

Reindeer Farming in the Arctic Regions.

John Muir, the geologist, who accompanied the Corwin exploring expedition, writes to the San Francisco Bulletin:

"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 guides informed us belonged to the reindeer people we were seeking. As we approached the shore, a hundred yards or so from the huts, a young man came running to meet us. He was presently joined by three others, who gazed and smiled curiously at the steam-launch and at our party, wondering suspiciously, 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—tobacco, 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 suspicions and alarms and consent to sell the carcass of one provided we would leave the skin, which they said they wanted to keep for winter garments. Then two young men, fine, strapping, elastic fellows, threw off their upper parkies, tied their handsomely-embroidered mocassins firmly across the instep and around the ankle, poised their long Russian spears, which they said they always carried in case they should meet a bear or wolf, and away they sped after the flock up a long, wide glacier valley along the bank of a stream.

"In the meantime we ate 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 Tschuckkis 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 precious flock. And they were proud of their red-cheeked girl and two strapping boys, as well they might be; for they seemed as healthy and rosy and robust a group of children as ever gladdened the heart of Tschuckki parents.

"The Tschuckkis 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 dealing as any people, savage or civilized. They are not savage, however, by any means, but steady, industrious workers, looking well ahead, providing for the future, and consequently seldom in want, save when at long intervals disease or other calamities overtake their flocks, or exceptionally severe seasons prevent their obtaining the ordinary supplies of seals, fish, walrus, bears, etc., on which the sedentary Tschuckkis chiefly depend. The sedentary and reindeer Tschuckkis are the same people, and are said to differ in a marked degree both as to physical characteristics and language from the neighboring tribes, as they certainly do from the Esquimaux. Many of them have light complexions, hooked or aquiline noses, tall, sinewy, well-knit frames, small feet and hands, and are not, especially the men, so thick-set, short-necked or flat-faced as the Esquimaux.

"After watching impatiently for some time the reindeer came in sight, about a hundred and fifty of them, driven gently 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 about three-quarters of a mile, led by the owner and his wife and daughter, who carried a knife and tin cup and vessels to save the blood and the entrails, which stirred a train of grim associations that greatly marred the beauty of the picture.

"I was afraid, from what I knew of the habits of sheep, and cattle and horses, that the 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 gathered about him, the reindeer is the tamest. They can hardly be said to be domesticated, since they are not shut in around the huts, nor put under shelter winter or summer. On they came, while we gazed eagerly at the novel sight—a thicket of antlers, big and little, old and young, led by the strongest, holding their heads low most of the time, as if conscious of the fact that they were carrying very big, branching horns; a straggler falling behind now and then to curl a choice mouthful of willow or dainty, gray lichen, then making haste to join the flock again. They waded across the creek, and came straight toward us up the sloping bank where we were waiting, nearer, nearer, until we could see their eyes, their smooth, round limbs, the velvet on their horns, until within five or six yards of us, the drivers saying scarce a word, and the owner in front looking at them as they came up, without making any call or movement to attract them. After giving us the benefit of their magnificent eyes and sweet breath they began to feed off—back up the valley—when the boys who had been loitering on the stream-side to catch a salmon trout or two went round them and drove them back to us. Then they stopped feeding and began to chew the cud and lie down, with eyes partly closed and dreamy-looking, as if profoundly comfortable, we strangers causing them not the

slightest alarm while standing nearly within touching distance of them. Cows in a barnyard, milked and petted every day, are not so gentle. Yet these beautiful animals are allowed to feed at will, without herding to any great extent. They seem as smooth and clean and glossy as if they were wild. Taming does not seem to have injured them in any way. I saw no mark of man upon them.

"After walking through the midst of the flock, the boys selected a rather small specimen to be killed. One caught it by the hind leg, just as sheep are caught, and dragged it backward out of the flock; then the other boy took it by the horns and led it away a few yards from the flock, no notice being taken of its struggles by its companions, nor was any tendency to take fright observed, as would, under the circumstances, have been shown by any of the common domestic animals. The mother alone looked after it eagerly, and further manifested her concern and affection by trying to follow it and uttering a low, grunting sound.

