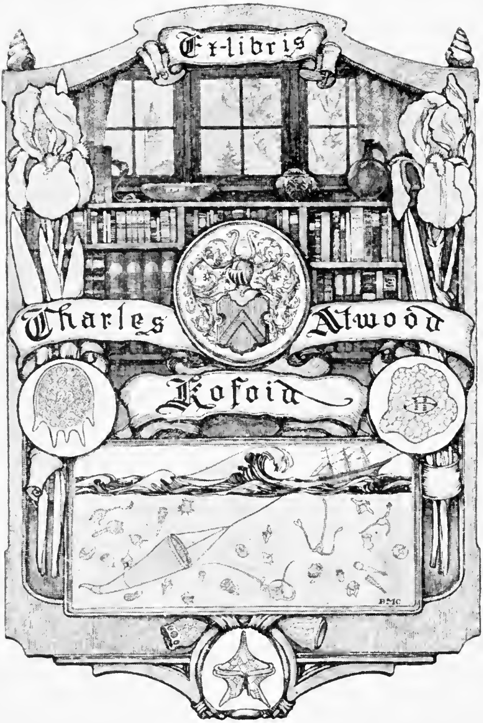
SHORT SKETCHES FROM OLDEST AMERICA

JOHN B. DRIGGS, M.D.



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FROM
OLDEST AMERICA

THE PRINCESS AND HER COMPANION

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By
JOHN B. DRIGGS, M. D.

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Publishers' Preface

FROM the small size of this volume, one would hardly realize, perhaps, what an immense amount of labor and patient research its writing must necessarily represent. The author, who was first sent to northwestern Alaska in the summer of 1890, and who, by the bye, has, with the exception of two vacations of a year each, been constantly at his post in that bleak country ever since, found himself one day landed, with his possessions, upon the inhospitable sea-beach of the Point Hope peninsula, where for weeks he was compelled to shelter himself from wind and rain, as best he could, in an improvised tent made of barrels and boxes with canvas thrown over them. Finally, the carpenters of some of the whaling ships were got together and a house, which had been framed in distant San Francisco, was put up for him, a few hundred yards from the water's edge.

A mile or so away lay a large native village, the inhabitants of which naturally regarded him as a great curiosity. But he found himself quite unable

to communicate with them otherwise than by signs, as the printed vocabularies and grammars, with which he had been supplied, proved to be inaccurate and practically valueless.

His house finished and no scholars being forthcoming, he proceeded one day to capture a native lad whom he found on the beach, and, leading him home, taught him several letters of the alphabet and then baked him a cake. This system of rewarding attendance with something to eat rapidly brought other scholars. Older visitors followed, and he soon had a school in active operation and then a lecture-room.

Prior to Dr. Driggs's arrival, the experiences which the natives had had with the whites had not been universally satisfactory. Outside of rare meetings with the officers and crews of the government's revenue cutters, their white acquaintances had been pretty much confined to the class known as "beachcombers," or deserters from the steam-whaling fleet. These are described as a rough, unscrupulous set of fellows, too worthless to obtain better employment in San Francisco, where they are enlisted. Some of these undesirable visitors had already appeared at Point Hope and had outrageously abused the

peaceful inhabitants before our author's arrival there.

In contrast with such men as these, Dr. Driggs proved himself a friend indeed to the poor natives, and succeeded in due time in winning the affection and confidence of their entire tribe. Little by little he mastered their language, until he has become so proficient in it that he is now planning to write a grammar.

During the summer months many of the Point Hope natives are away from home for long intervals in quest of game or on fishing expeditions, and the doctor would frequently follow their example, making long excursions along the coast, as far north as Icy Cape, if not further; and southward, along the shores of Kotzebue Sound. Similarly for many winters, wearied with confinement to the house during the long night, he was wont to set out, accompanied by some native guide and wife with dog-team and sledge, to make trips of several hundred miles over ice and snow, exposed to blizzards such as we have no conception of, camping out when weary in an improvised snow-house, or sleeping, perhaps, in some native settlement, where the only fare would be uninviting frozen fish.

These last excursions, however, he has been obliged to discontinue in consequence of having frozen one of his feet, several years since, when he fell from an ice floe into the ocean, and was with difficulty dragged out by his companions.

And right here it might be as well to observe that the pretty picture which childhood's memories depict as adorning a page in our Physical Geography, with its fur-clad traveler sitting comfortably on his sledge, brandishing his whip and dashing gaily along behind a row of trotting dogs, is more imaginative than accurate. The real use of the dog-team, it would appear, is merely to drag the traveler's baggage. The men plough along through the snow in front, and the animals, harnessed in single file, drag the sledge behind them, following the woman, to whom they are accustomed to turn for their food.

Thrown thus into close contact with Dr. Driggs, their physician when ill, their teacher in health, their friend and protector always, the natives gradually learned to discard the suspicion with which they must have originally regarded him, and confided to him their traditions and legends, which primarily they would naturally have guarded with the most sedulous care. How many an evening camp-fire,

how many a long conversation must these primitive tales represent! How much patience, upon the hearer's part, it must have required to corroborate these traditions by comparing one account with another and noting their remarkable similarity! These sketches are real native stories put into readable English, without any attempt at embellishment or enlargement.

Near the native village of Tigara extends, for a considerable distance, the ancient burial place of the tribe. Here, upon elevated platforms, supported high above the ground on whales' jaws, out of the reach of wild animals, have slumbered the dead for ages past. In and beneath these places of sepulture, Dr. Driggs has found many interesting relics of great antiquity, which he has brought away with him. Among these were the original instruments used in bygone ages for making flint axes and arrow-heads. These the reader will find described in the text.

The site originally selected for Dr. Driggs's house was too close to the shore. He found this out one night when a storm brought the water of the Arctic Ocean up over the land, and a succession of big waves forced his door open. Carrying a native lad

on his back, he was compelled to wade, in total darkness, through the icy water, for several hundred yards before he reached terra firma. After this startling experience, his house was moved to higher ground and further inland; but, proving always extremely cold, it was subsequently replaced, as a dwelling, by another and smaller building which was protected from the piercing wind by a thick casing of sod.

In conclusion, we will say that Dr. Driggs is a man of iron constitution, strong physically and mentally, an excellent shot, and one who hardly knows the meaning of the word *fear*. In years to come, his name will rightly go down to history as that of a hero.

Preface

DURING many years spent within the Arctic Circle of Northwestern Alaska, at Tig-a-ra (Point Hope Village), where I have lived at the mission station of the Episcopal Church, acting as medical man and teacher, and, later on, in deacon's orders, I have naturally become interested in these ancient people, and have written the following volume of short stories simply to show the nature, traditions and legends of the In-u-pash.[1] I have also introduced a few brief sketches, hoping to give a little insight into the simplicity of these primitive people who have been isolated from the outside world from the most remote time. There has been no attempt made to exhaust the subject.

JOHN B. DRIGGS, M. D.

April, 1905.

[1] IN-U-PASH—Native inhabitants of the coast of the Arctic section of Alaska.

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Introduction

I

INTRODUCTION

ONLY those who have had the experience, know the pleasure of traveling outside the beaten tracks and viewing new scenes that are not generally known to the average tourist of to-day. Every year the Atlantic has its throngs who are crossing the ocean to visit old places which have become familiar to the majority of readers. There is a route for the student of nature, which has been only partially opened of recent years, that presents many points of interest. While nature has not yet become defaced by the artificial scenes which the Atlantic tourist meets throughout his journey, the traveler can try the newer way by turning his steps toward the Pacific and visiting Alaska. There may not be all the comforts one experiences on the Atlantic, but the ocean voyage will be found plenty long, and there will be the satisfaction of viewing one's own country.

Alaska is a vast and not thoroughly explored territory, with many different tribes of people,

whose history if it were but known, would fill many an interesting volume. The signs of an advancing civilization are to be noted in the way of small towns and mining camps, extending even as far north as Nome ; then, if the journey is continued through the Behring Straits into the Arctic regions —where in winter, the moon forms its circle in the heavens, while in summer, the sun remains up as if trying to make amends for its long winter's absence —up as far as Point Hope to the village of Tigara, the tourist will find there an interesting and friendly people. His first impression probably is, what a bleak and barren coast! but, should he allow his thoughts to wander back to the remote past, he can imagine how in ages gone by this may have been an Eden with its luxuriant vegetation and a much milder climate. The huge mammoth roamed freely through the forest, along with many other animals that have long since passed into the forgotten history of long ago. Then through the changes of nature the warming ocean currents were shut off, causing this to become the bleak and barren country it is now, enveloped in ice the greater portion of the year. The belt of cold, acting as a barrier, isolates the people from the outside world, and they

have continued living in their primitive condition until the present awakening.

Should the geologist inform the villager that North America was once under water, only the tops of the highest mountains extending above the one great ocean, like so many islands, and that then the ocean currents carried their warmth to the Pole, the Tigara man would reply: "Yes, in very old times only three mountain-tops extended above the ocean, and it was at a very remote day that my ancestors first appeared."

Should the evolutionist inform the villager that man did not at first stand in an erect position as at present, but went round on his hands and feet; that the sperm whale originated from an animal akin to the bear; and that other great changes have taken place among the various members of the animal kingdom, the Tigara man would again reply: "Yes, the earliest men did not have their lower extremities developed for walking; the Bow-head whale originated from an animal similar to the deer, while another member of the whale family, called the Killer, armed with large teeth instead of baleen, originated from an animal akin to the wolf; the deer of old was a hornless and carniverous animal,

having teeth like those of the bear, its canines being quite long, and when it appeared in herds the earlier inhabitants were alarmed, as it used to attack and devour the people." He will also tell you that its fat was similar to the blubber of the seal, or perhaps more like that of the domestic hog, but the animal for some unknown reason began eating the salmon-berries called "achea," and in time became herbivorous; with the change of diet it gradually changed its habits, growing horns and losing its back teeth, ultimately becoming the caribou of the present.

The man of Tigara, through his traditions, has known all these things for ages past, while the man of science is only finding them out through his patient investigations.

