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IN PLOVER BAY.

Reindeer Farming on the Arctic Shores of Siberia.

Graphics Description of Reindeer Farmers and their Flocks.

Glacial Grooves—Desolate Appearance of the Land.

[Special Correspondence of the Bulletin.]

CHAS. CORWIN.

Plover Bay, Siberia, August 26, 1881.

This morning a party from the ship went to the head of the bay under the guidance of a pair of Tchuruchchins to see a flock of reindeer that they told us was there. The distance, we found, is about eighteen miles from the lower harbor, where the Corwin is at anchor. The day was fine and we enjoyed the sail very much, chimney-rapidly along in the steam launch over smooth water, past the huge ice-sculptured headlands and mountains, forming the walls, and the deep canons and valleys between them, sweeping back to clusters of glacial fountains, the naturalist making despairing efforts now and then to obtain specimens of rare anka, petrels, ducks, etc., which were flying and swimming about us in great abundance, making lively pleasure of happy, celestial life.

Desolate Appearance of the Land.

The rocks bounding the bay, though beautiful in their combinations and combinations of curves and peaks, following and touching delicately, and rising in bold, picturesque groups, are, nevertheless, intensely desolate-looking for want of trees, shrubs or vegetation dense enough to give color to looking quantiles visible at a distance. Even the valleys opening back from the water here and there, are mostly bare as seen to the distance of a mile or two, and have only faint images of green derived from dwarf willows, and sedges, and bent grasses creeping low among stones. Yet here, or in the larger valleys adjacent, where the main tributary glaciers came into the Plover Bay trunk, and others to the northeastward, lie corks of reindeer,find sustenance, wild as far as tame, together with a few wild sheep and bears.

Reindeer Farmers.

On the terminal moraine of the ancient glacier that formed the first main tributary of the Plover Bay glacier, some four miles from the extreme head of the bay, we noticed two small skin-covered huts, which our guides informed us belonged to the reindeer people we were seeking, and that we should certainly find them at home, because their flock was only a little one and found plenty of weeds and moss to eat in the valleys back of them without going far away, as the people had no open big docks. At two days distance, they said, where the valleys are wide and green, with plenty to eat, there is a big flock belonging to one of their friends, so big they cover all the ground themselves, but the flock we were to see was only a little flock, and their owner was not a rich man.

As we approached the shore a hundred yards or so from the huts, a young man came running to meet us, bounding over the moraine, with sky strength as if his limbs had been trained on the mountains for many a year, until running had become a pleasant indulgence. He was presently joined by three others, who gazed and smiled curiously at the steam-launch and at our party, wondering expectantly, when the interpreter had told our object, why we should come so far and seem so eager to see their deer. Our guides, who of course, understood their prejudices and superstitions, told them that we wanted a big, fat, deer to eat, and that we would pay them well for it—bears, lead, powder, caps, shot, calico, knives, etc., told off in tempting order but they said they had none to sell, and it required half an hour of cautious negotiation to get them over their superstitious alarms and consent to sell the carcass of one pronely we would leave the skin, which they said they wanted to keep for winter garments. Then two young men, fast, springy, elastic fellows, threw off their upper parkas, tied their handkerchiefencumbered mocassins firmly across the instep and around the ankles, poled their long Russian spars, which they said were always carried in case they should meet a bear or wolf, and away they sped after the flock up a long, wide glacial valley along the bank of a stream, bounding lightly from rock to rock in easy slope, and across soft bits of smoked and rough edgy meadow with hour-bounding undulating strides. Their gait, as far as we could see, was steadily maintained and admirably like and strong and graceful in their small feet and ankles and round tapered shanks showing to fine advantage in their short, short, dashing, and graceful as they went speeding over the ground. Like trained racers glorying in their strength. We watched them through field-glasses until they were about three miles away, during which time they did not appear to slacken their pace a single moment. They were gone about three hours, so that the flock must have been at least six or seven miles from the huts.
In the meantime we sit luncheon and strolled about the neighborhood looking at the plants, the views down the bay, and at the interior of the huts, etc., and chatted with the Tschu-chis about their flock, the wild sheep on the mountains, the wild reindeer, bears, and wolves, etc. We found the family to consist of father, mother, a grown daughter, and the boys that were after the deer. The old folks were evidently contented and happy in their safe retreat among the hills, with a sure support from their precipice deck. And they were proud of their red-checked girl and two strapping boys, as well they might be; for they seemed in happy and rosy and point a group of children as ever gladdened, the heart of Tschuckihi parents. The boys appeared to be part owners of everything about the house, as well as of the deer, for in looking through the huts we saw a few curious odds and ends that we offered to purchase, but were told, in most cases, that they could not sell them until the boys came back.

