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ESKIMO OF CAPE PRINCE OF WALES

GENERAL DESCRIPTION

KÍNGEGAN, the village of Cape Prince of Wales, lies on a long, gently curving beach which extends northward and eastward for more than a hundred miles to Kotzebue sound. Back from the wind-swept arctic shore stretches the low-lying tundra plain. The tundra flat behind Kíngegán and extending to Shismareff inlet is broken by many shallow lagoons with narrow outlets to the sea. Lopp lagoon, which is close to the village, is more than fifteen miles in length. These lagoons are of economic importance to the natives, as they are the breeding and feeding grounds for countless waterfowl. The summer and fall hunting and fishing camps of the Cape Prince of Wales people are scattered along the beach at favorable points as far northeast as Shismareff and southward to Prince William sound. The southern end of this sandy shoreline, where the village proper is situated, terminates abruptly in the high, stony Prince of Wales mountain, the cape itself. The traveller observes small figures resembling men in watchful attitudes stationed at intervals up the seaward face of the mountain to the top. One is informed that these are stone piles built in human form so that enemies approaching from the sea would believe the village to be ever alert and ready. The enemy, then thinking a surprise attack to be unfavorable and not caring to risk heavy losses in landing and open battle, would turn back.

The present population of Kíngegán is only about a hundred and sixty-five, but a century ago it was probably one of the largest of the North Pacific Eskimo villages, and no doubt the dominating group; indeed the village numbered four hundred in the year 1880. They were a vigorous, aggressive, seafaring people.

Cape Prince of Wales is the most westerly point of the American mainland. The unbroken winds from the arctic sweep down from the north upon its inhabitants, and from the south, across the full stretch of Bering sea, blow no less vicious storms, while the ice-packs of two seas pile up on the shores. Upon these grinding packs and storm-swept waters the Eskimo hunt and fish. None but a hardy and fearless people could wrest food, clothing, and shelter from such a cruel environment. Emboldened by their numbers, these people preyed on many disabled

or icebound whaling ships; but all their contact with the whaling fleets was not that of piracy, for it was here and on the Diomede islands that ships recruited native crews — and they also spread the diseases of civilization. At Cape Prince of Wales, as at all points on the North Pacific coast, the native population dwindled rapidly after the coming of the white man's ships. As a final blow to Kíngegán came the influenza epidemic Of 1917 which reduced the population to the meagre number before mentioned.

At one time, it is said, the village was divided into three parts. The northern was separated from the others by a small river, now filled in. The southern section in turn was divided from the other parts by a small stream. Such bitterness prevailed between the three groups that there was no social intercourse between them, but open warfare never broke out. Legend has it that one night the medicine-men of the northern village caused a dense fog, and, concealed by it, the people silently withdrew and disappeared. It is said that they migrated to the Point Barrow region, where place and family names of Cape Prince of Wales origin may still be found. Kíngegán today, therefore, is composed of two settlements, each with its own men's house. While they still remain aloof to some extent, much of the former enmity has died away, so that the inhabitants of the two now engage in free intercourse. Each settlement gives the Messenger feast, and intermarriage takes place. In the latter instance, however, the man retains his affiliation with his own settlement and men's house.

The Kíngegán houses are of dugout construction, with wooden framework, differing only in details from the dwellings of other places on the Alaskan coast. The most distinctive feature is the commodious entranceway, large enough to shelter kaiaks and small boats. Along the coast, in the summer and fall camps, before the innovation of canvas tents, round shelters were erected, their frames consisting of wooden hoops with ends thrust in the ground and crossing one another at the top. The covering consisted of seal- or caribou-skins. Another type of summer shelter was a conical structure resembling a tipi. The poles were braced inside by a wooden hoop to which the poles were lashed about a third of their length from the top. The hoop itself was strengthened by two crossed sticks intersecting at right angles and lashed to the rim.

Hunting at Cape Prince of Wales, as throughout the Alaskan Es-

kimo area, is largely that of migrating animals as they pass by, each kind in its season, when they must be captured, if at all. In more southerly regions it may be the habit to defer work until the morrow; but with the Eskimo in the matter of securing food there is no morrow. From the sea they take whale, walrus, sea-lion, seal, and fish; from the ice-fields, the polar bear and white fox; from the lagoons, tundra, and rocky cliffs come many kinds of birds and their eggs. Primarily the Cape Prince of Wales people were whalers. Other food animals were hunted, to be sure, particularly by those who were not strictly whalers; but it was the whale which furnished the most important food staple. Naturally the whaling crews were composed of the sturdiest and bravest men of the village; in fact, they were regarded as a class by themselves. To go out upon the storm-swept sea in small skin boats, provided with the most simple if not crude equipment for killing an animal twice the length of the craft, required courage and skill indeed.

Hunting for the bullhead or bowhead whale takes place only in spring, the season which ends about the first of June, when the whales migrate northward. The belugas are caught during spring, summer, and fall, either in seal-nets or by spearing from the ice. The whale crews, who hold their positions permanently, are usually relatives of the boat-owners, who steer when on the hunt.

Just before the time for whale-hunting arrives, preparations are begun. New skin covers are drawn over the boat frames. This is done either in the entranceway of the owner's house or in that of the men's house. The boats, each having a crew of eight men, are smaller than those used for hunting walrus, in order that they may be more easily dragged over the ice, for walrus-hunting is done in open water. While the men are re-covering the boat, two boys engage in a tug-of-war, using for the purpose the stick employed in cleaning the smoke-hole.

A woman, considered a member of the crew, is now chosen to take part in the ceremonies, which sometimes are performed in the boat-owner's home; or several crews may choose the same woman and hold joint ceremonies in the men's house. When the boats with their new coverings are taken out of the entranceways and placed bottom-up on the racks, the woman follows, bearing a dish of food, and takes her position beside a boat. The boys of the village line up on the opposite side of the craft, and the woman throws portions of food over the boat, for which they scramble. The boats are allowed to dry and

the skin coverings to become taut. Meanwhile the crews choose a day for launching.

At night, all wooden boat gear, such as harpoon-shafts, spear-shafts, masts, and paddles, are brought to the boat-owner's house, or to the men's house when several crews hold the same ceremonies. New equipment is made when necessary, and all the wooden gear is shaved with knives to impart the appearance of newness. Following this, the crew or crews feast and dance. The dance is for the purpose of driving away any evil influence which may cling to their work. At this time they wear new clothing.

A few days later, all air-pokes, or floats, are soaked until pliable. Then the boat-owner and harpooner proceed to a cache on the mountainside. Each owner and harpooner has a cache, carefully hidden and known only to him, where are kept harpoon-heads and points, talismans and charms, after the season has passed. These talismans of spirit-power, when the boat is ready to be launched, are placed in various parts of the craft, attached to the frame, on pokes, paddles, and harpoons. Each crew places them invariably in its own particular position year after year, although no two crews have exactly similar objects, nor does any one crew place its talismans in the same positions as any of the other crews. This prescribed custom is illustrated in several legends. Knowledge of the cache, of the objects therein, and of their usage, is carefully transmitted from father to son. The epidemic of influenza, above referred to, nearly eliminated the village, hence the locations of many of these caches were lost. During the season of 1927, however, one such cache was discovered. It contained several stuffed bird-skins, thoroughly disintegrated; a wolf and a fox skull, each including the jawbones; a caribou hoof and shin-bone; a wolf-claw, to which two small stones were lashed; a headband with a blue bead in the centre; a box for talismans, made from a tree branch, six and a half inches in length and three inches in diameter. The inside of the box was hollowed out and the ends plugged. The cover end had a sinew handle. This box contained a pebble, a blue bead, several beads wrapped in intestinal parchment, and a rolled parchment. From several long sinew belts depended sewn skin bags, each about six inches long and an inch wide, hung side by side, and each containing dried whale meat. Other objects were a wooden harpoon-rest for the bow of a boat, a large wooden ladle, and a wooden bird. The body of the

bird was thirteen inches long, with a wing spread of eleven inches. The belly was hollowed out to hold spare harpoon-points, and had a snugly fitting wooden cover held in place with a rawhide thong passing around the body. Several harpoon-points and -heads were found.

When the boat-owner and harpooner return with their sacred objects, the crew bring in the pokes, stand them in the front of the room, and then return to the rear bench. Then at dark the men prepare four other pokes or air-bags. These, lashed together in pairs, are sewed to the boat-bottom to prevent harm and wear to the boat-cover while dragging the craft over the ice. The women do any necessary sewing, such as making long mittens. Some crews devote a special day to these tasks.

