



INSIDE ESKIMO HUT.

effects affords quite an exciting display. About a dozen sledges or trucks are harnessed together, and on these are laid a very miscellaneous assortment of property and provisions. Boat frames, canoes, tents, tent poles and boards, deer-skin bedding, several whole deer carcasses, some hundreds of frozen fish pressed into a solid mass, tent furniture, utensils, clothes, fishing nets, and implements, with many other seemingly needless stores, are all laden promiscuously on the train, which is propelled by men, women and dogs, all hauling lines along the sides of the sledges, and assisted when the wind is favourable by a sail.

The dress of the women is very similar to that of the men, the coat and trousers of the same material, the chief difference being in the shape of the hood, which, in the case of the women, is made larger, to enclose their extra store of hair, and thus better protect their face. The women also wear no boots, but the trousers and shoes are all in one.

The Esquimaux generally cook meat or fish twice a-day, once at noon, and again the last thing before sleeping at night. If hungry at other times they will eat a fish or piece of raw meat that is frozen, and this is not so disgusting as you might suppose, for the effect of freezing meat or fish is sometimes the same as cooking it, that is, to harden the fibre and dry up the superfluous moisture. Even Europeans in this country sometimes eat a piece of frozen flesh uncooked, and find it good and wholesome.

When an Esquimaux visits a neighbour's house, before he has been sitting long, food is always offered him—generally a frozen fish, which he eats with much relish. Sometimes it is a small piece of frozen deer's meat, or, as a great delicacy, a lump of whale or seal fat. If he happens to come in at the time of cooking, a portion of what is cooked is set before him. This seems to be the rule of Esquimaux hospitality.

An Esquimaux travelling with his family and

The arrival of a large number of such sledge trains at camp one after another, is like so many railway trains coming in, for the runnels of the sledges are covered first with bone, and this again is carefully coated with ice, so that the sledges run on the frozen snow like trucks on a railway. The sledge train, which I assisted in drawing myself, consisted, I believe, of fourteen trucks, hauled by four men and boys, three women and five dogs. More than a dozen such trains reached the camp at which I was staying. In spring, the sledges are all stowed away on the river bank, and the boat forms the means of conveying the Esquimaux's effects during the summer months.

With respect to the character and habits of the Esquimaux, it is best to speak reservedly. They are certainly kind and hospitable, civil and obliging, skilful and clever in handicraft. I fear it must be added that they are liable to fits of passion and sulkiness, that they are lazy and sleepy, and addicted to lying, stealing, and even stabbing. Over their other shortcomings it is best to draw a veil.

They practice heathen dances, songs and conjuring, and this seems to be the greater part of their religion. They possess, most of them, in a bag, a collection of small miscellaneous articles, which are intended, I suppose, beneficially to influence their hunting, by way of spells and charms. Beyond this I cannot find that they