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John Muir

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AT METCHIGMNE BAY.

Dr. JAMES WILSON,
Near the Mouth of Plover Bay.
On the west side of Behring Sea.
June 27, 1881.

After leaving St. Michael's, on the evening of the 6th, we crossed behing Sea to Plover Bay to fill our coal-bunkers from a pile belonging to his Majesty the Czar of Russia, arriving there early on the morning of the 7th, having been detained at St. Lawrence Island by a gale from the north. While the ship was being cooked, I climbed the east wall of the fort three or four miles above the town, where it is about 1,300 feet above the level of the sea, and the day was clear, I obtained capital views of the mountains on both sides. I then strolled about, examining various phenomena which, during the Glacial period, joined their streams through the magnificent channel into Behring Sea.

In the ordinary course of events, when the glacier that is now called Plover Bay was in its prime, it was about thirty miles long and from 50 to 60 miles in width at the widest portion of the trunk and from 600 to 700 deep. If it had not been free main fringes, which, as the trunk melted toward the close of the ice period, became independent glaciers, and those again were melted into perhaps seventy-five or more small residual glaciers from less than a mile to several miles in length, all of which, as far as I could see, have at length vanished, though some wasting remains may still linger in the highest and best-protected mountains above the head of the fjord. The mountains hereabouts, in the form of the Norwegian mountains, are composed of solid rock, and are beyond the range of the glaciers, and appear in general, as those of the high Sierra Nevada, where the rock in least wasting flows with tendrils in drift gorges and stream beds and finally compiles huge cones to the sea-level, while there is but little deposit of soil snow on the highest peaks and ridges, so that, there being no warm, sunny face of granite slopes and footslopes, no varying belt of glaciers, the mountains are whole and seem to be the abode of ancient mountains, till there are spots here and there, where the snow is melted, and are already covered with about 100 spruces or fir trees in full boom; telephone, cottages, trunks, several aspects of arctic, and sunny mesas, mountains, the peaks, ridges, ledges, and sunlit gardens, but too small and thinly planted to show at a distance of more than a few yards, while trees are wanting.

On our way north to-day we stopped a few minutes opposite a small native settlement, six or eight miles to the southeast of the mouth of Metchigmne Bay, in search of Omitsche, the rich reindeer-keeper, whom we had met north of the coast two weeks ago, and who had promised to have a lot of deer sails ready for salt we would call at his village.

A SAD LOOKING STORY.

Some of the natives came off to the steamer to trade, who informed us that only lived some distance up the bay that we had just passed, and one of them who speaks a little English, informed us that we had not brought back Oxenporth's son, and took him in; he was his brother, and his mother was crying about him last night, fearing that he would not come back. We informed him that he was crazy and had tried to kill himself, but that he was now at Plover Bay with one of his friends and would probably be home soon. This young Omitsche, whom we had taken aboard at St. Lawrence Bay, thinking that he might be useful as an interpreter, in a son of the reindeer man and belongs to the Triangle tribe. We soon came to see that he had a troublesome disposition, the experience of which had made the interpreter very particular of his manners wherever we went. He would not stop, he would see some form of insanity in him; it would come to the door of the cabin and warn the captain against the people of every village that we were approaching as likely to kill us, and then he would bite himself below deck or climb for greater safety into the rigging. On the 10th, when we were near Anchorage on St. Lawrence Island, he offered his rifle, which he painted bright, to one of the officers, saying that he would not touch it, he had seen once to the same effect to the captain, but came to the cabin door and murdered after being unable to thrust them back. We ordered the gun silenced, and the crew took care of the gun for a dock weapon. He thought they would do well with it, he said, and that his father would give him some some way to make a beginning, which he would take over in some manner, and thus they would get plenty of good meat to eat on the river, and without much labor, until they became a war-like like his father's, so that nobody could count them. In three or four hours after this he threw himself off board, but was picked up and brought on deck. Some of the sailors stripped off his clothes, and then the discovery was made that he was strangling himself into the sea. The poor fellow was immediately hauled up, and the surgeon dressed his wound and gave him an opinion that it would prove fatal. It was doing well, however, when we left him, and is likely to recover. The Plover Bay address in commenting on the affair, remarked that the St. Lawrence people were bad, quarrelsome, etc., and always kept themselves in some sort of trouble.

Having procured a guide from among the natives that came aboard here, we ascended to a village on Omentsche's, but found the bay full of ice, and were compelled to go on without our winter supply of deer skins. However, it was to be affecting to them on the east coast.
There is quite a large Tchucht settlement near the mouth of the bay, on the north side. Seven large canoes loads of the population came aboard, making quite a show on our little ship. They are the worst looking lot of Siberian natives that I have yet seen, though there are some fine, tall, manly fellows amongst them. Mr. Nelson, a naturalist, and zealous collector for the Smithsonian Institution, who joined us at St. Michael's, photographed a group of the most villainous of the men, and two of the women whose arms were elaborately tattooed up to the shoulders. Their faces were a curious study while they were trying to keep still under circumstances so extraordinary.

The glaciation of the coast here is recorded in very telling characters, the movement of the ice having been in a south-southwest direction, nearly.

The weather is delightful, clear sunshine, only a few feathery wisps of cloud in the west, and the water still as a mill pond.

John Murr.