset, and move it in that position with both hands till they regain their balance; seventh, they lay it over the shoulder, and by working it with one hand before and the other behind, raise themselves from the water.

These exercises have regard, of course, to the possible entanglement of the paddle; cases, however, occur when it is entirely lost, which is the greatest misfortune that can befall the Eskimo in his kayack, so that eighth, another exercise, therefore, is to hold the paddle under the bottom of the kayack with both hands, with face down on the deck; having thus fixed themselves they upset the boat, and again rise aloft by working the paddle, which now lies on the surface, from beneath; ninth, they upset the kayack, let go of the paddle, and pull it down again from the surface; tenth, if the paddle is lost beyond recovery they attempt to jerk themselves upward by striking the water with the throwing-board of the harpoon, or a knife, or even the palm of the hand, but this experiment rarely succeeds. The youthful kayackers must also exercise their agility among the sunken cliffs and dashing surges, now driven by a double wave upon the rocks, now whirled completely round, now buried in the foam, and thus initiated into such perilous gymnastics in this rough school, they early learn to bid defiance to the heaviest tempest, and generally navigate their frail craft safely to land in the severest storms.

When capsized at sea, the paddle lost, and destitute of all resource, they usually creep out of their kayacks and call for assistance, and if no help arrives, lash themselves to their boats that their bodies may be found and buried.

There were three methods of taking the seal, either singly with the harpoon and bladder, or in a company by the clapper hunt, or in the winter on the ice. Till the use of firearms became possible, the customary method was that in which the harpoon and bladder were used. The Eskimo, seated in his kayack with all his accoutrements, no sooner perceives a seal than he approaches to the leeward if possible, with the sun on his back, lest he should be seen and scented by the animal. Concealing himself behind a wave, he paddles swiftly and silently forward till he arrives within a distance of thirty or forty feet, taking care meanwhile that the harpoon, cord and bladder are in proper order. He then takes the paddle in his left hand, and seizing the harpoon in his right, launches it at the seal by the rest or casting board. If the harpoon sinks deeper than the barbs, it immediately disengages itself from the bone joint, and that again from the shaft, and while the cord is being unwound from its coil in the kayack, the Eskimo, the moment he has struck the seal, which dives down with the velocity of an arrow, throws the bladder after him into the water. He then picks up the floating shaft and restores it to its groove in the kayack. The bladder, which displaces a body of water equal to more than a hundred pounds weight, is dragged down by the seal; but the animal is so wearied by this encumbrance that he is obliged to reappear on the surface in about fifteen minutes to breathe. The Eskimo, on perceiving the bladder, paddles up to it, and as soon as the seal makes his appearance, attacks him with the large barbless lance, and this he repeats every time the animal comes to the surface, till it is quite exhausted; he then despatches it with the small lance, and fastens it to the left side of the kayack, after inflating the cavity under the skin that the body may float more lightly and tow more easily.

This method of hunting is extremely dangerous, and exposes the Eskimo to the greatest danger, for if the cord in its rapid revolutions becomes entangled in the kayack, or if it winds itself around the paddle, the hand or even the neck of the paddler, as it sometimes does in stormy weather, or if the seal suddenly darts from one side of the kayack to the other, the inevitable consequence is that the kyack is capsized by the cord and is often dragged under the water. The Eskimo now has occasion for all his skill to extricate himself and recover his balance several times in succession, for the cord continues to whirl him round till he is quite disentangled. Even when he supposes all danger to be over and approaches too near the dying seal, it may bite him on the face or hands, and a seal with young, instead of retreating, often turns on the hunter and tears a hole in the kayack large enough to sink it.

The second method is called by them the clapper hunt, in which a number of hunters surround the seals and kill them in great numbers at certain seasons. In the autumn these animals generally come together in the creeks, where the Eskimos cut off their retreat, driving them under water by shouting, clapping and throwing stones. The seals being unable to remain long without air, soon become exhausted, and at last are compelled to remain so long on the surface that they are easily surrounded and killed by the missile darts. When the seal emerges they all rush on him with deafening cries, and on the animal's diving, which he is soon compelled to do, they all retire to their posts and watch to see at what spot he will arise next. This is generally half a mile from the former place, and if the seal has the range of a sheet of water four or five miles square, he will keep the hunters in play for hours before he is totally exhausted. Should he seek the shore in his distress, he is assailed by the women and children with sticks and stones, while the men strike him

in the rear. This is a very lucrative as well as lively hunt for the Eskimo, and a single man sometimes receives nine or ten seals as his share of the spoils of a single day's hunting.

The third method of seal catching is on the ice, when the firths and bays are frozen, and they are then taken in several ways. The Eskimo posts himself near a breathing hole which the seal has made, sitting on a stool with his feet resting on another, and a wall of snow behind him to guard against the effects of the cold. When the seal comes and puts his nose to the hole, he is immediately striken with the harpoon; then enlarging the hole he hauls out his prize and kills it outright. At other times he lies flat on his face on his sledge, or a substitute for one, near one of the holes through which the seals come forth to bask in the sun. A smaller hole is made not far from the large one, into which another Eskimo is prepared to plunge a harpoon with a very long shaft. The man who lies on the ice watches the large hole till he sees a seal coming toward the smaller hole, when he makes a sign to his companion, who forcibly drives the harpoon into the seal. When the hunter, clad himself in seal skin, sees a seal basking near his hole on the ice, he crawls towards it, wagging his head and imitating its peculiar grunt; the incautious animal, mistaking him for one of its companions, allows him to approach till he is near enough to cast the fatal lance. Again, where the current has made a large opening in the ice, in the spring, the Eskimo, placing themselves around it, wait till the seals approach in droves to the brink for air, and kill them with their harpoons. Many of them also meet their death while basking and sleeping in the sun.