The visitor can now enter into an interesting train of thought while saying to himself: "What need is there of crossing the wide ocean, with the delusion we are visiting the old world, while there are here in our own country the oldest Americans, a race of men who, according to their traditions and the rude architecture of their homes, can antedate any people to be seen by the tourist on his beaten lines of travel?"

A Group of Inupash

II

The Tragedy of The Three Brothers

II

THE TRAGEDY OF THE THREE BROTHERS

In the east not far from the region of the Romanzoff Mountains, toward the land of the Cogmoliks, there lived during the early days four brothers. The eldest had taken a trip on the ocean in his kyak or light skin boat. As the day drew to a close he had not returned, but it excited no attention among the members of the family, as it was a usual thing for any of the people to stay a few days at a friendly iglo[1] without leaving word at home where they were going, or how long they would be absent. Some acquaintances coming along reported that they had not seen anything of the missing man; then suspicion began to be aroused that everything might not be right and a search was instituted, but no trace could be found of him or his kyak; no one along the coast seemed able to throw any light on his whereabouts, although they lent their aid by joining in with the searching party.

[1] Iglo, a mound house.

As time went by, all hopes of the missing one's return were abandoned. The people talked about the case as one of those mysteries which had no solution. Then later on, a second brother, venturing on a trip, disappeared as completely as did the first. The remaining brothers were much alarmed and did not know what to do. A third brother started out determined if possible, to make a more thorough investigation, but disappeared the same as the others.

There now remained only Ahvooyoolachā, the youngest of the four. He was bowed down with grief at the great loss he had sustained, but it remained for him to solve the mystery. He went out in his kyak and had not proceeded far from shore when his attention was attracted by what appeared to be a whale in the distance. It was a common sight so he gave it no heed, and even when the supposed whale came closer he paid no attention to it.

Not until the creature came very near and charged him with a huge open mouth armed with great teeth, did he become alarmed. What to do he did not know; there was no chance to escape to the shore; he was unarmed, with the exception of a spear which

seemed altogether too insignificant an instrument to defend himself with against such a huge monster; yet in his dilemma it was the only chance he had. Grasping the spear with a hand rendered firm by despair, he awaited the right moment, and just as the animal was about to close its massive jaws to crush him and his frail kyak (aiming down the throat, his fright lending strength to the action) he cast the spear with great force. The aim had been good and the throw a powerful one. The creature instantly dove remaining down for quite a while, then floated to the surface, dead. Upon examining the body, it was found to be as large as that of a whale, at the same time resembling that animal in appearance, but in addition it had four legs. The mystery had been solved and Ahvooyoolachā at last knew the fate of his three brothers.

The Whales of Alaska

There are two varieties of the whale much sought for on account of the baleen they yield. The Right Whale of the Behring Sea, as well as of other waters, and the Bow-head that makes its summer run along the American coast as far as the Arctic Archipelago. In September it strikes westward to Herald Island,

and in October back to the Behring Sea, where it is supposed to spend the winter months at the southern edge of the ice. It is one of the large members of the whale family, sometimes attaining a length of sixty feet or more and yielding whalebone sometimes over twelve feet in length. The Bow-head is a timid, peaceful animal, preferring to visit the small bays and secluded nooks of the northern coast, where it can feed unmolested.

All along the coast of Arctic Alaska, there are lagoons of various sizes; many of them have streams as feeders, while others have no feeders but have openings into the ocean, which become temporarily obliterated by sand when there is a heavy sea breaking on shore.

It was into the latter form of lagoon that, a very long time ago, a school of Bow-heads had entered. The wind blowing on shore had obliterated the entrance, so the whales were entrapped with apparently no means of escape, yet they all crossed the beach and regained the ocean, a feat they probably could not accomplish to-day. The people watched them as they worked their way over the beach, the large ones making rapid progress while the small ones were very slow.

The Killer is one of the larger members of the whale family, which the natives prefer not to attack, as it can be very vicious at times. Even much further south than Alaska, the creature has the reputation among the shore whalemen, of chasing the boats to the shore occasionally and has had many victims. Its chief food is the seal and beluga, while its sly disposition enables it also to capture the water birds. Placing itself just beneath the surface, with open jaws, it emits a substance that attracts the birds who settle down on the waves and begin feeding; the Killer then darts forward, capturing the birds which it quickly devours. It is also said sometimes to attack as large an animal as the Fin-back.

III

The Metigewek

III

THE METIGEWEK

The Metigewēk was the largest of the numerous traditionary birds of Tigara. Its enormous size and strength enabled it to seize and bear to the interior the whales on which it used to feed. Even to-day when the older inhabitants find the skeleton of a whale, back from the coast in the interior of the country, they declare it was the victim of a Metigewēk at some remote time of the past.

One of the earlier inhabitants has been credited with a somewhat similar experience to that of Ganymede.

A hunter having killed a deer was in the act of cutting it up preparatory to carrying it home. Noticing a shadow coming over the ground, he looked up just as a Metigewēk swooped down and seized him in its enormous claws and bore him aloft. The bird carried him to a great height, so that the earth was almost lost to view. The man having retained his spear began stabbing the bird; at last the wounds proving fatal, the Metigewēk

gradually descended and reached the earth just as it expired. That night the hunter slept under the wing of the bird, ultimately reaching his home in safety.

IV

Origin of Man

IV

ORIGIN OF MAN

THERE is a fascination at the camp-fire. Men that have remained silent through the day will become entertaining under the genial influence of the crackling logs as they blaze and send their myriads of sparks skyward. So this evening as I examine the notes in my Polar log-book, collected at many of those fires, I find that man, no matter how humiliating the admission may be, is forced to yield the palm of antiquity to woman and—chewing gum. Yet as we pause to consider the subject, from the Polar man's point of view, it is but natural that woman should be first, for without her aid there certainly would be no men.

My log-book says that at a very early time of the world's history, long before day and night had been created, or the first man had made his appearance, there lived an old woman, indeed very old, for the tradition of her having had a beginning, if there ever was such a one, had been lost. We must bear in mind that during the first stage of the world

everything remained young and fresh; nothing grew old. It was not until a much later date that the indiscretion of a boy brought those physiological changes known as growing old into the world and placed a limitation to the period of youth. The old woman was like a young girl in her appearance and feelings, and being the only inhabitant of the earth, naturally felt very lonesome and wished for a companion. She was one time chewing "pooyā" (chewing gum) when the thought arose in her mind that it would be pleasant to have an image to play with, so taking her "pooyā" she fashioned a man, then by way of ornamentation placed a raven's beak on his forehead.

She was delighted with her success in making such a lovely image and on lying down to sleep placed it near her side. On awakening her joy was great, for the image had come to life and there before her was the first man.

V

What Brought Age Into the World

V

WHAT BROUGHT AGE INTO THE WORLD

At a time long ago, before old age had been introduced and while our early ancestors were still enjoying a state of perpetual youth, a boy was living with his grandmother. One day she remarked that they were out of provisions, to which he replied: "Never mind, grandma, I will set a snare and we will quickly have an owl to feast on." He skipped merrily off and soon had ensnared a large white owl. On approaching the bird, the following conversation took place:

Owl—"What are you going to do with me?"

Boy—"I am going to kill and eat you."

Owl—"Don't you do it."

Boy—"Why not?"

Owl—"If you kill me, I will make you an old man."

Boy—"Grandma and I are hungry, and we are going to eat you."

Owl—"Again I warn you, if you kill me I will make an old man of you."

Notwithstanding the warning, the boy killed the owl and started to carry it home.

Household duties did not hang heavily on the ladies of that day, so grandma was killing time by watching for the boy's return. At last, slowly approaching and dragging a large white owl, she saw a withered old man, stricken with the infirmities of age. It was her grandson who had left her but a short time previous, a merry, happy youth.

So old age was introduced into the world for the first time and has continued ever since. And often since that day many an old Inupash[1] who has felt the infirmity of age coming on has sighed and sincerely wished that the boy had shown more discretion by hearkening to the warning of the owl.

[1] Inupash, native Arctic inhabitant.

VI

Toongna

VI

TOONGNA

THE belief in an evil spirit is in all probability as old as the inhabitated world. It seems to be one of those traditions that has descended with man from the most remote times, not having lost but having gained strength through its long ages of descent. No matter where one may travel, he finds the majority of mankind firm believers in such a spirit.

Even here in the far North among the Polarites there is such a belief. "Toongna," the evil one, is supposed to be the adversary of man, and to him is ascribed all the misfortunes that afflict the people. Some he makes sick, while others he causes to be unfortunate in their undertakings. If a mother loses her new-born babe, Toongna was at the bottom of the misfortune, and she is placed under the superstitious ban called "Karookto," not being allowed to mingle with the rest of the villagers for a number of months, and the same tribal law is enforced in all families where death has occurred. Should a hunting party visit the interior in quest of deer and

not meet with success, Toongna has followed them and been the cause of their failure. Should foul weather with heavy gales arise at an undesirable time, Toongna has been the cause. Hence the necessity for some one having the power to expel this evil spirit that afflicts man in such various ways; and the "ongootkoot," rising to the emergency of the occasion by pretending to have the desired power, early became the important man of the tribe.

"Toongna" seems to have been one of those unfortunate spirits unworthy of having a history, for if he ever was on earth as a mortal his parents disowned him, and no one seems to have the least ambition to be considered one of his descendants.

He is simply a nagger of men that has had his day. Under the growing enlightenment of the people, his supposed power is diminishing, and the "karookto" is becoming a thing of the past.

VII

The "Ongootkoot"

VII

THE "ONGOOTKOOT"

THE "Ongootkoot" is the sorcerer, prophet and historian. He claims to have the power of expelling "Toongna" by his enchantments, and can do such marvelous things as change the wind, drive off eclipses, avert or drive off misfortunes and expel the evil one from the sick. There are two ways of becoming an "Ongootkoot"—one is by inheritance, the other by claiming to have performed some marvelous act. The Polar inhabitants are a primitive, confiding people, so when one claims to have performed an act contrary to the laws of nature, there are no questions asked or inquiry made; the statement is simply accepted as a truth.

