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The Distribution of Human and Animal Life in Western Arctic America: Discussion

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racés was due more to the timidity of the Indians than to that of the Eskimo. The separation was surprisingly complete, for although the Hudson's Bay Company had occupied trading posts on and near Great Bear lake for more than a century, they had never been able to enter into trade relations with the Eskimo, and did not, in fact, know that there were any Eskimo within reach. These trade relations, by the way, were immediately opened as soon as our work among the Coronation Gulf Eskimo familiarized the traders with the facts of their location and numerical strength.

On the whole our investigations tend to incline us against belief in any great antiquity of the human occupation of the Arctic coast. The evidence is all negative. Nothing that we have seen bears on the face of it any evidence of great age. It seems clear that the Eskimo came into Alaska from the east, and it seems probable that that event took place not over six hundred years ago at the most.

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Mr. FRESHFIELD: We are going to be asked to-night to transfer our interest, which has lately been so deeply and sadly absorbed in the Antarctic, to the Arctic. Mr. Stefansson, who is to lecture to us, is an Icéländer by descent, and a citizen of the United States, but was born, I believe, in the Dominion of Canada. At any rate, he has returned to his native allegiance, and the expedition which he proposes to lead now, for the further exploration of the Arctic regions, is to be under the auspices of the Government of Canada. Mr. Stefansson has already spent more than five years' wandering in the Arctic, very often with no European companion. Perhaps more than any other man living, he has lived with the Eskimo, and studied and made himself master of the lore and traditions of this remote and isolated race. He will, I feel sure, have a great deal of interest to tell to all those of us who are more or less anthropologists—and anthropology and geography are very closely united. There have been rumours that he has discovered a tribe of white Eskimo. I do not trust all the news that appears in the newspapers, but no doubt to-night we shall hear what foundation of truth there is for these statements and what are the probable causes of the peculiar features—the difference from other Eskimo—of this particular tribe. As I have already mentioned, the new and very interesting exploration which Mr. Stefansson is about to undertake will be under the auspices of the Government of the Dominion. We owe our thanks to Mr. Borden, the present Premier of Canada, and his colleagues, for the large view they have taken of the responsibilities of a Government in furthering to the utmost of their power scientific exploration. Long views of this kind seldom lead to loss in the future. There was a time when Mr. Seward, who annexed Alaska to the United States, was told he had made a bad bargain. I do not suppose that there is anybody in the United States who would now repeat that statement. I will not detain you any longer, but will ask Mr. Stefansson to deliver to us his account of his previous visits to the Arctic and of the Eskimo, and give us some idea of what his proposals for future exploration are.

Dr. A. C. HADDON: It seems superfluous to say how much we have enjoyed this lecture, as it is perfectly obvious we have done so. The point of special interest to me is that of the fair Eskimo to which Mr. Stefansson has alluded. I may remind you that the ordinary Eskimo is a person of short stature, with a large long narrow high head, a very broad face with high cheek-bones, black hair, the hair on the face is very scanty, and a yellow, sometimes brownish-yellow, skin generally

tinged with red. As a matter of fact, the Eskimo vary a good deal; in the west they have broader faces and heads than in the east. In other words, the Eskimo do not appear to be absolutely pure from a racial point of view, though their culture seems to be fairly uniform from Alaska to Greenland. So far as physical features are concerned, the Eskimo of Alaska seem rather to approach more closely to the natives of the north-west coast of America and those of north Asia, while those of Greenland appear to be narrower headed and somewhat distinct in other ways. None of these people, neither the Greenland nor the Labrador Eskimo, have fair hair, none of them have blue eyes like those whom Mr. Stefansson has discovered, and none of them have narrow faces except the Smith sound Eskimo, in whom the face is narrower than the head (Hrdlička). This is the problem which has to be faced, and it looks as if the explanation given by Stefansson were correct, that another racial element is indicated, for it is difficult to conceive how the environment could modify these people and leave the other Eskimo untouched when the conditions of existence are quite similar. I do not know whether the stature of the people has been published—the Eskimo, as I have stated, are a short people and the Scandinavians are tall. So far as the evidence is at present before us, it seems to me that Mr. Stefansson has made out a *primâ facie* case for a Scandinavian element in the people that he investigated.

Dr. THALBITZER: I have not much to add to what I have heard. I have enjoyed Mr. Stefansson's lecture in which he has put forth his ideas of this wonderful people he has met. I have come here from Copenhagen to hear personally what he had to say on this matter, and I am surprised how many interesting facts he has succeeded in bringing back from his eventful journey among our brethren who live in those northern regions on the border of humanity. I thank Mr. Stefansson also, for my part, for his interesting contribution to our particular science, viz. "Eskimology."

Mr. FRESHFIELD: If there is no one else who desires to continue the discussion, I shall, I am sure, be voicing the general feeling of the meeting in expressing in no conventional phrase, but in very hearty terms, the sense of the instruction, and I may add the amusement, we have received from a delightful lecture, and the pleasure which our eyes have had from the pictures which have been shown to us to-night. I have always felt with regard to Arctic exploration that its fault was its lack of human interest. The human side of the Arctic has been revealed to us to-night, I think, more fully than it has ever been revealed in this room. We have learned how men and women contrive to live tolerably happily and decently in these remote regions, how they endure the hardships of the climate and obtain sufficient food from the natural resources of their environment.

The lecturer has touched upon many interesting points, but none more interesting, more complicated, or more difficult than the results of the contact with civilization of a primitive and isolated people. Too often, unfortunately, we see the same disastrous results follow it in very different quarters of the globe. In East Africa one may hear similar tales of the result of the introduction of civilization among the native tribes. All progress it would seem brings, at any rate for a time, its attendant evils; yet these remote peoples must inevitably be brought into contact with the great swirl of the world. All we can do is to endeavour to make the shock as little harmful as possible to those whose lives we disturb. While the human side of the lecture to-night has been of the greatest interest, we have also learnt much of the nature of the country, of the coasts and islands of the frozen ocean. I shall not detain you any longer except to ask you to vote by acclamation a very hearty vote of thanks to Mr. Stefansson, who has come over from New York on purpose to give us this lecture, and has shown that he is in no way wearied by a passage of the Atlantic which lasted twenty-four hours longer than it ought to have.