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INDIAN LEGENDS RETOLD

BY
ELAINE GOODALE EASTMAN

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS BY
GEORGE VARIAN



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BOOKS BY
ELAINE GOODALE EASTMAN

—
YELLOW STAR
INDIAN LEGENDS RETOLD

—
In Collaboration with
CHARLES A. EASTMAN
WIGWAM EVENINGS



THE CAPTIVE
The murdered dove instantly became a whole flock of hawks.
Frontispiece. See page 18.

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INTRODUCTION

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF INDIAN LEGENDS

THE first Indian legends, repeated by the fireside to children, deal with the animals humanized, their gifts and their weaknesses, in such a way as to be a lesson to the young. Our view of the creation allows a soul to all living creatures, and rocks and trees are revered as sharers in the divine. Beyond their simplicity and realism there is always the unexplained, the background of mystery and spirituality.

These animal fables serve as an introduction to more complicated stories with human actors, which almost always have their hidden moral and are accepted by our people as guides to life. They are full of humor and poetry, of pride, tenderness, boastfulness, and real heroism. Human lives are mingled with the supernatural, with elements and mysterious powers, bringing swift punishment for wrong-doing. This is the basis of our Indian philosophy, the groundwork early laid in the mind of the child, for him to develop later in life by his own observation.

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One who reads these stories carefully and thoughtfully will understand something of Indian psychology. Mystery to the Indian is not mystery after all, but a reflection of the Great Mystery which opens out as simply as a flower. To us nothing is strange or impossible. It seems natural that an animal or even a rock should speak; God is in it and speaks through it.

It must be remembered that these are only fragments of what were once consecutive and

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continued stories, too long and involved to be set down here in full. With just such stories the foundation of my early education was laid in the cold winter evenings, and the impression made was permanent. The characters were real people to me, and the tales of the old men and old women fostered a love of nature, reverence, a kindly spirit, and finally patriotism and the inspiration to heroic effort. Like the other boys, I was expected to learn them by heart and rehearse them in the family circle. It is gratifying to have these old stories saved for the children of another race and generation.

CHARLES A. EASTMAN (OHIYESA).

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INDIAN LEGENDS RETOLD

A LITTLE TALK ABOUT INDIANS

MANY of us think of the American Indians as all one people. We talk of “the Indian language.” There are more than fifty distinct Indian languages.

There are many other important differences between the various tribes. The nature of the country, the kinds of game and other foods, the climate, winds, trees, all have their effect in molding the daily lives of the people. Their habits and customs are reflected in their legends and popular tales as in a looking-glass.

The mountains, plains, and seashore are the great natural features of our country, and corresponding to these we have coast tribes, prairie tribes, and forest-dwellers or mountaineers among the natives. If you try, you will soon be able to tell from reading a story what part of the country it came from. It is an interesting study to read and compare the legends of different tribes. [4]

The Cherokees lived originally in the South Atlantic States and some few still have their homes in the mountains of North Carolina, but the greater part of the tribe was forcibly removed many years ago to the old Indian Territory. There they developed a civilized government, established schools and colleges, and are now well educated and intermixed with white people. The stories repeated here were gathered from the eastern or parent branch. Their shrewdness and quick wit is very noticeable. Sequoyah, whose impressive statue stands in bronze in the rotunda of the Capitol at Washington, was the famous Cherokee who invented an alphabet. [5]

The Choctaws formerly lived in Mississippi and Louisiana but are now one of the Five Civilized

Tribes of Oklahoma (once Indian Territory).

The Tsimshians are Indians of the North Pacific coast and in the old days lived mainly by fishing. They also hunted deer, bears, and other animals. Their houses and boats were made chiefly of cedar wood, and they also wove the bark of the cedar into baskets, ropes, mats, and even clothing. The salmon and the cedar were to them what the buffalo was to the Indians of the Great Plains, so you will not be surprised by the many references to them both in these stories. There is a strong likeness between their customs and those of the Alaskan tribes.

The home of the brave and manly Iroquois was in the valley of the St. Lawrence, the basins of Lakes Erie and Ontario, and most of what is now the State of New York. They were an exceptionally gifted people, wise in state-craft and active in warfare. They believed in the manlike form and magic power of the creatures and elements. [6]

The Pimas are a gentle, peaceable, brown-skinned people, living in Arizona, making fine pottery, weaving beautiful mats and baskets, and raising corn. Like the other desert tribes, their songs and stories have much to do with the rain clouds, upon which their crops depend. They formerly stood in great fear of the warlike Apaches, who often attacked them and carried off women and children captive.

I suppose you all know that these legends were not written down at all until white people or educated Indians put them into books. They were made up by unknown story-tellers, far back in the past, and repeated by old men and women for the amusement and instruction of the young folks. Thus they were handed down, with some changes or additions, from one generation to another. [7]

Indians had good memories. There were no libraries or museums or universities. All their wisdom and their traditions were stored up in the heads of the people, and a thing once forgotten was lost forever. They had not even a notebook or memorandum to help out a poor memory.

It is not so simple to invent a short tale that is witty and ingenious, with as much point and meaning as have most of these we are giving you, as you will soon find out if you try to make up some fables or fairy tales of your own. To remember and tell over such a story in a clear and effective way, without missing any of its logical or dramatic quality—even this is no very easy matter. The hearing and repeating of the legends took in large part the place of both school and story-books to the Indian boy or girl, and it is good practice for any of us. [8]

It seems likely that every tribe has in its folklore a mischievous character with supernatural powers, who is at the same time a butt for jokes and a successful wonder-worker. He is boastful and resourceful, always trying to outwit other people, and in his turn is often outwitted. Among the Sioux this character is known as Unktomee, the Spider; the Tsimshians call him the Raven; the Cherokees the Rabbit.

Besides this clown, as it were, whose tricks and troubles are endless, every animal has its personal or human side, sometimes one that is obvious, and again it may be decidedly puzzling. The Turtle, for instance, is depicted as a famous warrior (we hardly see why) and the Porcupine as a wise man, which we should scarcely have expected. On the other hand, it seems quite natural to find the Grizzly Bear the chief among animals, and the Eagle the leader among birds. [9]

Indian legends are broadly classed as "myths" and "folk tales." The first tell in a fanciful way how the world was made, how winter, summer, fire, tides, and many other familiar things or conditions came into being. They go back to a time which all Indians believed in, when the animals were real people and could talk as we do. They could do many wonderful things besides that we cannot do. The Winds, Cold, the Stars, and so on are personified; that is, they are described and act as persons, and there are also giants, witches, water sprites and fairy people who change their nature at will. [10]

In many of the folk tales, which come nearer being a record of actual or possible happenings, the lovable and domestic qualities of Indians are brought out very clearly. Notice the loving brothers and the affectionate husband in "The Woman Who Became a Beaver" and "The Wooden Wife." The duty of hospitality is taught in the story of "Grizzly Bear and the Four Chiefs", kindness to animals in "The Feast of the Mountain Goats", patience with children in "The Naughty Grandchildren" and "The Stars and the Pine." In every instance the right-doer is rewarded, the selfish man and the trickster are punished. I hope that you will enjoy these stories as much as I have done, and that they may help you to know and like better the first Americans.

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PIMA TALES

CHILDREN OF THE CLOUD

THERE was sorrow on the Casa Grande (the Great Pueblo), for the prettiest woman in the village would accept no man for her husband. Her suitors were many and impatient, but her black glossy locks were still wound above her ears in the manner of virgins, and she steadily refused to allow them to hang down in the matron's coils.

One day a great Cloud came out of the east, looked down upon the maiden and wished to marry her, for she was very beautiful. A second time and a third he floated silently overhead, and at last he found her tired out with work and lying asleep at her mat-weaving. He let fall a single drop of rain upon her, and by and by twin boys were born. [14]

Now when the boys were about ten years old, they began to notice that other boys had fathers whom they welcomed home from war and the chase. "Mother," said they, "who shall we call our father?"

"In the morning look to the east," their mother answered, "and you will see a stately white cloud towering heavenward. That cloud is your father."

Then they begged to go visit their father, and she refused, for she was afraid; but when the boys grew large and strong she could no longer keep them, since they were determined to go. She told them to journey four full days to the eastward and not to stop once on the way.

Her sons followed her instructions, and in four days they came to the house of the Wind. "Are you our father?" asked they. [15]

"No," replied Wind, "I am your uncle. Your father lives in the next house; go and find him."

They did so, but Cloud sent them back to Wind, telling them that he was really the one whom they sought. Again Wind sent them to Cloud. Four times they went back and forth, and the fourth time Cloud saw that they were persistent and he said to them: "You say that you are my sons. Prove it!"

Instantly the younger son sent forked lightning leaping across the heavens, while the elder caused the heat lightning to flash in the distance. The skies opened and rain came down in torrents, enough to drown a mere mortal, but the boys only laughed at the roar and rush of the tempest. Then Cloud saw that they were in truth his children, and he took them to his house. [16]

After they had been there a long time, they began to miss their mother sorely, and finally they wished to return to earth. Their father gave each a magic bow and arrows, strictly charging them to avoid any whom they might meet on the homeward path.

First the Eagle on mighty wing swooped toward them, and they turned aside. Then came the Hawk, and afterward the Raven, but the boys managed to elude all of these. Last the Coyote sought to intercept them, and whichever way they turned, he was always before them. So they stepped out of the road and stood one on either side to allow him to pass. But when Coyote came opposite to them, each was changed into a plant of the mescal, the sacred agave, which is both food and drink to the Indian. [17]

THE CAPTIVE

There was once a little boy who was brought up by his grandmother. While he was yet very young, his mother had been taken captive by the warlike Apaches. He thought about her a great deal, for he had heard that they treat their prisoners cruelly.

One day he made up his mind to run away and find her. The way was long and hard, but at last he descried the enemy's camp upon the plain, and when he came nearer, he could see a woman standing, looking toward the mesa and her old home. He knew her at once by the white scars which covered her arms, showing where she had been tortured with fire. The child turned himself into a dove and flew straight to his mother, who took him in her hands, and recognized him as her son.

She caressed and fondled him, but told him that he must fly home again before the Apache chief returned, as it would not be safe for him to stay. While they were talking together, the chief entered suddenly. [18]

"What do you mean by whispering to that dove?" he demanded fiercely. "There is sorcery here." And he took the bird in his powerful hands and squeezed it so that the delicate flesh and bones oozed out between his fingers.

The woman screamed, and the murdered dove instantly became a whole flock of hawks, which beat the chief down with their wings and pecked out his eyes. While they attacked him, the captive escaped, and returned to her own people.

THE NAUGHTY GRANDCHILDREN

An old woman had set her pot on the fire with the soup for dinner, and as her two grandchildren [19]

were playing near, she cautioned them not to upset the pot. The boy and girl were in a frolicsome mood, chasing one another with shouts of laughter; and as they ran they heedlessly struck against the pot, which rolled over and broke in pieces, spilling the rich broth into the ashes.

Now when their grandmother saw the mischief they had done in spite of her warning, she caught and whipped them both. Thereupon the children determined to run away.

As soon as she missed them, the old woman followed the runaways out into the desert, calling loudly upon them to come back, for she had only punished them for their own good and loved them both dearly. However, run as fast as she might, she could never come up with them. The two children were never seen again; but it is said that they were turned into two giant cacti and still stand side by side upon the plain. [20]

BLUEBIRD AND COYOTE

In the old days the animals wore no such fine clothing as now, and the bluebird was of an ugly dun color, which made him very unhappy. One fine morning he came to a lake shining like turquoise, and something told him to bathe in the water.

