



AN ESKIMO FAMILY.

ESKIMOS—ANCIENT AND MODERN.¹

By BARON A. E. NORDENSKIÖLD.

Translated from the French by MARY FROUDE.

THE Eskimos occupy an enormous area, extending from the west coast of Greenland to Behring Strait, and covering the whole of polar America. The name Eskimo, said to be derived from "Eskimantsik," which in the Indian "Abenauques" means "eaters of raw meat," was given them by Europeans. They call themselves Innuits, or Karalit. It is a curious fact that over the whole of this vast tract, all Eskimos speak the same language, with no variations of idiom, and



LARS MÖLLER.

¹ In the spring of 1883, Baron A. E. Nordenskiöld, the well-known Arctic traveller, left Sweden on his second voyage to Greenland. His party included several scientific men, who during the summer made important geological and botanical researches, while he himself explored the snow-fields of the interior. M. Nordenskiöld's steamer, the *Sofia*, penetrated through ice floes into waters where no ship had ever been before, and gave its name to a hitherto unknown harbour. The expedition was accompanied by Lars Möller, a half-breed Eskimo, printer and editor of a native newspaper, who was acting as special correspondent to his own journal, and made several clever sketches, which M. Nordenskiöld has honoured with a place in his own account of the expedition. This book ends with an interesting chapter on the Eskimos, of which this article is an abridged translation.

that the vocabulary published by Frobisher in 1576 strongly resembles that of to-day. Their manners and customs are as uniform as their language except in regions where there is much intercourse with Europeans. The Icelandic annals tell how in 1379 they attacked the Scandinavian colonists, killing eighteen in battle and taking their children for slaves. Frobisher too speaks of their courage and contempt of death. But, though once a brave and warlike race, their martial ardour has cooled down under the mild rule of the Danish Guild of Commerce, and they are eminently peaceable nowadays. Still, even in the fourteenth century they were capable of much gratitude and affection, as is shown by the story of Bjorn Einarson and the two native women whose lives he saved. Bjorn was a traveller wrecked upon the Greenland coast, on whom the Scandinavians had conferred the



A KAYAK.

sovereignty of Eriksfjord. One day he rescued two native women who had been overtaken by the rising tide. Not only did these sisters swear the most entire devotion to him, but from that moment the natives, who were skilful hunters, supplied him with all the game he needed. One of them thought it a high honour to take care of Bjorn's little child, and at last, when they failed to get



MODERN ESKIMOS.

leave to follow him to Iceland, both sisters flung themselves into the sea from the top of a rock.

Soon after the discovery of America by Columbus, expeditions were sent from England to find the north-west passage to the Indies, and ships started from Denmark to look for traces of the ancient Scandinavian Colonies in Greenland. Many of these search parties came across the Eskimos, and the intercourse was anything but friendly. Their meetings always ended in the murder or capture of the poor natives, who were carried away to be shown as curious animals in Europe. *La Peyère's Report of*

Greenland, written in 1647, describes "these savages" as "sullen and untameable by presents or kindness;" as "fat, sleek, and yellow-skinned." The report describes their dresses of seal-skin sewn with gut, their fish-skin shorts, their boats covered with leather, their paddles, spears, bows and arrows; and the large dogs that they use instead of horses. It says that the women wear no petticoats, but leggings, with big pockets, and that they paint their faces blue and yellow; adding that "they are



ESKIMO DRESS.

stinking, dirty, and ugly. Their tongue serves them for napkin and handkerchief. Where other men are ashamed, they have no shame." The story goes on to tell of the nine Eskimos who had been brought to Denmark by different Polar expeditions. The natives were lodged and cared for at the King's expense. Their food consisted of milk, butter, cheese, raw meat and raw fish, "because they could not bring themselves to like bread, nor roasted meat, nor wine either; but preferred long draughts of oil or whale fat." Poor Eskimos! They