At one time long ago there lived a villager who had lost both his feet. He, being an invalid, remained in his iglo, simply existing as an object of charity to the neighbors, who were in the habit of supplying him with food. During the fall of the year, when the weather was growing cold, there occurred an eclipse of the sun, at the same time a

severe earthquake gave the inhabitants great alarm. The ground moved and rolled like the ocean waves, while large crevices opened in many places allowing smoke and sulphurous vapors to escape.

The people in their fright rushed out from their homes; the invalid, forgetting his crippled condition, also sought the open air and began jumping down the beach on his stumps, or as the people said, "He jumped big." No doubt the alarm added to his alacrity in his effort to escape, thus gaining for him the reputation of being an excellent jumper. The eclipse passed off, so also did the earthquake, but the villagers all declared that it was the jumping of the invalid that caused the phenomena of nature to cease, and after that, instead of being an obscure cripple, an object of charity to his neighbors, he arose to the dignity of being one of the greatest of "Ongootkoots." If any of the inhabitants were taken ill, the cripple's aid was solicited, and he would jump around the sick one a few times, exorcising the evil spirit and commanding it to depart. If hunting parties were about to start on expeditions, they could not expect to meet with success unless the cripple had jumped around them and their sled a number of times. His fame extended

throughout the surrounding country, his services being solicited from far and near, and he soon became quite prosperous, the rule among "Ongootkoots" being the greater the pay, the more efficacious the treatment.

At a far more recent day it was discovered that a certain Puneunau had a great admiration for his neighbor's dogs, he considering them a toothsome dish. The chief banished him from the tribe, with the warning that if he returned, the death penalty would be inflicted. In his wanderings Puneunau led quite a checkered career with its accompanying hardships. Several times starvation seemed to stare him in the face. It was during one of these latter occasions that he discovered the art of running a small slim stick down his throat without injury or great discomfort.

After the death of the chief, Puneunau returned to the village, claiming he could perform a marvelous feat, and in proof of the assertion he ran the stick down his throat, then went around uttering gutteral sounds. The thing seemed wonderful in the eyes of the villagers, gaining for him the reputation of being an "Ongootkoot."

One thing troubled Puneunau, however: he was

still a widower, much against his will, not for any lack of perseverance in offering himself to all the neighboring widows, but because none of them would accept his offer. At last that slight difficulty was removed. A widow belonging to another tribe came to the village with her children, and her son being ill, Puneunau offered his services to cure the lad. Day after day he would go to the iglo, run the stick down his throat, then walk around uttering gutteral sounds, but the boy refused to be cured and finally died. This, however, did not relieve the widow of her obligation to pay the "Ongootkoot" for his valuable services, and as she was very poor and had nothing with which to meet it, Puneunau took the widow herself for his fee.

The Inupash believe there are spirits wandering through space. Occasionally one of them, becoming discontented, desires to enter the world as a human being. It looks around, then selects some young woman about ready to enter womanhood, one that is noted for her virtue and other good qualities, to become its mother. Having made the selection, it awaits the opportunity and uses her as the medium for gaining its desire. In due course of time a child is born, which on maturity becomes an

"Ongootkoot" of the first grade. Such births of spirits, desirous of entering the world as human beings, it is said, have continued down until comparatively recent times. These earth-born spirits had the reputation of being men with charmed lives who could not be killed.

"Kownalia" was such an one. His descendants will often relate how, when just born, he began talking with the people, conversing like an adult. At one time while visiting further North, he and a number of men ventured on thin ice; the ice broke and all were precipitated into the water. "Kownalia," stepping on the backs of the struggling men, walked to the shore uninjured, while all the others perished.

The claims for "Ungmana," another "Ongootkoot" of the first grade, were that he could lay his abdomen open, then, placing fuel inside, set the mass on fire, the people being allowed to witness the blaze and smoke. He would then remove the charred mass, and on closing the wound there would be no sign left of an injury having been inflicted.

These "Ongootkoots" have undoubtedly rendered a service to their people in the past by acting as their historians in preserving their traditions; they have

also done good in the class of cases where nothing more than a faith cure is needed for the sick. Concerning the latter, the Polarites are not to be too much condemned when we consider the large amount of superstition exhibited by some of the more civilized inhabitants of the States, who have unbounded confidence in their "Faith Healers." The marvelous claims that are made for these "Ongootkoots" are undoubtedly due to the zeal of their descendants, who are naturally anxious to place their ancestors in as favorable a light as possible, especially if they themselves aspire to become "Ongootkoots" by inheritance. It is also doubtful if the marvelous deeds were ever known until the man had been dead fifty years or more.

The "Ongootkoot," however, has had his day and is now on the decline. One often hears the older people say, as they shake their heads, that he is not the wonderful man he was in the days of old. The young people, through their growing enlightenment, are also losing confidence in the man and his claims. Of those who were confirmed by the Bishop of Alaska at Point Hope in the summer of 1903, four were directly descended from spirits entering the world as human beings; but they dis-

carded their supposed birthrights and have become zealous church workers. Others have been baptized and married to their wives, and are making good citizens as well as earnest Christian workers.

Should one take a trip through the Arctic portion of Inupash land, it is doubtful if he would meet with very many really non-Christians, for the people are now accepting the Nazarene as their great good spirit. The workers in the field truly taking an interest in the people and trying to benefit their condition have been few, but the people themselves have spread the teachings they have received, and the seed has fallen on fertile ground. It is true there is yet much of the old superstition of the past, but it has had its day and is gradually lessening its hold on the people.

VIII

Webukside

VIII

WEBUKSIDE

THERE is a firm belief among the Polarites that a time is to arrive when the world will come to an end, it being known as "Webukside" or the Judgment Day. "Tooloogigra," the great and good spirit who was once on earth as a mortal, will be present to judge the quick and the dead. All are to be examined. The wicked, who through the sinful lives they led while on earth have not merited eternal happiness, are to be rejected and consumed in the great fire which will finally destroy the world. Those whose good lives have earned for them eternal joy are to be saved; they are to pass with "Tooloogigra" into their future home, where they will live forever, free from all cares, or sorrows, or suffering of any kind.

When a man dies, it is believed that after the third night some member of the tribe, who has made the journey before, visits the grave to conduct the new one to his home where he is to remain while awaiting the coming of "Webukside." On

the fourth day after a death, some member of the family strikes four blows with a hammer, at the recent home of the deceased, which is a sign of farewell and means that the spirit is not to return to that iglo again. With a woman, it takes one day longer to pass to the place of waiting, so not until after the fourth night are the knocks made. The dead have deer-skin masks over their faces and their hands are encased in mittens.

Like the Jews who have so long been awaiting the coming of their Messiah, so the Inupash have been waiting and looking for the return of "Tooloogigra" for ages past. Besides liberating day and night from their confinement (during his childhood), "Tooloogigra" has been credited with one miracle. When grown to manhood, he was once making a long ocean voyage with some companions in their kyaks, and being thirsty, he longed to reach some land where fresh water could be procured. His thirst becoming urgent, he cast his spear, and the western portion of the land now known as Point Hope arose from the water. The village of Tigara is at the extremity of the storm swept point, which used to extend westward much further.

When "Tooloogigra" had fulfilled his time on

earth, he did not die as an ordinary mortal, but ascended into the sky, the people standing below, watching him until he had faded from sight in the distance.

IX

Birth of Tooloogigra

IX

BIRTH OF TOOLOOGIGRA

At the remote time of the earth's history when these northern regions were clothed in a verdure of ferns and trees, nature presenting a far different appearance than at present, men had begun to multiply on the face of the earth and were living in a state of pristine contentment. The necessity for building homes to shelter the people had not yet arrived; the trials and perplexities of the busy world were unknown, and the ambition for riches had not become the absorbing problem of the day. Day and night, according to tradition, had not been liberated from their confinement to bestow their many benefits on the human race, neither had that heedless youth been born who introduced old age with its undesirable sequelæ into the world.

At this time there lived a man who was looked upon as a powerful chieftain. His home was a simple shelter, furnished in the rude fashion of those days, but what seemed to place him above his fellow men and stamped him as being no ordi-

nary mortal were two balls hanging up in his home, which he guarded zealously ; one was bright and beautiful, the other dark. Living with the chieftain were his wife and daughter, the latter just budding into womanhood. She was noted for her many virtues, while her laughing, merry disposition rendered her a favorite among the people, and her society was much sought.

Wandering through space just then was a spirit grown tired of the aimless life it was leading. It longed to enter the world, to become a mortal like the merry, happy people whom it daily saw. There was but one way in which the spirit could gain its desire; that was to be born into the world. On looking around in its wanderings, it fell in love with the great virtue and beauty of the chieftain's daughter and decided she should be its medium for entering the world, and therefore hovered around awaiting its opportunity.

One day the young woman's mother requested her to visit the spring as she wished some fresh, cool water. The girl, like a dutiful daughter, skipped off merrily to fulfil her mother's command.

The spirit having heard the mother's request, hastened forward and entered the spring. The day

was warm, the water looked inviting, and the young princess, being thirsty, first dipped up for herself some of the clear sparkling water, and with it dipped up the spirit. Taking a long drink, which seemed particularly refreshing, she swallowed the spirit, and returning to her mother, not dreaming of what had occurred, she was soon at play with her companions. As time went by the spirit grew and the princess became the mother of a son. She named him "Tooloogigra," and the oldest Americans of the Arctic have ever since looked upon him as their great spirit.

X

Day and Night

X

DAY AND NIGHT

YOUNG "Tooloogigra," inheriting his mother's happy disposition, was soon the pet of his grandparents. As he began to run around, he became infatuated with the bright ball that he saw hanging in his home, but his grandfather would let him have only the dark one to play with. He rolled it around in his childish play, yet it did not meet with his fancy. He often cried and teased grandpa for the other one. The old chieftain, although very affectionate and indulgent in every other respect, refused to let his young grandson have the bright ball that he had been guarding so faithfully for so many years.

At last an opportunity arrived for the boy to gain his desire. The chieftain was absent from home and some people venturing into the place were amazed at the great beauty of the balls. Curiosity has always been a strong element in the human character, and as the people of that day were no exception to the rule, they soon experienced a desire

to examine those balls. Unfastening the bright one from its place of confinement, they carried it outside to admire, when little "Tooloogigra," gaining possession, broke the ball with his hands. Instantly a bright light, which had been kept in confinement, escaped, flooding the world with daylight for the first time. The people in their amazement threw up their hands and cried "couru," which has ever since remained the name for daylight.