Lightly he skimmed above the waves and dipped his wings four times, singing as he did so:

“Here is blue water—
I go in—
I am all blue!”

The fourth time that he sang the verse and shook the water from his feathers, they really became bright blue!

Just then Coyote appeared, in time to see the transformation. “If you can make yourself beautiful by bathing in the lake, I can do as much,” said he, and accordingly he took the plunge. Coyote could not swim, and he choked and strangled and was almost drowned. When at last he contrived to get upon dry land, he was shivering with cold. He rolled and rolled in the warm sand, which stuck to his fur, and he became dirt color, just as you see him now. [21]

CHEROKEE TALES

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THE FIRST FIRE

IN the old days there was no fire on earth, and the world was a cold and a dreary place, especially at night and in the winter. Think what it would be if we had no hearth at which to warm ourselves, no coals to broil our venison!

One night, in the midst of a thunderstorm, the lightning struck a great hollow sycamore, and it began to burn. When the people saw it, they all wanted to get some fire, but the tree stood in a swamp where there was no firm ground for them to walk on. Many tried and were stuck fast in the bog.

The Raven easily flew across and got so close to the blaze that his feathers were burnt black, and black they have been to this day, but he brought back no fire. Then the Screech Owl tried, and he flew to the top of the burning tree from which he looked down on the hot coals, and got the red eyes that he has had ever since. The large Hooting Owl followed his brother, and the smoke gave him those white rings around his eyes that you have all noticed. The Black Snake said he would try, and he wriggled into a small hole at the foot of the tree, but he was immediately burnt black, and was scorched so badly into the bargain that he has done nothing but twist and squirm to this day. Not one of them brought back any fire. [26]

At last the little Water Spider wove a silken basket which he placed on his back, and then he spun a fine silken thread for a bridge and ran across on it. He reached the tree safely, put a tiny live coal in the basket, and brought it back to the waiting tribes of earth. [27]

ICE MAN PUTS OUT THE FIRE

Once upon a time there was a forest fire, and the fire went deep down to the roots of a poplar tree, and there it smoldered for a long time. The people tried to put it out, but they could do nothing. By and by they grew frightened, fearing lest it might burn down to the middle of the earth, or spread over all the world. So they sent a messenger to the far north, to beg the Ice Man to help them.

Now the Ice Man is a little fellow, with two heavy braids of black hair hanging over his shoulders. After he had heard all about the fire, he nodded, and loosening one braid he breathed upon the strands. Instantly the wind began to blow. He shook out the hair again, and it began to rain. When he undid the other braid, it hailed violently, and the fourth time he blew upon his hair, the storm became so terrific that the messenger hastened homeward. [28]

When he got home, he saw the fire at the roots of the poplar was still burning, and the pit looked deeper and wider than ever. Many people were standing sadly about it, and as they stood there the wind began to blow. Soon a cold rain fell hissing on the hot coals. Then large hailstones were mixed with the rain, and before long the tempest grew so fierce that they were forced to run for shelter. When it stopped at last, they came out again to look, and the pit of fire was nothing but black coals covered with lumps of ice.

THE ORIGIN OF SICKNESS AND MEDICINE

There was a time when man and the animal people were friends, and talked the same language, and even intermarried with one another. Later on, the human race declared war upon the animals and began to kill them in great numbers, using their flesh for food and their skins for clothing, so that there was great fear and anger among them. At last the old White Bear chief called all the Bears in council to decide what should be done. [29]

After much talk, it was agreed to make bows and arrows of their own with which to defend themselves, and one of the Bears sacrificed his life to furnish sinew for the bowstring. When all was ready, and the Bear chief undertook to try the new weapon, his long claws caught on the string so that he could not handle it. Some one then proposed that they all cut their claws, and they were on the point of doing this when the thought occurred to another that they would be unable to climb trees or seize their prey if they had no claws, and would be in danger of starving to death. In the end, the meeting broke up without coming to any decision, and Bears were hunted just the same as ever. [30]

The White Deer next called all the Deer together, and they decided to punish with rheumatic pains every hunter who should kill one of their number without asking pardon for the offense. Ever since that time, the hunters have been very careful to beg the Deer's pardon whenever it becomes necessary to shoot one, although now and then some one tries to avoid the penalty by building fires on his trail.

The other animals followed the Deer's example, and each made haste to invent a disease with which to torment the human race. The Fish and the Snakes threatened him with bad dreams, and the little Grub, who was tired of being trodden upon, heard them with such joy that he fell over backward and has never stood on his feet since. Only the Ground Squirrel said modestly that as man had never done him any harm he had no wish for revenge, whereupon the others were so angry that they scratched him severely, and he bears the marks on his back to this day. [31]

However, they reckoned without the plants, which were friendly to man, and promptly devised a remedy for each disease. We should be grateful to them whenever we are made to suffer by the revengeful spirit of the animals, for in the kindly vegetable world we can find a cure for every ill.

THE FIRST STRAWBERRY

It is told that the first man and woman quarreled, and the woman left her husband. He followed her sorrowfully, but she never once looked back. At last the Sun took pity on the man. [32]

"Do you still love her?" asked the Sun, and the man said he did, and prayed to the Sun to help him win her back again.

Then the Sun caused all manner of delicious fruits to spring up in her path. The woman saw luscious purple huckleberries, but she went right on over them. A service tree laden with sweet red fruit stood in front of her, and she passed it by. Finally she came upon a patch of scarlet strawberries, the first that ever grew, and these she could not resist.

She stooped to taste one, and at once the thought of her husband came into her mind. All the sweetness of their love enfolded her, and she stood quite still in the strawberry patch until he came up with her, and embraced her, and they went back together.

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HOW THE TERRAPIN BEAT THE RABBIT

The Terrapin once challenged the Rabbit to a race, which the latter regarded as a joke.

"The Terrapin is doubtless a wit," said he, "and a great warrior as well, but every one knows that he cannot run. I shall give him a big handicap, and even then I cannot help beating him."

The course lay over four ridges, and the Rabbit told the Terrapin to go ahead to the top of the

first ridge, so that when the signal to start was given he was already out of sight.

When the Rabbit reached the top of the first ridge, he was surprised to catch a glimpse of the Terrapin almost at the top of the second. He ran faster, and as his rival was soon hidden in the long grass, he saw nothing more of him till he was mounting the second ridge, and there was the Terrapin already passing the third. When the Rabbit with great leaps ascended the third ridge, behold! the Terrapin was about to cross the fourth, and the next minute he had won the race. [34]

This is the way it was done. The Terrapin had several friends who looked exactly like himself, so he stationed one of them at the top of each of the first three ridges, with orders to hide in the long grass as soon as the Rabbit came near. He himself stayed at the fourth rise until his competitor came in sight, when he crept over it and so came out ahead.

HOW THE TURKEY GOT HIS BEARD

Now the animals all suspected some trick in this case, and the Turkey in particular was heard to say that he would contrive to get even.

Soon afterward he saw the Terrapin coming back from war, creeping along with a fresh scalp hung about his short neck and trailing on the ground. [35]

"How, my friend!" he exclaimed, "you do not wear your scalp right; only let me show you."

The Terrapin let the Turkey take the scalp and hang it about his own neck, while he strutted proudly to and fro.

"Does it not look well?" the Turkey asked.

"Well enough," the other admitted, "but you may give it back to me now."

"First let me show you another way to wear it," cried the Turkey, and he adjusted the scalp and flew with it into a tree where the other could not follow. Thus he boasts the stolen ornament to this day.

HOW THE DEER GOT HIS HORNS

Perhaps you never heard that there was once a time when the Deer's head was as smooth as that of the doe, and as he and the Rabbit were both great jumpers and proud of their ability, a match was arranged, the winner to receive a fine pair of antlers as a prize. They were to start at one side of a dense thicket, and the first one to make his way through to the further side and back again would be judged the winner. [36]

Now the Rabbit said that he had never before been in that part of the country, and he asked permission to look about a little, which was agreed to. However, he was gone so long that they suspected he might be up to one of his tricks, so one of the judges followed him quietly. There he was, busily gnawing off branches and making a road through the underbrush!

When he finally came out, he was told that on account of his dishonesty the horns would be given to the Deer, and furthermore, since he was so fond of gnawing at bushes, he might continue to do so for the rest of his life. [37]

WHY THE DEER'S TEETH ARE BLUNT

Although it was not the Deer's fault that the Rabbit lost the prize, the Rabbit was greatly provoked and laid his plans to get even. Cutting a stout grapevine almost in two with his teeth, he laid it across the Deer's path and began leaping back and forth, snapping at the vine.

"What are you doing that for?" asked the Deer, when he caught him at this game.

"Only look! I can bite this tough vine in two with one snap of my sharp teeth," replied the Rabbit.

"Let me see you do it," the Deer suggested.

So the Rabbit sprang at the vine and bit it in two, where it was already almost cut through. "You cannot do anything like that," he declared proudly. [38]

"If you can do it, I am sure I can," the Deer insisted, and the Rabbit made haste to drag forward a heavy vine. The Deer leaped at it and tried to bite it as the other had done, but caught his heels and fell headlong. Again and again he tried without success.

"My friend," put in the Rabbit, who had been looking on and pretending to sympathize, "how can you expect to bite anything in two with such blunt teeth as you have? Just let me file them for you a bit, and they will soon be as sharp as mine."

The Deer was hot and embarrassed and very foolishly gave his consent. Thereupon the sly Rabbit got a rough stone and filed off the Deer's teeth almost down to the gums, so that he could not bite off anything at all.

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WHY THE POSSUM'S TAIL IS BARE

A long time ago, the Possum had a fine bushy tail of which he was very proud, so much so that he would even sing of it at the dance. As the Rabbit's tail is short and stubby, he had no patience with such absurd vanity, and at last he thought of a way to put a stop to it.

There was to be a large council and dance to which all the animals were invited, and Rabbit stopped in on his way home to inquire whether Possum was going.

"I shall not attend unless I can be assured of a good seat," declared Possum with much dignity, "for I think my tail entitles me to so much, at least."

"Certainly, I will arrange that," replied Rabbit, with a great show of deference, "and I shall be glad if you will allow me to send a barber to comb and dress your beautiful tail so that it may appear to the best advantage."

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On these conditions Possum agreed to attend the dance, and the Cricket, who was an expert barber, was sent to him with private instructions. As fast as he combed and brushed the tail, he wrapped it around with red string to keep it smooth, and no sooner had he finished his work than Possum hurried away in good spirits.

He found the council house crowded, but all made room for him at once, and when his turn came he quickly unwrapped his long tail and took the center of the floor, waving it proudly as he danced. He was greatly surprised to be greeted with loud peals of laughter. He ventured to speak of his tail in the accompanying song, and the people laughed louder than ever. At last, looking down, he discovered that the Cricket, according to the secret orders he had received, had shaved that splendid tail to the very roots, and it has remained entirely bare ever since.

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In his great mortification, Possum rolled over on his back helpless, and this he still does whenever he is taken by surprise.

THE OWL GETS MARRIED

There was once a woman who had a marriageable daughter. Many men came wooing, but the mother told the girl never to accept any but a skilled hunter, who would keep the lodge well supplied with meat.

One evening the Owl called, in the shape of a handsome young man, and asked the girl to be his wife.

"Are you a good hunter?" she asked.

He said that he was, and upon this she agreed to marry him.