The same fearlessness, ingenuity and skill is shown by the Eskimo in the pursuit of other game. The whale is attacked without hesitation, but, of course, by several kayacks acting in concert. So is the walrus, who at certain seasons and in defence of their young, are even more formidable antagonists than the whale. The polar bear is also attacked without question, but with this arctic monster they need the help of their dogs to divert bruin's attention. It would take too long to give a description of their several methods, and I content myself with giving an idea of their manner of taking the reindeer, which next to the seal is to them the most important of animals, and it is solely to supply himself with their skins, flesh and sinews that the Eskimo is tempted away at all from his much beloved sea-coast. The reindeer hunt is thus described: "In the month of September the band, consisting of perhaps five or six families, moves to some well known pass, generally some narrow neck of land between two lakes, and there await the southerly migration of the reindeer. When these animals approach the vicinity, some of the young men go out and gradually drive them toward the pass, where they are met by other hunters, who kill as many as they can with the bow and arrow, and then the herd is forced into a lake, and there those who lie in wait spear them at leisure. Hunting in this way day after day as long as the deer are passing, a large stock of venison is generally procured, and as the country abounds in natural ice-cellars, or at least everywhere affords great facilities for constructing them in the frozen sub-soil, the venison may be kept sweet till the hard frost sets in, and so preserved throughout the winter: but the Eskimos take little trouble about this matter. If more deer are killed in the summer than can be consumed, part of the flesh is dried, but later in the season it is merely laid up in some cool cleft of a rock where wild animals cannot reach it, and should it become considerably tainted before the cold weather sets in, it is only the more agreeable to the Eskimo palate and made very tender by keeping, it is consumed raw or after very little cooking. In the autumn also, the migratory flocks of geese and other

birds are laid under contribution, and salmon trout and fish of various kinds are taken. In this way part of a winter stock of provisions is secured, and not a little is required, as the Eskimos, being consumers of animal food only, eat an immense quantity. In the autumn the berries of the *Empetrum nigrum*, *Vaccinium uliginosum*, *Vitis-Idæa*, *Rubus Chamæmorus* and *Arcticus*, and a few other arctic fruit-bearing plants are eaten, and the half digested lichens in the paunch of the reindeer are considered to be a treat; but in other seasons these people never taste vegetables, and even in the summer animal food alone is deemed essential. Carbon is supplied to the system by the use of much oil and fat in the diet, and draughts of blood from a newly-killed animal are considered as contributing greatly to preserve the hunter in health. No part of the entrails is rejected as unfit for food, little cleanliness is shown in the preparation of the intestines, and when they are rendered crisp by frost they are eaten as delicacies without cooking.

In the construction of their dwellings the Eskimo have to vary the materials and shape according to their location in the widely extended area which they occupy. When drift-wood is to be found they make free use of it, as well as of sods and willows for wattling; on boulder-strewn coasts they have to adapt themselves to their building material, and it is only when neither are available, or when the hunt has detained them in a new location till too late to use either, that the snow house is built, so that the following description of their methods must be understood as only applying to certain portions of the coast they frequent:

In their thickest and most permanent settlements the houses are about twelve feet wide and from twenty-five to seventy feet long, according to the number of families who are to occupy them, and just high enough to allow a man to stand upright. These permanent buildings are not built underground, as is often supposed, but on rising ground, and, if possible, on a steep rock, that the snow water may run off the better. The walls are constructed of large stones six feet wide, with layers of sod and earth between, and on these walls they lay the beam, which is the length of the house, and if one is not long enough they splice two, three or four together with leather cords and support them by posts. They throw poles and smaller timber across, cover them with wattling and sods, and spread fine earth over the whole. This roof stands as long as frost continues, but in the summer it is washed in by the rain and must be repaired, together with the walls, in the autumn. As they derive their support from the sea, they never build at any distance from it, and the entrances of their houses face the shore. They have neither doors nor chimneys, but in place of both there is an arched entrance built of earth and stone, twenty-five or thirty feet long, and so low, particularly at the extremities, that it is necessary not only to stoop, but almost to creep through the passage. This long tunnel serves admirably to keep out the wind and snow, and the heavy air (there is no smoke) finds egress through it. The walls are hung on the inside with the skin coverings of old tents and boats, fastened with nails of seal bones, by which means the moisture is kept out; the roof is often covered on the outside with the same materials. Half the area from the centre of the house to the back wall is occupied by a floor or platform about a foot high, covered with skins. This platform is divided into several compartments by means of skins stretched from the pillars which support the roof to the wall. From three to ten families occupy one house, and each family has a compartment. There they sleep wrapped in skins, and there they sit in the day time, the men usually in front sitting on the edge of the platform, and the women sitting behind

with their legs crossed. The husband's time is employed in making or repairing his hunting and fishing implements, while the woman attends to her cooking and sewing. In the front wall are several windows, about two feet square, netted with the intestines of seals and the integuments of fish maws, of so close and compact a texture that they exclude the wind and snow, while admitting a good deal of light. A bench runs the whole length of the room under the windows, and is used for strangers to sleep and sit on. Near each pillar there is a place for the lamp. A block of wood laid on a hearth of stones supports a low three-legged stool, and on this stands the crescent-shaped lamp, a foot in diameter, hewn out of soft stone, with an oval bowl of wood under it to catch the oil that may run over. In this lamp, which is filled with seal oil they place filaments of moss instead of cotton wick, which burns with a flame so bright that the house is not only illuminated, but warmed by its several lamps. Over the lamp an oblong kettle of stone (now, of course, of metal), an utensil of the greatest importance, is suspended by four cords from the roof. It is a foot in diameter and various lengths, and every kind of food is cooked in it. Still higher is a wooden rack on which they spread their wet boots and clothes to dry. There are as many lamp-places in a house as there are families, and more than one lamp is frequently kept burning day and night in each, so that the temperature is kept warm and even. No steam or smoke is perceptible, and they are perfectly secure from accidents by fire. The smell, however, from so many train-oil lamps with such large quantities of fish and flesh boiling over them. and particularly the fumes from the vessels in which the skins are steeped for dressing, are extremely offensive to unaccustomed nostrils, though habit, it is said, soon renders the effluvia bearable. In other respects their housekeeping may well excite admiration, whether we consider the ingenuity with which all their necessaries are crowded into so small a space, or their contentedness in a poverty which appears to them the height of abundance, or the remarkable order and quietness with which they move in their contracted dwellings.