Not satisfied with their experience and the changed condition of things, they soon had the second ball unfastened and in their hands, when little "Tooloogigra," gaining possession of this also, broke it as he had the first. A dark vapor was liberated, which, spreading over the earth, extinguished the bright light. The people then cried "oongnoo," from which has been derived "oongnoorpuk" —night.

Ever since that time, many a polar mother has interested her children by telling them how young "Tooloogigra" liberated day and night from their confinement.

XI

Man's First Constructed Home

XI

MAN'S FIRST CONSTRUCTED HOME

North America, having gradually emerged from the water, had come into existence. To the east of Alaska, the warm Atlantic currents had become restricted by the rising land and did not flow so freely as formerly. To the south, the Seward Peninsula was forming, first appearing as a string of islands with shoals, then gradually rising more and more, until it restricted the ocean currents from the Pacific. The Arctic regions, being deprived of their warming influences, were beginning to feel the cold of winter.

The birds had taken the warning and were commencing to form their migratory habits by flying south to escape the cold and to find regions where their food supply was more abundant, returning north each summer to their earlier homes for the nesting season. The mammoth had also apparently tried to make its escape, but had perished in large numbers in the region of Escholtz Bay, at a section often called the Mammoth Graveyard. The

birds and ducks seemed to be trying to overtake the retreating sun as it worked its way southward, the godwit continuing its flight as far as New Zealand, where it yet continues to spend the winter months.

Many of the inhabitants of Alaska, in trying to make their escape from the cold, apparently preferred to follow the sun in its western course. These people had progressed far enough to know the art of canoe building. The remains of three of their canoes are to be seen to-day on mountains inland, where they have been well preserved by the ice and snow, remaining as silent witnesses of an early day and showing where the ocean used to be in the remote past. Also on higher ground inland can be seen the skeleton of a whale; while on the Seward Peninsula, on land between four and five hundred feet higher than the ocean, an acquaintance found a driftwood log in a fair state of preservation. The people, following the chain of islands which separate Behring Sea from the Pacific Ocean, reached Siberia, which they probably crossed. We read that there lived in Europe at a very early date, a rude race of hunters and fishers, closely allied to the Eskimos, who were apparently driven there

from the east by the increasing cold. They seem to have made an impression on the older languages of Europe in the line of their words and grammar, and it is also probable that their tradition of the earliest state of man may have led to the fable of the sea nymph.

The Seward Peninsula continued rising until at last it entirely emerged above the water, disclosing those wonderful deposits of gold that of late years have made Nome famous throughout the world. The rising land formed a barrier against the warming influence of the Japan current. Then the Arctic winters set in with their utmost severity, continuing until at last Nature came to the relief of this ice-bound region. A portion of the land nearest Asia sank, forming what is now known as the Behring Straits, again admitting the Japan current to exert its ameliorating influence on the Arctic sections. Our seasons then assumed pretty much the same conditions they have now. Tradition states that in the past there have been severe earthquakes in this section and it may be due to such a cause that the land subsided.

As the seasons grew more and more severe, Nature, according to tradition, took care of the seal

and the wolf, by changing the fat of the former to the blubber of to-day, and by causing the thin, short hair of the latter to grow into the thick, warm fur of the present. Man, with his superior intellect, was left to solve his own problem. Those people who had remained behind soon found that their cave-dwellings were not a sufficient protection against the cold, which was recurring with greater severity each succeeding winter, and undoubtedly many perished. The polar bear had solved the problem of sheltering herself by building a home, according to circumstances, either on the land, or on the ocean ice, and it was the latter that suggested to man how to construct his first mound house, called iglo.

The female bear, in making the winter home in which her cub is born, selects a site where the ocean ice extends up against a cliff, and where the snow has drifted the deepest; with her massive paws she digs into the drift, throwing the snow behind her. The entrance becomes filled, while the drifting snow soon obliterates any external sign of her presence. A good-sized room is formed and a small hole in the roof, made by the warmth inside, acts as a ventilator. The escaping steam is the sign

which shows the hunter where a bear is to be procured. She makes a hole in the ice, at one end of the room, through which she can dive to procure a seal when hungry. Here she has a warm, comfortable home for herself and cub, where they remain until the warmer weather of spring reminds the family that it is time to begin their travels with the ice pack.

Man imitated the bear in constructing his iglo. First excavating the ground for a short distance, he erected over it a frame of driftwood and whale jaws. At one end of the room the excavation was made somewhat deeper, a hole large enough to admit a man being left in the floor over the excavation to serve as an entrance, and a driftwood passageway ending at a mound left open at the top, whose elevation prevented the snow drifting in, made an exit to the outer world. A small hole in the roof of the one room acted as a ventilator and a larger one covered with the dried intestines of a seal served as a window. All was then covered over with sods and earth, making a home constructed on the same principle as that of the bear; one that resisted the cold and could be easily warmed by the seal-oil lamp. The same principle is still adhered to in

constructing the modern iglo, though a small room has been added at the entrance to serve as a cooking room, while for the hole in the floor for an entrance a small door has been substituted.

XII

The Mammoth

XII

THE MAMMOTH

The traditions regarding the mammoth, called the "keleegewuk," are few and short. They are not of an interesting nature, further than to give some idea of the great age of these traditions. They were undoubtedly much longer at first, but by their descent through a vast length of time, they now appear in their present curtailment. There is one that gives a slight insight into the condition of those early days, both as regards the heat of the weather, and the changes that have taken place with the wolf.

A man had gone into the interior on a hunting expedition. The weather proved to be very warm, so he sought the shelter of a cave, intending to await the passing of the heat of the day. He had not been in the shelter long before the sound of a heavy animal passing rapidly over the earth greeted his ears, and on looking out he saw a mammoth in full flight, the huge creature exhibiting great fear, as it was being chased by a thin, short-haired wolf. The

man watched the two until they had passed from sight.

The fear exhibited by the mammoth for so small an animal as the wolf puts one in mind of the reports that the modern elephant will occasionally exhibit much alarm when a mouse appears in its exclosure.

XIII

Fire-Making

XIII

FIRE-MAKING

The art of fire-making was known among these people at a very remote time. The earliest method appears to have been through the agency of iron pyrites, called "cozgeen" or "igneen," and from the latter has been derived "ignek," the Tigara word for fire. Two pieces of "igneen," being struck together, would emit a spark ; a small-sized heap of tinder being placed on the ground the operator would continue striking the glancing blows until a lucky spark ignited the mass. The operation, to say the least, must have required a great amount of patience on the part of the operator. It was the only method of fire-making known for a great length of time; then the second method was happily discovered.

It had been found that a small round stick with a piece of flint inserted in the end, revolved by hand, would bore through bone, ivory or even stone. Later on some inventive genius introduced the bow and string, to revolve the instrument more rapidly,

while a wooden mouth-piece was used to exert pressure and to steady the instrument. It is still in use for boring, a piece of wire having replaced the flint. After the introduction of the bow and string and the mouth-piece, it was found that the rapidly revolving tool excited friction enough to produce fire. That was the second method known, but it did not displace the "igneen" which continued in use until rendered obsolete by the well-known flint and steel. This last is of comparatively recent introduction, iron not having been known in Alaska until the past fifty or sixty years. The domestic match, however, has now almost displaced all the other methods, although the flint and steel are still in use with some of the older smokers.

XIV

Instruments

XIV

INSTRUMENTS

MAN is more poorly endowed, both as regards speed and natural weapons of defense, than almost any other member of the animal kingdom. Had it not been for his superior intellect from the first, he would undoubtedly have been exterminated long ago. From the earliest time he has been forced to exercise his ingenuity to make amends for the natural inferiority he labored under in striving for his food, yet he has advanced step by step until he has proved his superiority by subduing all the other creatures of his kingdom, standing to-day without a rival, his only capable adversary being his fellow man.

There was, of course, a very early prehistoric time, at which he was forced to procure his food without artificial aid, the Inupash will tell you; then, as his inventive genius began exercising itself, a stone with a thong attached was employed to dispatch the game he sought. The stick sharpened at one end was probably introduced about the same

time, it being the forerunner of the spear, which has proved as useful for small game as it has for the great brown bear. When the animal charged, the hunter quickly placed the butt of the spear on the ground, and the bear, thus coming in contact with the sharpened end, was pierced and killed. The noose also proved of service for bear and deer. If hunting the former, a steep bank, where the creature was known to walk, was chosen and the noose set. On becoming entangled, the bear in its struggle fell over the bank, where it would hang until dead. The sling probably never proved very efficacious, as its accuracy for birds on the wing is too uncertain. It was useful for casting stones into the ocean to frighten and drive the beluga into the nets set for that purpose. The "kalimetown" was a far more effective instrument. It was made of seven small ivory balls, each having a string of deer sinew attached, the strings being joined at the end by a feather. On being thrown into a flock of ducks on the wing, any one of the balls striking a bird would act as a pivot for the others to encircle the victim and bring it to the ground.

Bone or ivory hooks were used in fishing through the ice, the line being made from strips of whale-

bone or spines from the feather of the gannet. A spear formed from two pieces of bone arranged in the shape of a V proved effective in capturing fish. The net was of service, not only for fish and beluga, but also for ptarmigan and foxes. For the latter, it was set stationary, the hunters remaining hidden in snow shelters constructed for the occasion. On the approach of a fox, the men in hiding jumped up and made a noise, and the frightened creature in its efforts to escape was driven forward into the net. In netting ptarmigan, the only caution necessary is not to frighten the birds, but to keep them walking forward slowly. The meshes of the net are large and of fine sinew; the bird on attempting to pass through, becomes entangled. On the cliffs, during the summer months, the hand-net on a pole is a favorite device for capturing the murres, which fly back and forth among the rocks in immense numbers, making one continuous war night and day. These methods of hunting are all very old, yet all are still in use among the Inupash with the exception of that of netting foxes, the net having been abandoned for the steel trap.

