

A Glimpse of Naparyararmute--the Hooper Bay People

By M. S. IVANOFF

At the annual conference in Minneapolis last June it was decided to begin missionary work at Hooper Bay, Alaska. Mr. and Mrs. M. S. Ivanoff have been called to this work and the following article gives our readers a vivid description of the natives, their home life and customs. May we not forget our missionaries who labor so faithfully and quietly in the land of the eternal snow.—Editor.

Before proceeding any further my readers must get the right pronunciation of the name of the place that we are now going to talk about. Na-par-yar-ar-mute; the sound of the "r" you must say from way down your throat. Now then, Na-par-yar-ar-mute. Not quite so. I say the "r"-sound must be said down in your throat. Now, try again, Na-par-yar-ar-mute. There we have it! Naparyarak is the real name for the place, while Naparyararmute stands for the people of this particular place.

This village is approximately 250 miles south of Unalakleet. We all know where Unalakleet is, as it is one of our mission stations. Therefore I measure the distance from there. To navigate and get to the new mission field one takes any small-size schooner—a gas boat preferably—and goes by way of St. Michael, thence a short cut through a canal until one gets out on the open sea. Point Romanoff then comes in sight, a point which one must pass by before entering the famous river, the Yukon. Immediately after entering this river one gets in contact with many people. Here I wish to stop a while to describe to my readers and Christian friends the ways and habits of this people of the Lower Yukon.

Just as soon as one enters the Yukon one can see fishing camps; camp after camp on the right bank and on the left of the river. There were two special camps that took my attention. Each camp must have had at least a hundred people. This may seem a very small number when one does not look at it in a spiritual sense. But looking at them as being living souls—Oh, how great that number is! Souls that are starving in want of spiritual food! One cannot help but feel guilty. How much are we doing in feeding hungry souls?

The Lower Yukon is noted for the abundance of fish it carries. It was no wonder then to see fish here and there along its banks. It is also noted for the many different kinds of game, different species of fowls, as ducks and geese; fur-bearing animals, etc. To this place comes the white man to buy the skins from the natives. The natives get cash in return and then go to some store to buy the "grub." There are also some traders all



Mr. and Mrs. M. S. Ivanoff and children

along the Yukon, to which the natives go to sell what they catch. So one can see that the natives of the Lower Yukon are not starving from want of physical food, but they certainly are starving from want of spiritual food.

After passing so many people, curbs, and bends, along this river, we next come to a place, or rather a camp, but not occupied. I asked my nephew Alvin, who was quite familiar with this place, what this particular place was. He answered that this was the place at which the Catholic Mission at Akulurak had had their Eskimo children while they had been fishing. I again asked where this Mission was and was told that they were out of our course. For a few moments I thought again of these poor people that are starving in want of spiritual food. May God open our eyes that we may see the needs of souls that are in want!

We now reach the south mouth of the Yukon, where we must get through to get out to the open sea once more. But before leaving the main river we see at a distance of about forty miles some mountains close to which our missionaries, Mr. and Mrs. Wilson are stationed. It was, indeed, unfortunate for us that we did not have the time to go and visit these our friends. Before long the mountains have disappeared, and we find ourselves out on the sea not to make any more stops until we come to Naparyarak, our destination.

After propelling along the coast a day and a night, we now have the school building of Hooper Bay village in view. "What

a nice school building that is," we were all saying. "I wonder, if it will be as nice as our school at Shaktolik," some of our children said. I myself really wondered whether it would be. But where was the village? We then turned around a point, and then, in a somewhat corner-like space, we saw the village.

Coming in to the Bay, we had to anchor quite far out, as we did not know the channel of the river. After an hour or so someone came out in a kayak; right behind the first one came another, and then another, until there were about a dozen kayaks around our boat, The Good Hope. Some might have come to show us the way in, but most of them had come to buy some tea and tobacco. Some were fortunate, getting the tea, others were equally fortunate, not getting the tobacco, as our boat did not carry any of that stuff. After an hour or so of chatting, we lifted anchor and sped towards the channel of the river, piloted by one of the new friends that had come aboard. Here we met our unknown friends, the school teachers that were just ready to leave, and also many of the village people. The school teachers were very kind to us in every respect. They invited us to a good dinner which we enjoyed very much. Soon after the dinner was over with, the Good Hope was unloaded of our winter supplies, and then we had to bid farewell to our dear folks that had brought us here, and to the school teachers, whom we had come to relieve of their work.

