THOUGH the gypsies are usually considered the most mysterious race in the world, the Japanese empire includes among its subjects a race which is a still greater ethnologic curiosity; for the gypsies have at last been traced definitely to India, while the origin of this branch of the Japanese people, the Yezo-jin, is still shrouded in obscurity.

The name formerly given them was Ebisu, or barbarians, while to-day they are known to foreigners as Ainos or Ainu. They are rarely mentioned in the travel sketches of visitors to Japan, for they are not to be seen along the beaten tracks of globe-trotters. Even to the natives in Tokio and other Japanese cities they are such an unusual sight that an Aino family is occasionally exhibited by an enterprising showman as a rare curiosity. Indeed, although names and other relics of a more material nature prove that they once inhabited all parts of the Japanese islands, they are to be found to-day only on Yezo, the most northern of these islands, and on the desolate Kurile Islands (or the "Smokers," so called from their numerous volcanoes). Like our North-American Indians, they have been gradually driven to the northwest. About fifteen thousand of them now inhabit Yezo, living chiefly along the
OUTING FOR NOVEMBER.

cost on the proceeds of fishing, bear-hunting and primitive agriculture.

They are the wards of the Japanese government, without political arrange-
ments of their own, and show no rem-
nant of the war-like spirit which, until a
thousand years ago, led them to revolt.

Professor Chamberlain, of the
University of Tokio, says of the
island home of the Ainos that
"it is under snow and ice for
nearly half the year, the native
Ainos tracking the bear and
deer across its frozen and path-
less mountains like the cave-
men of the glacial age of
Europe." And in another
place he remarks that the
Ainos are "distinguished
by a flattening of certain
bones of the arm and leg,
which has been observed
nowhere else except in
the remains of some of
the cave-men of Europe."

It was formerly supposed that the
Japanese were, in part at least, of Aino
stock, but this notion has been aban-
donned, for it has been found that the
mixed breed of Japanese and Ainos
becomes unfruitful after a few genera-
tions. The best authorities now believe
that the modern Japanese come of a
mixture of Chinese and Malayan stock,
with not more than a trace of Aino
blood. The origin of the Ainos is still
more obscure. They themselves are
said to have legends tracing it to a re-
 mote male ancestry of dogs and bears,
a myth which may have been suggest-
ed by the fact that the Ainos are prob-
ably the hairiest people in the world.
There is some force in Dr. Griffis' as-
sertion that if the Japanese were be-
lievers in the Darwinian theory, an idea
not unknown in their speculations, the
Ainos would constitute the "missing
link" or "intermediate" between brute
and man.

One thing is certain. It is impossible
to look at a group of Ainos and believe
that they have much in common with
the Japanese. Both races are indeed
short and dark, the Ainos being the
more vigorous of the two, but in the
general cast of their features and in
their habits they are utterly unlike.
What especially differentiates them is
the extreme hairiness of the Ainos as
compared with the smooth skin of the
Japanese. Some of the Aino men
actually have a covering half an inch
long all over the body, and all have
magnificent black beards, often over a
foot long, giving them a most manly
and even majestic appearance. The
Japanese not only have smooth skins,
but are rarely able to grow a
beard or an embryonic mustache.
Japanese women would consider
the faintest trace of hair on their
lips a fatal blemish, while
the Aino women are so anxious
to appear like the men that
they have mustaches tattooed
on their lips, which gives them
a singularly masculine ap-
ppearance.

If in this matter of
hairiness the advantages
and disadvantages seem
to be about evenly di-
vided, from our æsthetic
point of view, in the
matter of cleanliness the
Japanese are infinitely superior. Every
Jap, be he rich or poor, bathes at
least once a day in hot water, and
many indulge in this luxury three
or four times a day; whereas the
Ainos never bathe at all, and seem to
have an unconquerable aversion to
water. Internally they prefer rice
wine, and externally they never come
in contact with water unless they are
compelled to swim an unbridged river,
and they do this without removing their
clothing. Japanese women do not have
the slightest hesitation in exposing their
nude bodies to the gaze of men and
women at the public baths, while the
Aino women have the same horror of
nudity that they have of water.

The adventurous Miss Bird, who spent
several weeks among the Ainos, gives
an amusing illustration of this trait:
"Not only is the Aino woman com-
pletely covered," she writes, "but she
will not change one garment for another
except alone or in the dark. Lately a
Japanese woman at Sarufuto took an
Aino woman into her house and insisted
on her taking a bath, which she abso-
lutely refused to do till the bath-house
had been made quite private by
means of screens. When the Japanese
woman went back a little later to see
what had become of her, she found her
sitting in the water in her clothes, and
on being remonstrated with she said that
the gods would be angry if they saw her undressed!"