When necessary, a day is spent in making a harpoon-point. The bone or ivory is chosen by a medicine-man, and then fashioned. The medicine-man next, to determine if the point has been made properly and is without any evil influence, has an assistant recline, with a stick bound to his head. If the medicine-man can raise his assistant's head with the stick, it is a sign that his spirit-power approves the work and can "feel" no evil in the point. Should the man's head remain rigid, the new point, however well made, must be rejected. The harpoon, the last implement to be made, consists of three sections. The wooden shaft is about ten feet long, two inches thick, and an inch and a half wide; it tapers slightly for about a foot from the butt to afford an easy hand-hold. Next is a tapering bone foreshaft, twenty-three inches long, its greatest circumference about three and a quarter inches and the smallest an inch. This member, which also is slightly curved, fits into a hole in the wooden shaft and is securely lashed in place. The third section, the head, of ivory or of bone, is about a foot long and also is slightly curved. The top edge is nearly an inch wide at the butt, and tapers narrowly to the front. The sides are bevelled off in three grooves, so that the bottom is sharp. The last five and a half inches, from the top to the butt, is cut obliquely to a point at the bottom edge. On this sloping end surface is a hole for the insertion of the bone foreshaft described. The centre of the head is pierced to accommodate the long loop, about twelve feet, of heavy walrus-line. A slot is cut into the front of the head for a slate point. The point is further secured by a sinew thread passing through a hole in one corner to the hole in the head. The thin slate point is about three inches long and two inches

wide. When the spear is cast, the downward-pointing curve of the bone foreshaft prevents it from glancing off the whale's back, so that it drives into the body, the force of the throw being greatly aided by the weight of the weapon. The ivory head detaches itself from the foreshaft and swivels till at right angles to the looped line. The loop is secured to another line, at the end of which are the air-bags, or floats. The wooden shaft, now disengaged, floats attached to the loop and forms an additional drag to the airbags. At the present time such harpoons are in disuse, small bomb guns being employed. The head of the one described, with others, was found in the cache along with the talismans above mentioned. These were all identified by the owner's mark, the old men who made the identification stating that the owner and his family had succumbed to influenza. All refused to touch any of the objects, and predicted dire misfortune to the members of the expedition who handled them.

After the harpoon is made, the air-pokes are inflated, brought into the men's house, and stood up in the front of the room. The crews fast all day and sing ceremonial songs, after which the pokes are placed in the boat, with the harpoon over them, as a sign that the boat is ready to be launched on the following morning. That night, while the boat-owner and harpooner keep vigil outside, the crew remain within, singing the ceremonial songs of the boat-owner all night.

In the morning the boat is carried to the shore, all implements are laid on the ground, and the boat turned over them. The boys of the village stand at one side of the boat and sing as the chosen woman brings out a dish of food. This she throws over the boat to the boys, who scramble for it. She now puts a mark on her forehead. The boat is righted, all gear is put in its proper place, and, while the owner sings, it is dragged to the ice, where all stop and render a song accompaniment. The boat is next hauled to the middle of the shore ice, where the night before a paddle was set up by the owner. As the men pass, the spearer seizes the paddle and sets it in the bow. The boat, to singing, is carried to the ice edge, where all is made ready for launching. The boat-owner then ties a pair of animal-ears on the blade of the paddle and lightly brushes the surface of the water.

The boat is launched and allowed to drift out. The crew sing, and the woman, left standing on the ice, sings. The boat is then put about and headed toward her, while the spearer makes as if to harpoon her.

She then scatters ashes to drive away evil influence, and runs home without looking back. There she remains and fasts until a whale has been killed or the crew returns.

As soon as a whale is killed, a member of the crew wraps some of the skin and blubber about his shoulders, in proof of the kill, and runs home to the woman. She distributes these evidences amongst the families of the crew or crews. The whale is dragged onto the ice, and one man is sent to the village with a piece of fluke on a small spear as a signal for the crew families to make ready to help in the cutting up. All the women line up on the roof of the men's house, behind the smoke-hole, and sing as the messenger approaches. When he reaches the spot in the shore ice where the paddle has been set upright, he stops. Then the woman, dressed in her best, leaves the house and advances as far as the boat-racks, where she dances, and sings as loudly as possible. The messenger sings and dances at the same time. She then returns to the house, and he runs to the smoke-hole, where he lowers the portion of fluke. The woman, singing, takes it and cuts it into small pieces, which she cooks. When done, they are placed in a new pot and carried by her as she rides out of the village in the first sled.

As soon as the boat-owner sees the dog-teams in the distance, he sets the boat-mast upright beside a poke. When near the whale drawn up on shore, the dog-teams stop, and the woman dances and sings. The boat-owner then dances and sings. The woman distributes the cooked meat to the crew, who at once eat it. The woman sprinkles some fresh water on the whale's head to refresh the whale-spirit's thirst, and also presents it with a hair from her parka. The crew pack all boat equipment but mast, paddles, and oars, to the village. The pokes are placed on the platform caches, and lines are strung on the boat-racks to dry. They then sleep, because the cutting up of the whale takes about two days of steady labor. When ready again for hunting, the boat is launched from the ice without ceremony.

When the crews of several boats have harpooned a whale, the entire right side and the hind-part to the navel belong to the first boat which cast a spear; the second boat receives the left side and flipper; the third boat takes the tongue and head down to the breast-bone; the fourth is allotted a strip from the chest, while any others are allowed only portions of the lips. In addition, the owner of the first boat may give away a strip from the nose over the head to any one he pleases.

Ordinarily the hind-quarters and portions of the head are stored away for the feasts of the following winter. The owner of the first boat takes all the whalebone from the right side, while his harpooner receives that from the left side. Of this, however, they must distribute ten bones to their own crew and some bone to the next two crews. From his share the harpooner gives the woman of the ceremonies some bone taken from the middle of the whale. During the whaling season, children may play games imitating their elders in a whale-hunt, but after the hunting is over, they must play the games of the following season, and so on through the year.

In the early spring (*úbanagruk*) the seal-hunting begins. The hunters move out to the edge of the ice, where they build snow or ice barricades to hide them from their quarry. They sit behind these walls on air-pokes and peep through holes on the lookout for seals. As the animals come up, they are harpooned and hauled in by the harpoon-line. When the southwest wind blows the shore ice in toward shore, the hunters watch for seal blow-holes and harpoon the seal as they come up for air, enlarging the hole to drag the body through. Since food is likely to be scarce at this season, unsuccessful hunters and their families ask the more fortunate for a share of the game. Their requests are granted, and it sometimes happens that a hunter is left only with the head and stomach for himself.

Those hunters using kaiaks for seal-hunting first stretch new skin covers on the frames. A kaiak is placed on a rack, and an air-bag covered with a waterproof parka is set in the manhole to represent the owner. The hunter and his wife remain in their house and sing ceremonial songs until daybreak. The man, followed by his wife, then carries the kaiak to open water, both singing ceremonial songs as they proceed. While the woman, wearing mittens and holding ashes, stands on the edge of the ice, the hunter, with full equipment of weapons, lines, and air-bags, launches the craft and slowly drifts offshore, singing as he goes. He then paddles toward her, and, when close, motions as if to spear her, because at this time she symbolizes a seal. At that moment the woman scatters the ashes to drive away evil influences, and runs home.

The hunter sets forth for game - the sea-lion and hair-seal which are now about to continue their northward migration. When these animals are harpooned, exhausted, and hauled in, the hunter kills them

by clubbing, rather than spearing, in order to save the blood. This is poured into a bag of walrus stomach. After the skin has been removed, the cut-up meat is stored beneath the decks of the kaiak to be carried home. The first sea-lion or seal is cut up to be eaten without first removing the skin.

Some walrus are caught when the southwest wind blows in the shore ice. These are harpooned through blow-holes and the meat hauled back to the village by dog-teams. Polar bears are killed with spears and bows. Following the sea-lion and seal migration, about March and the early part of April, the hunting of young sea-lions and seal, which appear then, occurs. At this time tomcod are caught with lines and hooks through the ice.

During the last of April and the first part of May, eider-ducks come in large flocks to the edge of the shore ice. These are killed with bolas. Each ovoid bola of the six is of ivory or bone, secured to a three-foot section of sinew. The handle usually bears a charm or talisman of the owner. Each hunter carries about five sets of bolas, the five considered to be worth a red-fox skin. When these are thrown from boats, floats of seal-bladder are attached to the handles. After the first ducks have been killed, boys play at duck-hunting with slings. One boy throws his sling in air while others try to hit it with theirs.

