

# ETU, OUR LITTLE ESKIMO COUSIN



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ETU

Our Little Eskimo Cousin

# THE Little Cousin Series

(TRADE MARK)

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ETU

Our Little Eskimo Cousin

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by E. J. Flanagan

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## Preface

IT is a very wonderful thing, when we stop to think of it, that no matter where we are placed in this great round world of ours, it seems just right to us.

Far away in the frozen north, where the lovely aurora borealis dances in the sky, where the long sunless winter night stretches half-way across the year, live a people who cannot keep themselves alive without working very hard. Yet they are happy and fun-loving. They *make* pleasures for themselves. They are patient and joyous in the midst of darkness and storm. They do not think of complaining at their hard lot, or that they do not live where Nature is kinder and more generous.

We call them Eskimos. They belong to another race than ours,—a different branch of the great human family. They are yellow and we are white, to be sure. But we know that, no matter how far away any race of people lives, and no matter how different these people may be from us in looks and habits, they and we belong to the same great family. It includes every race and every colour, for we are the children of one Father.

What a pleasure it is, therefore, to travel from place to place and see more of the life of others! But suppose we cannot journey with our bodies; we need not stay at home on that account. Let us use the wings of the mind, and without trouble or expense visit the hot lands and the cold, the yellow children and the red. Let us know them and learn what they can teach us.

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# ETU

## Our Little Eskimo Cousin



### CHAPTER I.

#### BABY DAYS.

A PAIR of very bright black eyes peered out from the mother's hood that winter morning. The thermometer, if there had been one, would have shown the temperature to be seventy degrees below the freezing point.

Yet baby Etu did not seem to care. He was nestled so warmly in the heavy furs, and felt so safe on his mother's broad back, that he laughed and crowed in pure delight.

It was his first ride since he was born, and there was so much to look at! At least he

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thought so, though great sheets of snow stretched outward to the frozen ocean, and covered the land in every direction. The twinkling stars gave the only light for Etu to see by, yet it was daytime. It was that part of the twenty-four hours when the baby's people did their work; and that must be called day in Etu's far northern country, even though darkness covers all the land.

For Etu lives in the frozen zone, on the shores of northern Alaska, and during the long winter of eight months the sun shows his face very little above the horizon.

Here and there the snow looked as if it had been raised into low mounds. Near these mounds holes could be seen in the ground, and pathways dug out between them. There were no trees, no fences, no roads.

Where was the village, and where was the baby's home? Those holes marked the entrances to the winter houses built by Etu's

father and his neighbours. The mounds were the coverings of the houses. Great pits had been dug in the earth, and lined with drift-wood which had floated on to the shore. Jaws of whales made the framework of the roofs, these being covered with sods cut out of the marshy plains in summer. Mother Nature did the rest by protecting all with a warm close blanket of snow.

At first it makes one shudder to think of living in such homes during the long Arctic winter. But the Eskimos are satisfied, and feel so comfortable that they remove a great part of their clothing while they are indoors. The houses are made so snug that the sharpest winds cannot enter, and they cost nothing but the labour of making them.

Etu's mother allowed him to stay out only a few minutes this first time. She soon turned toward home, and coming to her own doorway crawled down through a long slanting tunnel

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in the ground, eight or ten feet long. When she reached the end, she was obliged to stoop even lower, for now she must pass upwards through another passage. Lifting a trap-door, she stepped at once into the middle of her own home.

Why was there such a queer entrance? Because the wind must be kept out at all hazards. After all, it seemed easy and natural enough to this woman who had never known other and pleasanter hallways.

How close it seemed after the fresh cold air outdoors! There was a strong odour of smoking oil. It was noisy, too, as other women and children were moving around inside, for the house was shared in common by several families who were friendly to each other, and enjoyed living together.

Etu's mother quickly took off her outer coat of sealskin, and, lifting her baby out of his warm nest, placed him on a platform which

stretched along one side of the room. What a round, smiling dumpling he was! His face was broad and flat, while his little nose looked as though it had been punched inwards. His bright eyes were quite narrow.

He wore a curious skin cap drawn tightly over the top of his head. He must keep this on night and day for a year, at least. It would make his forehead taper upward, and that is a mark of beauty among his people. As soon as he was born, the top of his head was pressed between his nurse's hands, and the cap fitted on at once so that his head might grow in the proper shape. After that operation he was taken outdoors, and rolled in the snow. I suppose that was to get him used to the cold climate of his birthplace. Don't you?

Baby Etu's skin was much whiter than his mother's, — very nearly as white, in fact, as your own little brother's. Why has he changed

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so much since he has grown to be a big boy? Listen to the strange reason.

When our Eskimo cousin was born, there was a small dark spot on his back. Day by day it grew larger; the change came very slowly, so slowly it could scarcely be noticed. But at last the darker colour had spread over the boy's whole body, till his skin was nearly like that of his father and mother.

In course of time it would grow darker still, because he did not wash himself. Please don't be shocked. It is *so* hard to get water in that frozen land. Snow must first be melted, and to do this heat is required. Heating requires the burning of oil, and oil is very precious. It is scarcely any wonder, therefore, that Etu has not been taught to be cleanly in all ways.

The smoky air of the home during the long winter months also made the boy's skin grow darker. Sometimes during his babyhood his mother would wash him as a mother cat washes

her kittens, but that was all he has ever known of the delights of a bath. The mother-love made that pleasant, perhaps, but we cannot envy him.

It was quite surprising to an Arctic explorer some years ago, when he discovered the difference soap and warm water would make in an Eskimo's appearance.

“Why, you are almost a white man,” he exclaimed, “your friends will think you have been changed into another being by some magical spell.” And he laughed heartily when he thought of the only magic being soap and water.

Etu tumbled about on the sealskins which covered the platform, watching his mother while she trimmed the wick of the lamp. What an odd-looking lamp it was! It was made of a crescent-shaped stone hollowed out. Think of the labour of making it! It must have taken days, and even weeks, before the

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cavity was hollowed enough to hold the oil. But Etu's people are such patient workers they do not worry over the time they spend.

Moss was built up around the sides of the lamp; it served for the wick which spluttered away as the oil burned and warmed the room. A lump of seal fat, or blubber as it is called, hung over the lamp. As it melted slowly in the heat, it dripped down into the cavity and furnished a steady supply of oil.

There were two other lamps burning in Etu's home, for you must remember there was a very large family living here. And these queer lamps not only gave light and warmth to all these people, but the cooking must also be done over them.

Etu watched the light with blinking eyes for a few moments, and then fell fast asleep. Only think of it, he was nearly naked! There was no covering on his tiny body except a short skirt of fur, — his arms and legs were



quite bare, yet his loving mother did not hurry to cover him over. He must get used to cold while he was still small, so that when he grew older he could bear exposure better.

## CHAPTER II.

### MOTHER AND CHILD.

THE mother was proud that this first baby was a boy. She liked to dream of what a great hunter he would become. In a few years he would do his part to keep the wolf from the door, in more senses than one. He would bring home the seal, the walrus, now growing so scarce, the grim white bear, and make many a feast for his people. Oh, no, girls could never do such things as these! She was a happy woman, indeed.

This Eskimo mother had a pleasant, sunny face, even though the chin was tattooed with three long lines from the mouth downwards. She firmly believed that it would be looked upon as a sign of goodness, when she reached

the next world. It might help in bringing her to heaven.

The work was done by her own hands and must have been quite painful. The sinew of a reindeer furnished the thread which she blackened with soot. Fastening it in her bone needle, she drew it under and through the skin till the lines were plainly marked. They would stay that way as long as she lived.

She bustled about at her work without fuss or hurry. More than once the children playing in the room got in her way, but she did not scold nor even look cross. Now and then a hungry-looking dog poked his head up through the doorway, only to be chased out of sight again when discovered. As she worked she joined in the laughter and talk of the women.

Hark! the sound of many feet could be heard, and the women and children stopped their chatter to welcome the men of the house-

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hold, who had been away on a bear hunt for many hours.

“What luck? What luck?” all said at once, but there was no story of brave fighting to tell this night; the long march over the icy plains had met with no reward. But there was no danger of starving at present, for great dishes of smoking seal soup stood ready for the hunters.

In a few minutes all the household were squatting on the floor around the bowls. They ate the delicious supper to their hearts' content; and how they did eat! It seemed as though their stomachs must be made of elastic, for otherwise how were they able to stow away such immense quantities of the rich, fatty food?

