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Journey Round the Island of Yezo

Author(s): T. Blakiston

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reduced rations; but at the latest date Sir Samuel had taken possession of a most fertile portion of the Bari country, where he found abundance of corn, and expressed himself as tolerably easy in his mind on that point.

"The Englishmen attached to the Expedition were in good health, but Mr. Higginbotham, the chief engineer, had suffered severely from fever."

The following paper was then read by Sir HARRY PARKES, British Minister at Japan :—

Journey round the Island of Yezo. By Capt. T. BLAKISTON, R.A., F.R.G.S. SIR HARRY PARKES introduced the subject with some prefatory remarks descriptive of the general character and condition of the island of Yezo. It is the northernmost of the large islands which form the Empire of Japan. According to a calculation made since the recent running survey of the coast by H.M.S. *Sylvia*, it contains 34,605 square miles, and is therefore larger than Ireland. In population it is sadly deficient, and, in the absence of a census, 150,000 or 160,000 is probably a just estimate of the total number of Japanese and Ainos. The latter probably do not exceed 25,000 or 30,000. The presence of this aboriginal race in Yezo, and the circumstance of Hakodadi, the capital of the island, being a port open to foreign trade, are features which give to the subject material interest from a foreign point of view.

Hakodadi was first opened to foreigners under Commodore Perry's Treaty of 1854, as a port of supply for the whalers which frequent the sea of Okhotsk. A foreign trade, which in 1869 had increased in imports and exports to nearly half a million sterling, has since gradually grown up.

It is not a trade, however, which, under the present circumstances of the island, admits of much expansion. Exports are confined almost entirely to the produce of the fisheries. Large quantities of sea-weed, fish, *irico* (sea-slug) and *awabi* (*haliotis tuberculata*) are collected both for home consumption and for exportation to China, where all edible marine products are in great request. Of the commonest kinds of fish, such as salmon and herring, large quantities are salted down, while the latter is extensively made into oil, and the refuse exported as manure. Labour is much needed, as the island, although possessing a rich soil, does not at present grow its own supplies. The greater part of the Japanese population are such as migrate to Yezo during the fishing season, and return at its close to their homes on the main island. It is very important for the future welfare of the island that the Governor should encourage the permanent settlement of agriculturists, and should also take steps for the

development of its rich mineral resources, which have hitherto been almost entirely neglected.

It is surprising to note how slow has been the course of progress in Yezo. The Ainos, who contested the possession of Japan with the first outside settlers (whose immigration appears to have commenced about seven centuries before our era), found in Yezo their last stronghold; but Yoshitsune, brother of the celebrated Shogun Yoritomo, established himself as ruler of the island at the close of the twelfth century. Its present condition probably presents but little advance on that in which he found it; and, under the harsh treatment hitherto observed towards them by their Japanese rulers, the Aino population must have materially diminished. These people present a very interesting subject of ethnic enquiry. In feature and in language they differ altogether from the Japanese, and are regarded by the latter as an alien and a subject race. No attempt has been made by their rulers to raise their social condition; they have no written language, and therefore possess no records of their past and highly ancient history. Their features indicate a wholly different origin to Japanese, Chinese, Mongols, Mantchus or Tibetans. While these races have beardless and hairless faces with oblique eyes, the Ainos, on the other hand, are distinguished by a profusion of coarse black hair which hangs from their heads in heavy unkempt masses, and mingles with the thick moustachios and beards which fall almost to the waist. Their eyes are large and round, of glistening black; their cheek-bones are not prominent, while their noses are large and well shaped. Their bodies, however, look thin and weak, they have a shambling gait, and their shrinking subservient air is expressive of a long period of oppression, and an utter absence of culture. They make their own coarse garments from the bark of trees. They are wholly employed in the fisheries or the chase, receiving rations and some clothing from their Japanese employers, but no pay, which would be valueless to them. They have not even been encouraged to engage in agriculture, and their settlements are for the most part confined to the sea-coast. Although many of the men are good-looking, the women are generally uncomely, and add to their unattractiveness by tattooing their lips.

Previous to the journey undertaken by Capt. Blakiston, only the southern parts of Yezo had been visited by foreigners, and it was by virtue of a commission entrusted to him by the Japanese Government that he was able to perform the circuit of the island. He proceeded by ship to Akis and Hamanaki on the east side, and landing at the latter point, proceeded by land from thence to

Hakodadi, having thus traversed 895 miles of almost unexplored ground. The want of funds obliged him, in most cases, to follow the coast-line. He travelled chiefly on a packhorse, in the simplest form, contenting himself only with the food of the country, salmon and rice, but meeting with the kindest treatment from all classes of the people, whether Japanese or Ainos, with whom he came in contact.