On the day after the wedding, the bridegroom went forth to hunt, and at night he returned with nothing but some scraps that the hunters had thrown away. He excused himself by saying that he had had bad luck, and the next morning he declared that he would try fishing instead.

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When at evening he brought home only a worthless minnow or two, the old lady advised her daughter to follow him quietly the next time and see what he did. She did so and was horrified to see her husband turn into a great Owl and fly to the top of a dead tree, where he sat watching for some small fish that might be dropped by a Hawk or an Eagle.

She went home in disgust, and presently he returned with a story of an Owl which had driven away his game.

"I think you are the Owl," declared the young woman, and she turned him out of doors.

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The poor Owl went off by himself and pined away till he lost all his flesh, and is now nothing more than a big head and a bundle of feathers.

THE STARS AND THE PINE

Once there were seven little boys who spent most of their time down at the town house, playing a game with wheel-shaped stones and a curved stick like a hockey-stick. Their mothers thought they played too much, and one day, when they were boiling the corn for dinner, they put some round stones in the pot and served these to the little boys instead of corn.

This made the boys angry, and instead of staying at home they went right back to the town house and began to dance. Round and round they went, faster and faster, until their feet came quite off

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the ground, and they were dancing on air. When their mothers came to look for them, they were already out of reach.

The mothers screamed, and one caught up a game stick and contrived to pull her son down, but the other six went straight up into the sky; and there they are now, as the six bright stars named Pleiades, which the Cherokees call "The Boys."

As for the seventh little boy, he struck the ground with such force that he sank in and was seen no more. His wretched mother watered the spot every day with her tears, and after a long time there sprang up a slender shoot of green which grew into a pine tree. This was the very first pine. Perhaps you did not know that the Pine has a heart of flame and is a brother to the Stars.



THE STARS AND THE PINE

One contrived to pull her son down, but the other six went up into the sky.
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THE MAN WHO MARRIED THE THUNDER'S SISTER

A certain young man went to a dance one evening and met there two strange young women, both of whom had the longest and handsomest hair he had ever seen. He looked at them a great deal from a distance and finally spoke to them, and before the dance broke up he had asked the younger and prettier of the two sisters to be his wife.

In reply she told him to fast for seven days and she would meet him again at the same place.

The young man was so deeply in love that he gladly accepted the hard condition, and after going without any food for the prescribed time, he went to another dance. There he met again the two sisters with the beautiful long hair. When it was time to leave, the younger one said that he might follow her, but she warned him that if he ever told where he went or what he saw, he would surely die.

[46]

They all went along a footpath until they came to a small brook, when the two girls stepped quietly into the water and continued on their way. The young man hesitated at first, but when his sweetheart turned her head and beckoned he stepped boldly in, and it was as if he were walking in deep, soft grass.

Presently the brook ran into a wide and deep river, and now he stopped short, for he was afraid of being drowned.

"Oh," said the girl, "that is only the road to our home!" So in he plunged, and he did not seem to

be in the water at all but in the long meadow grass.

The girls led him to a cave under a great rock and offered him a seat, but when he looked at the seat he saw that it was an immense live turtle. He said then that he would rather stand. But what surprised him most was to see both young women take off their lovely hair and hang it up beside the doorway, leaving their heads quite bare. [47]

Soon there came a loud clap of thunder, and directly after a flash of lightning that disclosed a tall man entering the cave. This was the brother of the girls, and his name was Thunder. He invited the youth to ride with him and offered him a horse which turned out to be a large water snake. The young man refused the invitation, for he had become a good deal frightened and decided that he would rather go home.

There came another frightful peal and a dazzling flash, and the next thing he knew he was lying on the river bank with his feet in the water. He reached his home safely, but he could not resist telling his friends about his wonderful experience; therefore within three days he died, for no one may tell of a visit to the underworld and live. [48]

THE ENCHANTED LAKE

In the depths of the Great Smoky Mountains there lies a hidden lake which no human eye has ever seen. The hunters know where it must be, for sometimes one has come near enough to scent its freshness, and to hear the rustle of thousands of wings as the ducks rise in great clouds from its cool, green depths. Yet when he approaches, he perceives only a dry hollow in the heart of the woods.

All the creatures know this lake; it is their City of Refuge; mortal eye cannot find them there, and when one of them is wounded, he has only to plunge into its mysterious waters, and he comes out whole. [49]

THE BEAR MAN

A hunter once trailed a bear and shot many arrows into its body, but to his surprise they seemed to make no impression. Finally the bear stopped, pulled out the arrows, and turning to the man, he handed them back to him, saying pleasantly:

“You see it is no use—you can’t kill me. Better give it up and come home with me instead!”

The hunter was curious and followed the bear to his den, where he slept all winter, gradually growing thick black hair over his whole body. When spring came, he was wakened by the shouts of his friends as they surrounded the den.

Not knowing what else to do, he went forth to meet them, looking like a bear, but walking upright like a man. He spoke to them, and they knew his voice and spared his life. [50]

“You have done wrong,” said they, “and we cannot allow you to remain here. Come back with us—your poor wife mourns for you as for one dead!”

“I wish for nothing but to come back,” the Bear Man declared. “Tell her, however, that for seven days I must neither eat nor speak. That will break the charm, and I shall be once more a man! Otherwise I must die.”

Accordingly he betook himself to a solitary teepee on the outskirts of the village, and there continued his fast. His wife was told that he still lived, and was overcome with joy. Five days she waited for him to come to her, and at the end of the fifth day she could wait no longer. She went to him, threw herself into his arms, and compelled him to answer her questions, thus causing his death. [53]

CHOCTAW STORIES

WHY POSSUM HAS A LARGE MOUTH

THERE had been a long dry season, and the Deer had grown very thin. Meeting Possum one day, he could not help noticing how well-fed and contented the other appeared.

“How is it that you are so fat in a time of drouth and famine?” inquired the Deer, whose skin hung loosely upon a rack of bones.

“It is simple enough,” replied the Possum. “I live upon persimmons.”

"But how do you reach them?" persisted the Deer. "It seems to me they hang very high."

"Oh, that is easy," declared Possum, who is fond of a joke. "I go to the top of yonder hill, run down very fast and hit the tree with my head just as hard as I can. That shakes off the fruit. Then I have only to sit on the ground and eat and eat till I can eat no more." [54]

"It sounds easy, to be sure," agreed the Deer, who was hungry enough to try anything. He went to the very top of the hill, rushed down violently, and struck the tree with such force that he was killed instantly. At this the wicked Possum laughed so hard that it stretched his mouth, which has remained wide to this day.

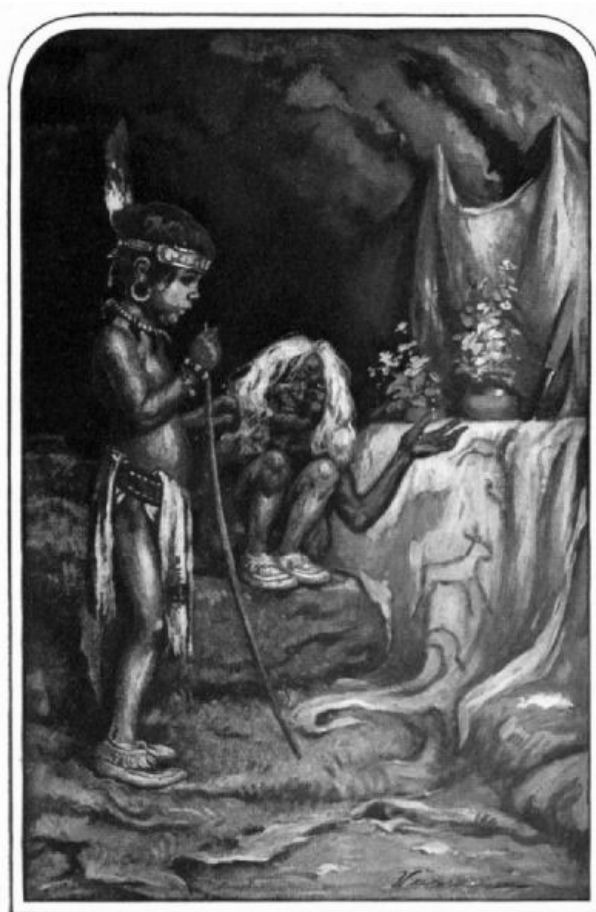
THE GOOD LITTLE SPIRIT

Perhaps you have wondered why some men are wise and do good, while others in their ignorance do nothing but harm. If so, I will tell you a secret.

In a cave not far from the homes of men there dwells a good little spirit. He is very old, his hair is long and white, and he is about as tall as a child three years old. [55]

Now every child, when it reaches the age of three or four, sometimes wanders away out of sight of home, and the spirit is constantly on the watch for this to happen. He comes out of hiding, takes the little one by the hand and leads it away to his cave. There he makes it choose one of three gifts: a knife, a bunch of poisonous flowers, and a handful of healing herbs.

If the child takes the knife, he will do only harm all his days. If he is misled by the beauty of the poisonous blossoms, he will never be wise; but if he takes the good medicine, he will be a wise man and a healer, who will bless and help his people.



THE GOOD LITTLE SPIRIT
He makes it choose one of three gifts.
Page 55.

FOLLOWERS OF THE SUN

There were once four brothers, who as soon as they noticed that the sun rose in one quarter and set in another, made up their minds to follow on to the place of his setting. They were very young when they set out toward the west, and as the years passed they grew to be tall youths, then [56]

strong men in their prime, yet they could never overtake the Sun.

Old age had begun to creep upon the travelers when at last they reached the shores of the Everywhere Salt Water (the ocean). Behind its shining rim the golden ball descended, and they were given power to follow, and where sky and water met to reach their journey's end.

"Why are you here who have not yet died?" asked the Sun.

"We have done nothing but follow you all our lives," replied the brothers.

"Only the dead come here," the Sun insisted. "You will have to go back."

He sent them each home on the wings of a buzzard, and thus returned to their amazed people four feeble old men, who had been where no mortal ever went before. When they had told all their strange story, they lay down and died, and so returned to the glories of heaven, which they alone of all men had seen before their time. [57]

THE HUNTER WHO BECAME A DEER

A hunter who had traveled all day without finding any game shot a doe near sunset, and as he was very tired, he lay down near the body and went to sleep.

In the morning, when he awoke, he perceived the doe looking at him lovingly out of large, soft eyes. As he returned her gaze, she astonished him yet more by speaking.

"Will you come home with me?" she pleaded.

The young man hesitated, but there was something strangely appealing about this beautiful woman, as she now seemed to him to become. Almost without knowing what he did, he arose and followed her. [58]

By and by, they came to a great cave under the mountain, where it seemed that all the Deer lived with their chief, an immense buck with powerful antlers. The hunter was hospitably received; but all along the sides of the cave he noticed piles of deer hides, with hoofs and horns. This puzzled him not a little; nevertheless he ate with them, lay down among them, and presently slept.

Now while the young man slept, the Deer tried skin after skin till they found one which fitted him, and they also fitted a pair of antlers to his head and hoofs to his hands and feet. In the morning, he opened his eyes and perceived that he also was a Deer, and he remained with the herd. [59]

In the meantime, his mother and his relatives continued to search for him throughout the forest. After some weeks, they discovered the lost one's bow and arrows, hanging on the branch of the tree under which he had slept after shooting the doe. They all gathered on the spot and began to sing songs of magic.