With Etu's people it is either a feast or a famine all the time. They have no regular time to eat, no such thing as breakfast, dinner, and supper. If there is a good supply of

food on hand, they will keep on eating hour after hour in a way to fill other people with wonder. But if there is nothing in the larder they are able to go several days without eating; yet they seem to keep well and strong.

All were satisfied at last, and baby Etu waked up in time to be held and petted for a while before bedtime.

His mother did not have any dishes to wash, but before she could settle herself for the night she had to arrange a net over the seal-oil lamp, and spread her husband's wet clothing in it to dry. She must rouse herself during the night to watch and turn it from time to time, for that is a woman's work, she has been taught.

But where were all these people going to stow themselves for sleeping? There was no sign of a bed in the whole house. That question was easily settled, for a portion of the

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platform was set aside for each family. They arranged their fur rugs upon it, and crept in side by side. Then, taking off all their clothing, they buried themselves under the warm covers. First in order lay the father of a family, next came the mother, and close to her the youngest child was always nestled.

Baby Etu slept, warm and safe, that night and many afterward. Not once during the long winter did he cry from colic.

As soon as he was able to sit up alone his mother gave him lessons in what he needed most,—strength of body, and ease in moving every muscle. She would sit on the floor or platform and stretch out her legs in front of her. Then she would brace Etu against her feet, and, holding his hands, would bend his arms in every possible direction. Now they must be stretched upwards, now to the right, the left, behind him, and so on. This would make him agile in hunting.

As soon as the baby could walk he began to have other exercises for his legs, for he must make a good runner and dancer, also.

As soon as Etu began to take more notice of those around him, he received many presents of toys. There were animals carved out of ivory, — tiny whales and walruses, baby seals and reindeer. He could not break them easily. They were fine things to press against his aching gums when the first teeth pushed themselves into sight. If he had been a girl he would have had an ivory doll, with a little dress of mouse skin, but, of course, a boy would not care for such a plaything. It was not to be thought of.

Soon the time came for his first suit of clothes, and, oh, how many days of patient work his mamma spent on those little garments!

In the first place, there must be some long stockings of reindeer skin, so made that the

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hairy side lay next his body. After that came socks of the skin taken from eider-ducks. And outside of all he must wear stout boots of sealskin with soles of thick whale hide. He must draw these up to his hips over his two pairs of deerskin trousers, just as his father and mother themselves did. His jacket was made of reindeer skin, with a warm hood fastened to it to draw over his head while outdoors in the searching winds. It had no buttons either before or behind, but fitted quite loosely.

Some one asks: "How did he get into this garment, since there were no openings except for the neck and sleeves?" He slipped it down over his head, as American boys put on their jerseys. The skin had been tanned and stretched and softened so beautifully by his mother that it was quite easy to do this.

The baby's jacket was shaped round exactly like his father's, while his mother's had



a long pointed tail both in front and behind. Besides this difference, her own jacket is always trimmed with a fringe of coloured beads bought of the traders. This fringe reaches around the neck, and also around both of the tails. It is very beautiful, her neighbours all declare.

It seems quite wonderful to us that Etu's boots could be perfectly water-tight, although they were home-made. This Eskimo mother is such a fine seamstress with her coarse needle and thread, that a drop of water cannot enter the skin boots after her work is done.

When his first suit was entirely finished, and Etu was dressed, he was ready for the coldest weather. As soon as he could walk easily, he had no more need to ride in the warm hood on his mother's back. There were times before this, however, when he cried with the cold even in that snug place, and his mother had been obliged to stop in her walk,

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loosen her jacket, and slip the baby inside of all her clothing next to her own warm body. After that the crying would stop, and Etu would coo softly as the two went on their way.

How many things had to be done before the baby's suit was finished! In the first place, his papa must kill the animals which furnished the warm skins. But when that was done, *his* work was over. It was his wife's turn now. She removed the skins from the dead reindeer and seal, and stretched them out to dry, with the hairy side toward the earth.

After a few days they were ready for her to begin the hardest part of the task. They must be scraped with a sharp knife until every atom of flesh should be removed, as well as the inner tough skin. Now they were flexible enough for all the clothing except the stockings, and these must be very soft indeed for the tender baby feet. A piece of the skin of a

baby deer was chosen by the careful mother, who next proceeded to chew it, inch by inch. Her teeth were beautifully white and sharp, but the work was done so carefully that no hole, nor even mark, could be seen in the skin when it was finished.

She was ready now to cut out the various garments with her odd scissors, — but, after all, it is wrong to call the queer knife she uses by the name of scissors. She speaks of it as an “oodlo,” and it is useful in so many ways, she really could not keep house without it. It is shaped much like your mother’s meat-chopper. It is made of bone edged with iron, and when Etu’s mother cuts with it, she moves it away from her in a way which looks very awkward to us. It not only takes the place of scissors, but is the hatchet, the knife, and also scraper with which the flesh is removed from the skins.

## CHAPTER III.

### PLAY - DAYS.

MONTH after month passed by with baby Etu. The little round ball grew into a sturdy boy, who delighted in rough plays outdoors, as well as many indoor games, when the storms raged too greatly for him to leave the house.

His mother never refused him anything possible to get. He was never scolded or punished, so it is no wonder he grew up kind and honest and truthful. And laugh? Why, you can't imagine how many things there are for Eskimo children to laugh about. In that cold and dreary land one would expect to see long faces, and hear people constantly groaning and complaining; but, instead of that, these people of the far north may be said to

be ever "on the grin," as travellers there have often expressed it.

And Etu was like the rest of his people. He was always finding some new source of fun and pleasure. When he was still a tiny baby, left to amuse himself on the platform inside the house, he would watch for the dogs to appear in the passageway, and throw his ivory toys at them. Then he would laugh and shake his sides as they dodged the play-things and scampered away.

Sometimes one of the older children would bring him a ball of snow or ice and teach him to kick it into the air again and again, without touching it with his hands, yet keeping it in motion all the time.

When he grew older and braver he allowed himself to be tossed up in the air in a blanket of walrus hide. He must keep on his feet all the time, and not tumble about in the blanket. After awhile he could go almost

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to the roof and back again, holding himself as straight as a little soldier.

Of course he slid down-hill and had any amount of sport, but the sled was generally the seat of his own deerskin trousers. He and his playmates liked to start from the top of an icy hill, and vie with each other in reaching the foot.

Sometimes the little fellows would double themselves up so they looked like balls of fur, then down the hill they would roll, over and over, one after another. And when they reached the bottom and jumped upon their feet, what a shouting there would be as they shook themselves and brushed off the snow!

Now that Etu is a big boy, he plays still another game on the snowy hillsides. His father has killed a great number of reindeer, and the boy is allowed to have all the antlers he wishes. When the boys want to play the reindeer game, as we may call it, they set up



“ HE WHO HITS THE GREATEST NUMBER WINS THE GAME ”





the antlers in the snow, a short distance apart from each other. Then they climb the hill again, and, seating themselves on their sleds, slide down past the antlers. They must steer clear of them and reach the foot without running into a single one. At least, that is the game, and the ones who do so successfully are the winners.

But what kind of a sled do you think Etu uses? It is simply a cake of ice; if you stop to think a moment, you can imagine how swiftly and smoothly it travels along.

There is a still different game of reindeer-hunting which requires more skill.

This time Etu and his playfellows arm themselves with bows and arrows. As they coast rapidly past the reindeer antlers, they shoot at them and try to leave their arrows fixed in as many as possible. Of course, he who hits the greatest number wins the game. This is exciting sport indeed, and Etu will go home

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afterward ready to eat such a quantity of frozen seal blubber as to make the eyes of any one but an Eskimo open wide with wonder.

Eskimo, I just said; but Etu does not call himself by that name. He will tell you that he is one of the Innuits, as his father has taught him. The word "Innuit" means "people."

Etu's mother has told him of an old, old legend of her race, about the creation of the world. At first human beings were made white, but they were not worthy of their Maker. Then others were created who were the true people, or the Innuits.

The word Eskimo means "eater of raw fish." It was given to these natives of the far north by the travellers who came among them and observed their queer ways of living and eating.

"Raw meat! Raw fish!" they exclaimed among themselves. "These are indeed queer

people who enjoy such food in a freezing climate.”

So it came about that they spoke of them as Eskimos, and the name has clung to Etu's people ever since.

The boy remembers well his first candy. He had been ill, but was getting strong once more. His good patient mother wished to bring a smile to his pale face, so while he was sleeping she prepared a surprise.

