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SMITHSONIAN MISCELLANEOUS COLLECTIONS

VOLUME 56, NUMBER 4

UPPER YUKON NATIVE CUSTOMS AND
FOLK-LORE

BY

FERDINAND SCHMITTER

Captain, Medical Corps, U. S. Army



(PUBLICATION 1933)



CITY OF WASHINGTON

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UPPER YUKON NATIVE CUSTOMS AND FOLK-LORE

BY FERDINAND SCHMITTER,
CAPTAIN, MEDICAL CORPS, U. S. ARMY

The Indians at Fort Egbert, Alaska, where I was stationed in 1906, are considerably modified by contact with white men, although many old customs remain as they were before the influences of civilization were felt.

An Eagle Indian village of about 200 inhabitants, 3 miles above the post on the south bank of the Yukon River, proved of particular interest in my research and observations of native customs and folk-lore. These Indians are classified as the Vuntakutchin people of the Athapascan family.

My first inquiry was for a medicine-man, but I was informed that there was none now in the vicinity, all of them having died or left long ago. They were very reserved on this subject and it was two years before I won their confidence, which I at last gained by treating their sick and showing sincere interest in their customs and mythology. One day I was told that a certain Indian named Luke was a good medicine-man. Accordingly, securing the services of the Indian Arthur as an interpreter, we visited Luke, who sheepishly admitted that he had been a medicine-man, but had given it up because the missionaries and police opposed the practice. After a brief conversation Luke became enthusiastic and boasted of his ability, making demonstrations which I will describe later. From medicine the conversation soon ran into folk-lore, with which he was intimately conversant. Arthur was of great service to me here, and later furnished most of the folk-lore which he secured from his father Simon and from the old folks of the village.

Many of my notes in the present paper are left in their more or less crude form, so as to illustrate the native way of thinking; for, since they are intended as records of a people, they should remain as nearly intact as possible. In reading the stories one must not be annoyed by inconsistencies, for they are characteristic of the people. Their "because" clauses, for example, are about as satisfactory as those of a child. It will also be noted that most of their stories begin, "Long time ago, when all animals were men," fol-

lowed with an account of certain animals which were evidently not men. For instance, when the bear goes out to hunt bear his daughter puts on a bear-skin to deceive the hunter. Such oddities will be understood when it is realized that they are traditional or folk-lore.

PSYCHOLOGY OF THE NATIVE

In order to properly appreciate native customs and stories one must be acquainted with the phases of their mental life, in which they are decidedly oriental. They are fond of mystery and mysticism. They have no idea of logic, but readily accept analogy and suggestion as proof of what they wish to believe, and in making inquiries one has to be careful not to ask leading questions, for they will answer in a way most convenient, with utter disregard of actual facts.

Combined with their child-like simplicity is a cunning secretive-ness, prompting them to withhold information of any value, as, for instance, if one asks a native how to tan a bear-skin or where to hunt moose, his comprehension is apparently dulled by an assumed oriental ignorance, and in this state he imparts little information.

Shyness is the chief characteristic of the females, resembling the form of insanity known as negativism, but it seems to disappear promptly after marriage. The women hide at the approach of a stranger, and, when spoken to, conceal their faces, seldom answering a question, though they understand English well.

The native believes in a rather concrete existence of dream life, and he sees spirits as if they were real creatures. Only the medicine-man has access to this dream life, and he alone can transfer animals from real to dream life and vice versa. One might assume from the tricks of the medicine-man that he is an impostor, but he is really sincere and believes in himself, although he has the faculty of believing what he must know "isn't so"—the same faculty that we find among hysterics and adherents of various psychic cults.

ANNUAL MOVEMENTS

During the winter season they move about wherever game is plentiful. The men go to a place, cache their packs, and then proceed to hunt. The next day the women come, pitch the camp, and prepare to cook. In the spring they go to the river bank, where they make canoes and nets in preparation for salmon fishing, and during the summer dry and cache large quantities of fish. In the early fall the entire family goes hunting and when a good supply of game is accumulated

they cache it on the spot. In October they return to the river for about two months, when they make snow-shoes, toboggans, and other things for winter use. About the middle of January they have a big time—"all same Christmas"—when they get out all their cached meat and bring it to the river. They stay there till the meat is nearly gone, and again go in search of game until the middle of March, when the weather moderates, at which time they return to the river banks.