Adjoining their dwellings stand their storehouses, built of stones in the form of a baker's oven, containing their fall stock of meat, blubber and dried fish. What they catch during the winter is buried in the snow, and the train-oil is preserved in seal-skins. Close by, their boats are suspended, out of reach of the dogs, on long poles, with the hunting apparatus under, and tied to them. In September, the building of houses, or the repairing of those whose roofs have fallen in during the summer, occupies the women, for the men do not engage in any kind of domestic labour, except wood and bone work. They move into their houses during the early part of October, and in March, April or May, as soon as the snow disappears and the crumbling roof threatens to fall in on them, they gladly move into their tents. In the erection of these tents they pave a quadrangular area with small, flat flagstones, round which they fix from ten to forty poles, coming together in a point at the top, and resting on a framework about the height of a man. Over these ribs they hang a double covering of seal-skins, lined by the more wealthy with reindeer-skins with the fur side inward. The lower edge of this covering is kept down on the ground by heavy stones, and the interstices are stuffed with moss to prevent the wind from overturning the tent. A curtain, neatly woven of seals' gut, hangs before the entrance, bordered by a hem of red or blue cloth and embroidered with white. Cold air cannot penetrate this hanging, though it admits a plentiful supply of light, and the tent coverings project considerably on all sides of the tent, making a kind of porch in which the inmates deposit their provisions, etc. It

will be readily seen, then, that where any other northern Indian tribe would starve or freeze to death, the Eskimo live in warmth and with plenty. A Chippewayan or Tinné Indian hunting party, overtaken by a winter storm on the barren grounds, would have no resource for safety and shelter but to lie down and let the snow drift over whatever covering they may happen to have, and often freeze, where an Eskimo party similarly circumstanced would build a comfortable house of the snow which threatened to destroy them.

It is as difficult a matter as with other Indians to obtain from them an idea of their religious beliefs, and with the Eskimo more so perhaps than with the others, so great is their fear of appearing in any way ludicrous to strangers. To get an idea at all, their language must be mastered and their confidence gained, and even then they are apt to refer you to their "angekoks," corresponding to the "medicine men" of the neighbouring Indian tribes, who alone are supposed to have seen and held converse with the spirit or spirits they worship, or rather, in most cases, endeavour to placate. As may be imagined, these angekoks are not anxious to give much information of their methods of dealing either with the Eskimo or with the higher powers, and even they (the angekoks or shamans, as they are sometimes called) vary in their opinions as to the greater deity or great spirit, some asserting that he is without form of any kind, others asserting that he is shaped like a great bear, but, with or without form, nearly all agree that he resides at the centre of the earth, where there is continual warmth and sunshine, seal, deer, whales, fowl and fish in abundance. He teaches, they say, the "special ones" their arts. There is, however, another great spirit, having no proper name, belonging to the other sex, and having a very bad and envious disposition. The angekoks boast of close intimacy with the great spirit, and from him they obtain on initiation their *familiar spirit*, who accompanies them on their journeys when they go to seek advice from the great spirit about the curing of diseases, procuring good weather, or dissolving the charms of some evil spirit by which land and sea animals have been protected from the hunters. When the angekok is employed to cure the sick, he erects a tent over himself and his patient, singing over him for several days, abstaining from food all the time, and blowing on the affected part, which is one of the chief remedies of these physicians, who employ ventriloquism, sleight of hand, swallow knives, extract stones from various parts of their bodies, and various other deceptions to impress their countrymen with a high opinion of their supernatural powers; and some of them, generally women, pretend to have acquired the power of stilling the winds and causing the rain to cease.

Though the majority of angekoks are mere jugglers, the class undoubtedly includes a few Eskimo of intelligence and penetration, and perhaps a greater number of genuine believers whose understanding has been subverted by the influence of some impression strongly working upon their fervid imagination. These sensible persons, who are best entitled to the name of "wise men" or "angekoks" (the meaning of the word is "great" and "wise"), have, either from the instruction of their fathers or their own observation and long experience, acquired a useful knowledge of nature, which enables them to give a pretty confident opinion to such as consult them on the state of the weather or the success of the fisheries. They show equal sagacity in their treatment of the sick, whose spirits they keep up by charms and amulets, while as long as they have any hope of recovery they prescribe a judicious regimen. Their blameless deportment and superior intelligence have made them the oracles of their countrymen, and they may be classed as the physicians and philosophers of this arctic race. Persons of this class, when closely questioned, often avow the falseness

