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## RUSSIAN AMERICA.

## ITS PHYSICAL CHARACTERISTICS AND NATIVE TRIBES.

It is doubtful if there be a spot on the globe that can truly be called useless. An observant mind may always perceive much that is beautiful, as well as much that is useful, and we who have voyaged in many distant regions notice this everywhere. Neither arctic nor antarctic climes are so barren as generally supposed. Mines of wealth—even if not always similar to what exists in civilized life—abound in them, and statistics prove that an abundant return is generally found for liberal enterprise in those quarters. Greenland, under the wise administration of the Danish king, is an instance of what may be done; and Russian America can undoubtedly become the same, if properly ruled. What the prospects are of making it not only a useful, but ultimately a valuable acquisition to the United States, may perhaps be gathered from the following information concerning it.

The boundaries and extent of the new Territory are as follows: Commencing from the southernmost point of the island called Prince of Wales, which point lies in the parallel of 54° 40' north latitude, and between the 131st and 133d of west longitude, meridian of Greenwich, the said line shall ascend to the north along the channel called Portland Channel, so far as the point of the continent where it strikes the fifty-sixth degree of north latitude. From this last-mentioned point the line of demarcation shall follow the summit of the mountains situated parallel to the coast as far as the point of intersection of the one hundred and forty-first degree of west longitude of the same meridian, and finally from the point of intersecting the said meridian line of the one hundred and forty-first degree in its prolongation as far as the Frozen Ocean. With reference to the line of demarcation laid down in the preceding article, it is understood—first, that the island called Prince of Wales Island shall belong wholly to Russia, and now, by this cession, wholly to the United States; second,

that whenever the summit of the mountains which extend in a direction parallel to the coast from the fifty-sixth degree of north latitude to the point of intersection of the one hundred and forty-first degree of west longitude shall prove to be at the distance of more than ten marine leagues from the ocean, the limit between the British possessions and the line of coast which is to belong to Russia, as above mentioned—that is to say, the limit to the possessions ceded by this Convention—shall be formed by a line parallel to the winding of the coast, and which shall never exceed the distance of ten marine leagues therefrom. The western limit, within which the territories and dominions conveyed are contained, passes through a point in Behring's Straits on the parallel of sixty-five degrees thirty minutes north latitude, at its intersection by the meridian which passes midway between the islands of Krusenstern, or Ignaalook and the island of Ratmanoff, or Noonarbook, and proceeds due north without limitation into the same Frozen Ocean. The same western limit, beginning at the same initial point, proceeds thence in a course nearly southwest through Behring's Straits and Behring's Sea, so as to pass midway between the northwest point of the island St. Lawrence and the southeast point of Cape Choukottki to the meridian of 172° west longitude. Thence, from the intersection of that meridian in a southwesterly direction, so as to pass midway between the Island of Attou and the Copper Island of the Kormanddorski couplet or group in the North Pacific Ocean, to the meridian of 193 degrees west longitude, so as to include in the territory conveyed the whole of the Aleutian Islands east of that meridian.

Taking the coast-line to begin with, there are numerous islands fringing the mainland, with several excellent harbors and places of shelter. Inside of these islands, vessels can navigate with perfect safety to the Aleutian Archipelago, and

thence, in the summer season, northward through Behring's Strait, round Point Barrow to the Mackenzie River, with far less obstruction from ice, than on the east about Hudson or Baffin Bay. Indeed, light draught vessels may coast the whole line of territory, with rarely any great impediment, and, as the Mackenzie is navigable for 1000 miles, for even large ships, so may the Colville River yet be found capable of conveying craft on its waters near to the Yukon, or Kvihpak.

On the southern coast, the scenery is magnificent. Densely timbered mountains, with several fine rivers and noble inlets breaking through the gaps, meet the eye. The Steeken, or St. Francis River, in latitude,  $56\frac{1}{2}^{\circ}$  is the first stream we meet of any importance, and is navigable for nearly 200 miles. Gold has been found in its neighborhood, but whether sufficient to pay for working there, until better settled, is a question. Game and fish, however, are abundant, as indeed may be found throughout the whole territory.

Beyond the Steeken are met several other rivers coming from the interior, and some of them connecting by lakes. These streams and water-channels are important, and future exploration will no doubt discover them to be far more valuable than as known now. Indeed, the whole system of water communication in that region is better than ordinarily supposed.

The British Hudson Bay Company has long leased the strip of land on the sea-coast between Fort Simpson and Cross Sound. It runs inland for about 30 miles, and was originally rented at 2,000 otters a year, but has latterly been paid for at a sum of £1,500 sterling per annum.