The fisheries along the whole coast are farmed out and divided into stations, each of which possesses its head-quarters or Quaisho, where the farmer or his agent resides, and where entertainment and accommodation are provided for travelling officials. The following description of the first one at which Capt. Blakiston put up when at Akis, is a type of those met with throughout the island.

"The principal house at the Quaisho is built in the ordinary Japanese style, but is of far larger size than usually seen in the towns, and everything about it seems large in proportion. At one end of the building are several apartments, fitted up with papered sliding doors and windows, for the accommodation of Government officers and distinguished travellers. In the middle is a large room with an open hearth, of sufficient dimensions to take on large logs of firewood, round which the Ainos and lower people of the establishments squat cross-legged, smoking and chatting, when they have nothing to do. An office is half-closed off from this place, and the kitchen is on the other side. Outside the back door are large cauldrons, used for heating water for washing and various purposes, and for filling the warm baths, so indispensable in a house where travellers are entertained. The ground before the house is neatly levelled, and enclosed in the form of a quadrangle by a sod-bank, in which are two gateways, with posts and upper cross-bars, painted black in the usual official style.

"Separated from the principal house, are carpenters' shops, boat-sheds, houses for some of the Ainos, and storehouses for the reception of rice, saki, rope, straw-mats, nets, and other necessities for carrying on the fishing business, and storing the produce of the fisheries."

At Akis, Captain Blakiston had an opportunity of observing the sea-weed fishery, which he thus describes:—

"After remaining a few days at the Quaisho, the *Akindo* was moved about five miles down the bay, and anchored off Ko-Daikoku Sima in seven fathoms, where, being favoured by remarkably fine weather, a part-cargo of sea-weed was loaded. This article is one of the greatest exports both for the native and China

markets from Yezo. It is collected in many parts of Japan, but the great source of the favourite kinds is the south-east coast of Yezo. Requiring simply the labour necessary to collect and dry it, this business is, probably, the most lucrative of any followed by the fishermen of the north. The season extends from the sixth to the ninth month, say July to October, during which time a large number of people are kept constantly employed. In its fresh state the weed is in appearance much the same as the 'kelp' of Britain, in lengths of from 20 to 40 feet. The mode of collecting it is for three or four men, according to the size of the boats, to work together. In the case of three, two go out in a skiff in fine weather between and about the reefs and islands, and fish up the weed by means of a pole with a crook on it, while their comrade remains on shore in charge of their straw hut, cooking, and looking after the sea-weed lying out to dry. On getting a full boat-load, they return and haul out the sea-weed on the beach, laying out the strips in parallel lines to dry on the sand. Every evening, or, in the event of rain, it is either housed, or collected in heaps and covered with mats. Two or three days of fine weather suffice to dry it, after which it is cut into lengths usually 3 feet 9 inches, and tied in bundles of half a picul each. A continuance of wet weather will cause the sea-weed, before it is sufficiently dried, to heat and spoil, when it has to be thrown away. Both Japanese and Ainos are employed by the fishing-masters for this service. The former are engaged by the season at Hakodadi, in June, and sent up the coast in junks or by land. Their usual pay is ten rios for the season, with food, and an additional ten rios between three of them if they make in the season 100 kokus (of 3 cwt. each) of dried weed, which they can usually do in a favourable summer. Including superintendence, food, mats, wear and tear of boats, and other plant, I calculate the prepared sea-weed to cost about 110 rios for 100 kokus. To this has to be added the Government duty, which hitherto has not been fixed by any certain tariff, but each fishing-master has paid an annual sum as rent for a certain part of the coast. Under the new 'Kaitago' regime, this duty, in the districts retained by the Government, is now fixed at thirty per cent. of all produce, with an additional six per cent. on arrival at Hakodadi. Selling on the coast, the fishing-masters always make one hundred per cent., and frequently two hundred per cent. of profit; so it is not astonishing that the principal men who have engaged in this business since the opening of Japan to foreign trade, have become mostly rich. The exports of this article from

Hakodadi in foreign bottoms alone, amounts to over one hundred thousand piculs per annum, equal to 6000 tons."

During his journey, Capt. Blakiston had frequent opportunities of observing the Ainos, of whom he furnishes the following general account:—

"The dwellings of the Ainos in all parts of Yezo are pretty much of one form, being composed of one inner chamber and a sort of porch. The roofs slant to the ground, with a chimney at the end over the porch, and an open hearth below it. They are composed of light poles, covered with birch-bark and thatched with reeds, grass, or scrub-bamboo. A small store-hut, either of the same materials or of wood, raised some feet above the ground, stands alongside; and usually some strong wooden cages, likewise raised on stakes, containing pet bears and eagles, for which these people seem to have some superstitious veneration. Numerous half-starved dogs are invariably loitering about.

