

The Eskimo Jonah in the Whale

By George Jennings Gale

While sitting around the Railroad club house the other evening, John Agwiak, an Eskimo who has had vast experiences on sea and tundra, told us the story of the Eskimo Jonah and the Whale.

Aguipuk was young and strong but he, like the others of the tribe, was beginning to feel the pangs of hunger which would soon run into starvation.

One morning Aguipuk went down to the beach with his long sharp spear and while walking along the rough rocky shore he saw a whale. It was a very large whale and Aguipuk, knowing how hungry his people were, leaped into the sea after

the whale but the whale swallowed him.

Aguipuk struggled desperately until he found out that he could see through the whale's eyes and he saw his people running down toward the beach to see what had happened to him.

Aguipuk then found out that he could steer the whale by jabbing his spear first into one side and then the other side. In this way, he brought the whale to the shore and then with a terrifically sharp jab toward the back end and downward, the whale made a mighty leap and fell upon the land.

Aguipuk leaped out of the whale's mouth and they all had plenty of food for many weeks.

No one seems to know whether this story was of the Bible and brought into Alaska by the early Tartars or whether it originated among the Eskimos themselves.