Although they chiefly dwell along the coast they are also, especially during the fishing season, to be found in considerable numbers along the banks of the numerous rivers which are born in these rainy mountainous regions. While I was stopping at Takigawo, on one of these rivers, the affable owner of the tea-house made me a present of

than the corresponding Japanese features. In the larger cities of Yezo, such as Hakodate and Sapporo, I did not come across any, and it was not till I made an expedition to the very center of the island (which is of about the size of Ireland), that I was able to gratify my curiosity regarding these gypsies of Japan, as they might be called.

specimens of the bark which the Ainos use for candles, and of one of the arrow heads with which they slay bears. They seem rather small and fragile, but it must be remembered that the Ainos generally make their weapons more effective by using an aconite poison which kills the strongest bear in a few minutes. Bear-hunting in Yezo gains
an added zest of danger from the custom of setting traps with poisoned arrows, in the neighborhood of which, however, large wooden signs are put up in the shape of the letter T, to warn unwary hunters.

In his book on Japan, Mr. T. W. Blakiston writes that bears are tolerably numerous in Yezo, and that they are often very destructive among horses, and occasionally attack people: "Notwithstanding bears are so numerous in Yezo, the denseness of the underbrush and bamboo scrub is such that they are seldom seen, though their presence is not unfrequently made known by the rustling among the bushes, or the starting of horses, as the less frequented trails are followed. Japanese travelers usually keep up a song in such places in order to scare the beasts away."

Although I spent a whole week in the densest part of the Yezo forest I did not see a trace of a bear, except at the inn at Takigawo, where the finest bear-skin I had ever seen was spread over the mats in my room. Its body was a brownish black, but the head was of the purest gold, almost like a lion's mane—a very rare color; and the fur was so thick that I found this skin more comfortable to sleep on than several mattresses. I offered the innkeeper twenty dollars for it. He said it was worth twenty-two dollars, but he would not part with it as it was an heirloom. I have since ascertained that in New York such a skin would be worth one hundred and fifty dollars. Had I offered him thirty dollars I think he would have succumbed. I have come to the conclusion since that ignorance is not always bliss.

In the afternoon my host took me a short distance to a hut occupied by three Ainōs. This hut resembled the Indian habitations in Alaska, with its central fireplace and smoke-hole above, and the arrangements for drying salmon. The three men were engaged in emptying an enormous kettle full of rice with chop sticks. Their limbs were hairy, their hair and beards long and thick, and, like their complexion, several shades darker than those of the Japanese, reminding me altogether very strongly of the Spanish gypsies near Granada. I asked my host to send for some rice wine for these Ainōs, but they shook their heads and would have none of it. This was rather a surprise, for I had read that the Ainōs are greatly addicted to drink, that they spend all their gains on it, consider intoxication the highest happiness, and drinking to the gods the most proper and devout way of worshiping them. But a few judicious questions revealed the true inwardness of their paradoxical temperance. They had been hired to work on the road, and the contractor, being familiar with Aino habits, had made them promise not to drink. Gradually, however, they became assured that our intentions were honorable, the wine was brought, and the three long-bearded men, on being told that it was "my treat," bowed very low and smiled gratefully on me before they filled their cups and eagerly emptied them. On the way back to the inn my host took me to a shop and showed me some large round cakes made of a powdered root and hard as a brick—the Ainōs' bread.

All this, however, was a mere foretaste of what I was to see a few days later. The largest groups of Ainōs are to be found in the villages scattered along the south coast of Yezo, east of Mororan, and on my way from Sapporo to Mororan I had to drive almost a day along this coast, in sight of the Pacific Ocean. I asked the driver where the largest Aino settlement was on our road, and he replied, "at Shiraoi," adding that I would have plenty of time to see them, as he always allowed his horses to rest there for an hour.

