

Theirs is no affectation of regret. There are twenty-two of them around me, all busy in good offices to the Docto Kayens ; and there are only two women and the old blind patriarch Kresuk, 'Drift-wood,' left behind at the settlement. CHAPTER  
LVII.

"But see! more of them are coming up—boys ten years old pushing forward babies on their sledges. The whole nation is gipsying with us upon the icy meadows. A nation  
gipsying  
on the ice

"We cook for them in our big camp kettle ; they sleep in the *Red Eric* ; a berg close at hand supplies them with water ; and thus, rich in all that they value,—sleep, and food, and drink, and companionship,—with their treasured short-lived summer sun above them, the *beau ideal* and sum of Esquimaux blessings, they seem supremely happy.

"Poor creatures ! It is only six months ago that starvation was among them : many of the faces around me have not yet lost the lines of wasting suspense. The walrus season is again of doubtful productiveness, and they are cut off from their brethren to the south, at Netelik and Appah, until winter rebuilds the avenue of ice. With all this, no thoughts of the future cross them. Babies squall, and women chatter, and the men weave their long yarns with peals of rattling hearty laughter between.

"Ever since we reached Pekiutlik, these friends of ours have considered us their guests. They have given us hand-sledges for our baggage, and taken turn about in watches to carry us and it to the water's edge. But for them our dreary journey would have been prolonged at least a fortnight, and we are so late even now that hours may measure our lives. Metek, Myouk, Nessark, Marsumah, Erkee, and the half-grown boys, have been our chief labourers ; but women, children, and dogs are all bearing their part. Kindness  
and gene-  
rosity of  
the Esqui-  
maux.

"Whatever may have been the faults of these Esquimaux heretofore, stealing was the only grave one. Treachery they may have conceived ; and I have reason to believe that, under superstitious fears of an evil influence from our presence, they would at one time have been glad to destroy us. But the day of all this has passed away. When trouble came to us and to them, and we bent ourselves to their habits,—when we looked to them to procure us fresh meat, and they found at our poor Oomiak-soak shelter and protection during their wild bear-hunts,—then we were so