The native dog proves a most useful domestic animal during their migratory movements. Each man owns a team of about five dogs, employed in winter for pulling toboggans and sleds over the trails and in the summer for hauling boats up the river banks. For inland travel, when there is no snow, packs are tied over the dogs' backs. Dogs are also used in hunting expeditions, as will be described later. There is no affection between dog and master. The animal is simply a beast of burden, never caressed, but thrashed unmercifully to secure obedience. They are wolfish and snap viciously at any attempt to caress; in fact, they are generally three-fourths to seven-eighths wolf and always gaunt, being given very little food and left to pick their own living. They live outdoors, even in the coldest weather. With the thermometer 60 degrees below zero, I have seen them sleeping comfortably curled up in the snow, protected by their woolly hair, their heads hidden under their bushy tails.

HABITATIONS

These Indians formerly had no permanent dwellings, but lived in tents of caribou skin covering a wicker framework. There was a fire in the center of the tent, and the smoke escaped through a hole in the roof around the tent-pole. When they moved they took the skins with them, but left the frames, which are sometimes seen still standing where Indians have not been for many years. They are spoken of by prospectors as an "Indian sign."

Most of these people now live in roughly built cabins, usually with only one room, that serves for all purposes. The cabin is built of logs, the chinks packed with moss. The roof is of saplings laid side by side and covered with turf. The floor is laid directly on the ground. There is usually but one window, and this cannot be opened. The only ventilation is therefore from door to stove-pipe. A small iron stove, that requires much attention, serves for heating and cooking. A low home-made bunk in the corner or a mass of dirty rags on the floor usually comprises the sleeping quarters.

Sometimes they have a rickety chair or two, but they seem to prefer to sit on the floor. Enamel ware and tin dishes constitute their dining outfit.

DRESS

The original native upper garment was the caribou-pelt "parka," a combination of hood and coat reaching to the knees and without buttons or laces. It was pulled on over the head like a shirt, the hood generally hanging down the back and covering the head only in severe weather. Sometimes sealskin "parkas" were secured in trade from the lower river natives. As far back as any of the present inhabitants can remember, they have worn shirts made of calico which they say traders brought from New York.

With the "parka" they wore a lower garment like the original pantaloons, a combination of trousers and stockings made of moose-skin from which the hair had been scraped.

Moccasins were of moose-skin, with caribou-skin strings to lace and tie them on, and they were of generous size, so that grass or other soft material could be placed in the soles to protect the feet. The moccasins usually reached several inches above the ankle, although low slipper-like moccasins were also worn in camp.

Large moose-skin mittens were made with gauntlet-like wrists, and these are now used and prized by the whites as an article of comfort.

Most of the clothing now worn is that cast off by the white people. Although the skin parka and breeches are still frequently seen, they have been mostly replaced by canvas parkas and other white-man's clothing. The natives, however, do not like shoes. Their moose-skin moccasins are continually wet in damp weather, causing constant headache, and they do not understand that the condition of the feet has anything to do with that of the head.

They wear no head covering in summer, but marten or rabbit skin caps are worn in winter. The old method of hair dressing was to allow the hair to grow long and tie it in a bunch behind with a small bunch over each temple. Swan feathers were chopped fine and applied with grease to the rear bunch daily until it became a large mass. Another custom was to pierce the nasal septum and through it insert rings of small bones from birds. These ornaments were worn especially at dances or other ceremonies, and most of the adult natives still have these holes in their noses.

Porcupine quills, which are used for decorating their clothing, were dyed red by boiling in cranberry juice, or blue by boiling in

huckleberry juice. When any quills were found which were pure white, they were left so. Various colored flowers were also boiled and their coloring matter used in dyeing the quills. Small geometrical figures were made by sewing the flattened-out quills to a backing of skin, and long stripes were made by rolling the quills into spirals about a sixteenth of an inch in diameter and sewing them side by side. The backs of mittens and insteps of the moccasins were decorated with these quills. Flat strings of caribou-skin one-fourth of an inch wide were sometimes wound with porcupine quills. These strings were either sewed to, or tied about the coat wrists and about the breeches below the knees. The coat of a chief was decorated down the front and back, and had a special collar, significant of his office, which consisted of a strip of moose-skin about two inches wide and nearly a yard long with one margin fringed by cutting it into strips. On this was sewed strands, and strings of quills were suspended from the ends. The collar hung around the neck and down the front like a scarf. A special hunting belt was made of caribou-skin decorated with porcupine quills, and from it hung an ornamented moose-skin sheath containing a hunting knife.

Moose-skin is prepared for clothing by the women. After soaking the skin in water to soften it, the hair is scraped off with the end of a sharp bone spatula. As in primitive times, all sewing is still done with bone awls, bones from the fore leg of the caribou or moose being used for coarse work, and for fine work a bone from the fore leg of the lynx or of a bird is used.

