

cept that the tail is not covered with a shell, on which account they like to conceal themselves in the shells of snails, which they often drag about with them.

Judging from the barrenness, rude aspect, and deficiency of the necessary articles of food, one would imagine, that this island was not destined for the habitation of man; but, according to the assurance of the Aleutians, it was sufficiently peopled before the arrival of the Russians, but hunger and other untoward accidents had reduced the population to less than one half, and at present not more than one third was remaining. Their residences are all fixed on the shore of the sea, and on the north, east, and west-side of the island, that to the south being uninhabited; they reckon fourteen dwelling-places in the whole, and three hundred and twenty-three male inhabitants. Each dwelling-place consists of two or three mud hovels of various sizes, the largest of which are nine fathoms long, and three broad.

The floor of such a hut is sunk somewhat under ground, and the roof is made of the floating wood which they fish out of the sea, covered with moss and grass. The light is admitted through some small openings in the roof, that serve also for the egress and ingress of the inhabitants, by means of a ladder, which consists of different steps cut out of a plank. About seven foot from the outer wall stakes are driven into the ground, which partly support the roof, and partly serve to mark out the partition for each family, in which, instead of beds, platted grass-mats are spread. They sit on these mats in the day-time to work, and sleep on them at night, using their cloaths for covering. They empty their dirty slops and every filth, into the middle of this common dwelling, which becomes by that means excessively wet and muddy; and were there no openings in the roof, would soon occasion an insupportable stench and vapor. Each partition has a particular wooden reservoir for the urine, which is used both for dyeing the grass, and for washing their hands; but after cleaning the latter in this manner, they rinse them in pure water, and dry them in the open air, by swinging them backward and forward.

They seldom make a fire in the jurt, except to cook the flesh of the sea-animals, and some sorts of fish: but they eat the cod-fish raw after cutting them into small pieces, which they consider as a preventive against the mischief that they might otherwise receive from some small worms, supposed to be in the flesh of these creatures.

They obtain fire by striking two flints over the down of birds, sprinkled with brimstone, which instantaneously catch the falling sparks.

In the evening they burn train-oil in stone lamps, on which