"After it was slain they laid it on its side; one of the women brought forward a branch of willow about a foot long with the green leaves on it and put under the animal's head, then she threw four or five handfuls of the blood from the knife wound back of the shoulder out over the ground to the southward, making me get out of the way, as if this distinction were the only proper one. Then she took a cupful of water and poured a little on its mouth and tail and on the wound. While this ceremony was being performed all the family was serious-looking; but as soon as it was over they began to laugh and chat as before. The flock all the time of the killing and dressing were tranquilly chewing their cud, not noticing the smell of the blood even, which makes cattle so frantic.

"One of our party was anxious to procure a young one alive to take home with him, but they would not sell one alive at any price. When we inquired the reason they said that if they should part with one all the rest of the flock would die, and the same thing would happen if they were to part with the head of one. This they excitedly declared was true, for they had seen it proved many times, though white men did not understand it and always laughed about it. When we indicated a very large buck and inquired why they did not kill that big one and let the little ones grow, they replied that that big fellow was strong, and knew how to pull a sled, and could run fast over the snow that would come by and by, and they needed him too much to kill him. I have never before seen half so interesting a company of tame animals. In some parts of Siberia reindeer flocks numbering many thousands may be seen together. In these frozen regions they supply every want of their owners as no other animal could possibly do—food, warm clothing, coverings for their tents, bedding, rapid transportation, and, to some extent, fuel. They are not nearly so numerous in the immediate vicinity of the bay as they once were—a fact attributed to several live specimens having been sold to the whalers."

A Curious Custom.

Monsieur X.—"I discovered one curious custom in your country, madame!"

Madame—"What is that, monsieur?"

X.—"It is this: Ven a young ladee she get—vat you call it—married, she bag her game, I tink I hear you say?"

M.—"We sometimes so remark, monsieur."

X.—"And ven a young ladee she tell a young man she no haf heem, you say she geeff heem de sack?"

M.—"Quite true, monsieur."

X.—"Now, madame, when I read in ze die—in ze diehshun—ze vat you call eet?—I find ze sack and ze bag are ze same ting. So, madame, I find me dat it is ze gustom in zis countree ven a young ladee she will marry she put ze young man in ze bag; and ven ze young ladee she will not marry she make of ze bag a present to ze young man. Zis is one curious gustom I find in your countree, madame; and it mooch interests me."—*Oil City Derrick.*

The Census of the Locomotives.

The total of locomotive engines in this country is 12,700. Of this total of engines New England has 1,700. Massachusetts leads with 998. The Middle States have 5,000 locomotives. It will humble New Yorkers a little perhaps to know the exact truth, which places Pennsylvania as the leading State, with 2,700 railway motors; New York comes next with 2,000. The young Western States, born only yesterday, already overtop all other sections of the land in the number of railway engines, the aggregate being 7,800. Illinois leads with 1,900. The Pacific States have 420, California having 220. The Southern States have 1,800 locomotives, Georgia leading with 303, Virginia coming next with 300, and North Carolina and South Carolina following with 146 each. Florida's position is shown by the cold-blooded statistician's figures of 38 locomotives for that State, large enough for an empire.

—A Small Boy once saw a Pin lying on the sidewalk, and picking it up, he placed it carefully in his jacket. His action was seen by a Rich Banker, who took the Boy into his service, and in time he was made Cashier of the bank and stole all the Money. After he had restored half of his plunder, and was getting ready to go to Europe for his Health, the Banker said to him: "Why did you pick up that Pin, unless you were the honest Boy I took you for?"

"Because," said the wicked Cashier, "I had read that story when a child, and was looking for a Sucker to play the game on."—*Chicago Tribune.*

Youths' Department.

CHRISTMAS.

Dainty little stockings
Hanging in a row,
Blue and gray and scarlet,
In the freights glow.

Curly-pated sleepers
Safely tucked in bed;
Dreams of wondrous toy-shops
Dancing through each head:

Mother, stepping lightly,
Plans, with tender care,
How to give each dreamer
Just an equal share.

Funny little stockings
Hanging in a row,
Suffled with sweet surprises,
Down from top to toe—

Skates and balls and trumpets,
Dishes, tops and drums,
Books and dolls and candies,
Nuts and sugar-plums.

Little sleepers waking:
Best me, what a noise!
Wish you merry Christmas,
Happy girls and boys!