The women do bead-work, which they sell to the local stores. These articles and other curios are sold to travelers. Moose-skin mittens are made for local use and are much in demand, as most white people hereabout wear them in winter.

HYGIENIC CONDITIONS

Early Habits.—The Indians say that they had very little sickness before the advent of the whites, and George Matlock, who came to Alaska in 1885, and other old prospectors, confirm this statement. Smallpox and diphtheria struck them in epidemics, but they either died or soon recovered. As military hygiene teaches us, a moving command is a healthy command, and, as the Indians were formerly rovers, camping only for short periods, their wandering necessitated the abandonment of much infected material and localities, thus preserving their health. The survival of the fittest was also a factor

in preserving health, as illustrated by the following incident. A few years ago some government packers were traveling from Fort Egbert to Tanana Crossing, and on their way they passed a camp which the Indians had just deserted, leaving behind a sick old woman and a crying baby, but no attention was paid to them, as it was supposed the Indians would return to get the woman and child. The packers on their return trip a few weeks later found the old woman and child dead, evidently left by the Indians to starve.

Present Habits.—A great change has taken place and conditions could scarcely be worse than they are now. They never wash more than their face and hands, and are consequently exceedingly filthy. Pediculosis and tuberculosis are ever-present indications of their unclean habits. Their cabins are as offensive as their persons. They have no methods of sanitation.

Tuberculosis far outweighs all other ailments. On entering the village one notices everywhere evidence of tuberculosis in the forms of humpbacks, hip disease, scrofula, and consumptive cough. Very few natives can be given a complete physical examination without disclosing some evidence of tuberculosis. Tonsillitis, respiratory disease, digestive troubles, and myalgia are ever present. Diphtheria, according to hearsay, kills off many in occasional epidemics, but there have been no epidemics this year. Heretofore the natives have been in the habit of obtaining medicine free at the hospital, but it has been found expedient to charge a small fee for prescriptions.

These natives are very undesirable patients; they all like to take medicine, but object to physical examinations. They strongly object to surgery and will permit it only under the most urgent circumstances. The relatives of a boy with hip disease were advised to submit him for operation, but to this their only response was, "No cut; make well quick." They will quite readily accept any magic methods, but modern surgery does not appeal to them.

FOOD

The native diet consists chiefly of fish, game, and berries. During July they catch king salmon, which they dry and keep for winter. At all seasons they hunt caribou, moose, bear, and mountain sheep. During the fall, when the caribou run in herds, the natives cache the meat for the cold weather. The other animals are scarcer, and when one is brought in it makes a treat for the village. It is customary, when one native is surfeited with meat, to give what is left

to his neighbor. Ducks are also shot during the fall and spring and make a variety in diet. This meat diet is supplemented by the usual white man's vegetables bought at the local stores. Their nearest approach to vegetable food is the tuber attached to the root of a pennate-leafed weed that grows on the hillside in the shade of spruce trees in the midst of moss, through which the root extends a few inches, the tuber itself growing in the ground beneath the moss. It is six to nine inches long and from one-half to three-fourths of an inch thick, with fiber strands running through it. It has a slightly sweetish but indifferent taste. The natives originally ate it only when they could get no meat, though they say that it is quite palatable when boiled with grease.

Huckleberries and cranberries grow in abundance on the mountain sides and are gathered in large quantities. "Hootchinoo," the native alcoholic drink, is made from huckleberries, by allowing them to ferment. Raspberries, strawberries, salmon-berries, and currants are also found in favorable localities.

The Indians never eat dog meat or wolf meat; they would rather starve. Neither do they eat ravens, hawks, or eagles. They seldom eat wolverene, though they eat lynx and one kind of owl.

These people have lately learned luxury to the extent that they think they are destitute when they have only animal food to eat, whereas, I am told, they never had anything but animal food ten years ago. A contrast to this particular tribe is found when the Mackenzie River natives visit here. These live almost entirely on a meat diet, and are a robust, healthy people.

FISHING AND HUNTING

In July the salmon begin to run up the river, first the king salmon and later the dog salmon. The Indians prefer the latter, for they say the king salmon are too oily. To catch salmon they generally use hand-nets which are let down to the bottom of the river in rather deep places. When the fisherman feels a pull he draws in the net, although sometimes the salmon pulls the Indian into the water. This method, however, is gradually being replaced by fish-wheels. The salmon are brought to the shore where the women, squatting at the water's edge, dress and wash them in the flowing current, split them lengthwise, make transverse cuts about an inch apart through the meat, and put them on pole-racks to dry in the sun until ready for caching.