A. PROVIDENT FLOCK.

Their huts are like all we have seen belonging to the Tschuckihi as far north and west as we have been—a balloon frame of snow poles drawn on two sides so that they might be bent outward, the points coming together not in the middle, but a little to one side away from the direction of the prevailing wind, which gives them a certain hemisphere appearance. This frame is covered with skins of the wairus, if it can be got; if not, then with seal or deer skins. No great pains are taken to keep them rain-proof, so that in wet weather they are continually damp or, mushy. But there is not much rain in the Arctic region, and the deer, skin poles or dressing-room huts inside are kept perfectly dry and snug, whereas the state of the little outer tent may change to be. The two tents at this place are smaller and more likely a few tanked than common. The skin covering is composed of different kinds of skins, perhaps 1,000 skin covered together, some of it with the hair on, as it made up of small scraps, the whole appearing as one colossal patchwork. The load of the family seemed to be in a kind of a little column of them, for he explained with the air of a man making an apology, that he did not construct them; they formerly belonged to some one else, and that soon after he came to take possession of them was torn open by a hungry bear that went in and frightened his wife and daughter and stole some grease.

A. PROVIDENT BARK.

The Tschuckihi seem to be a good-natured, lively, chatty, brave and polite people, fond of a joke, and, as far as I have seen, fair in their dealings as any people, savage or civilized. They are not savages, however, by any means; but sturdy, industrious workers, looking well ahead, providing for the future, and consequently seldom in want, save what at long intervals disease or other calamities overtake their flocks, or exceptionally severe seasons prevent their obtaining the ordinary supply of seals, bears, whales, whales, bears, etc., on which the sedentary Tschuckihi chiefly depend. The sedentary and reindeer Tschuckihi are the same people, and are said to differ in a marked degree both as to the following characteristics and language from the neighboring tribes, as they certainly do from the Esquimaux. Many of them have light complexion, hooked or squinting noses, tall, stout, well-knit frames, small feet and hands, and are not, especially the men, so thick-set, short-necked or dull-faced as the Esquimaux.

After watching impatiently for some time, the reindeer came in sight, about a hundred and fifty of them, driven greatly without any of that noisy shouting and worrying that is heard in driving the domestic animals in civilized countries. We left the huts and went to meet them up the stream bank along three-quarters of a mile, led by the owner and his wife and daughter, who carried a knife and tin cup and vened to save the blood and the entrails, which stirred a trait of grim associations that greatly marred the beauty of the picture.

A. REINDEER BLOOD.

I was afraid from what I knew of the habits of sheep, and cattle, and horses that a sight of strangers would stampede the flock when we met, but of this, as it proved, there was not the slightest danger; for of all the familiar tame animals man has tamed, the reindeer is the laziest. They can hardly be said to be domesticated, since they are not shut in around the huts, or put under shelter either winter or summer. On they came, while we gained energy at the novel sight—a thousand of antlers, big and little, old and young, led by the strongest, holding their horns low lest of the time, as it considerable of the fact that they were carrying very big, branching horn's a structure falling behind, and then to call a group of male reindeer, of which the mountains, rosy cheeks, rosy cheeks, were covered with the beauty of the picture.

A. REINDEER BLOCK.

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