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Author(s): H. Rink

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Sir ALLEN YOUNG, Sir L. McCLINTOCK, Mr. SETON-KARR and Dr. JOHN RAE exhibited a large number of ethnological objects principally from Arctic America.

The Secretary read the following paper :—

The MIGRATIONS of the ESKIMO INDICATED by their PROGRESS in COMPLETING the KAYAK IMPLEMENTS.

By DR. H. RINK.¹ (Communicated by DR. ROBERT BROWN).

IN a paper which I had the honour to present to the Institute last year, I tried to demonstrate how the dialects of the Eskimo tribes point to the interior of Alaska as the probable home and indicate the route by which they have spread over the coast regions from the Aleutian Islands to Labrador and Greenland.

The next question will be, how do the other peculiarities of the tribes agree with this conclusion? Notwithstanding the extreme simplicity and poverty of their mode of life, differences can be traced in their state of culture, caused partly by progress or new inventions, partly by certain habits being permitted to fall into decadence during their migrations. The problem is facilitated here by the fact that the Eskimo nation has been less exposed to that mixture and contact with other races which elsewhere renders the question more complicated. The changes have here more exclusively been dependent on natural influences, to which they were subjected in their new

¹ Besides the printed sources of information used in the preparation of the present article, I have been favoured by obtaining special communications from John Murdoch, A. Jakobsen, Aurel and Arthur Krause, relating to the West, Franz Boas regarding the Middle regions, and G. Holm concerning the extreme East of the Eskimo territory.

homes. For this reason the farther we go back towards their supposed mother country, the more of their original habits we must expect to find still preserved.

I shall try to apply the investigation here indicated to the chief Eskimo invention, the *kayak*, or skin canoe, and to the implements which belong to it. In Greenland the latter are known to consist of (1) The water-tight clothes which when in due connection with the kayak itself, entirely covers its occupant excepting his face. (2) The double-bladed paddle. (3) For ordinary use: the large harpoon connected by a line with the bladder, intended for retarding and weakening the seal in its course through the water. (4) The lance used to give it the *coup de grace* or mortal wounds. (5) For small seals: the "bladder-arrow," or small harpoon, with a bladder fixed to its shaft. (5) The "bird-arrow," or javelin, with long subsidiary hooks of bone on the middle of the shaft to strike the bird should the hunter have missed the mark with the primary point.

Beginning with the inland Eskimo of Alaska we find that he is still carrying on his fishery in the rivers by means of the birch-bark canoe just like his Indian neighbours, but in settling at the river mouth he has exchanged the birch bark for skin, at the same time protecting his small skiff against the waves of the sea by a deck. This of course may be simply the origin of the kayak; we find it subsequently improved with regard to its form and dimensions, but otherwise it remains the same.

The implements mentioned above appear gradually, as, after having left southern Alaska, we proceed towards the north and east. The first of them, the kayak dress, has been the latest to acquire perfection. At first the dress appears to be intended as much for protection against rain as against the sea. As far as I know they do not pass beyond this stage even in Labrador, and in Greenland not before they enable the kayaker to be quite independent of the dangers of capsizing or being wholly covered by heavy sea. Then, as for propelling the kayak, in southern Alaska, perhaps with exception of the Aleutians this is performed merely by the one-bladed paddle of the Indian canoe. The first proper double-bladed kayak paddles are met with north of the Yukon River, but even there the one-bladed paddle is still used on occasions, almost as frequently as the former, and as far as we are able to judge from models, this custom is still maintained at the Anderson River. At Point Barrow the one-bladed paddle always serves for common, the other only for particular use.

Then passing to the weapons, the bow and arrow of the Inlanders are even said to have been carried on the kayak in southern Alaska. While this, however, remains doubtful, it is

still a characteristic fact, that some at least of the javelins there are furnished with birds' feathers like the arrows for the land chase. But in the main it must have been already early observed, that a seal, even when hit by a harpoon will be able to escape more easily than a terrestrial animal, namely, by diving. To prevent this, a small inflated bladder was attached to the end of the harpoon, and in this way the "bladder-arrow" of the Greenlanders was invented. Only for sea-fowls this was found unnecessary, whereas the javelin for capturing them was fashioned as mentioned above.

The "bladder-arrow" is certainly met with on Kadjak Island. But by-and-by we see how it has been found necessary to enlarge the bladder, and of course at the same time the missile, by offering too much surface to the air, grew more and more unfit for being thrown to a suitable distance. In fact, specimens from Alaska are still seen of such a shape as would astonish a Greenlander. This inconvenience then gave rise to the invention of the large harpoon and the bladder to be separately thrown out, only connected with the harpoon by means of the long hunting line. This contrivance is unknown on Kadjak Island; passing to the north, loose bladders as a kayak implement are said to be met with for the first time just beyond the Peninsula of Aliaska, but only as a rarity, and even on Point Barrow the large loose bladder, like the double-bladed paddle, is only employed in exceptional cases, whereas the "bladder-arrow" suffices for ordinary use. I do not know where the more general use of the large harpoon and bladder begins; but in Greenland, in accordance with ancient custom, a boy is not considered a seal-catcher before he has captured his first seal in this way.

