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AN  
ACCOUNT  
OF THE  
NEW NORTHERN  
ARCHIPELAGO,  
LATELY DISCOVERED  
BY THE RUSSIANS

IN THE  
SEAS OF KAMTSCHATKA AND ANADIR.

By Mr. J. VON STÆHLIN,  
Secretary to the Imperial Academy of Sciences at St. Petersburg,  
and Member of the Royal Society of London.

Translated from the GERMAN ORIGINAL.



L O N D O N :

Printed for C. HEYDINGER, in the STRAND.

M. DCC. LXXIV.





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## ADVERTISEMENT.

IT would be an unpardonable ingratitude to let the following little treatises appear in the world, without every proper acknowledgment to those respectable persons, by whose kind and literary assistance I was not only encouraged, but enabled to complete the undertaking.

For the *Account of the New Northern Archipelago* I am indebted to Dr. MATY, who, besides furnishing the Original, superintended the Translation, and corrected the proofs. The Map annexed to this piece, was executed by Mr. KITCHIN; and it also underwent the previous inspection of Dr. MATY.

The very singular Narrative respecting the Russian sailors, though it seems to have been written soon after their arrival at *Petersburg*, yet it was not published until the year 1768. A copy of the German original was transmitted to JOSEPH BANKS, Esq. who communicating the contents to several Members of the Royal Society, they were pleased to express their wishes that it might appear in an English dress: these wishes were accompanied with a generous subscription for a considerable number of copies. Mr. BANKS having commissioned me with the translation, I have executed the task to the

utmost of my abilities; and trusting my qualifications to convey with precision the ideas of the original in an English idiom, I have prevailed on an English friend to correct the manuscript before it was given to the Press; and one of the learned subscribers has moreover been so kind as to revise the proofs.

If, notwithstanding these precautions, some errors may have crept in, the good-natured reader will, I hope, make every allowance to a man, who, if he hath shewn himself not accurately versed in the language, can plead in excuse, that he is not a native of this country. Besides, many passages in the original were prelix to an extreme: the difficulty, therefore, was to avoid the repetitions without destroying the sense, or varying from the ideas of the author. This I have attempted; how far I have succeeded the intelligent Public must determine. At any rate I shall deem my labours more than amply rewarded, if they can recommend me to the patronage of those for whose past favours I feel all that gratitude can inspire, from whose future services I hope all that industry can expect.

C. HEYDINGER.

*The following Gentlemen have encouraged  
the Publication of this Work by generously  
subscribing for a Number of Copies each.*

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## P R E F A C E.

**H**AVING lately received from my very learned friend and correspondent Mr. STÆHLIN, Counsellor of State to the Empress of Russia, Secretary of the Imperial Academy of Petersburg, and last year elected one of the foreign members of the Royal Society, a short, and, as he calls it, preliminary account, drawn up by himself of the new discoveries of the Russians, I thought a translation of it would not be unacceptable to the curious.

Every

Every new step towards a more perfect investigation of our globe, must be interesting to its principal inhabitant. While with unbounded curiosity he traces the course, measures the distances, and calculates the velocities of the Planets, his own habitation is still in great part unknown to him, and from the obstacles, which nature on one hand, and moral or political causes on the other, throw in his way, will ever remain so. A compleat map of Jupiter or Venus is perhaps more within his reach, than a compleat one of his earth.

To divert human industry from what is really not attainable, is no less useful than to direct its pursuits  
to

to what is so. To this nation will in all probability be reserved the glory of having ascertained the eternal barriers of navigation ; to Russia that of having discovered the true connection between the ancient and the new world.

The accounts hitherto published of these northern expeditions, tend to improve our geographical notions of the passage from one continent to the other. It appears, that the intermediate space between Asia and America, from the  $40^{\circ}$  to the  $70^{\circ}$ , is occupied by clusters of islands, within sight of, or at least at small distances from, one another ; and it is still uncertain, whether the last coast discovered by the Russians, and  
by

by them called the Great Continent, or STACHTAN NITADA, belong to the main land, or be divided from it by other freights. The success which these Argonauts have hitherto had in their navigations, gives us little room to suspect that this will continue a problem much longer. If in the British colonies the same spirit of curiosity, and perhaps interest, should animate the inhabitants, the communication of the two continents will soon be followed by that of the two seas; and we may hope to see the globe nearly encircled by two nations.

Naturalists, and perhaps Antiquarians, will be no less useful than Astronomers in these extensive researches.



searches. From the difference in the make, dress, and manners of the new discovered islanders, we might be induced to suspect that the most northerly parts of the new world were peopled by the most savage Asiatic Tartars, or Tchuktschi, while the inhabitants of the more moderate climates, and amongst them the Mexicans and Peruvians, were indebted for some part of their industry and civilization to the Tungusi Tartars, or perhaps their offspring, the Chinese and Japonese. That these nations have in ancient times navigated to North America, has long been suspected<sup>(a)</sup>. This was lately ascertained by an ingenious  
 French

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(a) DE HORNE. *De Origin. Amer.* 1652.

French author (*a*), and, from the situation of the Jeso, Kurili, and other islands, is rendered more and more probable. Were we to trust to some late accounts, it is not impossible but some of their descendants

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(*a*) Mr. DE GUIGNES, in a Mémoir inserted in the twenty-eighth volume of the Academy of Inscriptions and Belles Lettres for the year 1757, and entitled *Recherches sur les Navigations des Chinois, du côté de l'Amérique, & sur quelques Peuples situés à l'extrémité Orientale de l'Asie*. From the concurrent testimony of several ancient Chinese writers, he proves that their early navigators, after having followed the Asiatic coast towards the north as far as *Kamtschatka*, which they called *Taban*, crossed the ocean in an easterly direction, and at the distance of 20,000 lis, or about 2000 miles, arrived nearly under the same parallel at a country which they named *Poufang*; being, according to them, the land where the sun rises. This must have been the coast discovered by the Russians in 1741; and, from the new discoveries, it may be inferred, that the Chinese were directed in that tract, by following the course of the islands.

ants may still subsist in that immense continent, and not far from the same spot (a).

b 2

Traces

(a) During Mr. BLANKETT's, Lieutenant in his Majesty's Navy, stay at *New Orleans*, (lately the French and now the Spanish chief settlement upon the *Mississippi*,) an account came that the Illinois had discovered a people, whose houses made of red earth, together with some other circumstances, induced the French to conclude this to be a settlement originally come from Japan. Mr. AUBREY, the Commandant of the place, sent him afterwards the following account, in a letter dated June 18, 1765. It was Mr. DES VOLTES, a French officer settled since a long time among the Illinois, who gave Mr. AUBREY his information about these Asiatic figurès, as he called them. Some of the inhabitants of the river *Missouri*, reported, that towards the west there had been seen men quite different from the red and the white men; (under these denominations are understood the Americans and the Europeans) that they wore long robes, and had muskets and arms, which, though different from ours, had still the same effect.—

Traces of such a communication may, by diligent observers, be discovered,

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—The north and north-east parts of the country of the Illinois consist of a vast continent, hitherto almost unknown. By following the north course, and going three hundred leagues up the *Mississippi*, one meets with the fall of *St. Anthony*; beyond which the river divides into several branches. A hundred leagues farther is found a lake, and a marshy ground, from which the river takes its source. This spot is very fertile, and abounds in furs; but its inhabitants, called the *Sious*, are reported to be so ferocious and faithless, as to deter any traders from venturing among them. . . It is towards the north-west that the *Missouri* takes its run across the country. This is one of the largest as well as most rapid rivers. The French, on account of the difficulty of its navigation, have not been able to trace its course beyond four hundred leagues, at a village called *Ricaroo*. Various nations inhabit its borders; and a fair field seems to be opened to interesting discoveries, as well as to a considerable trade. Travellers have brought from thence elephants teeth, though the animals themselves were never found there; and this in-

duced

covered, not only among the productions of the earth, but also in the customs of the inhabitants. I know how dangerous it is to rely too much upon such analogies, unless they be sufficiently precise; since a similarity of wants and situations, in several people unconnected with each other, may have produced the same effects. I could not avoid however being struck with the following coincidence, which seems to indicate something more than mere chance, or a sameness of circumstances. The first conquerors of Peru reported that  
the

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duced Mr. AUBREY to suspect that the north-west part of America is either connected with the north-east part of Asia, or at least that the separation is not very considerable.

the inhabitants, instead of letters, made use of certain knots upon cords, to convey their ideas, or sentiments; and the Chilians still preserve the same way of assisting their memory and collecting their thoughts (a). It likewise appears from several authorities, that a

con-

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(a) Pour tenir un compte de leurs troupeaux, & conserver la mémoire de leurs affaires particulières, les Indiens ont recours à certains nœuds de laine, qui par la variété des couleurs & des replis, leur tiennent lieu de caractères & d'écriture. La connoissance de ces nœuds, qu'ils appellent *Quipos*, est une science & un secret, que les peres ne revelent à leurs enfans que lorsqu'ils se croient à la fin de leurs jours, & comme il arrive assez souvent que faute d'esprit ils n'en connoissent pas le mystere, ces sortes de nœuds leur deviennent un sujet d'erreur & de peu d'usage.

*Voy.* DE FREZIER, p. 67.

contrivance not unfamiliar to this was, in the earliest times, used in China. In a letter sent from Peking, in 1764, by one of the Missionaries, in answer to some queries relative to the Chinese characters, the author mentions, from one of their ancient books, that *Fo-hi, by introducing the eight koua, or elementary characters, put an end to the use of knots upon cords, for the purposes of government; which, adds Dr. MORTON, to whom this letter was directed, and who obliged the Royal Society with an abridgment of it (a),*  
*seems*

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(a) *Philosophical Transactions*, vol. lix. p. 495. This Letter has been since printed in French, with an Introduction by M. TUBERVILL NEEDHAM, F.R.S. at Brussels, in 1773.

*seems to be analogous to what has been observed in America.*

Care has been taken to render the translation of this little piece as exact as possible; and the Chart which precedes it has been executed with neatness and fidelity.

*British Museum,  
June 17, 1774.*

M. M.



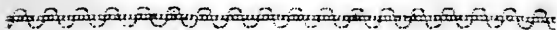


A

# BRIEF ACCOUNT

OF THE

New Discovered Islands in  
the Northern Seas.



**I**T is remarkable, that at the very time when the English and French discovered islands in the South Seas, which till then were totally unknown to all the rest of the world, namely, in the years 1764, 65, 66 and 67, the intrepid Russians discovered new lands in the utmost limits of the north, and found

B

a cluster

a cluster of inhabited islands, unknown to them and to the whole world.

Does it not seem that at certain periods a spirit of discovery arises, which excites universal emulation in different parts of the world? We are naturally led into this train of thinking, when we consider, that, formerly, when the new hemisphere of America was discovered by the Spaniards, the Portuguese and Dutch began, at the same time, to think of navigating from Europe to the East Indies. It is equally remarkable, that the Art of making Gunpowder was discovered in Germany, on the Danube, just at the time when the Art of Printing was found out on the Rhine, and when Literature and the Polite Arts were revived in Italy, after they had lain dormant for so many centuries.

About, or soon after the time above-mentioned, the Czar IWAN WASILJEWITSCH II. laid the foundation for the discovery of our new islands; which are so many in number, that they may well deserve the name of a New Archipelago. After he had made himself master of all Siberia, he wished to be acquainted with the frontiers of that country to the north and east, and with the inhabitants of those parts. For that purpose he sent several *Prikastshicke*, or Commissaries, to the different frontiers, who, on their return, after his death, during the reign of his son and successor, the Czar FEODOR IWANOWITSCH, brought the first account that Siberia was bounded by the frozen sea to the north, and by the ocean to the east.