New Archangel (Sitka), the principal Russian settlement, is on the Island of Baranor, and has a fine harbor, in latitude,  $57\frac{1}{2}^{\circ}$ , longitude  $137^{\circ}$ . Here, the mean temperature in summer is  $57^{\circ}$ , and in winter  $34^{\circ}$ . Indeed, the whole coast of Northwest America is very much milder than on the Atlantic board in the same latitudes. An examination of the charts of Professor Dove will show that  $41^{\circ}$  Fah. is the equal annual mean tem-

perature about Sitka,  $36\frac{1}{2}^{\circ}$  for the mean annual temperature just north of St. Elias, which has its isochimal line of  $32^{\circ}$  running to New York;  $32^{\circ}$  the mean annual temperature in latitude  $64^{\circ}$ ; and  $23^{\circ}$  in latitude  $69^{\circ}$  N.

With reference to the southern portion of these territories, the following extract from official reports in the British House of Commons, shows its value: "At Fort Simpson, on Mackenzie River, five hundred miles from sea-coast, on a large island of deep alluvial soil, farming was unusually successful. There were regular crops of barley, regular cattle, and a very good garden. That is in about latitude  $62^{\circ}$ . Barley grew there very well indeed." — *Lefroy H. B. Report*, 18, 246.

Beyond the Peninsula of Alaska there are fine rivers running into the sea from the far interior, but the most noble of them all is the Kvihpak, which enters the ocean by several mouths south of Cape Romans, off Norton Sound. This splendid stream is navigable for steamers full a thousand miles, where it receives the Rat or Porcupine River, flowing from near the lower part of the Mackenzie, and the Yukon coming from the south-east. The Hudson Bay Company have a port called Fort Yukon, at the junction of the Rat and Yukon with the Kvihpak. About the region of Fort Yukon, travelers and official evidence prove that there is mineral wealth to be found greater in value than all the returns of the fur trade. Barley is grown there, and also at Fort Norman, in latitude  $64^{\circ} 31'$ , where oats and potatoes have likewise been raised. But independent of all this, the valuable whale-fishery to the north of Russian America, and about the mouth of the Mackenzie River, deserves particular notice. The Mackenzie, it is true, belongs to British dominion, but as it is a river of great importance, navigable, without obstruction, to the Great Slave Lake, one thousand miles from the sea, it commands especial attention. As for the whale-fishery, an official navy report from Washington a few years back, stated that "a trade had sprung up by the capture of whales to the north of Behring Strait, of more value to

the United States than all the commerce with what is called the East, and in two years there had been added to the national wealth, from this source alone, more than eight million dollars."

With reference to the minerals, Sir John Richardson says: "I have little doubt of many of the accessible districts abounding in metallic wealth of far greater value than all the returns which the fur trade can ever yield." In fact, the whole of the Mackenzie River Valley—and from that testimony we can equally judge of the other localities west—is a mass of minerals, the banks of the river being composed of deep beds of bituminous shale associated with alum and beds of iron clay. The soil is, in parts, actually plastic with the transfusion of mineral tar. Mr. Isbister often drove a pole into one of the natural pits in which it occurs, ten feet deep without finding any bottom. The river itself is of great depth, and will admit vessels of the largest class.

On some of the newly-discovered islands, northward, the natives were found to have all their implements made of copper, their spears and arrows barbed with the same, the ore being remarkably fine.

At the south-east corner of Norton Sound, upon a peninsula, is situated Fort St. Michael, or Michaelowski, a principal Russian port, and several other ports are on the Kvihpak, the Darabin, and along the coast.

The northern part of the territory, about the coast, is low and full of small lakes or pools of fresh water to a distance of about fifty miles from the shore, where the surface becomes undulating and hilly, and, further south, mountainous. The level part is a peat-like soil covered with moss and tufted grass, interspersed with brushwood, perfectly free from rocks and stones, and only a little gravel is occasionally seen in the beds of rivers. The bones of the fossil elephant and other animals are found in many localities, particularly in Escholtz Bay.

The land is intersected by several rivers which frequently unite, or so connect by channels, that large boats can go from bay to bay without risking the sea pass-

age. Four of the largest of these rivers take their rise far to the south-east, in a mountainous country, inhabited by the Indians. The most northerly is the Kang'e-a-nok, which, after receiving on its right bank two tributaries, flows northward, and, at about one hundred miles from the sea, divides into two streams, the one known as the Colville, which is two miles wide at its mouth, and the other as the Tu-tu-a'-ling, or Kok. This latter flows through the level country nearly due west into Wainwright Inlet, ninety miles south-west of Point Barrow.

The Mu-na-tak is the next large river, and has its source close to that of the Colville, going to the west, direct through the country until, with a curve, it falls into Hotham Inlet, Kotzebue Sound. By the natives, it is considered their most important river, as boats can ascend it and be transported across the intervening land to the Colville in two days.