—*Smyrna.*

MAMMA'S CHRISTMAS BOX.

Mrs. Watrous had taken a great fancy to old-fashioned furniture. She already had a good deal that had been her great-grandmother's; and she had sent her modern furniture to auction, and had the old brought from the garret and rubbed with linseed oil and vinegar till it shone like glass, and then had rummaged round in the garrets of her cousins who did not care for such things, and among the second-hand furniture-shops, and had sent far and near into the country, wherever she heard of an article of the sort, to learn if she could add to her collection.

At last she had rested from her labors, her house equipped with a brass knocker, with brass sconces for candles, with little mirrors in open-work brass frames, with straight-backed chairs and "thousand-legged" tables, and everything, in short, except a great chest for the hall, which she wanted exceedingly, but which she could nowhere find.

She knew there had been such a chest in the family, all covered with carving that told in wood the story of some Middle-Age legend; but the track of it had been lost almost a hundred years ago. She would have given anything for it, she used to say; they were so very nice to stand in the hall, and so ornamental.

She wanted a great chest nearly as tall as Matty, with panels full of carving, and long shining hinges; but it was not to be found. And although Mr. Watrous would have had one made for her, that would not have been the genuine old article, and she would not listen to such a thing.

But one morning—it was on the morning before Christmas—Mr. Watrous took Matty on his knee and told her he was going to have a little secret with her, if she thought she could keep a secret; and of course Matty assured him that she could, and began to tell him all about several that she knew in order to prove how well she had kept them, clapping her hand on her little mouth in the middle of each, as she found how nearly she had betrayed every one of them.

"Well," said her father, "I think my little girl can keep this one; and it is only for a very little while. It is about mamma's Christmas present."

"Oh yes, indeed!" cried Matty.

"I have found the chest for her!"

"Papa! O papa!" cried Matty, clasping her hands. "Oh, how happy it will make her!"

Papa laughed and continued: "Now, you know that this afternoon the servants will be all gone—in Mr. Watrous' family the servants had the day and night before Christmas for a holiday, so that the rest of the family might have Christmas Day itself for theirs—and there will be nobody but mamma and you and the baby in the house."

"The cart will come with the chest in it, and will wait just round the corner; and as soon as Cousin Kate sees it from her window she will send across for mamma to run in and see her a moment, and taste her Christmas pudding, and tell her if it needs anything else before boiling. And what I want you to do is not to be afraid to stay a one about five minutes!"

"Of course not!" said Matty.

"And to tell mamma that you will mind the baby while she runs across."

"Oh, yes, indeed!"

"And then the men will bring in the chest, and you may tell them where to put it—under the stag's horns, you know—and when mamma comes back—"

"Oh, won't she have a happy Christmas Eve! She said it was all she wanted!"

Papa laughed again. "We shall all have a happy Christmas Eve," said he. "And as for my little Matty, I hope she has a stocking to hang up that will bear a little stretching!"

And then Matty hugged her father, and laid her head on his shoulder, to love him a little while; and presently he went to the office, and she went to look at the turkey, as to the monstrous size and fatness of which there was just then quite an outcry coming up from the kitchen.

So the day wore away. A short winter's day, but it seemed longer and longer to Matty. At last it was getting on towards three in the afternoon, and there came a ring at the door, and Cousin Kate had sent over for Mrs. Watrous to come and taste her Christmas pudding.

"Dear me!" said Mrs. Watrous, "I can't leave the baby."

"Oh yes, you can, mamma!" cried Matty. "Papa said—I mean—I'll stay with him, mamma, dear, and I won't be a bit afraid!"

So, leaving the baby with Matty, Mrs. Watrous threw a shawl over her head and ran across to Cousin Kate's. And five minutes afterward, the men had left the great chest in the hall, un-

der the stag's horns, and had gone, and shut the door behind them.

Matty could not see the chest plainly as they carried it by—it was getting dark in the hall. But she scratched a match, and then climbed up and lighted one of the wax candles in the little sconces just opposite the chest.

"Well, it is a splendid thing," she said to herself. The great sides, almost up to her shoulder, were all covered with carving of cherubs, and harps, and crowns, and birds, and -nakes, and leaves, and babies, in what seemed to Matty the strangest confusion.