of their apparitions, converse with the spirits and all the mummery connected with it; but still they appeal to their ancient traditions for the truth of revelations made to their forefathers and miraculous cures which they performed by a certain sympathy. With regard to their own practice, they readily admit that their intercourse with the spiritual world is merely a pretense to deceive the simple, and that their frightful gesticulations are necessary to sustain their credit and give weight to their prescriptions. Still there are many, even among those who have renounced these impostures with heathenism, who aver that they have frequently been thrown into supernatural trances, and that in this state a succession of images appeared before them, which they took for revelations, but afterward the whole scene appeared like a dream. The larger portion of these diviners are, however, barefaced imposters, who pretend to have the power of bringing on and driving away disease, enchanting arrows, exorcising spirits, bestowing blessings, and performing a whole catalogue of similar feats. The dread excited by these imagined powers of good and evil procures them a formidable name and an ample reward for their services. These sorcerers mutter a charm over a sick man and blow upon him that he may recover, or they fetch him, they say, a healthy soul and breathe it into him, or they confine themselves to a simple prediction of life or death. For this latter purpose they tie a bandage around the head, by which they raise it up and let it fall; if it feels light the patient will recover; if it is heavy the patient will die. In the same manner they inquire the fate of a hunter who has stayed unusually long at sea; they bind the head of the nearest relation and lift it by a stick; a tub of water is placed underneath, and there they pretend to behold the absentee either upset in his kayack or paddling in his proper position. They will also conjure up the soul of a man whom they wish to injure, to appear before them in the dark, and wound it with a spear, after which their enemy must consume away by a slow disease. The company present will pretend to recognize the man by his voice. The prescriptions of the angekoks relate either to certain amulets or else to a course of diet, which includes the healthy as well as the sick. Woman in child-bed have particularly much to observe; they dare not eat in the open air; no one else must drink at their water-tub, or take a light from their lamp, nor must they themselves boil anything over it for a long time. Their meals must consist of what their own husbands have caught; the fish must be eaten before the meat, and the bones are not to be thrown out of the house. The husband must abstain for several weeks from all pursuits except the necessary fishing. The ostensible reason of these restrictions is to prevent the death of the child, though it is plain that they were originally invented for the preservation of the feeble mother.

Abstinence from food and labour of certain kinds is also enjoined to young maidens who have had the misfortune to be affected by the beams of the sun or moon, or the shadow of a bird flying overhead. Those who neglect these precautions are liable to some misfortune, perhaps even the loss of their lives; besides, the "Torngak" of the air might be provoked on her account to raise stormy weather. A man never sells a seal on the day it is caught, and they always keep back the head or some other part, even if it is only a few bristles from the beard, lest he should forfeit his luck. Their amulets and pendants are so various that one conjurer laughs at another's. They consist of an old piece of wood, a stone, a bone, or the beak and claws of a bird hung round the neck, or a leather cord tied round the forehead, breast or arms. These potent charms are preservatives against spectres, diseases and death; they confer prosperity, and they especially prevent the children from losing their souls in

thunder storms or frights. A rag or shoe of a European hung about their children instils into them some portion of European skill and ability. They are particularly anxious to have an European blow upon them. When they set out to the whale fishery they must not only be neatly dressed, but the lamps in their tents must be extinguished, that the shy whale may not be frightened. The boat's bow must be adorned with a fox's head and the harpoon with an eagle's beak. In the reindeer chase they throw away a piece of the flesh for the ravens, and the heads of their seals must not be fractured or thrown into the sea, but piled up before the door of the house, lest the souls of the seals be incensed and they drive away the rest. This superstition, however, is probably due to their own vanity, which is gratified by these trophies of their valour. The kayack is frequently adorned with a small model of a kayack containing a miniature image of a man bearing a sword ; sometimes with a dead sparrow or snipe, a stone, a piece of wood, feathers or hair, to ward off danger. But it is observed that those who chiefly make use of these charms are in general the most unfortunate, since they are unskilled, and therefore timid, or else so secure in their superstition that they needlessly run into danger.

The description given by the angekoks of a future state is hazy indeed, this world being supported on pillars, and bearing, also on pillars, the upper world beyond the firmament. To the nether one the souls of the good go, and to the upper go the souls of the bad Eskimo. There the climate is bitterly cold, and hunger is the fiend which pursues them. The Aurora is simply these spirits playing bowls for the double purpose, we may imagine, of dodging the fiends and warming their shivering, ill-clad souls. Some angekoks, however, teach almost the reverse of the foregoing ; the place of bliss being the moon, where warmth and verdure await them around the rim of a great lake, wherein are seals and whales, walrus and narwhal, and around its grassy shores reindeer in vast numbers, all of which are to be had for the asking, or at least for the spearing, and when this lake overflows there is rain upon the earth, and, should the rim break, a deluge. Departed good spirits, however, do not make an immediate entrance to this blessed abode ; they must first, for five days or more, slide down a steep rock slippery with blood. The relations and friends of the deceased in consequence abstain for five days from all active work, except the necessary capture of seals, that the spirit may not be disturbed or lost upon its dangerous road. On the other hand, the souls of the bad go down to a place of punishment, a gloomy subterranean place filled with horror and anguish.

Different angekoks give different versions, and those on the eastern borders of their extensive habitat vary somewhat from that of the middle and western, and the idea of the first of these regarding the resurrection, of which they have a very vague idea, may be interesting. Of the end of the world and the resurrection of the dead they have generally scarcely any idea. Some of them, however, affirm that the souls loiter near the graves of the bodies they inhabited for five days, and who then rise again to pursue the same course of life in another world ; therefore they always laid the hunting implements of a deceased person near his grave. This opinion, however, is ridiculed by the more observant Eskimos, who perceive that the deceased and his weapons remain unmoved and go into corruption together. The following idea seems to bear more evident marks of a tradition relative to the resurrection, and is the more remarkable, as it involves belief in a superior being. They say that after the death of the whole human race the solid mass of the earth will be shattered into small fragments, which will be cleansed by a mighty deluge from the blood of

the dead; a tempest will then unite the putrefied particles and give them a more beautiful form. The new world will not be a wilderness of barren rocks, but a plain clothed with everlasting verdure and covered with a superfluity of animals, for they believe that all the present animal creation will be revivified. As for the men, "He that is above" shall breathe upon them; but of this personage they can give no further account.