The river Ko'-wak is next in size and importance, and is prized for a few mineral substances procured in its neighborhood. The Si'-la-wik comes next, and empties into a large lake which communicates with the eastern extreme of Hotham Inlet. This lake is twenty-five miles in length from east to west, and fifteen in breadth from north to south, of an irregular oval form.

Large pine-trees border these rivers in many parts, especially at their embouchures. Some that were measured had a girth of sixty inches at not less than six feet from the ground.

There are many settlements of natives at, or near these rivers, and along the coast; but the principal are at Point Barrow, Cape Smyth, Point Hope, and Cape Prince of Wales. This latter, or close to it, at King-ing, or King-a-ghee, is the great trading-place with the Asiatic or Tehoutki tribes who, after midsummer, cross the straits in boats from East Cape to the Diomed Islands, and thence to the Cape. From there, after trading with the people belonging to the Southern Districts, the boats proceed along the shore of Kotzebue Sound until the high land near Cape Krusenstern comes into view,

when they steer by it for *Se-su-a-ling*, at the mouth of the *Nu-na-tak*. At this place, towards the latter end of July, people from all the coasts and rivers, to a great distance, meet, and an extensive barter takes place amidst feasting, dancing, and other enjoyments.

From *Se-su-a-ling* the *Nu-na-tak* people now carry the goods into the interior, and finally descend the *Colville*, where the tribes from *Point Barrow* on the west, and others from the east, meet for a fresh scene of barter and amusement. Thus the *Nu-na-tak* people become the principal carriers, and import from *Kokh'-lit Nuna*, as they call *Asia*, the Russian goods most in demand.

These natives are mixed *Tchoutki* and *Esquimaux*, and exclusively dwell along the coast and within a district included by a line drawn from the mouth of the *Colville* to the deepest angle of *Norton Sound*. Their number does not exceed 2,500 souls, all of whom are akin in form, features, language, dress, habits and pursuits. For their support, they have several varieties of the whale, the narwahl,

walrus, four different sorts of seal, the bear, and some small fish from the sea; while the inlets and rivers yield them the salmon, the herring, and the smelt, besides other fish; and, on the land, besides abundance of berries and a few edible roots, are obtained the reindeer, the *inna* (an animal which nearly answers the description of the *argali*, or *Siberian sheep*), the hare, the brown or black bear, wolverines and martens, the wolf, the lynx, blue and black foxes, the beaver, muskrats, and lemmings. In summer, birds are very numerous, particularly geese in the interior, and ducks on the coast. Black-lead, and several varieties of stones for making whetstones, arrow-heads, labrets, and for striking fire, are produce of the land and articles of barter.

In the summer months the available resources of game, salmon, whales, seal, etc., as well as fruit, are enormous. Voyagers have occasionally obtained large quantities for the merest trifle in comparison, and *Sir Edward Belcher* states that, on two visits, the results of bartering were as follows:

For 1 cutter load of salmon—about one ton—	was given	$\frac{1}{4}$ lb tobacco.
1 " " eider duck— $\frac{1}{2}$ ton—	"	$\frac{1}{4}$ lb "
610 lbs. solid venison . . . . .	"	1 knife = 4 pence.
7 haunches venison . . . . .	"	1 string beads = 1 cent.
1 sealskin full of reindeer fat = to 60 lbs. }	"	1 lb tobacco.
2 very large swans . . . . . }	"	

The same officer remarks: "All their clothes, finery—indeed, I may add, very delicate embroidery—are executed by the women, and our museum attest the beauty of their designs, as well as the extreme delicacy of their manufacture. Can we then allow for a moment, that males as well as females, possessing such taste and aptitude for invention, are not in a condition for improvement as well as civilization? Indeed, if they are not tampered with by the introduction of ardent spirits, who shall assert that at no very remote period those people may not be furnishing for our Pacific commerce, in Japan and Northern China, products of considerable value, as regards mercantile transactions, for exchange of goods. Salmon may be

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cured, furs obtained, and minerals of value to the Japanese, taken to their southern markets. We have not as yet ascertained from what source plumbago and other minerals found among them are procured, simply because we have not exhibited to them the objects in their crude state."

Their ingenuity and skill are indeed very remarkable, and vie with civilized life. The chert, or flinty weapons, are in general use, and the material is obtained in many parts along the coast. At *Cape Lisburne*, chert has been taken from the vein, and manufactured by the natives under the inspection of *Sir E. Belcher*. This cape is about sixty feet high, composed of a grayish dolomite, in which many

fossil encrinites, corals, and crustacea are found. Near the base, about four feet above the sea-level, a vein of chert exists on which the friable stone lies.