The celebrated Counsellor MILLER, in his Account of the Discoveries made by the Ruffians, has shewn that, from the records of a town in Siberia, it appears, that an important attempt to penetrate into the frozen sea, had already been made in the course of this expedition, which had failed along the coast towards the north-east; and that one of the smallest vessels of these navigators had got safe round the farthest promontory of *Tshukotskoi-Nofs*, into the sea of *Kamtschatka*, commonly called the Pacific Sea, and had landed in *Lower Kamtschatka*.

The farther prosecution of this discovery was prevented by the troubles in Ruffia, under the usurpation of the powerful Czar BORIS GODUNOFF, and the succeeding false Demetrians: they even

obliterated the very memory of this transaction, for many years.

PETER the GREAT first resumed this important enquiry. He sent out several sea-officers, from the mouths of the rivers *Lena*, *Indigirka* and *Kolyma*. Some were ordered to coast along the north-east, and north of Siberia, and to try whether they could get round the promontories of *Swetoi-Nofs*, *Talatschoi-Nofs*, or *Tschukotskoi-Nofs*, into the Pacific Ocean; some others to undertake, in an opposite direction to the former, the navigation from *Kamtschatka* towards the north-west, and to examine the sea in those parts, and observe what lands or islands they could discover. Amongst the latter was Captain BEHRING; who, soon after the death of PETER the GREAT, in the year 1728, got into the bay of *Anadirsk*,

*dirsk*, in the 66th degree of northern latitude, came back safe to *Kamtſchatka*, and returned to Peterſburg in 1730, in the reign of the Empreſs ANNE; where he gave the Court a circumſtantial account of his expedition.

Scarce a year before his return to Peterſburg, the Ruſſians knew ſo little of thoſe lands and iſlands, that, from an account annexed to the Supplement to the Peterſburg Geographical Almanack for the year 1729, it was impoſſible to make out whether *Kamtſchatka* was an iſland, or a peninſula; or whether it was not the country called *Jedſo*.

The Court, after having received ſuch important informations from Captain BEHRING, immediately came to a reſolution to appoint an expedition, purpoſely to  
examine

examine farther into the state and situation of *Kamtſchatka*, and the neighbouring ſea, called the *Sea of Kamtſchatka*, or the Pacific Ocean; together with the lands and iſlands lying beyond it, to the eaſt, the ſouth, and the north. This expedition was ſent out from Peterſburg, in the ſummer of 1734, and was called the *Kamtſchatka Expedition*.

It is needleſs to treat of it at large, as a full account is to be met with in the excellent Collection of Ruſſian Tranſactions, published in 1758, by Mr. MILLER. In the third volume, which treats of voyages, &c. the author gives a circumſtantial account of this expedition, and how far the Ruſſians had carried their diſcoveries into the Pacific Ocean, to the north, the eaſt, and the ſouth. He relates, that BEHRING diſcovered ſeveral iſlands to the north-  
eaſt;

east; and one in particular, on which he was shipwrecked, died, and was buried by his fellow travellers; who gave it the name of *Behring's Island*. He farther tells us, that Captain Tschirikoff sailed eastward to the American coasts, and found a shorter cut from *Kamtshatka* to America, than could ever have been imagined: and that Captain Spangenberg, who had been sent to the south-east, discovered a multitude of islands, called the *Kurili Islands*; and beyond these, some large ones inhabited by Japanese, which are in fact the outskirts of Japan.

This important expedition, in which the Academy of Sciences at Peterburg had engaged a Professor of Astronomy, Mr. DE L'ISLE DE LA CROYERE, with an assistant, named KRASILNIKOFF; a  
 Professor



Professor of History, the celebrated Mr. MILLER, and his assistant, Mr. FISCHER, who was afterwards Professor, for the collecting of Facts from the Records of Siberia, and the Description of Nations; and a Professor of Natural History and Botany, Mr. GMELIN, with two assistants, KRASCHENINNIKOFF and STELLER, some draughtsmen, &c. ended soon after the accession of the late Empress ELIZABETH to the throne. Most of the persons who had been out upon this expedition, returned one after another in 1743, and the following year; but the Maps they had drawn up, were first engraved under the direction of the Academy of Petersburg in 1758, by order of the Grand Dutchess, the present Empress CATHARINE II.

The government being now sufficiently informed of the nature and situation of those seas, lands, islands and people, the matter rested there.

CATHARINE II. when she came to the Crown, invited some Russian merchants to extend their trade to these distant regions, offering them her protection, and the assistance of the governors and commanders in the different parts of Siberia; and in the first years of her reign, she was rewarded for her zeal, by the discovery of some new islands, opposite to the gulph of *Olutora* (a), which afforded choice furs of black foxes and beavers.

To

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(a) This gulph, and the islands that were discovered over against it, derive their name from the river *Olutora*, which runs into this bay from the west.

To the immortal honour of CATHARINE II. the way to new discoveries was now opened afresh; but it required both resolution and perseverance to pursue it, to the emolument and glory of Russia; and to extend her trade in those seas, which lay at so great a distance, though contiguous to the Russian dominions. This resolution and perseverance, the Empress found means to excite and support, by erecting a commercial company (*a*), com-

C 2

posed

(*a*) At first it consisted of about twenty merchants, who, till then, had traded singly with Siberia and the frontiers of China, in Russian and other European commodities. The fund for this association consisted of shares, of 500 rubles each; and two factories were erected, one at *Ochotskoi*, the other in *Kamtshatka*. The former was under the inspection of Mr. WASILEI IWANOFF SCHILOFF, Merchant at *Wilkingling*; the latter, of Mr. IWAN TIMOFEJEFF KRASILNIROFF, Merchant at *M...*, who had attended the first expedition

posed of Russian merchants, to whom she granted special privileges, for the carrying on their trade and navigation in the new discovered parts: she likewise honoured the twelve first members with a gold medal, struck for that purpose, which they were to wear hung to their necks by a blue ribband, as a mark of her high favour.

Farther to promote this end, the Admiralty-Office at *Ochotskoi*, on the sea of *Pensinsk*, or of *Ochotskoi*, had orders from her Majesty to assist this trading company of *Kamtschatka*, in the prosecution  
of

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dition in a ship of his own, and afterwards settled in *Kamtschatka*. The other principal members of this trading company were *Fedor Nikiforoff Ribinskoi*, a Merchant of Moscow; *Fedor Afanasyeff Kulkoff*, *Iwan Lapin*, and *Fedor Burenin*, Merchants of Wologod.

of their undertaking; to provide them with convoys; and to endeavour to procure all possible information relative to the islands and coasts they intended to visit, to the north and north-east, beyond *Kamtschatka*. In the year 1764, they accordingly sailed, from the harbour of *Ochotskoi*, with some two-masted galliots, and single-masted vessels of Siberia, called *Dofchtshenik*, a kind of covered barges, under a convoy from the aforefaid Admiralty-Office, commanded by the Lieutenant, Mr. SYMDO. They passed the sea of *Ochotskoi*; went round the southern cape of *Kamtschatka*, into the Pacific Ocean; steered along the eastern coast, keeping northward; and at last came to an anchor in the harbour of *Peter Paul*, and wintered in the *Ostrog*, or pallisaded Village, belonging to it. The next year they pursued their voyage further northward

ward; and in that and the following years, 1765 and 1766, by degrees discovered a whole Archipelago of islands of different sizes, which increased upon them the farther they went, between the 56th and 67th degrees of north latitude; and they returned safe, in the year 1767. The reports they made to the Government's Chancery at *Irkutsk*, and from thence sent to the Directing Senate, together with the Maps and Charts thereto annexed, make a considerable alteration in the regions of the sea of *Anadir*, and in the situation of the opposite coast of America; and give them quite a different appearance from what they had in the above-mentioned Map, engraved in the year 1758. This difference is apparent, by comparing it with the amended Map published last year, 1773, by the Academy of Sciences; and is still more visible

sible in the very accurate little Map of the new discovered Northern Archipelago hereto annexed, which is drawn up from the original accounts. In this are delineated both the former tracks of BEHRING and TSCHIRIKOFF; and more particularly the late voyage of our trading company of *Kamtshatka*, under Lieutenant SYNDO, together with all the new islands he discovered, are set down according to their situation and apparent magnitude, some with names, and some without.

The original accounts, that have hitherto been transmitted to us, are not yet sufficient to enable me to give a minute description of each, of their nature, or of the manners of the inhabitants; particularly, as no astronomer attended this expedition, or any adept in the know-  
ledge

ledge of the three kingdoms of nature, who might have given us an accurate account of the Botany, Zoology, and Mineralogy of these new discovered islands.

However, it appears, from the illiterate accounts of our sea-faring men, that there is no essential difference, in any respect, between these several islands, and their inhabitants; but that they seem to be pretty much alike.

It is needless to name every one of the islands which compose our new Northern Archipelago, as they are set down in the Map hereto annexed, with their situation and size.

As to the absolute accuracy of the two first articles, namely, the true situation,



as to geographical latitude and longitude, and their exact dimensions, I would not be answerable for them, till they can be ascertained by astronomical observations.

In the mean time, to facilitate the description of this new cluster of islands, we shall reduce them to three divisions.

The *first* contains the islands first discovered by BERING and TSCHIRIKOFF, in the sea of *Kamtschatka*, or Pacific Ocean, between the 50th and 56th degrees of north latitude, such as *Bering's Island*, *Mednoi*, *St. Theodor*, *St. Abraham*, *St. Macarius*, &c.

The *second* comprehends the islands of *Olutora*, over against the gulph of that name, between the 56th and 60th degrees; together with the islands of *Aleuta*,

D which

which lie farther south-east, discovered by the Russian trading Company, in the course of their navigation.

In the *third* we shall reckon the islands of *Anadir*; that is, those discovered in the two last years, 1765 and 1766, farther north and east, from the 60th to the 67th degrees of north latitude.

Of these islands we know in general, and for certain, that those which are situated from the 50th to the 55th degree, resemble the islands of *Kurili*, with regard to the weather, the productions of sea and land, beasts, fish, and shell-fish; as also in the figure, appearance, cloathing, food, way of life, and manners of the inhabitants; whereas those from the 55th to the 60th degree, which are the islands of *Olutoru* and *Aleuta*, are, in  
all

all these particulars, very like *Kamtschatka* (a).

Those of the third division have a different aspect, and are situated from the 60th to the 67th degree of north latitude. The former, which are like *Kamtschatka*, are full of mountains and volcanoes, have no woods, and but few plains. The more northern islands abound in woods and fields, and consequently in wild beasts. As to the savage inhabitants of these new discovered islands, they are but one remove from brutes, and differ from the inha-

D 2

bitants

(a) Mr. KRASCHENINNIKOFF, who went as Assistant to the abovementioned *Kamtschatka* Expedition, and to *Kamtschatka* itself, has published a very circumstantial account of that peninsula; as likewise of the islands of *Kurili*, in two Volumes, 4to. *Petersburg*, 1758.—N. B. *It has been translated and published in French and English.*

bitants of the islands lately discovered by the English and French in the south seas, as much in their persons, manners, and way of life, as in their climate; being the very reverse of the friendly and hospitable people of *Otaheite*.

To give a more distinct idea of these new islands, we shall here subjoin the above-mentioned Extract of the original Accounts delivered to the Imperial Academy of Sciences, without any comment whatever, or any addition, except a few remarks and explanations, with regard to the names of some plants, beasts, &c. which would otherwise be unintelligible. The extract contains an artless description of the chief of the islands whose names and situations occur in our little Map. From these we may form a tolerable judgment of the rest.

