

A WHALE HUNT IN THE ARCTIC.

ORD LONSDALE, who spent some time wandering in the frozen regions of the north, had some peculiar and exciting experiences. One of these was his visit to the wooden and canvas town of the Huskiemaux, which he reached in a canoe with a young man of the tribe who had been in the service of the Hudson's Bay Co. Lonsdale relates the incidents of his reception and treatment in a rather matter-of-fact but interesting way. He says: "We no sooner hove in sight than I saw with the glasses all the Huskies come flocking down to the beach. Four men put out in kiacks to meet us as an advance guard. Three of them were armed with bows and arrows and knives, and the fourth carried a fan. About 400 yards behind them came fully 300 others. We could see that there was a great commotion among them. As we advanced so did the kiack, but when we were 300 yards from them they suddenly stopped paddling and would not come any nearer. I called and hailed, but all to no purpose. I saw they were distrustful, so I told our Huskie to hail them.

"As soon as he spoke they recognized his voice, and I halloed: 'To-go-chi-nack' (the nearest approach I can get to spelling the chief's name), when they readily came up to us, followed by the others. We were now about 100 yards from the shore, and to take time I lowered the sail and made the men pull. Our Huskie now told them who and what I was, and made them a long speech, and sent them off to tell the others, which they instantly did, apparently in great glee. We went slowly on purpose, to give them a good chance of having a talk with their pals. There were about 175 men and 250 women and children now waiting for us to land. We no sooner touched the beach than I jumped out and shook hands, having taken care previously, however, to load my revolver and put it in my pocket. I shook hands with all the men and the chief. The chief was named Ta-wah-tsack and his sub Kagley. The former was a well built big man, with an active gait, diabolical countenance and fleshy eyelids, which left only tiny holes through which his black, ill-tempered eyes peered. But he was very civil and said he was glad to see me. The mosquitoes were so troublesome that I asked him to conduct me to the *Kishawa*, when he disappeared, returning in two minutes arrayed in his robe of state and accompanied by his three wives, in similar array. He then led the way, and Kagley, Billy and I followed him. Billy stayed only a few moments in the council chamber, as the atmosphere did not seem to suit him.

"After waiting a few minutes about seventy or eighty natives arrived, all in their best clothes and beads. Kagley and our friend, whom I was now told

were the counselors, and more respected than the chief, then came in in very smart clothes. When the room was full the chief made a speech, to which all listened with marked attention. He told them (so I learned through our interpreter, himself a Huskie, taken from his tribe when a boy by the Hudson's Bay Company) that the chief told them to welcome us, that we were the first white men who had ever visited them. He had heard that white men were brave, 'But if they are so brave,' continued he, 'how is it that they have not come to us before?' Still, said he, 'I think they must be brave, and we will try them.' They then showed us how a man was killed by them. Four men seized the victim. Two held him by his shoulders, another placed his hands against his back, and the fourth pulled his head back, while another man would draw a knife across his throat and all was over. The Huskies then tried to intimidate me by rushing at me with their knives, and then putting their hands over my heart to feel it beat.

"While in the midst of this interesting performance we heard a man calling 'Hoo-roo-e-e-ooo,'—or that was what it seemed like to me—which immediately threw everybody into confusion. Everybody rushed out, and the chief called upon me to follow. The interpreter told me we were going to a whale hunt. The cry still came at intervals, and I found out afterward that it came from sentinels who had been placed to watch for the coming of the white whale. The Indians wait until they come into the shallows, and then attack them. The chief put his two young wives and myself into an *omeach*—a large, flat-bottomed boat made of whale skins—and we rowed in the direction of the cry. The women are not allowed to put their feet into a kiack, because of an Indian superstition which says that the art of hunting leaves the man who owns the kiack if such a thing should happen.

"We all rounded the corner in silence, and there, moving up toward the shallows, were ten white whales. The Indians in their kiacks extended in skirmishing order, at the same time keeping up a rolling sound with their mouths and splashing the water. The whales were gradually driven into shoal water, and then began the attack. First one man in his kiack would rush forward and drive in his harpoon, and then another would follow suit. Each harpoon has a bladder filled with air attached to the end, so it will float if it should fall out of the whale. The line and order kept by the Indians was something wonderful. They never got in each other's way, and no two men would ever make a rush for the same whale. Each man carried but one harpoon, and when these were all exhausted they attacked the mammals with their spears. When they were all killed they resembled porcupines more than anything else."