The other great but mischievous spirit is a female without name. Whether she is "Torngarsuk's" wife or his mother is not agreed upon. The natives of the north believe that she is the daughter of the mighty angekok who tore the islands from the continent and towed them hundreds of miles further north, and this arctic Proserpine lives in a large house under the ocean, in which she enthrals all the sea monsters by the efficacy of her spells. Sea fowl swim about in the tub of train-oil under her lamp. The portals of her palace are guarded by rampant seals, exceedingly vicious, yet their place is often supplied by a large dog, which never sleeps longer than a second, and can consequently rarely be surprised. When there is a scarcity of seals or fish, an angekok must undertake a journey to her abode for a handsome reward. His "Torngak," or familiar spirit, who has previously given him all proper instructions, conducts him in the first place under the earth or sea. He then passes through the kingdom of souls who pass a life of jollity and ease, but their progress is soon afterward interrupted by a frightful vacuity, over which a narrow wheel is suspended, which whirls with wonderful rapidity. When he has been so fortunate as to get over, the Torngak leads him by the hand upon a rope stretched across the chasm, and through the sentry seals into the palace of the fury, who, as soon as she sees her unwelcome guests, trembles and foams with rage, and hastens to set on fire the wing of a sea fowl, the stench of which would enable her to take the suffocated angekok and his "Torngak" captives. These heroes seize her before she can effect the fatal fumigation, pull her down by the hair and strip off her filthy amulets, which by their occult powers have enslaved the inhabitants of the ocean, and the enchantment being thus dissolved, the captive creatures immediately ascend to the surface of the sea, and the successful angekok champion has no difficulties on his journey back. They do not think, however, that she is so malicious as to aim at making mankind eternally miserable, and therefore do not describe her dwelling as a hell, but a place abounding in the necessaries of life, yet no one desires to be near her. On the contrary, they greatly venerate "Torngarsuk," and though they do not hold him to be the author of the universe, they wish after death to go to him and share his affluence. Many Eskimo, when they hear of God and his almighty power, are easily led to identify him with Torngarsuk, for they honour the latter as much as the ancient heathens did Jupiter, Pluto, or their other principal divinities, yet they do not regard him as that eternal being to whom everything owes its existence. They pay him no religious honours or worship, regarding him as much too beneficient a being to require any propitiation, bribes or entreaties, though it cannot well be construed into anything but a sacrifice when an Eskimo lays a piece of blubber or skin near a large stone, and very often a part of the reindeer which is the first fruit of the chase. They cannot assign any other reason for this except that their ancestors have done so before them in order to insure success in hunting.

In the air dwells a certain "innua" (or possessor) whom they call "Innerter tirsok," the informer, because he informs the Eskimo through the angekok what he must abstain from if he wishes to be fortunate. Their "Erloersortok" also inhabits the air, and lies in wait for those souls which pass upward in order to take out their entrails and devour them.

He is described to be as lean, gloomy and cruel as a Saturn. The "Kongensetokit" are marine spirits; they catch and devour the foxes which frequent the shores in order to catch fish. There are also spirits of the fire called "Ingnersoit," who inhabit the rocks on the sea shore and appear in the form of the will-o'-the-wisp; they are said to have been the inhabitants of the world before the deluge. When the earth was turned round and immersed in water they changed themselves into flames and took refuge among the rocks. They frequently steal men away from the strand in order to have companions, and treat them very kindly. The "Tunnersoit" and "Innyarolit" are mountain spirits, the former more than twenty feet and the latter only six inches long, but at the same time exceedingly clever. These latter are said to have taught the Europeans their arts. The "Erkiglit" have dog-like countenances and are war-like spirits, enemies to mankind, but they inhabit only the east side of the Eskimo country, so that this belief may be a mere tradition of the hatred felt towards the ancient Norsemen. "Sillegiksartoj" is the Æolus of Greenland; he dwells upon an ice-field and regulates the weather. The water has *its* peculiar spirits, and when the Eskimo meet with an unknown spring, in case there is no angekok at hand, the oldest man in the company must first drink of it in order to rid it of any malicious spirit. When certain meats prove detrimental to any one, especially women with children, the "masters of the food" are blamed for enticing them to eat contrary to the rules of abstinence. The sun and the moon are inhabited by their separate spirits who were formerly men, and the air itself is a spiritual intelligence which men may irritate by criminal conduct and apply to for counsel. Such were some of the superstitions of this strange race varying in degree and form along their extended coast line, and if some one who knows their language would undertake to reduce these Eskimo superstitions to a regular system they would probably be found in some respects to rival the mythology of the Greeks and Romans.

Space necessary for more than a mere reference to some of the peculiarities of the Eskimo, cannot of course be taken; were it otherwise the remarkable homogeneity of the language spoken in their detached settlements along five thousand miles of coast line from Siberia to Labrador would be at once apparent. East coast Eskimo interpreters were generally taken by ships which sought the northwest passage from east to west and west to east, and while there were indeed differences of dialect among the various bands along the Arctic coast and islands, yet the Eskimo from the mouth of the Mackenzie may be understood by those of Point Barrow, at the mouths of the Coppermine and Back's Great River, as well as on the northwest coast of Hudson's Bay, and the north coast of Labrador and also on the arctic coast of Alaska and Siberia. Where the race comes in contact with other Indians on the east and west coasts of Hudson's Bay and the American and Asiatic coasts of Behring Sea, there is an incorporation of foreign words and the idiom is somewhat changed, but with these exceptions there is a homogeneity which is surprising, considering the fact that their communities, especially in the far north on islands where Parry met them, and in Greenland north of the great ice barrier, where when Ross first saw them they believed themselves the only Eskimo, and, indeed, the only people in the world. This remarkable homogeneity of language may be in some degree accounted for by their shunning and fearing all Indians south of them, a feeling so cordially reciprocated among sub-arctic savages that, till missionary influences were brought to bear on both, a broad line of demarcation was drawn which so favoured some wild animals, especially the reindeer, that hundreds

of thousands were seen by an explorer (Mr. Tyrrell) last year, who showed by their fearlessness that they had seen man for the first time.

