The greater portion of their food is eaten raw, especially in Winter. When they cook at all, they only "simmer" it over their lamps in a pot of soapstone. These pots are from eight to twenty inches in length, usually about sixteen inches, and though of variable patterns, the length is generally three times the width or depth. Among such Eskimo as are able to procure old cast-away meat-cans from around the ships, tin has superseded the soapstone both for lamps and boiling-pots.

In Summer, especially when on hunting excursions, they very often "fry" meat by making a little fireplace of stones, and laying a flat piece of stone on the top. The opening to receive the fuel supply is to windward. For fuel at such times they use *Cassiope tetragona* and *Ledum palustre;* these shrubs make a quick and very hot fire. It would be comparatively an easy task for these people to gather enough *Cassiope tetragona* during the Summer to burn during the coldest weather, and not rely wholly upon blubber.

When the Eskimo have been simmering meat, especially seal, in their boiling-pots, they pour off the liquor and mix it with about an equal quantity of blood; this makes a thick and rather greasy soup that must be quite nourishing; the children are very fond of it. It seems possible that from this dish has originated the popular error that these people *drink oil*, a notion that is simply preposterous.

I found among some of these people a little spoon, or rather a miniature scoop, made of ivory, which they used to drink the soup with; it appears to be an old utensil, now going fast out of use, for they can now procure tin mugs. A reindeer's rib, pointed at one end, is used to fish up the meat with, and sometimes to convey it to the mouth. These instruments are found in the graves, but seem to be little used at the present day.

When a seal is brought to the encampment, especially if they have not been plenty for some days, all the villagers are invited to the hut of the lucky hunter, and the seal is soon dispatched. A couple of the younger men skin the animal and distribute the pieces to the assembled company as fast as needed. The testicles, being considered as the choicest titbit, are usually handed over to the hostess; the spinal cord is also rated as one of the choicest portions of the animal. During these feasts they gorge themselves to their utmost capacity, and are in good humor and hilarious. Though there may be ever so poor prospects to procure more food for the morrow, this does not deter them from gluttonously devouring the last morsel, and then go on allowance till they can get a fresh supply. I have seen them thus gorge themselves, and then lie down to sleep with a piece of seal meat by their side, which they attacked every time they awoke.

The intestines of birds, notably *Lagopus* and *Somateria*, are looked upon as choice parts, and birds brought to the encampment are generally "drawn" by the hunters. The fatty excrescence at the base of the upper mandible of the male *Som. spectabilis* is too great a temptation for them. It was with great difficulty that we could induce them to bring these birds to camp without having them thus mutilated.

[*Coutinued.*]

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR.

[*The Editor does not hold himself responsible for opinions expressed by his correspondents. No notice is taken of anonymous communications.*]

A Spark from Menlo Park.

To the Editor of Science:

My note book is so full of observations made during a recent visit to Edison's laboratory, that I feel on looking it over as if I had struck an intellectual gold mine. The genius of Menlo Park is so exuberant, and his frankness—we may say *naiveté*—so unbounded, that we came into possession of many facts which we might almost commit a breach of confidence in exposing. I found him reserved, however, when the conversation was turned to the subject of the arc electric light, and avoiding criticism of the operations and machines of those inventors who have devoted themselves to its improvement and utilization. But he made quite merry over the opinions expressed to him by many of the sight seers who swarm to the laboratory. "Would you believe it possible," said Mr. Edison, "that in spite of the general and interesting descriptions I have seen in various publications of this and other countries, few of the visitors really know what they come to see when they ask to be shown the electric light? Many are disappointed, because we do not have a kind of inland light house with a 300 or 400 candle-power light in each pane of glass in the buildings. Others think it a 'poor show' when they examine an incandescent thread of 14 to 16 candle-power in bright sunlight."

There was one suggestion thrown off by him, while conversing about the arc electric light, which I think should not be suffered to remai nundeveloped; Mr. Edison is so devoted to 'his light' that he only has time to give an occasional thought in the other direction, and his power of concentration prevents the dispersion of his genius through a different medium. So I repeat, I do not think I am committing any breach of confidence in describing a sketch which grew up under my eye, drawn by his rapid and luminous pencil; for Edison possesses that peculiar quality of pictorial illustration which we have never seen, except in the sketches of that inventor-artist, the great Leonardo da Vinci.

"Our dynamo-machines," said he, "as we now build them, are especially constructed for the purpose of furnishing current for the incandescent lamp; but they are, of course, as easily adapted to the arc light as to other purposes. You see our lamp factory and electric railroad are run by them. A very simple addition to a machine would allow of its use in illumination where the production of reverse currents is necessary. Imagine the wire of a Gramme helix cut half way through the solenoid, the four ends joined two and two to a commutating wheel, and pairs of conductors leading to an arc light, say Jablochkoff's candles. Now, by intermittently joining the ends of the separated helices, by an appropriate arrangement on the ordinary commutator blocks, you will be able to use your main current for the small incandescent lamps, and the surplus for the arc lamp; thus supplying continuous and reverse currents from the same machine."

I hope this chance scintilla from the mind of the great inventor will be allowed to sink through the pages of my note book into your columns, without any violation of the proprieties. If it incite Mr. Edison, *en revanche*, to a development of the idea, we will bear the brunt of a, perhaps, just resentment.

F. T. Waters.