She took the red feet of a bird called the dovekie, and, drawing out the bones, blew into the skin until it was puffed out as full as possible. Then she poured melted reindeer fat into these bright-colored pouches, and the candy-bags were finished.

Etu's eyes grew suddenly bright when they opened upon the surprise prepared for him. It did not take many minutes, you may well believe, for every bit of this odd candy to disappear. You may like chocolate creams and

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cocoanut cakes, and think them the greatest treat in the world, but in Etu's opinion there is nothing better than a big lump of seal blubber or the marrow from the inside of a deer's bones.

When he had his first bow and arrow, it was a very tiny one. He learned to shoot at a target inside his winter home. His mother would hang up pieces of fat meat across the room where he sat, and he would try very hard to pierce them. If he succeeded, he could have the meat to eat, so of course he tried very hard.

At other times he would sit watching for a dog to push his head up through the doorway, and let fly the arrow at him. At first this seems like a very cruel sport, but the arrow was blunted and very small; it could not do much harm, even if it struck the dog, who would bound away out of sight only to appear again in a few moments.

Of course, Etu has played ball all his life, but his ball is of a different kind from yours. It is made of sealskin. Sometimes he will try with other boys to knock it about so continually that it is kept in the air for a long, long time without falling. At other times all engage in a grand game of football, but, according to their ideas, the children must on no account touch the ball with their hands. That would be a "foul play," as you boys would say. By their rules it can only be kicked.

In the long winter evenings there is still more fun. In Etu's big household old and young gather around the dim, smoky lamp and tell stories. There are such wonderful adventures to relate of daring deeds on sea and land. Etu listens breathless to tales of the white bear surprised in his den, of long tramps after prey, when life depended on fresh supplies, and King Frost was striv-

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ing to seize the weakened bodies of the hunters.

Then there are quaint legends and fairy tales, besides stories of wondrous beings in the unseen world around. Some of these beings are good, and some bad. Etu does not like to hear about these last, and tries to put them out of his mind when he is travelling alone.

But the evenings are not wholly given to story-telling, for the people are fond of music. They like dancing, also, for it makes them feel jolly and gay. They pass many an hour singing monotonous songs which they think very sweet, but which we would think tiresome.

Sometimes when Etu's mother has finished her work for the day, she gathers the children of the house around her, and shows them how to make wonderful figures with strings of deer's sinews. You all know the game of

cat's cradle; well, it is something like that, only very much harder.

The woman fastens the string back and forth on her son's hands, then weaves it quickly in and out; before one knows it, she has shaped it into the body of a musk ox. A few more changes are made, when, behold! it is no longer a musk ox, but has become a reindeer or a seal. It requires a great deal of skill to do this, but Etu can make nearly as many figures as his mother, although she has had so many years of practice.

## CHAPTER IV.

### DOG TEAM AND SLEDGE.

WHEN he was three years old, our little northern cousin had his first and only pets. They were two little puppies left without any mother. They looked like baby wolves with their sharp, pointed noses, erect ears, and furry backs; but they were very cunning, and amused their little master all day long. When night came they crept under the heavy covers, and lay close to Etu's feet while he slept, keeping him as warm and comfortable as he could possibly desire to be.

But, like all other pets, these puppies *would* grow up, and then their work in life began as well as Etu's. They must be trained to draw a sledge, for they must be able to carry their



young master on long journeys over the snowy plains.

Etu's mother made him some reins to be fastened to the dogs' necks. She placed the ends in the hands of her little boy, who sat on the platform, holding a whip. He must learn to manage the team, he must teach the dogs to obey his voice, to move to the right or the left, as he directed; in short, to understand that he was truly their master.

Every new birthday two more dogs were given to Etu, and it became his duty to feed and train them to be in readiness when he was old enough to hunt with his father.

Do not imagine for a moment that this was an easy matter. No white man has ever yet, I believe, found himself able to manage a pack of Eskimo dogs. Each one is fastened to the sledge by a single cord, and, as they hurry onward at the sound of their master's voice, it seems as though there were the most

dreadful confusion. One dog, wiser and cleverer than the rest, is always chosen as the leader; his rein is a little longer than the others. He is always the one that listens most closely to the directions given, turning his head backward from time to time to look at his master, and make sure that he is right. Then onward he dashes, the other dogs following close at his heels.

Etu spent some time in deciding which dog was the best out of his own pack, but when he was quite sure of Vanya's strength and brightness he gave him the greatest care and attention of all.

But the whip! It was far harder to learn its use than to master all his other lessons. The handle was only six inches long, while the lash was at least sixteen feet. To throw it out and then bring it back without letting it become entangled among the legs of two or three dogs was a difficult task. But to be



“ETU HAD BECOME QUITE SKILFUL”



sure of striking only the one for whom it was intended, was a far harder thing to learn. Even when Etu had become quite skilful, it seemed as though every time he rode away he must come home with at least one broken bone. For as the dogs gradually gained in speed, and one or another received a stroke of the whip to remind him of his duty, he would jump wildly around. Perhaps he would upset two or three others in an instant. Then there would be such a yelping, and such a breaking of reins would follow, it seemed impossible for Etu to straighten them out again, and harder still it must have been for him to keep his seat, and not be thrown off.

But the boy loves the work, and nothing pleases him more than to be sent twenty miles to a neighbouring village on an errand for his father.

In the winter season, when the dogs are not working, they are sometimes allowed to stay in

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the passageway leading to the house. And you already know that they try again and again to make their way inside. The burning lamp gives such pleasant warmth, and the smell of the seal or reindeer meat is so tempting that they are willing to run the chance of the blows they are almost sure to get for being so daring.

They are warmly clothed, however, and can bear the most terrible weather without harm coming to them. Beneath the long hair a heavy soft wool grows in the winter time, and protects their bodies from the icy cold.

It is Etu's duty to feed all the dogs of the household. It does not take a great amount of his time, for the poor hard-working creatures have only one meal in two days! If there is danger of a famine, and provisions are scarce, they are fed but once in three days. This is during the winter, moreover, for in summer they are expected to provide for them-

selves, getting fish from the shallow beds of the rivers, killing birds as they alight on the shore, catching baby seals, and getting reindeer moss or lichens from the rocks.

It is fun to watch Etu on feeding day. He gathers the dogs around him in a wide circle, and tosses first to one, then to another, his strip of sealskin. If a dog moves from his place or jumps out of turn to receive his food, he is only rewarded by a lash of the whip, instead of the longed-for meat. So by long experience they have learned to wait patiently.

These Eskimo dogs must have wonderful stomachs to digest the tough food on which they live. It is simply impossible to chew the strips of skin, so they are swallowed whole. Sometimes a young dog chokes over his hard work, and coughs up his precious bit, only to have it snatched away from him by one of his neighbours.

We feel like pitying these dogs of the cold

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lands. They are deeply devoted to their masters, yet a word of kindness is rarely spoken to them. Their work is hard, and their food is scant. In winter they must draw the sledges, and in summer, as their masters travel from place to place, they are laden with heavy packs which they carry cheerfully.

This reminds me that when Etu played "horse" in his early days, it wasn't *horse*, after all; it was *dog*, instead, for the Eskimo dog is the only horse of the far north.

When Etu was old enough to drive a team of a dozen dogs, he had reached his tenth birthday. His father said to him then :

"Now, Etu, you are old enough to make your own sledge. You have often helped me, but now you are able to do the work alone."

Our little cousin set manfully to work at once. It was so nice to think of having a sledge for his very own, and one that he had



made himself, too. It was not a very hard task, once he had gathered his materials together. The jawbones of a whale were used for the framework and runners. Sealskin was fitted over this framework, and a little seat made from which Etu's legs hung over in front when he was driving.

“But will the bone runners travel swiftly enough over the snow?” some one asks.

“Not unless they are properly iced,” Etu would answer.

Every time the boy starts out on a journey, he must prepare the runners afresh by squirting water upon them from his mouth. A coating of smooth ice is formed almost instantly, which will last for a short distance. Then it must be renewed.

Soon after Etu's sledge was completed, he was sent by his father to look for seal-holes along the coast. It was a bright, clear day, and, although it was fifty degrees below zero,

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the boy enjoyed his ride; he had no thought of cold, as there was only a slight wind blowing.

He journeyed on and on, his bright eyes watching for signs of seals beneath the snow-covered ice. He did not realise how far he was from home. He was many miles away, when a strong wind suddenly arose. How it cut his cheeks and bit his nose! He knew he must turn back at once or he might be overcome.

