

ESQIMAUX OF CAPE NOME.

The irony of fate is exemplified in the Cape Nome mining district and the contiguous regions. There for centuries the natives have with great difficulty extracted a precarious living. Indeed, the traveller accustomed to lands abounding in food plants and game and timber looks with wonder upon these people as his eye ranges over the vast desolation and his senses realize the difficulties which they have surmounted. At first glance it appears to be an impossibility to sustain life there even in summer, and the thought of the long, dark winter, with its frozen seas and drifting snows and lack of fuel is appalling. Yet all the time these people have been living upon sea beaches whose grave is embrace fabulous wealth of gold—wealth so easily acquired that had they but known they might all have easily become millionaires and purchased comfort and luxury.

But that late was not theirs. The gold beneath their feet means rather destruction than benefit to them. For, while the Esquimaux, or Innuits, who make up the native population of Cape Nome, are clever in adapting themselves to circumstances, they are slaves to whiskey and are always on the alert to purchase it, so that with the advent of a great mining population, when whiskey will readily be obtained in spite of laws to the contrary, the Esquimaux may be expected to fade away till in a few years a little of their language only will remain. King Alcohol will doubtless accomplish the extermination of people that for ages have successfully defied the Frost King in his most terrible manifestations.

Habitations of snow are not the only reliance of the Cape Nome Esquimaux, for the reason that the Alaska shores furnish considerable driftwood, especially below Behring Strait, from which, with grass and earth, a substantial winter house or iglu is made. Sticks of driftwood or whale ribs are set up and combined so as to form a frame similar in shape to an ordinary cabin. All over this frame smaller sticks are laid, and upon these grass and finally earth. In the colder regions a subterranean entrance is made which leads to a trap door in the floor and thus the inrush of cold air is checked. When an iglu of this kind cannot be built blocks of snow are used to form walls, about as high as a man's head, over which a canvas is spread on beams or sticks of driftwood or the poles of the summer tupik.

The room thus formed is reached through a snow-covered passage way some ten feet long, entrance being had by a low door and light being admitted by a window above it closed with membrane taken from the intestines of seals which is translucent, and in appearance resembles the paraffine paper that is wrapped around carmelts and other sweets. Even the fireplace, when there is one, is formed in the passageway of snow slabs, and is about two and a half feet square, with a stick across it for suspending a kettle. The first fire melts the surface of the snow, but, this melted surface freezes hard and afterward is little affected by the heat.

While the Esquimaux, who are scattered along the shores from Prince William Sound, Alaska, clear across the continent to Greenland and Labrador, are a wonderfully homogeneous people and speak practically the same language, everywhere there are variations in their customs due to local conditions. The Cape Nome native, for example, has a greater abundance of driftwood, and has therefore never been so dependent on oil for fuel and feathers of the race. For the same reason his house is considerably different from that of the Esquimaux the central continental regions. There the familiar dome shaped snow house is common as well as in Greenland, and this house is a triumph of Esquimaux skill. Blocks of snow of oblong shape are cut out of a convenient bank with a steel saw, or an ivory snow knife, the excavation thus begun forming the beginning of the room.

The blocks are laid around in a circle, the first one being beveled down toward the starting point, so that when the circle of snow blocks arrive at this place they rise upon the incline of the first block with out a break and thus spirally approach the centre overhead, where a key block is finally inserted to hold all firm, and completing the dome—the only dome or arch used on this continent before the coming of the whites. Windows of clear fresh water ice are usually added; while at night and through the long winter darkness both light and heat are obtained from another clever invention of these extraordinary

people, a lamp, and they are the only people on this continent who used an aid of this kind.

Necessity in this case as in many others was the mother of invention, for without the lamp the Esquimaux in the more barren portions of the snowland would have perished. With it, however, and with his snow iglu, called iglupeak, he defies the elements and offers an illustration of the ability of man to adapt himself to his environment. Where the Esquimaux can avoid it, he does not build the iglupeak, but in some regions he has small choice, and especially while on hunting expeditions it is a necessity. Two men will construct a very good iglupeak, which will shelter them on the coldest night, in two or three hours.

