

mediately north of the Canadas, though fur-bearing animals are still comparatively numerous, and the trade consequently valuable, the poor Indians have, at all times, a hard fight against famine. In this tract of country fish is at all seasons scarce, and in winter the sole dependance of the natives for subsistence is placed upon rabbits (the most wretched food upon which to exist for any time that can possibly be conceived); and when these fail, the most frightful tragedies at times take place. Parents have been known to lengthen out a miserable existence by killing and devouring their own children.*

* Revolting and incredible as this may appear, it takes place occasionally among all the Indian tribes when starvation is imminent. My brother records thus :

A valid reason for leaving home.—"In a conversation with the Dogribs we afterwards learned that these mountain Indians are cannibals, and immediately upon any scarcity arising, cast lots for victims. Their fierce manners have been circumstantially detailed by an old man, who, while yet a stripling, fled from the tribe, and joined himself to the Dogribs, in consequence of finding his mother, on his return from a successful day's hunting, employed in roasting the body of her own child, his youngest brother."

I may, in like manner, instance the following as

A good reason for a separation.—An Indian couple, finding their provisions quite exhausted, lengthened out their existence by eating their children. Plenty again reigned with them; but the thoughts of the cannibal father still revelled in the delights of human flesh. In the exuberance of these thoughts he unwittingly muttered in his wife's hearing, "She is fat, and would be good to eat." The hint was not lost on the woman.