E X T R A C T

O F T H E

R E P O R T

M A D E T O T H E

D I R E C T I N G S E N A T E,

F R O M T H E

Chanceries of the Government of *Ir-  
kuzk, Kamtschatka & Bolscherezk;*

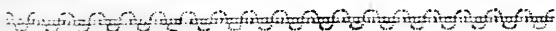
S H E W I N G

What Islands have been discovered by the *Promyschleniki*, or Commercial Company, on their Trading Voyage beyond *Kamtschatka*; what People inhabit those Islands, and what Animals and Productions were found there.





## Extract of the Report, &c.



I. **T**HE island of AJAK is about 150 wersts (*a*) in circumference. It has very high rocky mountains; and likewise valleys, dry grounds, plains, moist ground, turf, meadows and roads; so that you may easily go all over the island, and along the sea-coast. There are no woods at all upon the island. The same young high grass (*b*) grows there, as is found

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(*a*) A werst is about two-thirds of an English mile.

(*b*) A kind of sea grass (*Alga*) which may be used for firing, instead of wood.

found in the gulph of *Kamtſchatka*. The berries that grow on this illand, though very ſparingly, are the common *Schickſa* (*a*) and *Golubel*. On the contrary, the roots for food, namely, the *Kutarnick* (*b*), and the red root, grow in ſuch quantities, as to afford a plentiful proviſion for the inhabitants. There is a little river, that flows from north to ſouth, and diſcharges into the ſea. Its courſe, from the ſpring-head to the ſea, meaſures about ſeven or eight werſts; and the breadth, from ten to fifteen, and twenty fathom. The depth, at low water, is an *Arſchine* (*c*) and a half;

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(*a*) Very ſmall hurts, that grow brown on the heaths, but dark blue in the woods: they are otherwiſe called Ant-berries. *Golubel* is the common Sloe.

(*b*) We cannot poſitively ſay what root this is, for want of an accurate deſcription. KRASCHEN-INNIKOFF makes no mention of it in his *Deſcription of Kamtſchatka*; conſequently, it is not known there.

(*c*) A Ruſſian yard, about three-fourths of an Engliſh yard long.



a half; and, at high water, two, or two and a half. In June, this river affords red gudgeons, soles, or the large sort of halbut; in August, the *Kitschug*: but, in winter, there is hardly any fish to be got. The number of inhabitants on this island cannot well be ascertained; because they remove from one island to another with their whole families, cross the streights in great *Baidars* (a) between the islands, and settle in such as they find the pleasantest and best provided.

II. The island of KANAHHA is distant from the former about twenty wersts, and is about two hundred wersts in circumference. Among the many high mountains in this island, is a remarkable one, called the *Horelaai Sopka*, that is, the *Burning Top*, where the islanders fetch brimstone in summer.

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(a) *Baidars* are large boats, made of whales ribs, bound together with hoops, and covered over with the skins of sea-dogs, sea-cows, and other sea animals.

summer. At the foot of this mountain there are hot springs, where the inhabitants boil their meat and their fish. There are no other rivers on this island. The low grounds are much of the same nature as in the former. It contains about two hundred inhabitants of both sexes.

III. The island of TSCHEPCHINA lies forty wersts from the second, and is about eighty wersts in circumference. Among many craggy rocks, one rises above the rest, which is called *The White Cliff*. In the low grounds of this island there are some hot springs, but no cold streams or rivers. On this account the island is inhabited but by a few families.

IV. The island of TAHALAN is distant from the third ten wersts, and may measure upwards of forty wersts round. There are no considerable mountains on this island; nor is there any great plenty of fish, or other necessaries of life. The coast is so rocky, that there is no landing there

there in *Baidars*, much less in other vessels, that are not so flat. There are also but a few families on this island.

V. The island of *ATCHA* lies forty wersts from the fourth, and may be about three hundred wersts in circumference. Here you find many rocks, and many rivers running from them into the sea; but they do not equally abound in fish. The island produces plenty of vegetable food; such as the *Kutarnik*, the red root, and the *Sarana* (a). It affords convenient landing-places. The inhabitants may be between sixty and seventy souls; men, women and children.

VI. The island of *AMLAI* is distant five wersts from the fifth, and may be

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(a) A kind of wild tulip, or lilly: the root has no unpleasant taste, and is of a very stimulating quality. This plant is found pretty common in many parts of *Siberia*, particularly about *I-kuck*.

somewhat more than three hundred wersts in circumference. On this island are a great many rocks, and many brooks that fall into the sea; one of which, in particular, abounds with what they call the red fish, which is a kind of salmon, an arschine and a half long. The high grass, as also the *Kutarnik* and *Sarana* roots, grow there in great plenty. The number of inhabitants, men, women and children, is from sixty to seventy.

Besides these islands, we saw many more to the eastward, at no great distance from each other, but did not visit them.

The manner of living in these six islands is this. 1. The inhabitants on the low lands have green huts, which they call *Jurts*, where they constantly live. They care little for warmth, so never kindle fires in their *Jurts* all the winter.—2. They wear no cloaths but what are made with the skins of sea-fowls, especially a kind  
of

of black duck, called *Arkea* and *Toporka* (*a*) which they have the art of catching by the sea-side, with a sling made of whalebone. With the guts of the sea-cows and sea-calves, which they call *Sizutscha* and *Nerpa*, they sew their *Kamlees*, or upper garments. They use nothing else for their clothing.—3. For their common food, they are content with raw fish, and mostly with what they call *Paltufina*, and other kinds of stock fish. If they are hindered from fishing by contrary wind, they live upon sea-kail, (*Crambe Littoralis Bunias*) and sea-oysters.—4. In May and June they go out to catch *Nerpas* (sea-calves) and beavers.—5. In the depth of winter, by the severest cold, they go just as in summer, with their fish-skin and bird-skin upper and under garments, without breeches,

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(*a*) Most of them are a kind of sea-fowl, (called *Tubtani*) which are caught in great numbers, a hundred different ways; they are of a very beautiful red colour, and almost as large as a goose.

breeches, stockings, caps or gloves. If now and then it sets in uncommonly cold, they kindle a heap of the hay of strong sea-grass, and let the warmth penetrate to their feet, and between their legs, into the under garment, till they are in some measure warm.—6. Their women and children wear the same cloaths as the men; but some have both the under garments and an upper cloak made of beaver-skin.—7. They sleep with their wives in their huts, in a cellar dug in the ground, which they strew with grass, and prepare so as to make a soft bed; but have no other covering than the cloaths they wear in the day-time.—8. They take no manner of thought about their soul; much less about their condition after death; for they have not the least notion of a future state.

VII. KONJAK; this appears to be a pretty large island, on which is seen a ridge of mountains, with high tops, projecting here and there. In the middle

part of the island are vallies and plains, and a navigable river, of a considerable breadth and depth. The mouth of this river forms a bay, fit to admit shipping. Another smaller river issues from a lake to the northward, and flows southward, for the space of about four wersts into the sea. The lake seems to be about six wersts long, a werst broad, and from ten to fifteen fathom deep. In this river many sorts of fish come from the sea into the lake, and are caught in great quantities; such as large gudgeons, herrings, five or six *Werschocks* (a) long, haddocks, soles, red salmon, and several other species, known only in these waters, and called *Kischutsch*, *Chaiko*, *Pestraiki*, *Pof-tuschina*, &c.

This island is inhabited by a people absolutely unknown hitherto, who call themselves

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(a) The sixteenth part of an *Arfeline*, or one inch and an half English measure.

felves *Kanagyst*. To all appearance these islanders are numerous; for they appeared in great numbers on the coast. They seem to be an obstinate and brutish people, who will submit to no ruler, and shew no respect to each other. The dress of these people consists of the under garment above described, made of dark coloured, brown and red fox-skins; as also of the skins of beavers, sea-fowls and elks, and the speckled field-mouse, (*Mus Citellus*) which they call *Jewraschki* or *Suslik*: how and where they catch these animals, we could not learn. In winter they wear on their feet a kind of long snow-shoes, called *Torpases*, made of reindeer-skin, sewed with *Kamisch* (a). They wear no stockings nor breeches, but variety of caps, which they make of many different stuffs, according to their fancy. Their common weapons are bows  
and

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(a) *Kamisch* is a kind of reed, the fibres of which they draw out into threads.



and arrows, lances and knives, made of reindeer's bones, hatchets of a hard black stone, with which they likewise make the points of their lances. As soon as these people perceived us, they wanted to fall upon us, after their brutish custom, to rob and murder us. They are particularly spiteful against all people that come from the district of *Kamtschatka*; and, in general, they are dangerous to all strangers who approach their island. They live in *furts* or cellars under ground, where there does not appear the least cleanliness, as in the huts of the *Kamtschadales*. By way of ornament, they bore their under lip, where they hang fine bones of beasts and birds, as other nations wear ornaments to their ears. They commonly paint their faces with red, blue, and other colours. The men bear wooden shields, which they call *Kujaki*. They go out to sea, either alone or two or three together, in their *Baidars*, which are light, small and long boats, made of sea-dog's skin. They have likewise large *Baidars*, in which

more people can fit. They live chiefly upon the fish they call *Paltusina*, and stock-fish or haddock, which they catch in the sea with hooks made of bone. They are very dexterous at catching the river fish with their *Tsbiriugs*, which are nets or bags, that they weave with strings or threads. All these fish they eat raw. Besides these, they catch a good quantity of beavers, sea-cows, cat-fish (*Suitschi*) and dog-fish; but, on the rivers, otters, brown and grey foxes, ermines, bears, and beautiful speckled and tabby mice, called *Jewraschki*. As to birds, they have on this island all sorts of storks, ducks, ravens, magpies, &c. but no particular kinds have been observed. The berries that grow there in great plenty are, hurts, *Schick-sas*, cranberries, flocs, *Toloknjanka* and *Sarana*. Their woods are chiefly the alder-tree, birch, and several sorts of willows.

VIII. The island of UMANAK, which had already been discovered in the former

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mer navigation, is full three hundred werfts in compafs. No woods are to be found there. What grows there, is the fame thick reed, or fea-grafs, as in *Kamtſchatka*. The rivers that flow from the lakes are but ſmall. Both in this and the iſland of *Unalaſchka*, before diſcovered, as alſo throughout our new Northern Archipelago, the inhabitants have no notion of any religion; and in their darkneſs, only believe in witchcraft.

The men wear upper and under garments of ſkins of the *Uril* and *Arjen* (a), &c. the women wear the ſame

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(a) The *Uril* (*Corvus Aquaticus*) is a kind of water-raven, not unlike the crane: it is eſteemed as a dainty. See KRASCHENINNIKOFF'S *Description of Kamtſchatka*, vol. 1, p. 334.—The *Arjen*, *Colymbus Arcticus*, (*Lumme dictus Wormis*) *Hoyer*. A large ſort of black and white duck, which are found in innumerable flocks on the rocky iſlands: their ſkin ſerves to make clothes and furs. See KRASCHENINNIKOFF, vol. 1. p. 300.

cloathing, only theirs are mostly made of the skins of beasts; namely, of the beaver and cat-fish, sewed together with the sinews of the *Sjutscha*. A man has as many wives as he pleases, or as he can afford to keep; but he often trades with them different ways: for instance, if one man is in possession of something that another has a fancy for, he lets him have it for a wife or two. They do the same with their children, especially with their boys. They feed upon the flesh of several animals, and commonly eat it raw; sometimes they roast or broil it. Their manner of doing it is this: they heap up some stones, which they bind on all sides with clay, light a fire underneath, then lay some sticks across the top, on which they put their meat or fish to broil. They catch the *Paltusina* and stock-fish, both in winter and summer, with bone hooks, fastened to a string: the larger fish they shoot with arrows. The whales which the sea casts on shore are a great addition to their provision. Some years the  
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the berries called *Schickfa* will grow there; and some years none at all. When the sea fails to throw up the customary supply, they live upon the common sea-mussels, &c. Wherever any one has fixed his habitation, nobody else dares to hunt or fish in the neighbourhood, nor appropriate to himself what the sea has cast up, unless he has previously agreed with him for a part of the produce. If a man happens, on his way or in hunting, to come upon another man's territory, he must take up his lodging in their *Baidars*, unless he is a relation, for in that case he takes him into his hut. As they do not constantly reside in one place, their numbers cannot be exactly ascertained. The men, and women too, cut their hair before, and some all round, and tie it up in a bunch behind; but if they are in affliction, or meet with any mischance, they let it hang down carelessly. They bore the upper lip of the young children, of both sexes, under the nostrils, where they hang several sorts of stones, and whitened



A  
NARRATIVE  
OF THE SINGULAR  
ADVENTURES  
OF  
Four Russian Sailors,  
*Who were cast away on the desert  
Island of EAST-SPITZBERGEN.*

TOGETHER WITH  
Some OBSERVATIONS on the Productions  
of that Island, &c.