These Esquimaux are evidently of Tartar origin, and no doubt migrated from Asia about the time of their wars in China during the ninth and tenth centuries. They are distinct from the Indians, with whom they not infrequently have severe quarrels. These latter, however, are far from being a friendly people, and one or two massacres committed by them on the Russian settlers and strangers, show barbarous treachery not to be ignored in dealing with them. Not so the Esquimaux. In general, they are well disposed and willing to receive friendly advances made to them. The exploring voyagers all, as a rule, speak favorably of their behavior.

To themselves they apply the word *Enyuin*—people—the plural of *ē-nyúk*, a person of any nation, prefixing, when necessary, the name of their *nuna*, or country, as, Nu-wúng-meun, that is, Nu-wúk En-yu-in, Noowook or Point Barrow people: Ing-ga-lan-da-meum, Englishmen.

Of their language we have not space to say much here. There is hardly any difference between that of the Esquimaux on the eastern parts of America, and those about Behring Strait, and the Tchoutski of the coast. Interpreters born on the shores of Hudson Bay have no difficulty in conversing with the natives of Northwest America by the sea. Moravian missionaries of Labrador, also, can speak with them.

They divide the year into four seasons, as follows:

*O'-ki-ak*, including October, November, and December.

*O'-ki-ok*, which is January, February, and March.

*O-pen-rak'-sak*, April, May, and part of June.

*O-pen-rak'*, the remaining part of June, together with July, August, and September. They have also particular designations for the successive moons, to the number of twelve, the setting in of win-

ter being the commencement of their year.

For denoting time they also have expressions equivalent to yesterday, to-day, to-morrow, morning, afternoon, evening, etc., but these are by no means very precise; and in speaking of events a year or more past, they use two terms, *ai-pá-ne*, and *al-rá-ne*, in the olden time, or indefinitely.

The following gives a sample of a few words belonging to their language:

One—Ah-tou'-zuk.

Two—I'-pah.

Three—II'-jahn.

Four—Tcheet'-ah-mahn.

Five—Cal'-yee-mahn.

Six—Ah-min'-ran, or Ar-wing'-ahng.

Seven—I'-pahng.

Eight—II'-lahng.

Nine—Tcheet'-ah-mahng.

Ten—Cal'-yee-mahng.

It will be observed that seven, eight, nine, and ten are almost identical with two, three, four, five, and it is doubtful if they have any words for numbers over six. All quantities above that are given by repetition.

A man—Mah'-tah-lok.

A woman—Ar'-nak.

A brother—Noo-kahng'.

A son—Noo-koo'-pe-ach.

A daughter—E-mun'-ha.

Mamma—Ah-ma'h-mah.

Water—E-ma'ak.

Fire—Nah-ne'-ach.

Earth—Noo'-nah.

The Sun—Tzeer-ka-nok.

Moon—Taht'-koeuk.

Wood—Kí'-yoke.

Stone—Ko'-yoke.

Ice—Noo-woo-ra'-me-oh.

Copper—Kar-no-je'-ach.

A Pipe—Koyn'-gah.

A Boat—Ung'-yak.

To sleep—Tchin'-ning.

To awaken—Tche-kin'-ning.

To eat—Ne-ge'-yok.

The accents denote more emphasis on the syllable.

Strangers, without an interpreter, may, however, soon form an acquaintance with them. On first meeting they will pause

awhile to observe if you are friendly; then, advancing with their hands held up at an angle of  $45^\circ$  over their head, they will slowly lower them and make rapid passes over the stomach as a salutation. If this is returned, they will approach, and fixing the forehead against the visitor's, use it as a fulcrum to *rub noses*—a very expressive, if not agreeable ceremony. Then follows a desire to trade, and it is generally understood that for everything given something must be returned. If a *free* gift is made, wrong is often suspected; and it is always better to bestow or receive an article, no matter how trifling, in return, than to offer or take gratuitously.

The stature of these people is not so dwarfish as supposed. Some are 5 ft. 10 in., and rarely any under 5 ft. 1 in. They are robust, muscular, and active, their chief strength being in the back. Their coarse, sooty black hair is cut in an even line across the forehead, cropped close on the crown, but kept long at the back and ears. The color of the skin is a light yellowish brown, growing darker, and soon weatherbeaten, as age advances. They have remarkably firm and regular white teeth when young, but towards middle age they have lost their enamel, and become black, or are worn down to the gums. In general, they have a good-humored expression of countenance, but tattooing and lip ornaments much disfigure them.