Brave boy as he was, there would keep entering his mind the thought of a neighbour who was frozen while travelling in just such weather. When his sledge arrived at his own doorway, there sat the man in his seat, straight and stiff; but the reins were tightly held in dead hands. The dogs had kept on their way unharmed, while the driver gradually lost all knowledge of them, and of this world.

Etu put his gloved hand to his nose again

and again, to make sure it was all right; it was such an easy thing for it to freeze without his knowledge. And now his hands began to grow numb, and then his feet, although he often sprang from his sledge to run with the dogs and jump in the snow.

Ah, that icy wind! Would it never stop? The boy's eyes became blinded, and at last he thought:

“It is of no use. I don't care very much, anyway. I begin to feel so queer and stupid. What does it mean?”

That was the last he knew till he awoke in his own home to find his mother bending over him; she was rubbing him with balls of snow, and looking very, very anxious. How the blood tingled through his body, as it began to move freely once more! But he was safe now, and could no longer feel the terrible wind blowing against him.

It was a narrow escape for Etu. It was

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well for him that he was within a mile of the village when he lost the power to think. The dogs kept on their way, and brought him quickly to his own home.

## CHAPTER V.

### KAYAK AND HARPOON.

WHEN Etu was only nine years old he began to go out upon the ocean, fishing and shooting with his father. Of course he was allowed to go on calm days only. Years of practice would be needed before he could be trusted to manage his boat in winter storms, or risk his life in seal hunting. When he was eleven years old, however, he had learned to paddle very well, and, besides, he had grown to be such a big boy that his father said :

“You must have a new kayak, Etu ; your mother will help you make it. You have outgrown the other, and it is not safe.”

It was one of Etu's duties to watch for all the driftwood floating in toward shore.

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Every piece is more precious to these people of the north than we can imagine. They have no money, but if they could express the value of the bits of driftwood in dollars and cents, we would be amazed. Some of us, I fear, would feel like carrying a shipload of lumber to Etu's people and making a fortune very easily.

When our little Eskimo wished to begin the making of his boat, he went first to the family treasure house. Of course you can guess what was stored there. Not diamonds and pearls, nor gold and silver; but simply — driftwood.

Etu chose with much care the pieces from which to make a stout framework for his boat. It was important that he should take light wood that had not lost its strength by drifting about in the water too long. He cut the strips with a bone knife and bound them into shape with strong cords of seal

sinew. The ends of the boat were sharply pointed.

His mother's work began now. She took the skins of seals which her husband had just killed and scraped away all the scraps of blubber and flesh left on the hides. Then, rolling them tightly together, she left them for some days. When they were again unrolled, it was quite easy to scrape off the hairs with a mussel shell. After this, the skins were well washed in sea water.

A very important step must be taken next. The skins must be stretched. Etu's first boat must be a fine one and there must be no wrinkles in the covering. The safest way was to stretch them over the framework of the boat itself. Then they would be sure to fit well. An Eskimo woman feels very much ashamed if any part of the boat's covering is loose or wrinkled. People will think she is a poor worker, and that would be a sad disgrace.

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How did Etu's mother manage to make the boat water-tight? It was done through her careful sewing. She worked with her coarse bone needle, and the sinews of seal and deer were the only thread; yet when the kayak was finished, not a single drop of water could enter. It was a clever piece of work.

Where was Etu to sit in this wonderful boat? The deck was entirely covered excepting the small hole in the centre. The boy had measured this hole with great care when he made the framework of the kayak. It was just large enough for him to squeeze through. His feet and legs must be underneath the deck, and his thighs should fill up the hole exactly. Now you understand why the boy's father spoke of his outgrowing the old boat.

Do you also see why there was no larger hole? Think for a moment of the waters through which he must ride. Our rough seas would seem calm to Etu. If the deck were



not covered, the dashing waves would swamp his boat almost instantly. His people had found this out for themselves; so they cleverly planned a boat different from that of any other in the world.

Etu made a stout paddle with two blades. It is a pleasure for his mother and her friends to watch him use it. He is very skilful, and now, at twelve years of age, he can make the kayak skim over the water like the wind. How straight he always sits! He balances the boat exactly and first bends the right blade into the water, then the left, without seeming to work hard, either. And in some wonderful way, one can hardly understand how, he speeds onward. No wonder it is such a pleasure to watch him.

Etu is very proud of his paddle; not because he made it, but because of the time his mother spent in decorating it. It is inlaid with bits of stone and ivory set in a pretty

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pattern. Surely, his mother is a fine worker. She has just made him a present of a new pair of gloves. They are to be worn while he is out in his boat, and reach above his elbows. They will protect his arms and keep them dry, even if the waves sweep clear over him. But they are not like common gloves, for they are embroidered in a fine pattern. She cut out bits of hide and dyed them different colours. Then she sewed them together in a neat design on the arm pieces of the gloves. Shouldn't you call that embroidery?

While Etu's boat was being made, his mother had a party. Perhaps it would be better to call it a "sewing-bee." Etu was sent around to the different women in the village. He told them his mother was ready to sew the covering on his boat. Would they like to help her?

Now there is nothing Eskimo women like

better than to come together for a friendly chat. So the invitation was accepted, and one morning, bright and early, a party of women could be seen gathered around the sealskins. Their fingers worked swiftly, but I fear their tongues moved still faster. There was a great deal of laughter, for they seemed to have many funny stories to tell. And I don't believe there was a bit of unkind gossip; at least, their faces didn't show it.

It was amusing to see how much their teeth were used. They were like another hand to these Eskimo women, for, as they sewed, they held the piece of skin in its place with their teeth. When the covering must be stretched over this hard place or that edge, it was the teeth again that gave the needed help. Etu knows one old woman whose teeth are worn almost down to the gums. She must have worked very hard all the years of her life. She must have sewed on many boat-coverings

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and made many suits of clothes before this could have been done.

When Etu's kayak was finished, his mother invited the workers up to the house, where they were treated to a dish of seal-blood soup and a pipe of tobacco. It was a grand surprise. In the first place, the heated blood of the seal is always a dainty; and then, they seldom had the privilege of smoking tobacco. It was a great rarity, for it could only be obtained through trade with the white people.

When night came, all were in great good humour as they left for their own homes. But, as they stepped outdoors, what a beautiful sight met their eyes! The northern lights were shooting across the heavens in glorious colours. Have you never noticed on cold winter nights lines of light shooting upward into the sky? It is always in the north that we see them, and we wonder and exclaim as we look.

Your mother tells you, "It is the *Aurora Borealis*." It is not fully known what causes the strange light. It is thought, however, to be electricity.

In Etu's land the aurora is far more wonderful and beautiful than with us. The visitors were used to such sights, yet they called to the boy and his mother to come outdoors and look.

"The lights are brighter than I ever saw them in my life," exclaimed one of the women. At first it seemed as though there were a great cloud of light just above the horizon, but it suddenly changed till the heavens appeared to be alive. The very air around the people quivered, as long, bright lines shot upward across the sky. They changed so quickly, it seemed as though a mighty power was directing them about, now here, now there. It made one dizzy to watch them. Now there would be streamers of green and red

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and blue darting from the sky-line way to the very zenith. There they would meet in a purplish crown of glory.

Again the sky would change in its appearance, and a red light would spread over all. It was so bright that the snow in every direction was tinted a rosy colour.

“What makes it, mother?” whispered Etu. “Is it the work of good spirits, or are evil ones trying to show us their power?”

“I do not know, my child,” was the answer. “We are not wise, and cannot understand these things. Come, let us go back into the house. The sight makes me fearful.”

Etu had many finishing touches to put on his boat after it was covered. A wooden hoop must be fitted around the hole in which he was to sit. Several thongs of seal hide must be fastened on the deck, under which his spear and harpoon should rest while he paddled. Still other straps were bound to the sides of

the deck, for, unless the birds or seals could be fastened to the boat in some way after they had been killed, how could they be towed home?

Then Etu began to work on his harpoon. His father had to help him now, for it needed skill and care to fit it exactly to the throwing-stick. The Eskimos long ago found that the bow and arrow were not useful in their narrow, dangerous boats. Only a one-handed weapon can be used in such a place, so they invented the harpoon and the bird dart.

