



PORTAGING A YORK BOAT.

In the matter of amusements the Eskimo are not badly off. They have a form of cup-and-ball, the ball being a block of ivory pierced with holes at different angles, into one of which the players strive to insert an ivory peg as the block falls, the position of the hole determining the value of the stroke. Another game closely resembles dominoes, and contains pieces running as high as "double-thirties," but the sequences are not regularly carried out, the breaks in them seeming to be without system. When they can borrow or purchase a pack of cards, they will play euchre and high-low-jack with considerable skill; and they also enjoy draughts, having learned these games from the whalers. They have a game exactly like solitaire, with the exception that ivory pegs take the place of the glass balls. The special amusement of the women is a species of "cat's-crade," which has been brought to such perfection that they develop from twenty to thirty different figures in it. Indeed, they are extremely clever in performing tricks with string, winding and twisting a piece in and out among their fingers, and then disentangling it by a single pull on one end.

Such are some of the manners and customs of the quaint, harmless and—despite their dirt—lovable people whose home is among the dreary regions to

the north and south of Hudson's Straits. They have many admirable traits of character. They are wonderfully patient and enduring in times of trial and suffering; honest and intelligent to an unlooked-for degree; perfectly fearless in the chase, yet so peace-loving in their disposition that quarrels are almost unknown; hospitable, docile, keenly appreciative of kindness, and ready to share their last bite with their white visitors; willing to work when opportunity offers, and content with small remuneration. So many good points have they, indeed, that the sad certainty of their gradual extermination is rendered all the sadder thereby. The most careful estimate of their numbers in the Hudson's Straits region at present is 1,500, but this, of course, is only an approximation, as their own system of counting, which generally runs "one-two-three—a great many," renders anything like an accurate census impossible. Each year finds their food-supply diminishing, thanks mainly to the enterprise of the whalers and sealers. As the number of the seals decrease the number of the Eskimo must decrease also, and the end, though it may be long delayed, seems inevitable.

Although the region inhabited (if that term can be rightly applied to tiny settlements scattered at vast intervals over boundless wastes) by the Eskimo is ut-