

ST. JOHN, N. B., SATURDAY, JUNE 11, 1898.

## LABRADOR'S NATIVES.

THE WHITE MEN WHO LIVE THERE  
OF THEIR OWN CHOICE.

Vocation That They Follow—Their Homes  
and Their Religion—A Peeking off in their  
Civilization—The Eskimos and Their  
Easy-Going Life.

It seems strange that with freedom to come and go civilized men should choose to dwell in a region so terribly bleak and sterile as Labrador. Yet of the 8,700 inhabitants of that great peninsula, 3,000 are of the white or mixed race. They mainly are descendants of English sailors, some of whom were shipwrecked and more of whom probably left their ships without leave. Finding themselves stranded on this lonely shore, they made the best of their lot, marrying eskimo wives and living after the manner of the country. In later times some Newfoundlanders chose rather to settle in Labrador than make the uncomfortable trips to and fro yearly from St. John's for the annual codfishing off the Labrador shores. These brought their wives and children with them and introduced a new strain of civilized life.

All of these people live in little settlements strung along the coast, on islands or in fords, from Battle Harbor south to the Gulf of St. Lawrence. They dwell in houses of stone or logs. In winter they wear fur garments like the Eskimos; in summer the ordinary garb of Newfoundland fishermen. The women dress in gray or blue wollen stuff, with a gaudy gown for best. On their heads they wear a knit hood or a bright-colored handkerchief, and it may be, at out-of-door work or abroad on the water, a man's sou'wester.

Against the walls in their houses are pasted such pictures as they have been able to clip from the few newspapers that fall in their way, advertising lithographs that have come with goods to the trading stores and pictures of the sort issued by tract societies. On the table or a shelf in the living room is always a Bible, religiously read on every Sunday when the cod are not biting or a fare of fish to be dressed flaked. It is a devout and sober-minded community, that of the whites along the coast of Labrador. Their religious ministrations are provided by the Moravians, who have several missions in Labrador; their temperance is assured by stringent laws forbidding the landing of any liquors in Labrador, and these are made effective by a thorough patrol by the Dominion revenue cutters, which deal inexorably with smugglers of strong water.

In summer the white colonists fish for cod with trawls, nets, traps, and hands line. Before the cod arrive they usually turn a turn in salmon fishing, using nets and spears. They dispose of their surplus fish at the trading stores, with which they keep a yearly account that rarely is completely settled. In October, when the cod have left the shores for deep water, ending the fishing for the year, and the twenty-odd thousand Newfoundland fishermen who came at the beginning of the season have departed for home, the residents in Labrador prepare for winter. He lays evergreen boughs round the foundation of his house for warmth and looks after his supply of firewood. If living far to the north, where wood is scarce he may depend on an oil stove or lamp for heat. For provisions he has an abundance of salted cod and smoked or pickled salmon of his own catching. If the season has been fairly good his credit at the trading store will insure him flour, tea, sugar, and canned or salted meats. If he has a plot of ground in a sheltered, sunny place he may have raised a few bushels of turnips or watery potatoes to help out his fare, and if they have not been kept too busy at the flakes his wife and daughters have gathered from the uplands in the summer wild berries which they preserve in jars of cold water.

Until snow falls he will have traps set for mink and otter in the streams that pour down into the fords. Afterward he will go on snowshoes to the uplands to hunt caribou, and to trap and poison the wolf and Arctic fox for their fur. Also he will do some seal and walrus hunting off the shore for the skins and to get food for his dogs, and seal, like caribou meat, is an agreeable addition to his bill of fare. He keeps from six to twenty Eskimo dogs and does all his winter travelling in a komatik, or sled, drawn by a dog team, usually taking the ice along shore for his roadway.

Taken altogether the white colonist in Labrador is simple of character, ignorant,

religious and superstitious. He is fortified in prejudices and a believer in all sorts of sailors' and fishermen's omens and old wives' tales. The rigors of the climate keep him down to the stern necessities of providing warmth and food and leave him little time for anything else. It is a curious study what the ultimate effect of such conditions upon a civilized white people will be. But already there is found a decrease in stature and a lessening of mental energy. How far these things may be overcome by acclimation remains to be seen. The Icelanders, as far to the north, are noted for learning and intellectual energy—but then they started as a race of hardy and sage men.

