

as fiery bodies, as proved in their estimation by the shooting stars, which they look upon as portions thrown off by the fixed ones. They form them into groups, and give them names, many of which they explain. The star Aldebaron, with the cluster of the Hyades, and other smaller ones around, are called Pa-chúk-hu-rin, "the sharing-out" of food, the chief star representing a polar bear just killed, and the others the hunters around, preparing to cut up their prize, and give each hunter his portion. The three stars in Orion's Belt are three men who were carried away on the ice to the southward in the dark winter. They were for a long time covered with snow, but at length, perceiving an opening above them, they ascended farther and farther until they became fixed among the stars. Another group is called the "house building," and represents a few people engaged in constructing an ig-lu, or winter hut. But perhaps their most complete myth refers to the sun and moon, who, they say, are sister and brother. Given as we received it, it runs as follows: "A long time ago, in a country far away to the eastward, called Pin'g-ō, the people held a winter festival, when one of the women, tired of dancing, left the company and retired to rest in her own hut. Before she had gone to sleep, she perceived some one enter, who blew out the light, and lay down beside her. Being desirous to know who her stealthy visitor was, she smeared her hands with soot from the lamp within her reach, and secretly blackened his body, that she might know him again among the dancers. After he had gone, she returned to the dance-house, and peeping in, saw to her horror that the man whose person she had marked was her own brother. She retired in great grief to the open air, but soon returning to the dance-house, she went into the middle of the assembly, and with a woman's knife (o-lú) cut off her left breast, which she gave her brother, saying, 'All this it is good that you should eat.'* They then went out, and both ascended slowly towards the heavens in a circular path, he with his dog going first and she following, and when nearly out of sight separated, the man by name Nel-lu-kat'-si-a Tád-kak, to become the moon, and his sister, Sigh-rá-a-na, to become the sun, still dripping with her own gore, as may be seen occasionally in cloudy weather, when she looks red and angry." The moon is considered cold and covered with snow, on the white surface of which may be traced at the full the figure of the man perpetually travelling with his dog, whilst the lady sun enjoys the warmth of an eternal summer."

In some of their pursuits, necessity compels the men of different establishments to combine their strength, as in taking the whale, and in such circumstances, some must take the lead. It would seem an easy step from this to the permanent ascendancy of individuals over the others, and some have accordingly considerable weight in the community; but there is nothing among them resembling acknowledged authority or chieftainship. A man who has a boat out in the whaling season, engages a crew for the time, but while in the boat he does not appear to have any control over them, and asks their opinion as to where they should direct their course, which, however, they generally leave him to determine, as well as to keep the principal look-out for whales. The chief men are called Ome'liks (wealthy), and have acquired their position by being more thrifty and intelligent, better traders, and usually better hunters, as well as physically stronger and more daring. At the winter and summer festivals, when the people draw together for enjoyments, proficiency in music, with general knowledge of the customs and superstitions of their tribe, give to the most intelligent a further ascendancy over the multitude; and this sort of ascendancy once established, is retained without much effort. As they combine to form a boat's crew to pursue a common prey, so will they unite to repel a common enemy, but it is only when danger is common they will so unite; their habits of life leaving them perfectly free from the control of others, and making them dependent solely on their own individual exertions for a livelihood; they are bound together as a society only by ties of relationship and a few superstitious observances, and have no laws or rules excepting what custom has established in reference to the spoils of the chase. It cannot be doubted that their Ome'liks have considerable influence, more especially over their numerous relations and family connexions, and may use some art to maintain and extend

* This is not given as a literal translation, but we believe it conveys the meaning. The Esquimaux words are "tu-man'g-ma mam-mang-mang-an'g-ma nigh'-c-ro."