often looked northwards, and once tried to escape in their skiffs; but a storm cast them ashore, and some peasants caught them and took them back to Copenhagen. After this attempt they were guarded with more care than ever, but they pined and died. Five lived to be seen by a Spanish Ambassador who visited Copenhagen. The Don was amazed at the skill the savages displayed in managing their frail canoes. The King of Denmark got up a regatta in his honour, at which a long boat with sixteen oars proved hardly a match for their kayaks. The ambassador sent each Eskimo a present of money, and each spent it in purchasing a Danish dress. Two or three even put plumes in their hats, went booted and spurred, and sent to tell the King that they wished to be troopers. But this light mood did not continue, and they soon relapsed into their usual melancholy. Two of them again tried to escape in their kayaks; one was caught, the other who got away was drowned at sea. The remaining three were kept more closely than ever, and survived their comrades ten or twelve years. They were kindly treated, but could never learn Danish, nor forget their own land. The last of them died of grief after the failure of his third attempt to return to Greenland in his kayak. He was thirty or forty miles out to sea before he was overtaken.

Hans Egede, the Danish missionary, settled in Greenland early in the eighteenth

century. It is to his "Relation," to the reports of the Guild of Commerce, and to such Arctic travellers as Dalager, Cranz, and Parry that we are most indebted for our knowledge of the Eskimos. Owing to the intercourse between the Danish colonists and native women the pure-bred Eskimos have grown rare in the vicinity of the settlements. On the east coast we can also trace the influence of the ancient Norse population, in the Scandinavian features of the natives. Thus the only quite pure Eskimo type is to be found on the west coast. Here we have a short, thick-set race, well-proportioned, but with very small hands and feet. The complexion is olive, the eyes small and rather oblique, the nose



AN OUMIAK.

flat, and the mouth wide, with beautiful teeth. The hair is black and stiff. In the Danish half-breeds, the mixture of native and Scandinavian blood sometimes produces a southern type which is really handsome. Eskimos prefer to marry these half European women, who they think better looking than the pure-bred natives. The children of mixed parentage retain the foreign features, but unless forced to learn a European language and adopt our usages they will lapse in a generation or two into Eskimo manners and customs.

Before European manufactures found their way to Greenland, the Eskimos wore



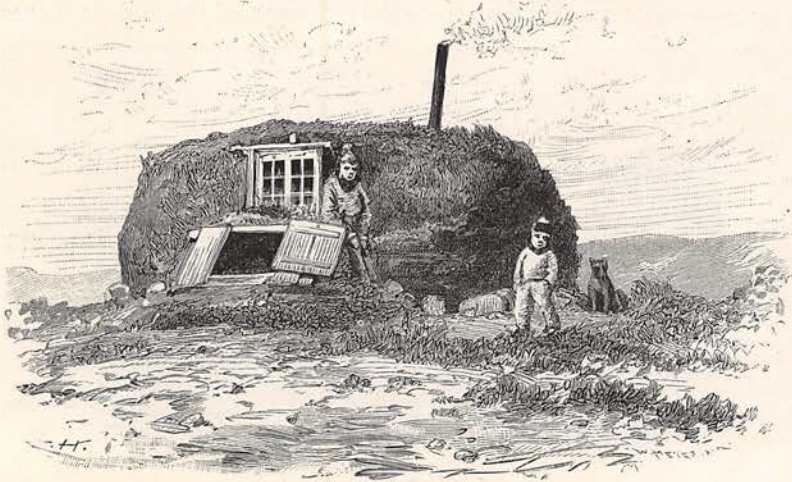
A KAYAK RACE.

nothing but furs, and even now shirts are a luxury enjoyed only by the rich. Seal and dog-skins are chiefly used on the east coast, bear and reindeer on the west. Men and women alike wear fur trousers, with the hair turned inside, and long boots. The men's jackets also of fur are close fitting like jerseys, but the

women make theirs large enough for them to carry a baby on their backs. In some parts they say the women put their children into the legs of their boots. In the fine season the girls take great pains with their toilet. Their hair is tied with coloured ribbons in a tight topknot. The gaiters and embroidered boots set off their pretty legs and feet to perfection, and their necks are adorned with broad collars set with pearls.