Soon a herd of deer appeared in the distance, coming nearer and nearer as they were drawn by the singing. At last one spoke, and immediately they knew his voice for that of the missing hunter. His mother cried bitterly, and insisted that they should take off the deer's hide from her son and restore him to his own shape again.

"We dare not," protested his brothers and his cousins. "It might endanger his life!"

"Even so," she replied, weeping, "I had rather see my son dead than wearing the form of a beast!" [60]

When they began to tear off the deer's hide, behold! it had grown fast to his own skin, and he began to bleed.

"Go on! go on!" exclaimed the mother in agony, and they persisted until the man died. Then at last they carried home his body and gave it honorable burial.

PRETTY WOMAN

Once in time of famine there were two children deserted by their parents, because they could not find food enough for all. The boy and girl were perishing of hunger when they were discovered wandering in the wood by Old Crow Woman. The kind old body took them to her poor teepee and went out to search for something to eat.

While she was gone, the girl, who was very clever, picked four grains of corn out of the dust and tossed them into the air. In this way each grain became a fine full ear, which they roasted and ate. She then threw up the small skin tent, and it came down large and beautiful. She took her little brother in her arms and threw him up, and he was a tall youth. Finally she said to him: "Brother, throw me up, too!" and he did as she asked. [61]

The half-starved little girl came down again a remarkably pretty woman, and when Old Crow returned with a few grains of corn in her beak, she was astonished to find so beautiful a girl

sitting and making moccasins before the largest and handsomest lodge she had ever seen.

When the Mole poked his long nose through the earth to look at Pretty Woman, she ordered him back, saying, "I am not the light." [62]

Three times the Hummingbird circled round her head with buzzing wings, but she drove him away. "I am not a flower," said she. He went home and told all the people that he had seen the most beautiful woman in the world, and the woods were soon full of suitors.

Since Old Crow Woman was the girl's chaperon, they all appealed to her. One said: "I will lay down the richest of bear skins for her to walk on, all the way to my village."

"That will never do," replied the old woman. "She might slip on the skins and hurt herself."

The second lover offered to lay down a line of mortars all the way. "You must not do that," said Old Crow. "The mortars might roll and trip her up."

The third man declared: "My people shall lie down on the ground, and she may tread upon them as she comes to me a bride!" [63]

To this the old woman made no objection, and Pretty Woman walked all the way to her future home upon the bodies of the people.

THE CRANE AND THE HUMMINGBIRD

Once there was a beautiful girl who had many suitors, and among the most persistent were the Crane and the Hummingbird. She rather fancied the latter, since the Crane was a long-legged, awkward fellow, not at all to her taste. In order to rid herself of his pretensions once and for all, she told them that they might fly round the world, and the first one to return should be her husband. As the Hummingbird is very swift, she had no doubt of the result.

At the end of the first day, he had indeed a long start. Well pleased, he tucked his head under his wing and went to sleep. About midnight, the Crane overtook him and flew on. The Hummingbird passed him at breakfast time and again secured a long lead. But in the night time, while he slept, the unwearied Crane flew on, each night overtaking him earlier, till he had gained a whole day and won the race. [64]

After all, he did not win a wife, for the maiden was so much chagrined by the failure of her plan that she has stayed single to this day.

[67]

IROQUOIS TALES

THE THUNDERERS

THERE were once three comrades who went upon the warpath, and when they were a long way from home, one had the misfortune to fall and break his leg. The other two made a litter in which they undertook to carry him, but there was a ridge of high mountains to cross, and the way grew very painful and difficult. At last they became discouraged, set the litter down, went a little aside and consulted together in whispers.

By and by they took up their burden again, and coming to a deep crevasse they let it fall as if by accident, so that the injured man rolled into the abyss. They went home and reported that they had met the enemy and that their comrade had died of his wounds. To console his weeping wife, they assured her that he had fought bravely; also that they had tended and cared for him until he died and had then given him suitable burial. [68]

In the meantime, the abandoned one fell to the bottom of the pit, where to his surprise he beheld a very old man sitting with his hands clasped about his withered knees.

"What is this?" inquired the old sage. "Is it possible that your comrades have deserted you and left you to perish miserably?"

"It seems that they have done so," calmly replied the youth.

"You may live, nevertheless," the other promised, "if you will agree to my conditions. I am now too old to hunt. Stay here and keep me supplied with game as long as I live, and I will cure your leg." [69]

As the young man had no choice, he agreed without hesitation, and the ancient bound up his limb with healing herbs, fed and tended him until he was able to hunt.

There was game in abundance in that part of the country, and the old man told him that if ever he

shot more than he could carry, he should call out and he would come to his assistance. One day the hunter succeeded in killing an immense bear, and while he was skinning it, behold! three very tall strangers clad in garments of cloud appeared close by.

"We are the Thunderers," said they. "We should be glad to help you, for you have not deserved your misfortunes. That old man for whom you hunt is not what he seems to be. Call him, and you shall see!" [70]

Since the youth saw no harm in calling his benefactor to help him with the game, he did as they advised, and the aged man climbed out of the pit very cautiously, first calling aloud to inquire if there were any cloud in the sky.

"There is none," replied the hunter, and the other hobbled forward, continually peering into the heavens as if in fear of some enemy. Suddenly a rumble of thunder was heard, and immediately he turned and fled in the form of a Porcupine, throwing back sharp quills like arrows as he ran. Louder and louder pealed the thunder, and just as he reached the edge of the pit a bolt of lightning struck the Porcupine, and he fell dead into his den.

After this the young man returned to his own people.

[71]

THE WINGED HUNTER

A lone hunter had spent all of his arrows, and was at a loss. He was a long way from home. Upon the lake were many wild geese, but how was he to kill them? Finally he swam underneath the flock, caught several by the feet, and tied them to his belt with withes of basswood bark. When the geese flew up into the air, they carried the hunter with them.

Now he planned to loosen one or two of the birds so that he might sink gradually to the ground, but the rest broke loose suddenly, and he fell into a tall, hollow stump where he remained a prisoner. To be sure, it was only a day or two before some women came near after wood, but his cries frightened them, so that they retreated. Later they returned with their men and released him.

Immediately the hunter made new arrows with which he killed both deer and bears, extracting oil from the latter which he kept in leathern bottles. He now wished to return home; but since he had tried flying, walking seemed to him too laborious. After much thought, he made himself a pair of wings out of a thin piece of tanned deerskin, and flew homeward, carrying the bottles for ballast, and letting fall one or two into the wigwams of the women who had set him free. [72]

GREAT HEAD

High up on an inaccessible cliff, there dwells an immense Head, very fierce, with long, bushy hair and huge staring eyes. The people call it the Great Head, and fear it very much.

There was once a family of ten boys who lost their parents at about the same time of a mysterious disease. As they knew no near relatives, the brothers continued to live alone in the forest. However, one day the eldest failed to return from the hunt, and in the morning the second brother went to look for him. That night he, too, was missing. On the next day, the third brother set out to search for the others, and so on until only one of the ten was left. [73]

Now the youngest brother had scarcely started on their trail when he stumbled over a queer little old man, half buried in the ground, and entirely covered with green mold.

When he had dug him out and revived him by rubbing him with oil, the boy told the stranger his story.

"I can tell you what has become of your brothers," exclaimed the little old man. "Without doubt, it is my brother, Great Head, who has enticed them away."

"What! the Great Head is your brother?" asked the boy. [74]

"Yes, he is," replied the little old man.

"Then you must know his ways and can help me to outwit him."

"I can tell you what he eats. Huge billets of maple wood—only maple—are his favorite tid-bit."

"And is there anything he is afraid of?" the boy inquired.

"He fears my arrows, which grow ever larger as they fly!"

First the boy worked very hard chopping a great maple tree into blocks; then he invited Great Head to a feast. But Great Head would not come.

Then the little man, his brother, crept slyly to the foot of the cliff through the long grass, and sent forth a magic arrow, which grew larger and larger as it sped toward the mark. A great noise arose, like that of a hurricane rushing through a forest. Down tumbled Great Head to the foot of [75]

the precipice, and the nine youths whom he had held captive were freed from the spell, and came joyfully home again.

[79]

TSIMSHIAN TALES

HOW THE DAYLIGHT CAME

A LONG, long time ago the son of the first chief of the animal people set out upon a journey. Dressed in the skin of a raven, and carrying in his beak a magic bag which his father had given him, he flew eastward over a dark and watery waste. When he had flown far and was tired, he dropped a stone in the sea, and it became an island, upon which he rested.

Again he rose up and flew onward upon slow black wings, no blacker than the gloom that covered the face of the world. As he skimmed the surface of the waves, he scattered from his enchanted bag the spawn of every kind of fish, so that the sea was filled with finny life. Then he turned toward shore, and over the dry land he cast berries and seeds of all plants that are good for food, so that the earth too was ready to burst with fruitfulness, only there was no sun to warm it into life.

[80]

Raven became very tired of the eternal darkness, and at last he flew straight upward until he found the hole in the sky, and went right through the hole. There he left the raven's skin lying and flew on till he came to a spring of clear water, bubbling up with a sound like maidens' laughter near the wigwam of the Chief of Heaven. He turned himself into a leaf and floated in the pool, waiting for the chief's daughter. When she came, she was indeed very beautiful. Stooping, she dipped up the leaf in her bucket and drank it with the water.

[81]

Now the maiden returned to her home, and not long after a child was born to her. The baby grew very fast. He was stronger than any child ever seen, yet he cried continually. Soon he was creeping about the floor and crying all the time in a loud voice. The wise old men were called in to explain these cries, and the wisest one of all told the princess that her son was crying for a large box that hung under the roof. This was the box that held the daylight.

Since nothing else would do, they took down the box and gave it to the child to play with. For four days he rolled it about the floor; then one day, when no one was looking, he lifted it to his shoulders, got to his feet, and ran out of the door with it. He sped as fast as he could to the hole in the sky, put on the raven's skin that he found lying there, and flew down to earth with the precious box.

[82]

Now the Frog people were fishing down there, and they made a great noise and confusion in the darkness. Raven called upon them to be silent, but they paid no attention to him. The big frogs were bellowing very loud, and the little frogs were piping high and shrill, and there was no peace or quiet anywhere. Raven told them twice to be less noisy, and when they would not, he said, "Then I shall open the box."

So he opened it, and daylight overspread the earth.

THE OLD WOMAN AND THE TIDES

Again Raven flew over the waters till he reached the mainland and the wigwam of the old, old woman who holds the tide lines in her hand. At that time the tide would remain high for many days at a time, so that the people could get no clams or other sea food. It happened that Raven was very hungry for clams, but he entered the hut and sat down, saying pleasantly:

[83]

"Good day, grandmother: there is fine digging to-day. I have just had all the clams I could eat."

"Nonsense!" exclaimed the old woman. "What are you talking about, Raven? You know very well that the clams are all covered."

"Yes, but I've had all the clams I want," he insisted.

"That isn't so," she declared.



THE OLD WOMAN AND THE TIDES
He rudely pushed her backward until she fell down.
Page 83.

Upon this he rudely pushed her backward until she fell down, and her mouth and eyes were filled with dust. Of course she was forced to let go the tide lines, so that the tide ran quickly out, and the beach was covered with fine fat clams and other shellfish. Raven did not come back to the hut [84] until he had eaten as many as he possibly could.

“My eyes are blinded with dust,” mourned the old woman. “Will you not give me back my sight?”

“I will, if you will promise to slacken the tide lines twice a day,” he replied.

So she said that she would, and from that time to this the tides have run in and out twice each day.