Their dresses are made of the skins of deer and seals. The upper garments are double, the inner one having the hair of the skin next to the body, and the outer one in the reverse direction. The coat or frock has a hood attached to it for drawing over the head, and a skirt hanging down to the calf of the leg in a peak. Their trowsers descend low in the leg, and they often wear two pair of sealskin boots, with the hairy side of both turned inwards. The dwellings of these people are, in summer, good, substantial tents, made with deerskins, and in winter, log-houses, constructed of driftwood, which is generally abundant on the Arctic shores, and collected in large quantities by the

native. The outline of the house is formed by digging a pit about twelve feet square and ten in depth, and driving vertical piles within these lines. These serve for the support of long spars laid obliquely, and which, resting on their vertical ends, and ballasted with earth on their butts, form a four-sided pyramidal roof, leaving an opening at the summit about eighteen inches square, which serves as a window as well as ventilator. This is closed, when requisite, by a frame, on which the large skin of the paunch of the whale or seal is stretched, excluding the air and cold, and yet affording a pleasant, subdued light, about equal to ground glass. The flooring is formed of split timber, nicely smoothed, the interstices filled or caulked internally and externally with moss. Over all, outside, the hut is coated with bark, fine brushwood and turf.

The entrance to them is constructed on a scientific principle. It is a passage of about twenty or twenty-five feet long, from the south, and from four to six feet below the flooring. This passage is at first six feet high, and descends gradually until about five feet below the surface of the ground, becoming low and narrow before it terminates beneath the floor of the hut. Near its middle, on one side, branches off a recess, ten to twelve feet long, with a conical roof open at the top, forming an apartment which serves as a cookhouse; and on the other side is often a similar place, used as a store or clothes-room. The youst is entered by a round aperture in the floor, so that a person has to descend into the passage, crawling along it, and then ascend into the room, the outer entrance being generally closed by a slab of ice.

On each side the room, bed-places are formed away from the entrance, and on either side is an oil-burner, or "fire-place," having a slender rack of wood suspended over it, on which articles of clothing are placed to dry, also a block of snow to melt and drip into a large wooden vessel. Beneath the last, again, are other vessels for different purposes, some of them frequently containing skins to undergo preparation for being dressed. These vessels

are each made of a thin board of the breadth required, bent into the form of a hoop, and the ends sewed together neatly with strips of whalebone, the bottom being retained in its place by a score like the end of an ordinary cask.

The oil-burner, or lamp, is an article deserving mention. This lamp is a flat stone of a peculiar shape, three to four and a half feet long, and four inches thick, pointed at the ends by the union of the two unequally convex sides, somewhat like the gibbous moon. The upper surface is hollowed to the depth of three-quarters of an inch, to contain the oil, leaving merely a thin lip all round, and several narrow ridges dividing the hollow part, both lengthwise and transversely. It is placed on two horizontal pieces of wood, fixed in the side of the hut, about a foot from the floor. Not only a good light, but a great degree of heat, is produced by these lamps, and it is seldom that the temperature of the room is under 70° Fah. Great care is taken to keep it trimmed, and no offensive degree of smoke arises, though the olfactory nerves are generally saluted by other scents anything but agreeable.

Captain Trollope, when describing the dwelling-places of the Esquimaux he encountered during a journey to Kingaghee, says: "The interior was really clean and cheerful. It was a spacious room, twenty feet square, with brilliant lights in troughs of seal oil, the wicks, formed of moss, placed in a row at the edge, and fed by a piece of blubber hanging within reach of the flame. The light was excellent. I was reminded of the jets of gas often seen in shop windows; and the heat was far more than I could have believed."

The Esquimaux seem to be particularly fond of dancing; and the tambourine is, apparently, their only approach to what we should call music. It is a thin skin (intestine of a seal), well stretched on a circular frame of wood, and beat against a stick. On one occasion, when several of the natives were on board the Plover, a flute was played by an officer. This greatly astonished them. They could not comprehend how the sounds were pro-

duced, and it was highly amusing to the sailors to see one of the most intelligent of the Esquimaux, who fancied there was some trick practised, examine the fingers and lips of the musician to find out the deceit. On another occasion, Captain Maguire permitted several of the natives, who had evinced a friendly disposition, to enter the vessel, and witness some of the amusements going on amongst the crew. "Being made," says the Captain, "to seat themselves round the deck, the entertainment commenced by serving each native with a little tobacco; then our musical instruments (a violin, cornopean, drum, and triangle) played a lively air, which caused a general exclamation of wonder and pleasure, most of the party now hearing them for the first time. This was followed by a request for them to dance, and, being supplied with a drum, they willingly complied. Our seamen danced in their turn, and, in a little time, the natives entered fully into the spirit of the amusement, stripping off their skin-coats, and danced naked to the waist, with the temperature at 6°, showing the state of excitement they work themselves into, as the male performers-shout in a wild, triumphant manner, and all the lookers-on join in a chorus, and become as much excited as the performers. Their appearance makes a scene as savage as can well be imagined."