Their language, though flexible like the other agglutinative dialects of more southern Indians, is harsh to European ears and hard of pronunciation to European tongues, owing to the guttural *r* which is sounded deep in the throat like *ch* or *k;* and the numerous terminations in *t* and *k;* yet in general the language is not so imperfect and rude as that of a people so lacking in refinement might be expected to be, and this fact has led to the conjecture that it has been reduced to its regular form by a set of men much farther advanced in civilization than those who now speak it. It is so copious in words expressive of common objects and conceptions that like many of the Mongolian languages it distinguishes the slightest shade of difference in a thing by an appropriate term; much, therefore, may be said in a few words without obscurity; on the other hand, they have no words whatever for subjects beyond their knowledge, such as religion and morality, arts and sciences and abstract ideas of any kind. Secondly, the words are very variously inflected, though according to certain rules and provided with many affixes and prefixes, so that the language is not only plain, but unequivocal and energetic. And thirdly, many of the words are connected together, so that like the North American Indians they can express themselves with force and brevity. This circumstance, however, occasions foreigners so much trouble in learning the language that several years' study are required to be able to thoroughly understand the natives and to speak it with fluency, and scarcely any one attains such proficiency in it that he can express himself with the ease and significance of the natives.

Several of our letters are wanting in their alphabet, and they never begin a word with *b*, *d*, *f*, *g*, *l*, *r* or *z*. Consonants are seldom joined together and never at the beginning of a syllable. In the pronunciation of foreign names, therefore, they omit the defective letters and separate the crowded consonants; Jephtha for instance is pronounced Eppetah. On the contrary, their deep, guttural sound of *r* and some of their diphthongs baffle the efforts of European organs to imitate them. The letters though never transposed, are frequently changed for others for the sake of euphony, especially by the women who are particularly fond of the termination *ng;* the accent generally falls on the last syllable and if this is not attended to, a different and perhaps quite a contrary meaning to the one intended may be conveyed. It is also noticed that the Eskimo, and especially the women, accompany some words not only with a peculiar accent, but with certain winks and gestures, and unless they are understood much of the sense is lost. Thus, to express complete approbation, they draw in a breath with a peculiar noise, through their throats and if they are in a bad humour it is shown more by their gestures than by words.

Having spoken of the customs of the Eskimo while living, it will be well to give briefly their treatment of the dead. When one of their number is known to be at the point of death his relations dress him in his best clothes and boots and double his legs up to the hips that his grave may be made small and as soon as he is dead they throw out everything that belonged to him, otherwise they would be polluted and their lives rendered unfortunate. The house is thus cleared of all its movables till evening, which after mourning the dead in silence for an hour they begin to make preparations for the interment. The corpse is carried out, not through the usual entrance, but through the window, or if they are living in tents at the time, an opening is made for it by loosening one of the skins in the back part; a woman follows the corpse waving a lighted chip and crying, "Here thou hast nothing more to hope

for." They prefer an elevated and remote situation for the tomb, which they build of stones and line with moss and skins, and the nearest of kin brings out the dead swathed and sewed up in his best pelts, bearing him on his back, or sometimes dragging him along the ground. He then lays him in the grave, covering him with a skin or sods and placing over these large heavy stones as a protection against foxes and birds of prey. The kayack and weapons of the dead are deposited near the grave, as are also knives and sewing implements of women, that the survivors may contract no defilement from them, nor be lead by the constant sight of them to indulge in too great grief, an excess of which is thought to be injurious to the departed soul. Many also entertain the notion that the same weapons which were used in this world will be necessary for the support of life in the other.

In attempting to form my own opinion regarding this singular people, I have consulted all the records of early and later intercourse with them within reach here, and in the foregoing having endeavoured to give from these and from unwritten sources of information as faithful an account of their habits, modes of life, religious belief, etc., as was possible considering their wide habitat and the contradictory statements often made in reference to them, and some of these accounts of them I have copied from the records of observers who seemed to me to have had a fair opportunity of being correct, and whose veracity I do not doubt, and from all these sources of information I am inclined to class the Innuit nation high among the aborigines of Canada, high even among the aborigines of America, excepting, of course, in constructive skill and some of the arts, the tribes of Aztec and Toltec stock. And it seems to me that no aboriginal people have been, when first encountered in early or more recent days, more misunderstood or traduced. They were believed for a time to be sun-worshippers, because when first emerging from their tents in the morning they invariably looked toward that luminary to see what mists were likely to obscure the haunts of the seal and what clouds betokened a gathering storm or fair weather. They have been considered cowardly, though their life is one long war with the elements and where they constantly exercise in the pursuit of food a courage greater, indeed, than he who attacks the whale, walrus or polar bear with modern implements of destruction, and, when smarting under the sense of injustice and cruelty, they have, in times long gone, swept the Norsemen from the Greenlandic coasts, and in chance encounters with sub-arctic Indian tribes, they are nearly always the victors.

They have been set down as inveterate thieves, generally by those who underrated the temptation to purloin a little of the white man's stupendous affluence of that metal, the slightest bit of which in needle or knife-blade was a treasured possession to be handed down from mother to daughter and from father to son, and most writers agree that honesty and respect for their neighbour's goods characterizes their dealings with each other. In their semi-communal life, however, no man must possess too much; the man who has two kayacks must allow any relative to use the spare one, and he who has three, must submit to the third being taken by any one who needs it, and a misdirected exercise of this unwritten Eskimo law may perhaps account for the ingenious abstraction of a tin plate or a coveted nail from a kegful of such riches; they are said to be callous or indifferent, but no savages exceed them in fondness for their children and the care of the aged, although when famine is abroad and only the well and strong can make their way to the distant sealing ground or the stranded or rancid whale, the old must wait till help can come. Family relationships, moreover, are strong and the aged whose young people have gone before, are only cared for in

times of plenty, and left to perish when food fails. They are accused of treachery and crime when Europeans are in their power, but such was not the experience of such of the arctic explorers whom disaster caused to seek their hospitality and assistance. It is true that they attacked Franklin on his western boat expedition from the mouth of the Mackenzie river, but the Eskimo of his day had not learned to distinguish between the daring explorer and christian gentleman, and the grasping Russian trader of the straits, who did not scruple to use powder and steel to urge the trade for his brandy in exchange for the ivory and whalebone, seal skins and oil of the Eskimo, and there is good reason for believing that had Crozier's gaunt and scurvy-stricken band met with and trusted Eskimo aid the sad cairn record found by McClintock might have been spoken by the lips of rescued survivors.