Bows and arrows are of very ancient origin, too remote to trace out their first introduction. The

bow was made from selected pieces of driftwood, reinforced by strips of whalebone, and bound with deer sinew. The arrow had two principal forms of head, one of brown flint, the other of deer horn, much longer than the first and nicked on the sides, to make it hold in the wounded game. On being struck, an animal would try to dislodge the arrow, giving the hunter a chance to send a second one, and so it would continue until a lucky shot proved fatal.

In constructing the flint arrow-heads, two instruments were used, the "natkenn," a small hammer made preferably from the base of the horn of a deer where it enters into the bony portion of the skull, and the "kigleen," a kind of sharpener made from a piece of deer horn, with a small round piece of ivory overlapping and bound to its upper surface. A piece of flint being chosen, the man making the arrow-head would place a deerskin mitten on his left hand, then, placing the flint on the palm and wrist of the protected hand, would strike the edge of the flint with the "natkenn" so that small slivers would be detached from the under surface. The operation would be continued until the flint had assumed the proper shape, and then the "kigleen" was employed to drive and make the edge even.

For the horn arrow-heads, deer horns were immersed in hot water, then straightened and shaped with stone knives. Two pieces of feather, properly bound at the lower end of the shaft, gave the arrow a rotary motion as it passed through the air, and insured a greater accuracy. It is a principle that has been adopted by manufacturers of modern rifle guns to impart to the projectile a spinning motion in its flight.

The first guns introduced among the Inupash were the old flintlocks, although this was probably not over thirty-five or forty years ago; they must have been the flintlocks left over with some trading company, after the introduction of the percussion caps, that had found their way this long distance across the country.

"Koonooya" is the name of the villager who was the first to own a double-barreled shotgun; previous to that he had killed fourteen white, and two brown bears with his bow and arrow. The older people laugh as they relate how those standing near the man firing would place their hands over their ears to deaden the sound, while the little girls cried, declaring the big noise hurt their ears.

The first knives were of flint, jade and slate; the

boring tools of flint; the adze of jade; hammers were made mostly from jade and wedges of bone; while flint was used to saw the jade, and the brown variety was employed for tools. The women's knives were largely of slate, but sometimes of jade, and their needles of ivory or bone.

Pots were crudely manufactured by mixing clay with heavy-spar that had been roasted and powdered fine,—called "kētik," blood from a seal being added and sometimes the pin-feathers from a bird. Utensils thus made were less liable to fracture than those formed simply from clay. Occasionally a flat stone was hollowed out to about the depth of a frying-pan, and used for a cooking utensil, it having the advantage of boiling more quickly than the clay vessel over the seal-oil lamp. These lamps were simply flat stones, hollowed out with the flint instruments so as to hold oil. A few copper kettles of Russian make found their way into Tigara from the Diomedes about sixty years back; they were very expensive and could be afforded by but few. The "Ongootkoots" frequently broke up these kettles and pounded the copper into knives, these being the first metal blades known among the Inupash.

An Elevated Grave

Wood shovels, tipped with bone, and picks made from whale jaws, were employed in cutting sods and excavating the ground for the iglos, and also for digging pits in the deep snow, back in the valleys, into which the deer would fall and could then be easily captured.

The first spear heads were of bone or ivory; later on they were nicked on the sides so as to hold more firmly. Afterward, the heads were made movable with a line attached, having the advantage of holding crosswise when driven well in. About one hundred miles east of the village of Tigara, in the land of the Kivalinyas, a man once darted a beluga, but becoming entangled in the line he was dragged off into the ocean. The beluga was afterward killed at the mouth of the Mackenzie River, it having towed the body considerably more than one thousand miles.

For clothing, deerskins were stretched and scraped with flint instruments, then dressed with powdered heavy-spar, making the skin soft and pliable. Fresh skins from the common seal were rolled up and kept in a warm place until the hair loosened, then stretched and dried, and afterward scraped and worked until soft. These were employed to make

the upper portions of the summer waterproof boots and shoes. The skin of the giant seal, treated in the same way, was used for boot soles, the soles being crimped into shape by biting with the teeth. All sewing was done with deer or whale sinew, the former being considered the best. The same methods are yet employed for dressing skins and making clothing as of old.

Lines for the seal spear, hauling lines for the boat or sled, and all lashings, are made from the skin of the giant seal, treated as above, then cut into long strings.

All the stone implements that were formerly in use have been rendered obsolete by the introduction of iron, and it is now difficult to procure any of these old reminders of the past.

XV

Music

XV

MUSIC

THE Polarites have but two musical instruments, the "ahtooktoora," or one-string fiddle, and the "calown," or one-headed drum. The latter is by far the more important, being used on all festive occasions both to beat time for the dancers and also to accompany the singers.

Many of the songs of these people relate fragments of tradition, while others deal with a crude mythology. There is yet another class, looked upon as prayers; some of these are very old, and are highly treasured by the possessors, being guarded as great secrets. When a father is about to pass away, he will call his son and impart to him the song as a legacy. No one else is allowed to be present on such an occason, it being regarded in the same solemn light as a dying parent's blessing. The son in his turn, when he has grown old, and is about ready to take leave of the world, will impart the song to the next one in line of inheritance. These heirlooms have descended through families

from one generation to another for an immense length of time. They are supposed to have a mystic charm and are never sung loud, but are hummed in a low voice. No outsider is allowed to learn the words or hear the tunes. If a seal on the ice is very watchful, the hunter that has received such a legacy will lie still and sing the magic words, at which the animal is supposed to go to sleep and so be readily approached. The same is said about the whale; if it has been struck, and there is danger of its being lost, the initiated will sing the magic words, after which the whale can be captured.

One song of the first named class relates the experiences of a young woman. Her parents, who are growing old, are desirous that she should choose a husband from among the young men of the village. She, refusing to do so, selects a skull as her lover. Her mother is indignant, and one day during the daughter's absence accuses her son-in-law of keeping her awake the previous night by too much whispering. Taking a stick she thrusts it into the eye socket, then tosses the skull out-of-doors. The wind rolls it down the beach and far out into the ocean. The daughter, on returning

and finding her lover absent, eagerly inquires where he is. On going outside the trail of the skull is discovered and followed to the water. A mouse coming along the trail is killed and, on its being thrown into the ocean, a path is made visible which leads down into the shades. There the lover is found; he has grown a new body and is living with two old women. The young woman is overjoyed at finding her Orpheus, but he, pointing to the wound in the eye, tells her that her mother was the cause of it and refuses to return with her. She mournfully retraces her steps to earth and decides to choose the other road thence leading to Paradise.

Taking the winding path that ascends toward the sky, she finds that the scene grows more enchanting as she proceeds. At last she arrives at the moon, where everything is found to be most beautiful. After viewing the amazing scene, she expresses a desire to cast her eyes upon the earth again, but the keeper refuses to open the door. Finally, however, her earnest pleadings have the desired effect, and he concedes to her request by opening the door a little. While she is looking down, a great shout is heard, as the villagers cry out, "There's the new moon!" One man, taking a

cup, tosses water so high that it enters the door of the moon; at the same time he shouts, "Send me a whale." A second man does the same, but tosses the water only a short distance, for he has met with disappointment in his whaling. All these scenes, with the distinctness of the voices, have the effect of making her homesick to return to the village. She pleads with the doorkeeper to allow her to retrace her steps, but he declares that the path has vanished, and that no one entering the moon can return by the same road. She, becoming disconsolate, is at last informed that if she will braid a rope long enough to reach the earth a descent can be made by that means; so she sets to work and after diligent labor the task is ultimately completed. As she starts to lower herself, the doorkeeper tells her to keep her eyes closed until her feet touch the ground, and following his instructions she at last reaches the earth once more.

XVI

Wooden Faces

XVI

WOODEN FACES

MANY families treasure old family portraits—paintings of ancestors who have rendered themselves famous in one way or another. Such paintings have their unwritten stories, repeated by word of mouth from one generation to another, thereby preserving the family history which is looked back upon with pride by the descendants.

Among the inhabitants of the Arctic regions the same sentiment long ago prevailed. They had no pencils or paints, neither did they know anything of the painter's art, so with their stone knives or other rude tools they carved faces from driftwood, which were hung up in their homes as mementos of former great men and ancestors. With these faces were always associated the unwritten stories of the men they represented, descending by word of mouth from one generation to another, thereby preserving the family history. Sometimes the accounts of the deeds these men performed were carved on ivory, thus aiding in the preservation of their stories.

It is doubtful if these masks were very good likenesses of the individuals, but they have served their purpose remarkably well. It is also doubtful if our more civilized artists could have done much better than these untrained sculptors with the same rude tools and materials with which they had to work. Sometimes the untutored artist would create an unsatisfactory face, one rather hideous in its appearance; then he would declare that he had made the face of Toongna. At other times faces would be created without any intention of their representing any particular individual. Such faces were hung up in homes for the same reason that we adorn our walls with oil paintings or photographs, simply to look at them. Other large faces were made and used in the festivities of a feast, but I have never learned that such faces were looked upon with any degree of superstition, as many have supposed.

XVII

The Evolution of the Cook

XVII

THE EVOLUTION OF THE COOK

THE Arctic cook's necessary tools are first a fire, then a pot and a spoon or stick, and a piece of seal meat. Judging from tradition, these must have been known to the first old woman. The forerunner of the spoon was the "allutok," a name derived from two words, "allukto," to lick, and "tock," occurring only in the construction of compound words and having a reference to bringing. The first "allutok" was simply a small stick like the Chinese chop-stick. It continued in use for a great many centuries, or to within the past ten or twelve years. Since then it has been entirely replaced by the modern spoon, which has retained the same name.

Calling boiled seal meat the first, we will look upon "pooyā" as the second triumph of the culinary art. I give the recipe for number two. At the same time, it is doubtful if any of the modern ladies of the kitchen will care to experiment with its manufacture. The only things of interest about

"pooyā" are its age, the ingredients and style of its construction, and its one great product (according to the Inupash)—the first man.

During those very early days, the woman appears not to have washed her dishes, although she may have spent a great deal of time in the water. The recipe says: Scrape the old dried dinner from the "allutok" used at a previous feast of seal meat. To the scrapings add a small pinch of the tender pin feathers of a bird. The two ingredients are to be mixed, then masticated until metamorphosed into chewing-gum.