When she had sufficiently admired the outside, Matty thought she would like to see the inside. The lid was enormously heavy; but she tugged and tugged, and up it came a crack, and then she stooped and got her shoulder under, and rose little by little, and at last succeeded in standing the great lid upright—and what a wonderful place it was inside! Almost big enough for a baby-house.

There were great drawers and little drawers, and boxes with covers, and boxes inside these, and places like the berths she saw in the steamer when she was taken to bid Susy good-by, and an open space among them all, with a fur robe, a new fur robe for the sleigh, folded and lying on the bottom.

Matty had not half exhausted the delight of her discoveries when the baby, who was getting sleepy, and was quite tired of his rubber doll and rattle, began to fret. She ran to get him, and brought him out into the hall; and it occurred to her that a seat on that fur robe would be a capital thing for the baby while she pursued her pleasure.

And no sooner said than done; she climbed in herself, lifted the baby over and set him down; smoothing the fur and saying "Poor pussy" to it.

The baby did just as she did, and patted the fur and said "Push," and cuddled down his little sleepy head upon it and let Matty go on opening this tiny box, and pulling out that tiny drawer, till all at once the grocer boy's quick ring at the area bell startled her so that she jumped, and, hurriedly scrambling out, she hit the great lid and down it fell and shut fast.

Matty came very near screaming. But she thought it wouldn't hurt the baby for a minute, if he would keep still while she opened it again; and she called out that sister was there, and listened to hear him cry, but heard nothing—for the baby had gone fast asleep on the soft fur, and even the dropping of the lid had not waked him.

So Matty stooped again to her task of opening the chest, and tugged and tugged, and pushed with her shoulders and pulled with her hands, and wished with all her heart she had let the chest alone.

"Oh, he'll be smothered!" she exclaimed. "He'll be smothered!" And she burst out crying and ran to find her mother, screaming: "The baby! Oh, the baby!"

Just outside the vestibule her foot slipped on the frozen dripping from an icicle overhead, and she fell from top to bottom of the steps and lay on the sidewalk senseless.

Mrs. Watrous, who had been kept much longer than she wished by Cousin Kate, came running up, only to meet her husband at the door, hurrying for the doctor. For he had turned the corner just in season to see Matty fall and to pick her up, himself almost turned to stone with terror. And then Mrs. Watrous flew into the house, to find one child unconscious and the other child gone; and she fainted dead away herself.

You can imagine what a moment it was for Mr. Watrous when he came back with the doctor—his wife coming out of her swoon only to scream for her baby, and Matty still stonned with the fall. And this was the happy Christmas Eve he had promised himself!

There was nothing broken, the doctor said, at last; he only feared concussion of the brain now, but possibly they might avoid that—only Mrs. Watrous must control herself and bend all her strength to Matty's recovery; and then it was evident that Matty knew what had happened to the baby, he said, and the sooner Mary could speak, the sooner they should know, too. Nobody thought of the chest; nobody looked at it; nobody saw it.

But while the doctor and Cousin Kate—who had come running over to see the reception of the chest, and found it all forgotten—were busy with Matty, Mr. Watrous had called a neighbor, and had searched the house from roof to basement, every room, every closet, even the cellar; and then he had run to the nearest police-station with the baby's photograph, to call out the force in a public search.

His wife sat there like a statue when he came back. Cousin Kate was doing everything she could have done; for with this fearful calamity overtaking both her children at once, Mrs. Watrous was so overcome that she could hardly move; she could only sit still and feel an unspeakable longing for Matty to open her sweet eyes, to open her dear lips, and whisper just one word about the baby. But no; Matty lay stone-still.

It was certainly an awful hour; one child perhaps dying; the other child lost; the neighborhood in a wild alarm; the police bringing two lost children to the door, for whom other parents were in equal sorrow—and all in the middle of the Christmas bells rang out from the church-tower not far away.

Then Matty opened her great dark eyes wide, as if just waking from a pleasant nap. "There's the chime!" she said. "See if the baby will—O mamma!" as it all rushed over her, "the baby! the chest! the new chest!" And she fell back again into the arms of the doctor, who instantly began to pour a cordial down her throat.