Near all the permanent houses a frame structure is usually erected for the storage of all but the heaviest articles out of reach of the dogs. Last winter dogs were in such demand at Dawson for the purpose of reaching Cape Nome at an early date that in some cases they sold for as much as \$400 a piece. Fine dogs of the collie breed have been sent up to Alaska from the United States, and have been found to be admirably adapted to the work. One collie in a team of Esquimaux dogs is of great value, as he is able to keep them in order. The Cape Nome and other Alaska Esquimaux do not as a rule ride on the sledges, but in the central regions of the continent the driver usually sits on the load and urges his team forward from that position. Variations of this kind are due, like the changes and the style of the houses, to local conditions. An abundance of wood and a milder climate, for example, would probably soon completely do away with the lamp. In form this utensil is some what like the half of a large shallow saucer, and is made generally of soapstone, though it is sometimes of burned clay. The wick is simply a bunch of dry moss, and the oil is that obtained from the blubber of the seal and walrus. In winter the freezing breaks the vesicles of oil, so that the fluid is easily extracted, but in summer the blubber is chewed, and the chewer spits the oil from time to time into a receptacle provided. It was this practice, misunderstood by early travellers which gave rise to the reports of enormous consumption of oil by these northern people.

It is now said that they eat little more fat and oil than other races, though their diet is chiefly meat the year round. They are extremely fond of wheat bread and hardtack, and a present of these products is received with the same relish and eagerness that American youngsters bestow on sweet cakes or bonbons. It must certainly be a great relief after a long and steady diet of seal meat.

When the warmer days of spring arrive both the snow and the earth iglu grow damp and even wet the low entrance passages of their houses fill with water. Then they are abandoned for the summer, and the tupik or tent is erected. This is made of poles covered with skins, but in these latter days in the Alaska region canvas tents of the wall pattern, obtained by trade, are largely used. These are comfortable and warm especially when the sun is shining. The interior then is extremely pleasant. A mat of grasses or rushes is spread on the ground and the family sit or lounge about enjoying life, some perhaps engaged in sewing or boot or basket making. Their boots are waterproof and are preferred by many miners to rubber boots, because of their lightness and durability. Their baskets are made from long coils of grasses about as thick as one's finger, and held together by cross weaving with smaller strands. The tents and houses are always near the shore.

The boats, therefore, lie near by, and they are of two kinds, the umiak, or large travelling boat, capable of taking two or three families or thirty to forty persons, with ease, and the kayak, or hunting canoe, which usually is made for one person only. Both these craft are made from slender poles and walrus hide, and for ingenuity of construction they will compare favorably with any boat in the world. The kayak is light as a feather, and, urged forward by the skillful paddle, seems to skim the water more like a bird than a boat. As it is entirely covered over excepting a small hatchway, in which the occupants sit, it can be launched in stormy weather and will ride through heavy seas. An apron is so arranged that it can be secure, ly tied around the waist of the navigator, and it is then an impossibility for water to find an entrance. In case of a capsizing the

native simply rights himself again by means of his paddle, and the Norton Sound Esquimaux turn over and come up on the other side just as a matter of amusement, the double bladed paddle being of prime importance in the execution of this feat. When it is stormy two or three men will sometimes take up the kayak and its occupant and toss them beyond the breakers. By the Russians the kayak was called a baidarka, and the larger umiak, a bat dar.

The Esquimaux travel considerable distance in the umiak, which is fitted with a sail, and some from the Siberian side of the strait come over to Port Clarence and the shores down to Cape Nome for the purpose of trading. The Siberian Esquimaux originally sailed across to Alaska, so that it is evident that the waters of the strait have been no obstacle to the journeys of the Alaska natives. Their customs are full of interest to the ethnologist and have been described by Boas and Turner and Murdoch and other travellers in the Far North. The marriage relation is very loose. Polygamy is common, and in some districts the reverse is practised, two men marrying one woman. They seldom steal from one another, but they will take advantage of a stranger if an opportunity is offered. Like many Indian tribes, the authority of the chiefs is merely nominal. The office of chief is sometimes hereditary. There is nothing warlike about the Esquimaux and they appear to be tractable, so that the missionaries who have gone to the Alaskan field may yet be able to save them from extinction.

Peculiarity of the Merganser.

The merganser is a species of fish-duck of great beauty of plumage, common in the Adirondacks. Senator George Chahoon, who has studied the birds of this region for many years, notes a habit of the merganser which he thinks is unique, and he is surprised that ornithological writers have not recorded it—the males are entirely migratory, and the females are not. "For more than 20 years," says Mr. Chahoon, "I have seen female mergansers on the Ausable River all winter, and I have frequently seen them on the other Adirondack rivers; but I have never seen a male merganser in the winter, and in the late fall the males and females gather in separate flocks, and when the male mergansers appear in the spring they are always in flocks, by themselves.

Dickens's "Nerves."