There were no clocks or watches in those early days, so the Polar man's first mother had lots of time. After a few centuries had passed, some genius invented a new form of chewing-gum called "ānoon." It appears to have been the third triumph in the culinary line. Seal oil is boiled; the upper portion being poured off, the thick sediment remaining is again boiled until it becomes black and nearly burnt, when it is ready for chewing. The use of this is said to shorten time considerably, but the mass does not look inviting.

"Keveh," made by warming deer tallow, then beating it into a light mass with salmon berries, was

the fourth innovation, and "ahkootoo," the fifth. "Ahkootoo" is made from deer marrow, mixed with whale oil, a small amount of soup from boiled deer meat and also some of the meat cut fine. The mass is to be beaten until it becomes quite light. It is an article of food very highly esteemed by the Inupash.

These remained the only dishes known to the cook for a vast length of time, but I take it that much meat and fish were devoured raw. On the first introduction of flour, the people did not care for it, but about 1890 they learned the art of making "nookpowras," flour mixed with a small amount of water, then dropped into boiling seal or whale oil. "Nookpowras" proved quite popular, and flour became a demand.

A few years back instructions were begun among the young people at Tigara in the simple art of cooking. At first the girls viewed it in the line of a novelty, but when they noticed the eligible young men picking out the cooks for their wives, it was astonishing to see what zeal all the marriageable girls suddenly developed. As soon as they had learned to turn a slapjack, or to make a cup of coffee, they would, on returning to their homes in the

evening, pass around among the young men, bragging of what good cooks they were; or if a whale ship was sighted, off would scamper the cooks, anxious to be the first on board, invariably hunting up the cooks' galley, where they introduced themselves as cooks, seeming to feel that there should be a professional bond of sympathy between them.

It was not alone in cooking that instructions were given, but also in the art of sewing; simple cutting was taught and the making of such things as towels, snow shirts and trousers.

At one time the young tribal princess and her companion were under instruction. They tried to excel all previous apprentices in various ways. No sooner would the breakfast dishes be through with than the girls would disappear out-of-doors. On searching for them, they would be found in some secluded corner playing housekeeping; or, if a doctor's patient came along, after his departure they would prescribe small powders of flour for each other. When the time came for them to receive instruction in sewing, they were set to making woolen trousers. A great amount of whispering and tittering went on; then when the work was brought for inspection it was found that, as before

these girls had tried to excel all previous attempts. They had procured some bright pieces of calico with which they had trimmed the garments in a style the princess thought quite pretty. Fancy trousers immediately became the rage among the villagers. One young man of dudish propensities came out with a pair that had been worked in rings of various colors down each leg, while his competitor introduced knee breeches made from fancy bed ticking, heavily frilled at the knees and fancily embroidered in bright colors. The village belles, not to be outdone by the young men, discarded the old bone fish-hooks they had been wearing for ear jewelry and adopted the more natty safety-pin, at the same time making for themselves pretty waist belts with can-openers for danglers, and also giving their cloaks a liberal supply of the same.

It was the beginning of a new era among the people. They were awaking from the long sleep they had been taking, ever since the beginning of the Polar race. Old ways that had been followed from the most remote time were to give way to the new conditions that were advancing, and would ultimately end in the improvement and benefit of the people.

The art of cooking has now greatly advanced. Nearly all the young people understand how to cook. It is doubtful if there is an iglo in the village that has not one or two cooks. Eating raw meat is pretty much of the past, its place being filled by bread, slapjacks, soup, and tea or coffee. Nearly all the young people can make their own yeast, and as good a loaf of bread as is to be found anywhere, far surpassing their instructor. Soap and water, and with them cleanliness, have also been introduced. If in traveling along the coast one meets with clean young natives, who ask for a piece of soap, he may know that they are from Tigara, or have spent a season or two in the village; at least so say the persons who have had this experience.

XVIII

Chokarluke

XVIII

CHOKARLUKE

LUKE occurs frequently as an affix to many nouns, more especially in the names of individuals, but no one seems able to throw any light on the meaning of it. If it ever had any, it has been lost. In the interpretation of the names of individuals, Katuktorluke becomes Lost Luke; Covewluke, Slop-bucket Luke; Chummerroyluke, Beads-on-the-hair Luke; Tatkeāluke, Moon Luke; and Chokarluke, Whalebone Luke.

Chokarluke was the traditionary strong man of the Polar race. He lived in the neighborhood of Cape Lisburne, near which place the traveler may see two large stones that he has been credited with carrying in his arms and placing in their present position. They were used for the purpose of stretching his seal lines to dry. He is also credited with having been a wonderful pedestrian, having had great power of endurance. At one time the neighbors had killed a whale but were in danger of losing their prize, the strong ocean current threaten-

ing to carry it away. Chokarluke, happening along, seized the whale by the tail and lifted it half out of the water and upon the ice, a deed of strength far surpassing any of our modern strong men's feats and well earning for him the name of Whalebone Luke.

XIX

Introduction of Tobacco

XIX

INTRODUCTION OF TOBACCO

THERE is always a pleasure in recording the deeds of great men, and although they may have been taking their long sleep for many a year, yet those innovations they introduced still live on. So I take pleasure in introducing "Nanoona" for the first time, and leave it to the historian to record his name along with that of "Bobo," the introducer of roast pork, or to place this story with that of Sir Walter Raleigh's involuntary bath.

The inhabitants of the Arctic Circle are as fond of their smoke as any other race of men, but the high price of the first tobacco necessitated the invention of the small pipe, and also the method of smoking which is peculiar to the Inupash. The tobacco is first cut fine, then the bowl of the pipe, which holds about as much as a thirty-two cartridge shell, has a pellet of fine wood shavings crowded into its base. A small amount of tobacco is then introduced, about enough to give one or two puffs, and a piece of tinder being placed at the edge, fire is struck with a

flint and steel. The smoker is now ready to enjoy himself; he takes a long pull and then tries to swallow the smoke, but lower down there is an objection; the stomach refuses to be considered a smoke bag, and, puckering up, does all in its power to repel the intrusion, while above the act of swallowing is persisted in. At last the stomach gains the victory and the smoke is expelled, the smoker coughs, wipes his eyes and puts the pipe away. He has had a good smoke.

It was during the earlier days of the past century that a small amount of the strong Russian tobacco found its way through Siberia and across the Behring Straits. "Nanoona" was a great traveler for those days, and had ventured as far south as what is now known as the Seward Peninsula. Obtaining some of the tobacco, he returned to his home, and the news soon spread that "Nanoona" could actually swallow fire and then belch forth smoke. The thing seemed incredible; it even surpassed the doings of the wonderful "Ongootkoot" who was very successful in driving off eclipses, thereby saving the villagers from some terrible catastrophes. At the appointed time the people gathered, filling "Nanoona's" iglo; even the roof was packed.

NANOONA'S DESCENDANTS

The seal-gut window having been removed, the people gathered there several rows deep, all desirous of witnessing the wonderful act.

Our hero no doubt felt the importance of the occasion and filled his pipe more times than his discretion should have allowed; first came the stage of exhilaration, the world looked beautiful, and he spoke entertainingly of the traditions of the past, a subject that is always interesting to an Inupash, even if he has already heard them many times; then came the well-known after effects, which nearly all beginners with the weed experience.

His transient indisposition served as no warning to the people; neither did the odor of the smoke that they had been forced to shield their noses from. Had they not seen him swallow fire and belch forth smoke? Had they not seen him during the stage of exhilaration? They all wished to pass through a similar experience, but tobacco was scarce and held at a fabulous price. One pull at the pipe was worth two dressed sealskins; or a pipeful of the weed, affording two good swallows, cost two deerskins. Only the wealthy could afford such a luxury.

"Nanoona" has long since gone to his rest, but his

name remains green among the villagers. To-day the traveler can see his elevated grave at Tigmeārook, about six miles east of the village of Tigara, at which place his career came to a sudden end through the agency of an arrow driven by the bow of an enemy.

XX

Winter Evenings and Stories

XX

WINTER EVENINGS AND STORIES

THE inhabitants of the busy world have no end of amusements, besides their newspapers and magazines with which to pass their leisure hours. It is not so with the less fortunate inhabitants of the far north. Their winter evenings are long and their homes but dimly lighted by the seal-oil lamps. To the uninitiated, it would seem a dreary sight, yet the people have their enjoyment in the shape of an occasional dance, a most innocent form of amusement, being as much singing as dancing, accompanied by the beating of the one-headed drum.

The dancer stands up and makes a few graceful movements with the arms, as well as limbering at the knee joints, then sits down. Others go through the same motions in their turn, while the audience does the singing. Their main festivities occur at the full of the moon, in the month of "Nekanok-kochevik," corresponding to our December, at which time, besides the dancing and feasting, presents are given by the leading men.

Their other form of amusement is story-telling. The stories may be old, but that makes no difference to an Inupash, he is one of the most attentive listeners, no matter how many times he may have heard the same tale before. The repetition has the advantage of fixing the story in the minds of the people, enabling them to retain and pass down their traditions from one generation to another for an immensely long period of time. Outside of their traditions, their stories deal largely with the supernatural in the form of ghosts and fairies. Occasionally, one may hear a fable that apparently has a moral attached. The following are a few of the stories that mothers interest their children with, and that are eagerly listened to by the older ones also:—

ALLUGUĀ

Little Alluguā had been born blind. It had worried his father and mother greatly, for they knew when he grew to manhood he would not be able to hunt and support himself. They hoped as he grew older he might yet receive his eyesight, although both eyes were white and sightless. At last when he became seven or eight years of age his parents gave up all hope.

The summer season was approaching, a time when all the villagers would be going on their annual trips, some to the north in quest of deer, while others would go to the east, down the Kotzebue Sound, where they would meet natives of other tribes, and do their trading. All would leave the village; the place would be entirely abandoned. Little Alluguā's father and mother, in talking the matter over with some of the neighbors, came to the conclusion that the child was hopelessly blind and would never be able to support himself. It was therefore decided to leave him behind. The parents placed him in their iglo, laying heavy whale jaws over the window and blocking up the entrance, thus leaving no way of escape. They then left him without food, expecting him to starve to death during their absence.