HOW THE FIRE WAS BROUGHT

After a time, Raven saw that the people were discontented without fire, for they could neither cook their food nor warm themselves when it was cold. He remembered that they had fire at home in his father’s village, so he flew westward once more until he came to the wigwams of the animal people. But however hard he begged, they would not give him what he had come for. [85]

Raven made a new plan. He went a little way off and sent the Sea Gull to the camp with this message:

“A handsome young chief will come to feast and dance in the dwelling of your chief. See that all is ready.”

He knew that the people would prepare for their guest, so he caught a Deer and tied a bundle of pitch-pine to its tail, for at that time the deer had a long tail like that of the fox. He borrowed the canoe of the Great Shark, and with the Deer came in it to the village.

As he expected, the house of his father the chief was full of people, and there was a big fire made and much feasting and merriment. All the creatures were dancing and singing, and the very birds clapped their wings for joy.

The Deer entered, leaping and dancing, and his grace was much admired, but as he danced [86] around the fire he swung his long tail over it, and the pitch blazed up. He ran out, sprang into the sea and swam off, with his lighted tail flaring above the waves like a torch. Many sprang into

their canoes and tried to follow him, but he escaped and reached our shores in safety. There he struck a dead fir tree with his blazing tail and said to it:

"You shall burn as long as the years last!"

We should remember that it is to him we owe the gift of fire, for his tail was burned off, and since that day all Deer have had a short black tail.

RAVEN AND THE CRAB

Raven had been flying all night over the ocean, and he had grown very hungry indeed, but what was there to eat? At sunrise he reached a sand spit, and there sat a large Crab. Raven thought he might be good to eat, but he was a little timid about attacking him, so he merely touched him on the back, saying, "Let us have a game, grandfather!" [87]

"Certainly not," replied the Crab gruffly.

But Raven grew bolder and touched him again and again, crying out teasingly, "Come on, let us have a game, grandfather!"

Presently the tide turned, and about that time the Crab grew angry. He seized Raven by the leg and walked very slowly into the water with him.

"Dear grandfather, only let me go!" begged Raven, for he was terribly frightened.

Crab paid no attention to his prayers and cries, but walked on the bottom of the sea until he felt sure that his enemy was dead, when he let go of him, and Raven came up and floated lifeless on the top of the waves. [88]

A light wind wafted him ashore, and he lay for a long time motionless on the warm sand. At last the sun revived him, and he awoke. He looked at his raven skin and saw that it was sadly draggled and some of the feathers had come off, but he was so thankful to be alive that he only said to himself, "After all, I have not done so badly!"

THE BEAUTIFUL BLANKET

Not long after this, Raven grew tired of the jet-black robe that his father had given him, and one day he exchanged it for a beautiful blanket of many colors, such as is worn to dances. He had not gone very far when the gay blanket fell to pieces, and he was cold and sorrowful.

He did not know what else to do, so he went back to look for his raven skin and found it lying by the roadside. He put it on again, but soon came upon another dance blanket even handsomer than the first. Forgetting the lesson he had just had, he tore his old robe in half and threw it away with contempt, and dressed himself in the other. Then he walked on, thinking how well he must look in the eyes of any whom he might chance to meet. [89]

This fine dandy was greatly pleased when he saw a strange village near at hand, until, glancing downward, he found to his dismay that he was covered with nothing but moss and lichens. Crying bitterly, he was once more forced to go back in search of his raven skin; after hunting a long time he found it, but it was torn in two. Sadly he pinned it about his body as well as he could and again turned his steps toward the village.

While he was still a little way off, Raven plucked up spirit and gathered a piece of rotten spruce wood, which by his magic art he turned into a slave. Lacking a fine blanket, he made for himself some large ear ornaments out of common clam shells which he found on the beach. Then he ordered his slave to walk before him, crying in a loud voice: [90]

"People of the village, here comes my master, who is a great chief! You will know him by the costly ornaments of abalone shell in his ears!"

It is said that the strangers were deceived by this fine talk and invited the pretender to their chief's wigwam, where a feast was given in his honor.

RAVEN AND THE HUNTERS

One day Raven happened to see a boat load of hunters coming home with plenty of game. As usual, he was hungry, and it occurred to him to take the shape of a woman in the hope of obtaining some food. [91]

Sure enough, when the hunters noticed a good-looking young woman on the shore, they beached their canoe and took her on board. She had a child in her arms, and the child cried incessantly.

"It is hungry," the woman explained; so they made much broth of wild ducks and fed the child and its mother. They feasted most of that night, and the head man was so well pleased with the

supposed woman that he offered to marry her. All went well till they awoke in the morning, when, to his surprise and disgust, the new wife looked like a man.

“So it is you, up to your tricks again, you good-for-nothing Raven! Be off with you!” exclaimed the angry hunter, and he cast him overboard.

Raven put on his feathered robe and flew off without any trouble, and at the same moment the baby turned to a crow and flew away also. [92]

RAVEN AND THE CHILDREN

Raven was out for a walk and came upon a crowd of children playing with whale’s blubber. Huge piles of it lay at their feet, and they were throwing lumps at one another in great glee. He stopped and spoke to them.

“Where did you get all that blubber?” he asked.

“Oh,” answered the oldest boy, “we climb up that tall tree you see over yonder and jump down from the topmost limb. As we land, we cry out, ‘Be piled up, all my blubber!’ and it is so.”

Raven immediately climbed the tree and jumped off the highest branch, shouting, “Be piled up, all my blubber!”

Nothing happened except that he struck the ground so hard that he was lame for several days. [93] Meanwhile the children picked up the blubber and ran off, laughing heartily.

RAVEN AND HIS MOTHER-IN-LAW

Once upon a time Raven came to a small house away from everybody, where lived two women, a widow and her young daughter. The elder woman asked him in and gave him a good supper, and as the house appeared to be well stocked with dried fish and other necessaries, he proposed that evening to marry the daughter and was accepted.

The next day, after a hearty breakfast, he borrowed the old woman’s stone ax and went out. He told the two women that he was going to cut down a cedar tree and make a boat for the fishing, and he charged his wife to see that her mother had a good meal ready for him on his return. [94] Before night he came back very hungry, saying that he had felled the tree and would begin next day to hollow out the canoe.

This went on for some time, Raven going forth every morning with the ax and returning in the afternoon, apparently tired out, and with so great an appetite that the widow’s stores of food were getting low. They could hear the blows of the ax from time to time in the depths of the forest, but somehow the boat was never quite finished.

At last one morning the old woman said to her daughter, “Go quietly, my child; follow your husband without letting him know it, and see for yourself what progress he is making.”

The young wife did as she was told, and there was the trickster pounding a rotten stump with the stone ax so as to make the sounds they had heard. When she told her mother what she had seen, [95] the two women packed up all the goods they had left and went away.

When Raven went home that night, he found only the empty hut, which was as much as he deserved.

RAVEN AND THE SALMON WOMAN

Now Raven had been unfortunate for a long time and was poorer than ever, but he had at last contrived to build a small hut and make a boat and a spear. Just as he was ready to go fishing, a heavy fog came down and covered the face of the water, hiding his boat entirely. When the fog lifted, there sat a beautiful woman in the bow of the canoe.

“You have come to my boat; will you be my wife?” asked Raven.

And the woman consented, saying, “Yes, if you will be always kind to me, my husband. [96] Remember, I am the Salmon Woman.”

“Then we shall have plenty of fish in our lodge,” exclaimed the pleased bridegroom.

And he was right, for next morning his new wife rose early and stepped barefoot into the little brook that ran close by their hut. Instantly salmon by hundreds came leaping up the stream, and she called to him, saying:

“Husband, come! the creek is full of silver salmon!”

After he had speared many, he went after wood with which to smoke their abundant catch, and as he feared the birds might come down and steal some of his fish while he was gathering the wood, he left one of his eyes to watch the boat, telling it to be sure and call him in case the birds came near the salmon.

Soon the eye cried out, "Master, come quickly! the birds are here." But as he was very busy he merely replied, "Hide the fish under the seat until I come," and went on with his work. [97]

When he came back to the boat with a load of wood, he found to his sorrow that the greedy creatures had not only eaten up all the fish but his eye also.

Crying bitterly, Raven went back to his wife, who asked him what the matter was. When he told her, she had only to touch the empty socket, and immediately he had a new eye quite as good as the other. As for the stolen fish, he did not miss them at all, for the tiny stream was now so full of salmon that there was scarcely any water to be seen.

Although their poor hut was well supplied with food, and his meals well cooked, and his wife was as loving and kind as she was beautiful, nevertheless Raven would leave her in the morning and be gone all day without saying where he went. By and by he began to come home in a bad temper and to speak to her harshly. One evening he exclaimed: [98]

"Well, who has been to see you to-day?"

"No one has been to see me, my husband," she replied. "No one ever comes to this lonely place."

"Don't try to deceive me," said he roughly. "A man has been here in my absence. I know it, because I have been gambling this long time, and at first I had good luck, but to-day my luck was bad; therefore I know you have had a man here."

Then the Salmon Woman felt insulted, and without speaking to him she turned to the dried fish that hung from the ceiling.

"Come, O my tribe!" she cried, and all the fish came to life and followed her. She sprang into the water and swam away, and they all swam after her, leaving the unkind husband alone and hungry once more. [99]

THE ANIMALS IN COUNCIL

It is now many years since the ancient friendship between man and the animal tribes was broken, and since that time the animals have been hunted continually and go about in fear of their lives. One day Grizzly Bear invited all the larger beasts to meet at his wigwam and discuss the matter. Deer, Elk, Wolf, and many others were present when Grizzly Bear made his great speech in which he spoke of the constant danger they were in and the need of finding a remedy, and finally proposed that they petition He-Who-Made-Us to lengthen the winter and cause very deep snows with extreme cold, so that the hunters could not get about. [100]

All agreed to this plan, but Wolf got up and proposed that before acting upon it they should consult the smaller animals and even the Insect tribes. "For," said he, "if we ignore them now they may make trouble for us later on."

The others had no objection, and next day Beaver, Squirrel, Mink, Muskrat, all four-footed creatures down to the little Mouse, and all of the Insect tribes as well, were invited to join in the council.

It was a great gathering. The larger animals sat on one side of a wide semicircle, and the smaller on the other side. Again Grizzly Bear made the first speech, telling of the meeting of the day before and of his suggestion, and asking all present for their opinion on the matter.

After a silence, Porcupine arose and remarked that the idea might do well enough for those who had warm fur coats, but that many of the little people were not so well protected against severe weather, and as for the feeble Insects, if the winters should become any longer or colder than they were already, they would all perish, therefore they could not agree to the proposal. [101]

"I don't care whether you agree or not," growled the Bear. "We larger animals have decided that this is the best thing to do, and we are going to do it anyhow."

"I fear you are short-sighted," replied Porcupine, who found that he had used the wrong argument. "You large animals are always roaming the woods in search of something to eat, and if the winters grow any colder there will be no food for you, that is certain. All life will perish, even the roots of the grass on which the Deer lives, and the berry bushes of which the Bear is so fond will be frozen. You will all starve, but we shall live, for we Porcupines can live on the bark of trees; and as for the smallest Insects, they can burrow into the earth and survive." [102]

The other animals were impressed by this speech and began to say among themselves, "How wise he is!" "Now who would have thought of that?" and "I think we should reconsider the matter."

"Ah, ha, ha!" laughed Porcupine, and he was so pleased with himself that he stuck his thumb into his mouth and then bit it off, which is the reason that he has only four fingers and no thumb.