The harpoon is a long piece of wood pointed with bone or iron. It is fastened into a handle of wood called a throwing-stick. A cord of seal hide is attached to it at the other end. You should see our stout little Etu riding the waves in his kayak, and balancing the throwing-stick on his shoulder to send the harpoon flying straight to the mark. But suppose the harpoon lodges fast in the seal's

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body ; if the hunter still holds the other end of the cord attached to it, the creature in his fury may make such plunges as to drag the boat and all down under the water and destroy them. Something else must be invented. This was the buoy or float. So it was that Etu had to make a buoy to complete his hunting outfit.

He took the skin of a young seal, from which his mother had scraped off all the hairs, and tied up the holes made by the head and legs. Through a small tube fastened in the skin he could blow up his queerly shaped buoy to its fullest size.

Now the float was completed. Do you understand what help it would give? If the float is attached to the other end of the line when the harpoon is thrown, the hunter can let everything go. He does not need to have any part fastened to the boat. For the float cannot sink, and will show him where to follow



the game, and where to throw next; yet he is himself in no danger of being pulled after the animal.

Even now Etu would not be safe to go hunting in rough waters. He must have a special coat prepared. This, again, was his mother's work. The skin of the seal was used after all the hair was removed. The jacket was made to fit closely over his other garments. It had a hood to be drawn tightly over his head, long sleeves, and drawing-strings around the neck and lower edge.

When Etu gets into his boat he must fit his jacket around the hoop of the sitting-hole, and draw the cord tightly. And now he seems a part of the boat itself. No water can enter, and although the waves may dash completely over him he will keep dry, and the boat will not sink.

No boy could be happier than Etu was when his outfit was complete. He ran to

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meet his father to tell him the joyful news. Now he could be looked upon as a man, no longer a child. He would hereafter be allowed to take part in the dangers of his father's life. He was very glad.

This happy, good-natured boy, who disliked to say a cross word to any one, who would not fight with other boys, was certainly no coward. For his heart was set upon war,—not war with his fellows, but war with the winds and waves, and the powerful creatures of sea and land. He was ready for battle. Time would show that courage was not wanting when he came face to face with danger.

## CHAPTER VI.

### THE SEAL HUNT.

IT was about this time that Etu's father bored holes in his son's lips. These holes were made at each end of the mouth. Ivory buttons were fitted into them, and now Etu felt that he was more of a man than ever before. It was a proud moment when he looked in the bit of mirror his father had bought for ten seal hides, and gazed on his queer ornaments. He thought they were very beautiful, and then they fitted so well! The pain of having the holes bored, and the unpleasant feeling before the flesh healed, were of little matter to him. It was not worth thinking about.

It was a terrible winter, and food was scarce.

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There was a very small supply of meat on hand in the village. The first pleasant morning after Etu's fishing outfit was finished, he started off for a day's hunt on the ocean. Very early in the morning he and his father went out on the rocks to look for the weather signs. Yes, it would be a clear day; it would be safe to venture on the waves. The other men of the village were already out, and soon all were busy launching their boats. No breakfast was eaten; they could work better and shoot straighter if they waited to eat until they came back.

Each one of the party carefully arranged his harpoon, spear, and float on the deck of his boat; then, shoving it into the icy water, sprang in after it and quickly fitted himself into the small seat. The sea jacket must be drawn carefully around the hoop, for, if water should enter, the boat would soon sink.

As the hunters paddled merrily along, the

waves kept dashing over the decks. But the men sang and shouted gaily to each other as though it were the finest sport in the world. Yet it was a lonely scene about them; we should even call it fearful. Cakes of ice jostled against the boats here and there, and far out in the dim light a floating field of ice could be seen by the watchful Eskimos. Sometimes they hunted for the seals on such fields, for these creatures often gather in herds on the ice to bask in the sun and to sport together. But to-day they would search for them in the ocean itself.

The boats skimmed onward over the waves till the land lay far behind. Three hours passed before the seal ground was reached. Etu paddled steadily and kept up with the men who had so much more experience than himself.

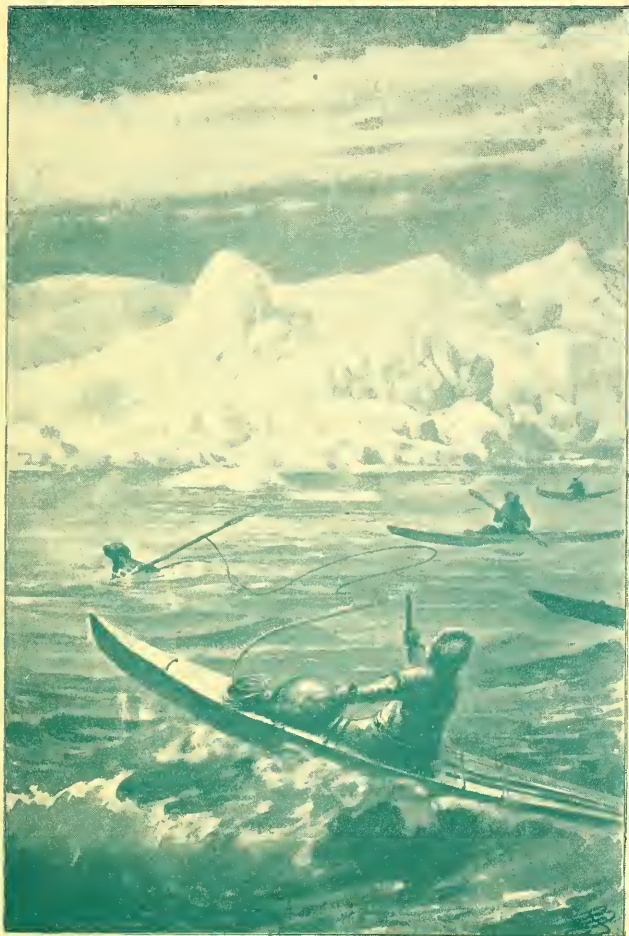
As his father watched him from time to time, he thought, "My boy will be a leader

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for his people when I grow old and weak. I have never before seen one so young show such strength.”

Etu's father was held to be the best huntsman of the village, and for this very reason was looked upon as the chief. The Eskimos share everything in common, but one man in a settlement is chosen as the leader. He settles the disputes and gives advice when it is needed. He directs the hunt and judges the wrong-doer. When he fails in strength it is but right that another should be chosen in his place.

When the seal ground was reached at last, the men moved away from each other in different directions; the singing and shouting stopped as they rested on their paddles and watched for seals' heads to appear above the water. Etu's father kept quite near him; he might be needed to help his son in case he was successful.



“WHIZZ ! SOUNDS THE HARPOON AS IT SPEEDS FROM  
ETU’S SHOULDER ”





Ten minutes passed, then twenty, thirty, but the boy did not grow impatient. His bright eyes watched closely, scanning the water in all directions. At last he was rewarded, for look! there is a brown head rising into view. The seal is easily frightened, and darts out of sight when he sees the boy in the boat. But Etu does not move a muscle till the seal has disappeared. Then he paddles rapidly toward the spot where the creature sank out of sight and once more quietly waits, but this time with harpoon in hand.

Seals are able to stay under water for twenty minutes at a time. They can close their nostrils whenever they choose, and they breathe very slowly at all times. But they must come to the surface after a time for fresh air. Etu knows this and watches.

Ah! the water moves again. The prey is to be seen and is but a short distance away. Whizz! sounds the harpoon as it speeds from

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Etu's shoulder and goes straight to the mark. Quick as a flash the float is thrown from the boat, and the coil of rope fastened to it runs out as the seal drags it along. He throws himself about in agony, but cannot free himself from the cruel harpoon lodged in his side. The water is stained with blood.

Now the float can be seen on the surface of the waves, now it is dragged below as the seal dives out of sight; but Etu does not worry. He must paddle far enough away from the seal, however, to keep out of danger. For although it is usually a timid and gentle creature, yet, when it is attacked, it grows daring and dangerous.

Etu knows of several hunters whose boats have been ripped open by seals; they would have been killed by their angry foes if their comrades had not come to their rescue. The boy has listened to stories of such narrow escapes ever since he was old enough to under-

stand these things. So he is very quick and watchful. He does not notice that his father has drawn quite close, and sits, spear in hand, ready to end the seal's life if his son should fail.

And now the wounded animal appears again directly in front of the boat. A good chance must not be lost, and Etu, seizing his spear, drives it straight through one of the flippers. It pierces the seal's lungs, and after a few gasps the beautiful soft eyes close in death.

"Well done, my boy," shouted his father. "You have won the first prize of the day. You shall treat our friends."