"The men are usually stout well-made people, of lowish stature, with very heavy bodies. The hair of the head and beard is commonly allowed free growth, although in some districts many of them follow Japanese fashions in this respect. A well-fed male Aino is not a bad specimen of humanity, but the women are not to be compared with the men. They seem to age very soon, and get shrivelled up in their features; this, perhaps, is caused partly by the hard work they undergo, as they carry wood and water and perform most other menial services. I have, however, seen some young girls very good looking, save and except their lips, which are invariably tattooed, a fashion, I fear, it would take some time to become so familiar with as to admire. These people are all subsisted at the expense of the 'Okiyainin,' the lessee of the fishing-coast from the Government. They receive a daily allowance of about a quart, or a little over a catty, of dry rice per head. The able-bodied men, women, and boys, work at fishing, cutting and hauling timber and firewood, carrying produce, or as servants attending to house and general work about the stations. They likewise hunt, and, as may be imagined, are expert at taking bears, deer, foxes, &c.; but the produce of the chase has to be delivered up at the Quaisho, for which a small remuneration is made them in presents of cotton-cloth, thread, saki, tobacco, and such like. They generally hunt with bows and arrows, but a few match-locks are lent them from the Quaishos. The women employ part of their time in manufacturing a coarse kind of cloth called 'Atzis,' made from the inner bark of a tree which grows in the country. Some of the men are pretty fair carpenters. Their proper language is

very different from Japanese, having many words ending in consonants, the entire want of which is a peculiarity of the latter language. The tone of voice of the men is by no means unsonorous, while that of the women is a clear falsetto. In pulling boats or hauling at nets they almost invariably sing, and frequently when at work keep up a constant jabber, laughing at one another's jokes,—doubtless, the effect of their dependence on their masters, and the little need of forethought causes the cares of life to press lightly on them, for they are a very lively people. Most of those I met spoke Japanese, more or less, but the usual language in which the Japanese speak to them is a mixture of the two. As clothing they generally wear a loose 'Atzis' coat, bound round the waist by a girdle of some sort, and a breech-cloth, to which, in cold weather, they add leggings and deer-skin mocassins, with a deer-skin overcoat, mittens, and a warm cap, covering the ears and back of the neck. In summer, however, their brown skins are oftener exposed than otherwise, shewing their extremely hairy legs, whilst the thick long crop of hair on the head and full beards are sufficient proof against ordinary weather."

In only one instance did Capt. Blakiston find the Ainos engaged in agriculture. This was in Volcano Bay, where he observed that they grew successfully, millet, potatoes, turnips, and other vegetables. This fact, and the following account of his Aino guide, shew that this peculiar race possess a degree of natural intelligence and courtesy which denotes considerable capacity for improvement when the opportunity of advancement is extended to them.

"As I sat over the fire, before turning into my blankets for the night, my Aino kept me in constant conversation, being anxious to gain information about foreign countries, which he called Kara; and, being able to write the Japanese Katakana (he was the only one I met whom I discovered could do so), he put down English names for various things, and spelt them over and over again to himself to get them by heart. This boy accompanied me all the way to Soya during eight days' travel, and during that time worked every night at his vocabulary. He must have had a very retentive memory, for I do not remember that he ever asked the name of the same thing twice, unless it was that there was some indistinctness in the characters he had written, or he wanted to make sure of the pronunciation, which was not to be wondered at, considering that when without his brush and ink, he made shift with pieces of charcoal out of the fire to write with. He was so civilized an Aino that at first I doubted whether he was certain as to his parentage; but a peculiar pronunciation, his dark heavy eyebrows, and

the general contour of his features, convinced me he was of pure stock."

Their mode of salutation is given in the following paragraph :—

"My Aino was a stranger to these people, so on meeting, before exchanging a word, he went through a ceremonious form of salutation individually with each of the principal men. This they performed by going down on their knees, and holding out their hands with the palms together, rubbed them back and forwards twice, the *saluted* party following the motions of the *saluting* one; then they raised both hands to a level with the chin, palms uppermost, lowered them, raised them again, stroking the beard, lowered them, and performed the last operation over again, which completed the ceremony."