Another sort of people are the Eskimos, of whom about 1,700 live along the coast of Labrador from Cape Chidley to the Straits of Bellisle. Through the winter they live in their igloos, or huts of stone, by the waterside, hunting the seal and walrus. They do not go to the uplands, for they are afraid of the mountain Indians, their hereditary enemies. They do not fish for cod, but with the coming of summer set up their sealskin tents at the mouth of streams emptying into the head of a ford and catch trout and salmon for food. This occupation they vary by killing seal and walrus that come with the pack ice or are found summering along the shore. The walrus they kill from their kayaks with the harpoon, to which an inflated sealskin is attached by a string, and, floating at the surface, informs them of the movements of the walrus when he dives below. After they have killed the walrus they observe some queer ceremonies in respect to him.

In towing the body to the shore or ice pan, every man in the hunting party must forgive the others any injury ever done him and declare all quarrels with them to be at an end—else they will not get the walrus safe from the water. When once the walrus is upon the ice or shore, before cutting it up they give it a drink of water. Otherwise, they believe, they would catch no more walrus. This having been done, they divide the meat and take it to their igloos.

The Eskimos bury their dead under mounds of stones, or jutting promontories. A year or two ago a yachting party from St. John's, which had landed near Cape Chidley, saw an Eskimo burial. Four Eskimos hauled over the dry ground the komatik, or sled, on which was the body of a hunter who had been drowned in the killing of a walrus. After them came in irregular order a procession of about thirty men and women. On a high, rocky point of land overlooking the sea they placed the body in a sitting position, laid the hunter's paddle, harpoon, throw stick, and snowshoes beside it, and then, with stones as large as could be handled, proceeded to build a wall about the body. When the wall had been carried above the head they roofed it with flat stones and then built a rounded mound over the whole. But they left a hole in the roof so that the man could come out at any time if he wished. Then the party ranged itself in a semicircle before the mound and one man sang a weird chant with a chorus or refrain in which all the others joined. This done, they went back to their encampment with no further show of grief and resumed their usual occupation.

### THE RAW PEANUT HABIT.

Why Bath N. Y., Sells More Unroasted Peanuts Than Any Other Place.

'The village of Bath,' said a wholesale dealer in nuts, 'sells more raw or unroasted peanuts than any other place in this State. As a matter of fact, the sale of raw peanuts is quite the feature of the peanut trade in Bath, because there are more people there who have the raw peanut habit than there are in any other one place in the State. The reason for it is that the State Soldiers' Home is located there. That is why Bath's peanut trade is unique in the quantity of raw peanuts it handles.'

'No one likes raw peanuts until he acquires the habit, and then he wants them just as regularly as he wants his tobacco. Before the civil war the peanut was chiefly a holiday luxury to the great mass of the people in this country. The day when the circus was in town, and the day when the county fair was whooping it up in behalf the honest husbandman and the man with a four-minute trotting horse, and when the great and glorious Fourth of July had come round again—and it came round with bells on in those days—were about the only occasions when the popular yearning for peanuts was to any extent satisfied. On those memorable occasions the nut was

shucked and masticated until every bucolic jaw was lame. It was only in the towns and large villages that the favored few could have peanuts with them always. Before the war there wasn't a peanut roaster in the whole country outside the big towns, and the rural dealers bought their stock of peanuts already roasted. They were delivered in big, coarse bags. Today every crossroads, from Maine to California, has its peanut stand and its wheezing steam roaster, and the great American nut has no better or more exclusive standing on circus day or the Fourth of July than it has on any ordinary day of the year, although there is a greater concentration and application of energy in its shucking and chewing on those red-letter days.

