

off, apparently as much frightened as any of us, at a round trot. We now ascertained that the bears are both fierce and numerous on this road; and as the natives have no fire-arms, they let Bruin get pretty much his own way, excepting that they do sometimes propitiate him, as if he were himself the "Spirit of the Forest," by all sorts of grimaces and obeisances. Two horses had been killed in the neighbourhood only the day before, very probably by the same animal that had caused the present alarm. Before the two brutes were out of sight, we passed the herd of cattle, the drivers riding the bulls with as much indifference as if they had been on horse-back.

The town of Yakutsk enjoys a temperature which keeps its cellars frozen all the year round, although for a short time in summer the thermometer stands at 106 degrees of Fahrenheit in the shade! It is, nevertheless, a great emporium both of the fur and ivory trade; the materials of the latter being the bones of an extinct animal preserved in the frozen soil of eastern Siberia. 'Spring after spring, the alluvial banks of the lakes and rivers, crumbled under the thaw, gave up, as it were, their dead; and beyond the very verge of the inhabited world, the islands lying opposite to the mouth of the Yuna, and as there was reason for believing, even the bed of the ocean itself, literally teemed with these most mysterious memorials of antiquity. The ivory again fetches from forty to seventy roubles a pood, or from 1s to 1s 9d a pound, according to the state of preservation. The tusks are found to be fresher as one advances to the northward—a circumstance which seems to corroborate the notion that the climate has had something to do with their continued existence in an organic form. Though in mere amount, this branch of commerce is of comparatively little value, yet it is well worthy of honourable mention, as having in a high degree promoted the progress of geographical discovery. It was in the eager pursuit of the bones of the mammoth, that most of the northern islands were visited and explored—*islands which, when taken in connection with their mysterious treasures, invest the Asiatic coast of the Arctic Ocean with an interest unknown to the corresponding shores of America.*'

The voyage up the Lena was uneventful, unless a dance may be considered worthy of record. 'The music was the screeching of some half-dozen old women; and the floor was occupied by only one man and one woman at a time. First, the lady would endeavour to escape from her lover with an amusing display of coyness and coquetry; and then the gentleman, in his turn, would draw off, while his mistress would strive, by every winning way, to coax the truant back again. At the conclusion of each dance, the fair performer gave me three kisses, conferring the same favour on each of the other strangers, excepting that our Cossack appeared to me to get, or perhaps to take, a double dose. All the people, whether drunk or sober, carried their civility to excess, kissing my hand frequently, and even the ground on which I had been standing, and showering on me their perpetual benediction of "may you never want bread and salt." Farther on, the travellers suffered a little from hunger and cold; 'for we had started in the heat of the day, without shoes, and with no other clothes, in fact, than our shirts and trousers. The peasants, taking pity on our forlorn state, made a grand fire for us, and offered us a share of their own supper, which consisted of black bread, a little salt, and a dish of cold water, which, that it might look as like soup as possible, was taken with a spoon. Immense piles of the unsavoury cakes rapidly disappeared; and each person, as he finished his meal, bowed to some images that stood against the wall of the best room, of which the door was open.' It is worthy of remark that on the banks of the Lena nettles are cultivated as greens for the table.

Irkutsk, the metropolis of eastern Siberia, 'presented a fine appearance, with its fifteen churches and their spires, its convents, its hospitals, and its other public buildings. But this favourable impression vanished as we approached; and we were disappointed at seeing so little bustle in the wide streets, and so many edifices going to decay.' From this place Sir George had looked forward to a trip to Kiachta and Maimatschin, the Chinese and Russian outposts, where the traffic between the two countries is carried on; but, for some reason not clearly explained, his design was frustrated.

Beyond Irkutsk, they found themselves in the midst of the convict population of Siberia, with whom the native peasants

contrasted favourably. 'Not only are the peasants of Siberia remarkable for their civility, but all grades of society are decidedly more intelligent than the corresponding classes in any other part of the empire, and perhaps more so than in most parts of Europe. The system on which Siberia has been, and continues to be colonised, is admirable alike in theory and in practice. The perpetrators of heinous crimes are sent to the mines; those who have been banished for minor delinquencies are settled in villages or on farms; and political offenders, comprising soldiers, authors, and statesmen, are generally established by themselves in little knots, communicating to all around them a degree of refinement unknown to other half-civilised countries.'

'The villages are very numerous, not only on the road, but as far back on either side as we could see; and the people all looked healthy, comfortable, and happy. In any place where the post-house was out of repair, our police officer used to pounce on the best house for our use; and as the owners would neither make any demand nor accept any remuneration, we were generally obliged to compromise the matter by forcing a small gift on the host's wife or daughter. The dwelling in which we breakfasted to-day was that of a person who had been sent to Siberia against his will. Finding that there was only one way of mending his condition, he worked hard, and behaved well. He had now a comfortably furnished house and a well cultivated farm, while a stout wife and plenty of servants bustled about the premises.' Sir George considers Siberia 'the best penitentiary in the world.' 'When not bad enough for the mines, each exile is provided with a lot of ground, a house, a horse, two cows, and agricultural implements, and also, for the first year, with provisions. For three years he pays no taxes whatever; and for the next ten, only half of the full amount. To bring fear as well as hope to operate in his favour, he clearly understands that his very first slip will send him from his home and his family, to toil as an outcast, in the mines.' The mines and washeries, however, for which there is now a mania, are unfavourable to the settlement and cultivation of Siberia; although it is supposed they will ultimately support the agriculture they now embarrass, by affording a regular and extensive market for its produce.

The fine old city of Tobolsk, the ancient capital of Siberia, is admirably situated on two sides of the Irtysh; but its buildings present a melancholy spectacle of dilapidation and decay, and the population and trade are rapidly diminishing, in consequence of the general government of the province being transferred to Omok. From this place a single chapter brings the traveller to London, his journey round the world having been accomplished within the space of nineteen months and twenty-six days. We now close these interesting volumes, in the belief that the extracts we have made will induce all who have it in their power to refer to the book itself.

LUMINOUS INSECTS.

A few days ago we received a present we had long desired: one of the celebrated luminous beetles of South America, (*Elatér noctiluca*.) It resembled our common "snapping bug," except that it was double the size or more, and had a spot on each side of the head, which emitted a brilliant greenish light in the dark, and was sometimes so bright as to enable us to read a few words in a book. We had the pleasure of exhibiting it to many friends, and at a meeting of the Farmers' Club, where it was much admired. It was brought from Havana, in a joint of sugar-cane, on which it fed.

It died in a few days. It is not uncommon, we believe, in our most southern states.

Our attention having been thus particularly turned to luminous insects, we insert some extracts from a late writer, chiefly on the English glow-worm in our own country, though it is rarely to be seen. We have observed them three or four times in the course of our lives.

The glow-worm (*Lampyrus noctiluca*) is very common, but is local in its habits, being only found in certain places, and has been supposed to disappear occasionally for some time, and then reappear with its usual splendor. It is more generally found to inhabit the borders of paths and the other margins of woods or coppices, especially in low situations, where it is observable after the heat of the day is over, and when the dew is falling. The