NAVAHO NIGHT CHANT.

LAST NIGHT. — NAÄK*ĦA*Í AND END.

THIS ceremony, which is the longest and most important of all, begins after dark, — seven o'clock or later, — and lasts incessantly until daylight. It is called Naäk*ĥa*í. It consists of a performance outdoors, which is mostly dance and song, and a performance within the medicine-lodge, which is mostly song, and in which there is no dancing. Let us first consider the performance which occurs outside.

CHARACTERS — DRESS.

The requisite characters are: *Ĥa*st*ś*éyal*ĥ*i, the Talking God or Yébit*s*ai; *T*ó'nenili, the Water Sprinkler (Rain God), and a number of dancers, preferably twelve. Of these six represent yébaka or male divinities, and six, yébaäd or female divinities. Besides these the chanter and patient participate. The mask of *Ĥa*st*ś*éyal*ĥ*i is illustrated in "Navaho Legends," fig. 27. The yébaka have their bodies whitened, and are decorated, masked, and equipped as are those who appear in the dance of the atsá'*l*ei, or first dancers. The yébaäd, or goddesses, are usually represented by small men and youths. The males thus acting are nearly naked like the yébaka; have their bodies daubed with white earth; wear silver-studded belts with pendant fox-skins, showy kilts, long woollen stockings, garters, and moccasins; but, instead of the cap-like masks of the yébaka, each wears a blue domino (illustrated in "Navaho Legends," fig. 28), which allows the hair to flow out behind. They have no eagle plumes on head, or on stockings, and no collars of spruce. They carry rattles and wands like those of the yébaka. Sometimes women and so-called hermaphrodites are found who understand the dance. When such take part, as they sometimes do, in place of small men and youths, they are fully dressed in ordinary female costume, and wear the domino of the yébaäd, but they carry no rattles; they have spruce wands in both hands. As has been said, there should be six yébaäd characters; but there is often a deficiency of the small men and youths, and when such is the case, arrangements are made to do with a less number.

That which is considered the typical or complete dance will first be described, and then the variations will be discussed. The dancers are dressed and painted in the lodge, and then proceed to the green-room or arbor, blanketed, to get their masks, wands, and rattles. When they are fully attired, they leave the arbor, and proceed to the dance-ground (fig. 1). The chanter leads, observing all the forms he used in conducting the atsá'*l*ei (fig. 2); *Ĥa*st*ś*éyal*ĥ*i follows

immediately after the chanter; the twelve dancers come next, all in single file, and *Tó'*nenili brings up the rear. Among the twelve dancers the first is a yébaka, the second a yébaäd, and thus the male and female characters follow one another alternately. As they march in the darkness, they sing in undertones, and shake their rattles in a subdued way.

When they reach the dance-ground between the two lines of fires, the chanter turns and faces them; they halt; the patient, warned by the call, as before, comes out of the lodge. They all now stand in the order shown in the diagram, fig. 3. The patient and chanter walk down along the line of dancers from west to east. As they pass, the chanter takes meal from the basket carried by the patient, and sprinkles it on the right arm of each dancer from below upwards. This done, the patient and chanter turn sunwise and retrace their steps to their original position west of and facing the line of dancers. Meantime the dancers keep up motions such as those made by the atsá'*l*ei when they are sprinkled.

When the patient returns to the west, *H*astsé*y*al*t*i runs to the east, whoops and holds up his bag as he did with the atsá'*l*ei; the dancers whoop, lean to the right, and dip their rattles toward the earth, as if they were dipping up water. *H*astsé*y*al*t*i runs to the west, whoops and holds up his bag; the dancers turn toward the east, and repeat their motions. They turn toward the west again. *H*astsé*y*al*t*i, now in the west, turns toward the dancers, and stamps twice with his right foot as a signal to them; they whoop and begin to dance and sing. Usually now the chanter goes into the lodge to superintend the singing, and the patient sits beside the meal-basket, near the door.

For a while they dance in single line, nodding their heads oddly, and facing around in different directions, each one apparently according to his own caprice. At a certain part of the song, the yébaäd move, dancing, a couple of paces to the north, and form a separate line, leaving the yébaka dancing in a line to the south. The position of the dancers at this time is represented by the following diagram, fig. 4. They dance only for a brief time in this position, when the two lines again intermingle, and they form a promiscuous group, the dancers facing in different directions, and moving around. After dancing thus for a little while, the yébaäd dance again to the north, and two lines are formed as before.

