

from Cumberland Sound by Kumlien, and is described by him (p. 38). There was a ball in the hollow body of this instrument, which could not be pulled through any of the openings. One line was fastened to this ball, passing through the central hole, and another one to the top of the whirl. A simpler pattern is represented in Fig. 408.

On its capture, the seal is dragged to the sledge and after being covered with the bearskin is firmly secured by the lashing. It freezes quickly and the hunter sits down on top of it. If the seal happens to blow soon after the arrival of the hunter, a second one may be procured, but generally the day is far spent when the first seal is killed.

Wherever water holes are found they are frequently visited during the winter by the Eskimo, especially by those who have firearms. They lie in wait at the lower side of the hole, i. e., the side to which the tide sets, and when the seal blows they shoot him, securing him with the harpoon after he has drifted to the edge of the ice. These holes can only be visited at spring tides, as in the intervals a treacherous floe partly covers the opening and is not destroyed until the next spring tide.

In March, when the seal brings forth its young, the same way of hunting is continued, besides which young seals are eagerly pursued. The pregnant females make an excavation from five to ten feet in length under the snow, the diving hole being at one end. They prefer snowbanks and rough ice or the cracks and cavities of grounded ice for this purpose, and pup in these holes. The Eskimo set out on light sledges dragged by a few dogs, which quickly take up the scent of the seals. The dogs hurry at the utmost speed to the place of the hole, where they stop at once. The hunter jumps from the sledge and breaks down the roof of the excavation as quickly as possible, cutting off the retreat of the seal through its hole if he can. Generally the mother escapes, but the awkward pup is taken by surprise, or, if very young, cannot get into the water. The Eskimo draws it out by means of a hook (niksiang) and kills it by firmly stepping on the poor beast's breast. An old pattern of the hook used is represented according to Kumlien's drawing in Fig. 409; another, made from a bear's claw, in Fig. 410; the modern pattern, in Fig. 411.

Sometimes the natives try to catch the old seal in a most cruel way, by using the love of the dam for her pup to lure her to the surface of the hole. They tie a thong to the hind flipper of the pup and throw it into the hole. It dives at once, crying pitifully. When it comes up to breathe the hunter pushes it back, and frequently the dam returns to her young and attempts to draw it away. As soon as she is seen the harpoon is plunged into her body and she is quickly drawn out of the water and killed.