The Esquimaux generally show great ingenuity in making sundry models of canoes, representations of themselves, or imitations of birds, animals, etc. The late Lieutenant Hooper (a most amiable, zealous, enterprising, and highly-talented young officer, who published an account of his residence amongst the Tuski, when belonging to H. M. S. Plover, under the title of "Ten Months in the Tents of the Tuski"), thus describes some of these clever artificers: "At Wootair dwelt a cunning artist, a very Tuski Cellini, whose skill in sculpturing ivory was the theme of praise throughout the country. One man made whip-handles well; another produced the best thongs; and so in all things we saw, as I believe must inevitably be, *chaqu'un a son métier*. A fine



harvest was reaped by the more ingenious. Models of sledges, and of household furniture, pipes, and toys of ivory, among which were ducks, seals, dogs, etc., made for the children, and evidencing great taste and variety, were eagerly purchased."

The hatchets are made of a thick piece of copper, about five or six inches long, and from one and a-half to two inches square, beveled away at one end like a mortise-chisel, and fastened at the other to a wooden handle about twelve or fourteen inches in length, so as to resemble an adze; but they have neither weight nor sharpness to act like an adze or hatchet, and are generally applied in working like a chisel, being driven into the wood with a heavy club.

The Tuski understand the art of tanning, and are able to produce very fair specimens, but practise it principally with sealskin, which is dressed in all colors; the white is very delicate, and much prized. Deerskins are dressed with ammonia, red ochre, and other materials. They are rendered very soft and pliable, but the mode of curing gives them an exceedingly unpleasant odor, which is only imperceptible in cold weather.

Amulets or charms seem to be very common among the Esquimaux. Parry speaks of them in the Hudson Bay tribes; and here, in North-West America, they are very similar. The *amber* is said to be "frequently found in the pools inland, or floating on the sea, to which it has been carried in the summer by the floods."

The Esquimaux women deserve more notice even than the men, for they are more intelligent, and more capable of becoming civilized. Like most of their sex; however, in wild regions, they are considered of secondary importance by the men, Indian and Esquimaux alike. One of the chiefs, Matonabee, once said, in explanation: "When all the men are heavy laden, they can neither hunt nor travel to any considerable distance; and, in case they meet with success in hunting, who is to carry the produce of their labor? Women," added he, "were made for labor; one of them can carry or haul

as much as two men can do. They also pitch our tents, make and mend our clothing, keep us warm at night; and, in fact, there is no such thing as traveling any considerable distance, or for any length of time, in this country, without their assistance. They are maintained at a trifling expense, for, as they always stand cook, the very licking of their fingers, in scarce times, is sufficient for their subsistence."

As regards their appearance, we cannot say they are beautiful, though there is a winning charm about them that attracts. Before marriage they are generally well-behaved and modest; afterward it too often occurs that they become what we should term shameless, especially when strangers are near. The husbands, however, are to blame, as they usually contract all such bargains. Even among themselves, it is common to loan each other one's wife.

Their stature is short, and, when old, they look very miserable, with their long matted gray hair and bow legs. They have a dress sometimes very tasteful and peculiar, and one that displays much skill and ingenuity in the make, with generally much vanity, if not coquetry, in the wear. This dress differs from the men's, in the moccasins and breeches forming a single close-fitting garment tied round the waist, as well as in being more uniformly striped, and the coat in being longer, reaching to below the knees, in a rounded flap before and behind. The back of the coat and hood are also made large enough to contain a child, whose weight is chiefly sustained by the belt. For common use, and among the poorer people, the inner one is made of bird-skins, and among those better off, of deerskin.

The hair of the western Esquimaux women is worn parted in the middle from the back to the front, and plaited on each side behind the ear into a roll, which hangs down the bosom and is wrapped round with small beads of various colors. Length of hair generally accompanies softness of its texture, and is considered a point of female beauty. The ears are, with very few exceptions, pierced to support, with ivory or copper hooks, four or five long strings

of small beads suspended at a distance from the ends, which hang free, leaving the middle part to fall loosely across the breast. Not infrequently the ends are long enough to be each fastened back in another loop to the hairs behind the ears.

A voyager, known to the writer, states that at a festival he witnessed, there was on the head of every dancer a band supporting one, two or three large eagle's feathers, which, together with a streak of black lead, either in a diagonal line across or down one side of the face, gave them a more savage appearance than they usually exhibit. Many of these headbands were made of the skin of the head and neck of some animal or bird, of which the nose or beak was retained to project from the middle of the forehead.

