

the answer. If the answer is favourable, preparations begin immediately, and the village is scoured for the necessary gifts. It is a point of honour between the tribes to exceed the requests as much as possible. The visiting tribe also has the privilege of demanding any delicacy of the *nāskuk* during the first day's feast which fancy may suggest. This usually takes the form of meat out of season, or Eskimo "ice-cream"—a concoction of reindeer tallow, blueberries, and chunks of whitefish kneaded in the snow until it is frozen. Sometimes the *nāskuk* is hard put to it, but he must produce the necessary articles, or be disgraced forever.

THE DANCE SONGS.

When the feast has been decided upon, the people gather

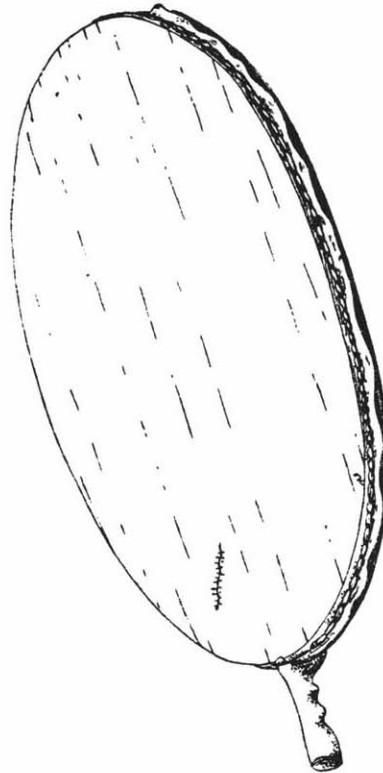


Fig. 4. Eskimo drum (*chūuyak*).

nightly in the *kázgi* to rehearse. The songs are the property of some old man, the storehouse of tribal tradition; and he "sells" them to the different dancers, as the Eskimo say, which means that he teaches the people the proper dances for the festival, and they make him presents in turn. When the villagers have assembled, the oil lamps are extinguished, and the people sit in darkness¹, while the old man gives out the songs—a few words at a time. Weeks are consumed in learning them properly; in acquiring every rise and fall, proper shade, and intonation. The drum is the only instrument employed. It is shaped like a tambourine, about two feet in diameter, and covered on one side with a thin membrane of the bladder of the walrus or seal. It is held by the handle level with the face, and struck with a flat thin stick. The northern tribes strike the back of the rim; but the Yukon tribes the face of the drum (Fig. 4.)

With the Eskimo, rhythm is everything. The songs are based on the double drum-beat: two quick beats, then a pause, then two more. At any moment the leader drops an octave or changes the key; but the others follow instinctively, and there is no break or discord. The following measures, taken from the Crow Dance, will give an idea of this primitive type of song.



Leader: *tū-lū-kaú-gok tcau-ya-tá-ka*: Chorus: *tū-lū-kaú-gok nū-lerq-tuq-tō-a klā-kú-ya klā-kú-ya ā-yūⁿ-ā-ā-yūⁿ-ā-ā-ā²*.
 Translation: The crow song, I drum it. The crow, he wishes to take a wife. Klā-kú-ya.

The chorus usually consists of six men, led by the old man, who acts as prompter, calling off the words of the song a line ahead. The measure begins softly to a light tapping of the drums; then, at a given signal, comes a crashing double beat; the leader

¹The lamps are extinguished during the practice of the festival songs, so that any spirits which may be attracted by the sound of the music will not be frightened away by the light.

²The words *klā-kú-ya* are imitative of the croak of the raven, the *ā-yūⁿ-ā, ā-yūⁿ-ā, ā-ā*, is a monotonous refrain common to all Eskimo songs.

announces the dance in stentorian tones, the song thunders out, soaring high until the voices of the singers crack; then drops to lower pitch and breaks off abruptly in the middle of the measure. Every one is privileged to join in after the song has been started; and the shrill treble of the women and children can be distinctly heard above the shouting of the men and the thumping of the drums.

The Eskimo dances naturally and enthusiastically, stamping each foot twice in succession, and jerking his arms to the double beat of the drums. The women dance differently, swaying the body from the hips, and waving the arms with outspread palms. Both sexes have dances of their own, but occasionally dance together, the woman being the central figure and the men dancing around her. Nothing pleases the Eskimo more than an exaggerated imitation by one of their clever actors of the woman's dance.

The northern style of dancing differs as much from the southern as does the beating of the drums. The northerners leap and bound and stamp out their lines with tremendous vigour; while the southerners sit on the floor of the *kázgi*, and, adorned with fillets and masks and feathers, wave their hands in graceful unison.

The Eskimo delight in telling an old legend which illustrates his difference:—

A long time ago, they say, when the Eskimo first came into the country, there was only a single woman between the man who lived in the north and the man who lived in the south. In their struggle for possession of the woman, one took hold of her hands and the other of her feet, with the result that she was pulled in two, the hands and upper half going to the man of the north, and the feet and lower half to the man of the south. At first they were each much perplexed as to what to do with only half a woman; but eventually conceived the plan of whittling out the missing parts in wood; this they did, and found they grew together nicely.

Consequently, the northern woman was an adept with the needle but a wooden dancer, while her southern sister was an indifferent sewer but a charming performer in the *kázgi*. The same distinction descended to their children.

The "Inviting-In" dances partake somewhat of the nature of the nith contests of Greenland. Each party puts forth its best actors, and strives in every way to outdo the other. During the first day, when the comic dances are on, the tribe succeeding in making the other laugh can demand anything of them they wish. The best dancers receive valuable presents.

The actors themselves go through the same general motions as the ordinary dancers, never losing a step or a gesture, at the same time fitting their movements to the character in hand. As much as possible they strive to make every gesture expressive, and succeed so well that a stranger could tell the part they represent, even if the prompter did not call it out at the beginning of the song. In fact, I have often wondered if they were not possessed by the spirit of the animal they depicted when dancing, as the Eskimo believe.

The actor's outfit consists of a face mask, armlets, finger masks, and fillets. In certain dances the actor also carries a staff. The masks are of two types—those intended to excite merriment and good feeling among the guests, and those worn to honor the *ínua* of the animals in whose honour the dance is given. They are made by some noted shaman employed by the tribe, who also has general direction of the dances. They are very clever representations and will be described as they occur in the dances.

The finger masks are diminutive masks with an animal head in miniature. They are plentifully adorned with feathers; which give the idea of flying as the dancers' arms sweep through the air. The women (supporting dancers) use plain handlets of woven grass and feathers. The armlets and fillets are of fur or feathers corresponding to the animal represented.

COMIC DANCES.

First Day. The dances the first day are of a comic character. If, during the day's dances, the home tribe can succeed in making the visitors laugh, they can ask of them anything they wish.

Entering the *kázgi*, I noticed that the walls and *íplak* had been hung with white drilling (*katúktókūōwítlok*), as a gift to