The Eskimos live entirely by hunting and fishing, depending, for both food and clothing, on what they catch. In their eyes all wild animals are eatable—but they

think the fruits of agriculture unclean, because they grow in manured ground. They also loathe pork, because pigs feed on refuse, and yet they relish entrails, and reindeer's stomach cooked with oil and berries. Here is the *menu* of a gala dinner in the good old times. Dried Herrings (the indispensable *entrée*). Roast Plovers. Whale's



A GREENLAND DWELLING.

Tail. Dried Salmon. Dried Reindeer. Dried Seal. Boiled Seal. Decayed Seal. Berries seasoned with oil, and flavoured with Reindeer's stomach. In a modern feast

coffee would be a necessary element. Coffee, sugar, and bread have become indispensable to Greenlanders who are within reach of trade with Europe. Danish ships bring cargoes of such luxuries as figs, raisins, and tobacco which are eagerly purchased by the natives—who have a passion for snuff, and mix powdered cryolite with it to increase the strength.

Happily the Guild of Commerce prohibits liquor traffic, but Europeans are permitted

to give spirits in some cases—long canoe voyages, for instance—and the Greenlanders have come to demand this occasional indulgence as a right. Still brandy exercises no evil influence on the population, and its abuse is practically unknown. In 1724 a Greenlander called Pok went to Copenhagen, and astonished his compatriots on his



A SNOW HUT.

return with the account of the marvels he had seen. He described the King's palace, the almshouses, hospital, madhouse, the splendour of the rich, the misery of the poor—and most strange of all the reason why people were poor, and naked, some because they were idle, others because "there are houses where they sell nothing but brandy, and where these people go and drink it. When they come out—they fight." "But," said one of his listeners, "you told me there was only one madhouse."

Lamps, hunting and fishing tackle, and a few cooking utensils form the whole of an Eskimo's possessions; their lamps are mostly shallow earthenware dishes hollowed out on one side with dried moss for a wick, and fed with oil. The lamp serves the double purpose of lighting and warming, for the Eskimos burn no wood fires, except out of doors in summer. Their few pots and pans used formerly to be all earthenware, but nowadays they are supplied with iron and copper vessels by the Europeans. The native weapons and boats admit of no improvement. They are the result of generations of labour, and have attained to absolute perfection. The Kayak is a beautiful little canoe, consisting of a framework of wood, covered with hide. It is pointed bow and stern and decked, except for the manhole in the middle. It is very light, and if well managed very safe, capable of going long distances in a heavy sea, with little exertion to the rower. The Oumiak is a larger boat, also made of hide, calculated to carry a number of persons, and a heavy freight. The construction of these boats and of the harpoons, bows, spears, &c., is extremely ingenious.

Several styles of building exist among the Eskimos. The snow huts are merely circular erections, easily built, and containing no interior fittings but a snow bench, covered with hides. Such a hut is easily completed in two or three hours, and one needle covers the cost of erection. The commonest form of Eskimo house however is about six feet high and twelve wide, the walls are of large stones, and turf, the roof thatched with brushwood, filled in with clods of earth. The length varies from twenty to eighty feet, according to the number of the families that inhabit it. The roof is supported on pillars, which divide the house into compartments. A bed six feet wide, and two high runs the whole length of the wall. Hides stretching across it from each pillar mark each family's portion. Here the inhabitants sleep all together by night, and sit by day; the husband on the edge with his legs dangling, and the wife crouching behind. By each pillar is a separate family hearth, built of flat stones, over which are hung two lamps—with a wooden dish to catch the dripping oil. One large pot to each hearth suffices for cooking purposes. In winter time, when all the lamps are alight, and the hut crowded, the heat is almost intolerable, especially as there is no outlet for the vitiated vapour, except the long low tunnel, which serves as a door. The windows being covered by fish skins admit light, but no air. Men and women have to strip off their clothes, in this atmosphere, and wear only short breeches, the women's being very prettily trimmed with feathers—Europeans are driven out of these huts by the smell of half tanned leather, and half cooked putrid meat, but Eskimos find it delicious, and object to what we call sweet scents. One old woman being made to smell lavender water sneezed violently, and called it "Mamaitpok" (very unpleasant).