In another minute her father had

dashed down stairs and had pressed the rusty old spring of the great chest, and tossed up the lid, and there, cuddled down all rosy and warm in the white fur of the robe, lay the baby, as sound asleep as if he were in his little crib—for the moth holes in the red leather that was stretched under the open work top had given him plenty of air to breathe.

With what an ecstasy his father caught him and sprang up those stairs, to put him in his mother's arms! And his mother seized him, covering him with kisses and tears, till he set up a lively roar; and then everybody laughed, and everybody cried, and Matty joined the chorus with her little pipe, and her father fell on his knees and said: "Let us thank God!"

And there never was such a Christmas Eve as that one, after all. The neighbors came flocking in; the church-bells rang another chime as if in congratulation for the lost that was found.

Mrs. Watrous could only continue to sit still and sob till the doctor said Matty was all right if no new symptoms should make their appearance, partly to prevent which, Matty must on no account be allowed to go to sleep for some hours.

And then Mrs. Watrous rose to the occasion; and before her husband knew what had happened, and while he was nursing Matty in his arms, in a state of bliss, Cousin Kate's Christmas-tree had been brought across the street and set up in the parlor, and Cousin Kate's husband had been sent down town for a multitude of gifts that met the fate they deserved, and were hung on the instant.

And the tapers were lighted, and the neighbors' children were brought in, and Matty, in a toilet whose decorations consisted chiefly of brown paper and butter and vinegar, sat up till nearly midnight, regretting that her mother's chest could not have been hung on the tree, till some one suggested that, with the baby, it had already played the part of the Manger and the Christ-child.

Then, after distributing the gifts to all the other children from her throne on a high chair, and laughing at every fresh kiss under the bit of mistletoe, she fell sound asleep at last, with a horn of candy in one hand, a box of china dishes in the other, and hugging to her breast a wax doll, and a book of fairy stories, and a paint-box, and a bottle of cologne, and—

But there! what is the use of naming the possessions that poured in upon Matty that night? Let us see a whole toy-show full; for never had any child such a Christmas Eve before.

And surely never was any child's mother so happy as Mrs. Watrous was as she hung over her two children that night, and felt that the great chest which had been the desire of her heart, and was to be the delight of her eyes, splendid Christmas box as it was, with its carved cherubs and crowns, was only the smallest part of her Christmas.—*Harriet Prescott Spofford, in Youths' Companion.*

A Telegraph Operator Learns a Lesson.

It would doubtless be safe to say that Fred King, the young man who occupies the position of night operator at the Union Depot telegraph-office, on Canal Street, did not go to sleep while on duty last night. On the night previous he slumbered when he should have been waiting for a call, and the result was that he awoke to find himself staring sleepily into the muzzle of a shining pistol-barrel, while at the other end of the pistol was a midnight robber.

It happened in this way: Shortly before one o'clock King, who had nothing to do just then and was all alone, locked the office door and tipped himself back in his chair for a snooze. Before doing this he had lowered one of the windows opening onto the depot yard, being desirous of securing a good ventilation. He had been asleep but a few moments when he was awakened by a tap on the shoulder. On opening his eyes he found a smooth-faced young man of about eighteen years standing by his side, who said he wanted to send a message. He also intimated, by the flourishing of a revolver which he held in his right hand and in close proximity to Mr. King's head, that he was ready on the slightest provocation to send a leader messenger where it would do the operator the most harm. Mr. King assumed a perpendicular, the pistol covering him all the time, and then discovered another young man climbing into the window that had been opened for ventilation. The second intruder was also armed with a pistol. The robbers told the operator to hold up his hands. He was in an obliging mood, and at once complied with the request. Then one of the robbers rifled his pockets of about eight dollars in silver, part of which dropped on the floor. Without stopping to pick any of the money up, the robbers, who seemed somewhat nervous, hurriedly took their departure. One of them covered King with a revolver while the other climbed out of the window, and then the one who had climbed out performed the same service while waiting for his pal. After the pair had gone, King hastened to the Madison-Street Station and reported the matter. He found that his loss amounted to only about six dollars, the rest of the money taken from his pockets having dropped on the floor.—*Chicago Tribune.*

—The production of the South African diamond mines last year was 1,440 pounds of gems, valued at \$16,839,485. At the end of last year 22,000 black and 1,700 white men were employed at these mines.