While the smooth ice is still beyond shore, crabs are gathered, but they are found only in the region between Cape Prince of Wales and what is called Tin City, a few miles southward, around the cape. Crabs are caught in dip-nets, of which the hoop is made of horn. The weighted net is baited with bits of fish or blubber, and lowered in deep water, to be drawn up at intervals and the catch removed.

In May, some hunters depart inland at the caribou fawning season. After a herd is sighted, the hunters lie hidden and watch until the fawns are dropped and cleaned by the mothers. Then they kill the newly born animals either by running them down or with dogs trained for the purpose.

Squirrels, just emerging from their holes, are caught at this time of year in snares laid at the entrances.

Herds of walrus appear about the time when the whales have gone north, and the walrus-hunt lasts until about the first of July, when these animals migrate in their turn. Skilful hunters stalk them on the ice, but this method needs extreme care, because the walrus is very

wary. The hunter must creep slowly toward his quarry, and always in the same direction. From time to time he scratches on the ice with an implement carried for that purpose, in order that the walrus will think that the hunter is a walrus and pay no attention to him. When close enough, the harpoon is cast and the animal played on the line until exhausted. It is then brained through the eye with the small end of the harpoon, or clubbed with the bone end.

The usual method of walrus-hunting is by boat, one larger than the whale boat, and capable of holding a large catch and of carrying a crew of nine or more. Boys and sometimes women are allowed to participate in the hunt. When a herd is seen upon the ice, the boat creeps along the ice edge. The crew don waterproof parkas with hoods, make ready the harpoon, and attach air-bags to the heavy line running from stem to stern. When near enough, the harpoon is cast and the animal killed with the long spear when hauled in on the line. It is cut up on the ice and stored in the boat, which then proceeds to its next victim. If walrus are scarce on the ice, or difficult to approach because wary, the hunters sing as they draw near, in the belief that they will be forced to sleep soundly and thus be easy to kill. When the herd is moving in the water, the boat approaches from the rear and the nearest walrus is harpooned. As the wounded animal tows the boat, other weapons are cast into the walrus swimming near by. These are hauled in on the harpoon-lines and clubbed or brained until a boatload has been obtained. The carcasses are towed to ice, cut up, and taken to the village.

Polar bears are sometimes killed from the boat. In this event the harpoon is thrown at the hind-quarters and the crew keep the line taut by backing away. This keeps the deadly forepaws and jaws away from the boat. Heavy stones on loops are then slid down the line until the bear sinks with the weight and drowns.

The early summer (*uwúnnok*) is occupied with the storing of the spring catch, drying and tanning of skins, the making of lines, repair of equipment, and other necessary tasks. At the village, gill-nets are run out from the shore. Many families go in camp along the beach, perhaps fifty miles to the north. There they also set out gill-nets. While wading out to set them, the people wear a waterproof garment of sealskin in which the only opening is at the neck. This garment is also very useful in cutting up whales, inasmuch as it protects the wearer from blood and grease.

Hunters go inland to a lake where caribou are killed by the enclosure system. Runners round up the animals and stampede them toward the lake, driving them between two lines of men whose shouts and gestures frighten the animals so that they head for the water. Once in the lake, they are speared from kaiaks. People stationed around the shores prevent the animals from escaping. The runners and spearers take the best of the meat.

The families who move up the coast stalk caribou and pack the meat on sleds to a nearby stream before the snow melts, if possible. There it is dried. Then walrus-hide is wrapped around the sled and sewed to make it serve as a boat, and the dried meat is brought down to the lagoon. After the caribou-hunting, the poorer families remain along the coast to fish. Some families go south as far as Teller for this purpose. Those who can afford large skin boats travel to Siberia, the Diomedes, and Kotzebue to trade. The Diomede people often come to Cape Prince of Wales before the villagers have scattered along the coast. The trade with Siberia is for iron for weapons, and for such furs as beaver, deer, fox, otter, and wolverene; with Kotzebue for furs of caribou, fox, muskrat, and squirrel.

In the fall (*úgiúksuk*) the people return to the village and engage in placing in caches the summer's catch and in repairing houses or building new ones. At this time nets are set out for beluga, sea-lion, and seal, but this must be done only when the water is cold, otherwise they will rot. When set out at the proper time, and cared for, a net will last for as long as six years. The nets are visited every day and kept out until ice forms.

Some boat crews, about ten men, take their nets to the rocky point of the cape. Here they put out five anchor-stones on lines, each stone as much as two men can carry. The five nets are extended in five directions, and the other ends also are anchored. Each net is in three eighty-foot sections, five or more sealskins being required to make a section. In depth a net is about twelve feet, or thirteen to sixteen meshes. Two heavy lines run along the top edge and are secured to the net at eight-foot intervals. Every twenty-four feet is a float of sea-lion bladder or flipper, or of walrus bladder or flipper. Opposite the floats, on the bottom edge, are sinkers. The owners, two to a net, take whatever is caught in their net. A good catch will fill a boat. Some crews stretch their nets straight out from the shore.

Men who own nets, but not boats, or who do not belong to boat crews, and sometimes even boat crews, wait for a south wind and then go up the coast, stretching their nets seven or more miles apart from one another. The men who work together tie their nets end to end as one long net. The shore-lines are securely fastened to posts. The other end is then carried beyond the breakers as far as it will reach, and there anchored. The net is visited several times a night, and the owners take whatever is in their sections. Nets placed out in this manner must be hauled in during stormy weather or be lost. One informant put out his net three times in the season and made a catch of eighty seals. As many as fifty have been caught in all the sections on a good night. It is said that nets employed in this manner keep in better condition than those left out in all weather. Those set out by the cape, it should be mentioned, receive some shelter from storm.

After the fall storms, many clams are collected on the beach. In late summer and early fall women went south to Tin City to make pots and lamps from a clay found there. Since the epidemic of influenza, however, the site has been lost.

In winter (*úguiuk*), after the freeze-up, seal-nets are set out. One method of seal-netting is with the short, two-fathom net. The hunter makes or chooses a seal blow-hole and hangs the net under the ice from four pegs in such a manner that when the seal comes up for air, it is enmeshed. When the shore ice is solid, and very thick, the hunter goes out to smooth ice by the water's edge, where he stretches a section of net underneath the ice, the ends suspended through two holes. The waiting hunter makes a tinkling sound above the net by lightly touching the ice surface with a small piece of ice attached to a pole. The curious seal then comes up to find out what causes the sound, and is enmeshed. These methods can be used only in winter, when the days are short and dull, and the nights long; for in the longer, brighter days, the animals see and avoid the nets.

When the families move into the village in early winter, the boys gather and watch. In the evenings, as the houses are opened, the boys go from one to another in turn. They gather by the smoke-holes and shout, "Is it time to come in?" As soon as an affirmative answer is made, they enter and sit around the walls, keeping their faces concealed. A woman will give them food, after which they depart to visit the next house.

After all the families have returned, the men's house is opened; there is no women's house. Each family brings in its stone lamp and sets it before its place in the house. Food is brought by each family for a feast, games are played, stories told, and whole crews dance and sing. Each family has songs and dances, records of lives and hunts, handed down from generation to generation. During the winter, dances are held, lasting a day, wherein families render their songs and dances. The old men, young unmarried men, and boys live and sleep in the men's house. Here the men perform work on sleds, weapons, and implements of all kinds, and while working receive food brought in by the women. It is a gathering place at all times, and a place where men return after hunting and other work to tell stories.

Some time during the winter, the Messenger feast is held by the two men's houses. These take turns in holding it in successive years. One men's house, the hosts, practises songs and dances for four days, and then sends out two messengers to the other men's house. Only about five of the members are invited, although all are privileged to come, and usually do so. Each morning the messengers bring their guests and wives, and before leaving their own men's house the guests feast the messengers. In the hosts' house the guests sit by the rear wall, their wives in front of them, and are feasted. The wives bring bags along to hold the food they can not eat immediately. Opposite them, by the entrance hole, are the hosts with many lamps on each side, and they render their practised songs.

On the morning of the fourth day the messengers bring in the guests at an early hour. Now the hosts paint ludicrous marks in charcoal on the faces of their guests, who must endeavor not to laugh. While painting, the hosts ask gifts of their guests. Men ask for women's utensils, and women ask for men's implements. Guests are not allowed to ask verbally what they desire, but may indicate their wishes by signs, such as pointing to their boots or parkas. The guests then leave, and both parties indulge in brisk trading amongst themselves to get the requested articles.

