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*Prehistoric and Present Commerce among the Arctic
Coast Eskimo.*

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If, with reference to the Eskimo, we are to call *prehistoric* all the time that antedates the first visit to them of a white man who puts on record some information concerning them, then some tribes of Eskimo even now may be in the prehistoric period, for it is not certain that there are not tribes whose very names and existence are unknown to us. From this point of view, prehistoric time may include not only to-day but to-morrow. In the following discussion, it will appear just what is meant by "prehistoric" in the case of each tribe or section of the country. In general the past will be inferred from the present condition supplemented by some apparently reliable information through word of mouth.

So far as a research might be based on the published or unpublished accounts of the explorers of the past, this essay will be found wanting, for the sources are not at hand where this is written.

There are three things that chiefly determine the character of Eskimo commerce: the geographic conditions that make

PHONETIC NOTE. The alphabet used in spelling Eskimo names is that of the Bureau of American Ethnology, Washington, slightly modified: \acute{g} = g in Icelandic *saga* or Norwegian *dag*; \acute{r} = the German guttural r , while r is as in English; s always has a sibilant sound, nearly, but not quite, equal to English *sh*; tj = English *ch* in *church*. Other variations from the Bureau of Ethnology alphabet occur, but are of little consequence.