White-fish is occasionally caught in the nets, and is even preferred

to salmon, which is the staple fish food. Greyling, a kind of trout, is also caught in the mountain streams, and is prized as a delicacy.

The caribou, or Alaskan reindeer, is the staple winter food. During the fall, when a run of caribou is expected, two long rail fences are built converging into a corral. Snares are placed in the fence about fifty yards apart and also thickly interspersed in the corral space where the herd is driven. The Indians line up at the entrance and shoot with their arrows those that try to escape. Some are caught in the fence snares, but most are captured in the corral. The snare consists of a loop of strong braided moose-skin rope, the end tied to a loose log, the loop being held in place by small strings of caribou-skin that break easily. It is set in a natural opening through which it is presumed the animal will try to pass. As the caribou jumps through the loop the strings break, the loop tightens, and, thus caught, he tries to run, dragging the loose log after him, which soon exhausts him. If tied to something firm the rope breaks too readily; hence a loose log is preferred.

Moose are usually stalked and shot with bow and arrow, aim being taken behind the shoulder; but sometimes the dogs get a moose at bay and the Indians attack him with pikes. In the springtime the moose can be caught with snares set in a creek, the dogs chasing him down the creek into a snare. The Indians say that a moose once shot with an arrow never escapes, as they sometimes do after being shot with a gun, for, though they may run for some time, they will finally succumb and be caught.

A pike or spear is nearly always used in hunting bears. The hunter attracts the bear by making a raven-like noise, causing the bear, as the Indians say, to think the raven has discovered a dead moose. They also further explain that the big bears only would come, as the little bears would not know what the croaking meant. As the bear approaches the Indian holds the spear in position, facing the bear as it draws nearer to him, and as the bear springs the Indian sticks the spear into its throat at the top of the breast-bone, at the same time shoving the handle of the pole into the ground, thus causing the bear to spear himself with his own weight. Sometimes three men hunt in this manner, two of them attacking the bear on either side as it rushes forward. The meat of the young bear killed in the fall, when they feed on huckleberries, is considered a great luxury.

Grouse, ptarmigan, ducks, rabbits, owls, hawks, and other small game are killed with a dull, round-pointed arrow, sharp-pointed arrows being used only for big game.

The eagle cannot be shot with an arrow, but is snared. For this purpose a small fence having a snare at one side is built on a mountain peak and baited with a caribou lung. The Indians say that the eagle is very wary and will not go in at the top of the snare, but usually alights near it and inspects it carefully before entering, which he eventually does and is caught.

COOKING

Baskets for cooking are made of spruce roots, and, though they leak when new, they soon shrink and the crevices become filled with grease. Each Indian woman keeps near at hand during the winter a stone which is used in cooking, as follows: First it is heated in the fire, and when it is red hot the ashes are brushed off and the stone dropped into a basket of water, making it boil in about a minute. These stones are hard to procure in the winter and are guarded most carefully. Sometimes birch-bark baskets are used, but, since they break easily, are of little service except for cooking and drinking utensils on a hunting trip. The spruce basket is preferred, since it is collapsible and can be rolled into a small package.

Meat is roasted by suspending it on a string from a cross-bar on two supports near the fire, where it is continually twirled until roasted. Salmon is cooked a little differently. Usually it is hung at rest with the flat inner surface toward the fire. Rabbits, ptarmigan, moose-foot, and other small things are roasted in a pit-oven, made by building a fire on the ground in the sand. After the fire has burned for some time it is brushed aside and a hole dug beneath it in the sand. The meat is placed in the pit, covered with hot sand or dirt, and over this the fire is rebuilt and kept burning until the roasting is finished. Ducks, geese, and swans are boiled in a large basket of water by means of the hot stone.

NATIVE DEVICES AND IMPLEMENTS

One method of starting a fire was by the flint and iron-pyrites method, in which a piece of flint fastened to a stick about three inches long was struck against a piece of pyrite to produce a spark. Punk to catch the spark was usually secured from a fungus growing on birch trees. The Indian word in the Porcupine language for flint was "vetrih," and pyrites "tshi tlya." Another method of fire-making was with the whirling stick. The stick was braced between the body and a piece of punk. A string was wound round the stick,

so that pulling would revolve the stick rapidly in either direction, starting a friction fire on the punk.