The little fellow sat on the floor, with his head bowed on his breast, feeling very bad at the fate which awaited him. He was growing very hungry and had apparently no means of relief. Everything was dark to him. His hunger grew still worse, with a terrible gnawing sensation in his stomach. If he could only get something to eat! and his thirst was terrible! He was beside himself with despair;

if death would only come, what a relief it would be. It seemed a terribly long time that he sat there in the darkness with his head bowed on his breast.

At last he heard a noise; what could it mean? He knew that none of the villagers would return for a long time. It must be one of those hallucinations that hunger and thirst often create. Then the noise came nearer, and a little woman coming up through the floor asked him why he was there and what made him so sad. He soon told the story of how he had been left to starve to death and how he was suffering for food and water. If he could only get a drink from the spring near by, how it would relieve the terrible parched condition of his mouth and throat! Water, oh, if he only had some water!

"Never mind," said the little woman, "you shall not starve to death," and she placed by his side some nice pieces of whale meat and black skin, with a pailful of clear cold water. How Alluguā did enjoy the water, and then the whale meat and black skin! He had never in all his life tasted anything half so good. Every day the little woman brought a fresh supply of meat and water; she knew just what to choose so that he would gain strength and grow.

At last the fall season came, bringing with it the colder weather. The villagers were returning from their summer trips, and Alluguā's father and mother were among the arrivals. Soon he heard some one moving the barricade from the entrance, then his mother looked up through the hole in the floor. She was greatly surprised to see him alive and well; here was a fat, healthy boy instead of the emaciated body of her son, who, she supposed, had starved to death during her absence.

"Why you are alive and hearty, what makes you so fleshy?" she remarked, "and how you have grown!" Alluguā did not tell his mother that a good little fairy had been feeding him. He simply said that the food and water she had left had proved very nourishing. After that his parents decided that as he would not die they would take care of him.

In time he grew up and was approaching manhood, when he expressed a desire to join one of the whaling crews. His parents said no; he was blind and would simply be in the way of the whalers. But he persisted, declaring that he would kill a whale. At last they consented, and he went with one of the crews. He had not been long out when he insisted that he should be placed at the head of

the boat with the whaling spear. The men at first refused, but ultimately acceded to his request by placing him at the head with the spear. Just then a whale coming along quite close, they told him to dart, but he said no; that was not the right one, as it passed off. Then the ice began crowding in and the canoe was quickly hauled out. The men stepped back to a safe place, but Alluguā stayed at the edge.

After a while he began beckoning to the men to come forward. But no, they would not, for they thought it was simply the crowding ice he heard. Later on, the ice moved off and another whale came quite close. The men again placed the spear in his hand and told him to dart, but he said no; that was not the right one. The ice again crowding in as before, he took his stand at the edge. After listening a while he beckoned for the men to come forward. At last they did so, remarking among themselves, that it was only the crowding of the ice he heard. He stood for a moment listening, then darted the spear, but instead of striking the ice, it went under, and the line with the floats was drawn out with great rapidity. He had darted a large whale which was soon dispatched.

Before the season closed he had killed three more, and the following year he did the same thing again; so that instead of being a poor blind man, a care to his parents, Alluguā proved to be one of the most successful whalers in the village.

Caterpillar

It is not long since ghosts and fairies were fully believed in in the far north, as they were in the olden days in our more civilized countries. The men and women who claimed they had seen such apparitions were so common that no one doubted their statements or gave the subject an investigation, but would listen patiently, no matter how extravagant the story might be. Even to-day, superstition seems to exist among the older people, although there is scarcely any one who would care to assert that he had seen such a thing at a very recent date. In 1892 a young woman came to me with the information that the previous evening an "Ongootkoot" had seen a black man and boy walk slowly across the land, then out upon the ocean, where they disappeared.

Quite a while back, a man and his wife had gone into the interior country in search of deer. The

man was meeting with unusually good success in his hunting, while the woman busied herself with cutting and packing willow brush for the camp. One day while at her task, happening to look up, she saw a woman near at hand with a very fine deerskin coat on. It was all fancily trimmed with wolverine and other furs, making one of those beautiful coats any woman would love to possess. At the same time, looking down at her own shabby artege, she sighed and remarked to the stranger, "What a beautiful coat you have." The woman smilingly replied, "Yes, how would you like to have it?" Of course she was delighted with the proposition, and when the stranger offered to make the exchange, was only too glad to accept the offer. The exchange was soon made, but on putting on the new coat she was instantly transformed into a caterpillar. The stranger put on the old coat, then picking up the bundle of willow brush went to the camp, where she took the place of the real wife.

The hunter, on returning, remarked to his supposed wife, "Why, dear, you don't look the same as usual, and you have a different odor." To which she replied, "Why, husband, you know I have been working hard all day, cutting and packing

brush and have become overheated." The man, not being very inquisitive, accepted the explanation and was satisfied, especially so as there was a nice hot dinner awaiting him.

So matters continued for some time.

The real wife felt terribly over her misfortune, wishing sincerely she had never coveted the other woman's coat. She slowly crawled back toward the camp, but, make the greatest exertion she could, it was very slow work. Then, when she thought she had nearly arrived at the place where her husband was, he and the fraudulent wife would break camp and move to a new site. It was such slow work crawling; besides, the poor wife had several narrow escapes from hungry birds, only escaping by hiding in the crevice of a rock or under a blade of grass. The season was advancing and her husband would soon return to the village; she must hurry or be left behind. So crawling night and day, she at last reached the camp and managed to crawl in among the deerskins, as they were being lashed preparatory to taking them home.

On arriving in the village she could only crawl around and see her friends, but no one took any

notice of her. She crawled around the iglo and watched the fraudulent wife making love to her husband. It filled her with jealousy and indignation, but she could do nothing to help matters. The season was arriving when she would turn into a cocoon for her long winter's sleep. If something did not happen quickly, her hopes would be blasted forever. Crawling up over the place where her mother was cooking, the caterpillar accidentally fell down at the edge of the fire, burst open and the woman escaped from her prison. Her mother was greatly surprised. Explanations were made, and the fraudulent wife was soon turned into a caterpillar. Crawling off she has never since been heard from, and may be crawling yet, as far as any of the villagers know.

Tungnāluke's Perplexity

Tungnāluke was one of those slow-of-comprehension, good-natured, shiftless fellows, that the men of the world would consider as not being very bright. He would rather hang around his neighbors doing a bit of gossiping, than to exert himself by hunting for his family. As usual with such characters, he had chosen for a wife a woman his extreme

opposite, and she was not to be blamed if, at times, she exercised her fiery tongue or wielded a stick. It was the only way to excite a little energy in the man she had accepted as her life partner. There was a certain amount of affection existing between the two; she looking upon him as a man she could control, while on his part, he viewed her with a considerable amount of respect.

Knowing the man's gossiping disposition so well, she had ordered him to go up the river alone for three or four weeks and lay in a winter's supply of fish. He would much rather have taken a companion, for spending three or four weeks alone fishing through the ice, with no one to converse with, did not meet with his approbation ; yet he knew better than to raise any objections with Mrs. Tungnāluke. So he obeyed and went off. Feeling the loneliness of his position, he worked with an unusual amount of energy, trying to hurry the task through. Still the feeling of, "Oh, if I only had some one to talk to," would occasionally steal over him.

One day, meeting with unusual success, he stayed at the task much later than usual and the twilight had begun to fade. At last casting his eyes toward his hut he was surprised to see the place brightly il-

luminated. What could it mean? He knew that the seal-oil lamp had not been lighted that day and there was no other person within many miles.

The number four seems to be regarded among the villagers with some degree of superstition, though why it is hard to say. Perhaps it originated from the idea that man ascends on the fourth day after death, and the four raps with the hammer are given on that day at the recent home of the deceased.

Tungnāluke, on seeing the illumination, hastily picked up four frozen fish and on entering the hut he was delighted to see a woman. Here was somebody to talk to. To be sure, she had a deerskin mask over her face, and he knew that was the way the villagers dressed the dead, but he gave the subject no heed. The place was nice and warm, and he felt that his solitude was at an end. He could now have a nice long conversation; so seating himself on the floor he spoke to the visitor. But she made no reply. He then pushed one of the frozen fish toward her, but the fish came flapping back. Then he offered the other fish one by one, telling her to eat; but they came flapping back as did the first. Thinking that the warmth of the room had brought

them back to life, he gave the subject no further attention.

His curiosity being aroused, and wishing to see who the visitor was, he pulled the death mask from her face and threw it outside; but it came back and covered the face again. Supposing that it was the wind which had blown it back, he pulled it off again and threw it outside; but with the same result as before. It was not until the fifth time that the mask stayed away. Then recognizing one of the young women of the village, he spoke but received no reply. Passing his hand over her face he felt that she was cold and clammy, and supposing it was a chill she had he placed her in his bed.

After awhile he had the satisfaction of knowing that his visitor was growing warmer. Then she spoke and told him she had died and been buried, but that he had warmed and made her comfortable again. After talking together for quite awhile, the visitor proposed that they should return to the village together, Tungnāluke taking her for his wife.

At last the truth began to dawn through his mind, and he found himself in a perplexity. Here he had been making a ghost comfortable, and it was now insisting on being his wife. He already had one in

the village, whom he had a great amount of respect for, and knew she would be highly indignant if he brought a second wife home, especially so if the new one was the recently deceased neighbor. So he refused, but the ghost insisted. He was in a great perplexity, not knowing how to escape from his dilemma. The ghost was growing more and more imperative in its demands.

At last the idea arose in his mind that he would try the hammer. So going around the room he struck the four magic blows, at which the ghost disappeared, and he returned alone to his home to relate his adventure.