Now the animals called him the wisest of their number and accepted his decision, and as for those who would not agree, Porcupine filled them full of sharp quills, on which account they all stand in awe of him to this very day. [103]

THE FOUR WINDS

Once there were four great chiefs who lived in the four corners of the earth, and their names were North Wind, South Wind, East Wind, and West Wind. The other three all hated North Wind, for he was very rude and boisterous, and insisted upon blowing his bitter blast into their faces at all times of the year, so that the tender fruit buds and fragile blossoms were never safe from his withering breath.

Finally they united to make war upon him, and after a long struggle they succeeded in gaining his promise that he would only blow for half the year, which helped matters a little.

Now the South Wind had four sturdy sons and a beautiful daughter, while North Wind's family consisted of twin boys, one of whom was called Frosted, and the other Frozen. No sooner were the children grown up than Frosted wished to marry the daughter of South Wind, who was as fair and gentle as a summer's day, but she would have nothing to say to him. [104]

The next year Frozen came courting. He was a handsome fellow, very determined, and proved more fortunate than his brother. The wedding feast was the finest ever known in that part of the country. It lasted for seven days, at the end of which Frozen carried home his bride in a tempest of wind and rain.

When South Wind's daughter reached the land of perpetual snow and ice, she very soon regretted her rash choice. There was not so much as a spark of fire in the house, which was built of ice blocks, and day and night she was chilled to the very marrow of her bones. Meanwhile the rest of the family were saying, "What a pleasant season we are having!" and "The weather seems unusually mild for this time of the year!" [105]

At last she could bear it no longer, and one day as she sat sadly on the beach she picked up a bit of yellow driftwood and carved it into the shape of a duck. When she had finished, she tossed the duck into the air, saying:

"Fly south, little duck, and tell my father that I am very unhappy here in the cruel northland!" And the duck flew away southward.

Far in the southland the South Wind's wife stood in the door of their wigwam and called to her husband, "Look, husband! Spring is coming, for I see the ducks returning!"

The little yellow duck came on, and as soon as he was near enough he gave the daughter's message: [106]

"Your child is very unhappy there in the cruel northland!"

When South Wind understood it, he was angry and called his four strong sons to his side. "Boys," said he, "go at once to North Wind's house and bring home your sister!"

The eldest son started first in the shape of a great gray cloud, and when the little bride saw the cloud in the distance she was glad, for she felt sure that it was her brother. But immediately North Wind went out with his two sons to meet him and drove him back, so that she wrung her hands in sorrow.

The second brother went as a very black cloud, and he got a little farther than the first when he too was fiercely attacked and beaten back. Then the bride of Frozen cried bitterly, for she began to be afraid she must stay there forever. [107]

The third brother went as a great storm of rain, and he had nearly reached the spot where his sister was eagerly waiting, when the icy wind turned the rain to hail and drove it back, and the poor girl was in despair.

However, there was still the youngest brother. He went as a sharp-edged and thin cloud which slipped right by North Wind and reached his palace, where he turned all the ice to water. The whole country was flooded, and North Wind and his family were helpless.

"Not only does your son lose his bride," cried the victorious son of South Wind, as he retreated with his sister, "but I shall take away three of your months also. From this time forth you are allowed to blow but three months in the year."

Thereupon the four Winds divided the year among them in this fashion: to North Wind the three winter months, to East Wind the spring, to West Wind the summer, and the autumn to South Wind. [108]

THE FEAST OF THE MOUNTAIN GOATS

In the old days the hunters were many and skillful. They killed hundreds of mountain goats for their flesh and skins and left their bones lying unburned on the rocks, which was a great dishonor. Moreover, their children were thoughtless.

One day, a young man whose name was Really Black Raven Feather was walking along the beach, and he saw a group of boys making merry with a kid. They would seize it and throw it into the water, watch its struggles for a time, then drag it ashore half drowned, and as soon as the poor creature was able to walk, they would throw it in again. When they tired of this sport, they built a fire and put the kid in the fire, to dry, as they said; but before it was more than scorched this young man pulled it out and scolded the boys severely for their cruelty, so that they all ran away. [109]

Not long after this, a messenger came down from the hills inviting all the villagers to a feast, and as was the custom they followed the messenger. They came to a large wigwam on the mountain side which they had never seen before, and all were seated within this immense tent. Really Black was given a seat immediately behind the tent pole, which was unusually heavy.

Soon a crowd of people wearing goats' headdresses came dancing and singing over the rocks. They danced around and in front of the wigwam, and presently the chief dancer kicked so high that he touched the tent covering with his goat's hoof. Instantly it fell down on the heads of the guests and became a mountain which crushed them to death. Only Really Black was saved. He clung to the tent pole, which became a giant spruce growing out of the side of the mountain. Therefore he and his descendants have always respected the goats, and taken care to burn their bones when it was necessary to hunt them for food or clothing. [110]

THE WOMAN WHO BECAME A BEAVER

There was once a man who took his wife with him to hunt raccoons at a distance from the village. They were very successful. Every night the man shot several of the animals, and in the daytime they were both busy skinning them and trying out the fat. One day the young wife became tired of work and she approached her husband and tried to attract his attention, saying playfully: [111]

"Look at me, my husband!"

It is true that she was a pretty woman, but the man was bent on skinning his game just then and took no notice of her. Seeing that he made no answer, she kept on teasing him to look at her. At last he grew provoked.

"Go away," said he crossly; "you are no better than these raccoons!"

At this the young woman was much hurt and went away without speaking. Her husband finished his work and then came to his supper, but no meal had been prepared for him, and no wife was to be seen. He called and called, but no one answered. After searching for her some time, he discovered the woman taking a bath in a small pool, which she had made for herself by piling up sticks and pebbles to dam the stream. [112]



THE WOMAN WHO BECAME A BEAVER
He discovered the woman in a small pool.
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"Come, my wife, it is time to eat," begged the young husband.

"You have said that I am no better than the raccoons," she answered, "and I am very much ashamed. I prefer to stay where I am."

He went back to their hut, but came again later in the evening and tried hard to persuade her.

"My wife, you know that I love you," he protested. "I only spoke as I did because I was thinking of my work and I wanted to get through with it. I am sorry for what I said, and I did not mean anything by it. Come, now, you should not stay in the water so long or you will be sick; and besides, it is time to go to bed."

She would not listen to him, however, and he noticed that the dam had grown higher, and the pool was much bigger than before. [113]

The woman did not come to bed at all that night, and the deserted husband could not sleep for thinking of his wife swimming about in the cold water. He lay awake, listening to the lapping of the little waves and the slap of her leathern apron as it struck the water when she dived.

Next morning the pool had become a pond, and out in the middle of it he could still see her swimming about. For the third time he called to her and pleaded with her to come out, but she would not answer him at all, so he went home very sorrowful.

Now the young woman had six brothers, and when they heard what had happened, they all declared that they would go and bring home their sister. Their brother-in-law guided them to the spot where he had left her and behold! a large lake filled the valley, and there was a beaver house under the dam. [114]

The young men saw several young beavers swimming about, and presently they heard a great beaver tail spank the water. Looking closely, they recognized the woman, but she was covered from head to foot with soft brown fur, and her leathern apron had become the flat tail of a beaver.

At this they wept much, and with one voice implored her to come home.

"No," said the beaver woman. "My husband has said that I am no better than the raccoons, and I am too much ashamed to live with mankind any longer. Do not trouble about me further, for I shall never come back."

"Let us go away and leave her," said the eldest brother, for he did not know what else to do.

"No," said the youngest. "Let us break the dam; then all the water will run out, and she will be compelled to come." [115]

They broke the dam and destroyed the beaver house. The woman lay face downward in the mud at what had been the bottom of the lake. She was quite dead. In all points she was like a beaver, but when they turned the body over, grieving much, the face was the face of the offended wife.

THE TEN PRINCES

The ten sons of a chief went hunting, and all took their wives with them except the youngest brother, who was unmarried. They all camped together at night, and in the morning the eldest prince went out in search of game.

The first thing he saw was a fat porcupine coming toward him, which he easily caught. He wrung its neck, and hung it on the branch of a tree, and went on. [116]

Near the top of a hill, he met a handsome white she-bear and shot her dead. He kept on to the very top, and looking down, perceived a strange town at the foot, which made him very curious. He walked up boldly to the first hut, in which a pretty young woman sat alone. She beckoned to him through the window, but he had scarcely entered when some one called out from the next dwelling:

"You have a visitor. Send him here: the chief wishes to see him."

At the chief's door, several young men met the stranger with much kindness and greatly admired his weapons, which they begged to be allowed to examine. As soon as he went in, the chief greeted him with all hospitality. He ordered that the softest robes be brought for his seat and caused him to be served with the choicest food. While he ate, his weapons were returned to him and laid at his side. When night came, the chief said, "Bring the best blanket for our guest; he will remain with us to-night"; and it was done. [117]

In the morning a cry arose, "The bears are coming!"

"Let my best hunters go out against them," ordered the chief. Now the young prince was an expert hunter and had a mind to display his skill, so he hastened to attack the foremost bear. He drew out his best arrow, but to his astonishment the arrow broke. Hurriedly he seized his spear, and the spear broke. In a moment the grizzly bear was upon him and bore him to the ground.

As soon as he was dead, the young men dragged his body into the chief's hut, where the chief caused it to be cut in pieces and hung up to dry. [118]

Now when this young man did not come back to camp on that day or the next, his wife grew anxious, and the next in age offered to go in search of him. He set out in the same direction, and half-way up the hill he met a fat porcupine, which he clubbed and hung in a tree as his brother had done. A little further on, he saw a white she-bear and killed her, after which he went toward the village which he observed in the distance.

The pretty young woman invited him to come in, and the young men welcomed him cordially and took away his weapons, which they returned to him as he sat feasting in the house of the chief. In short, everything happened to him exactly as it had happened to his brother; and in the morning, when his arrows broke off short, he was at the mercy of the bear, and his body was cut up and hung beside that of the first. [119]

Next day, the third youth went to look for the other two, and so on, until all were gone except the youngest. The nine widows mourned continually, and they begged the last brother not to follow the others, for if he should, they felt sure that he too would be lost and they would all be left without a protector. However, he insisted upon going, assuring them that not only would he come back safe and sound, but would bring back their husbands also.

He took the same path up the hill, and when he saw the fat porcupine coming to meet him, it occurred to him that he had better let her pass unharmed, and he did so. A little later, he met the white she-bear and shot her; but when he came to her he could not help laying his hand gently on her side and exclaiming aloud, "How beautiful she is!" [120]

Instantly the bear became a handsome young woman, who smiled upon him, and warned him of the dangers that he would meet in the Bears' town at the foot of the hill.

"These people are really Bears," said she, "and I am one of them sent to deceive you. But you have no wife, and I like you very much. Do not let the young men take your weapons even for a minute, or they will change them to dry sticks as they did those of your nine brothers, who killed me without remorse."

Finally she gave him two small pups and told him to hide them in his robe, and if ever he was in trouble to set them one by one on the ground, saying, "Red, grow up quick and help me!" "Spot, grow up quick and help me!" and it should be so. Then she kissed and embraced him, and he went on down the hill to the village. [121]

In the first hut he came to he found his sweetheart again, and she greeted him lovingly. When the

chief sent for him, she delayed parting with him as long as she could, but was at last forced to let him go, with many charges as to the best way to outwit her kinsmen. Accordingly he kept fast hold of his weapons, when the young men crowded admiringly about him, and even lay awake all night lest they should take them from him while he slept.