Starting in the direction he pointed. I soon came across Ainotown, which, as usual, was separated some little distance from the rest of the village. It consisted of a few irregular rows of straw houses, of the most primitive construction. I stopped at one of the first to look in at the door, but saw nothing to reward this enterprise except the bare ground with a single mat and a fireplace in the center. Nobody seemed to be at home, nor did I find anyone in the other houses I looked into. We met, however, several groups of women and children hastening toward the beach, and talking so excitedly that they hardly paid any attention to such a strange apparition as a foreigner. Suspecting that something unusually interesting was going on, I sought the beach and soon beheld a sight which made my heart leap for joy. A large whale had been cast ashore, and around it were assembled all the Aino
men, women and children of Shiraoi, two hundred in all. I might have lived among these “savages” for weeks and months without getting an equally fine opportunity to see them in their element. It was the best bit of tourist’s luck that ever befell me. Indeed, the innkeeper told me that such an event occurred but rarely.

The whale had been cast ashore during the night, and by eight o’clock in the morning everybody had appeared to make the most of the opportunity. The whale had been fastened by a strong rope to a stake driven in the ground, to prevent it from being washed out again. It was a monster—sixty feet long, as I was informed by two Japanese policemen who were on the ground, presumably to prevent quarrels. It was no longer as fresh as it might have been; the waves had battered it considerably, and the odor it emitted was so strong and offensive that I had noticed it before we drove into Shiraoi. But it did not daunt the Ainos, who crowded around the carcass, brandishing long knives with which they cut off big slices of flesh and blubber, retreating every moment with wild shouts whenever a breaker dashed over the whale. Their faces were delightfully expressive and animated with the excitement of the occasion, and seeing my chance I dashed recklessly among them and snapped my camera in every direction. Ainos, Ainos everywhere, in all possible attitudes and groupings—did ever a photographic fiend have such an opportunity?

I took at least three dozen shots, and before long my presence with the mysterious little black box, which I kept aiming at them, distracted the attention of the younger ones, especially the girls, from the whale, and they watched me wonderingly, while some even followed me about. One young woman, apparently suspecting what I was doing, put up her hands before her face as I aimed at her; but too late—she did not know the rapidity of instantaneous photography. Among the young girls was one who was really very pretty, with regular features, a light complexion and large, round, wondering black eyes. She was about thirteen. Two or three of the older ones also had pleasing features, and would have been pretty had it not been for their atrocious tattooed mustaches.

The women did their part of the work by taking the chunks of flesh and blubber cut off by the men and carrying them out of the reach of the tide, where they were piled up in several places for future consumption. Whale, however high, is considered a great delicacy, and they were therefore preparing for a grand picnic in the afternoon and evening, at which, of course, the blubber was to be washed down with copious draughts of rice wine. While the younger men were engaged in cutting up the whale, the older men and some of the women and children were squatting in groups on the sand, waiting for the good things to come.

Of these groups the most interesting was at the extreme left end, facing the sea. Here a dozen or more emblems of Aino gods—peeled and whittled sticks with the curled shavings hanging down from the top—had been placed in a row. These gods represent animals and the forces of nature, sun, air, water, etc. Beside them were about twenty of the village elders, dignified old men with splendid black beards and an intelligent cast of countenance which, however, was probably deceptive. They were sitting in a semi-circle, with their hands uplifted and waving in prayerful thanks for the god-send on which they were about to feast. Here was an opportunity—twenty superb specimens of the aboriginal population of Japan sitting in a natural photographic group and needing no instructions regarding pose and expression. I suppose it was a rude thing to do, but I could not resist the temptation to walk right up in front of the venerable group, and when I got to the middle I took two shots at them as undemonstratively as possible.

At first they seemed surprised and interested, and not at all indignant.
But when I moved a few more steps toward the religious sticks the chief got up and with a smile and a motion of the hand begged me to keep away. Kind old fellow! I know I deserved a good kicking for my impudence, but I bagged my photographs in safety and congratulated myself on my rare luck. Indeed the whole adventure had been a combination of lucky coincidences; in the first place—most marvelous of all—that the whale should have been beached exactly in front of the Aino village, of all the miles and miles of coast; secondly, that it was customary for the stage to stop there for an hour; thirdly, that we came along just on the right day and at the right hour; fourthly, that we saw some of the last parties hastening to the beach, without which we might have missed all; and, finally, that the sun shone brightly enough to take good photographs, while an hour later clouds were spread over the region and remained for two days.

The Aino gods, however, had their revenge for my irreverent act of photographing the elders. The climate spoiled nearly all my pictures. I had been warned when I left San Francisco that if I wished to succeed in Japan as an amateur photographer I must do up my films in air-tight wrappers. I did so, but even that was not sufficient precaution, for when the films were placed in the camera they were no longer protected and the moist air damaged them so that the resulting pictures were little more than shadows. In winter the conditions are more favorable, and the Japanese themselves take most excellent photographs.