So here we are now at Naparyarak. May God abundantly bless the work that is to be done here! You have already learned how to pronounce the name of the village. Now the next is to know the meaning of it. Naparyarak means, as we have found out after a month's stay, "A mighty place," having an imaginary immense pole set fast to hold the village from some supposed enemies. With them it is no imaginary pole but a real one. Some superstition is involved, of course. Seeing two poles near the village, one cannot but ask what they are for. One day I found out that they were idols. Idols set up on poles. From these the name, Naparyararmute, might have originated. "Mute," the last syllable of the word, comes on every name of the villages in this part of Alaska, and designates the people of a certain place, as we, for instance, say Nomites for the people of Nome and Americans about the people of America. The village is located on a small hill or knoll and is east of the school building at a distance of about two hun-

dred yards. The school house and the teacher's residence are on a little higher hill but separate from that of the village.

The Home of an Eskimo

Most of the people live in igloos, dug-outs. I must say that this is the filthiest village I have ever seen. There are one hundred seventy-four people living in a patch of ground, the area I should judge to be not more than a hundred feet square. The reason for their staying in such a small place is, as I understand it, their fear of some supposed enemies to come to make war on them. I have been told by one of the oldest men in the village that many years ago people from other villages would come to Hooper Bay, trying to kill the people there. The igloos are so placed that the people can travel from place to place by digging their way through the earth without any need of going out. You know how the gophers and the rats do. Well, these people are doing the same thing. Several igloos have one main entrance, and as one comes in to that one, smaller passageways lead off to several igloos. The doors, too, are so low and narrow that one with a full stomach finds difficulty in getting in. These igloos serve as storehouses as well as living quarters. There is fresh fish and dried, seal oil, berries and anything they have in their possession; all is kept in the igloos. For bedding they use very little. Some of the poorer ones simply use a little dried hay spread out under themselves. One good thing is that they have their resting places raised somewhat above the running mud, so they don't have to lie right in it. "But say, what are those things hanging here and there in the igloo?" They are dried up small birds. Some are snipes and others are smaller birds, the first ones that the children in the home have killed. These are dried with feathers, skin and all. Then they are reserved for the coming feasts to be sacrificed—to the devil, I suppose. They hold many very queer customs and beliefs, all of which I can not state.

One afternoon I was down to the river to pull up our boat. I had a little ax in my hand. One old native came along and asked me what I was going to do with the ax. In reply I said that I was going to cut off a little of the bank's edge so as to pull up the boat, "No, no," he said, "you must not do that. You'll drive all our tomcods away, and they shall never come back to this river." For a moment I could not say anything. Finally I told the old man that it was necessary for me to do this and that the tomcods would not mind. He gave a smile as to say, "Go ahead." It happened so that the next morning the tomcods came in so thick that everybody went out with their kayaks and filled them with tomcods to the brim. I guess after this they will rather like to see

me with an ax in hand, cutting away the banks of the river.

Eager to Attend Church Services

Although I have said so many things against these people, I also have some good things to say for them. They are a very lowly people and always ready to help in little things, especially so when there is a little tea in sight.

Each Sunday we have the morning service at 10:30. One hardly needs to ring the bell to call them together. Most of them come before we ring. One Sunday morning, a little before the time for ringing the bell, our oldest son, Harold, and I were playing the organ and the violin. The sound of the music was enough to bring them in. Try that in your churches and see what the result will be. The Spirit of God is being felt at times in our gatherings. It is a good thing that here is none that is working against the work of the Lord. Several days ago a young man came to me and said: "Well, I have gotten rid of all my idols and may die, but I want to serve the only true and living God." After a pause I said: "Die! No, you shall not die, because you have thrown away your idols but you shall live with God. Thank God!" There was still another, an old woman, that had her adopted child to abandon his idols, meaning that she wanted him to serve the living God. The Lord be praised for his wonderful power over Satan and his devices!