In the morning, when the Bears came on as before, and the chief called for men to go out and meet them, the young prince drew his bow and shot the foremost through the heart. More followed, and he killed them one after another until his arrows were all gone. Then he fought with his spear until he was tired out, and still the Bears came on. [122]

Finally he remembered the pups that his sweetheart had given him, and he placed the first one on the ground, saying, "Grow up quick, Red, and help me!"

Instantly the pup became an immense dog which rushed at the Bears and drove them back.

Then he put down the second pup, saying, "Grow up quick, Spot, and help me!" and another savage dog attacked and put to rout the last of his enemies.

Then the young man returned to the Bear chief's wigwam for his nine brothers. He took down the pieces of their bodies and laid them side by side, and they all came to life and followed the hero and his Bear wife back to their own camp, where they were welcomed with great rejoicings.

[123]

THE GIRL WHO REJECTED HER COUSIN

In the old days, a chief's daughter was expected to marry the son of her uncle, and so keep the chieftainship in the family. But there was once a proud princess who behaved very badly to her cousin when he came wooing, according to the custom.

"I must be sure that you love me," she said.

"I do love you," he declared.

Upon which she answered, "Then prove your love by making a cut down your right cheek."

The young man immediately took out his knife and slashed his right cheek so that the blood streamed over his face.

When the cut had healed, he went again to his cousin and asked for her hand with some confidence, but she said:

"First you must cut your left cheek also, and then I shall know that you really love me." [124]

The young man did not like to do it, but he would not give up, and he slashed his left cheek also.

He waited for the second cut to heal and then went to her with his scarred face and begged her to marry him at once.

"Yes," said she, "I will marry you, for you have done well," and she kissed him, so that he became more in love than ever. Finally she told him sweetly that she was not yet entirely satisfied, and that before the wedding he must cut off all his hair.

Now short hair is considered a disgrace to a man, and the prince was most unwilling to cut his off, but at last he yielded and went to her to ask that the wedding day might be set. But she refused to see him, merely sending a servant with the message that he must be quite mad to suppose that she would marry such a hideous object as he had made of himself. [125]

The poor young man was very unhappy, and he left his home and wandered away until he came to a small hut that stood all by itself under a hill.

An old woman opened the door and kindly asked him to come in—"that is," said she, "if you are the chief's son who was rejected by his cousin."

"I am he," declared the youth.

"What can I do for you?" asked the old woman.

He answered that he wanted nothing more than to be as he had been, before he disfigured himself at the bidding of the cruel young woman.

Accordingly the crone prepared a bath for him, and when he came out his skin was smooth and fine, without any mark upon it. She combed his hair with a comb of ivory, and it became long and splendid and fell over his shoulders like a mantle, so that he was far handsomer than before. [126]

When he went back to the village, all the people admired him as a being from another world, and his cousin put on her best robes and walked to and fro, trying to attract his attention, but he did not even glance at her. Finally she sent her servant with a message, asking him to come and see her.

When he did not appear, she sent a second time, and inquired very humbly what she could do to please him. He told the messenger to say that if she would slash her right cheek with a knife, he would come.

So the princess cut open her right cheek, and when the cut had healed she sent to her cousin again. This time he made answer that she must first cut her left cheek also, and she did as he ordered. [127]

When her messenger came to the prince a fourth time, he directed that her mistress cut off all her beautiful hair, declaring that he would then be entirely satisfied. Crying bitterly, the poor girl cut it off and sent it to her lover, but he threw it on the ground with contempt, saying that nothing would induce him to look upon the face of a woman who had so disfigured herself.

The wise men say that since this happened, women have not been allowed to choose their husbands, or to refuse the men who have been selected for them to marry.

GRIZZLY BEAR AND THE FOUR CHIEFS

There were once four chiefs who were brothers and lived in one village. In the dead of winter, when food was scarce, a lean stranger came among them and stopped at the hut of the eldest brother. [128]

He was courteously received and seated by the fire, as is the custom, and the chief asked him where he came from.

"I have come a long way," replied the stranger.

"And what have you eaten on the way?"

"I have eaten nothing but snow," he said.

Then the chief ordered a dish of snow and a spoon to be placed before his guest, but he got up without touching it and went on to the house of the second brother.

Here he was again asked where he came from and what he had eaten on the road, and when he answered that he had eaten only snow, he was given a large dish of it with a spoon. The same thing happened at the third house. [129]

When the traveler came to the dwelling of the youngest brother, and the host heard that he had eaten nothing but snow and was starving, he said to his wife, "Wife, see if there is still a dried salmon left."

She looked, and found a single one, half of which she broiled and gave it on a dish to the stranger.

After he had eaten, he made ready to go on, but his host said, "Wife, give our guest the other half of the salmon to eat on the journey," and she did so.

Then the stranger said to him, "All the others ridiculed a starving man, but you were a true host. Your kindness shall be rewarded. Meet me to-morrow at the mouth of the river."

The young chief did as he was told, and behold! a great grizzly Bear, who presented him with leggings, a grizzly-bear headdress, and a magic bow which killed all manner of game. From that day he never went hungry, but became the envy of his elder brothers and the richest man in the village. [130]

THE WOODEN WIFE

Once there was a young man newly married who was very fond of his wife. She was not only a pretty woman, but she wove the most beautiful dancing-blankets of any one in the tribe.

One day this young man went into the mountains to hunt wild goats, from whose hair his wife might weave more of her much-prized blankets, and she went with him to keep his hut and to cook for him. While they were yet far from the village, the girl fell sick, and although he did all that he could for her, the young husband soon saw that she was dying.

"Tell me, my dear, what can I do for you?" he begged, as he hung over her. [131]

"Only do not leave me soon, my husband! Do not soon forget our love," sighed the wife, and she died.

The goat-hunter mourned her truly, and he did as she had asked him to do. He remained on the spot where he had lost her and seemed to have no thought of going back to the village. He kept her body with him in the hut as long as he could, and when at last he was forced to lay it away, he carved an image out of cedar wood and set it up in front of her loom, so that as one entered the hut it seemed that a woman sat there, weaving a dancing-blanket. Every morning he went out hunting goats, and when he returned in the evening he would call out as he came near the hut, saying:

"Come out, my wife, and see what I have brought you!"

Then he would answer himself in a woman's voice, "I cannot come just now, my husband. I am weaving, and the wool may become snarled if I leave my loom." [132]

Presently he would enter the wigwam, come up behind his wooden wife, and kiss her lovingly.

After a time, the story of these strange doings spread to the village, and two young girls, sisters, being filled with curiosity, decided to come and find out for themselves what truth there might be in the rumors that were about. When they reached his lonely hut, the hunter was away as usual, so they raised the door-flap and peeped in. There sat the wooden wife in front of the loom, with her back to them, exactly like a woman weaving.

"Elder sister," said they, "we are hungry." But when she did not move nor speak, they knew that she was not a real woman, and they hid in a corner behind some blankets until the husband should return. [133]

By and by they heard his voice outside the hut, telling his wife to come out and see the game he had brought, and then her usual answer that she was busy weaving and could not come just then. Next he came in, put his arms about the wooden wife, and kissed her fondly.

Upon this the elder girl could not help laughing so that he heard it and discovered them both. But the young man was a courteous host. He begged them to be seated and offered them food, and the elder sister ate heartily; she even over-ate, while the younger was very quiet and took but a taste of each dish. The hunter took note of their conduct, and when supper was over, he asked the younger girl to be his wife.

"I will marry you," said she, "if you will put away your wooden wife." Accordingly he destroyed the image that he had made, and married the girl, and they lived happily together for many years. [134]

ILDINI

Ildini lived at End-of-trail, with his wife and two boys. One day he went fishing when the wind blew strong from the shore. It blew his boat so far out that he could not get back. All day and all night he was blown about the cold gray waters. He became very hungry and chilled to the bone.

Ildini prayed and sang for a fair wind. This was his song:

"Ocean Spirit, calm the waves for me!
Come closer to me, my Power!
Calm the waves, so that I may go home!"

After many days the wind went down and the canoe floated near a strange shore, but by now the man was so weak that he could not land. On the shore he saw no one but a little child, scarcely big enough to talk. He told the child his name, "Ildini", and the little fellow repeated it over and over as if it were a game—"Ildini—Ildini—Ildini!" He ran home still saying over the new name, and exclaimed to his grandfather: "Grandfather, come—Ildini!" He kept saying this until the old man followed and discovered the canoe and the fisherman, who was by this time unable to stand. [135]

He called his wife to help him and together they carried Ildini to their house, where they rubbed his limbs, warmed him and gave him broth, a little at a time. When he had recovered, he became the chief of that tribe, and learned their ways and their language. He never ceased to mourn for the two sons whom he had left behind at End-of-trail, but he did not weep for his wife, for he believed her faithless and thought that she had been the cause of his misfortune. In truth she supposed him dead and had long since married another. [136]

[139]

ALASKAN STORIES

THE MAN WHO ENTERTAINED BEARS

THERE was once a man who had lost all of his family in a terrible sickness that came upon the people of his village. He was all alone in the world and very sorrowful. He did not know what to do. First he thought he would get into his canoe and paddle away till he came to another village. Then it occurred to him that they might think he had run away from home because he had been accused of witchcraft or of some other shameful thing.

He considered taking his own life, but did not like to do it. Finally he concluded to go among the bears and let them kill him. He found a bear trail, and lay down in it till he heard the bushes breaking and saw several grizzly bears coming along the trail. An unusually large bear was at their head. [140]

Suddenly the man became frightened and felt that he had chosen a hard death. He arose and spoke to the leading bear.

“Brother,” said he, “I am come to invite you to a feast in honor of my dead. I have lost my children and my wife and there is none left of my blood and of my house. Will you help me to do honor to their spirits?”

The largest bear turned toward the others and whined, as if he were telling them of the invitation. Then they all went back, and the man hurried home to prepare his feast. He took away all the old sand from his fireplace and replaced it with clean sand. He brought a load of wood and picked many berries, both cranberries and huckleberries. He also told his neighbors what guests he expected, and they all supposed him crazed by sorrow. [141]

Next morning he arose early and painted himself with unusual care. When all was ready, he stood in the doorway of his house awaiting his guests. Presently he saw the bears entering the mouth of the creek in single file, the great bear in the lead, just as on the day before. The other villagers saw them too and ran and hid themselves in their houses, terrified out of their wits; but their host stood still to receive them and give them the seats of honor, the chief in the middle seat, as is the custom.

First he served them with large trays of cranberries covered with grease, and as soon as the bear chief began to eat of the food the others followed his example. The other courses were served and eaten in the same way. When all had finished eating and were about to retire, each in turn licked some of the paint from his breast and arms in sign of their sympathy. [142]

On the next day, the smallest bear came back alone in human form, and spoke to his host in his own tongue, telling him that he was a man who had long since been captured and adopted into the Bear tribe. “The Bear Chief,” said this person, “is very sorry for you, because he too has lost all of his friends. He understood your sorrow and for that reason refrained from killing you. I was not permitted to speak to you in his presence, but he wishes you to remember him when you mourn for your dead.”

Ever since this time, the old men, when they kill a grizzly bear, paint a cross on its skin. It is also commanded that when you give a feast you should invite every one, even your enemies, just as this man invited the Bears, who are the enemies of human kind. [143]

BEAVER AND PORCUPINE

Once in the old days Beaver and Porcupine were comrades and went everywhere together. Now Beavers are much afraid of Bears, who break down the beaver dams so as to let off the water, catch them and eat them. But the Bear fears the sharp quills of the Porcupine, therefore the little fellow acted as guard to his friend. Porcupine often visited Beaver in his house, which is dry and comfortable, and unfortunately annoyed his host by leaving some of his quills there.