A large proportion of the soldiers who went South with the Union army were from the rural districts. So, when they got among the peanut patches of Virginia, North Carolina, and Tennessee they were, metaphorically speaking, right in clover. At first they roasted at their campfires the peanuts they pulled from the patches, but it wasn't long before they not only learned to like them raw, but actually preferred them that way. The result was that the boys discovered after a while that they banked after peanuts almost as much as they did after tobacco, and they brought the longing back home with them after the war was over. What has been the consequence? The demand for peanuts increased so rapidly with the return of peace that the crop then grown did not begin to supply it. Wide-awake farmers in Virginia, North Carolina and Tennessee saw the point, and their patches of peanut vines, which had been not much more than an incidental adjunct to the farm, expanded into broad fields and improved cultivation and new methods in caring for and disposing of the crop took the place of the old-time carelessness and crudities. The peanut crop of these three States amounts to more than 4,000,000 bushels annually—a result due entirely to the civil war and the contracting of the peanut habit of the soldiers. The bulk of this crop is handled, prepared, and shipped from Norfolk, the value of it being not less than \$8,000,000 a year.

Naturally, the returned soldier's loud call for peanuts soon brought about a situation that placed the nut within his reach and that of the rural population to the furthest limits 'wayback, and the nut ceased forever to be simply a holiday luxury. The floor of the backwoods grocery is now littered nightly with shucks of peanuts, hot from a revolving roaster, thicker than it ever was on any Fourth of July of the olden time, and the old soldier can get his supply of raw peanuts at Wayback Corner just as fresh and regular almost as if he were still on the old camp ground yanking the nuts from their native soil.

'So that is why the soldiers' Home at Bath makes that village the champion raw peanut centre of the State. There are hundreds of old soldiers living at the home and many of them have the war time peanut habit, and it takes heaps of the nuts to keep pace with them.'

### Kipling's Advice to Schoolboys.

Two English schoolboys who run a school newspaper have drawn a letter from Rudyard Kipling, which the London Daily Mail reprints:

'CAPETOWN, Easter Monday, 1898.

'To the Editors, School Budget.

'GENTLEMEN: I am in receipt of your letter of no date, together with a copy of the School Budget, Feb. 14; and you seem to be in possession of all the cheek that is in the least likely to do you any good in this world or the next. And, furthermore, you have omitted to specify where your journal is printed and in what county of England Horsmonden is situated.

'But on the other hand, and notwithstanding, I very much approve of your 'Hints on Schoolboy Etiquette' and have taken the liberty of sending you a few more, as following:

'1. If you have any doubts about a quantity, cough. In three cases out of five this will save you being asked to 'say it again.'

'2. The two most useful boys in a form are (a) the master's favorite, pro tem., (b) his pet aversion. With a little judicious management (a) can keep him talking through the first half of the construe and (b) can take up the running for the rest of the time. N. B.—A syndicate should arrange to do (b's) imposts in return for this service.

'3.—A confirmed guesser is worth his weight in gold on Monday morning.

'4. Never shirk a master out of bounds.

Pass him with an abstracted eye and at the same time pull out a letter and study it earnestly. He may think it is a commission for some one else.

'5. When (pursued by the native farmer always take to the nearest plough land. Men stick in furrows that boys can run over.

'6. If it is necessary to take other people's apples do it on a Sunday. You can then put them inside your topper, which is better than trying to button them into a tight 'Eton.'

You will find this advice worth enormous sums of money, but I shall be obliged with a check or postal order for 6d at your earliest convenience, if the contribution should be found to fill more than one page. Faithfully yours,  
Rudyard Kipling.

### THE RED CROSS AND ITS FOUNDER.

The Origin of the Famous Order to Relieve the Wounded.

The battle of Solferino, fought in 1859 between the allied French and Sardinians and the Austrians, was one of the most sanguinary conflicts of modern times. Twenty thousand Austrians and eighteen thousand of the allies were killed and wounded.

To Henry Dunant, a Geneva philanthropist who witnessed the battle, it seemed that the wounded, not the soldiers who met instant death, were the real unfortunate. The military hospitals, overburdened, proved inadequate; most of the wounded were left in agony. Thousands who might have been saved by timely help, died upon the battle-fields.

