

learned more than once, at a crowded dance, to my temporary affliction.

The old man took his place in the centre of the floor amid perfect silence. With head on his breast and hands at rest on his lap he seemed sunk in some deep reverie. Then he raised his hand to his head and cracked a louse audibly. This was too much for the Unalaklit, and they howled with laughter. Then, having won the day by this ruse, the old man began his dance. Two women with feather handlets stepped forth, and accompanied him, imitating his every move. Higher and higher he swung his hands, like the rapid upward wheel of a carrier pigeon. Then the dance stopped as abruptly as the others; the day was won.

Immediately the food for the feast was brought in. It consisted of a strange and bewildering array of native delicacies: ancient duck eggs, strips of walrus blubber, frozen seal-meat, boiled entrails, kantags of blueberries and lichens, and various other dishes which appeal to the stomach of an Eskimo. Not having any particular desire to partake of the same, I took my departure.

GROUP DANCES.

Second Day. Entering the *kázgi* the second day, I noticed that the floor was covered with small heaps of skin and calico. As the Unalaklit came in, each man added to the pile. This, I was informed, was the price of the first day's defeat, and that they were looking for ample revenge the second day.

They began with a "muscle" dance. This consisted mainly in comic posturing and in a droll display of the biceps. Occasionally the dancers would glance down the heaving muscles of the back and shoulders or extend their arms and make the muscles quiver. The Unalit, in their turn, attempted to imitate the same, and outdo the visitors, but although their big clown dancer exhibited his enormous arms and legs to good advantage, they were evidently outdone. Nothing daunted, they began another series, the contest consisting in the ability of the opposite side to guess the meaning of the dances. To this end, ancient dances which have fallen into disuse or been forgotten, except by the old men, are resurrected and practised in secret.

A young woman appeared in the centre of the floor wearing a white reindeer parka¹ and a girdle of reindeer hair tied around her waist. She began the conventional motions of the woman's dance, glancing nervously round her. Then men dancers, wearing fillets and armlets of wolf-skin, leaped down from the *inlak* and surrounded her, jumping about and howling hideously. As the dance-song quickened, they became more and more excited, until the floor became one confused mass of shaggy heads and wildly tossing arms. The drums redoubled the beat, until the *kázgi* fairly rocked under the volume of sound and the stamping feet. Then, as suddenly as the pandemonium began, it ended.

This was easily guessed as the wolf-pack pulling down a reindeer.

Not to be outdone, the Unalaklit presented a very ancient dance from their old home, Kotzebue sound. This dance, I was told, was two hundred years old, and the old-style dance of the Malemiut. Strangely enough, no drums were used, but the chorus consisted of a double row of men who used ivory clappers to mark the time. Instead of stamping, the dancers bounded up and down on the balls of their feet, holding the legs arched and rigid. No one was able to fathom this dance. It was different from any Eskimo dance I have ever seen. It might be an earlier form, or borrowed from the Déné. So the visitors won the honours of the second day, and left the *kázgi* in high good humour.

TOTEM DANCES.²

Third Day. The third day the contest reached its climax. The best dancers of each party were put forth, and the interest became intense. For months they had been trained in their parts, until every movement had become almost instinctive. Each appeared in full regalia of armlets, fillets, and handlets, adapted to their part. Their appearance was the signal for a demonstration on the part of their friends and every new turn or movement which they introduced into their dance received attention.

¹During the early occupation of Alaska by Russian fur-traders, several words of Kamchatkan origin were introduced, and incorporated in the native languages, among them *parka*. It should be pronounced *párkĭ*, but it being sanctioned by general use, I have retained the usual form.

²Totem marks on personal property and grave posts can still be seen among the Alaskan Eskimo, but the accompanying subdivision of the people into clans has evidently broken down.