The character of the roads or tracks along which he travelled, and which, when these deviated from the coast, lay either through thick woods, or over immense lagoons, may be gathered from the following account :—

"Often I had to leave all to the horse, contenting myself with shielding my face from blows of branches of trees, and holding on with the other hand to the cantle of the saddle, to keep myself in position when descending the steeper places. Frequently my horse almost lost its footing, and had to make a sudden rush down the steep mountain-side in order to keep on its legs, the impetus carrying him at times so far that I thought he must either roll over or continue his slide to the bottom.

"The worst part of the swamps have timber laid transversely, forming a narrow 'corduroy' road; or broad rough planks are laid lengthwise. Sometimes turf, gravel or sand is put on the top for ballast, but usually such is dispensed with, and, being in miserable repair, these kinds of roads are not the best for horse travelling. They are, however, the only attempts at roads in any part of the island, and are never resorted to unless the natural state of the country is such, that travelling would otherwise be almost impossible. Elsewhere the sea-beach, or the rough mountain-side, with the trees cut away sufficiently to allow of the passage of pack-horses in single file, are the 'roads' of Yezo. It is to be hoped that, as the attention of the Government is now directed to the improvement of the country, one of their first measures may be the establishment of lines of communication, so essentially necessary to the development of its resources."

After nineteen days' travel, Capt. Blakiston reached Soya, the northernmost point of Yezo, arriving there on the 24th October. Soya is an important station, as it is the point from which the

passage is made to Siranosi in Saghalin, across the La Perouse Straits, a distance of 18 ri or 54 miles. Being pressed for time, on account of the lateness of the season, Capt. Blakiston only halted one day at Soya, and then proceeded south. The 'fall' colours of Yezo, which are very beautiful, are thus adverted to:—

"I felt," he says, "that it was none too early to turn southwards, for the weather was getting cold, and my limited stock of baggage included little clothing suitable for cold weather. I therefore set out on the 26th, in company with a Japanese and an Aino.

"Leaving the bay, we turned up a valley towards the south-west, where we had some experience of plank and corduroy roads not in the best of repair. Mounting the hills by a fair cut horse-path, we travelled along plateau-like land, till we came suddenly to the brink of a steep high bank immediately above the Sea of Japan, where a fine panoramic view lay spread out before us. Looking to the southward, the view was bounded by a ridge of hills terminating on a low point, where a few houses, barely visible, marked the fishing-station called Bakai. From there the sea-beach swept with a gentle curve to our feet, with a narrow strip of lowland intervening between it and the partially-wooded hills, on which the hardwoods, in their brightest 'fall' colours, mixed with the deep-green firs, showed out in fine contrast with the light pea-green of the scrub-bamboo covering the hill-sides. The lateness of the season had turned the oak-leaves a deep rich brown, the birch yellow, and the mountain-ash the brightest lake colour, which with the berries of the last, a rich scarlet, and some of the grasses a violet hue, made up such a mixture of colours, and so beautifully distributed, that an artist would have been at a loss to exaggerate them. As I gazed on this scene, recollections of similar views in the more northern regions of America came fresh to my memory; but I believe I can say with truth I had never seen anything to excel the fall colours of northern Yezo."

The principal places on the west coast of Yezo, are the settlement at the mouth of the great Iskari River, and Otarunai, which is the port of the great valley watered by that river. On that account Otarunai, next to Hakodadi, may be said to be the principal point of interest to foreigners on the island. Capt. Blakiston furnishes the following description of that port:—

"The first occasion that I was at Otarunai was on the 3rd of November, having travelled that day from Iskari (9 ri) on horse-back. Notwithstanding that I had heard it much spoken of by Japanese, I was struck with the place, not only for the picturesque nature of the locality, but with the many advantages it seems to

hold out as a place of settlement and a port of trade. The land, though hilly and diversified, has a sufficiency of level ground for building purposes, and fine slopes available for cultivation, while the hills and mountains afford pasture for horses and cattle, and an ample supply of wood. As an anchorage, the bay is capacious and well sheltered, with good bottom. A vessel can bring Takasima Head to bear north-east with six fathoms of water, shutting in Cape Ofuji, which bears N.E. by N. $\frac{1}{2}$ N., while the land on the far side of Iskari Bay is not distant enough to allow anything of a heavy sea to get up with easterly winds, and of course there is excellent protection from north round by west to the southward, from which quarters the heaviest blows may be looked for at all times of the year.

“The advantage of a good harbour, in fact the only one on the north-west coast of Yezo—the value of the productive fisheries on this part of the coast—the rich agricultural valley of the Iskari, for which it is the sea-port—and the excellent locality of the place for an extensive settlement—will, I believe, cause Otarunai to become a large place, second on the island only to Hakodadi.

