

Occasionally one would be found who showed far greater genius than his fellows, and here we might instance a man named Cowktooian, who, by the way, had lived many years on the north shore. With the roughest tools he was seen to make some beautiful joints in wood work, and on one occasion undertook to make the nipple of a gun, his only tool being a file. He first filed a piece of steel to the requisite shape, and then grinding one point of the file to the proper size for a drill made a very neat hole through it. Now, however, he was quite unable to file a rough thread for the necessary screw and was obliged to appeal to one of my men for aid.

The Eskimo cannot be said to excel in the finer arts, and yet we find in them the inborn love of sketching and carving, only in the latter, however, are they at all proficient. Good models of kyaks, animals and birds in ivory are made especially on the north side of the strait, where they seem to delight in vying with one another in trying to make the smallest models. The art of drawing is confined almost altogether to describing figures on the level surface of the snow either with a piece of stick, or, in larger figures, with their feet, and in several instances most correct drawings of their own people were made by slowly moving along with feet close together, raising a low ridge of snow as an outline, and afterwards adding details most dexterously with one foot.

Perspective in drawing was a great mystery, and even those who had been able to look at pictures upon the wall of my house every day for a year could not understand it. Involuntarily their hands would steal up to the picture and slowly passing them over they would feel for the objects that stood out from the background, while others would shift their heads to look behind screens or doors in the picture.

Soon after our arrival at the Observatory a coloured life sized picture of a child was put up just over my bed, directly facing the window. It had not been there long when hearing a great commotion I went to see what was the matter and found half a dozen faces pressed against the window and all were calling "chimo, chimo," which is a kind of welcome, and nothing would persuade them it was not real life until they had been allowed to examine it closely.

I am now reminded of a similar incident with a crying doll, several of which I had brought up as presents for the children. A