Funeral Customs

The burial of a little girl not very many days ago showed so clearly their ignorance of the future state of mankind. They have very little or no conception at all of what is to come after this life. I have seen some very sad funerals among our own people at home but it is like nothing compared to this. One might say it is almost a joy compared to the sorrow that these people have for their dead. Why is it thus? What makes the great contrast? This little girl had been sick with pneumonia. The parents were treated as if they had been outcasts. No one came to comfort them during these hours of anxiety. Mrs. Ivanoff and myself were the only ones that would go to see them and to give them what we thought would help them. We would also talk to the parents about the love of God and about the future welfare. This would somewhat cheer them, and then we would leave them. One day we were there when, to our surprise, we were asked not to come any more. The reason for this was that they thought the child would get worse and soon die if we should continue to come. What should we do now? After we had thought it over we decided that it probably would be best not to go there any more until we were called for. We advised them, however, that, if they needed anything in the line

of medicine or food, they could get that. While at my school work one afternoon I was told by several men that the little girl had passed away and that they needed some lumber for a coffin. There was nothing in the line of boards that was suitable for the purpose, but I had some old boxes which I gave them. These they took and made the coffin.

Since I was quite anxious to know where they would place the body of the child and how the dead ones were handled, I walked down to the village to see. Before getting into the village, but only a few feet away from it, I saw where they had left the coffin amongst the rest of the graves. Evidently this was to be the place where they would put the child. I had told the people once before that it was bad to have the graves right close to the village, especially when they are placed right on top of the ground where the boxes are exposed to the sun and the rain. "This will never do," I said to myself. Taking up the coffin, I continued to go to the place where the dead child was. I greatly disliked to interfere in such circumstances but felt that I had to. Stepping into the house, in which the sorrowful parents, brothers, and sisters of the dead child were, the first thing I noticed was a burning seal-oil lamp, opposite to this light was the dead child placed in a sitting posture. Her eyes were wide open, as if she had been looking at the burning lamp. What a sad sight it was! At times the parents seemed to forget their grief. Then they would smile to the dead child and whisper to it. It seems that they would just imagine that the child was not dead, but then again the reality stood before them and they burst out in mourning and weeping. Poor people with not a ray of hope to see their beloved ones again!

The graveyard, as I have said before, is so close to the village that one might as well say it is right in it. Coffins are made of box boards, placed right on top of the ground, exposed to sun and rain. Another graveyard is close to the school building and the nearest grave or coffin placed there during the former teacher's time is only about 100 feet away. Is it any wonder that one has to interfere in such a case? It is still the custom in many Eskimo villages that the dead ones are placed right on top of the ground. One can hardly make them bury the dead ones. In this case I succeeded, however, in getting them to place the coffin in a place about a quarter of a mile away from the village.

The people here have many queer customs at the death of some one. For four days after the death of a person the people will keep from working. They do not touch anything during this time with any sharp edge as that of an ax or a knife. They are not allowed to wash, to comb their hair, or to hunt. Rather nice for a lazy

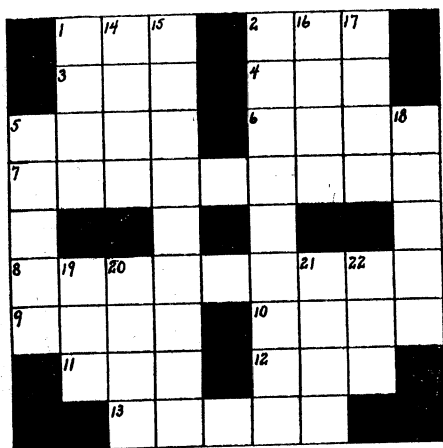
person but hard for a worker. But such are the ways and customs of these people, and God only can change them.

Much prayers are needed from our Christian friends for the work that is being carried on here. We feel that it is only through prayers that something can be accomplished for the Lord. Both Mrs. Ivanoff and myself feel thankful that we are called to do a little for our dear Lord. We feel that we are not doing enough and at times get discouraged, but we look to the Lord in prayer. He gives us the

strength and courage we need. We also wish to express our hearty thanks to all our Christian friends that are so interested in the welfare of the natives, physically as well as spiritually. The baby clothing that our friends, the Osts, sent us to give to some poor child came in very handy. These were given to a young woman who gave birth to a child not long ago. How glad she was to receive such nice dresses! We are thankful to Mr. and Mrs. Ost for their kindness.

Biblical Cross Word Puzzle No. XXVII

By E. Gust. Johnson.



Horizontal

1. A symbol of the new testament or covenant.
2. A son of Zophah, a descendant of Asher.
3. Tree mentioned by a prophet.
4. A city in Benjamin, near Lod and Hadid.
5. What God would have all men to be.
6. A royal gift to Joseph.
7. White, marble-like material out of which containers were made.
8. A N. T. mother, a descendant of Aaron. (Use possessive case and Swedish spelling.)
9. Become foolish. See 50th chapter of a prophet.
10. Gifts of charity.
11. To know; to be acquainted with.
12. N. T. name of Saul's father.
13. What the keepers of the tomb did when they saw the risen Lord.