“In 1869 the resident population of Otarunai and Takasima, which have hitherto been separate townships, was 3500 persons, which number in the fishing-season is increased to 6000.

“Otarunai proper, besides lining the shore of the bay, extends back on the slopes of a valley, and contains many houses of respectable appearance. Takasima is more a number of fishermen's houses scattered round the shore of the north-western part of the bay: it is, however, better situated as a place for working with shipping during autumn and winter, as the shore at Otarunai is somewhat exposed to northerly winds. The whole country in the neighbourhood is remarkably picturesque, the land rising gradually into high hills to the south and west, backed by wooded mountains. The hills and grass are covered with some scrub-bamboo, but this plant is not so prevalent here as in most other parts of the country. Some high precipitous bluffs overhang the sea, and relieve the uniformity of the shore-line, while a pretty cluster of pinnacles of rock stand a little detached from the high land between Otarunai proper and Takasima.

“The great resource of Otarunai hitherto has been its herring-fishery, the most productive on the whole coast of Yezo. The fish are exported in a dried state, as well as boiled for their oil; the residue, after extraction of the latter, being dried, is known under the name of ‘Kasze,’ or fish-manure, in which state it is shipped in large quantities to the South. The rice is likewise saved and dried.

Herring-fishing commences with the latter part of March. These fish, curiously enough, are not found on the Iskari shore. A certain amount of cod, awabi, irico, cuttlefish, and sea-weed, are taken during their respective seasons. Large quantities of firewood are required for boiling down fish. A great deal of it is brought from Iskari."

Iskari and the salmon-fishery, which forms the chief resource of the island, are next described.

"The mouth of the Iskari, having a northerly opening, is somewhat askew with the shore of the bay, which is in a line north-east and south-west. The next reach above the river runs parallel with the coast, and the town is situated on its left or western bank, between it and the sea, leaving an unoccupied flat sand-point strewn with drift-timber immediately at its mouth. The deep channel follows the bank along the town, where junks move five abreast, with gangway-planks laid ashore from the inside ones, where there is fifty to seventy-five feet of water. Above the town the river bends, and a long reach comes from the south-east. Its width opposite the town is about 300 yards, with a sluggish current. The 'bar' is a little outside the mouth, the channel over which is said to be rather crooked and variable, while the depth of water likewise varies, according to the season, from seven to twelve feet. When I was there, late in autumn, there was between nine and ten feet, allowing of the passage of the largest junks which trade to Yezo; but, later in the season, the prevalence of north-westerly gales and reduced currents of the river, cause the bar to silt up, it remaining shallow all winter till it clears again with the spring floods, caused by the melting of the snow in the interior, in April.

"There are some large houses and substantial godowns at Iskari, but a great part of the place is made up of temporary buildings, occupied only during the salmon season, when, besides the people actually engaged in fishing, a number of small traders and others resort thither, which, together with the presence of the junks—there were fifty-seven sail in the river when I was there—give the place during that time a busy appearance. The resident population in 1869, according to the Government records, was 350 Japanese and 430 Ainos; but, in autumn, the former was raised to 800, besides the crews of the junks, amounting to some 600 more men. The situation of the town is low, being on sandy soil but a few feet above the river or the sea. On the sea-side are a few low sand-mounds. The Government buildings and offices are on the opposite side of the river to the town, where there are a few other houses. A high outlook stands inside the Government enclosure, and there are some others in the town. The Government have

likewise some godowns for storing fish, &c., on the river-side at the upper part of the town. The Ainos live mostly in huts farther up.

"The salmon fishing, which is the great resource of Iskari, is carried on both inside and outside the river by sein-nets, which system is pursued at various stations up the river for a distance of fifteen to twenty miles, portions of which are let out by the Government to about thirty fishing-masters, while the Government retains for its own use certain parts, where they employ Ainos under superintendence of Japanese. The average catch of salmon on the Iskari (exclusive of the fish taken near its sources) is 20,000 koku, or 1,200,000 fish, equivalent to 50,000 piculs, or 3000 tons; but in some seasons considerably above this. The best fishing is about the mouth of the river, where 2000 fish are frequently taken at one haul, and outside in the sea sometimes as many as 16,000 are taken at once. The season of 1869 was a very indifferent one, so that the junks, representing about 30,000 koku, would probably be not above half-loaded. The fish are mostly not clean and silvery, but much discoloured, especially those caught up the river; they are, however, considered by the Japanese sweeter eating than the red-fleshed clean-run fish, but do not keep so well. By the junks they are carried to various ports on the west coast of Nipon, few coming into the Hakodadi market, as that place is supplied mostly from the east coast. The greatest obstacle to the salmon-fishing on the Iskari is the numerous 'snags' and drift-wood in the river, which greatly interfere with hauling the nets.