Now it is a custom among these people of the cold lands that when a seal is killed the successful hunter at once cuts away a portion of blubber, and divides it among the rest of the party. Etu, therefore, pulled the dead seal close to his boat, drew out the spear and

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harpoon, and coiled the cord attached to it. After putting these in their proper places on the deck of the kayak, he cut away the blubber, and proudly distributed the treat among the men, who by this time had drawn near. It was at least noontime, and was the first food tasted that day. Every one praised the boy's skill, and then all drew off once more to their different stations.

Before the afternoon was over, Etu's father had secured two seals, and two more were killed by others of the party. It had been a most successful hunt, although several accidents had occurred. One of the seals captured by Etu's father had succeeded in tearing the float into shreds before he was finally killed. Another of the hunters was overturned and almost drowned. This was because the cord attached to the harpoon had caught in a strap on the deck as it was running out. The wounded seal dragged him along as it

plunged, before he had a chance to free his boat.

Over they went, man and boat, and only the keel of the kayak could be seen. The seal, too, was out of sight. Did it see the man? was it attacking him below the surface of the water?

Three of the man's companions paddled rapidly toward the overturned boat. One of them reached his arm down under the water and, giving a skilful jerk to the man's arm, brought him up suddenly on even keel. Another of the party cut the cord with his spear. Still a third found the paddle, of which he had lost hold, and gave it into his hands. Then all started off in pursuit of the seal as though nothing had happened.

You must ask Etu to tell you more of the wonderful doings of that first ocean hunt. He will never forget even the smallest thing which happened on that day.

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It was near night when the party started homeward, and three good hours of paddling were before them. At length, however, the shore came into view. Nearer and nearer it looked to the tired workers. And yes! there were the women waiting and watching, ready for the good news.

Etu was not the first to land, for you remember he had a seal in tow, and those who are so burdened cannot travel as quickly over the water as others who have no extra weight. He travelled homeward beside his father's still more heavily laden boat; while both the man and his son pictured the mother's delight at Etu's success.

As the boats landed, one by one, the men jumped out, and started for home with their weapons. The women would draw up the boats into safe places. They would also dispose of the seals. The men's work was done, and nothing was left for them now except to

sit around the oil lamp, eat, and tell stories of the day's adventures. This very night there would be a seal feast at Etu's home, and hours would be given up to eating and making merry.

## CHAPTER VII.

### FEAST AND FUN.

IT did not take long for the hunters to exchange their wet clothing for dry garments. Then with their wives and children they gathered in the home of their chief.

“How could the feast be prepared so quickly?” we ask in surprise. If we could have been there we should not have wondered very long.

The people squatted on the floor in a circle. Etu and his father stood in their midst with big knives, ready to cut up the seals lying before them. Hungry as they were, they must not eat yet. Something important must be done first.

The Eskimos have many strange beliefs.



They think there is a spirit in everything,—the rock, the snow, the wind, the very air has its spirit. The seal, therefore, has its spirit, too, and must be treated respectfully.

Etu's father solemnly sprinkled water on the body, while every one watched him in silence. It was an offering to the animal's spirit. He next carefully cut away the skin and showed the thick layer of blubber beneath. The eyes of the company sparkled with delight. Many funny faces were made as each in turn received a huge chunk of raw blubber.

Please don't shudder at the thought of eating it. White travellers among the Eskimos tell us it is really very good, and tastes much like fresh cream. It is only after it has been kept for a long time that it begins to taste rancid and fishy.

After the blubber had been divided among the company, the bodies of the two seals were opened, and the blood scooped out. It

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seemed truly delicious to the hungry visitors. The last course of the feast consisted of the seal's ribs, which were picked until nothing was left save the bones.

How the people did eat! How they enjoyed the dainties served to them! There were many stories told by those who could stop long enough to talk. Etu was asked, over and over again, to describe how he killed his first seal. And each time the movements of his face, as well as his arms and hands, seemed to express as much as the words themselves.

At this strange feast, for which no cooking was needed, the women were not served first, as in our own land. It was the men who were first thought of, and who received the choicest pieces. But Etu did not forget his mother, and looked out to see that she was well served.

When the feast was over at last, all joined

in a song. There were only a few notes, and these were repeated over and over again; but the party must have enjoyed it, or they would not have sung it so many times.

At last the moon shone down upon them, and Etu's mother hastened to draw the seal-skin curtain. For her people dread the power of the moon, and do not willingly sit in its light. It is a wonderful being, and Etu has been taught that it brings the cold weather to his people. How is this possible? Why, as it dwells afar off in the sky, it whittles the tusk of a walrus. In some wonderful way the shavings are changed into the snow which falls in great sheets over the earth.

By this time the party began to think of going home. They must prepare for another "sleep," they said, and the people of the house were soon left to themselves.

Etu does not count time as we do. He speaks of a "moon" ago, instead of a month.

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Yesterday is the period before the last "sleep," and the years are counted by the winters. A fresh notch is cut in the wall of his winter home when the family leave it for their summer's travels. That is the only way his people have to keep account of the passing time. They do not write or read, except as they are taught by their white visitors, and Etu has never seen a book in his life.

The boy's father has shown him how to make good maps of the coast. They are very neat, and are measured so exactly that every island and point of land are correctly marked for many miles. They are drawn with the burnt ends of sticks on smooth pieces of driftwood, but if you ever visit Etu, you can trust to them in exploring the country.

On the day after the feast the other seals were divided evenly among all the people in the village. The successful hunters did not once dream of keeping them for their own

families. What! have a fine dinner yourself, while others around you go hungry! It was not to be thought of. All must share alike.

## CHAPTER VIII.

### HARD TIMES.

TIME passed by. The weather was terribly cold, even for these people. The hunters went out on the ocean whenever it was safe to venture, but the seals and walruses were very scarce. They had probably gone in search of warmer waters.

At this very time their winter stores were all stolen. Whenever there is an extra supply on hand, it is hidden in a deep hole underground, so that neither wild animals nor dogs can reach it. Such a place for stores is called a *caché* by our western hunters and trappers.

One night Etu was wakened by a great noise outside. In a moment the whole household was aroused. They heard the dogs

howling and rushing around. There was certainly a fight of some kind. Etu and his father were dressed in a moment, as well as two other men who shared the home.

“Wolves! It is a pack of wolves,” cried the women. “Don’t go out and leave us; it is not safe.”

But the men only seized their spears and moved as quickly as possible down the passage-way. They must go to the aid of the dogs, who had been left outdoors for the night. They also thought of their precious stores. The wolves had probably scented the place and were then attacked by the dogs.

In a short time the men returned to the frightened household. They were all safe. The wolves had fled, but the harm had already been done. Not a scrap of the precious stores remained. The dogs had finished what the wolves left behind them. It was the quarrelling of the dogs themselves over the food that

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had wakened the people. It was plain, however, that the wolves had been there, because the dead body of one of them lay close by the storehouse. The dogs had been more than a match for them.

There was nothing for Etu and his people to eat that day. There was scarcely any oil in the lamps. The women and children tried to keep warm beneath the piles of furs; the men went out to search along the shore for seal holes.

Our brave little Etu looked upon himself as a man now. So, leading his brightest dog by a cord, he started out in search of prey. The dog had a wonderfully keen scent. He would help in finding the hiding-place of a seal, if there were one to be found.

You may not know what a queer home the mother seal makes for her baby. She chooses a place on the solid ice that is covered with a deep layer of snow. She scrapes away the



snow and carries it down through a hole in the ice into the water below. When her work is done, she has a dome-shaped house. The floor is the icy shelf, from which there is a passageway to the water beneath. There is a tiny breathing-place in the snowy roof to which she turns when needing air.

The baby seal is born in this strange home. He lies here and sleeps most of the time till he is old enough to take care of himself. His mother often visits him. She hopes his enemies will not find him. But the bear, the fox, and the Eskimo dog, are watching for signs of just such hiding-places as these. Their scent is keen and they discover the tiny breathing-holes when men and boys would pass them by. This is why Etu took his dog along with him.

Perhaps you wonder why Etu did not let Vanya run free. He only wished him to find a seal hole; the boy would do the hunting

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himself. The dog, if left alone, might succeed in scaring away the old seal; and Etu wished to get both the baby and its mother.

The boy tramped for many hours. Remember, he had no breakfast this morning, yet he went with a bright face and a stout heart. When night came, Etu was still brave and cheerful, although he had met with no success. He went home and found the men just returning. They also had failed.