The Raven, the Barnacle Goose and the Whale

A raven that lived along the cliffs near Cape Lisburne became tired of the humdrum life he was leading. He had noticed that his friends, the gannets and murres, with many other acquaintances, were in the habit of going on long trips each fall and not returning again until the warmer weather of spring had arrived. His own family was content to stay at home the year round, not showing the least ambition to travel or visit any of those other countries about which their neighbors were continually

talking. He was particularly interested to learn that in the south the sun was never lost in winter and the days were warm and balmy, just the same as in summer. He was growing tired of his bachelorship, and therefore he decided to seek a bride outside of his own people, one that would be willing to travel with him. Meeting one of the young ladies of the Barnacle Goose family, he proposed that she should become his wife, lauding himself by saying what a sweet voice he had, and what a good husband he would make. Miss Goose hung her head and demurred a little, nevertheless she accepted the offer, and they began their wedding tour together.

The goose, knowing the route, took the lead straight out over the ocean, while the raven followed, trying to keep pace with his bride. As the day waned, the raven began to feel the effects of the long flight, while hunger was admonishing him that he had partaken of only a light breakfast that morning. So addressing his wife, he said, "My dear, don't you think it is about time for us to take a rest while we try to find something to eat?"

"All right, husband," was her reply, as she settled lightly down on the waves. But there was no place for the raven to alight, unless upon his wife's back.

All was water, so with a slight apology, he lit on the bride's back. After a short time she began to feel her husband's weight to be somewhat of a burden. Seeing a small fish, she remarked, "Look out, dear," as she dove and captured it. The raven just had time to open his weary wings, to avoid a ducking; then he had the mortification of seeing how selfish his bride was, as she swallowed the whole fish without offering him even a small piece, although he was famishing with hunger.

The goose then started to continue the journey, while the raven implored her to rest just a little longer; but no, she would not. There was nothing else for him to do but to continue his flight, trying to keep up with his wife, while beseeching her to take another short rest. So the night wore away.

As the dawn came, the bride, who had gradually gained in her flight, was far ahead, while the bridegroom could scarcely flap his wings any longer. The situation began to look serious. If he should alight on the water his feathers would become wet and that would be his end. What to do he did not know. Just then a whale came along, and thinking it would be a good place to alight, he managed to reach its head just as his wings gave out.

The whale had just started to take a fresh breath, and the raven entered the blow hole along with the rush of air. Looking around he said to himself, "What a nice long room this is," and commenced walking about picking at the walls here and there. The whale remarked to some of its companions, "What a cold I have taken in my nose," and began sneezing. The raven thought he was in a very draughty apartment, but he had been born on the cliffs at Cape Lisburne, where the gales are frequent and severe, so he did not mind the present wollies [1] to any extent.

He took a walk in the long passageway until the road divided up into the many small by-paths of the lungs. At last, finding a crevice where the drafts did not seem quite so strong, he settled down for a good sleep. On awakening, he began examining the comfortable crevice and found that the walls were not quite so thick as at the other places. So setting to work with bill and claws on a thin portion, he soon had a hole made through the membrane; at the same time the whale was grumbling at having the tickling sensation in its nose and throat that made it sneeze so often.

[1] Wollie, a sudden high gust of wind rushing through a gulch.

The raven walked through the opening and found himself in a much larger apartment, where there was a great deal to excite his interest, but what seemed the most curious thing of all was a great red object that was thumping in regular order. After standing and watching it for quite a while, his curiosity became much aroused. He thought he would feel it, just to see if it was hard or soft. He commenced feeling with his bill and found it was quite firm, but on trial discovered that it was easy to nip off a small piece. The fragment tasted very good, and as he had not breakfasted yet he made up his mind to keep nipping off small pieces until his hunger was appeased. The whale told its friends that these colds in the nose were awful things, for sometimes they struck through to the heart. The raven declared he had never before had such a good thing in all his life. Here was a nice large room with plenty to excite his curiosity, while there was no end of good things to eat.

At the end of a week he found himself growing quite fleshy, but the big red object was not beating with the same regularity as at first. At last it ceased, and the whale lay floating on the water, dead. The whale's friends declared that their late

comrade had died suddenly from heart failure, induced by a cold in the nose and aggravated by too much sneezing.

The raven soon began to suspect that all was not quite right. The big red object did not work any longer, while everything remained so still. After a while, the breaking of the surf on the beach greeted his ears. Then people's voices were heard shouting, "Here comes some new meat and black skin floating on the ocean."

The whale drifted on shore and the inhabitants were soon cutting off the meat and blubber. One man, working on the ribs, quickly had a hole made and light began streaming through. The raven said to himself, "Here I have grown quite corpulent during the lazy life I have been leading; I must not let the men see me." So, crouching down and hiding, he waited until the hole was made large enough, then suddenly opening his wings flew out. Everybody was much surprised to see the raven come out of the whale. But they heard him say before he disappeared toward his home on the cliffs, that in the future he would stick by his own people and avoid those frivolous young ladies of the Barnacle Goose family.

XXI

Courtship

XXI

COURTSHIP

As viewed by the outsider, the average Inupash courtship is devoid of romance. The first mating of young people is usually suggested and arranged by the mothers, yet there are slight indications noticeable to the initiated that will often point to the intentions of the persons interested. If one sees a young man beating out a piece of metal and fashioning a finger ring, it is apt to be for some young woman; or should a young woman be making a fancy tobacco bag, of course it is for some young man, and the whispering of love is probably back of the inspiration. It only remains for the meeting of the two mothers to arrange matters.

The two families may be living close together, yet the mother of one will call on her neighbor and tell her how she has intended to be more neighborly, but she has been so busy. Then the neighbor will declare how delighted she is to see her, after which the conversation is carried on in the usual strain, or until mother number one commences

to tell what a great hunter her son is and how good he is. Then mother number two remarks that her daughter is such a good sewer and knows how to chew a beautiful boot sole. Mother number one declares that they are never hungry in their iglo, as son is always so successful and brings lots of seals home. Mother number two now remarks that daughter is such a lovely cook, having taken lessons and knows how to cook everything. (At the same time, she may consider herself fortunate if she has half a sack of China flour in the house.) The conversation continues for a while, each mother trying to present her side in its most favorable light.

The father now arriving, and being suspicious of what is taking place, will naturally try to be as agreeable as possible. He will relate some old story that has been doing duty in the tribe for a number of generations. Of course the women gather around and listen with a great deal of interest, as if it was entirely new to them. Returning to business, it is decided that the young man shall enter the family on a sort of trial. If the girl turns up her nose and makes faces, he might as well leave, as the match will never amount to anything; but should she greet him with an occasional smile

and allow him to sit by her side in the evening, with his arm around her, it will be all clear sailing and they will unite as husband and wife.

With older people courtship is different. They plead and arrange their own affairs, usually without the assistance of a third party. As I have watched these marriages, I could not help but think that they turn out as happily as in any other section. Divorces, formerly so common, are now far less frequent, and when the people marry it is usually for life, most couples living together happily until parted by death.

XXII

The Wooing of Billy Fishtail

Mr. and Mrs. Billy Fishtail

XXII

THE WOOING OF BILLY FISHTAIL

THERE was a bond of sympathy between Billy and myself, for I had looked upon him as a permanent bachelor, and he was always such a reliable fellow. If I set him to whittling a bit of wood or to sawing a board, he was sure soon to apply for a bandage to stop the flow of blood from a wound. On trying to bore a hole through a board with a sharpened knitting-needle, only the bone of his second finger prevented the instrument from passing through that also. Even with the axe he was an expert; lifting it high to take a vigorous blow he would bring the back down on his own head, and rush for aid.

He was very faithful, however, and nothing seemed to make him so happy as to be doing what he thought would give me pleasure. Some one had informed Billy that far away in the States, the singing on Sundays was accompanied by an organ, so on the following Sunday Billy brought his small accordion to church and tried to accompany the singers. He had not practiced the tunes, and there

seemed to be a difference between the drums of his ears, for one would catch a tune one way while the other gave a different interpretation. The accordion could not please both ears, so it squeaked and wheezed out an air of its own.

At last a time came when it was evident that a change was coming over Billy. He was growing more particular in his personal appearance, and was even trying to learn how to whistle.

Just about the same time, rumor said that the widow Okpoktoah had been seen running around the village trying to procure the loan of a cake of soap. It looked very suspicious, but Billy would not admit anything. He would simply hang his head and grin. Then the cook came one morning with the information that Billy had been seen very late the previous evening talking earnestly with the widow at her iglo.

Time has now rolled along and Billy is very happy for he owns the widow, yet those gossiping neighbors will persist in saying that Billy is not finding his nights quite as restful as formerly, for his little daughter has a very imperative way of ordering him to take a walk during those hours of the night when sleep seems the most refreshing.

XXIII

Writing

XXIII

WRITING

To the uninitiated children of nature, the art of reading and writing seemed at first as great a mystery as the electric current. How those scrawls of black lines were words, that could be spoken just the same as in conversation, was beyond their comprehension. At first, they gathered around every time a letter was received and listened eagerly. Then arose the desire for them to be able to make out those intelligible scrawls that had a meaning.

One elderly woman seemed to feel slighted that she had not received a letter; so going on board the whalers at anchor, she inquired if there was not one for her. At last her heart was made glad by receiving a mukparā (letter) which read as follows:—"Give this woman a dose of poison." Carefully wrapping the precious missive in a piece of sealskin and attaching a string, she wore it around her neck as an ornament, and guarded it zealously.

With the young people, it was a proud day when they had advanced far enough in their studies to be

supplied with a pen for the first time. Eagerly taking the pen and copy, the scholar would lie flat on the floor, in the most secluded part of the room, then call loudly to all the others to stand out of the light. If a blot accidentally occurred, an attempt would be made to erase it with the finger-nail. So the young Inupash gradually advanced until he became proficient enough to begin writing compositions.

The young tribal prince, for his first composition, chose to write upon the seal, and supposed he had exhausted the subject when he wrote, "Man he go on ice, shoot him seal. By and by woman she come dog sled, take him seal home. By and by man he go home tell woman, You cook him seal very big quick, me big plenty hungry."

Those earlier days have passed by and the mystery of the scrawls has been solved. The young Inupash are learning to read quite nicely and can now write their own letters. They still have the English grammar to master; it is very different from their own, but at length they will accomplish that task, and at no very distant time. The days when they used to borrow each other's fingers to do their counting with have gone by. They are

steadily advancing and will, in the course of time, be numbered among our good and intelligent citizens. They are the only ones that are naturally fitted to inhabit this, the most northern part of our country.