One day Porcupine proposed to call on his friend, and Beaver offered to carry him on his back, since the prickly one cannot swim. But instead of taking him to his home under the dam, he took him to a tall stump in the very middle of the lake, and there he left him! [144]

There Porcupine was compelled to stay until the lake froze over, and he could walk home on the ice.

Beaver contrived to explain the whole thing as a joke, and the pair appeared to be on as good terms as ever. One fine day the Bear appeared.

“What shall I do? Save me! save me!” cried Beaver in terror.

“Certainly, friend; just get upon my back and I will carry you to safety,” replied Porcupine.

Beaver did as he was told, and was taken to the top of a very tall tree and left to himself. He did not know how to climb and was afraid to try to get down alone.



BEAVER AND PORCUPINE

He took him to a tall stump in the very middle of the lake and there he left him.

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“Oh, do help me down!” he cried; but it was of no use to beg. After staying up there so long that he grew dizzy and almost starved to death, he finally contrived to scramble down the tree; and they say that is why the bark of trees is rough and full of scratches to this day. We are also told that it is on account of this happening that people who have loved each other very much sometimes quarrel, and are no longer friends. [145]

MOUNTAIN DWELLER

Two sisters belonging to a well-known family one day became very hungry and helped themselves to some of their mother's fat meat, notwithstanding the girls were strictly forbidden to eat anything between meals.

When the mother found it out she was angry, especially with her elder daughter, for the younger was still a child. She not only scolded the girl, but slapped her severely. At last she said: “Since you are so fond of eating, you had better go and marry Mountain Dweller!” [146]

Now Mountain Dweller is a being who lives alone upon the mountains and is supposed to be a great hunter. Up to this time, no mortal had ever seen him. The girls were more deeply offended by her words than by the blows she had given the elder, and that night when their mother slept they ran off into the woods.

They had wandered a long way and were crying with fear and hunger when they heard some one chopping wood in the distance. “Perhaps it is really he,” said the elder sister, and they followed the sound.

There stood a man whose face was painted red. He was kind and asked the girls what they were doing so far from home.

As soon as they had told him, he invited them into his house near by, and they found it large and well stored with abundance of meat. They remained there as he asked them, and the elder sister in time became his wife. [147]

Now the mother had soon repented her hasty speech and both parents searched everywhere for their daughters. When they could not find them, they mourned them as dead. A year passed, and the mourners' feast had been given, when one day Mountain Dweller said to his wife and his sister-in-law: “Wouldn't you like to see your father and mother again?”

"Oh, yes, yes!" exclaimed the little girl, but the other thought not, for the insult was hard to forgive. At last she consented to go, whereupon her husband hunted continually and prepared a large quantity of meat for a present to his father-in-law.

"Make a little basket, no larger than the end of your thumb," he told her; and when it was finished, he put into it all those canoe loads of meat, hung it on his finger, and the three of them went down the mountain to the old home of the two girls. [148]

Their little brother was playing outside the hut and saw them first. He ran inside. "Mother, mother!" he cried, "my two sisters are coming!"

"Nonsense," scolded his mother. "Your sisters have been dead a long time, as you well know. Did we not give the mourners' feast for them this last moon?"

"Nevertheless I ought to know my own sisters, and I do know them," the boy persisted. "They are coming—they are here!"

The mother came to the door and saw them, and instantly she threw herself upon their necks, crying for joy.

The next morning, the elder daughter said to her: "Mother, back there in the woods a little way there is a basket for you. Send my brother to bring it." [149]

The boy went and soon came back saying that it was too heavy for him. The whole village went, but all of them together could not carry the basket. Finally the young wife went herself, and she brought it easily in one hand. But when she set it down in the house and began to unpack it, behold! the place was filled and running over with meat of all kinds. There was a great feast and every one was pleased, but unfortunately the girls' mother ate so much that in the night she became very ill, and by morning she was dead.

This is a story told to discourage greediness.

[150]

THE EAGLE CREST

It is well known that there is a certain clan which claims the Eagle for its crest or totem, and this is how it happened.

There was once a very poor man, so poor that he could not even get enough to eat. He was always cruising around in a small canoe, trying to catch a few little fish with which to keep himself alive. One day he caught nothing, and as he had brought no food with him in the boat he became very hungry.

Early in the morning, as he lay on the shore, he heard a voice but could not tell where it came from. The voice said: "I have come after you." The man looked all around him, but saw only a young Eagle perched upon the branch of a tree. Then the voice said quite plainly: "My grandfather has sent me to get you." This time the Eagle looked to him like a real person, and he followed it into the woods. [151]

The trail led to a fine large house high up on a cliff, and inside there was plenty of good food. There were also mats to sit upon and all the comforts to be found in good houses. The Eagles treated the poor man well, and since he was wretched and despised among his own people, he wanted to stay with them always. He married one of the Eagle women and became one of them.

Now the mother and brothers of this man were just as poor and contemptible as he had been, and he pitied them, now that he himself was well off. Whenever he saw his brother out fishing, he would leave some fish where the other could find it. The brother was astonished at his luck and could not account for it.

One night his mother had a dream. She dreamed that a large fish might be found upon a certain point of land, and when they went there, the fish was where she had dreamed she saw it. Soon afterward she dreamed that they must camp on a certain spot, where they would find much food. While they camped there, they all saw an Eagle bring a fish ashore, after which he sat upon a branch not far from them, and exclaimed: "Do not be afraid; it is I!" [152]

Such is the origin of the Eagle clan, which is now a large one and respected of all the people.

THE GIRL WHO MARRIED THE FIRE SPIRIT

Many men wished to marry the chief's pretty daughter, but she laughed at them all. One day as she sat quite close to the fire, a spark snapped upon her dress and burned a tiny hole in it. She pointed at the fire and called it a bad name in her anger, for it must be admitted that the girl had a quick temper. [153]

That night the chief's daughter was missing. All the people sought for her. They searched every house in the village and in the other villages, wherever men lived who had proposed for her hand. When she could not be found anywhere, they employed the wisest medicine men. In a far distant

village there lived one whose power was much talked about, and when he was consulted he said to the chief:

“Your daughter may have said something to displease the Fire Spirit. Let your fire go out, and have every one in your village do the same; then you may hear something.”

The chief came home and sent his crier through the village to ask that every fire be allowed to go out. When this had been done, the girl came up between the stones of the fireplace. The Fire Spirit had taken her to be his wife! [154]

After this, she was permitted to spend a part of her time with her family, but whenever the burning wood whistled (as you have sometimes heard it do) she knew that her spirit husband wanted her, and she was obliged to go to him at once.

One day, as she was sitting in her father’s house stirring a dish of boiling soap-berries, a young man who was in love with her, and who was encouraged by her mother in the hope that he might be able to keep her always with them, took hold of the spoon. Instantly the fire whistled loudly, and the young wife was terrified.

“He wants me,” she murmured, as she disappeared. They never saw her again.

[155]

THE SHADOW WIFE

A certain young man lost his wife when they had been married only a few days, and he was very sorrowful. All night he lay awake thinking about her. The next night and the next it was the same. In the morning they took away her body to bury it, and he put on his best clothes and started off.

All day he walked and all night; he could not stop; daylight found him still walking. He heard voices a long way off, and he followed them. At last he saw light through the thick trees and came out of the woods upon the shore of a quiet lake. All this time he had been walking upon the death road, the road of spirits, but he did not know it.

On the other side of the lake he saw people and called to them, but to his surprise no one seemed to hear him. After he had grown hoarse with shouting, he whispered to himself: “Why is it, I wonder, that no one hears me? It is not so far over there!” [156]

Immediately they heard him, and one said: “It is a person come up from Dreamland. Let us go and bring him across!”

They came in a canoe and carried him across the lake, and when he reached the other side, the very first person he saw was his wife! Her eyes were red, and he saw that she had been crying for him. What joy to see her again! He was so happy that he could hardly bear it. The people offered him food, but his wife warned him not to eat, for if he did so, she said, he could never return to earth.

As it was, they went back together in the canoe, which is called “Ghost’s Canoe”, and started hand-in-hand down the long trail that led to his father’s house. They walked for a day and a night, and when they arrived, he left her standing outside and went to speak to his father. [157]

“Father,” said the young man, “I have brought my wife home!”

“Why don’t you bring her in?” asked his father.

So they arranged robes to make a soft seat, and he went out to fetch her and came in again, but the people saw him alone. There was something like a shadow that came after. Wherever the young man went, this shadow could be seen to follow him. The shadow wife never spoke, at least not in the day time, but at night her voice could be heard plainly. The people in the house complained that it kept them awake. It seemed as if the two were talking and playing together all the night long.

There was a former lover of the girl who grew very jealous when her husband by his love brought her back from Ghost Land, and one night he hid himself behind their bed and suddenly raised the curtain. As he did so, there was heard a rattling of dry bones and then silence. In the morning the young husband lay dead, and the spirits of both went back to Ghost Land. [158]

THE SELF-BURNING FIRE

One winter there was a great famine on the Copper River. The people began to die of hunger, first the children, then the old people, and finally the young and strong, until at last but eight men were left.

These eight men set out to walk to another village where food might be found, but they had not gone far when one perished of cold and starvation. They buried him and went on. Soon another froze to death, and a third lay down exhausted, and so on until only one was left. [159]

Now this man felt wonderfully strong and walked on rapidly, notwithstanding he felt great sorrow

at the loss of his comrades. Late that evening, he heard a shout ahead of him on the trail. He followed the sound and came to a great fire burning in the midst of snow and ice. Then he knew that it was the fire he had heard calling to him.

When he had warmed himself thoroughly and was about to start on again, he heard a crackling of bushes behind him. He looked back, and one by one his frozen comrades came up the trail and warmed themselves at the fire, followed by all the people who had starved to death in the village. This is the Self-Burning Fire which has mysterious power and is worshiped by the Indians.

[160]

THE LONG WINTER

It was almost summer time when some boys who were playing in a boat pulled out of the water a long piece of drifting seaweed and put it in again on the other side of the canoe. For this trifling, not only the mischievous boys were punished, but all the people in their village.

For winter at once came on again with fresh fury, and snow was piled so high in front of the houses that the people were soon in want of food. Their winter stores were exhausted, and they would have starved to death, had it not been for a bluejay which one day perched on the edge of a smoke hole with a spray of fresh elderberries in its beak.

"Kilnaxe! Kilnaxe!" screamed the jay. Now this was the name of a neighboring town. So all the people took the cedar bark they had prepared to make their summer houses of and went to Kilnaxe, where they found it was full summer and the berries already ripe. Winter lingered only about their own village.

[161]

From this story we learn that one must not insult anything—not even a piece of seaweed.

Transcriber's Note

Archaic spelling is preserved as printed.

The following typographic errors have been repaired:

Page 9—beside amended to besides—"They could do many wonderful things besides that we cannot do."

Page 42—has amended to had—"... he returned with a story of an Owl which had driven away his game."

The frontispiece illustration has been moved to follow the title page. Other illustrations have been moved where necessary so that they are not in the middle of a paragraph.

The list of other books by the author has been moved to follow the title page.

Repeated half-titles have been deleted.

Omitted page numbers were blank or half titles in the original book.

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