The Eskimos have no domestic animals except the dogs who draw their sledges. They are like the Lapland dogs, having sharp noses, thick coats, and bushy tails: like their Samoyede relatives they cannot bark. One who was brought to Europe as a puppy, tried hard to bark like the dogs he associated with, but failed to do more than howl dismally. They are trained exclusively for sledge work. The team consists of six or eight harnessed abreast; the driver uses a short-handled whip with a long lash, which can deal terrible blows, when skilfully used. The leading dog keeps the others up to their work, and will punish a lazy one severely. In summer the poor beasts are turned out to shift for themselves—but in winter they are well fed and cared for. When the snow is frozen hard, the Eskimos protect their dogs' feet from the sharp ridges by putting them in little bags.

Accounts differ widely as to Eskimo honesty. Some travellers call them thieves and rogues, while others praise their uprightness. In reality most Eskimos are extremely honest, never stealing the smallest trifle from their own people. The doors of their dwellings have no locks; and all the property they do not take with them to their summer camps is left unguarded in the winter quarters. One Greenlander would never dream of robbing another or a foreigner whom he knew and respected. But such Europeans as do not speak their language, and show themselves rude, quarrelsome, and immoral, are considered lawful prey, and pillaged without scruple.

The Eskimos' code of honour may be partly attributed to the sort of communism which exists amongst them. Each member of a family has next to no private possessions.

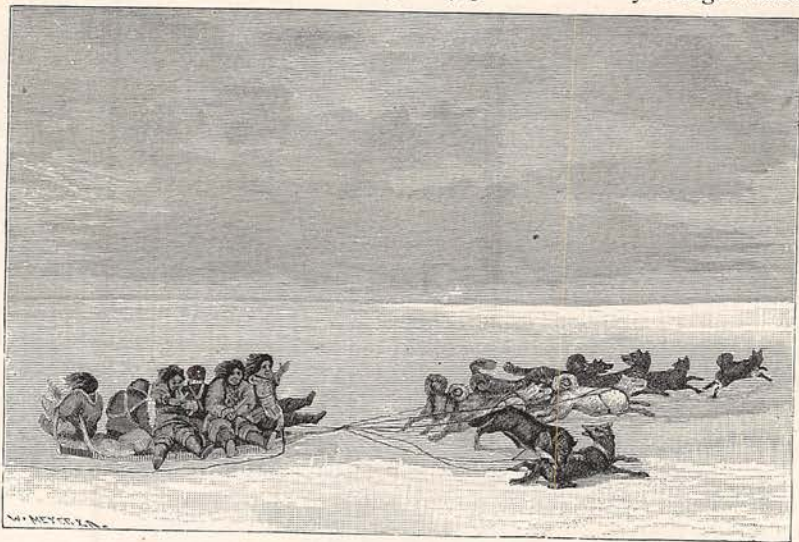


AN ESKIMO DOG.

The husband has his kayak, hunting and fishing tackle; the wife her clothes, kitchen utensils, needles and thread. A native never lends his clothes or weapons, but if he owns more sets than one they are common property. The oumiak, the summer tent, the game, and other spoils of the fine season, belong to the family collectively, which, besides the husband, wife, and children includes several adopted members. Here there is neither master nor servant, the chief of the family exercises a mild supremacy, but domestic authority in our sense is unknown. The greater part of the winter's fish harvest is shared equally by the whole settlement. Even the hero of some hunting exploit gets no larger portion of the prey than others; but he has the advantage of hearing his praises sung at the feast

which always follows a successful expedition. Perfect concord reigns in a hut occupied by several families. Such are the pacific habits of the Eskimos that their language hardly contains an abusive epithet, order and tranquillity prevail in every village. Such peace and quietness would be found in few so-called civilized communities. Yet here there are no laws, and no police.