"The boats used in the salmon-fishery are large 'sampa' for running the nets, and small 'tsippa' (skiffs), or 'kawafune' (canoes), for other purposes—a 'sampa,' which is the usual form of large fishing-boats used round the whole coast of Yezo, and, I believe, not found in the south of Japan at all, is about 50 feet in length, by a breadth of 10 feet. Built with very great shear, high prow, and curved stem, they are good to ride in a sea, and easily hauled out stem foremost on the beach. Each boat carries a crew of about twenty men, sixteen of whom ply short oars in the fore-part; the skipper stands on a raised platform at the stern, guiding the boat with a large steering oar: two or three others attend to paying out the net, which is carried amidships; and when on the look-out for fish, as for shoals of herring, one stands right in the bow, leaning on the high prow, which is probably designed for that purpose. One hundred and fifty piculs (8 to 10 tons) is a fair load for one of these boats when carrying cargo. Japanese fishermen every year make long voyages in these large boats, when going to and returning

from the more distant fishing-districts; they are then built up with weather-boards, bamboo, and mattany, and carry a mast and sail. They have also on board rollers, small capstans, and gear for hauling out on the beach, which they are frequently forced to do when caught by bad weather on a coast where there is no shelter. These 'sampa' are certainly well adapted for the use they are put to.

"The smaller boats used on the coasts are the ordinary improved Aino 'tsippa' which the Japanese have adopted, having a flat solid bottom, plank sides, and square stem; but in rivers the Aino 'dug-out' canoes are more generally used. These are long narrow crafts, shaped out of a single tree, usually elm, and hollowed out tolerably thin. Bow and stern both overhang slightly. On the Iskari there are great numbers of them, where they are used for almost all purposes of river-navigation. The one in which I subsequently ascended this river was about 35 feet in length, with a breadth of 2 feet 9 inches. They are paddled by one, two, three or more persons, with narrow-bladed paddles usually about 6 feet in length, which are likewise used for poling in shallow water. Some Ainos use longer paddles. In paddling or poling, they stand up, except when taking it easily in going down-stream, when they frequently sit or kneel in the bottom of the canoe. The Ainos, like other savages, are very dexterous in the management of their canoes.

"Hitherto the Government has employed and fed most of the Iskari Ainos, or rather those inhabiting the lower valley, and they now use at their various fishing-stations about four hundred of these people, with fifty Japanese. In a good season they take 3000 koku of salmon, but as, besides subsisting the Ainos, they have on pay a number of idle yakonins, and these not being ignorant of the usual official mode of feathering their own nests, the Government makes little or nothing out of the business. During the fishing-season the allowance to the Ainos is one quarter of a sho of rice, an equal amount of saki and fish. At other seasons when they work for the Government they get the same allowance of saki, and double of rice in lieu of fish. On going into the woods to hunt, certain advances are made them, and they settle up."

Capt. Blakiston ascended the Iskari River, taking the southern branch at the point where it bifurcates. The importance of this stream may be gathered from the following particulars.

"A little before noon on the 19th November, I stepped into a canoe which lay ready alongside the bank of the river at Iskari. It was manned by three Ainos, and a young Japanese was in charge of the provisions, &c. Having taken off my boots, I made

myself snug in the bottom of the canoe, which was laid with clean mats, using my blankets for a covering, and the baggage piled behind supported my back. There was a small brazier containing a charcoal fire, which Japanese carry with them on all occasions when possible, more for the purpose of lighting their pipes than for anything else, although they have usually a small tea-pot with it. The Japanese laid himself down in the bottom of the boat, covered with his spare clothes and sleeping-quilts, and as the weather was cold, with more or less snow, he seldom showed himself after we first started. Each Aino handled a long paddle, with which they poled the boat along in shoal water near the bank, or paddled when the bottom could not be reached.

"We passed a number of fishing-stations, where the only buildings were straw huts. At many stations Ainos were working, superintended by Japanese, and at others Japanese alone. The country on either bank is one dead level, thickly wooded with large elm and other trees, with an under-scrub of dwarf bamboo, and willows on the lowest ground. The soil is entirely alluvial mud, without a trace of gravel, sand or stones. The concave banks, which are kept vertical by the wash of the river, were about 10 feet above the level of the water, and apparently constantly crumbling away.