Charles Dickens had what the old woman scornfully said she "thanked God she hadn't!"—"nerves." They helped to make him the people's novelist. Says his daughter:

"After the morning's close work he was sometimes quite preoccupied when he came into luncheon. Often when we were only our home party at Gad's Hill, he would come in, take something to eat in a mechanical way, and return to his study to finish the work he had left, scarcely having spoken a word.

"Our talking at these times did not seem to disturb him, although any sudden sound as the dropping of a spoon or the clicking of a glass, would send a spasm of pain across his face."

In 1865 he was so shaken up by a railroad accident that always afterward he suffered an intense dread whenever he found himself in any kind of conveyance. "On one occasion," says his daughter, "when we were on our way from London to four little country station, Higham, where the carriage was to meet us, my father suddenly clutched the arms of the railway carriage seat, while his face grew ashy pale and great drops of perspiration stood upon his forehead and although he tried hard to master the dread, it was so strong that he had to leave the train at the next station.

"The accident had left its impression upon the memory, and it was destined never to be effaced. The hours spent upon railroads were thereafter hours of pain to him. I realized this often when travelling with him, and no amount of assurance could dispel the feeling."

Dangerous Voyage.

Deep-water sailors are apt to view with contempt the seamen who go on coastwise ships, but these longshoremen are often skillful and certainly, they are exposed to many dangers. A New York exchange describes the voyage of the schooner William Bell from Charleston, South Carolina, to New London, Connecticut.

It foundered at sea in a furious gale, and the captain and five men went down with it. Two seamen named Lowd and Robinson, kept themselves afloat and found refuge on the roof of the cabin, which had become detached.

To this the two men clung until the hurricane had spent its fury. On this novel raft they spent five days and nights, without food or drink and with very little rest, as the waves frequently swept over them. Robinson twice slipped into the water,

but each time was rescued by Lowd. In their hunger they ate part of their leather sea-boots, and when picked up by a passing schooner they were on the verge of delirium; but they were rescued in time, and soon recovered.

Proof Positive.

Proof positive is arrived at in various ways. One method is pleasantly described by a foreign correspondent of the Argonaut.

Not far from the harbor of Naples, we sighted a rocky islet apparently about two miles off shore. An elderly man approached me on deck, and said, politely:

"Do you know whether this is Mount Vesuvius or not?"

I replied with equal politeness: "I don't know what it is, but I do know that it is not Vesuvius."

"But," said he, with an air of triumph, "if you don't know what it is, how do you know that it isn't Vesuvius?"

"Because," I replied, pinning him with my glittering eye, "because Vesuvius is inland and this is outland; because this rock is three miles round and Vesuvius is about thirty miles round; because this is an island and Vesuvius is not; and because Vesuvius is a volcano and this is not."

The elderly man sniffed and withdrew.

Cool and Methodical.

A lawyer who worthily bears a distinguished name occupies an old-fashioned mansion on the edge of New York. His sister, who lives with him, tells a laughable story, which is reported in Harper's Round Table, illustrating his coolness and love of method.

Recently his sister tiptoed into his room some time after midnight, and told him she thought burglars were in the house. The lawyer put on his dressing-gown, and went down stairs.

In the back hall he found a rough-looking man trying to open a door that led into the back yard. The burglar had unlocked the door, and was pulling at it with all his might. The lawyer, seeing the robber's predicament, called to him:

"It does not open that way, you idiot! It slides back!"

The Gun and the Cat.

It generally takes "nerve"—the slang synonym for impudence—to be a borrower but here the Chicago News shows such effrontery at its height:

Quinn—He has more nerve than any man I ever met.

De Fonte—In what way?

Quinn—Why, he went over to his neighbor's to borrow a gun. Said he wanted to shoot a cat.

De Fonte—Where does any nerve come in?

Quinn—It was his neighbor's cat he wanted to shoot.

Death to Cockroaches.

One of the bulletins of the Department of Agriculture mentions a simple Australian remedy for cockroaches. It consists in feeding the insects upon a mixture of flour and plaster of Paris which, it is said, they greedily devour. The plaster of Paris 'sets' after they have swallowed it, and that is the end of them.

Military Precision.

Colonel: "Gentlemen, I have summoned you to tell you that one of your number incurred my displeasure the other day and just who he was and what he did I cannot recall, but something was wrong, I remember. So I must ask you to find out what it was for me that I may reprimand the offender."

One of the Evils of Drink.

"Intemperance is a dreadful thing," said the earnest citizen.