Good health and skill in hunting and fishing make an Eskimo prosperous. The list of an Arctic millionaire's worldly goods proves that much is not required for wealth. This rich man owned a stone house, covering four-



SLEDGING.

teen square yards, in which he lived with his wife, four children, his brother and sister-in-law, a sister and a brother's widow with five children, fifteen persons in all. Moreover he possessed an oumiak, a tent, an iron stove, two guns, a copper

kettle, two iron and twelve earthenware pots, a kayak with all its fittings, a tool box (hatchet, saw, file, and plane), a coat of reindeer skin, and a second of birds' skins. His brother and son had each their kayaks, and every member of the household had plenty of clothes.

The Eskimos are a heedless race, and so soon as they have sufficient food and no occasion to hunt, they give themselves up to good cheer and the pleasures of society. They pay each other visits, chatter morning, noon, and night, and arrange balls, carouses, and athletic sports. At these parties they retail the latest scandals, and discuss the affairs of the nation, but grotesque dances and songs are the chief diversion. Eskimos have no musical instrument but the drum, or rather tambourine, but they have good voices, and easily pick up European tunes, for which they compose words, usually satires, on current events, or improvisations in praise of their own hunting exploits. If one man has a grudge against another he composes a song about his



VILLAGERS.

injuries, which he performs at one of these festivals. The defendant must then reply in another song, after which the audience pronounce sentence, and the parties are reconciled. An entertainment of this kind lasts all night. As soon as one native has done dancing and singing another takes the drum and tries to outdo him, and they amuse themselves with such zeal, that they often remain eight or ten days without sleep. Though they have little conscience in the matter, the Eskimos generally behave decently at these festivals, and in their houses, because they say, "The missionaries make such a fuss about it."

Greenlanders have no special marriage ceremony, except that the bride must be carried off by craft or pretended violence. The bridegroom either performs this feat himself, or gets a friend to do it for him. The match is usually arranged by the parents beforehand, often while the pair are still children. Etiquette requires the bride to get a few knocks and rents in her garments. She must also appear for some time with dishevelled hair, as if mournful and weary of life, and make several attempts to escape. To prevent his fair lady's flight when she tried it too often, or to furnish her with a



AN ESKIMO BOY.

pretext for resignation, the husband had formerly the right to make notches in the soles of her feet; he was then sure that his wife would not run away till the wound was healed. A girl brings nothing for her dowry but a few clothes, a knife, and a lamp—the bridegroom supplies a bed, a kettle, and a pitcher—and the house is set up. Sometimes the couple separate a year or six months after marriage. In this case the husband walks off one night without telling his wife, who returns quite gaily to her parents next morning. Afterwards, if the ex-husband goes near her home, she loves to show herself, decked out in her best clothes. Sometimes too a young woman will leave her husband, notably if she has taken a dislike to one of her female neighbours. But after the birth of a boy the union is never dissolved, and usually

married couples live in perfect harmony. The husband always consults his wife before coming to any important decision, and they hardly ever quarrel.

Most Eskimos have only one wife, but it is considered a mark of superiority to be able to maintain three or four, and a tribe of children. One native is known to have presided over a harem of twelve wives. Before the arrival of missionaries jealousy was unknown in these establishments, but the first precept native women attended to was that a man might only have one wife. It was a most embarrassing task for the missionaries to organize the family affairs of new converts who possessed harems.

Eskimos show great affection for their children, who enjoy complete liberty, and are never scolded or whipped; the parents regard our venerable birch as absolutely barbarous. In spite of a system of education so contrary to all rule and precedent, a good conduct medal might be awarded to all Eskimo children over eight or nine, though, it is true, they are scarcely familiar with certain civilized usages, and are apt to mistake their fingers for forks, and knives for spoons. They play, like other children, with bows and arrows, balls, and skipping-ropes; they scramble on the rocks, steal birds' nests, and kill beasts. Paul



A YOUNG HUNTER.

Egede's sons were great favourites with the natives, and leaders of the youthful games. The little Eskimos would wait impatiently till Paul and Nils (or as they called them, Pavia and Nese) had done their lessons, and reproach them for wasting so much time singing psalms. Still they were the butts of native wit. The Greenland imps could never cease mocking at Pavia's nose, which seemed to them immeasurably long. Egede, wishing to learn the declension of Eskimo verbs, once asked his sons to make their friends conjugate "neglipok," the equivalent of "amo." The playmates took to it eagerly at first, but they soon tired of grammar, and teased Paul and Nils long after, repeating the verb neglipok every time they saw them, in all its moods and tenses.

