

THE ESQUIMAUX' CEREMONIES

The Esquimau's love of a feast is well known, and they combine it with and make it the *pièce de résistance* of every ceremonial occasion.

Their principal ceremonies are:

I. "**Chakanik-Kiami-pitahungluk**," or feast of adieu to the sunlight, which is celebrated at the commencement of the winter night. The announcement is made by the tribal conjurer, who, with the chief, unites the tribe, and invites them to witness the solemn lighting of the *kotalik* for the winter. The tribe chants the song of adieu to the sunshine, after which the conjurer, with his primitive apparatus of wood, illuminates his lamp of seal oil. Then follows the dance of adieu to the sun with a weirdly chanted accompaniment. The dancing and chanting terminated, the tribe forms in procession, conducted by the conjurer and chief, and passing before each igloo and topek, solemnly lights the lamp within, with a prayer to assure it from a scarcity of oil. The fête is ended by a feast composed of raw fish and meat, and by divers games and amusements.

II. "**Chakanik-Kiami-Pitalik**" is the feast of the return of the sun, a time of great rejoicing, during which all the lamps are solemnly extinguished.

III. The "**Pitigatsak**" is the celebration of the entry into the world of a newly-born Esquimau. The infant, dressed in gala attire, is confided to the arms of the chief of the tribe, who presents it to all his subjects. A circle is formed, the center of which is occupied by a stone lamp filled with seal oil. The conjurer then anoints the child's hands and feet with the oil, that the hands may be strong and honest and the feet swift and unailing. This is followed by tribal chants, and the child is then passed from hand to hand, each one expressing a wish for its future welfare. The inevitable feast follows, and games and dancing mark the close of the occasion.

IV. "**Pitsaghek**," or promising in marriage, is less important and solemn, but more amusing than the ceremony of marriage. It partakes somewhat of the latter, to which it is often but the prelude, both ceremonies frequently occurring within the hour. The young man who desires to take unto himself a wife must demand the permission of the chief of the tribe, and, if fortunate, is presented by the latter to the mother of his heart's object. If the mother is willing to listen to him, the presentation is followed by the discussion of the number of skins which she shall receive as the price of her daughter's hand. An understanding upon this important point being arrived at, the young man must at once present to her the number of skins agreed upon. She thereupon examines their quality, and,