Vertical

1. Part of the sacrificial animal to be burnt on the altar.
2. Mode of travel of carriers by which letters were sent out by a king who reigned from India to Ethiopia.
3. A Manassite, the father of one of the spies.
4. A son of Abinadab who died for touching the ark. (Swedish spelling.)
5. A city in Egypt referred to by Ezekiel. (Spelling varies; use the one with a h.)
6. Two words in the Master's answer to the Pharisees' question: "Is it lawful to heal on the sabbath days?"

Solution to Cross Word Puzzle No. XXVI



Where These Answers are Found

- | Horizontal | Vertical |
|-------------------|-------------------|
| 1. 1 Kings 4: 31. | 5. Gen. 36: 41. |
| 2. Matt. 2: 22. | 9. Matt. 21: 2. |
| 3. Hos. 13: 8. | 10. Judg. 3: 15. |
| 4. Neh. 11: 31. | 11. Gen. 46: 21. |
| 5. Mark 15: 34. | 12. Neh. 12: 9. |
| 6. 1 Chr. 2: 31. | 13. Gen. 36: 32. |
| 7. Josh. 15: 54. | 14. Rom. 16: 32. |
| 8. 1 Chr. 4: 35. | 15. Esth. 3: 1. |
| | 16. Gen. 46: 10. |
| | 17. Col. 4: 6. |
| | 18. Josh. 19: 38. |
| | 19. Acts 26: 13. |
17. Said of a thing or an act when completed.
 18. What the behemoth eats.
 19. A state or condition to which pride will bring a man. (Proverb.)
 20. What Jehonadab answered those who asked him: "Is thine heart right?"
 21. Great-grandfather of Samuel the prophet. (Leave off last letter.)
 22. Initial letters of an object made of pure gold in the holy sanctuary.

HONOR ROLL

CALIFORNIA: Ellen E. Falk, Turlock.
CONNECTICUT: Mrs. Hannah M. Gustafson, Middletown.
ILLINOIS: Hazel M. Dahlstrom, Batavia; Esther Bjorklund, Elgin; Emma M. Lalky, Chicago.
IOWA: Florence A. Strom, Essex; Delia and Ella Falk, Red Oak; Mrs. A. W. Samuelson, Gowrie; Emory Gustafson, Lanyon; Florence Wetterholm, Red Oak; Joe Johnson, Pomeroy; Anna Nordquist, Red Oak.

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WISCONSIN: Naemi Johnson, Superior; Edith Fagerlin, Superior.

Additions to last month's list

Evelyn Benson, Bracken, Sask; Urban Simons, Portland, Ore.; Mr. and Mrs. Charley A. Johnson, Chariton, Ia.; Hannah M. Gustafson, Middletown, Conn.; Ruth Lindquist, New London, Minn.; John A. Anderson, Worthington, Minn.; Mrs. Otto V. Nelson, Willmar, Minn.; Esther Wilson, Helena, Mont.

NO RETREAT IN CHINA

We must be on our guard in these troubled days against taking too gloomy a view of the outlook for missions in the Far East. There are some who are ready in a crisis like this to throw up their hands in despair and to declare that the whole missionary movement is doomed to failure. This is a nervous state of mind which is not worthy of Christian men. A true Christian does not readily fall into a panic. No matter how dark the sky, the Christian always knows that the sun is still shining, and no matter how long the night morning will come. The religion of Christ has been obliged to fight its way in the teeth of tremendous opposition from the beginning. Its way has never been smooth. Its enemies have always been determined and numerous. The obstacles have again and again seemed insurmountable and more than once it has looked as though the Galilean had been conquered. But a calm reading of the history of nineteen hundred years fortifies faith. There is a power in Christianity which cannot be permanently overcome. Out of every defeat there springs a fresh victory, and out of every disaster innumerable blessings come. Much may be lost in China but not all will be lost. The Christian cause may be checked for a season but it will not be halted forever. There may be many and bitter disappointments, but later on there will be amazing surprises, and after painful and disheartening delays there will be gigantic leaps forward again. No matter what the present indications are, China is going to be Christian.

Rev. Charles E. Jefferson, D.D.