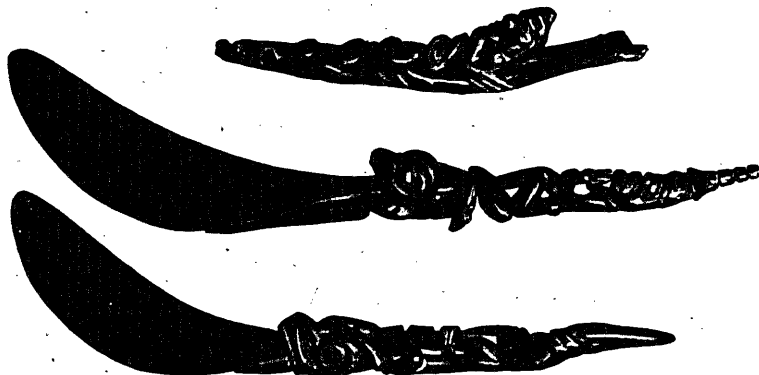


Being unable to go further overland I returned to the Asónque camp. There we fitted ice-guards to a small canoe, and with ice-hooks pulled our way through, and carried our canoe over the floes and among the icebergs, to the extreme limit of so-called open water in that direction. The ice-guards were merely wooden false sides hung to a false prow. From this point, also, I found the interior impenetrable, and went to a temporary

Here he paused again, picked up the corner of his squirrel robe and raised it with a sweeping forward gesture, which he maintained till his words had produced their full effect, when the sing-song intonation would begin again.

Coon-nah-nah-thklé, for that was his name, showed me his sorcerer's kit. There was an immense drum of stretched seal-skin or goat-skin, made to accompany him in his incantations, and to terrify the wicked spirits preying



THLINKIT ANCESTRAL SPOONS. (FROM HORNS OF MOUNTAIN GOAT. HOONÁH KWÁHN.)

camp of seal and goat hunters, who were camped on a ledge of rocks above the crunching and grinding icebergs. The head man of this camp was a young fellow of about thirty, who was both Shamán ("medicine-man") and hereditary chief. He was the most thoughtful and entertaining Thlinkit I had met. He told me that within his own lifetime this place where we now were had been solid ice. He would listen with breathless attention whenever I spoke, and then reply in low, musical intonations, almost like chanting. His narration of the traditions of his people was pathetic in its solemn earnestness. He said:

"You are the only white man that has ever been here, but I have heard of your people. Before I was born—a long time ago—a ship came to the mouth of this bay, and gave the Thlinkits iron to make knives like this one. Before that they had made knives from copper or from stone, like this."

Then he would pause, fix his eyes on me, and hold up the knife. When he saw I had absorbed his words, he would give a graceful wave of the hand and continue:

"Then the Thlinkits had many furs,—foxes, and bear, and sable,—all the people were warm, all were happy, and lived as Yéhl had set them to live [or after Yéhl's example, I don't know which]. There was plenty to eat, and plenty to wear. Now, sometimes we are hungry and wear ragged robes."

upon the life of the sick person. The drum had formerly belonged to a celebrated Shamán, and his spirit was either in the drum itself or had passed into the possessor of the drum, I could not determine which. I found it to be a common belief that anything that had belonged to a dead wizard possessed some inherent virtue. For this reason it was almost impossible to secure Shamán instruments. These Shamáns claim to be able to see the "life" or soul leaving the body or being dragged from it by spirits, and it is their business to seize the soul with the mouth and breathe or force it back into the body. The dress they wear depends upon what malign spirits they determine are at work. I only saw one Shamán exorcising, and I do not believe he would have continued had he known I was observing him. He kneaded, pounded, yelled, chanted, frothed, swayed to and fro, played tunes all up and down the suffering patient, blew in his mouth and nostrils, and literally worried the life out of him. In general practice the Shamán continues this performance till the wretched patient declares he is better or well. If he cures, the Shamán gets large pay. If he kills, he restores the goods he has previously received on account. If any one who is not a regular Shamán does anything for a patient who dies, the self-constituted doctor is held responsible, and must pay forfeit in life or goods. If the patient is obdurate and will not declare