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BY Mr. P. L. LEROY,  
Professor of History, and Member of the Imperial  
Academy of Sciences at St. Petersburg.

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Translated from the GERMAN ORIGINAL,  
At the desire of several MEMBERS of the  
ROYAL SOCIETY.







## INTRODUCTION.

**L**ONG Voyages have frequently been productive of such incidents as exceed the bounds of probability; so that however fond we may be of those Authors, who in this respect administer to our pleasure, by relating adventures of the wonderful kind, yet we are apt to be suspicious in perusing them, lest our credulity should get the better of our judgment. It has happened nevertheless frequently, that those very Writers, whose works at first sight were suspected of exaggeration or

fiction, have afterwards, by some unexpected accident, been wholly cleared from such imputations.

The occurrences which I am now about to relate, may, in a great measure, be classed with those which, if not utterly incredible, are at least improbable; they seeming to have been studiously embellished with such circumstances as would give them most the air of the marvellous. I must confess, that I myself was, in the beginning, at a loss what opinion to form, when Mr. VERNEZOBRE, Director of the whale-fishery, transmitted to me the first account of them from *Archangel*. But as the people concerned in the following

lowing Narrative were dependents of Count PETER IWANOWITSCH SCHUWALOW, who at that time enjoyed a grant of the whale-fishery under the Empress ELIZABETH, I requested that Gentleman to send for them from *Archangel*, that I might satisfy myself by questioning them concerning their adventures. The Count complied with my request; and moreover expressed a desire to see and converse with these men himself.

In consequence of his orders, two of them were sent to *Peterf-burg*; the one, ALEXIS HIMKOF, the mate, a man of about fifty years of age; the other, IWAN HIM-

HIMKOF, godson to the former, of about thirty. They arrived at this city in the beginning of the year 1750; and the first conversation I had with them, was on the 8th of January. They brought with them several curious pieces of their workmanship, and some productions of the desert Island on which they had so long resided, as presents for Count SCHUWALOW, of which things I shall give some account in the sequel. I examined them with all the circumspection and care I was master of; proposing to them such questions as I thought necessary to satisfy me of the truth of this relation. The reader therefore may safely believe that, after having taken such precautions, no

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room is left to question the veracity of the following Narrative.

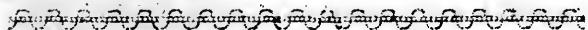
Another circumstance tending also to authenticate the following account, is, that as soon as the unfortunate sailors arrived at *Archangel*, Mr. KLINGSTADT, chief Auditor of the Admiralty of that city, sent for and examined them very particularly concerning the events which had befallen them; minuting down their answers in writing, with an intention of publishing himself an account of their extraordinary adventures. This Gentleman, some time after, came to *Petersburg*, and seeing the Narrative which I had drawn up, he was pleased to say, that he preferred

ferred it to his own, and therefore gave up all thoughts of publishing one himself. But he was so obliging as to favour me with a sight of his manuscript, in order that I might insert (as I actually have done) some particular incidents, which the sailors had omitted to inform me of, but had related to him. Both the accounts agreed to a tittle in all particulars where this Gentleman and I had put the same questions to the sailors; a circumstance which affords an almost incontestable proof of the truth of the whole.



T H E

NARRATIVE, &c.



IN the year 1743, one JEREMIAH  
OKLADMKOF, a Merchant of  
*Mesen*, a town in the province  
of *Jugovia* and in the government of  
*Archangel*, fitted out a vessel, carrying  
fourteen men; she was destined for *Spitz-*  
*bergen*, to be employed in the whale-or  
seal-fishery (a). For eight successive days  
after they had sailed, the wind was fair;  
but on the ninth it changed, so that instead  
of

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(a) Seals are by the Russians called *Morgi*; a commodity in which they carry on a very considerable trade.

of getting to the west of *Spitzbergen*, the usual place of rendezvous for the Dutch ships, and those of other nations annually employed in the whale-fishery, they were driven eastward of those islands; and, after some days, they found themselves at a small distance from one of them, called EAST-SPITZBERGEN; by the Russians, *Maloy Broun*; that is, *Little Broun* (SPITZBERGEN, properly so called, being known to them by the name of *Bolschoy Broun*, that is, *Great Broun*). Having approached this island within almost three *Wersts*, or two English miles, their vessel was suddenly surrounded by ice, and they found themselves in an extremely dangerous situation..

In this alarming state a council was held; when the mate, ALEXIS HIMKOF, informed them that he recollected to have heard, that some of the people of *Mesen*, some time before, having formed a resolution of wintering upon this island, had accordingly carried from that city timber  
proper



proper for building a hut, and had actually erected one at some distance from the shore.

This information induced the whole company to resolve on wintering there, if the hut, as they hoped, still existed; for they clearly perceived the imminent danger they were in, and that they must inevitably perish if they continued in the ship. They dispatched therefore four of their crew, in search of the hut, or any other succour they could meet with. These were ALEXIS HIMKOF, the mate; IWAN HIMKOF, his godson; STEPHEN SCHARAPOF, and FEODOR WEREGIN.

As the shore on which they were to land was uninhabited, it was necessary that they should make some provision for their expedition. They had almost two miles to travel over loose ridges of ice, which being raised by the waves, and driven against each other by the wind, rendered the way equally difficult

and dangerous; prudence therefore forbade their loading themselves too much, lest, being overburthened, they might sink in between the pieces of ice and perish.

Having thus maturely considered the nature of their undertaking, they provided themselves with a musket, a powder-horn containing twelve charges of powder, with as many balls, an axe, a small kettle, a bag with about twenty pounds of flour, a knife, a tinder-box and tinder, a bladder filled with tobacco, and every man his wooden pipe. Thus accoutred, these four sailors quickly arrived on the island, little suspecting the misfortunes that would befall them.

They began with exploring the country; and soon discovered the hut they were in search of, about an English mile and a half from the shore. It was thirty six feet in length, eighteen feet in height, and as many in breadth. It contained

tained a small anti-chamber, about twelve feet broad, which had two doors, the one to shut it up from the outer air, the other to form a communication with the inner room: this contributed greatly to keep the larger room warm, when once heated. In the large room was an earthen stove, constructed in the Russian manner; that is, a kind of oven without a chimney, which serves occasionally either for baking, for heating the room, or, as is customary amongst the Russian peasants, in very cold weather, for a place to sleep upon.

The reader must not be surpris'd at my mentioning a room without a chimney; for the houses inhabited by the lower class of people in Russia are seldom built otherwise. When a fire is kindled in one of these stoves, the room; as may well be supposed, is filled with smoke; to give vent to which, the door, and three or four windows are opened. These windows are each a foot in height, and about

fix inches wide : they are cut out of the beams whereof the house is built; and, by means of a sliding-board, they may, when occasion requires it, be shut very close. When therefore a fire is made in the stove, the smoke descends no lower than the windows, through which, or through the door, it finds a vent, according to the direction of the wind; and persons may continue in the room, without feeling any great inconveniency from it. The reader will readily conjecture that the upper part of such a place, between the windows and the cieling, must be as black as ebony; but, from the windows down to the floor, the wood is perfectly clean, and retains its natural colour.

They rejoiced greatly at having discovered the hut, which had however suffered much from the weather, it having now been built a considerable time : our adventurers however contrived to pass the night in it. Early next morning they

they hastened to the shore, impatient to inform their comrades of their success; and also to procure from their vessel such provisions, ammunition, and other necessaries, as might better enable them to winter on the island.

I leave my readers to figure to themselves the astonishment and agony of mind these poor people must have felt, when, on reaching the place of their landing, they saw nothing but an open sea, free from the ice, which, but a day before, had covered the ocean. A violent storm, which had arisen during the night, had certainly been the cause of this disastrous event. But they could not tell whether the ice which had before hemmed in the vessel, agitated by the violence of the waves, had been driven against her, and shattered her to pieces; or whether she had been carried by the current into the main; a circumstance which frequently happens in those seas. Whatever accident had befallen the ship, they saw  
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her no more; and as no tidings were ever afterwards received of her, it is most probable that she sunk, and that all on board of her perished.

This melancholy event depriving the unhappy wretches of all hope of ever being able to quit the island; they returned to the hut from whence they had come, full of horror and despair.

Their first attention was employed, as may easily be imagined, in devising means of providing subsistence, and for repairing their hut. The twelve charges of powder which they had brought with them, soon procured them as many raindeer; the island, fortunately for them, abounding in these animals.

Raindeer being only found in the most northern parts of Europe, such as *Lapland*, and in the corresponding parts of Asia, a short description of these animals will, it is hoped, not be deemed an unpardonable digression.

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The reindeer much resemble the stag, or elk. They are commonly of an ash-colour; but there are some of a reddish cast. They exceed the stag in size, and are also more fleshy. Their horns are smooth and of a whitish hue, with more branches than those of the stag, but very like the horns of the elk. The reindeer, when running, make a noise with the joints of their legs; and this also serves to distinguish them from the stag.

The *Laplanders*, the *Samojedes*, and a branch of the *Tonguses*, who, from the word *Olen*, which in the Russian language signifies *Rain-deer*, are called *Oleni-Tonguses*, use reindeer to draw in their sledges, instead of horses; for, besides being of sufficient strength, their swiftness is incredible. Moss, which in all the northern countries is produced in great abundance, is the only food on which they subsist. This they procure for themselves, by clearing away with their feet

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the snow which covers the moss : so that their owners are at no expence for their maintenance.

An opinion prevails, that the reindeer cannot live in any but their native country. This however I will venture to say is false; for I myself saw at *Moscow*, twelve of these animals, which belonged to the High-Chancellor Count GOLOPKIN, feeding in a meadow adjoining to the river *Kausc*, which waters that nobleman's gardens: and in the year 1752, Count PETER IWANOWITSCH SCHUWALOF, had both a male and female brought from *Archangel*. They fed on nothing but moss, yet the female produced a young one, which throve to admiration, and continued in full health and vigour till the year 1754. How long they lived afterwards I cannot say, as I returned to *Petersburg* in that year.

I have before observed, that the herds which the sailors were so fortunate as to find

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find, had sustained some damage, and it was this: there were cracks in many places between the boards of the building, which freely admitted the air. This inconveniency was however easily remedied, as they had an axe, and the beams were still found (for wood in those cold climates continues through a length of years unimpaired by worms or decay) so it was easy for them to make the boards join again very tolerably; besides, moss growing in great abundance all over the island, there was more than sufficient to stop up the crevices, which wooden houses must always be liable to. Repairs of this kind cost the unhappy men the less trouble, as they were Russians; for all Russian peasants are known to be good carpenters: they build their own houses, and are very expert in handling the axe.