They dance thus for a while when, at another part of the song, the single yébaka and yébaäd who dance farthest west approach one another, and face east in the middle. Here the yébaka, or male, offers his left arm to the yébaäd, or female, much in the manner in which civilized people perform this act; the yébaäd takes the prof-

fered arm, thrusting "hers" through to the elbow; with arms thus interlocked they dance down the middle toward the east. Before they reach the eastern end of the lines, they are met by *H*astsé́yalʌ́i, who dances up toward them; they retreat backward, facing him; when they reach the west again, *H*astsé́yalʌ́i begins to retreat, dancing backward, and they follow him. When they reach the eastern end of the lines, they separate and take new positions, each at the eastern end of his or "her" appropriate line. Soon after they have begun to dance "down the middle," the second time, the pair now in the extreme west lock arms and dance east. As soon as the first couple separate, *H*astsé́yalʌ́i dances up to meet the second couple. All the evolutions performed by the first couple are now performed by the second. This is continued by each couple in turn until all have changed their places, and those who first danced at the west end of the line dance there again. White people witnessing this dance usually liken it to the well-known American contra-dance, the Virginia reel.

When all the figures of the dance proper, heretofore described, have been repeated four times, the yébaäd return from their line in the north, and a single line is formed of alternate yébaka and yébaäd facing west. *H*astsé́yalʌ́i whoops and places himself at the eastern end of the line; all face east, and, dancing in a lock-step, as closely packed together as the dancing will allow, they move to the east. When they get off the dancing-ground, they halt, give a prolonged shake of the rattles, whoop, and move away at an ordinary walk in silence, until they get beyond the glare of the fires, about midway between the dance-ground and the arbor. Here in the darkness they cool off, and breathe themselves for the next dance. They may take off their masks, and chat with one another, or with any one else.

All the acts described are performed in a most orderly and regular manner, without the slightest hitch, hesitancy, or confusion on the part of any of the participants. No orders or promptings are given. The dancers take their cue, partly from the acts and hoots of *H*astsé́yalʌ́i, but mostly from the meaningless syllables of the song they are singing. At certain parts of the song, certain changes of the figure are made.

When the dancers have rested for about five minutes, they return to the dance-ground in the same order in which they first came; but the chanter does not accompany them, neither does he sprinkle meal on them when they arrive on the dance-ground, unless the patient be a child. The chanter only leads, and, as a rule, only sprinkles meal on each group of dancers once, and that is when they make their first appearance.

Except when performing the dipping motion described, and when turning around, the veritable male dancer holds the upper arms hanging by the side, the forearms partly flexed, a gourd rattle in the right hand, a wand of spruce in the left. When a real woman enacts the part of the yébaäd, she holds both arms extended outward horizontally, the elbow bent at right angles, the forearms vertical, and a wand of spruce in each hand.

At those parts of the dance where men remain in one place they raise the right foot high, and hold it horizontally in marking time. At certain parts of the song they hold the foot raised for a period of two notes. When moving, also, the men lift the feet well from the ground; but the women do not do this; they shuffle along on their toes, lifting the feet but little.

The average duration of a figure, such as described, is five minutes, and that of the breathing-time is about the same. But on occasions, when many sets of dancers are prepared, and the programme for the night is crowded, the periods of rest are greatly shortened or altogether neglected. The dancers sometimes go but a few paces away from the dance-ground, when their song is done, and return immediately to begin a new song.

There is often no change in the general character of this figure all night. From the beginning, soon after dark, until the ending after daybreak, it may be constantly repeated, and the accompanying songs may be sung to the same tune and in the same cadence.

The most desirable number of repetitions for the dance is said to be forty-eight, when four sets of dancers each perform twelve times. This, it is said, was in old times the invariable rule. On such occasions each set holds the ground about two hours, and there is a pause of about half an hour between the final exit of one set and the first appearance of another. This gives us, with the work of the atsá'*l*ei, an entertainment of ten hours' duration. But great variations are made from this standard, depending on the number of groups which have drilled themselves and come to the ground prepared to dance, also on the number of songs which each group may have composed and practised for the occasion. For the first set we have noted always twelve or thirteen dances; but for subsequent sets we have sometimes noted higher numbers, up to twenty, — not always multiples of four and not always even numbers. When the night's programme was crowded, we have seen two sets perform completely within an hour; then the rests were short or omitted. There may be six or more relays, and they may dance until perilously near sunrise.