Now there is still one invention to be mentioned as indispensable in completing the large harpoon. This improvement also makes its appearance gradually from south to north, almost side by side with the loose bladder. Experience must early have shown the usefulness of fastening the point of the javelin on its shaft in such a manner, that after having hit the game it will be detached from the end of the shaft, and only remain fastened to it hanging by a strap. In Southern Alaska we see this tried in different ways, but further to the north, along Behring Strait, it is more perfectly performed. The use of the large harpoon especially required that the point should get wholly rid of the shaft, and the latter be allowed to remain floating separately; while the seal runs off with the line and the bladder. For this purpose the foremost part of the shaft is made with a joint, which enables it to be bent, whereupon the point and line will directly fall off. The movements of the seal in its struggle will occasion this. The same flexibility is given to the lance,

whereas, on the small harpoon, or "bladder-arrow," the point has been destined to remain fixed immovably to the shaft.

Finally, we have to consider that side by side with the improvements of the implements the kayak itself is rendered more suitable for its purpose by the necessary adjustment of its form and size. A peculiar construction, and especially a certain degree of narrowness of the kayak, was still required in order to enable the kayaker to rise to the surface again by means of his paddle, in case he was capsized. This art, which in Greenland also has been considered one of the indispensable accomplishments of a seal hunter, is, as far as I have been able to discover, only exceptionally known in other Eskimo countries. Moreover, it may be added as a curiosity in the history of the development of the kayak implements, that the extreme east of Greenland can still boast of one or two small improvements unknown on the west coast of the same country.

DISCUSSION.

Dr. JOHN RAE on being asked to address the meeting said, that anything either spoken or written by Dr. Rink, regarding the Eskimo, must demand the greatest respect and attention of everyone. Especially is this the case as regards the natives of Greenland, of whom Dr. Rink knows, from personal knowledge, more than any other man living, having made himself as far as possible, master of the subject.

As regards the Eskimo from Hudson's Bay, westward to Behring Strait, Dr. Rink's evidence is not of equally great value, depending as it does on the report of others, and not on his own observation. Dr. Rae entirely agrees with Dr. Rink's remarks on certain advantages of the Greenlanders' *kayak*, and the expertness of the kayaker himself, over those of the natives further west, where the *kayak* is much broader in the after part, therefore less liable to capsize, and could not be "righted" by the kayaker as the man of Greenland does when capsized. He had seen kayaks capsize both at the McKenzie River and in Hudson's Bay, and but for the presence of others the men would have been drowned. Along all the Arctic coast from McKenzie River to Hudson's Bay the double paddle is used, so also is the waterproof sealskin coat, tied round the wrists, the face, and round the rim at opening where the man sits.

The various parts of the kayak as mentioned by Dr. Rink, with the exception of one weapon, were well illustrated by a model of a Greenland one shown by Dr. Rae.

Dr. Rink said he had tried to demonstrate that the interior of Alaska was the probable home of the Eskimo tribe, and his *original* boat the birch bark canoe, which he still uses on the rivers of Alaska, "just like his Indian neighbours." Dr. Rae, with much diffidence ventured to differ entirely from this view, and his

opinions are on record in the journals of the Ethnological Society and Anthropological Institute; his belief being that the old home of the Eskimo tribe was the north-eastern portion of Asia, and that in their emigration to America they came from the west and crossed the sea, probably at Behring Strait.

Dr. Rae further thought that the original boat of the Eskimo was made of skin, and that when they went inland by the great rivers of Alaska and made a new home there, they, being an adaptive and clever people, naturally took to building and using bark canoes, as being more readily and easily made, and cheaper, as sealskins could not be obtained, except with difficulty. Dr. Rae considered that, under the circumstances, a change from skin kayak to bark canoe was no sign of degenerating, but rather shewed intelligence and ingenuity.

Mr. H. W. SETON-KARR observed that the model which Dr. Rae exhibited was the true *kayak* having only one hatch. The two models which the speaker exhibited were of three hatch *bidarkies*, as this kind of canoe is named in Central Southern Alaska. The sealskin canoe is not known further south than the Copper River. From this point west to the Aleutian Islands these *bidarkies* are one, two, and three hatch, rarely one hatch. Two and three hatch *bidarkies* were formerly confined exclusively to the Aleutian Islands. North of Bristol Bay only one hatch *bidarkies* are used. This is the *kayak* proper. Mr. Seton-Karr exhibited an Eskimo gut coat which he always wore himself, but he explained that he could not put it on as it was necessary always to wet these coats or *kamleygas* in order to soften them first. He understood that this word was from a Siberian word, *kamlaiia* meaning "deer-skin coat." Wearing these coats in a *bidarky* or *kayak*, and having them firmly lashed to the rim of the hole, one can pass through rough water and even breaking surf in safety. Bows and arrows are certainly carried upon the canoe in Prince William Sound and Cook's Inlet. He exhibited some of the bows and arrows used for sea-otter hunting. The barb is fixed lightly in the end of the arrow and remains fixed in the sea otter while the shaft becomes detached. and the gut string unwinds. The shaft then floats at right angles to the cord, and, acting as a drag, soon exhausts the animal. The arrow is winged with eagle's feathers, and the fore part of the shaft is white bone from a whale's jaw.