The intense cold, which makes those climates habitable to so few species of animals, renders them equally unfit for the production of vegetables. No species

of tree, or even shrub, is found on any of the islands of *Spitzbergen*; a circumstance of the most alarming nature to our sailors. Without fire it was impossible to resist the rigour of the climate; and without wood, how was that fire to be produced, or supported? Providence, however, has so ordered it, that in this particular, the sea supplies the defects of the land. In wandering along the beach, they collected plenty of wood, which had been driven ashore by the waves; and which at first consisted of the wrecks of ships, and afterwards of whole trees with their roots, the produce of some more hospitable, but to them unknown climate, which the overflowing of rivers, or other accidents, had sent into the ocean. This will not appear incredible to those who have perused the journals of the several navigators who have been forced to winter in *Nova Zemla* (a), or  
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(a) I must observe here, that the true pronunciation of that word is not *Nova Zembla* (as mentioned

any other country in a still more northern latitude.

Nothing proved of more essential service to these unfortunate men, during the first year of their exile, than some boards they found upon the beach, having a long iron hook, some nails of about five or six inches long, and proportionably thick, and other bits of old iron fixed in them; the melancholy relicks of some vessels cast away in those remote parts. These were thrown ashore by the waves at a time when the want of powder gave our men reason to apprehend that they must fall a prey to hunger, as they had nearly consumed those reindeer they had killed. This lucky circumstance was attended  
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tioned by several authors) but *Nova Zemla*, or *Nova Zemla*. The Russians having taken possession of this island, gave it the name of *Nova Zemla*, or *Nova Zemla*; that is, *New Earth*, or *New Land*; for the word *Zemla*, in the Russian language, expresses both these ideas: and thus it is called in Russia, on which it is dependent.

with another, equally fortunate; they found, on the shore, the root of a fir-tree, which nearly approached to the figure of a bow.

As necessity has ever been the mother of invention, so they soon fashioned this root to a good bow, by the help of a knife; but still they wanted a string, and arrows. Not knowing how to procure these at present, they resolved upon making a couple of lances, to defend themselves against the white bears, by far the most ferocious of their kind, whose attacks they had great reason to dread.

Finding they could neither make the heads of their lances, nor of their arrows, without the help of a hammer, they contrived to form the large iron hook mentioned above into one, by heating it, and widening a hole it happened to have about its middle, with the help of one of their largest nails. This received the handle, and a round button at one end of the hook served

served for the face of the hammer. A large pebble supplied the place of an anvil; and a couple of reindeer's horns made the tongs. By the means of such tools, they made two heads of spears; and after polishing and sharpening them on stones, they tied them as fast as possible with thongs made of reindeer-skins, to sticks about the thickness of a man's arm, which they got from some branches of trees that had been cast on shore.

Thus equipped with spears, they resolved to attack a white bear; and after a most dangerous encounter, they killed the formidable creature, and thereby made a new supply of provisions. The flesh of this animal they relished exceedingly, as they thought it much resembled beef in taste and flavour. The tendons they saw with much pleasure could, with little or no trouble, be divided into filaments, of what fineness they thought fit. This perhaps was the most fortunate discovery

covery these men could have made; for, besides other advantages, which will be hereafter mentioned, they were hereby furnished with strings for their bow.

The success of our unfortunate islanders in making the spears, and the use these proved of, encouraged them to proceed, and to forge some pieces of iron into heads of arrows of the same shape, though somewhat smaller in size than the spears above-mentioned. Having ground and sharpened these like the former, they tied them, with the sinews of the white bears, to pieces of fir, to which, by the help of fine threads of the same, they fastened feathers of sea-fowl; and thus became possessed of a complete bow and arrows. Their ingenuity, in this respect, was crowned with success far beyond their expectation; for, during the time of their continuance upon the island, with these arrows they killed no less than two hundred and fifty reindeer, besides a great

great number of blue and white foxes (a). The flesh of these animals served them also for food, and their skins for cloathing, and other necessary preservatives against the intense coldness of a climate so near the Pole.

They killed however only ten white bears in all, and that not without the utmost danger; for these animals being prodigiously strong, defended themselves with astonishing vigour and fury. The first our men attacked designedly; the other nine they slew in defending themselves from their assaults: for some of these creatures even ventured to enter the outer room of the hut, in order to devour them. It is true, that all the bears did not shew (if I may be allowed the expression) equal intrepidity;

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(a) The Russians call them *Peslzi*, on account of their greatly resembling those islandic dogs which the shepherds in Germany usually employ to watch their sheep.—The word *Fox*, in the Russian language, signifies a *Dog*.

trepidity; either owing to some being less pressed by hunger, or to their being by nature less carnivorous than the others: for some of them which entered the hut, immediately betook themselves to flight on the first attempt of the sailors to drive them away. A repetition, however, of these ferocious attacks, threw the poor men into great terror and anxiety, as they were in almost a perpetual danger of being devoured. The three different kinds of animals above-mentioned, *viz.* the reindeer, the blue and white foxes, and the white bears, were the only food these wretched mariners tasted during their continuance in this dreary abode.

We do not at once see every resource. It is generally necessity which quickens our invention, opening by degrees our eyes, and pointing out expedients which otherwise might never have occurred to our thoughts. The truth of this observation our four sailors experienced



rienced in various instances. They were for some time reduced to the necessity of eating their meat almost raw, and without either bread or salt; for they were quite destitute of both. The intensity of the cold, together with the want of proper conveniences, prevented them from cooking their victuals in a proper manner. There was but one stove in the hut, and that being set up agreeably to the Russian taste, was more like an oven, and consequently not well adapted for boiling any thing. Wood also was too precious a commodity to be wasted in keeping up two fires; and the one they might have made out of their habitation, to dress their victuals, would in no way have served to warm them. Another reason against their cooking in the open air, was the continual danger of an attack from the white bears. And here I must observe, that suppose they had made the attempt, it would still have been practicable for only some part of the year; for the cold, which in such a climate

for some months scarce ever abates, from the long absence of the sun, then enlightening the opposite hemisphere; the inconceivable quantity of snow, which is continually falling through the greatest part of the winter; together with the almost incessant rains at certain seasons; all these were insurmountable obstacles to that expedient.

To remedy therefore, in some degree, the hardship of eating their meat half raw, they bethought themselves of drying some of their provision, during the summer, in the open air, and afterwards of hanging it up in the upper part of the hut, which, as I mentioned before, was continually filled with smoke down to the windows: it was thus dried thoroughly by the help of that smoke. This meat, so prepared, they used for bread, and it made them relish their other flesh the better, as they could only half dress it. Finding this experiment answer in every respect their wishes, they continued to practise

practise it during the whole time of their confinement upon the island, and always kept up by that means a sufficient stock of provisions. Water they had in summer from small rivulets that fell from the rocks; and in winter, from the snow and ice thawed: this was of course their only beverage; and their small kettle was the only vessel they could make use of for this and other purposes.

It is well known, that sea-faring people are extremely subject to the scurvy; and it has been observed, that this disease increases in proportion as we approach the Poles; which must be attributed either to the excessive cold, or to some other cause yet unknown. However that may be, our mariners, seeing themselves quite destitute of every means of cure, in case they should be attacked with so fatal a disorder, judged it expedient not to neglect any regimen generally adopted as a preservative against this impending evil. IWAN HIMKOF,  
one

one of their number, who had several times wintered on the coast of *West-Spitzbergen*, advised his unfortunate companions to swallow raw and frozen meat, broken into small bits; to drink the blood of reindeer warm, as it flowed from their veins immediately after killing them; to use as much exercise as possible; and lastly, to eat scurvy-grass (*Cochlearia*) which grows on the island, though not in great plenty.

I leave the Faculty to determine whether raw frozen flesh, or warm reindeer blood, be proper antidotes to the distemper; but exercise and the use of scurvy-grass have always been recommended to persons of a scorbutic tendency, whether actually afflicted with the disorder or not. Be this as it may, experience at least seems to have proved these remedies to be effectual; for three of the sailors, who pursued the above method, continued totally free from all taint of the disease. The fourth, THEODORE WEREGIN, on  
the

the contrary, who was naturally indolent, averſe to drinking the raindeer blood, and unwilling to leave the hut when he could poſſibly avoid it, was, ſoon after their arrival on the iſland, ſeized with the ſcurvy, which afterwards became ſo bad, that he paſſed almoſt ſix years under the greateſt ſufferings: in the latter part of that time, he became ſo weak that he could no longer ſit erect, nor even raiſe his hand to his mouth; ſo that his humane companions were obliged to feed and tend him, like a new-born infant, to the hour of his death (a).

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(a) Though I have intimated my doubts reſpecting the antiſcorbutic virtue of raw frozen fleſh, and the warm blood of raindeer, yet theſe things are not unworthy of conſideration; for, in the firſt volume of *Voyages and Discoveries made by the Ruſſians, along the Coaſts of the Frozen Sea and Eaſtern Ocean, &c.* published by Counſellor MILLER, I find the inhabitants of North Siberia eat raw frozen fiſh as a preſervative againſt the ſcurvy. The paſſage alluded to occurs in pages 194, 195. “ Our

“ people wintered at the mouth of the river Cho-

I have mentioned above, that our failers brought a small bag of flour with

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“ *tushtach*. Here the scurvy began to spread amongst  
 “ them; but it was happily cured, by a decoction of buds of cedar, which there grows like  
 “ shrubs; and, according to the custom of that  
 “ country, by frozen fish eaten raw. By these  
 “ means, seconded by continual motion and labour,  
 “ the major part of the crew continued healthy,  
 “ and the sick recovered.”

The recovery of the sick may perhaps be attributed solely to the constant motion in which they kept themselves, and to the balsam contained in the cedar-buds, which properly is a kind of turpentine, and is used as such for purifying the blood. It is however evident, from the passage above quoted, that the inhabitants of those countries eat raw frozen fish as a specific remedy for the scurvy; and this is what I meant to observe.

The above-mentioned Counsellor Miller, in pages 205, 206, also speaks of exercise, and the warm blood of reindeer, as beneficial in scorbutic cases. “ In this particular,” says he, “ the  
 “ Russians about *Archangel* should be imitated;  
 “ some of whom, almost every year, winter in  
 “ *Nova Zemla*, without ever contracting the scurvy.  
 “ They follow the example of the *Samojedes*, by  
 “ frequently drinking the warm blood of reindeer  
 “ just

with them to the island. Of this they had consumed about one half with their meat; the

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“just killed.”——“The hunting after these animals requires a continual exercise. None ever keeps in his hut during the day, unless the stormy weather, or too great quantities of snow, hinder them from making their usual excursions.”

When I read to Mr. S. BATIGNE the account which I now lay before the public, he told me, he was inclined to believe that the blood of reindeer, if drunk quite warm, might be a great preservative against, and even a cure for the scurvy, preventing and dispersing, by its resolvent nature, all those visciduous concretions, which give rise to a disorder that proceeds chiefly from a want of proper circulation in the juices; which at length brings on putrefaction, and infects the whole mass of the blood. Among other proofs, he grounded his opinion on what some voyagers to the West-Indies relate, that when the scurvy rages amongst a ship's crew, they directly make for one of the *Tortugo*, or *Turtle Islands*, so called from the great number of those animals found there. The patients feeding plentifully on them, from the quantity of their blood, and its balsamic quality, find them remarkably wholesome.—This is farther confirmed by a prevailing custom in the

Alps

the remainder they employed in a different manner, equally useful. They soon saw the necessity of keeping up a continual fire in so cold a climate, and found that if it should unfortunately go out, they had no means of lighting it again; for though they had a steel and flints, yet they wanted both match and tinder.

