

dren for whom such a frame can be made firmer and closer, are kept sometimes a whole year and even longer, until another comes into the world to supply its place. Such coffins are decorated by the mothers with enamel beads, thongs and bird's bills, and hung over their beds.

I shall now conclude my description of these islanders with some few remarks on their capacities, propensities, and morals. The Aleutians have a good natural understanding, very considerable talents, and a quick comprehension; some of them were very expert at cards, draughts, or even chess, in which none of our companions could excel them. They are indebted for these acquirements to the Russian hunters, who, without intending any good to the islanders, sought by this means to enliven the leisure time, which hung heavy on their hands. Had they however, chosen to turn their thoughts to the introduction of agriculture and every rural occupation, they would have obtained their own object more effectually, and enjoyed the gratifying reflection of having contributed to the civilization of a savage people.

The inhabitants are very quiet and peaceable among each other, at least as far as we can judge from experience, having never observed the least discord among them, during our whole stay.

On my journey round the island, they every where received me with the greatest friendliness, and entertained me in the kindest manner, so that I may with justice place hospitality among the principal virtues of this rude people; it being displayed to all who pass through their places, without regard to relationship or acquaintance; for I myself was witness to their sharing the half of their own provisions with perfect strangers from other islands, and that too without receiving any compensation. At the same time they have the commendable custom of relieving every one from the painful necessity of asking for any thing, by setting before the weary traveller whatever they possess, as soon as he enters their yurt and is seated. In addition to this, the Aleutians form an exception to savages in general, and particularly those inhabiting the Eastern Islands, that they are not thieves. Nor have I observed any other evil propensities among them, but indolence and ingratitude. They never betray any vehement emotions, nor do their countenances ever indicate either vexation, melancholy, or joy, on any occasion, however extraordinary. On the return of a relative from a distance, he is received with as much unconcern as if he had never been absent. He likewise goes himself without saluting any one, or speaking a word, into his partition of the yurt, seats himself by his relations or wives, and takes off his