The guests are brought back that night, wearing their best clothes and bringing the requested articles, which are sent in the entrance by the messengers to the persons requesting them. While still outside, they request articles of their hosts, which must be procured by the following night. Each guest enters in turn and sings two songs as he thrusts

his head through the entrance hole. When all are within, a dance and a feast are held.

On the morning of the fifth day the guests make up songs for their hosts and a special one for the headman — songs which pertain to the gifts they desire. Then, preceded by their dancers, wearing light clothes and dancing as they go, all bearing sticks with food on the ends, the procession marches to the men's house of their hosts, who are outside waiting for them. As they arrive, the dancers hold out their food-laden sticks to people whom they like. Then the hosts enter and take their places, sitting with heads averted in order not to be recognized. The most athletic of the visitors, as they enter, endeavor to jump through the entrance hole and to land on their feet. The hosts, women, and boys surrounding the men, stand in the middle of the floor, while the guests sing their new songs. If the visitors are able to recognize their hosts, they touch them with the food-laden sticks. All day and until midnight gifts are exchanged, both guests and hosts trying to outdo one another and to be the last to give away an article. The Messenger feast is concluded on the following, the sixth night, by a dance at which the guests receive quantities of food.

While the more important ceremonies at Cape Prince of Wales are connected with the hunting of whales, walrus, sea-lion, and seal, and include the Messenger feast, other ceremonies, relative to the various events of social life, are held. Of these, the first in order of human life, is concerned with customs of childbirth and the giving of names. As soon as the navel of a child has been tied and healed, the child is given a name, customarily that of a relative to keep the name in the family. If the name of a recently deceased relative has not been given as yet to some child, the newly born receives that name. When the birth occurs during the winter, the mother is obliged to limit her diet to one form of food, usually seal meat, and refrain from drinking water until the following spring. It is believed that this regimen will aid a male child to grow up to be a good hunter, and the female to become skilled in womanly duties.

Boys are given bows and arrows as soon as they are old enough and able to use them. The first bird the boy kills is carefully skinned, and the skin, together with the bow and arrows, is laid away. Then the parents make gifts to those who visit them on hearing of the boy's good fortune. The following fall, after the men's house has been opened, the

parents give a feast at which the boy's head is shaved and the bird-skin and weapons are hung on the wall. After the feast, the bird-skin and the bow and arrows are burned behind the village to signify that the spirit of the bird may return to its nest and that the boy will be aided in becoming a good hunter. When girls pick their first berries and plants, they must present them to the old men and women of the village.

A youth is eligible to marry after he has killed both a sea-lion and a seal. Should he presume to take a wife before he has shown his prowess as a hunter, the other men may take his first sea-lion and seal, leaving him only the heads. Before a youth may live with the woman of his choice, after the consent of the parents has been obtained, he must present her with a complete outfit of clothing and provide meat for her parents for some time, in order to prove his worth as a hunter and provider of food. When the youth's parents choose a suitable wife for their son, they send a woman, an intermediary, to ask the girl's parents for their consent to the marriage. If all is arranged satisfactorily, the youth's parents must provide the bride-to-be with clothing, while the youth hunts for his prospective parents-in-law. But if the girl does not consent to be married, she signifies her rejection by returning the clothing. Clothing also is returned when the couple agree to separate. Divorce occurs by mutual agreement, or when either party is unfaithful. An adulterer may be killed.

When a person is about to die, new clothes are made for him. In any event, the body is dressed in its best and kept in the house overnight, watched by the relatives. Then it is wrapped in a walrus-hide and securely lashed. The body is hoisted through the smoke-hole, that all sickness and evil may pass out with it, and laid on the roof, head toward the south. The relatives, six of them carrying the corpse feet first on sticks thrust beneath, others bearing food, water, grave-boards, and the person's tools, implements, utensils, and weapons, all proceed up the mountain to a suitable spot. There the body is laid, head toward the south, a grave-board underneath, on each side, and on the top, and covered with stones. The possessions are placed around and on the pile. Before the family leaves the grave, they build a fire and burn a pungent herb (*iksudit*), purifying themselves by making rubbing motions over their bodies in the smoke. After returning home, the smoke-hole is closed, the room is heated, and the family bathes. During the bath, each rubs his body with a stone, an act with a dual meaning: evil

and sickness pass from their bodies into the stone, and they are further hardened against evil or sickness. If the deceased is a man, the family remain indoors, performing no work and fed by relatives for four days; if a woman, five days. Men may not hunt, nor women fish, until the next new moon, before which they must first bathe, put ashes in their boots, and sprinkle them over their clothes to drive away any lingering evil influence. On returning from their first hunting or fishing trip, and before partaking of food, men and women must bite a stone; this is to prevent their teeth from falling out. The period of mourning prevents the spirit of the deceased, which may be wandering about the village, from doing harm, and the preparations for the first hunting and fishing are necessary to keep game and fish from avoiding the village. After a year has elapsed, the family carry food to the burial-place and scatter bits on the grave. A feast, to which the relatives who helped with the burial are invited, is held. It is believed that the spirit which lives somewhere on the mountain will also be present and eat of the food on the grave. If the deceased had been a good hunter, the bones of the whales he had killed, his polar-bear heads, and his kaiak, would be placed on the grave at this time.

The spirits of the dead go to a village somewhere on the mountainside, where they meet and live with their relatives. The spirit may linger around the village, therefore to keep it from doing mischief and harm, the mortuary observances and purification rites must be carefully followed. When a spirit continues to haunt the village, to show itself to people, and work mischief, it is a sign that some possession or article which it desires has been kept in the house. To satisfy the spirit and cause it to go to the village of the dead, it is necessary for the family to consult a medicine-man, who finds out what the desired article is, and informs the family, who then place it on the grave.

MYTHOLOGY

THE SON OF ÓGLAZHÚNA

Óglazhúna, a great whale-hunter, had his own boat crew. With himself at the steering oar and his cousin as harpoon-thrower, they brought in four whales each year, two in the spring and two in the fall. The meat caches of this crew were always full. On one of their whale-hunts,

darkness overtook them as they were towing a whale to the village, so Óglazhúna decided to make a landing for the night. Each time he tried to land, the shore rose as a sheer cliff. At last, when about to give up and sleep in the boat, Óglazhúna saw the land sink to its normal form and he beached the boat. A woman carrying a dish and a bucket awaited their approach. She commanded: "That whale belongs to me! Cut it up and carry the meat to my house! You will never see your own homes again!"

After the crew filled her cache, stowed their whaling gear in the entranceway, and went into the large house, the woman said:, "You will never go to your homes again, because I need hunters. I should have taken you before, but your sons were not then old enough to take care of your families. Now they can help at home while you stay with me."

They hunted whales for her, always being forced to return to her home. Their village gave them up for lost. The families of the missing boat crew were on the verge of starvation. Their stored meat became exhausted, and they had to trade nets, weapons, and whaling equipment for food.

One day the son of Óglazhúna went along the shore far from the village, picking up clams. After dark, as he walked along feeling tired and hungry, the smell of cooking meat came to him. He thought: "There must be a house over that hill, though I have never seen one here before. I smell food; perhaps they will give me something if I go there."

The youth reached the house. Whaling gear was stacked in the entranceway, and a great heap of freshly cut whale meat. The thought came to him, "There is so much food here that perhaps I can take some home."

Inside he saw eight men, a boat crew, feasting. They were solemn and unsmiling. Óglazhúna looked up, not recognizing his son, for he had been away so long. He shouted: "Who are you? Name your parents! Answer quickly!"

His son, so frightened that he could hardly speak, stammered: "My mother used to tell me that my father was a great whale-hunter. He never returned from a hunting trip. My father's name was Óglazhúna."

Óglazhúna, greatly surprised, now made himself known and gladly welcomed his son. He pointed to the sleeping woman, and said: "That

woman is the cause of all our misfortune. She has great spirit-power with which she holds us here. We can never return home."

When he learned that the families were poor and nearly starved, he gave his son four pieces of whale meat. This he was to take home and put in the cache. Then he showed the youth how to use whaling equipment, and gave instructions: "There is a place on the mountain to keep a whaling outfit in the summer. Take this equipment to the mountain; you will find the place even though you do not know where it is now. Go home now to your mother."

He carried the full pack home, though it felt light to him, cached the meat, and laid away the whaling equipment on the mountain. Then he went to bed. In the morning his mother woke him, asking if he had brought home clams.

"No, I found none."

"Why were you out so late, my son?"

"I travelled far, searching for clams."

"Why do you not get up?"

"I am too hungry to get up, mother. Go see if there is any meat in the cache."