The ordinary occupations of the women are sewing, the preparation of skins for making and mending, cooking, and the general care of the supplies of provisions. The woman's property, consisting of her beads and other ornaments, her needle-case, knife, etc., are considered her own (even after her marriage), and if a separation takes place, the clothes and presents (made to her by her husband), are returned, and she merely takes away with her whatever she has brought.

An intelligent white man is thought much of among them. The carpenter of a ship is valuable in their eyes, as are all mechanics or others who can show skill, and they gladly offer up their prettiest daughters, with land, implements, etc., to such a man if he will become her husband and remain with them.

Many who have not beheld strangers before, think our ladies too pale, when they see them in portraits, and often ask singular questions as to whether their dress does not make them cold and miserable. Indeed, several had a fancy that white women had beards, the same as men, to *help warm them*.

A widow is supported by next of kin to her late husband. If he does not himself marry her, he may select another to do so. They are strict and peculiar in this, deeming it a duty to provide the bereaved woman with another partner as

soon as possible. She is still entitled to one, and, having had a husband, it is not just to her to let her remain single afterwards. To be barren or unmarried is a disgrace, and the woman is generally looked upon as something to be despised, or if unavoidable with her, to be pitied for the cause.

Thus adoption, sometimes slyly, is common with them. A child they must have somehow, in proof of being what they consider they ought to be, fruitful among mankind. But it is rare for one woman ever to have as many as seven children, and for five to live to maturity is still more rare. If a child is not well formed at birth, they will often kill it. During pregnancy the wife is carefully attended to, and every effort is made, in their superstitious way, to have a good season of the year for the period of trouble to her. With them, however, nature gives more relief than in civilized life. Some of their customs, at these times, are almost identical with the ceremonies of the Levitical Law.

Children keep to the breast till five years old, *standing* up to receive the nourishment. Indeed, one of four years old was seen asking for a chew of tobacco, and then going to his *mammy* for the baby's food.

No feelings of delicacy arise as to plurality of wives. Occasional jealousies take place, but as in the civilized world a wife is proud of the *moneyed* wealth of her husband, so, there, is she of the *number of wives* he can maintain. To her it is a proof that she has the right sort of man. Polygamy with them is a sign of *wealth*. Sometimes there will be three wives and one old one—the latter old enough to be mother of the young ones. But generally a man who can afford it has his housewife, hunting-wife and love-wife. The fact is, they look at the laws of nature in their icy region more than what we should call the laws of morality or society. The majority of them think it better to marry a man double their age than one of their own period of life. Thus a man of forty, may have his housewife of the same age—she being probably a widow previously, whom as next of kin he was bound to protect, and two or three younger wives from sixteen to twenty-five.

Hospitality is so great among them that a stranger is, indeed, made welcome, and some of the women—as in the Marquesas, with regard to a poor, innocent missionary on landing there—are often very curious and inquisitive to know the cause of any refusal by strangers of kindness offered them.

The younger women are very communicative on once becoming friendly with a stranger. Possessed of extraordinary mental powers in some things, they will sketch out for you a coast-line, or pilot you about, remarkably accurate.

They are occasionally left to die, when their fate is doomed by the dictum of a wizard-man or medicine-doctor. Sometimes they are actually sealed up in a living tomb, with food and water placed within their reach. If in a week, on being visited, she is not dead, the wizard-man or woman is again consulted, and the door once more sealed, if so ordered, and the poor creature is left to die alone, while the husband, even before the breath has gone, gets another wife.

These people are very superstitious. Their dances and ceremonies are all intended to please, to cajole, or to frighten certain spirits that they dread. A most curious ceremony came under the observation of Doctor Simpson. It was performed at the village, in the course of one winter, when food had become scarce, in consequence of the ice continuing very close, from a continuance of northwesterly winds. On the sea-beach, near one of the dancing-houses, a small space was cleared, and a fire of wood made, round which the men formed a ring, and chanted for some time, without dancing or the usual accompaniment of the tambourine. One of the old men then stepped towards the fire, and, in a coaxing voice, tried to persuade the evil genius, from whose baleful influence the people were suffering, to come under the fire to warm himself. When he was supposed to have arrived, a vessel of water, to which each man present had contributed, was thrown upon the fire by the old man, and immediately a number of arrows sped from the bows of the others into the earth where the fire

had been, in the full belief that no twin-gak (or spirit) would stop at a place where he had received such bad treatment, but would depart to some other region, from which, on being detected, he would be driven away in a similar manner.