The performances of *T*ó'nenili, the clown, next demand our attention. While the others are dancing, he performs various acts accord-

ing to his caprice, such as these: He walks along the line of dancers, and gets in their way. He dances out of order and out of time. He peers foolishly at different persons. He sits on the ground, his hands clasped across his knees, and rocks his body to and fro. He joins regularly in the dance toward the close of a figure, and when the others have retired, he remains going through his steps, pretending to be oblivious of their departure; then, feigning to discover their absence, he follows them on a full run. He carries a fox-skin; drops it on the ground; walks away, as if unconscious of his loss; pretends to become aware of his loss; acts as if searching anxiously for the skin, which lies in plain sight; screens his eyes with his hand, and crouches low to look; imitates in various exaggerated ways the acts of Indian hunters; pretends at length to find the lost skin; jumps on it, as if it were a live animal he was killing; shoulders it and carries it off, as if it were a heavy burden; staggers and falls under it. Sometimes he imitates the acts of *Hastséyalʌi*; tries to anticipate the latter in giving the signals for the dance; rushes around with wands or skins in his hands in clumsy imitation of *Hastséyalʌi*; in intervals between the dances goes around soliciting gifts with a fox-skin for a begging-bag, to which no one contributes. Thus with acts of buffoonery does he endeavor to relieve the tedium of the monotonous performance of the night. He does not always come regularly in nor depart with the regular dancers. His exits and entrances are often erratic.

There are some variations of the dance which have not been yet described. Sometimes a set of dancers is made up without any yébaäd characters; then, instead of the dance down the middle, two men lock arms to dance along the north side of the line, and other changes are made to suit circumstances. Sometimes the number of yébaäd is less than six; in this case some of them dance down the middle more than once. Portions of the song may be varied in length. If the song is longer than that given here, *Hastséyalʌi* may cause the dancers coming down the middle to retreat more than once to the west. On some occasions they are not required to retreat to the west at all, but dance directly down the middle, and then separate. There seems to be difficulty often in finding men and boys of suitable size to enact the part of the yébaäd, and even when present, they have been seen, as the work approached its conclusion, to become exhausted by the severe exercise, to throw themselves on the ground, and refuse to take part.

There is a variety of the dance called *bézʌton*, occasionally employed, which has not been carefully noted on the dance-ground, but which has been demonstrated in private to the author. In this, the hands are thrust far downwards and thrown backwards in time to

the song. The step is slower and more halting than in the regular form. As compared with the latter it bears somewhat the relation of *deux-temps* to *trois-temps* in our waltz.

In the element of music, the songs sung outdoors are much alike. To the ear untrained in music they sound quite alike. Even a musician, Sergeant Barthelmess, says of them: "In all the figures of the dance, the melody of the song remained the same." Yet it is apparent, from a study of the phonographic records, that some latitude is allowed the musical composer in framing these melodies. The author is not sufficiently versed in music to declare wherein they must agree and wherein they may differ. In "Navaho Legends" (pp. 283, 284) may be found the music of two different naäk*h*aí songs noted by Professor Fillmore from phonographic records. The male personators of female divinities sing in falsetto.

As for the language of the songs, it has little significance. They consist mostly of meaningless syllables, or of words whose meanings are forgotten. Yet many of these are all-important, and must not be changed or omitted. As before stated, some of them serve as cues to the dancers. There are changes made in the few significant words of the song; those of the first song after dark and of the last song in the morning are invariable; it is in the intervening songs that the modern Navaho poet is allowed to exercise his fancy. All the songs begin with these vocables "óhohohó éhehehé." In singing these the dancer in the west sings the first syllables "o" and "e" alone; in all the subsequent syllables the other singers join.

Following is the full text of a stanza of the first song:—

FIRST SONG OF THE NAÄK*H*AÍ.

I.

1. Óhohohó éhehehé héya héya
2. Óhohohó éhehehé héya héya
3. Éo ládo éo ládo éo ládo na*ś*é
4. Hówani how owow owé
5. Éo ládo éo ládo éo ládo na*ś*é
6. Hówani how owoú owé
7. Hówani hówani how héyeyeye yéyeyáhi
8. Hówowow héya héya héya héya
9. Hówa howé héya héya héya
10. Óhohohó éhehehé héya héya
11. Óhohohó éhehehé héya héya
12. *H*ábi níye *h*ábi níye
13. *H*á'huiz*á*naha, *ś*hiwá*n*aha.
14. *H*á'hayá' éaheóo éaheóo
15. *Ś*hiwánaha, *H*á'huiz*á*naha.
16. *H*á'hayá' éaheóo éeheóo éaheóo eaheóo.