"The cache has long been empty."

"Take your dish and look again. There might be something in it."

She was greatly surprised to find meat, and excitedly called to her son that some one had filled the cache. He told her the story of finding his father. They shared the meat with their cousin's family, but they used only a little at a time, in order to make it last long.

He asked his mother where his father's boat-rack had been. She answered that he was not old enough to think of whaling; that he had no boat. The youth replied: "I have no boat, but my cousin and I shall put up a boat-rack, even if we only dry skins on it. It will remind us of our lost fathers."

When the people were making ready to go whaling, the youth spoke to his mother and cousin: "If we had a boat, we too could hunt whales. Mother, ask that family with the two boats to let us use one."

"My son, you are not yet old enough to go out. Besides, you have no outfit."

He insisted: "If we had a boat we could take other poor boys along as a crew. I shall get equipment somewhere."

The mother asked the man to lend one of his boats. He consented,

saying: "Sometimes poor boys, whose fathers have been great whalers, can hunt successfully. Your son may use one of my boats."

The two youths chose six poor young men for a crew. All were ragged and hungry. They brought the boat and put it up on the new rack. They feasted, and the youth said to his mother, "From this time the crew will eat in my home." After the feast, the mother told the youths to send their mothers to her for fresh meat.

People wondered where this fresh meat had come from. Most caches were almost depleted at this spring season before whaling, and many came to the woman, exchanging all manner of hunting equipment and clothes for food. The young men were now well equipped. The mother asked her son why he had not his own outfit ready. He answered: "Let all my crew gather here tonight. My cousin, who will be my harpooner, and I then shall go up to the mountain to see if there is any gear in my father's cache. Tomorrow we shall launch the boat."

The two brought down a complete outfit of pokes, lines, paddles, spears, and talismans, and put them in the entranceway. The crew carried all these inside. They inflated the pokes and carefully washed all the equipment, because they did not know how to scrape and shave it to make it look like new. The youth placed the talismans on lines, pokes, and harpoons, as instructed by his father. His mother recognized them all and wept silently. The crew sat on a bench while the youth sang ceremonial songs for each talisman, as he had learned them from his father. They took all the hunting implements to the boat, and then feasted. The pokes by the boat signified that it was to be launched. Through the long night they sang ceremonial songs.

At daybreak, while the crew were making ready, the youth carried out a paddle and stuck it up in the shore ice. They next carried the boat to the water's edge. The mother followed to the shore, carrying a pan of ashes. They embarked, and paddled away, singing the whaling songs. Then they turned to paddle toward her. Just then a whale came up between the boat and the woman. The spearer cast his weapon. The mother poured out the ashes and quickly ran home. She could hear the ceremonial shout of the kill. She quickly bathed, dressed, and was ready to receive the messenger, who came in shouting, "A boat is killing a whale!"

The mother knew that the whale was harpooned, but could say nothing about it until one of the crew ran to her with some fresh meat.

If the whale should be lost, she would be shamed. Soon a messenger brought meat to her. The crew returned home, and the youth gave the boat-owner a large share of meat. News of his success spread rapidly, and people knew that the boy had done exactly as his father used to do.

He kept the same boat crew and became the most successful whale-hunter in the village, killing four each year. His paddles were always plain, with no mark painted on them. After each season, in accordance with his father's instructions, he burned the paddles. His father had been lost because the spirit-power of the woman was greater than the power of the talismans painted on his paddles.

THE LAND OF THE WHALE PEOPLE

Four men once drifted to sea on an ice-floe. They were carried to the Land of Whales, where the whale-spirits all gathered in a large men's house. All wounded whales came there; also the dead were laid away behind the house. The men lived with the whales, eating shrimp, and often, when needing meat, cutting slices from the dead. But after eating meat, they had to remain away from the whale people for four days. During the winter the whales left their bodies on the beach to be cared for by the young ones, especially to clean them after storms. Some of the older whales did not have their bodies washed. For this reason stones are sometimes found in whale kidneys. The whale-spirits dwelled in the men's house. The spirits of dead whales also lived there. Those wearing new parkas had been killed by hunters who had performed the proper whale ceremonies. Spirits with old parkas bad been killed by men who had conducted the whale ceremonies carelessly.

The four humans learned that in the spring, two white whales, belugas, are sent out to report on conditions; to find out which villages are clean, because whales avoid those places which are unclean, or where there are houses in disrepair or burning rotten fuel. Whales also go out to sea away from a village if the dead are improperly buried. After learning these conditions, the whales choose their route north. Before starting, one of the old whale men brings out a pan of dark liquid. The young ones then dip two fingers to the knuckles, the older dip in over the knuckles. After feeding, they are ready to travel. The four men were informed that, as the whales are making ready for their northward migration, the humans ashore are preparing for the hunt;

that they are overhauling gear and getting talismans ready: animal talismans of fox, wolf, or any four-legged creatures. As soon as all preparations have been completed, the hunters set a day for the pursuit of whales. On the preceding night, the boats to be used in the hunt become animated they have an animal-like appearance, because the talismanic animal heads serve as heads for the boats, the boats themselves are like bodies, and the four posts of the boat-racks are used as legs. Thus filled with life, the boats waddle off on their stiff legs toward the Land of Whales. It is believed that those animated craft which succeed in reaching their objective and return will carry their owners and crews to a successful hunt on the following day.

After the four humans had been fully instructed by the whale-spirits, they returned to their village and told of what they had learned. Since then people have been very careful to keep the village clean, to put away neatly all whaling equipment, and to observe burial rites faithfully. Thus the whale-spirits are pleased, and successful whaling seasons are assured.

A GOOD WHALE-HUNTER

A good whale-hunter lived in the south village. Near him dwelled a woman with her son, to whom the hunter always gave a part of his catch. Through her supernatural power, he always caught one whale a season.

One spring, when the boats were out, the woman suggested to her son: "It is a good day for hunting. Let us go out to the point and cut grass to put in the boats."

She carried a bag containing ashes and a knife, but instead of gathering grass, she led her son over shore ice to open water. She said: "We shall rest here and then go back. But look! What is that in the water?"

As the son bent over to look, she pushed him in the sea, then plunged in herself. Her son did not feel the cold or the lack of air. At the bottom they became whales, and the mother said: "We shall look for the hunter who brings us meat. I shall show you why he kills a whale every spring."

They swam along shore ice, and every time they came up to breathe, the mother threw ashes in the air to represent whale-spouts. Soon they spied the boats on the ice, about half a mile apart, with crew members standing by their seats, ready to push out and jump in.

A crew yelled: "There is one! There is a young one! But it is too early for the young."

They launched, but the crew were so careless and rattled the gear so much that mother and son heard them and dived to safety. Other boats came out as the whales went along the ice. Some were dirty, some noisy, and some rattled harpoons. These the whales easily avoided. The last boat was the good hunter's. "Now," predicted the mother, "I shall show you why he always gets a whale."

They broke water, were seen, and dived. The boat crew launched and paddled swiftly. The boat was clean and noiseless. The bird-skin charms flew over the boat. The whales, coming up again, watched these bird talismans until the boy said, "Let us dive, mother, before they spear us."

"No, there is plenty of time to get away."

The boy watched the charms, fascinated, while the boat drew near. When the spearer stood up, the mother dived. The boy felt the harpoon stab and drive deeply in his flesh. He sounded, and down below his mother cut the line. She probed for the point and put it in her bag.

They swam back to land, became human again, and went home.

The hunter's boat came in empty. The crew carried up the gear, while the man came to the woman, saying: "We lost a young whale on account of a poor line. If we had caught it, you would have some tender meat."

The woman lamented with him, pretending to know nothing about it. The following day the hunter was successful and brought her much whale meat (*múktúk*). During the winter he gave away meat at the dances.

In the spring, at launching time, meat was very scarce, and the people were nearly starving because it was too stormy to go out. Then the woman ordered her son: "Take this spear-point to the hunter and give it to him in exchange for meat. If he asks you where you got it, say you found it on the beach while gathering clams."

The hunter took the point, and was astonished to see that it was the one he had lost. After hearing the boy's tale of finding it, he exclaimed: " It must have worked out of that young whale and been washed ashore! I am glad you brought it to me; some one else might have kept it."

Although he had little meat left, he sent a large dishful to the

woman. Then the weather cleared enough to let boats out, and the hunter soon caught a whale. After that, with this spear-point he killed several whales a season.

