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ST. LAURENCE ISLAND.

Arctic Volcanoes—A Land of Lava and Craters—A Gently Scene in an Arctic Golgotha—The Work of a Famine.

STEAMER CORWIN.

St. Laurence Island, Alaska, July 3, 1881.

St. Laurence Island, the largest in Behring Sea, is situated at a distance of about 120 miles off the mouths of the Yukon, and 45 miles from the nearest point on the Coast of Siberia.

Extinct Arctic Volcanoes.

It is about 100 miles in length from east to west and 36 miles in average width; a dreary, cheerless looking mass of black lava, dotted with volcanoes, without a single tree, covered with snow, and rigidly bound in ocean ice for more than half the year. Inasmuch as it lies broadside to the way pursued by the great ice-sheet that once piled Behring Sea, it is traversed by numerous valleys and ridges and low gaps, some of which have been worn down nearly to the sea-level. Had the glaciation to which it has been subjected been carried on much longer, then, instead of this one large island, we should have had several smaller ones. Nearly all of the volcanic cones, with which the central portion of the island is in great part covered, are post-glacial in age and present well formed craters but little weathered as yet.
written, July 3, 1881

Pub. Aug. 15

the surface of the low grounds in the glacial
pups as well as the flat table-lands are covered
with wet spongy tundra of mosses and lichens,
with patches of blooming heathworts and dwarf
willows, and grasses and herbs, diversified here
and there by outer spots stained with saxifrages,
axillaries, daisy-like primulas, anemones, herbs,
etc., forming gardens with a luxuriance and
brightness of color, little to be hoped for in so
cold and dreary looking a region.

INHABITANTS OF THE ISLAND—SNAKES AND FISH OR

PARKING SIE.

Three years ago there were about 1,500 inhab-
tants on the island, chiefly Esquimaux, living in
five villages located around the shores and set- 
ting on the seals, Walruses, whales and water fowl
that abound here. Now there of only about
people, most of them in one village on the south-
west end of the island, nearly two-thirds of the
population having died of starvation during the
winter of 1878-79. In seven of the villages not
a single soul is left alive. As the largest village
is the northwest end of the island, which suf-
fered least, 200 out of 600 died. All the one on
the southeast and only fifteen out of about 20
survived. There are a few survivors also, of
the villages on the east end of the island.

A VILLAGE OF THE DEAD

After landing our interpreter at Marcus Bay
we steered for St. Michael's and in passing along
the north side of this island we stopped an hour
or so this morning at one of the smallest of the
dead villages. Mr. Nelson went ashore and ob-
tained a lot of skulls and specimens of one sort
and another for the Smithsonian Institute.

ABANDONED GOLOMUL

A few miles farther we anchored before a
larger village situated about half way between
the east and west ends of the island, which I
visited in company with Mr. Nelson and the Cap-
tain and surgeon. We found large caches held
secure on the beach with bones of all kinds
from the rocks and rubbish heaps

withina few yards of the doors. The house was
indestructibly clean and dense, though in a
ruin; we found all sorts of household supplies in
the yard, dishes were swimming and dying about
in happy life, the pueri red, dead, standing white,
against the snow, the blooming hydrangeas were
back to the sap-cold volcanoes, and the wild, azur-
ese sky bent slowly over all, nature intensely
mourned, and sweet, the village lying in the frount
and most startling death. The diminutive bodies
with cots on top, or white, blooming she-
tempered forks, the row lying matted with
irish-brown cobwebs where they were cut
out by their surviving relatives while they yet
sought strength to carry them. In the south-
est corner of the island, the few perch were found in ten, lying evenly side by side
beneath their rotating needles, greyish, yellow skull, seen opening out there and there, and a
heap of children in a corner, laid there or dead.
After there was no one strong enough to carry
them through the narrow under-ground passage
to the door. Thirty were found in one house,
about a tenth of them placed like deadwood in a cor-
ner, the other half in bed, seeming as if they had
met their fate with tranquillity. Botanically
these are the most rich and lovely Viking gardens
ripened the whole may have been, as some of the
leaves had fallen from the trees, confirming them that had
not been in use. Nor, although their survivors
and neighbors all say that the sole cause of their death, could there have met with
man in the latter end, became a considera-
table material of warms rawable and skins of
other animals were found in the huts, which
would have sustained life at a week or two

The game all told to show that the winter of
1878-79, as from whatever cause, one of great
severity, fee as these people never lay off no
considerably in the country, and the few huts seen as alive,
a few in bed or turned in the dead was old and wiggled,
cams were carried to the ordinary distress ground
from a corner of the main to a mile from the vil-
lege. Then, the survivors became weaker and
carried them a shorter distance, 3 made no effort
to mark their positions or by their effects benec-
them. At length the bodies were only dragged
to the doors of the huts, or laid in a corner, and the last survivors laid down in despair with
making any hard struggle to prolong their
wretched lives.

We went into two Golgothas with hearty
enthusiasm, gathering the thin white harvest of
stills passed before them and throwing them in
hills like a boy gathering pumpkins. He brought
hastily a hundred on board, which will be stripped
with specimens of some arane, weapons, utensils,
etc., in the Alaska Commercial Company's
steamer St. Paul.

where were the survivors

We also landed at the village on the southwest
edge of the island and interviewed the fifteen
survivors. When we inquired where the other
people belonging to the village were one of the
group, who speaks a few words of English, an-
swered with a happy, heedless smile, "All
mocky;" "All gone;" "Dear, dead; all dear.
Then he led us a few yards back of his hut and
pointed to twelve or fourteen skeletons,
where lay the bodies of the last to die, and every
almost a mercy" (or voice, "Dead, yes, all
ten, all dead, all mocky, All gone," "Almost," "Almost
turned here, and unless some aid be extended by the
government which claims these people, in a few
years most of them will vanish from the face of the earth, for owing almost
out of the count, the few articles of food, cloth-
ing, guns, etc., furnished by the traders, exert a
degrading influence, making them less self-reli-
ant, and less skilled as hunters. They seem
castly susceptible of civilization, and well de-
serve the attention of the Government.

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