The American savages have hit on an expedient for procuring fire, by rubbing a square piece of hard wood between two pieces of a softer kind; which being pressed close by the knees, are at length heated by the friction, and soon after  
 smoke

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Alps and adjacent country, where those afflicted with a pleurisy, or other disorders occasioned by an obstruction in the circulation of the fluids, are ordered to take the blood of *Bouquetins*, or *Wild Goats*; which though it be a dry substance, yet retains so much of its volatile nature, as to produce the most happy effects, in bringing on first a gentle perspiration, then copious sweats.



smoke and take fire (a). It is not to be presumed that our unfortunate failors were

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(a) See what LABAT says on this subject, in his *New Voyages to the American Islands*, when speaking of the *Caribs*.—But I must here add, that this is not the only manner of procuring a fire, in use amongst the Americans. Some of them have fallen on another expedient, which is a singular contrivance, a machine peculiarly adapted to the purpose; and what is more remarkable, even the inhabitants of *Kamtshatka* use the same instrument. Here I beg leave to lay before the reader what Counsellor MILLER has said on this subject in his *Account of the Discoveries made by the Russians*, before quoted, page 257. “ Mr. STELLER  
 “ came to a place where the Americans had but  
 “ just dined, but the instant he approached they  
 “ retired. He there found an arrow, and a wooden  
 “ instrument for making fire, exactly similar to  
 “ those used for that purpose in *Kamtshatka*.”—  
 In a note subjoined, he gives the following description of it: “ This is a piece of board with several  
 “ holes in it, and a stick, the one end of which  
 “ is thrust into one of these holes, whilst the  
 “ other end is whirled round between the hands,  
 “ until the swift gyration sets the hole on fire;  
 “ then the sparks are caught on some substance  
 “ like

acquainted with this American practice; they knew, however, that by rubbing together two dry sticks, the one hard, the other soft, the latter would take fire; for besides that this is the method practised by the peasants in some parts of Russia when in the woods, there is also a religious ceremony, strictly observed in every Russian village where there is a church, in which the fire employed is called *Givoy Agon*, that is, *Living Fire*, and which must be kindled in the like manner (a).

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“ like tinder, easily combustible, and the fire is  
 “ kindled by the help of dried grass, or other ma-  
 “ terials fit for the purpose.”

(a) An account of this singular ceremony may probably not prove unentertaining to my readers, though it have no immediate connection with this Narrative.

The eighteenth of August, old stile, is by the Russians called *Frel i Lavoir*, from two martyrs, who, in the Roman calendar, are known by the names of *Florus* and *Laurus*. According to the Roman chronology, this day falls on the twenty-ninth of August, the same day on which the church com-

memorates

The knowledge however of this could be of little use to them, for they were at a loss for the materials necessary to perform the experiment. They had no other wood but fir, which, as it was brought them by the waves, was much too wet for

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memorates the decolation of St. *John*. On this day the Russian peasants lead their horses to the church of the village, near to the side of which they have the evening before dug a cavity underground, with two openings, one for entering, the other for going out. Each horse having a bridle made of the rind of lime-tree, is made to enter this cavity in processional order; at the outlet stands a priest, with a brush in his hand, to sprinkle the creatures with holy water; and as they successively come out, the bridle of each is taken off, and the horses are then made to walk between two fires, kindled by what the Russians call *Giezy Agen*, that is *Living Fire*: into one of these fires the peasants throw their bridles, where they are consumed. The manner of kindling this *Giezy Agen*, is as follows. They take a branch of the maple-tree, which is previously dried, and about six feet long; this they rub hard on a piece of birch, which is also thoroughly dried; but being softer than the former, it is soon set on fire by the friction, and serves for making the two fires here mentioned.

for the purpose. The difficulty therefore was, by what means to secure themselves against so dismal a calamity as the want of fire? After revolving this hard problem in their minds, they had recourse to the following contrivance. In their excursions through the island, they had met with a slimy loam, or a kind of clay, nearly in the middle of it. Out of this they found means to form a utensil which might serve for a lamp; and they proposed to keep it constantly burning, with the fat of the animals they should kill. This was certainly the most rational scheme they could have thought of; for to be without a light, in a climate where, during winter, darkness reigns for several months together, would have added much to their other calamities. Having therefore fashioned a kind of lamp, they filled it with reindeer's fat, and stuck in it some twisted linen, shaped into a wick. But they had the mortification to find, that as soon as the fat melted, it not only soaked into the clay, but fairly  
run

run through it on all sides. The thing therefore was to devise some means for preventing this inconveniency, not arising from cracks, but from the substance of which the lamp was made being too porous. They made therefore a new one, dried it thoroughly in the air, then heated it red hot, and afterwards quenched it in their kettle, wherein they had boiled a quantity of flour down to the consistence of thin starch. The lamp being thus dried and filled with melted fat, they now found, to their great joy, it did not leak. But for greater security, they dipped linen rags in their paste, and with them covered all its outside. Succeeding in this attempt, they immediately made another lamp, for fear of an accident, that in all events they might not be destitute of light; and when they had done so much, they thought proper to save the remainder of their flour for similar purposes.

As they had carefully collected whatever happened to be cast on shore, to supply them with fuel, they had found amongst the wrecks of vessels some cordage, and a small quantity of oakum (a kind of hemp used for calking ships) which served them to make wicks for their lamp. When these stores began to fail, their shirts, and their drawers (which are worn by almost all Russian peasants) were employed to make good the deficiency. By these means they kept their lamp burning without intermission, from the day they first made it (a work they set about soon after their arrival on the island) until that of their embarkation for their native country.

The necessity of converting the most essential parts of their cloathing, such as their shirts and drawers, to the use above specified, exposed them the more to the rigour of the climate. They also found themselves in want of shoes, boots, and other articles of dress; and as winter

was approaching, they were again obliged to have recourse to that ingenuity which necessity suggests, and which seldom fails in the trying hour of distress.

They had skins of raindeer and foxes in plenty that had hitherto served them for bedding, and which they now thought of employing in some more essential service; but the question was how to tan them. After deliberating on this subject, they took to the following method. They soaked the skins for several days in fresh water, till they could pull off the hair pretty easily; they then rubbed the wet leather with their hands till it was nearly dry, when they spread some melted raindeer fat over it, and again rubbed it well. By this process the leather became soft, pliant and supple, proper for answering every purpose they wanted it for. Those skins which they designed for furs, they only soaked for one day, to prepare them for being wrought,

wrought, and then proceeded in the manner before mentioned, except only that they did not remove the hair. Thus they soon provided themselves with the necessary materials for all the parts of dress they wanted.

But here another difficulty occurred.— They had neither awls for making shoes or boots, nor needles for sewing their garments. This want however they soon supplied by means of the bits of iron they had occasionally collected. Out of these they made both; and by their industry even brought them to a certain degree of perfection. The making eyes to their needles gave them indeed no little trouble; but this they also performed with the assistance of their knife; for having ground it to a very sharp point, and heated red hot a kind of wire forged for that purpose, they pierced a hole through one end, and by whetting and smoothing it on stones, brought the other to a point, and thus gave the whole needle  
a very



a very tolerable form. I myself examined some of these needles, and could find fault with nothing except the eye, which being made in the manner abovementioned, was so rough that it often cut the thread drawn through it; an imperfection they could not possibly remedy, for want of better tools.

Sciffars, to cut out the skins, were what they next had occasion for; but having none, their place they supplied with their knife: and though there was neither taylor nor shoemaker amongst them, yet they contrived to cut out their leather and furs well enough for their purpose. The sinews of the bears and the reindeer, which, as I mentioned before, they had found means to split, served them for thread; and thus provided with the necessary implements, they proceeded to make their new cloaths.

Their summer dress consisted of a kind of jacket and trowsers, made of skins

prepared as I have mentioned above, and in winter they wore long fur-gowns, like the *Samojedes*, or *Laplanders*, furnished with a hood, which covered their head and neck, leaving only an opening for the face. These gowns were sewed close round, so that to put them on, they were obliged to bring them over their heads like a shirt.

Excepting the uneasiness which generally accompanies an involuntary solitude, these people, having thus by their ingenuity so far overcome their wants, might have had reason to be contented with what Providence had done for them in their distressful situation. But that melancholy reflection, to which each of these forlorn persons could not help giving way, that perhaps he might survive his companions, and then perish for want of subsistence, or become a prey to the wild beasts, incessantly disturbed their minds. The mate, ALEXIS HUMKOF, more particularly suffered, who having

let,

left a wife and three children behind, sorely repined at his being separated from them: they were, as he told me, constantly in his mind, and the thought of never more seeing them made him very unhappy.—But I will now give some account of the island, and relate what the sailors told me about it.

In the sea-chart of the northern parts of Europe, drawn by GERHARD VAN KEULEN, and corrected by JOHN PETERSEN STUURMAN, this island of *East-Spitzbergen*, the *Maloy Brown* of the Russians, is placed between  $77^{\circ}.25'$ . and  $78^{\circ}.45'$ . of north latitude, and consequently between the end of the third, and the beginning of the fourth climate; hence the longest duration of day-light there, must be four months in the year. According to the above Map, this island forms a kind of pentagone: its length, from east to west, is about one hundred and twenty, and its breadth, from north to south, about one hundred and fifteen

English

English miles. As I had forgotten to question our sailors concerning the size of the island, so for some information I was obliged to consult the Map which had been laid before them on their return home, and which has been since sent me from *Archangel*. In this they had pointed out the place of their exile, shewed the very spot where they conceived their hut to stand, and had marked it with the stroke of a pen.

As a proof that our mariners had not been mistaken in the situation of this island, I shall lay before my readers what Mr. VERNEZOBRE communicated to me in one of his letters.

“ The captain of a galliot, called the  
 “ Nicholas and Andrew, belonging to  
 “ Count PETER IWANOWITSCH SCHU-  
 “ WALOW, wintered in *Maloy Brown*, in  
 “ the year 1749. As he arrived there  
 “ soon after the departure of our sailors,  
 “ he found the hut in which they had  
 “ lived

“ lived, knowing it to be the same by a  
 “ wooden cross, which the mate ALEXIS  
 “ HIMKOF had erected before the door,  
 “ as a memorial of his having taken pos-  
 “ session of the country, which, from his  
 “ own name, he called *Alexeyewskoy*  
 “ *Ostrow*, that is, *Alexis’ Island*.”—He  
 further says, in the same letter—“ Some  
 “ *Samojedes*, having heard of the adven-  
 “ tures of these sailors, and questioned  
 “ them very circumstantially concerning  
 “ the country, lately sent me a mes-  
 “ sage, expressing their desire to make a  
 “ settlement upon this island, provided  
 “ a free passage were granted to them,  
 “ their wives, children, and their rein-  
 “ deer.”

Before I enter on a circumstantial ac-  
 count of the nature of this island, it may  
 not be improper to introduce it with the  
 following observation. Some authors main-  
 tain, that the country known by the name  
 of *Nova Zemla*, is no island, nor, as others  
 affirm, a part of our continent; but only

an assemblage of ice, which had gradually accumulated. They support their opinion, by saying, that you will meet with ice on digging to the depth of one or two feet into the superficial earth, which they pretend has been carried thither by the wind from the coast of Asia, and deposited on this ice.

I shall not undertake to decide this question, as I have not perused all the authors who espouse or controvert this opinion; nor is it to my present purpose. But thus much I will venture to affirm, that the island of *East-Spitzbergen* has not been formed by the ice, but that it is certainly real land; and the account given me of it by these sailors, puts this matter beyond all doubt.