The words in this stanza to which any significance is now assigned are those in the 13th and 15th verses, and the meanings of these are only traditional: "The rain descends. The corn comes up." The other three stanzas are the same as the first, except that in the second and fourth the significant words are placed in inverse order.

Sometimes, in the intervals that occur between the final disappearance of one set of dancers and the first appearance of the next set, *Hastséyalʔi* or some other of the masked characters go around among the spectators with a begging-bag, soliciting contributions, and receiving tobacco and other articles. He does not speak, but merely holds out the bag; when the contribution has been put in, he closes the bag, and utters his peculiar hoot.

So far we have described the work outside the lodge; it now remains to describe the work within it. The basket is "turned down" at night with many ritual observances. From the time it is turned down until the final ceremonials in the morning, the work consists of singing the songs of sequence of the rite in their proper order. The singing begins when the atsá'ʔlei depart from the medicine-lodge in the evening, and continues until the song of the atsá'ʔlei is heard outside. The moment the song outside ceases that in the lodge is resumed, and again the song in the lodge ceases the instant the singers outside are again heard. Thus, song is continued throughout the night, without interruption, either in the lodge or on the dance-ground, but never in both places together. There are many intricate rules connected with these songs, some of which have been learned; but there are many more which have not been discovered.

The first of the songs of sequence sung in the lodge is perhaps the most musical of the night. It is the first of the Atsá'ʔlei Bigín, and alludes to the atsá'ʔlei without naming him. The following is a free translation of the first stanza: —

1. Above it thunders,
2. His thoughts are directed to you.
3. He rises toward you,
4. Now to your house
5. Approaches for you.
6. He arrives for you,
7. He comes to the door,
8. He enters for you.
9. Behind the fireplace
10. He eats his special dish.
11. "Your body is strong,
12. Your body is holy now," he says.

The second stanza is the same, except that the first line is, "Below it thunders."

After the dancers have sung their last song outside, the singers

FIGURE 1. Diagram of Dancing-Ground: *a* . . . *a*, fires; *b*, *b*, piles of wood; *c* — *c*, prepared dancing-ground. From lodge to arbor is about 100 paces; width of dancing-ground about 15 paces.

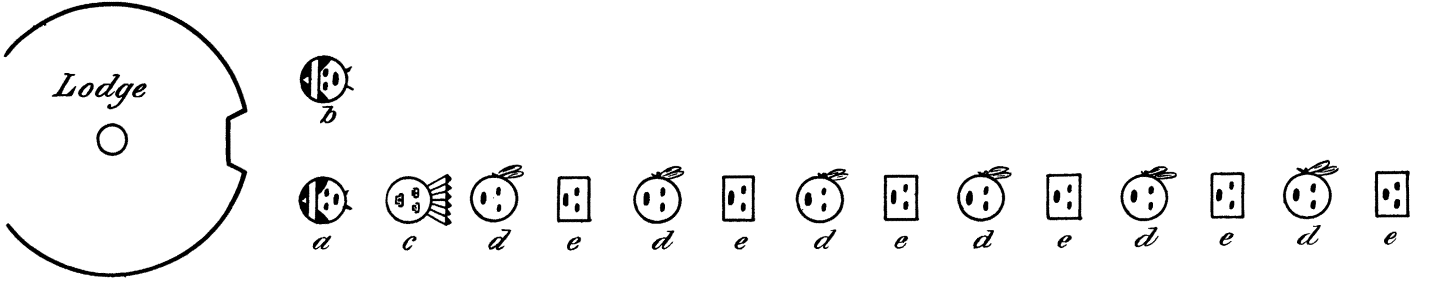

FIGURE 3. Diagrams of first position of dancers of the Naäk*h*aí: *a*, chanter; *b*, patient (facing east); *c*, Yébits*i*ai; *d*, male dancers; *e*, female dancers (facing west).