"It is in this region that it is intended by the Government to form agricultural settlements, and, from what I could learn, the country and soil are well suited for such purpose. That this region is capable of producing wheat, oats, barley, maize, buck-wheat, millet, hemp, peas, beans, onions, turnips, beet, cabbage, potatoes, tobacco, and other vegetables and fruits of a temperate climate, I think there can be no doubt; for the soil seems remarkably rich, and the climate is certainly suitable for the growth of all the productions of the northern part of Nipon, except rice.

"That same evening an old Aino brought me a present of some fresh venison and a couple of salmon. I learned that he was chief of the Salsporo Ainos, about 500 in number. The Japanese who accompanied me had brought some saki on his own account for trading with on the river, and I therefore got him to serve out a liberal allowance, which I presented to the old man. He went through the usual form of throwing a few drops to the four winds, presented me and the Japanese in charge of the station with some in a formal manner, and then retired.

"The Iskari drains a much larger extent of country than any other river on the island. The northern branch has much the longer course, some of its waters being drawn from 70' latitude north, and its course cannot be less than 180 geo-

graphical miles above the junction, which would make its total length over 200 miles. The northern branch probably discharges considerably more water than the southern one; for the main river just below its junction is about 200 yards wide, while the south branch is only from thirty to fifty. This latter draws its waters principally from three large lakes, the southernmost one near to Taromai Volcano, and a great extent of swampy country in that district.

"Japanese have told me that a number of Ainos live on the north branch of the Iskari, there being a large settlement of these people some five days' travelling up it; and another five days above that, I met a Japanese who had been seven days up (say about 50 miles), where he described a great fall, so that the canoe has to be unloaded and hauled up by a rope, the baggage being carried overland to above the fall. We put up for the night at Tizi-Iskari, which is 25 miles from the sea."

From the head of the branch of the Iskari which he ascended, Capt. Blakiston crossed to Yubuto on the south coast, and his account concludes with an interesting description of the settlements around Volcano Bay, so-named from the presence of three fine volcanoes, all of which are in sight at once, and two of which, *Usui yama* and *Komano taki*, are in active eruption. The shores of Volcano Bay and its vicinity are also particularly rich in mineral productions,—gold, silver, lead, iron, petroleum, and coal. Skirting the shores of Volcano Bay, Capt. Blakiston eventually reached Hakodadi on the 29th November, having thus accomplished, from the time of leaving Hamanaki (in Akis Bay), on the 6th October, a journey of nearly 900 miles.

Mr. WINCHESTER said he had been over part of the ground travelled by Captain Blakiston in the latter part of his journey, and could therefore recognise the great accuracy of his descriptions. There could be no question as to the great natural resources of Yezo. It produced gold, galena, iron-sand, iron-stone, and copper-ore. The great want was labour and roads. The Japanese lived in villages along the coast, and the interior was only known from the descriptions of the Ainos. He had travelled from Hakodadi to Mori, and thence along the shores as far as the mineral springs of Kokumi, and back again to Hakodadi. It was one of the most delightful journeys he had ever taken. He set out from Hakodadi about the middle of May, when the lily-of-the-valley was in a profusion of flower all along the isthmus which connected the rock of Hakodadi with the rest of the island. This rock was a species of Gibraltar, situated at a corner of the island. He then took a road through the woodlands to the lake under the volcano described by Captain Blakiston. This was the only part of the island in which he saw anything like regular farming. The forest trees were similar in kind to those of the southern parts of Scotland,—birch, ash, various descriptions of pines, and mountain-ash. There was also a most magnificent maple. From the lake he passed over to Mori, where he first saw the Ainos;

and certainly any one who once saw them would immediately perceive the great distinction between them and the Japanese. The Japanese were a mixed race of Mongolians, Chinese, and South Sea Islanders, and were a striking contrast to the Ainos, who had long hair, thick beard and mustachios, and clear, well-set eyes. From Mori he went to the other side of the volcano. At a particular part of the coast-line, the strata, formed by successive eruptions, were so distinctly marked, that it was almost possible to count the years which had elapsed between the eruptions, by the depth of the strata. About thirty-five years previous to his visit in 1864, a very copious eruption had taken place, and all the trees then in existence were burnt, the bark being stripped off, leaving nothing but white wood. Beneath these white sticks was the undergrowth from the young seeds. This afforded some data for determining the dates of the earlier eruptions. From the volcano he went to Kokumi, where a hot spring issued from the side of the mountain and fell into three basins. In the highest basin the water was so hot that it was impossible to bathe in it. Invalids who could not attend the public bath were allowed to take the water away to their own tents or huts. The second bath was reserved for patients of a better class, who paid a certain amount of subscription-money. The third basin was evidently devoted to the common people. It was then very early in the season, and there were only about 50 or 60 persons there; but he was told that in the height of the season 300 or 400 people resided there. From Kokumi he went back to Hakodadi by a different route from that which he had first travelled, over a high chain of mountains and through beautiful woods. Hakodadi was certainly not favoured during the winter in the matter of climate, for it was exposed to strong north-easterly winds, and to a strong icy current from the sea of Okhotsk. The summer, however, was very delightful.