Mr. Petroff (who was a census agent for enumerating some of the Indian tribes in South Alaska in 1878-1880, and who was sitting near Mr. Seton-Karr at supper when the Alaska Company's agent was shot at with slugs from outside the house and killed by his side by a Russian Indian) considers that the Eskimo reached the coast from the interior.

Sir ERASMUS OMMANNEY, remarked that in his arctic voyages he had visited the settlements in Greenland, Okkuk in Labrador; on his search after Franklin's expedition he communicated with the small tribe located on the coast at the extreme north of Baffin's

Bay and the entrance of Smith's Sound, lat. 78° N., from whom he brought to England he believed the only Eskimo ever brought to this country, the tribe in question being isolated entirely from the habitable world, even from the Eskimo in southern Greenland, from whom they were separated by hundreds of miles of glacier. This singular tribe were first discovered by Captain John Ross in 1818; until then they believed themselves to be the sole possessors of the earth; on beholding Ross's ship they were amazed and terrified with fright, wondering with awe what the apparition of the ship would entail upon them.

It was at Cape York that the speaker fell in with these people, and induced one of them to join the ship, with a view to make him useful in his search for Franklin; the youth was about eighteen years old; he came aboard with three companions. On being taken into the engine room the furnaces astonished them, but when the engine was started they bolted on deck with fright. Being anxious to proceed, as he had a wish to bid farewell to his friends, he went on to the Wolstenholme Sound where he ascertained that H.M.S. "North Star" had wintered there. The Eskimo was named Erasmus York; he conducted the speaker to the winter quarters of his tribe, which consisted of several huts built with stones into a dome shape. Several dead natives were found in their huts lying in their clothing of sealskin, and there was a place of sepulture for the dead. A spear was removed from a grave by one of the officers, which called forth tears and entreaties from the natives, as they hold a superstition that the spear is required after death for hunting in another world.

As regards the origin of these people, this native gave evidence of Asiatic descent: in form and features he was of Mongolian type, the eyes being placed in an angular line as in the Chinese, wide apart, high cheek bones, flattish nose, sallow complexion, straight black hair, wide across the forehead, about five feet four inches in height. From the traces of their settlements along the south shores of the Parry Islands, it must be concluded that these people had in former times gradually migrated from Behring's Straits.

It is remarkable that the habits, dress, and implements correspond with those of the Eskimo on the continent, Labrador, and South Greenland.

He passed the winter with the party after Sir Erasmus Ommanney had discovered the first traces ever found of Franklin's ships; the party was frozen up for eleven months, and during that time he became accustomed to our habits and learnt to read and write. On the speaker's return to England he was sent to the Missionary College of St. Augustine's College, Canterbury, for three years; the mind did not expand beyond the rudiments of the three R's. He was docile, amiable, taciturn, had naturally good manners, and was devoid of excitement. He showed a taste for drawing; and delineated a good map of the country and coast of his native land. The animals on which these people subsisted were seals, walrus,

deer, and birds. They did not possess the kayak, or canoe, in use by the other Eskimo.

Sir LEOPOLD McCLINTOCK desired to express his admiration of the genius and the enthusiastic perseverance of the author of the paper, Dr. Rink, through whose labours our knowledge of the habits and traditions of the Greenland Eskimo has been so greatly increased.

He exhibited to the meeting some interesting woodcuts, being the work of these people in Greenland, illustrating their mode of life, their traditions, including their conflicts with the Scandinavians and their weapons. Dr. Rink, who had fostered these efforts at producing woodcuts, very justly appealed to them as evidence of the capacity of the Greenlanders for improvement and elevation.

Sir Leopold also exhibited a toy sledge, from the Eskimo living under the 78th parallel—and therefore nearer to the North Pole than any other people. It was composed, like their large sledges, of pieces of drift wood, bones, and walrus ivory, ingeniously bound together with strings of seal skin. He remarked that here in the north-west corner of Greenland, the further migration of the Eskimo was checked by impassible limits of ice and snow, and in this desperately severe climate, their privations were so great that their lives were spent in a constant struggle for subsistence; they were unable to supply themselves with kayaks, or bows and arrows. They were but few in number and they were decreasing yearly. In reply to the President he said he saw no greater difference between this remote tribe and other Eskimo further south along the shores of Baffin's Bay than was due to the greater severity of their climate and the greater privations they were subjected to.

Miss BUCKLAND requested some of the Arctic explorers to inform her whether bows made of bone were used by the Eskimo, as there were two in the Bath Museum among relics brought over by Ross or Parry, which she understood had been taken from Eskimo graves, and as one was broken, she wished to know whether it is the custom of these people to break weapons and other implements buried with the dead as is done by some races either with the idea of sending the spirit of the implement to join the spirit of the man, or with the more utilitarian idea of preventing its being abstracted and used by the living.

Professor FLOWER read extracts from two letters addressed to him by Mr. COUTTS TROTTER, dated from s.s. "Lübeck," between Samoa and Sydney, December 19th and 22nd, 1886.