Monsieur Dunant and other volunteers did all they could to relieve the suffering, but that was comparatively little. The Geneva asked himself, What can be done to mitigate the horrors of war? He dwelt upon the problem until he was able to suggest a plan of action; and this he set forth in a pamphlet called 'A Souvenir of Solferino.'

He advocated an international society composed of volunteer nurses, who should hold themselves in readiness to follow armies and aid the wounded of any nation—protected by all nations as neutrals and non-combatants, engaged in works of mercy.

With this pamphlet the Red Cross Society practically began. Monsieur Dunant's project was warmly approved by his own Swiss government; and when he went to Paris, seeking to organize a convention of the powers, he found that there also the "Souvenir" was known.

On the very day after its publication, Madame de Staël, sister to the Duc de Broglie, caused the Red Cross badges to be placed in her drawing-room. To visitors who asked their meaning the lady made such convincing answer that both Paris society and the French government were soon committed to the Red Cross principle.

The international conference which organized the society was held at Geneva in October, 1863. By the end of the following year thirteen governments had officially approved the society's purpose. To-day every civilized nation sustains it. The good it has done in thirty years may be gaged by the single fact, during the Franco-Prussian war, the German society alone expended thirteen million dollars.

But the story does not end here. After Monsieur Dunant had won his victory for the world, he had his own battle to fight, his own tragedy to meet. Unfortunate business ventures cost him his fortune, and he learned what destitution meant.

Happily his misfortunes came to an end. The Dowager Empress of Russia and the Federal Council of Switzerland granted him pensions. These were supplemented by a sum of money contributed by citizens of Stuttgart, Germany.

Now in his peaceful old age the philanthropist knows that these tributes from three nations express the feeling of all toward the man who reminded them that the claims of humanity are never wholly to be disregarded—even in war.

### APT QUESTIONS.

Why Speakers Frequently Fail to Make a Desired Point.

A simple question put in parliament a few years ago caused a laugh throughout all England, and defeated a great measure. Mr. Curzon, then Under Secretary for India, was making a long and elaborate speech against a measure urged by the opposition regarding that dependency, as certain to result in a loss to the government of many lacs of rupees. He repeated with emphasis: 'Consider. Not pounds nor guineas, but lacs of rupees!'

A quiet voice on the opposition benches asked, 'Exactly how much is a lac of rupees?'

Mr. Curzon opened his mouth, stammered, grew red, and then with English candor, said, 'I really don't know.' The House laughed, and in that laugh he lost his cause.

A somewhat similar scene occurred many years ago in Congress. A present of Arabian horses, a sword, etc., arrived from the Imam of Muscat for President Adams. A Western member, with some heat, moved that the gift be sent back with a letter from Congress, informing the ruler in Muscat that the President of the United States was no king, but the servant of the people, and was not permitted to give or receive presents.

Another member rose. 'Such a letter might easily be written. But where is it to be sent? Where is Muscat?'

There was no response. Apparently not a member of the House was prepared to answer, nor could Muscat be found in any atlas published in this country. It was found at last on a German map. A civil answer was returned, and the geographers made haste to insert Muscat in the next edition of their maps.

Nothing perorates bombastic oratory like a sharp question. When Burke, in the height of a labored peroration in Parliament against France, drew a dagger and threw it on the floor, somebody made the act absurd by saying, 'Yes, that's the knife. Where's the fork?'

Equally sharp was the reply of Pope Pius IX., when the cardinals met and eloquently condoled with him on the sufferings in certain villages from earthquake and famine.

'How much are you sorry, my brethren?' he said. 'How many lire does your sympathy weigh?'

The only answer possible to this question was the relief of the villages.

### Rain for Plants.

Rain does plants comparatively little good until it enters the soil, where it can be absorbed by their roots. A daily record of the amount of water in the soil would indicate whether the indications were favorable or otherwise for certain crops. There is a plan for burying specially constructed electrodes in the soil, in order that by measuring the resistance to the passage of a current through the soil the amount of moisture can be ascertained. This method was suggested by the necessity of grounding thoroughly telephone and telegraph lines. If the terminals are not continually in a moist soil the lines do not work during dry seasons.

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