Sir H. PARKES said it had been recently proved that the warm stream from the south flowed up the west side of the island, while the cold stream from the sea of Okhotsk came down on the east side. The consequence was, that the west side of the island enjoyed a favourable climate, while the cold and fog were chiefly confined to the east coast. As the west side was also the best and richest part, nothing was wanted but industry, enterprise, and population, to make the island of Yezo as prosperous as any other part of the Japanese empire.

Seventh Meeting, February 26th, 1872.

MAJOR-GENERAL SIR HENRY C. RAWLINSON, K.C.B., PRESIDENT,
in the Chair.

ELECTIONS.—*Harry Rivett Carnac, Esq.; F. L. Cook, Esq.; Charles R. Cope, Esq.; Hon. H. Crespigny-Vivian; Edward Dent, Esq.; Joseph Dixon, Esq.; Isaac Broad Eade, Esq.; Don Juan Espinosa (Baron de Eldenburg); William Feuner, Esq.; James King, Esq.; Captain J. Liebenrood, R.N.; Arthur Styan, Esq., F.S.A.; Capt. Alex. Wood; Charles H. Westendarp; Lieut. William Thomas Wilson (Beng. Eng.).*

ACCESSIONS TO THE LIBRARY FROM FEBRUARY 12TH TO 26TH.—‘*Le Névé de Justedal et ses Glaciers.*’ Par C. De Seue. Christiania, 1870. ‘*Om Skuringsmøerker Glacialform,*’ &c. Af Theodor Kjerulf.

Christiania, 1871. 'Storm Atlas.' Af H. Mohn, 1870. 'Norskes Officiel Statistik for 1870.' From the Royal University, Norway. Portraits, framed, of Sir George T. Staunton and Dr. John Lee. Donor S. M. Drach, Esq. 'Antidote against Unscriptural &c., Geology.' By P. McFarlane. Donor the author. 'Madras Road-Book.' Edition of 1839. Donor S. M. Drach, Esq.

ACCESSIONS TO THE MAP-ROOM, SINCE THE LAST MEETING OF FEBRUARY 12TH.—Geological Map of the Lower Geyser Basin (Fire-hole River), Wyoming Territory. By F. V. Hayden, Geologist. Presented by W. H. Jackson, Photographer U.S. Geological Survey.

LIVINGSTONE SEARCH AND RELIEF EXPEDITION.

THE CHAIRMAN announced that the Council had been informed by Messrs. Cousens and Co. that the steamer, *Abydos*, with the Relief Expedition on board, passed Malta on the 23rd, and was expected to reach Port Said on the evening of the 25th, and Suez the next night. She would then proceed direct to Zanzibar. All were well up to the last accounts. He was also glad to say that the finances of the undertaking were in a very satisfactory state. Many of the contributions that had been received showed how great was the interest taken in the Expedition, not only in this country, but in distant parts. His Excellency Count Platen, an honorary member of the Society, and formerly Swedish Minister to England, had sent 100*l.* from Stockholm, and the Royal Geographical Society of Italy had also contributed 15*l.* Committees had also been organized in Scotland and Ireland. From Glasgow a cheque for 1000*l.* had been received, and 400*l.* had been subscribed in Edinburgh, although, the list not being closed, the money had not yet been remitted to the Society. A subscription was also opened in Dublin. Exclusive of the Edinburgh subscriptions and the 600*l.* balance of the Government grant at Zanzibar, the Society had at present received 4242*l.*

During the meeting, the President received a telegram from the Rev. Horace Waller, which he read, to the effect that the sender had just received a letter from Dr. Kirk of so late a date as the 6th January, and that there had been received, up to then, no news of Dr. Livingstone, nor, indeed, from the interior. The Sultan of Zanzibar was going to Mecca.

MR. CLEMENTS MARKHAM, Secretary, read the following extract from the 'Sydney Herald,' relating to New Guinea:—

"The schooner *Surprise* has been absent from Sydney some eight months. On her departure from this port she proceeded to New Guinea, and from thence cruised among the Line Islands. She is last from the Loyalty Group,