They could expect no supper, nor fire to warm them, after the long day's tramp in the bitter cold, but they must not show sadness; they must keep up stout hearts for the sake of the women and children.

After all, there was a surprise waiting for Etu. His mother had used the last bit of oil in thawing a little snow to give the household some water to drink. And, besides this, there was a scrap of seal hide for each one to chew. Tough as it was, it was received

as though it were the greatest dainty in the world.

After this meal, if it could be called one, Etu crept into bed, and was soon sound asleep. Morning came, and our little cousin started out once more in search of food. But he had no better success than the day before. When he got home at night there was good news awaiting him, although it did not bring any supper.

His father had found a seal-hole, and had said to the other men, "I will not leave my place till I can bring food for my hungry people." They left him, and went back to the village to tell his waiting household. His good wife at once got a heavy fur robe, and sent it back to her patient husband. He could wrap it about his feet, as he sat watching in the cold.

Perhaps it would be only a short time before he would hear the mother seal blow-

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ing at the hole below. But, again, hours might pass before she would come back to nurse her baby. Yet the man must watch and be ready to pierce the breathing-hole with his long spear at any moment,—it was his only chance of killing the mother.

The long hours of the night passed; the morning, too, was gone, when, suddenly, the quick ears of the hunter heard the welcome sound. And now, a second blow! the seal's head must be close to the hole. Like a flash, down went the waiting spear, and fastened itself through the nose of the seal. If it had turned a half-inch in its course, it would have failed in its work.

There was a violent pull at the spear, as the seal darted down through the passage from her icy home to the water below. But the hunter had a long rope fastened to the spear, and he let it run out quickly. Then, brushing away the snowy roof, he jumped down on the floor

of the "igloo." With two or three strong pulls he brought up the struggling seal, and quickly ended her life. It was an easy matter to dispose of the frightened baby.

What a prize he had gained! He did not think of his frost-bitten nose, nor of his empty stomach. He only pictured the joy of the waiting people when he should reach home.

When the hard-earned supper was set before them, you cannot guess what was the greatest dainty of all. It was the milk inside the baby seal's stomach! It was sweet and delicate in its taste, and was much like the milk from a green cocoanut.

There were many other hard times before that winter was over, but Etu did his part bravely, and no one died of want.

One day the boy hunted a seal bear-fashion, and was successful, too. He had learned many lessons from this wise creature, and he did not forget them. The polar bear, so

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strong and fierce, is also very cunning. If he discovers a dark spot far away on the ice, he seems to say to himself, "Ah! there is a seal asleep. I will deceive him, and catch him for my dinner." So he creeps, or, rather, hitches along, with his fore feet curled beneath him. Nearer and nearer he draws to his prey. And now the sleeping seal awakes. Is there danger? But the bear at once stops moving, and makes a low, strange sound. It is different from his usual voice. The seal listens, and is charmed. He turns his head from side to side, and then is quite still once more. The bear creeps nearer now; once more the seal starts, but is again charmed by the strange sound. Suddenly he is caught in those powerful claws, and the long, sharp teeth fasten themselves in his body. In a moment it is all over with the poor seal.

This is one of the lessons Etu learned from Ninoo, the bear. He followed his teacher



“ETU STOPPED MOVING AND LAY QUITE STILL”





well when one day he, too, saw a dark spot on the shore, quite a distance away. Holding his spear beneath him, he crouched down on the snow, and jerked himself along. For some time the seal was not aroused. Then, opening his eyes, he must have thought: "Is that a brother seal over there? His coat is like mine." Still he watched, for a seal is easily frightened. Etu stopped moving and lay quite still.

"No, there is no danger," thought the seal; and he closed his eyes again.

Once more Etu began to move, and drew quite near before the seal stirred again. But now the creature seemed to question himself once more.

"Is it a friend, or is it one of my terrible enemies?"

He was about to dart away when Etu began to make a low, strange sound. You would have thought it was the bear himself, he was

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imitated so well. The seal seemed pleased, and did not stir again.

Before another five minutes the young hunter had killed his victim. He hurried homeward with the heavy burden flung over his broad shoulders. You can imagine how proud his mother felt when he appeared in the doorway of the house and showed his prize of the morning.

## CHAPTER IX.

### AN ESKIMO CHRISTMAS.

NOT long after this Etu's people celebrated a festival. It was about Christmas time, but the boy had never heard of our own great holiday. Yet his own Christmas always means very much to him.

All the people of the village met together on a certain evening in Etu's home. The medicine-man was there, and made a sort of prayer. He prayed that all might go well with the people during the coming year. This medicine-man is the priest as well as the doctor among the Eskimos. After the prayer there was a feast. The hunters had done their best, and had managed to get a good supply of seal meat on hand.

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The next day after the feast, men, women, and children gathered together in a circle in the open air. A vessel of water had been placed in their midst. Each one brought a piece of meat with him. No one spoke while it was being eaten, but each thought of his good spirit, and wished for good things. Then each in turn took a drink of water from the vessel. As he did so he spoke, telling when and where he was born.

When this ceremony was over, all threw presents to each other. They believed they would receive good things from the good spirits if they were generous at this time.

Soon after this festival came New Year's. This, too, was a strange celebration.

Two men, one of them dressed as a woman, went from hut to hut blowing out the flame in each lamp. It must be lighted from a fresh fire.

The people believe there is a new sun in

the heavens at the beginning of each new year. They think they ought to picture this great change in their own homes.

The year was a moon old, as Etu would say, when one day he was out hunting for seal-holes with his father. They brought a pack of dogs along with them. These had just been loosened for a run when they darted off as though they had found a fresh scent. They rushed toward a great bank of snow on the side of a high rock.

Surely it was no seal-hole they had discovered. The small opening on the surface of the snow showed that it was the breathing-place of a polar bear. The mother bear eats vast quantities of food at the beginning of winter; then she seeks a sheltered spot at the foot of some rock, and begins her long rest. The snow falls in great drifts over her. This makes a warm, close house. Does it seem as though she must die for want of air? There

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is no danger of this, for the breath from her great body thaws enough snow around her to form a small room. It also makes a sort of chimney through the snow, to the air above.

The baby bear is born in this house of snow, and there he stays with his mother till old enough to hunt for himself.

It was the home of a mother bear, then, that the dogs had discovered. They were wildly excited, for Eskimo dogs are no cowards. They love a bear hunt hugely. They rushed upon the opening and quickly pushed away the snow. Etu and his father stood on the watch for the mother bear and her cub to appear. They were as much excited as the dogs, but stood with spears in hand, perfectly still.

Look out now! for here they come. What a tiny little thing the baby bear is! It is like a little puppy. It would be easy to end its life, but Etu knows that would not be safe.

It would make the mother a hundred times more dangerous.

The great creature looks now in one direction, now in another. It would not be hard for her to escape; but she will not leave her cub. So she rushes madly toward Etu's father. The dogs jump around her, biting at her heels. She does not seem even to notice them. Look at the long sharp teeth as she opens her mouth for a spring upon the man. One blow of her paws would knock him senseless. But he does not fear. He jumps to one side and dodges the blow. At the same time, he strikes at her throat with his long spear.

The blood gushes forth and she staggers. However, she shakes herself together with a great effort and rises on her hind legs to strike again. The pack of dogs surround her and keep biting at her legs, but the man would not be able to escape if Etu did not suddenly

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come up behind. He plunges his own spear far into her side. She gives one fearful groan and falls to the ground. No hunter will ever be troubled by her again.

The poor little cub runs to its mother's side, giving piteous cries. But no one is left now to pity and love it, so its life is mercifully and quickly ended. The men and dogs are soon on their homeward way. They must get sledges and go back quickly for the bodies of the two bears. Suppose that while they were gone another party of Eskimos should come along, need they fear their prey would be stolen? The thought does not enter their heads, for such a thing has never been known to happen among their people. They are honest in all ways, and would not touch that which they believe to be another's.



## CHAPTER X.

### SUMMER TRAVELS.

THE long winter was over at last, and Etu's people got ready to leave their underground homes. They would spend the first spring days farther up the coast, and closer still to the water's side; for there they could watch the seal-holes more easily.

The household goods were packed on the sledges, and Etu said good-bye to his winter home for four months. The men walked along, guiding the dogs, while the women and children rode in the sledges. They travelled nearly all day before they came to a place where they wished to settle. But the weather was even now bitterly cold. The snow still covered the earth, and the water along the shore was a mass of broken ice.

