

encircle his head with a crown, to lord it over them. They maintain no court, do obeisance to no ruler with imaginary divine rights and superior wisdom. It is true that in every village there is a man called the *tyok* or *taion*, who by virtue of high intelligence acts in an advisory capacity. He is respected for his knowledge and better judgment, and does what he can to further the general interests. But this man receives no unusual attentions, no compensation, and is not elevated in rank or caste by virtue of being the *taion*.

The natives are subject to nearly all the common diseases, barring nervous complaints and those of endemic character belonging to other zones. I found no traces, however, of small-pox. Tuberculosis is even more prevalent than in temperate zones. This is owing to the cold and dampness of the climate necessitating close quarters in the snow-houses, which afford poor chance of escaping infection from tubercle bacilli. Syphilis was introduced into Nanek in the summer of 1895 by a white fisherman. Two cases developed while I was there, one in a man, the other in a woman. They are the first authenticated cases occurring north of the peninsula among the natives of Alaska. His disease, if unchecked by the instrumentality of white physicians, is destined to make frightful inroads with these people—even to exterminate their race! I did everything possible to quarantine these cases and hasten their cure, but any physician knows that in four months very little can be accomplished in dealing with this disease. The shameless white scoundrels, lost to manhood and conscience, who spread this poison can procure relief in charity hospitals upon returning to San Francisco; but the innocent victims of their criminal lust, the Eskimos, must rot above the ground unless further medical aid is soon sent.

Scurvy is very common in spring, owing to the meager, semi-starvation diet, now limited almost solely to fish.

The saddest feature in the life of this cheerless people is their extreme destitution. Their raiment is tattered skins. Their food, little better than carrion, is so scarce that many of them perish every winter from starvation.

It is not because they are slothful, indolent, or improvident. Twenty years ago,

their industry in hunting and fishing yielded them an abundance of skins for clothing and food suitable to this icy clime. The life-blood of the Eskimos with their independence and manhood has been swallowed up by three great corporations whose heads are in San Francisco.

About fifty men have grown enormously rich to the utter degradation and impoverishment of a virtuous and self-reliant race. An important food and industrial supply, the whale, has been dynamited out of Alaskan waters by the steam-schooners of the Pacific Whaling Company. The seals and other fur-bearing animals have been practically annihilated on both land and sea by the Alaska Fur and Commercial Company. This company, has wrought its purposes in Alaska by fixing a bondage on the natives more galling and detestable than outright slavery, because it disclaims responsibility or care for its wretched serfs.

Under the guise of preserving the game from quick destruction, and to prevent uprisings of the natives against the company's traders at the various posts (they line the mainland and peninsula from Sitka to Bering straits, and extend up the many large rivers), a law was caused to be enacted at Washington prohibiting the sale of repeating arms to the natives of Alaska. This was a ruse to keep outside parties away, and to enable the traders themselves to supply arms at unheard of and almost fabulous prices. The native was not slow in appreciating the superiority of fire-arms over bows and arrows in hunting bears and seals. The method of exchange was as follows: The rifle was set upright on the ground, stock down, and the natives piled skins upon one another flatwise until the stack reached to the muzzle. Thus, often, more than eight or nine hundred dollars worth of fine furs were obtained for a ten-dollar gun.

There never was any excuse for the law which gave opportunity to perpetrate this shameful robbery. In spite of its ostensible purpose the fur-bearing animals have become almost extinct. The natives have exhibited the greatest forbearance and looked on in all humility at the devastation this company has made. So far from an uprising against the traders (whom, God knows, they ought to have annihilated), there has been but one native homicide in