Of course the children's favourite sport is learning to handle the weapons they will one day get their living by. When they are quite little, the parents give their boys harpoons, arrows, and kayaks suited to their size; and their girls small hides to tan and stitch. From babyhood they teach them to make and use hunting and fishing tackle, above all to manage kayak paddles, heavy and dangerous for unpractised hands. The young hunter's progress is watched with the liveliest interest by the whole family. When he brings home his first seal, they give a grand feast in his honour. The seal is eaten as a special delicacy, and the hunter's praises are sung at the revels. The boy grows up to manhood, builds his house, marries, and has children. He hunts, provides for the family—one cannot say in the sweat of his brow, for it is cold he has to face—and lives careless of the morrow, carousing at times, or fasting patiently when sickness threatens. In after years he stoops and dies, and finally is buried under a cairn of stones by the shore, when his grave is not in the icy waves of the sea. The girls, while they are little, have an idle time, learning nothing but how to chatter, sing, and dance. But from fourteen or so, they must help their mothers, and share the labours of a Greenland woman, cooking game, and preparing leather. They soon acquire taste and dexterity in tanning and stitching hides, and turn them to account in making those brilliant costumes they delight to shine in. A Greenland beauty, with her brown complexion and full cheeks, looks pretty enough in gala dress—a clinging garment of lovely seal-skin, high boots, and pearl necklaces twisted round her neck and hair. But the best part of her is the good-humoured air, and a coquettishness which astonishes one in an Eskimo. All that soon changes, sad to say. Some gallant Nimrod secures this fair prize. Once mother of a family, she neglects her appearance. Her straight figure bends under the weight of the baby on her back, from being plump she grows thin. Her steps totter, the hair falls off her temples, her teeth are worn out with chewing hides for tanning—in short, she takes no care of herself. Girls, very pretty in their first freshness, are ugly, dirty, and repulsive after marriage. No wonder that Frobisher's crew, in their voyage to the Meta Incognita, pulled off an old Eskimo woman's boots to see if she had hoofs, and was the devil's dam.



A GREENLAND BEAUTY.

When a friend or relation dies, the Eskimos, women especially, make a great show of grief. For half an hour together they weep and wail, then after a moment's silence, begin laughing and chattering again. The process is repeated each time a visitor comes to condole. A spectator meanwhile makes a funeral oration, extolling the virtues of the deceased, and making great lamentations, after which the whole party sit down to eat and drink. Greenland Eskimos are buried in their best array.

Beside the corpse is laid all the dead person is supposed to need in the next world. A man has his spear, bow and arrows: a woman, needles and thread, a leather scraper, and a bucket; a child its toys, and a dog's head to guide it beyond the grave. Some tombs contain torches and models of kayaks. In one I found several rusty nails, probably the dead man's greatest treasures; in another several pairs of wooden snow spectacles: the deceased had doubtless weak eyes, and was afraid of the dazzling snowfields in the regions of the blest. The grave is usually a simple ditch, surmounted by a cairn of stones.

Several Eskimo customs, their mode of burial especially, indicate a vague conception of a future life. In the next world, they think, the brave hunter will lead a life analogous to that he lived on earth; only he will have less hardships to endure, and will find seal's flesh, and other Greenland delicacies in abundance. But of religion, properly speaking, the Eskimos have little or nothing. Their legends merely assign various offices to the great spirit Tornasuk (who is made by the missionaries to do duty as devil), while they people air, and earth, and sea, with spirits less mighty. They evince the utmost tolerance, not to say indifference about religious matters. One Greenland who believes in Tornasuk will let others ridicule his faith without protesting, and one who does not believe will listen unmoved to the praises of the mighty



A GREENLANDER'S GRAVE.

spirit. Once when Nils Egede laughed at some natives for telling him they had killed a white bear, "so old that he had ice on his back that never melted," they exclaimed: "What—we believe what you tell us! How can you mock at our stories?" They thought that Egede's incredulity was not fair play.