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Where were these people to be sheltered when night came on? The question could be easily answered. They would build homes for themselves in an hour or two. The sheets of snow around them were quite solid, and the boys and men began to saw the snow into thick blocks. The walls and roofs of the houses should be built of these.

Two men stood in the centre of each cleared space: the blocks of snow were handed to them. These were laid on the ground, side by side, in a circle as large as they wished the house to be. The foundation was quickly made. Then another row of snow blocks was laid above the first, but drawn in toward the centre a very little. Then came a third row, and so on, till at last there was just space enough at the top for one block of snow to fill it in completely. The new house looked like a great snow beehive.

But the two builders were shut up inside!



"THE BLOCKS OF SNOW WERE HANDED TO THEM"



One of the men on the outside cut a block of snow out of the wall of the house. This made a doorway through which people could go and come. It could be closed afterward, when the inmates desired, by filling it again with a snow door.

The builders now took loose snow and sifted it into the cracks and crevices to make the house quite close and tight.

After this, the floor must be trodden down smooth, and then the women could enter to set up housekeeping. A bed of snow was quickly made, over which the fur rugs were thrown. Next, a stand of snow was shaped, and the lamp set up in its place. The oil was soon burning brightly, and snow was melted to furnish drinking-water. In half an hour more our cousin Etu was eating supper as comfortably as he could wish. Not long after, he was sound asleep on his snow bedstead, without a single dream of cold or trouble.

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After a few weeks of seal hunting, Etu noticed that the birds were returning. There were great numbers of them,—wild ducks, geese, and sea-birds of many kinds.

The ice began to disappear, and it was great sport to paddle his boat over to the islands near the shore, and shoot a bagful of birds for dinner. But sometimes he stayed in his boat, and, moving slowly along the shore, would throw his bird-dart at ducks as they flew by. His aim was straight and true, and he was almost sure to be successful.

Spring changed suddenly into summer, and now the snow house must be left, for Etu and his people were ready to move again. Besides, the walls of the house grew soft, and would soon melt away.

Where would Etu travel next? you ask. He would answer:

“Not far from here there is a broad river where great numbers of salmon live during the

warm weather. It is great sport catching the fish. Now we can have so much rich food that we can all grow fat.”

Once more the dogs were harnessed, and the spring camping-ground was left behind, as the Eskimo party journeyed southward. When the river was reached, new homes must be made ready. But what material would be used now? There were no trees to furnish wood, for the forests were still hundreds of miles south of them, and snow at this time of the year was out of the question.

But Etu's people were well prepared, for they took their supply of skins, and quickly made tents out of them. It was still so cold that a double row of skins must be used to keep out the sharp winds.

And now they were ready for the happiest part of the whole year. They need not fear hunger for a long time to come. Plenty of fish in the river, plenty of birds in the air,

birds' eggs, which the bright eyes of the boys and girls would discover; and, besides all these dainties, they would get stores of reindeer meat.

“How could any one be any happier than I?” thought Etu, and he smiled a broad smile, making a funny face to express his joy.

In another country of the world as far north as Etu lives, the Laplander has herds of tame reindeer. They are driven as Etu drives his dogs. They give sweet milk, too.

Etu has never heard of these people, but he has been told that there is a place in his own country where his kind American friends have brought some of these tame reindeer from Lapland. Great care is taken of them, so they will grow and get used to their new home. It will be a fine thing for Etu's people to have these tame reindeer and be able to get fresh milk during the long winter,



as well as tame animals that will supply them with food when they are in danger of starving.

But Etu busies himself now with setting traps for the wild reindeer which begin to appear in the country as summer opens. They have spent the winter in the forests far away, but as the heat of the sun begins to melt the snow, they travel toward the shores of the ocean.

Here the baby reindeer are born. They are tiny, weak little creatures at first; but they grow fast, and in a few days are able to take care of themselves, and get their own food.

The reindeer have a wonderfully keen sense of smell. Even when the ground is covered with a deep layer of snow, they seem able to tell where the lichens and mosses are living beneath it. No one has ever seen a reindeer make a mistake in this matter. When he begins to paw away the snow with his broad, stout hoofs, you may be sure he has discov-

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ered a good dinner for himself. The lichens are tender and white, and taste somewhat like wheat bran. It is no wonder the reindeer grows fat on this plentiful food.

Etu hunts the reindeer in several different ways. Sometimes when he is out on the watch for them he hears a great clattering. It may be a long way off, and he cannot see a living thing, yet he knows what that sound means. It is the hoofs of the reindeer as they come pounding along.

He lies down and keeps very still. He watches closely, however, to see if the reindeer are coming in his direction. If he finds this to be so, he keeps in the same position and waits till they have passed by him and are headed for the shore.

Then he jumps up suddenly, and chases them with fury. They get confused, and rush onward in disorder. On he follows till they reach the water's side, where they plunge madly

in. They are good swimmers, but are so frightened that Etu is easily able to secure at least one of them.

Sometimes our Eskimo cousin goes a long way over the plains, and with his father's help digs a deep pit in the earth. They cover it over with brushwood. If a herd of reindeer should travel in this direction, some of them would fall into the pit and break their slender legs. It would be an easy matter then to come and get them.

But there is another way that Etu likes best of all. Soon after he came to his summer home he hunted about over the country till he had chosen a spot where the reindeer were likely to come. Here he built a sort of fort, or wall, out of stones. He could hide behind this wall, and watch for his game without their being able to see him. He spent many days of the summer in this place with one of his boy friends. They would sit there talking, or

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playing some quiet game, but their bows and arrows were always ready ; and their eyes ever on the lookout for the reindeer who might come that way at any moment.

Many times, of course, they met with no success ; but many times, too, they took a herd by surprise, and were able to carry home a goodly feast to their friends and relatives.

Reindeer meat is tender and sweet, the marrow and tongue being the parts best liked by Etu's people. But the most delicious food Etu ever puts into his mouth is the contents of a reindeer's stomach ! We must not be shocked at this, though it does seem a queer thing to eat, doesn't it ? The reason Etu likes it so well is probably this : the food of the reindeer is moss ; when it has entered his stomach it has a slightly acid taste, so it gives a relish the people cannot often get. Besides, it belongs to the vegetable kingdom, and Etu's people, we know, do not have the pleasure of

eating corn, potatoes, and other delicious fruits of the earth, so commonly used by us that we hardly appreciate them.

It was after one of these long days on the plains that Etu came home feeling quite ill. His head ached; his eyes were bloodshot; his hands and face burned like fire.

His loving mother was quite worried. She put her son to bed at once, and sent for the medicine-man. She got a present of deer skins ready to give him as soon as the great person should appear.

After he had accepted the deer skins the doctor put on a horrible black mask; then he began to move about the tent, waving his arms from side to side, and repeating a charm. Do you understand what he was trying to do? He thought a bad spirit had got hold of Etu; he believed the hideous mask and the charm of certain words would drive it out.

After awhile he went away, and Etu was

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alone again with his own people. His fever lasted for several days, but at length it left him, and he grew well and strong once more. He believed the great medicine-man had healed him; but we think Mother Nature worked her own cure through rest in his own warm bed. The poor boy was tired out, and had caught a hard cold watching on the plains.

As soon as he was strong his father said: "The trading season has come, for it is already two moons since we made our camp. We must journey southward to the great river. We shall see our friends from the western coast; they must have already started to meet us. Let us get our furs, seal oil, and walrus tusks together to sell to them, for, no doubt, they will have many things to give us in exchange. We greatly need some copper kettles and tobacco. Oh, yes, let us get ready as soon as possible."

Etu was delighted to hear these words. Now would come the merriest time. He would have a long journey, and he dearly liked a change. But that was not all. He would see new people, and hear of new things; he would have a chance to trade, and that would be great sport in itself.

Besides all these things, he knew his people would spend at least ten days with their friends from the west; and there would be much dancing and singing and story-telling, both day and night. Hurrah, then, for this summer journey!

You may be sure Etu did his best in packing and making ready. In another twenty-four hours there was no sign left of this Eskimo village. The dogs, the sledges, and the people were all gone. Nothing was left except a few articles used in housekeeping, and these were buried in an underground storehouse.

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If you wish to hear more about Etu, and of his yearly visit south; if you care to hear about the big whale he helped to kill last winter, and of his adventure with a walrus, you must write and ask him about these things.

And yet, after all, I fear he could not read the letter. You would better go and visit him. It is well worth the journey, for then you can see for yourself how a boy can be cheerful and happy and loving, even though he lives in the dreariest part of the whole world.

THE END.



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