

and his brave crew. They came back with sad faces and sadder hearts, for they could learn nothing, and no news was bad news.

We had been fighting our way through ice in cold, stormy weather for several weeks, and stayed at this place eight or ten days to rest the ship's company and make some repairs to the engine.

Always interested in the boys, I made something of a study of the little chaps there. It was summer time for them, but oh! such a barren summer land it is. It is far within the Arctic circle, and the ground only thaws to a depth of a few inches. By a present of knives to some of the boys I soon had quite a group of them gathered about me, anxious to show me all there was to be seen in the vicinity. They were dressed entirely in skins, from top to toe, and were bright-eyed, merry-hearted, active little fellows.

Up there the day is several months long, and the continual sunshine melts the ice and snow. The boys brought me bunches of poppies and dandelions. They took me to sheltered sunnyspots where the ground was fairly covered with buttercups and ox-eyed daisies. Now and then I could see and hear an energetic bumble bee darting through the air, and butterflies went aimlessly flitting from flower to flower, just as in warm days at home.

These were all strange, unlooked for conditions to find in an Arctic land. At one place they called my attention to some trees, wee bits of trees they were, too. Willows, not half way up to my boot tops, but perfect. I had seen sage brush on the deserts of New Mexico and thought it the most forlorn little dwarf that could be, but to my mind the willows of the Arctic circle are the bravest living thing that grows.

But how do the boys live there? Their summer houses were small tents, made of skins. Their winter houses are made of stones, piled up till they form a four-sided wall about twelve feet square and six to seven feet high. They are covered with

earth and moss and chinked up with the same, and, I suppose, are fairly comfortable in cold weather. The furniture consists of a hollowed-out stone, filled with fat, for a lamp. The bed is a pile of flat stones, along one side, covered with skins. Their food is meat wholly, except now and then a mouthful of sorrel or sour grass in the summer time. The meat is always eaten raw. The boys and girls are as vivacious a lot of youngsters as you can find anywhere. They don't wash their faces or hands in all their life long. When the dirt gets unbearably thick they rub it off, and when their hair gets too long they cut it with a knife. They know absolutely nothing of any sort of religion. They are not even heathen. They have no books, no pictures, but few playthings, and their life looked as if it could be nothing else from the cradle to the grave but a hard struggle for existence. Yet all the persuasion and inducements we could offer failed to get a single one of them to go back to the United States with us. When the time came for us to go away nearly the whole settlement came out in their little skin canoes and gave us a noisy, tearful farewell. I don't want to go there again, but one of my most cherished memories is that of the little Eskimo lads in that desolate icy land far up toward the North Pole. How blessed, beyond compare, are the boys who read this, who have all the comforts of this favored land, the blessings of Christian homes, and the privileges that surround you on every side.—*Sel.*

### INSTINCT IN MICE.

An Icelandic naturalist tells a wonderful story of the sagacity shown by mice in crossing rivers in search of food. He says that eight or ten mice dragged a piece of thin turf to the edge of the stream. They all got upon this quaint raft, sitting with their heads toward the centre and their tails in the water. They used their tails as oars and rudders, and so got across. He says that many Icelanders have seen these singular voyagers.—*Sel.*