STORY OF PUTÚGUK

One time there was no hunting on Cape Prince of Wales, because ice stretched solid far out to sea, even to the Diomedes. It remained frozen fast so long that the villagers became alarmed, and asked Putútuk, a medicine-woman, to break up the ice. "Oh Putúguk!" they cried, "Help us! The ice is thick; we can not hunt nor fish; our children will starve!"

Putúguk ordered all ropes, heavy and light, to be tied together and coiled in the men's house; she ordered also an air-poke, and a mitten such as is used in setting out seal-nets. At night, following Putúguk's instructions, all took their places, and the men blocked the entrance to the men's house, that no dog might enter. Putúguk sat silent while medicine-men performed. When they had finished, she walked about the room many times, clad in a waterproof parka and with no drum, but accompanied by medicine-songs sung by the people. At last she raised a hand, and all fell silent. "Now I am ready," she announced.

Putúguk tied the mitten and air-poke to the coiled line. Then men bound her hands and stood her in the entrance hole so that head and shoulders only showed. "All who can sing, now sing until I have finished!" she commanded.

As the people sang, they saw the mitten and air-poke slide slowly across the floor toward Putúguk. Mitten and air-poke entered her open mouth, and fathom after fathom of line slid down her throat. "My mouth is tired," she gasped at last. Then all saw the line shift to her neck, where it crawled under her waterproof parka.

Putúguk announced: "The rope is all paid out. It is hardly long enough to reach open water, but it may do. Now I can feel air-poke and mitten returning."

A chosen man reeled in the line, and the end was found to be wet and frozen. The wet mitten and air-poke, as the man hauled, stripped the parka from Putúguk. Then they pulled her back into the room and unbound her hands. Putúguk instructed: "Pour out the mitten in a drum. Perhaps something is now in it."

Sea-water and fresh seal whiskers cascaded into the drum; this was

a good omen. "Now," directed Putúguk, "go home and look out at daylight. I have touched the ice in the straits, and tomorrow it will be gone. These seal whiskers which I shall give to the best men will bring good hunting."

The people slept, and at daylight came out. "See!" they cried, "There is open water. Now our children shall have meat." The hunters went out and returned at night heavily laden with the kill.

THE MAN TAUGHT BY WALRUS

A good hunter, a strong man, used to play tricks on all in the village, even the aged. Some he mimicked; he ridiculed the peculiarities or mannerisms of others, so that he was avoided and disliked by all. Medicine-men and all who had supernatural powers worked against this joker, but he could not be harmed. He tricked animals as well as humans, for when the walrus herds were thick, he used to jump from one to the other, slashing their cheeks as he leaped.

One fall, when the walrus were southbound and passed near the village, this man went out on the ice to hunt. He harpooned a large bull, which dragged him to the edge of the ice in spite of all efforts to hold back. Then the man, when he decided to give up and let go the line, found that his hands were stuck so fast that he could not release the line. He was dragged into the water.

At first the salt sea-water choked him, but he soon found to his astonishment that he could breathe under water. The bull walrus said: "You have trifled with walrus. Now I am going to take you south with us, so that you may see all those whom you have stashed and hurt. Some day you may return to your village. Now take this harpoon-point out of my side. There! Now you will live."

To the rest of the herd, the bull walrus said: "I am taking this man south with us, because he is the one who has troubled us. I am going to teach him a lesson."

The man now had a walrus form. He travelled with the herd, but when they dived to feed on the sea-bottom, he was always behind them. Before he had his fill of clams, the food of walrus, they rose to the surface again, so that he became thin and weak from lack of nourishment. Noting his condition, the bull walrus instructed: "If you eat as you do now, you will starve before reaching our land. When you eat clams, blow on the shells till they open, then suck in the bodies. You

waste too much time opening and cleaning them. The skin of the clam will make you fat. When you get ready to dive, look into the sky for a cloud; then pretend that you are kicking the cloud, and the force of the kick will carry you to the bottom."

The man carefully followed instructions. The first time he dived in this manner, he descended so rapidly that he bumped his nose on the bottom. He was now able to finish eating ahead of the herd, so that he grew fat and had no difficulty in keeping up with them.

Arrived in the south, the man saw a large village with a huge men's house. In this house were a great number of men and women walrus, many of which had deep scars on their cheeks. The walrus, as they came in, took off their tusks and piled them in a corner. The bull walrus pointed to the scarred people, and explained: "Those are the people whom you have harmed. They are eager to teach you, so that you will injure them no more when you go home."

The man saw many carcasses behind the village, the walrus graveyard. Some of them were hairless, and he remembered that, back home, when blubber was put in a warm place, the hair came off, and then the meat could be eaten either cooked or raw. Viewing these bodies and becoming hungry, he drew a knife and cut off slices. They tasted good after the long clam diet; but some walrus saw him violating their graveyard, and the headman of the walrus made him keep away from the village four days. Whenever he became hungry for flesh, he returned for more, even if he did have to remain by himself.

The walrus people repeatedly told him: "When you return to your village, never harm our people anymore. If you do, we shall capture you and turn you into some kind of an animal, and you will never go home again."

The days became longer, and people said, one to another: " It is nearly time for us to go north. After our women deliver their children, we shall 'try."' The man did not understand the word "try"; he thought that it might mean a dance, because there had been no dances all winter. After the walrus calves were born, the headmen called all the people into the men's house. There water came in until it rose to the benches where sat all the people of the village. The headman announced: "It is nearly time for us to move north. On our way, human boat crews will chase us. The women must try now. They must show us how they will escape with their young. You, young woman, jump

in the water and show us how you would protect your baby when pursued."

The indicated young woman, baby on back, was swimming. When she dived, her calf dived too, but they came up immediately. "You came up too soon. The hunters' boats will get you; but if you can swim without being seen, you will be safe," criticized the headman.

"I could stay below longer, but my baby could not," she answered.

Another woman tried. After she dived, she came up swimming at right-angles to the direction in which she went down. Walrus usually come up on the same course. The headman approvingly said, "You will escape boats." All women tried. Those whom the headman approved, would escape death, while the others would be taken by humans, although he announced that even some who were good at dodging would also die.

One evening the cry went up, "New moon!" Then all rushed for the tusks piled up in the corner and departed north after obtaining them. Some were slow, and succeeded in getting only one tusk. The man got none, and, with the bull walrus, was the last to leave. They over-took the herd on an ice-floe, where they bedded down for the night. There was so much talking, singing, and bawling that the man could not sleep. He was taught: "Do not sleep too soundly. Raise your head and look about every once in a while, because humans may slip up in their boats."

The following day a strong wind made large swells, so that instead of resting and sleeping, the herd continued northward. The man saw the herd begin to separate, going in family groups. He and the bull walrus followed the shore, but kept well away from the villages. The bull walrus said: "You must go north with us. When we return in the fall, after the ice has formed, you may go to your own village."

The summer was spent in the north. Many walrus were missing there, killed by humans, because they slept too soundly on the ice or because they could not stay long enough under water. In the fall, when all were migrating south and came opposite Cape Prince of Wales, the bull walrus said: "We are going south, but I can not take you with us. You must now return to your own home; but remember not to play any more tricks on the walrus."

The man left the others and came up on the ice in his walrus form. Then he emerged through the nose of his walrus shape and was once

more a human. He walked down the beach and met hunters returning. When they appeared not to see him or to hear his voice in greeting, he became very uneasy, thinking that perhaps he was now a spirit. He was more alarmed when he noticed that his feet did not touch the ground. He felt then that he might have become a spirit. He walked to the men's house, but when he saw the painted marks, one red, one black, extending around the house,[1] he knew that he could not enter. As the man stood by the door, a youth came out and extended his hands to empty a urine pot. At once the man who had been with the walrus flung himself on the ground. Then the young man saw him, but was unable to avoid drenching the man. He apologized: "I did not see you lying there. I did not mean to throw urine on you."

The man answered: "That is all right. I lay down purposely, so that you could save me from becoming a spirit. I am now a man again."

He went in the men's house, where all recognized him. He learned that he had been given up for dead and that his parents mourned him. He satisfied their curiosity, and told all that had happened while away from the village. From that time he was kind to all, and helpful to the aged. He had learned his lesson, and no more teased or played practical jokes on men or animals. All in the village respected and had a good word for him.

THE SPIRIT MARKS ON THE MEN'S HOUSE

One night, after all the old men and married men had gone home, the young men and boys, as is customary, were playing, dancing, and singing in the men's house. The moon was full, and a strong wind blew from the north. At midnight the youths were startled to hear something bump heavily on the roof and roll off. More alarmed, they heard a strange, peculiar step, a thumping, waddling step coming up the entranceway. In terror all the young people sprang up on the wall benches and fearfully watched the entrance hole. The step ceased, and a frightful face, skin torn and hanging to the breast, thrust itself up.