The women are more poetically superstitious than the men. The firmament above, they consider to be filled with fiery bodies, as proved in their estimation by the shooting stars, which they look upon as portions thrown off by fixed ones. They form them into groups, and give them names, many of which they explain. And here again the women show more intellectual power than the men, being better astronomers as well as geographers.

The star Aldebaran, with the cluster of the Hyades and other smaller ones around, are called Pa-chukh'-lu-rin—"the sharing out" of food; the chief star representing a Polar Bear just killed, and the others the hunters, around, preparing to cut up their prize, and give each hunter his portion. The three stars in Orion's Belt are three men who were carried away on the ice to the southward, in the dark winter. They were, for a long time, covered with snow, but at length, perceiving an opening above them, they ascended further and further, until they became fixed among the stars. Another group is called the "house-building," and represents a few people engaged in constructing a winter hut.

Invisible spirits people the earth, the air, and the sea. Some are good, some bad. Sometimes they are seen, and resemble the upper half of a man, but are likewise in many other forms. Ghosts they believe in. Once two young girls, going from a ship, in the short twilight of a winter's day, turned back in breathless haste on seeing a sledge set up on end near the path to the village. They fancied the sledge was an evil spirit.

They believe in spiritual influences, as may be inferred from the following: A man was once carried away by the ice, during the time one of the exploring ships was in the vicinity. His wife then had a long, thin thong of seal-skin stretched in four or five turns around the walls of her

hut, and anxiously watched it, night and day, until she heard of her husband's fate. Their impression is that, so long as the person watchèd for is alive and moves about, his twin'-gak (spirit) causes the cord to vibrate, and when at length it hangs slack and vibrates no longer, he is supposed to be dead. This wife, having heard of the movements of a magnet suspended by a thread to the ship's observatory, sent to inquire if it had any connection with her husband's case.

Thunder is rare in their locality, but, when it occurs, they say it is caused by a man-spirit who dwells, with his family, in a tent far away to the north. He is an ill-natured fellow, who sleeps most of his time, and, when he wakes up, he bids his children go out and make thunder and lightning, by shaking inflated skins and waving torches.

They do not entertain any clear idea of a future state of existence, nor can they apparently imagine that a person altogether dies. The soul is a twin'-gak, they say, seated in the lungs, and from it emanates all thoughts, which, as they rise, the tongue gives utterance to. Some of them consider a man has *four* twin'-gaks in his breast, and others that, wherever a man went, there was, in the ground beneath him, his familiar spirit, which moved as he moved, and was only severed from him in death. They say the body *sleeps*, and the spirit descends into the earth, to associate with those which have gone before, and subsists on bad food, such as roots, stones, and mosquitoes. In order not to offend the spirits of the departed, their bodies are wrapped in skins, and laid with the head to the east. As his clothes, and other portions of property he habitually used, including the sledge on which he was carried, would bring ill-luck to any one else who took them, they are left with the body, in a torn or broken state; and the family to which he belonged keep within the hut for five days, not daring to work, lest the spirits should be offended. They believe death will happen to any one infringing this custom. Diseases are twin'-gaks, and so hurtful do they think the touch of a corpse that they will not

smoke from the same pipe, nor drink out of the same cup, with any one who was a near relative of the deceased, until after a period of purification.

Of the Indians, it is related that some of them are very savage and cruel, loving deeds of murder simply for the sport of killing. But these we believe to belong more to the interior tribes, for many instances are recorded where the Indian is very different to this, and may be considered perfectly trustworthy. The following illustrates this:

"The printed slips of paper delivered by the officers of H. M. S. Plover, on the 25th of April, 1854, to the Rat Indians, were received 27th June, 1854, at the Hudson Bay Company's establishment, Fort Youcon, supposed latitude, 66° N., longitude, 7° 55' W. The Rat Indians are in the habit of making periodical trading excursions to the Esquimaux along the sea-coast. They are a harmless, inoffensive set of Indians, ever ready and willing to render every assistance they can to the whites."

Still there are other tribes who have often proved very ferocious. These belong to the Koolooch group, which comprise thirteen tribes, and abide west of the Rocky Mountains, numbering about forty-five thousand souls. Some of these Indians, especially the Kok-you-kons, are considered revengeful, fierce, and blood-thirsty. It was a portion of them that fell upon and murdered the Governor, employèes, Esquimaux villagers, and an English officer, at the Russian port of Darabin, in February, 1851. But the fault does not lie with the Red Men. Sir Edward Belcher has well observed "that civilization might be materially facilitated were the aborigines not bound down by the iron hand of Russian domination." This, alas! has been too true, not only of Russia, but of the Hudson Bay Company's rule also; and, now that the poor native tribes are to have a new and more enterprising Power to reign over them, let us hope their better qualities will be drawn out, and the future prove more beneficial to their unfortunate race.