"Indeed it is," answered Mr. Van Diggie who is an enthusiastic wheelman. "Why, sir, it is intemperance that causes people to strew the street with all these broken bottles!"

Something Needed.

Beggar: "You very kindly gave me a pair of your trousers yesterday, sir, and now I have something else to ask for."

Corpulent Benefactor: "Well, what is it?"

Beggar: "A square meal, so that I can wear them."

Mose—Ah wist de summah wuz near obah.

Sam—W'at you talkin' 'bout? Yo' knows yo' laik de summah time.

Mose—Sho' I do, but ef de summah wuz near obah watahmillions would be ripe.

"Why is it that the emancipated woman always dresses so plainly?"

"Well, I fancy no woman has the time or the strength to stand up for her rights and also to have dresses fitted."

Daughter—Marriages are made in Heaven, you know, papa.

Father—Yes; but you young people seem to think they are imported free of duty.

MEMORIAL WINDOWS.

A Field in Decoration in Which This Country Leads.

America may be a few laps behind Europe in many of the arts, but in one at least, she has forged ahead of all competitors, says the New York Sun. Before 1879 American workers in art glass depended upon Europe for designs, method and material. Today the art glass work of this country is the finest in the world, and many French and English artists send their designs for art glass windows to be carried out here in New York. English, French and German workers still follow the old traditions of the Munich and London schools, and produce their color effects by painting or staining the surface of the glasses. On the other hand, the American school obtains its best effects without using either paint or stain, and constructs its windows of mosaic glass, which contains within itself the required beauty and color.

In the old cathedral days, when the famous windows of Chartres, Bruges; and the like were produced, painted, stained and mosaic glass were all used; but later, the secrets of the mosaic work dropped from the knowledge of glass workers, and art glass windows lost much of their beauty and popularity. Even such windows as those by Burne Jones, at Oxford, and in St. Stephens, Birmingham are wrought in enamel fused to the surface of glass, and leave much to be desired, in spite of their beauty of design.

Ladies' Costumes From England.

The trade in ladies' and children's costumes, mantles, dress fabrics, corsets, underclothing and all kinds of drapery goods, which the well known firm of John Noble Ltd. of Manchester England, has done for some years past in the Dominion, bids fair to make a record for itself during the last year of the century. People residing far off from towns and shopping centres are fast recognizing that they can save much money and trouble, as well as time, by sending to Brook street Mills, Manchester, for John Nobles profusely illustrated catalogues and fashion sheets, and ordering straight away, by the aid of the patterns and explicit measurement forms sent with them. The firm guarantees satisfaction to its customers and is at as much pains with the order of its 250 dollar client as with that of the customer for a 2.56 dollar serge costume.

It speaks well for the fair dealing of this old established firm, that quite half of its customers live in the cities and larger towns of the Empire, where it might be supposed that circumstances would favor local business houses.

Whilst much of the increased patronage referred to, is doubtless due to the firm's improved export arrangements, and the recent tariff reductions. It is still more likely the bulk of it, it is traceable to the exceptionally high value for money with which its name is associated.

Glass Dissolved in Water.

Every kind of glass at a sufficiently high temperature, says Prof. Carl Barus, must eventually show complete solubility in water. Under pressure glass dissolves in water heated to 410° Fahrenheit. Sea-water more than about 660 feet beneath the surface will remain liquid at that temperature, and if it penetrates the earth's crust where the temperature is equally high, it will apart from the pressure, liquefy the silicates, or glassy rocks. Professor Barus concludes that at a depth of about five miles, silicates in contact with water are virtually fluid, and that the level of aqueous fusion in the earth is five times nearer the surface than is that of igneous fusion.

A Suspended Railroad.

Between the towns of Elberfeld and Barmen in Western Germany, a remarkable elevated railroad is nearing completion, while part of it has been in operation for several months. The cars are suspended beneath the superstructure from a single rail on which run motor trucks attached to the car roofs, the motive power being electricity. Each car can accommodate fifty passengers, and the maximum speed, with a train of either two or four cars, is twenty five miles an hour. The road, which is more than eight miles in length, crosses the Wupper Rivery without interruption.

The Photographer—Here, sir, are the cabinets that your son ordered of me. The father (regarding one)—The picture is certainly very like him. And has he paid you? The Photographer—No sir. The Father—That is more like him.

Bingo—How long is your wife going to be away this summer? Kingley—I don't know. I haven't figured up yet how much I can get into debt.

'Does he play golf on Sunday?' 'Well, I should hardly call it that. He just walks a good deal and swears occasionally.'