The thing slowly walked on elbows and knees about the room while the youths gazed, hardly daring to draw breath. It bumped against each bench as it passed, and the young men, unable to resist,

1 See the following myth.

followed in single-file behind the thing, the evil spirit, walking as it did on elbows and knees. They followed it out through the entrance.

One orphan boy saved himself by putting his fingers in his mouth, biting the tips, then hanging with his fingers from cracks in the wall. The people entering next morning found all the young men gone and a terror-stricken orphan hanging on a wall. After he gasped out his tale, the people trailed the youths. They found frozen bodies all along the trail to the interior. They did not trail the evil spirit. Since that time there are two marks by the entrance to the men's house to prevent evil spirits from entering.

THE WOMAN TAUGHT BY SPIRIT MEDICINE-MEN

A great hunter and medicine-man, who had his own men's house, was married to two women, keeping them in separate homes. One had several children, but he lived mostly with the other, who bore no children, but was a medicine-woman.

One night, his first wife, sleeping with her children, suddenly awoke, feeling that she must take her urine pot and go outside. There she found two men, whose feet, as they stood before her, did not touch the ground, thus indicating that they were spirits. They informed her, "Our chief has sent us for you."

"I can not leave, on account of my children. My lamps are burning, and they will smoke while I am gone."

"Your children and lamps will be safe while you are gone. We shall bring you back soon."

Setting down her urine pot, the woman followed the spirit-men along a creek and up the mountainside until they reached and entered a large men's house filled with people. The headman from his bench summoned her before him, and said: "Your husband, who is a medicine-man, often called you to come to his men's house to show a supernatural power. You remained at home because you were not a medicine-woman. We felt sorry for you. Now watch us closely."

A medicine-man, clad in a waterproof parka and with a drum, jumped from his seat and began to drum while the people sang. Putting aside the drum, he rolled back the floor-boards and began to pick in the ground beneath, bringing up roots eaten by the walrus, with which he filled the waterproof parka. Then he kicked the floor-boards into place and distributed the roots to all present. He said to the woman,

"When you become a medicine-woman you must do just as I have done."

Next he picked up a mallet and a wedge, strode to a wall, and drove in the wedge. When he placed a bowl beneath it and pulled out the wedge, seal-oil flowed into the bowl. With this he filled all the lamps, then passed a hand over the hole and the oil stopped flowing.

A second and older medicine-man came to the centre of the room. He pulled a tiny drum and beater from the innermost of four bags which he wore about his neck. From beneath the floor he took a piece of very blue ice and rubbed both drum and beater with it. Soon the instruments became huge. He drummed and called for his dogs. Then two polar bears, so large that they had to widen the entranceway by gnawing the posts, came in. The medicine-man instructed the woman: "These bears are now yours. Put your arms about their necks and walk once about the room." Then he dismissed them, and repaired the entranceway by passing his hand over it. After drumming once more, the medicine-man walked to a side wall, kicked a beam, and the wall rose, letting in sea-water until the floor was covered. All manner of sea animals could be seen outside. The man reached out, cut blubber from a whale, and closed the wall. The meat which he held out to the people was frozen. He then rubbed the drum and beater the opposite way, until they became small enough to enter the bag. He hung these four bags, one inside the other, about the woman's neck, telling her to use them when called upon by her husband.

The woman was escorted home by two spirit-men. She found her urine pot outside, unfrozen, her children sleeping quietly, and the lamps burning brightly.

The following night, when her husband was holding the last of the ceremonial dances in which medicine-men show their powers, a messenger entered and bade the woman to come to the men's house. She put her children to bed, trimmed the lamps, dressed, and for the first time went to the men's house where all the people were gathered. She sat in a corner with a relative.

The husband, surprised at her appearance, thought, "She must have become a medicine-woman, because she has come here."

The other wife, who had long been a medicine-woman, sat on the floor, beating a drum and calling for her supernatural powers. Two noisy birds flew in and sailed about the room, disappearing at a wave

of the hand. Then she laid aside the drum and sat down with the other people.

Now the wife, taught by the spirits, was summoned. She refused the drum, and pulled out her tiny drum, which she used as instructed. As she drummed, the singing of many people was heard outside the walls. First, she raised up the wall, showed all the sea animals, even cutting from a whale a piece of blubber, which froze instantly, and closed the wall. Next she rolled aside the floor, plucked walrus roots from the ground beneath, gave them to all present, and put the floor back in place. Then, driving a wedge into the wall, she drew forth seal-oil, filling all the lamps. Last, she called for her dogs, the polar bears, and with her arms encircling their necks, walked about the room, the people crowding back in great fear. Her husband cried: "That is enough! We know now that you are a great medicine-woman."

When she went home to bed, all her children were asleep and the lamps were burning brightly. Soon her husband entered and lay beside her. He queried: "Are you asleep? Why are the lamps all burning?" The wife made no answer, but remained quiet until he was asleep. Then, clothing herself, she went outside, where she drew a line in the snow with a finger. Immediately the house rose in air and moved to the other end of the village.

The husband awoke to find himself alone, cold, shivering, and naked on the snow. He hurriedly dressed, and ran to his men's house. At daylight he saw his home on the opposite side of the village, and went there. His wife, now herself a great medicine-woman, let him stay, so he gave up his other wife and these two lived there peacefully.

THE MAN WHO MARRIED A POLAR BEAR

A man, a good hunter, lived with his mother in a home beside the men's house. The mother frequently scolded, urging that he take a wife, " Because," said she, "I am getting old; I am worn out from cutting up meat. I need a daughter-in-law whom I can teach to help me."

"O, mother, there is no girl in the village whom I should care to marry."

"O, my son, there are many girls in other villages."

"O, my mother, I have never seen a girl anywhere whom I could marry."

So day after day the mother pleaded, but the son remained obdu-

rate. One time, while hunting, he left shore ice, jumped on a floe, and went far out. From a hummock he spied a woman, dressed in a white parka trimmed with bear-fur, playing with a ball of tanned sealskin. His curiosity aroused because a woman should be playing ball all alone so far away from a village, the man approached, and asked, "Why do you play ball on this floe ice?"

She affected not to hear, but continued to toss the ball. Again he asked: "Why do you play ball on floe ice? Why do you not play on land? Whence did you come?"

Then she turned to answer: "I belong out here. I play here because I like to."

"Are you married?"

"No, I have never been with men," she answered.

"I have never married nor been with women. Will you marry me?"

"Even if you persuaded me to marry you and treated me well, the time would come when trouble would separate us, because your mother would say unkind words to me."

The whole village saw the man leading his wife, a girl strange to them, to his home. He said to his mother: "Because you always urged me to marry, I married this girl. You must always be very careful what you say to her and never utter an unkind word."

The mother assured him: "You have followed my wishes in choosing a daughter-in-law for me. I shall never use harsh words toward her."

For a long time the hunter brought in much meat, which his industrious wife cut up and stored. The mother-in-law attentively watching, and now relieved from the hard tasks, saw the daughter-in-law often eat pieces of blubber or lick up oil as she worked. This greatly irritated her more and more as time went on.

A boy was born to the couple, and was reared by the old mother. Once, while still a mere youth, and the father was out hunting, he was in the room with his grandmother, while his mother was in the entranceway pounding blubber. The youth's mother put frozen blubber on a large stove and pounded it with a wooden club to obtain lamp oil. She used frozen blubber in order that the oil might not spatter. She heard the old woman say to the boy: "Why does your mother always eat pieces of blubber and lick up oil when she cuts up meat? I think she must be a polar bear."

Hearing these words, the wife wept, but soon dried her tears and filled the lamps. She knew now that she would soon be separated from her husband. When the hunter returned and she ran out to help him with the game, he noticed that she acted peculiarly toward him. He asked if anything was the matter, but she replied: "Nothing has happened. Everything is all right."

She cut up the meat, trying hard not to eat any, nor to drink oil, but her appetite prevailed. When she carried her husband's food to the men's house, he noticed her averted eyes, and once more questioned: "What has happened? Has my mother said unkind words to you?"

"No; everything is all right," she responded.

In the morning when her husband arose, she remained in bed. He asked her to get up, but she turned her back to him. Still in bed when he was dressed and ready to go hunting, he chided: "Why do you act that way? Tell me what is wrong." At her refusal to answer, he stamped out of the house.