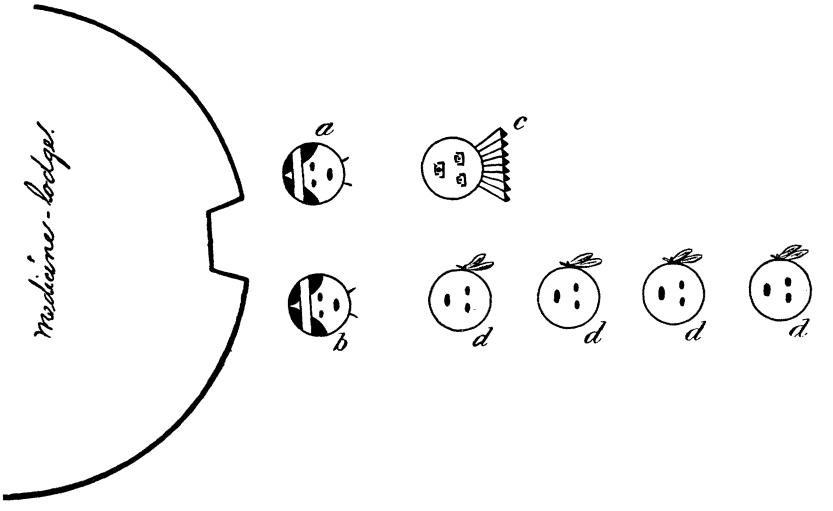

FIGURE 2. Diagram of first position of Atsá'ǐei or first dancers: *a*, chanter; *b*, patient; *c*, Yébitsai; *d* . . . *d*, dancers.

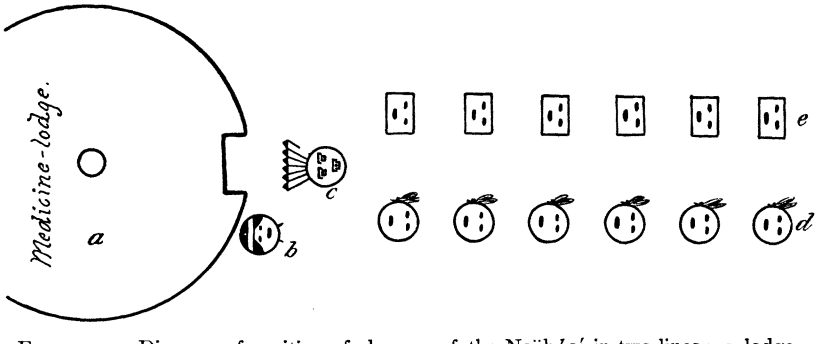

FIGURE 4. Diagram of position of dancers of the Naäkhaí in two lines: *a*, lodge; *b*, patient; *c*, Yébitsai; *d*, line of male dancers; *e*, line of female dancers.

inside the lodge sing the four Béna *Haṭáli* or Finishing Hymns. The following is a free translation of the last of these: —

I.

From the pond in the white valley (alkali flat) —
The young man doubts it —
He (the god) takes up his sacrifice.
With that he now heals.
With that your kindred thank you now.

II.

From the pools in the green meadow —
The young woman doubts it
He takes up his sacrifice.
With that he now heals.
With that your kindred thank you now.

At the pronunciation of a meaningless vocable (niyeoóo) in the refrain, the chanter puts his right hand under the eastern edge of the inverted basket which serves as a drum. (Illustrated in "Navaho Legends," fig. 16.) As the last verse of the song is uttered, he turns the basket over toward the west, makes motions as if driving released flies from under the basket out through the smoke-hole, and blows a breath after the invisible flies, as they are supposed to depart. During the singing of this song, an assistant applies meal to the lower jaw of the patient.

The next labor of the chanter is to unravel the drum-stick (illustrated in "Navaho Legends," fig. 40), lay its component parts in order, and give them to an assistant to sacrifice. While unravelling, the chanter sings the song appropriate to the act. When the stick is unwound, the chanter gives final instructions to the patient, and all are at liberty to depart.

According to these instructions, the patient must not sleep until sunset. Shortly before that time he returns to the medicine-lodge to sleep there, and this he must do for four consecutive nights, although he may go where he will in the daytime. Under the threatened penalty of a return of his disease, he is forbidden to eat the tripe, liver, heart, kidney, or head of any animal, or to eat anything that has floated on water. If an ear of corn or a melon has dropped into water, and floated, it must not be eaten. These taboos must be carefully observed until he attends a celebration of the rite of *d*onastsi*h*égo *haṭál*; then he may partake of the peculiar composite mess prepared on that occasion, and thereafter the taboos are removed.

Washington Matthews.

WASHINGTON, D. C.