We now come to the difficult question of the probable origin of these denizens of the most inhospitable regions of North America and of part of Asia, and are met at the outset, not only by the ordinary difficulties of such an attempt in regard to the better known aboriginal tribes of the continent, but with the very distinctive difference which exists between them and the Innuits of the polar basin. The movements at least, if not the origin of all the other Canadian Indians has been fairly well ascertained, but the habits, manners and customs, the religious beliefs, and language as well as their habitat so far as we have any account of them have remained the same with the Eskimo since they were first seen by European eyes. Migrations there have been, but these, since the eleventh century at least, have partaken more of the character of the natural overflow of population, seeking in bands of several families new fields where food was to be procured than any general hegira from internal or external causes. Unlike in appearance, manner, habits, disposition and language from all Indian tribes near them, they have sought no communication with them, discouraging even marriage with captives taken in war, they have nearly everywhere remained of pure blood, "Innuits," the "*People*" who live in plenty where all others would starve, resisting all temptation to leave their boulder strewn and ice furrowed shores, and who languish and die when forcibly removed from their bleak headlands and barren rocks.

I pass by the ingenious arguments which would have us believe that man is the result of evolution, or that men of different colours were created as unworthy of a single thought when we possess the divinely inspired account of the origin of our species, and accept without hesitation the present general belief derived from the conclusions reached after much research by those who devoted much time to its study, that all at least of the northern portion of the aborigines of North America reached this continent by chance from the Aleutian islands, or with intent across some part of Behring Straits.

Accepting this belief we may suppose the progenitor of these Eskimo or "Skraelings" seen early in the eleventh century on the Newfoundland and Labrador coasts by the Scandinavian discoverers of Greenland to have been one of the Mongolian offshoots of the great dispersion caused by the confusion of tongues, and we must suppose them either to have adopted their present mode of life by being forced to the northeastern portion of arctic Asia by tribes stronger and better armed than they, and having acquired the habits of life necessitated by a residence in the polar basin, gradually found their way over five thousand miles of arctic and Atlantic coast line to where first met near the straits of Belle-Isle, or, the (to me) far more probable conjecture that their progenitors were the Mongolian tribe or tribes who first peopled America and the great eastern and southward tide of occupation, which, increasing in its flow southward along the great river valleys and lake basins of the

continent left a northern fringe to occupy country not further south perhaps than the southern tributaries of the Saskatchewan or the northern tributaries of the Missouri and a disabled remnant to continue to occupy the Aleutian Islands, and there learn that which was to preserve their race when they rejoined their companions and were forced northward from these homes to their present habitat : hard pressed by the tribes, which having increased, multiplied and grown strong in the warmer portions of the continent, began those incessant, interminable wars which the discoverers succeeding Columbus found everywhere along the eastern coast, and later explorers found extending to the heart of the continent, they would naturally seek refuge northward by the rivers of the arctic watershed in the bark and wooden canoes which are so like, in form at least, the skin boats which the Russian navigators, Behring, Spangenberg and Tschivikin found in use by the then occupants of the Aleutian Islands. We can easily understand if we accept this theory of the colonization of the arctic shores of this continent, how the bark, and even wood canoe would have to give place to the light skin boat when the northern limit of wood had been reached and passed, and how gladly a hard pressed tribe fleeing for their lives would, if accustomed to the use of boats, seek to at once reach a limit where they could not be followed ; hence the occupation of the arctic coast as a haven of safety and where the arts of the Aleutian islanders could be exercised to procure that abundance of food which, till the white man came, filled the caches and storehouses of the Eskimo nearly everywhere along this extended coast line.

If we accept this theory there still remains the question as to whether this hegira took place down one or many of the rivers flowing into the Arctic Sea, and though not important, there are reasonable grounds for supposing that it took place down two at least, or three perhaps, of the Canadian arctic rivers, although one, indeed, of the rivers of Alaska would offer some of the facilities afforded by the others farther east.

Passing from the region of conjecture, we come to the present condition of, and the future possibilities of this interesting people. When they became, on the 15th of July, 1870, wards of our government, the north, western and eastern shores of Hudson's Bay was occupied by Eskimo to whom the whale, seal and walrus hunt afforded plenty to supplement their land hunt, salmon and other fisheries and their surplus of whalebone, train oil, walrus tusks, white bear, fox and wolf skins were bought by Hudson's Bay traders sent from Churchill on one side and from Moose Factory on the other side of the bay. That devoted missionary, the late Bishop of Moosinee, had already been able at intervals to preach the gospel of Christ and the truth as it is in Jesus had been told, when and where they could be reached, to the Eskimo on the west shore as well. Whales, walrus and seals were found in numbers, and a fair field seemed open for that kind of domestication and civilization which had been effected by the Moravian brethren on the Labrador coast, and similar successes might have rewarded the efforts which were being made by the great church mission societies of England, but, alas, when was the greed of the white man stayed by the consideration of the spiritual or temporal welfare of any portion of the Indian race! The most profitable kind of whales had gradually been driven or exterminated from off the coast from Newfoundland to Hudson's Straits, and the remnant had sought refuge with their kind in Hudson's Bay, where they were taken occasionally when they could be attacked by the Eskimo near the shore, but they were still in numbers, however, which gave them the chance of affording for these Indians a permanent supply and a continuance of this valuable species in these waters, but American and other whalers followed them and when it was

