

THE NATIVES OF ALASKA.

Observations of an American Explorer.

How the People are Clothed, their Dwellings and Food Supplies.

Some of the results achieved by Lieutenant G. M. Stony's exploring expedition in Northern Alaska will be found full of interest, says the New York Herald. The following observations by Lieutenant Stony of the natives, their mode of life, etc., together with other matters in this connection, may not prove uninteresting. He writes:

"These people live in huts made partly under ground and subsist principally upon the meats of animals, fish and game, their vegetable supply being limited to leaves and roots of a few plants and a small supply of berries, which latter are collected during the summer months.

"They are a healthy, hardy race, comparing favorably in size with the white men; complexion a bright brunette, eyes small and black and nearly even with the face, high forehead, nose small and rather flat, excellent teeth, coarse black hair. They tattoo very little, only a few lines on the lower lips and chins of the women. Wearing of the labrett is confined exclusively to the men, and even they do not all wear it. No nose ornaments were seen, and in a few instances only were earrings observed. All the men are beardless. It is said that they pull the beard out. The women wear the hair long and plaited into two braids behind. The men also wear the hair long and allow it to hang down, except in front of their faces. They go without head covering during the summer, and are much more cleanly in their habits than the Tchoutches of Siberia.

"The native dress is made principally from the skin of the reindeer; the undergarments from the skin of the younger ones; trousers, overshirts (coats) and socks from the skin of the older ones; boots are made from the tougher skin of the legs, and sometimes trousers from the same. The shirts in shape resemble that worn by the white man, but no buttons or fastenings are used, a hole being cut in the upper part just large enough to admit the head, to which is sewed a hood to be worn in cold weather. The overshirt (coat) is made long, reaching to the knees, and ornamented and trimmed with long hairs of various animals. Some of the coats are made from inferior furs (such as ground squirrel) and skins of water fowl, &c. These are very light and worn only in summer. Lighter trousers are also made for summer wear from the skins of seals, those of the younger and smaller ones being preferred. Both drawers and trousers are confined at the waist by a cord. Except during rainy weather the coat and trousers are worn with the hairy side out, but with the underclothing the hair is worn next the body. The socks and boots are very similar in shape, the latter having a thick sole made from the skin of the walrus or large seal. The boots for summer are made from sealskin entirely, the hair being removed in tanning; the legs are long, never below the knee and sometimes extending below the waist; they are waterproof, but not warm. During snow storms or drifts an overall is worn to keep the snow out of the hair, which is very essential for the preservation of the reindeer skin garments. These overall are made from entrails of seals, buckskin, drilling and calico, the latter being preferred when obtainable. Straw is placed in the bottom of the boots for warmth and to give a soft footing for the wearer.

"The dress of the women is much like that of the men, the only difference being a slight variation in the pattern of the overshirt (coat). Heavy mitts are made from the reindeer and moose skins and occasionally from sealskins, and are worn nearly all the time, summer and winter.

"The native houses are constructed by sinking a circular hole twelve feet in diameter to a depth of three feet into the ground. Spruce poles, five feet long, are driven around the side to the depth of one foot (the bark having been removed), and placed as close together as possible. The roof, made of the same material, is put on, leaving a circular hole of two feet in diameter at the top for the outlet of smoke and admission of light. The roof is well lashed by means of rope made from the bark of the spruce. The entire hut above ground is then covered with straw and earth. The entrance to the hut is subterranean, a passageway being dug at an angle of about forty-five degrees from the exterior of the hut to the floor, which passageway is carefully protected in the same manner as the roof.