Though not on the whole a superstitious people Eskimos are apt to attribute their misfortunes to the "Ilisetsok," as they call witches, and many a poor old crone has suffered in consequence. They have neither temples, shrines, nor idols, but the amulets they began by treating as toys and ornaments would probably have become fetishes, and certain of their usages, religious ceremonies, had it not been for the missionaries' intervention. One of their superstitions is that they believe the whale hunter will fail unless he puts on his best clothes, because whales like to be respected and detest the sight of dirty people. An amulet is fixed in the bow of the kayak, and a hare's claw tied to the harpoon. Meanwhile the women at home wash themselves, put out the lamps, and wait in silence. A Greenlander does not like to sell a seal on the day of

its capture. He always cuts off a scrap of every hide or piece of blubber he parts with, and prefers to consult some "Iliseetsook" before striking a bargain, propitiating the oracle with a few pins. In reindeer-hunting, the crows who follow the sledge must be appeased with scraps of meat.

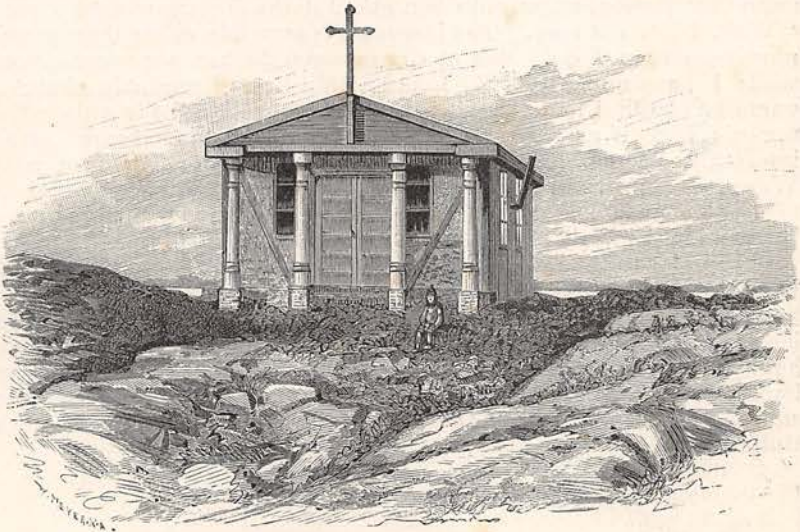
The office of priest does not exist in Greenland, but the Angekoks would most likely have assumed the dignity had they not been suppressed by the Danish missionaries. These angekoks or magicians, were far superior to all other Eskimos in morals and intelligence, and exercised a distinctly good influence though they confessed to having deceived foolish people with their sorceries; however, they were themselves to a great extent convinced of their magic powers. The art of the angekoks resembled that of the modern spiritualists. Like them they did their tricks in the dark, conversed with ghosts, and went long voyages through the sky or to the depths of earth and sea. An angekok would have himself bound hand and foot, and sit down on the floor in a dark hut. A moment afterwards he would have freed himself of the cords, and be playing the magic drum and uttering piercing shrieks. He then addressed to Tornasuk any question the audience wished to ask. Tornasuk, personated by an accomplice outside the hut, replied in weird and muffled tones.

An Eskimo once brought as a message to Paul Egede a stick on which was scratched a sort of V reversed. The sender had prudently given an explanation to the bearer. "If the Christian angekok does

not understand this symbol, I will tell him that I want a pair of breeches, but I need not say this, for he will understand." Another time, an angekok announced that his projected voyage to heaven had not quite succeeded; his soul had risen to celestial regions, but his body could not quit the earth.

A lady who had two husbands and practised magic with them, affirmed that she and her two accomplices had no dealings with the devil; but they could converse with ghosts. She said she had recently paid a visit to the mother of earth whom she found guarded by a troop of white bears, and had dined with her on flounders.