According to their relation, the island of *East-Spitzbergen* has many mountains and steep rocks of a stupendous height, which are constantly covered with snow and ice. Not a tree, nor even the poorest

pooreſt ſhrub is to be met with; and of plants, ſcurvy-graſs is the only one which grows there, and that but in ſmall quantities; it produces no graſs, but plenty of moſs in every part. About the middle of the iſland they found, as I have mentioned before, a fattiſh loam or clay; whence we may reaſonably infer, that iron ores have exiſted, or will be formed there: perhaps a careful ſearch would diſcover ſome even now. It has no river, but a great number of ſmall rivulets, which riſe amongſt the rocks and mountains, and afford plenty of water. Beſides pebbles, which are met with in abundance, this iſland produces another kind of ſtone that will burn to lime, and which is found on the ſurface of the earth. In Ruſſia it is called *Plit*, and is taken from quarries, and uſed for making quick lime, to cement the foundation of houſes. It has the appearance of a kind of free-ſtone, but when long expoſed to the air, it ſcales and falls to pieces like ſlates. The ſhores of

the island are covered with sand and gravel, of which last a little is also found towards its center.

I further questioned our sailors concerning the appearance and absence of the sun, the temperature of the climate, the several vicissitudes to which the air was exposed, and in short all the phænomena they might have observed during their stay on the island.

The answers they gave me relating to the first appearance of the sun, its course round the horizon, and its total disappearance, were as follows. The sun, they said, first appeared in the beginning of Lent; but as this varies much, according as Easter happens to fall, and as these illiterate sailors were quite unacquainted with the manner of calculating Easter, or had perhaps never observed that this festival falls sometimes later than others, so I could not from this answer determine the time of the sun's first appearance



pearance above the horizon, with any degree of certainty. The time of their observing the sun to begin his course round the horizon was more exact; this, they said, was on the feast of St. *Athanasius*, which is the second day of May, old style; from that day they had seen it perform the circuit during ten or eleven weeks, which (supposing the latter to be the true time, as is most probable from the situation of the island) would be to the fifteenth of July. They added, that the sun then rose and set every four and twenty hours, till the festival of St. *Demetrius*; that is, till the twenty-sixth of October, old style, when it totally disappeared.

This account however of our sailors is, I suspect, not exact; for if we suppose the island on which they were, to be in latitude seventy-seven and a half degrees, as laid down in the map above-mentioned, the sun must make its first appearance on the horizon on the fourth of February; it ought to be seen performing its circuit

from the eleventh of April till the eighth of August, and must disappear on the sixteenth of October.

But though these good people might err as to the rising and setting of the sun, and the time of its circuit round the hemisphere, by taking the church-kalendar for their guide, yet it is not to be inferred from thence that they fell into any considerable mistake about the time of their abode in that place; for the vessel which brought them home, arrived off the island on the fifteenth of August, which is the day of the Ascension of the Virgin Mary; but our sailors, who had always observed the great church holidays, as well as they could remember them, imagined it to be the thirteenth of August, and had not yet celebrated that feast. So that there was a difference of two days only, which is easily pardonable, when we consider that in summer they saw the sun moving round the horizon for four months together, and in winter were as long in  
total

total darknes; that the thick and cloudy weather, the great quantities of snow, and almost incessant rains at certain seasons, frequently interrupted the sight of the stars.

I could not conceive how these men, who had neither clocks nor watches, nor sun-dial, nor nocturnal, had been able to determine the length of a natural day, at the time when the sun was constantly moving round them, and especially when they had no longer any sight of him. On this head I was very particular in my questions; so that the mate ALEXIS HIMKOF, surprized at them, answered me with some warmth. “ What a fine pilot, Sir, would  
 “ you think me to be, if I knew not how  
 “ to take the altitude of the sun when he  
 “ is before my eyes, or not to regulate  
 “ myself by the course of the stars on the  
 “ sun’s not appearing, and by that means  
 “ to determine the period of twenty-four  
 “ hours? I had for this purpose made a  
 “ staff, like that which I had left behind

“ in

“ in our vessel, which I employed for  
 “ making my observations.” From hence  
 I conceived this instrument to have been  
 what we call a *Jacob's staff*, or something  
 like it.

When I questioned them concerning  
 the appearance of the moon, they told  
 me, that she shone in winter for almost  
 two months continually, and that she rose  
 higher above the horizon in proportion  
 as the days grew shorter. I am not  
 Astronomer enough to determine whe-  
 ther they told me the truth in this par-  
 ticular; but I find that the Dutch, who  
 wintered in the year 1576 in *Nova Zemla*,  
 in the seventy-sixth degree of north la-  
 titude, give a similar account of the  
 moon's course above the horizon during  
 the sun's absence, which I will here lay  
 before the reader.

“ On the first of November, in the  
 “ evening, we saw the moon rise in the  
 “ east, and the sun was sufficiently raised  
 “ above

“ above the horizon to be wholly visible.  
 “ —On the second, the sun rose in the  
 “ south-south-east, and set in the south-  
 “ south-west; but moved on the horizon,  
 “ so that the whole disk was never visible.  
 “ —On the third, the sun rose between  
 “ the south and the south-south-east, but  
 “ something more towards the south, and  
 “ set between the south and south-south-  
 “ west, but also nearer the south, and we  
 “ could only see the upper part of his body,  
 “ though the place from whence we made  
 “ our observations was as high as the  
 “ main-mast of the ship, which lay close  
 “ by.—On the fourth, the sun was no  
 “ longer to be seen, though the weather  
 “ was fair.—When the sun had left the ho-  
 “ rizon, the moon took his place, and  
 “ continued to shine day and night with-  
 “ out setting, when in her greatest nor-  
 “ thern declination (*a*).”—This account  
 perfectly

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(*a*) See *Recueil des Voyages qui ont servi à l'établissement & aux progrès de la compagnie des Indes Orientales, formée dans les Provinces-Unies*  
 des

perfectly agrees with that of our sailors; as to the moon's shining day and night; though it does not mention how long she continued so.

They further told me, that the aurora borealis was pretty frequent in winter, and greatly contributed to lessen the gloominess of so long a night.

One would imagine, that in a country so near the Pole, where the heat in summer is very moderate, though the sun shines for some months without interruption, the cold must be very intense during the whole winter; but the fact is otherwise; for from about the middle of November to the beginning of January, a period about which these good people satisfied me, by defining it, in their usual manner, by two holidays; namely, the  
beginning

beginning of St. *Philip's* Fast, which falls on the fifteenth of November; and the day for consecrating the holy water, which among us is the Twelfth-Day, or sixth of January. During these seven weeks they said it generally rains hard and continually on the island, and all that time the cold is very moderate; but after this rainy season it becomes intolerably severe, especially when the wind is south. This will appear extraordinary, as in most countries this is a warm wind, whilst its opposite the north wind is cold; but here it must be considered, that the south-winds came to our islanders over Europe, and particularly the northern parts of it, which in winter are generally covered with snow and ice, whence it contracts this excessive coldness. The north wind, on the contrary, came to them from the ocean, and instead of increasing the cold, carried along with it the vapours from the sea, which are always less frigid than those from snow. It is indeed a fact well known on the sea-coasts, that the

land-winds are usually colder than such as blow from the sea: and what confirms this account is, that all who have been on the *Riphæan* mountains, or that chain called *Poias Semnoy* (which divides European Russia from Siberia) agree with our sailors in saying, that the coldness of the south winds there far exceeds that of the north winds.

The snow fell on this island in such great quantities during the winter, that it wholly covered their hut, and left them no way of getting out of it, but through a hole they had made in the upper part of the roof of their anti-chamber.

On my asking these people about meteors, tempests, &c. they told me, that during the whole time of their abode on the island, they had not heard it thunder more than once.

Excepting



Excepting the white bears, the foxes, and the reindeer, with which, as I have already observed, the island abounds, it is as void of every other kind of animals as of the human species. A few birds are indeed seen in summer; but these are only geese, ducks, and other water-fowl. Nor is the sea that surrounds it better stocked; so that under such a dearth of fish, our sailors, who otherwise very strictly attended to the ceremonies prescribed by their religion, could neither observe their Lent, nor other single fast-days. But had the sea even abounded with fish, they would have been of little service to them, unprovided as they were with every kind of fishing-tackle; unless necessity had likewise taught them to make hooks, lines or nets.

The whales seldom approach the shore; but sea-dogs and seals are there in great abundance: and hence we need not wonder at the Russians having formerly provided necessaries and wintered there;

for they carry on a very considerable trade with the skins, the teeth, and the blubber of those animals, especially of the latter. So that we have reason to be surprized, that not a single vessel with that view touched at the island during the whole time which these men passed upon it: and from this circumstance I am led to think, that the fishery turns out far more profitable on *West-Spitzbergen*, whither it seems they generally direct their course.

Our men told me, that they had frequently found on the beach some teeth, and even whole jaws of the seals, but never an entire skeleton of them. This is not to be wondered at, for when any of these animals die upon the shore, the white bears immediately eat the carcase, and the foxes perhaps come in for a share.

But the common food of the white bears is the dead whales, which are frequently seen floating about, and sometimes are cast on shore in these polar regions. When

this provision fails, they fall upon and devour the seals, or other sea-animals, when sleeping on the beach. The reindeer live entirely on moss, of which these desert countries produce an incredible plenty. But what provision there is for the foxes we do not know. These creatures are known to be carnivorous, and on the continent they subsist by catching poultry and hares; but as nothing of this kind is to be met with on that island, it is probable that they feed upon the remains of the animals killed, and partly consumed by the white bears; as they are not sufficiently strong to cater for themselves, and to master such creatures as are as little able to withstand the bears.

Before I come to the no less fortunate than unexpected deliverance of our sailors from their forlorn abode, at a time when they thought of nothing but miserably ending their days there, I must mention a circumstance which had almost escaped me, and yet seems not unworthy of notice. It is

remarks-

remarkable, that these men were neither troubled with fleas nor lice, during the whole time they remained on the island, though on their return home they were again visited by them. It is a pretty general observation, that sailors, who otherwise are very subject to vermin, and who, it is said, for that reason wear shirts of blue linen, get quite free from them on passing the equator; but no sooner do they repass the line on their return, than those vermin swarm among them as before. Now these two circumstances, namely, the crossing the equinoctial line, and getting beyond the polar circle, being attended with the same effects, one would naturally imagine, that there must be something in common between them; and it were to be wished that naturalists would make that a subject of their inquiry.

When our four mariners had passed nearly six years in this dismal place, FEODOR WEREGIN, whose illness we had

had occasion to mention above, and who all along had been in a languid condition, died, after having in the latter part of his life suffered most excruciating pains. Though they were thus freed from the trouble of attending him, and the grief of being witnesses to his misery, without being able to afford him any relief, yet his death affected them not a little. They saw their number lessened, and every one wished to be the first that should follow him. As he died in winter, they dug a grave in the snow as deep as they could, in which they laid the corpse, and then covered it to the best of their power, that the white bears might not get at it.

Now, at the time when the melancholy reflections occasioned by the death of their comrade were fresh in their minds, and when each expected to pay this last duty to the remaining companions of his misfortunes, or to receive it from them, they unexpectedly got sight of a  
Russian

Russian ship: this happened on the fifteenth of August, 1749.

The vessel belonged to a trader, of the sect called by its adherents *Staru Vieva*, that is, *The Old Faith* (a), who had  
come

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(a) These are looked upon as a set of heretics by the Russians, who give them the name of *Raskolchiki*, or *Raskolniki*, which signifies *Backsiders*, or *Apostates*.

Though the particular religion of the master of the vessel be a circumstance indifferent in itself, and in no ways connected with the subject of my narrative, yet I hope some account of it will not be unacceptable to those who delight in searching into the history of nations, and more particularly into the Russian history, and every thing relating to it. Another reason for my mentioning it, is, that I find these people misrepresented by several authors. Some have described them as a distinct nation, and others have taken them to be a set of hermits, or monks; but they are neither one nor the other; for the inhabitants of the northern coasts of Russia, who bear the name of *Russians*, are as such esteemed professors of the pure Greek religion; whereas these sectaries are, in opposition to them, distinguished, as I said, by a nick-name  
of

come with it to *Archangel*, proposing it should winter in *Nova Zemla*; but fortunately

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of ridicule and reproach. The appellation they give themselves is *Starna Nievci*, that is, *Professors of the Old Faith*.