found that the harbour on Marble island afforded an opportunity for wintering whaling ships, with two months longer of fishing and a winter's trading with the Eskimo, it was not difficult to predict the speedy destruction of the whale, walrus and seal. The whale especially had little chance of escape, as the bomb-lance fired from a swivel gun deprived him of even the little chance he had against the ordinary harpoon and coiled line, and killed him from a distance with scarcely a chance for his usual final flurry. The valuable whales of the bay were thus destroyed or driven northwards to channels so ice-blocked that ships could not pursue them, the walrus and the seal were hunted till they too almost disappeared, forcing the Eskimo northward in pursuit of the remnant and rendering their domestication and civilization within reachable distances of Moose and Churchill mission stations almost an impossibility.

What has been done in Hudson's Bay is now being done at the mouth of the great Mackenzie River. The sealing and whaling fleet which annually entered the arctic haunts of these valuable contributors to the whalebone, spermaceti and oil of commerce found the season too short to effect their purpose, and that the best fishing grounds were off the mouths of the great rivers farthest away from the straits, where the spring floods of southern waters had pushed back or melted the permanent arctic ice, and so when it was discovered a few years ago that Herchel Island afforded near the best fishing grounds, even a better harbour than that of Marble Island in Hudson's Bay, American whalers annually took up their winter quarters and though the field is wider the same destruction is going on.

Years ago, that devoted missionary, Bishop Dr. Bompas, had sought out in their houses and tents on the arctic coasts the Eskimo of the Mackenzie River region and rejoiced to think that he might be able, before they came much in contact with the whites, to embrace them in his regular mission work. The hope was a vain one, for when his successor in this far-off arctic and sub-arctic diocese, Dr. Reeve, with commendable energy sent a missionary to them he found their coast occupied by four wintering whalers, whose evasions of the revenue laws of Canada give good grounds for the truthfulness of the reports of the supply by them to the Eskimo of spirits, arms and fixed ammunition in direct violation of those wise enactments of the Dominion legislature which have tended so much to the peace and prosperity of the Canadian Indians of the northwest.

Many years ago the good Bishop of Moosinee wrote: "A whale fishery (the small "white variety) when the whales are numerous, is a very exciting sight. The Eskimo give "much cause for encouragement; no matter what they were about when summoned to "school or service their work was dropped instantly, their little books taken up, and off "they went, singing, listening, praying, they showed that they were thoroughly in earnest." Similar but later accounts have come to us from the northwestern Canadian arctic coast, but all the efforts of the missionaries, all the prayers of those who send them, will be needed to offset the taste for liquor, the debauchery and crime which will be the legacy of the foreign whaling occupation of our western arctic sea-coast.

And now, what of their future? Contact with the whites has already brought to many of them enfeebled frames, many new wants and no real increase in their comfort or happiness in any way. No European fabric has taken or can take the place of the dress which is so fitted to their needs; they may, it is true, kill their game from a greater distance with the arms and gunpowder of the stranger, but in doing this they lose the skill which has made them the most expert single boatmen of the world, and the seal always, and their other game

often, sinks and is lost when thus killed in or near the water. They have not, as yet, wholly lost their independence of all the white man's arts, and are the only remaining aboriginal people on the continent who, if the white man of to-day were to be swept away, as were the first they saw in the eleventh century, would still be self-supporting and wholly independent of outside aid, and it seemed as though, when the curtain was lifted by arctic explorers of the latter half of the last and the first half of the present century, giving us glimpses of their life in their icy homes, that in these frigid solitudes, aboriginal man had at last found a permanent resting place, but we have seen that this is not to be the case, and he must do battle with intoxicants and the diseases which have decimated nearly all of his kind on the continent, and die out without we can bring to him the blessings as well as the curses of civilization and economize him in some way to the public and his own good, unaided by the strong arm of the government this cannot be done. Intoxicants, arms of precision and its ammunition he must *not* have; and this restriction our government can and should effect; the gospel must be preached to him to undo the evil already accomplished, and this end reached, it may be asked, "What then?" The answer is this, leave him to pursue his avocations till the time comes to economize him as a hunter, a boatman or pilot, the best of assistants to a northern explorer. We know not yet what mineral riches are encased in these rocks within the arctic circle, but we know that when, if ever such riches are discovered, there exists the coal on the arctic coasts of Canada and on her islands of the great northern archipelago to reduce and transport it. We know that vessels of the size of the United States war steamer "Thetis" can with safety reach a secure Canadian harbour near the mouth of the Mackenzie; Count Sainville, an amateur explorer, tells us of another harbour within the mouth of that longest of Canadian rivers with navigation for crafts of less draught, and uninterrupted navigation is known to exist for fourteen hundred miles southward. So that when the time comes, as come it will, that we may use the arctic natives in work pertaining to what may yet be a great commerce, it will be found that their powers of resisting cold and skill on the element to which they are bred from their earliest youth, will render them possibly a very important factor in the future development of arctic Canada.

That much may be done to elevate them while interfering but little with their mode of life is evident from the success of the Greenland missionaries and of the devoted brethren and others on the Labrador coast, and all who know of them will hope for this Innuit people—the most interesting, as they are certainly the most homogeneous and widely extended of all of the aboriginal tribes of either continent—that all the safeguards which a government can give will be thrown about so peculiarly situated a portion of her aboriginal people, and that the gospel may be preached to these dwellers of the white north, whose future for good or ill Providence has placed in our hands as wards of the Canadian people.