The angekoks often proved more than a match for their Christian opponents in argument, and the missionaries' zeal in suppressing them is comprehensible, though much to be regretted. When Christianity was first introduced, the natives made strong objections to several dogmas. The Eskimos asked Paul Egede why our Lord had not allowed them to receive Christianity sooner, for then their ancestors might have gone to heaven too. Another missionary having told a native that Christ cast the heathen and the wicked into hell-fire, the latter replied, "If God is so cruel as that, I don't care to go to heaven." Resisting all further attempts to convert him he added—"I don't understand a word of all that; and I am going fishing." The Eskimos regard original sin as an institution peculiar to the Kablunaks (Europeans), saying that they themselves being chiefly good people, will reach Paradise without difficulty. They always wonder how Adam and Eve could have been so silly as to let a serpent beguile them, and ask why God did not warn them of their danger. The Danish colonists were by no means so moderate as they should have been in their dealings with the angekoks. When ridicule and persuasion failed they were too apt to have recourse



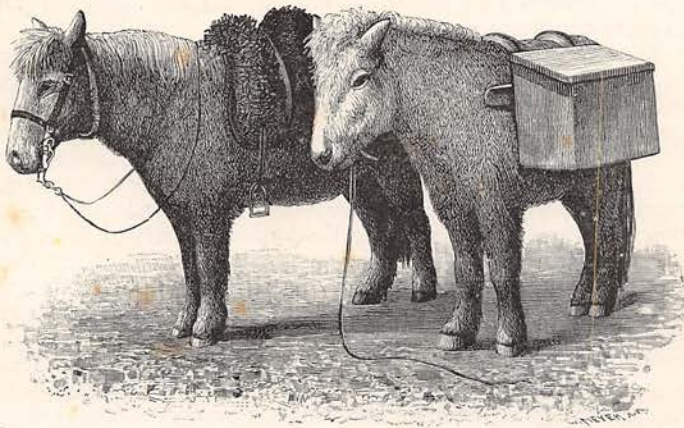
A GREENLAND CHURCH.

to blows. In fact, religious discussions backed up by arguments *ad hominem*, appear to have been the missionaries' favourite sport.

As all these anecdotes tend to show, the Eskimos are a simple-minded race, good-tempered, somewhat conceited, loving to be amused and to laugh at their neighbours. Their heedlessness often exposes them to severe suffering which they bear patiently and quickly forget. But amiable and pleasant as they are to each other, and to foreigners with whom they are intimate, there is a strange element of cruelty in them. They kill every creature they come across merely for sport, and have absolutely no pity for old age or infirmity. The old and sick are left helpless and comfortless, and hardly given needful food and clothing. Several instances are quoted, before the Danish settlement in Greenland, of cripples being buried alive or murdered by their relatives. True, this was sometimes done at the request of the victims themselves, who longed to have done with the sufferings of this mortal life.

All Eskimos, whether pure or half-breed, have an excellent opinion of themselves. The son of a Swedish cook and a Greenland squaw, who thought himself a very important person, answered when asked if the Governor were a greater man than he, "Well, I am not sure. The inspector is certainly richer than myself, and commands more men than I do. But at Copenhagen he has superiors whom he must obey; while I have no superior." Every skilful hunter probably shares this view, and if game be plentiful and the feast after the hunt gay he is satisfied with his fate, and regards himself as perfectly happy. The Greenlanders are certainly a clever and intelligent people, more susceptible of civilization than most natives of the New World, as is proved by the ease with which they learn to read and write.

Eskimos who have made no long voyages, believe their country to be the most beautiful in the world; and their race the most talented, most intelligent, most polished, very superior to the savage, cowardly Indians, and also to the avaricious, quarrelsome Kablunaks who crossed the seas in huge treasure-laden "oumiaks," none of whom can hunt even passably. Greenlanders still cling to this opinion. But their frequent intercourse with the Danes, and the reports of their friends who have been to Europe, have given them a notion of the superiority of European inventive genius, and the bad impression made by the whalers and convicts transported to Greenland, has been effaced by the devotion of the missionaries and the kindness of the officials of the Guild of Commerce.



ICELAND PONIES.