These heretics, in order to make themselves known, are obliged to wear a large yellow collar, bordered with red, which hangs a great way down the back, and ends almost in a point. Upon condition of wearing this distinguishing badge, whatever their other dress be, and under the promise of not attempting to spread their doctrine, or raising disturbances in the empire, PETER the GREAT gave orders that they should be tolerated, and live unmolested, after having been cruelly persecuted for some time before.

This sect originated about the year 1666, upon the following occasion. The patriarch NICON, who may well be called the Hildebrand, or the Gregory VII. of the Russian church, as he plainly appears to have had the genius of that Pope, from his disputes with the Emperor ALEXEY MICHAELOWITZ (who at last had him solemnly deposed from his dignity by the patriarchs, bishops, metropolitans and other Russian prelates assembled for that purpose at *Moscow*) this NICON, I say, had observed that many obsolete words occurred in the Slavonian

tunately for our poor exiles, Mr. VERNEZOBRE proposed to the merchant to let

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Liturgy used in the Russian churches, which were neither understood by the priests, nor by the people; these he changed for others of the same signification, but more modern and intelligible.

A great number of priests, especially about *Archangel* and in *Siberia*, with one JACOB at their head, protested against this alteration of the expressions, which they considered as the greatest crime against religion. They obstinately persisted in retaining the old words, which according to them had been sanctified by a long series of ages, and could not be changed without great impiety. They therefore dissented in certain articles from the Russian church, and asserted, that they alone maintained the old and pure religion. However, many of the most learned and sensible Russians have assured me, that these articles only relate to matters of little consequence. Thus, as an outward mark of their profession, they make the sign of the cross, by joining the thumb and the two last fingers of the right hand, holding up the index and middle finger. The Russians, on the contrary, join the thumb with the index and the middle finger, and press the two last fingers down into the palms of their hands.



let his vessel winter at *West-Spitzbergen*, which he at last, after many objections, agreed to.

The contrary winds they met with on their passage, made it impossible for them to reach the place of their destination. The vessel was driven towards *East-*  
 P 2 *Spitzbergen*,

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From the beginning of this schism, to the time when PETER the GREAT abolished the patriarchal dignity in Russia, during the space of about fifty years, the *Raskolniki* were inhumanly used, and hence many of them fled to the woods for safety; but they never were a set of hermits, as asserted by the author of the *Nouveau Dictionnaire universel pour l'Intelligence des Affaires d'Etat, des Nouvelles publiques*, &c. under the article RASKOLNIKS. Many of them are merchants and people of great property, and are thought to be more honest in their dealings than the other Russians. There are hermits in Russia, known by the name of *Poussiniki*: these are commonly trades-people, who, being tired of the world, associate and retire in small companies into the woods, where they build huts and a church, live upon alms, and pass their days in penance and prayer; but they must have leave of their sovereign for this purpose.

*Spitzbergen*, directly opposite to the residence of our mariners, who, as soon as they perceived her, hastened to light fires upon the hills nearest their habitation, and then ran to the beach, waving a flag made of a reindeer's hide fastened to a pole. The people on board seeing these signals, concluded that there were men on the island who implored their assistance, and therefore came to anchor near the shore.

It would be in vain to attempt describing the joy of these poor people, at seeing the moment of their deliverance so near. They soon agreed with the master of the ship to work for him on the voyage, and to pay him eighty rubels on their arrival, for taking them on board, with all their riches; which consisted in fifty pud, or two thousand pound weight of reindeer fat; in many hides of these animals, and skins of the blue and white foxes, together with those of the ten white bears they had killed. They took care not to  
forget

forget their bow and arrows, their spears, their knife and axe, which were almost worn out, their awls, and their needles which they kept carefully in a bone-box, very ingeniously made with their knife only; and, in short, every thing they were possessed of.

Some of these things they brought with them to *Petersburg*; others they afterwards sent by Mr. VERNEZOBRE from *Archangel*, as presents for Count SCHUWALOW, who was pleased to commit them to my care. This gave me an opportunity of examining them at leisure, and to lay them before many curious and ingenious persons, who could not sufficiently admire them.

One day, when I shewed the bone needle-case above-mentioned to some of those gentlemen, and told them the sailors had, according to their account, made it with their knife, they answered me that it could not be; that it was impossible

possible they could have given it so regular a form with a knife, that the box had undoubtedly been turned in a lathe, and that the men had deceived me in pretending it to be their work : hence they directly inferred, that these men, affirming a falsity in this point, might have done it in others ; so that the whole account of their adventures on the desert island was not to be credited. I defended them, and during our dispute Mr. HOMANN, a very skilful ivory-turner, casually entered the room. We presently agreed to abide by his decision ; and turning to him, I gave to the question a quite different turn, that Mr. HOMANN might not be thought to have decided in my favour only out of civility. “ Be so kind,” said I, “ to determine a small difference between these gentlemen and me : I say that this box is turned, and they maintain the contrary.” Mr. HOMANN having carefully examined it, answered, “ The Gentlemen are in the right ; this box was never made by a  
“ turner ;

“turner; it is a bone which has been  
 “scraped to this form.”—The answer  
 silenced my opponents, and gave me a  
 right to conclude, that as the sailors had  
 not deviated from truth in this particular,  
 so they deserved credit for their narrative  
 in general.

I must indeed confess, that I myself  
 have often been tempted to doubt the  
 truth of several circumstances, and have  
 therefore carefully and impartially con-  
 sidered every thing these men related to  
 me. But though I put the same questions  
 to them at different times, and on dif-  
 ferent occasions, often objected to their  
 answers, and by cross examination en-  
 deavoured to find them in contradictions;  
 yet their answers were always perfectly  
 consistent with one another, and thereby  
 removed the suspicions I had before en-  
 tertained about their veracity.

As a further proof of my having taken  
 every necessary step to satisfy myself about  
 the

the truth of their relation; I shall here lay before the reader a letter of Dr. KRATZENSTEIN, Professor and Member of the Imperial Academy at *St. Petersburg*, whom I consulted about the account given by our islanders, concerning the rising and setting of the sun, and every thing they had mentioned to me relating to that luminary. Now, though the remarks contained in this letter seem in some measure to invalidate some part of what was told me by the sailors, yet they are not a sufficient proof against the veracity of the rest; for their mistake in a few particulars might arise from the very natural causes which we assigned before.—Here is the letter:

“ I beg your pardon for having so long  
 “ delayed returning the written questions  
 “ which you sent me, and to which I  
 “ have added my remarks; the multitude  
 “ of affairs, and the long continuance  
 “ of the rainy weather, have hindered  
 “ me from doing it sooner.”

“ Having

“ Having carefully examined all cir-  
 “ cumstances, I found that what Professor  
 “ GRISCHOW accounts a proof of the  
 “ justness of the calculation of these ship-  
 “ wrecked sailors, namely, that they  
 “ computed two days later than those  
 “ who took them off that desert island,  
 “ was certainly the very reverse; for, if a  
 “ person in leap-year reckons the twenty-  
 “ ninth of February, he who knows  
 “ nothing of the leap-year reckons the  
 “ first of March, and after two such years  
 “ reckons the second of March; conse-  
 “ quently, supposing the sailors to have  
 “ omitted taking notice of the leap-years  
 “ 1744 and 1748, they would of course  
 “ have reckoned in 1749 the seventeenth  
 “ of August, whereas with their deli-  
 “ verers it was only the fifteenth. Thus  
 “ it is clear, that if they were acquainted  
 “ with the leap-years, they have been  
 “ mistaken by two days; and if they  
 “ were not acquainted with them, they  
 “ have been mistaken by four days;  
 “ which indeed might easily happen in

“ so long a night, or dark and cloudy  
 “ weather, especially being without any  
 “ help to calculate the length of a re-  
 “ gular day.

“ Farther, in the years when they  
 “ placed the total disappearance of the  
 “ sun on the twenty-sixth of October,  
 “ their calculation must have been ten  
 “ days too early; or they must have lived  
 “ in latitude  $74^{\circ} 41'$ . which cannot be,  
 “ unless we suppose them to have re-  
 “ sided on *Bear-Island*, which lies in  
 “ that latitude.

“ If we fix the place of their abode,  
 “ according to the Map, in latitude se-  
 “ venty-seven and a half degrees, the  
 “ sun there would appear on the horizon  
 “ for the first time on the fourth of Fe-  
 “ bruary, would shine continually from  
 “ the eleventh of April to the eighth of  
 “ August, and totally disappear on the  
 “ sixteenth of October.



“ If they lived on *Bear-Island*, they  
 “ must have seen the sun for the first  
 “ time on the twenty-eighth of January;  
 “ as he there performs his circuit above  
 “ the horizon from the twentieth of  
 “ April to the thirty-first of July, and  
 “ disappears on the twenty-third of  
 “ October.

“ Now, from the observations of these  
 “ sailors, it would appear more probable  
 “ that they were on the last mentioned  
 “ island; but the darkness of the horizon,  
 “ a circumstance very usual in these nor-  
 “ thern countries, may have occasioned  
 “ their mistake in observing the sun ten  
 “ days later than they would have done  
 “ with fair weather and a clear sky; and  
 “ from the same cause they may have  
 “ lost sight of him ten days before the  
 “ period of his disappearance.

“ If we date the beginning of this lumi-  
 “ nary’s course round the horizon on the  
 “ second of May, its end must have been

“ on the nineteenth of July; and this  
 “ would pre-suppose them to have been  
 “ in latitude seventy-one and a half de-  
 “ grees, which from other circumstances  
 “ in their relation seems impossible.

“ I could have wished that you had  
 “ examined the account of the adven-  
 “ tures of these sailors drawn up by  
 “ Mr. KLINGSTADT, who examined  
 “ them soon after their arrival, as this  
 “ might have made up what is wanting  
 “ in your's. I have no doubt but that,  
 “ on making application to him, he would  
 “ with pleasure have gratified your de-  
 “ fire\*. He discharges with honour the  
 “ post of Chief Auditor of the Admiralty  
 “ at *Archangel*, and lives in Mr. VER-  
 “ NEZOBRE's house.

“ I am, &c.”

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\* This was accordingly done, to the satisfaction of that gentleman; as I have informed the reader in page 47.

Our adventurers arrived safe at *Archangel* on the twenty-eighth of September, 1749, having spent six years and three months in their rueful solitude.

The moment of their landing was nearly proving fatal to the loving and beloved wife of ALEXIS HIMKOF, who, being present when the vessel came into port, immediately knew her husband, and ran with so much eagerness to his embraces, that she slipped into the water, and very narrowly escaped being drowned.

All three on their arrival were strong and healthy; but having lived so long without bread, they could not reconcile themselves to the use of it, and complained that it filled them with wind. Nor could they bear any spirituous liquors, and therefore drank nothing but water.

Before I conclude, I cannot help sub-joining a reflection of Mr. VERNEZOBRE, with which he concludes one of his

his

his letters.—“ I make no doubt, but  
 “ some of your readers will consider  
 “ the adventures of these sailors in the  
 “ same light as they do the English hi-  
 “ story of *Robinson Crusoe*. But however  
 “ ingenious that composition is, a compa-  
 “ rison with this Narrative will prove  
 “ much in your favour; as the former is  
 “ all fiction, whereas your subject consists  
 “ of facts sufficiently authenticated. And  
 “ *Crusoe* is represented as having almost  
 “ lost what knowledge he had of Chris-  
 “ tianity; but our sailors carefully retained  
 “ their religious principles, and, as they  
 “ assured me, never wholly departed from  
 “ their confidence in the goodness of God,  
 “ to be exerted in their behalf, even in  
 “ this world.”

F I N I S.

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