The old mother-in-law, sleeping on a bench, awoke and heard mother and son dress and eat. Then all was still for a time. She peered down, but the room was empty. Mother and son had gone, but not through the entranceway; they had disappeared through the rear wall. Mother and son ran to the shore and fled northward along the beach until they reached a rocky point. There they stepped on shore ice. Once on the ice, their hands became bear-paws. Travelling to seaward, they reached floe ice after a long walk. When they jumped on the floe ice, mother and son were transformed into polar bears.

When the husband returned, and no wife ran to meet him, he hurried into the house, shouting to his mother, "Where is my wife"'

"She and her son left, passing through the rear wall before I knew they had gone."

"Did you say anything to offend her?"

"No."

Snatching up weapons, he rushed out, picked up the trail, and hotly pursued. He found where the tracks led over shore ice and knew that they had become polar bears. Their path over floe ice showed that they travelled northward. The hunter was now fully assured that mother and son were polar bears, because no human villages lay to the north. The tracks showed that they were travelling slowly, the mother going ahead and waiting for her son to catch up. The trail

became fresher. Then he saw a dark vapor ahead, and knew it arose from open water. Next he saw the two polar bears, and ran fast, but before he could catch up to them, they slipped into open water, the mother swimming fast, the son holding to her ear. They paid no heed to his shouting. The hunter could not swim the stretch, so he ran to shore ice and around the open water in the hope of intercepting them as they emerged. Arriving on the opposite side, he was too late, so he picked up the trail again. He followed for a long distance, until he saw two large villages.

The man entered the men's house of the first village. In the entrance was a rack hung with bear-skins. Two were newly hung up, for the noses were still quivering; then he knew his wife and son were inside. He waited. Soon his son came out, and said, "You have followed us here."

"Is your mother inside?"

"Yes."

"Tell her to come out; that I am here."

The boy told the mother that his father had come and was outside. She exclaimed: "No! Your father is far away. No human can come here. I shall not go out."

An old man, her father, spoke: "What the boy says may be true, because humans sometimes travel far. Daughter, go out and see."

Seeing her husband, she asked: "Why did you come here? Your mother does not like me."

"Why did you leave me?"

His wife told him the whole story, adding, "But you must return to your village, because no humans can live here."

"I pursued you here and I shall stay, even though I lose my life." Going inside at her

bidding, he saw her parents and his son. The old man greeted him,

saying: "I knew some humans could travel far, even outrunning a fast animal. You have arrived safely, but you have not met my sons, who are out hunting. If my eldest son is angry, you will lose your life. He will enter first. As he comes up through the entrance, throw a bead in his teeth and he will be pleased. Then he will not kill you."

Outside bears were heard approaching, then a growling and gnashing of teeth as some one muttered that he smelled a human. One cried, "Why did our father let a human enter our home?"

The father warned the hunter: "My eldest son is angry. He will surely kill you. If you throw the bead, maybe all will be well."

The man took off his forehead-band containing the bead. As the first son stuck his head through the entrance hole, the man flung the bead between his teeth. The head disappeared and in a moment reappeared wearing the beaded forehead-band and smiling. Then all the sons entered, having left their skins in the entrance, and were so numerous that they filled all the benches. They were glad to see their sister, greeted the husband, and joyfully made much of the boy. They had brought home many seal, and all feasted on raw meat and blubber. The man could stomach only frozen liver. When all slept, he was kept awake, because the bears snored loudly, snarling and growling in their sleep.

The following day the old man told his sons to treat their brother-in-law well, because he would always remain and work with them. He added: "When I was young, I never went near human villages, because I did not want to be killed. It is hard for those who are killed to return here and hunt. Humans hunt with spears, arrows, and dogs. I always feared dogs."

One son boasted: "I am not afraid of dogs. If one followed me, I should turn and rip open his belly."

"No. You would be killed, because dogs can outrun bears. You could never get away from them."

The man remained with them, although he ate and slept little. After a hunting trip, one brother failed to return. The old father mourned: "That is my son who scoffed at dogs. He must have tried to fight them and they brought him down."

The missing son returned the next day, carrying a bow and arrows. He explained: "I was hunting near Kíngegán [Cape Prince of Wales], when a hunter and dogs gave chase. But for the dogs I could have escaped easily. The hunter shot and killed me, because I could not see his arrows."

Another brother jeered, "If I ever meet a human, I shall dodge his arrows and escape."

Every now and then a brother returned late, bearing spears or arrows and naming the man who had killed him. Some of these men the hunter knew. He explained to the old father and brothers that a hunter always took home a bear's head, bladder, and pelvis, along with the

meat. Then at night he would hold a dance at which meat was distributed to the people and afterward would sing and dance with his wife, jumping over the pelvis. Some one present would then make a new song and put the successful hunter's name in it.

One morning a messenger from the other village appeared, saying, "Our headman wishes to play kickball with this man."

The old man answered, "Humans can not play our game, but he will meet your headman."

To the man, his son-in-law, the old Bear-man instructed: "If the headman beats you in the game, he will kill you. You can not go out unless you wear a skin. Wear mine, because I am old and can not hunt. When I was young, I won all the games. When you go out, keep your nose to the ice and your tail down. After meeting the other village, choose any of the four ice balls which suits you. Have your new brothers line up and crouch down with them, ball beside you. When your turn comes, stretch arms and legs, blow hard on the ball, and kick. It will roll far."

Outside he found his opponents lined up. Their skins had black spots on the side, while those of his side were all white. Their leader stood up, stretched, ground his jaws, and kicked a ball. It rose in an arc, but dropped between the two lines.

The man picked up the ball and carried it to his side. He also stretched, but blew hard on the ball as he kicked. It soared high and over the heads of his opponents. Then he and his new brothers walked home on the tips of their claws, tails straight out, and loudly growling their joy.

The beaten side slunk away, heads low and tails down.

The old father boasted: "When I was young I always won games. Now you can use my skin. That headman will keep on trying to beat you, but they have only a few games."

They remained in the men's house all day and night, because there is no hunting during games. Then a Bear-man arrived with the message, "Our headman wants that human to dive in the sea with him and see who can stay under longer."

The old father answered, "Humans do not dive in water, but he will try his skill."

Again the old Bear-man instructed the human: "Wear my skin once more. Each village will cut a hole in the ice. Both of you will lie

by the holes and then dive. On the bottom you will see your opponent pick up a stone he thinks he can carry above. Then he will sit on it, facing you. You do the same as he does. When you feel that you have to breathe, stoop and pretend to shift the stone, so that he will not suspect what you are doing, and breathe out under your arm. Then you will feel as if you had just dived. When he can stay below no longer, he will rise up with his stone, throw it on the ice, and kick it toward your side. Then you come up as he did. Now go out, tails down and heads low, to the snow."

The headman stood by his hole, stretched, gnashed his teeth, and lay down. The human did likewise. They dived and sat on stones on the sea-bottom. Soon the man choked from lack of air, but when breathing out under his arm, he was relieved. The bear began to blow out bubbles; he shifted about restlessly. Then he rose, and, once on the ice again, kicked his stone, which fell short between the two sides.

The human still sat below. He could see and hear all that went on above. His eldest brother-in-law, anxious, called to the headman: "Why does not that human come up? Did you kill him?"

"No; he is still waiting below."

"He is human and can not stay long below. You must have killed him."

When the eldest brother was about to fight the headman, the human rose up with his stone, sprang on the ice, and kicked the stone. It sailed over the heads of his opponents.

Then his brothers gave a mighty yell. They walked home on the tips of their claws, heads up and tails out straight.

The old father boasted: "When I was young, I always won over that village. Now there is only one more game left in which you will see who can first bring in meat. Wear my skin, because humans are slower than polar bears in hunting."

In the morning a messenger announced, "Our headman wants the human to hunt seal with him."

"Humans are slow, but he may go," was the reply.

The old Bear-man instructed: "In this game I always used to bring in the first seal. You and your brothers-in-law must try to bring in the first seal. Look for seal-holes and make them larger that you may see your game more easily. When you see any living thing moving in a hole, scoop with your paws and throw it on the ice; it will be a large

hair-seal."

Both villages spread out on the ice looking for seal-holes. The human found an old one and cleared it off. Below some very small animal was swimming. Quickly he flipped it out, and it turned into a big hair-seal. Then all the brothers threw their heads back and yelled in triumph. They curved up their tails to their backs and walked home on the tips of their claws.

The old father exulted: "I always won while hunting, and brought home the first seal. Now all the games are over, and that village will never bother you again."

Since that time the human, the hunter, has lived with the polar bears.

"Eskimo of Cape Prince of Wales"
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