"These people never want for food. The country abounds in animals and game, and the river in fish. Large numbers of reindeer are killed, generally shot, although during the winter it quite frequently happens that many are captured by driving them into ravines where they sink into the deep snows and fall an easy prey to the hunters. The following is a list of animals whose skins are preserved by the natives viz.—Bear (black, brown and gray), moose, fox (white, black, red, cross and silver gray), marten, sable, land and water otter, mink, wolf, beaver and lynx. The meats of all these animals are used for food, great preference is given to the reindeer, moose and bear. The latter are usually shot, the former trapped. The fish caught are of many varieties, including large quantities of salmon, white fish, mullet, pike and sculpin. The salmon are chiefly caught in Hotham Inlet at the mouth of the river that empties into it; the other fish are caught in the river. They are mostly caught in the summer by means of the gill net or speared, the dexterity with which this is done being something marvellous. The pike weigh from seven to ten pounds, whitefish from one to two pounds and mullet from three to four pounds. In the winter fish are also taken through the ice by hook and line. The hook used consist simply of a flat piece of ivory, with a sharp piece of metal screwed into one end of it at right angles to the face of the ivory. White whales are caught in Hotham Inlet, and it is regarded by the natives as a great and dangerous feat to catch one. Those who are successful are looked upon as men of distinction. Hair seals are also caught in Hotham Inlet, but they do not seem to go up the river.

The Dutch at Home.
There is a singular calm reigning in the streets of Rotterdam, says a writer in the Cornhill Magazine. The faces of the passers-by are stolid; there is no chattering, no gesticulating. The population is imperturbably good. I was constantly struck by this feature of the Dutch wherever I went; they are preternaturally tranquil. At Rotterdam, it may be argued, the people are preoccupied with business and have no time to be gay and noisy. But at their holiday resorts they are equally quiet. One Sunday afternoon I went down to Scheveningen, the famous seaside resort near The Hague, and I was utterly astounded at the bearing of the crowd of holiday seekers. I could hardly help thinking that the whole thing must be a toy, and that the people were playing at being good. The hotels on the top of the sand dunes, the neat, brick-paved, winding footpath that runs the whole length of the upper part of the beach; the villas, the casino, the village, the church, with its clock painted red and blue, with the hours picked out in white; the little canvas bathing machines, brilliant with new paint; the little tents on the beach, the fishing boats, all seemed to accord with this idea, they were so neat and proper. When we arrived all the people were out on the beach; the Sunday holiday makers, too, had arrived, and yet the tranquility, the stillness, the absence of the sounds of gayety, or, indeed, of any human sounds, were so marked that it made one feel quite uneasy. You met groups walking quietly; here and there were groups sitting quietly and talking quietly, and quiet smiles pervaded at rare intervals their buttry physiognomies. I presume these people were enjoying themselves in their own quiet way. But how unlike a Latin crowd at the seaside! At Scheveningen I saw no more style, no more elegance, no more coquetry than at Rotterdam. Very few of the Dutch women wore their quaint native head-dress, and these few had surmounted it by horrible Parisian bonnets. As for their dress it was horrible. Once for all I may say that, generally speaking, I found the Dutch women uncomely, the children unpleasing, and the men ugly, coarse, and unsympathetic. Dutch cleanliness is proverbial, I know; but, nevertheless, the Dutch are not a well-washed nation. In all their towns I found but poor washing appliances and a sad absence of bath-houses.

A Remarkable Pig.
A newly-married lady, who recently graduated from Vassar College, is not very well posted about household matters. She said to her grocer, not long since:
"I bought three or four hams here a couple of months ago, and they were very fine. Have you got any more like them?"
Grocer—"Yes, ma'am, there are ten of those hams hanging up there."
"Are you sure they are all off the same pig?"
"Yes, ma'am."
"Then I'll take three of them."
—*Times & Trips.*

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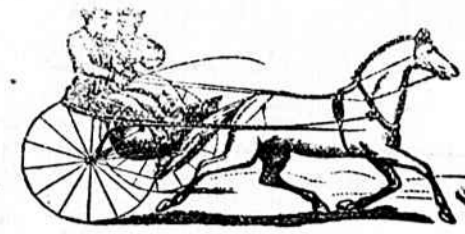
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