They still have hammers made from a rounded stone fastened to the end of a stick with a string of caribou-skin. These are used to break up bones for cooking, and to make arrow-heads. My interpreter has seen stone hammers in use, and he also says that stone axes for chopping down trees were used some time ago, although he never saw one. Hunting knives are made of bone ground flat and sharp on both edges, and they occasionally have copper knives of the same pattern, which were secured in trade from the White River Indians. One of their most useful weapons, the spear, was made by binding a hunting knife of caribou-horn to the end of a pole about 6 feet long.

Birchwood is used for making bows, arrow-shafts, frames for fish-nets, snow-shoes, toboggans, and canoes, and their woodwork is nearly always painted with red ochre, which is secured from the banks of a creek near the village of Nation, about thirty miles down the river from Eagle. They say that this creek is red from the ochre, which can be gathered in handfuls from the mud in the swampy places along the banks. In former times this pigment represented an important article of commerce, and was carried to a great distance and traded with other tribes. They used it also for painting their faces in the dances.

"Babiche" is a tough string made of walrus hide, secured in trade from the lower river Indians and used for making snow-shoes and fish-nets.

Arrow-heads are about five inches long and made of caribou-horn or bone, and bound into the split shafts with fine sinews.

The natives still build a style of canoe characteristic of the upper Yukon. It is of birch bark, fastened to a frame by lacing with the slender roots of trees. The bark is fitted over the frame, and then about a dozen squaws hold a sort of sewing-bee, as they sit along the sides of the canoe and lace the bark through holes punctured along the edges by a sharp bone awl. The cracks are filled with pitch by the supervisor to make the canoe water-tight. This is a product entirely free from the influence of civilization. White men do not use them, because they tip too easily.

AGRICULTURE

The natives in this locality pay no attention to agriculture. There is excellent opportunity for it, but they have never been taught. About their village there is much more rich garden land than they can use. The white people grow an abundance of potatoes, carrots, turnips, cabbage, cauliflower, onions, and other vegetables. One man raises wheat, barley, and oats. In a single season a garden 100 feet square will yield five hundred dollars' worth of vegetables (according to Alaskan prices).

There are always a number of natives loafing around the village, many of whom are unable to hunt on account of age or consumption. To give them work in a garden would be an excellent hygienic measure.

GOVERNMENT

Under their primitive form of government the chief (ha-kkih) had despotic authority. He detailed hunting parties and dictated their duties, and when game was brought into camp he assumed charge of it, apportioning it out to whom he pleased. The chief of the Moosehide Indians near Dawson shows much of the pristine dignity and authority of his rank, and whenever he buys anything in Dawson he does not carry it home, but sends an Indian after it. He shows his genteel extraction by always wearing a pair of fancy decorated gauntlets when he goes on a several days' visit to Eagle during warm weather. During the absence of a chief, or when he is incapacitated, a patriarchal form of government exists, and all important measures are decided by the old men after holding the "big talk." Public opinion is very strong and each individual has great respect for the opinion of the community concerning his personal actions.

For several years the chief of the Eagle Indians did not attend to public affairs on account of age and feebleness; hence the functions were carried on by the old men. At one time a chief from farther down the river came here and assumed to be chief, but he was never generally recognized as such and ended his career when he fled from the village and the police.

Their life is somewhat communal, each family living by itself, but in a small tribe most of the families are inter-related. They occasionally marry into other tribes and sometimes children are adopted into a family. Joseph, the chief at Ketchumstock, has two boys which, it is said, were taken from Tanana when they were

infants, and, strange to say, such kidnapping appears not to be considered a serious offence.

POLITICAL AND DOMESTIC ECONOMY

The native idea of money value is very unstable. In this respect they are the victims of unfortunate circumstances. I am told that in 1898, during the gold rush, many natives were hired as pilots and guides at \$10.00 per day. This gave them an exaggerated notion of the value of their labor, to which they cling tenaciously. The smallest piece of money current in any of the Alaskan stores is twenty-five cents, so the native regards a twenty-five-cent piece about the same as a laborer in the States regards a cent. An incident will illustrate: I saw a white traveler take a picture of a native family and give the paterfamilias twenty-five cents as a tip, but he superciliously tossed it to his baby, considering it too trivial a reward for himself.

The wages of a white man in this country average five dollars a day. This compensates him for labor and things incidental to working away from home. The native has a keen appreciation of his own value and will not work for any less than the white.

The lowest price usually assigned by a native to any piece of work is five dollars. I have seen one refuse to tan a small bear-hide (worth about \$4.00) for less than five dollars, although in a few days his wife was seeking destitute rations.

While these people will not come down from a set price, their failure to appreciate comparative values allows them to be cheated. The following incident will illustrate: A native had a pail of berries for which he wanted two dollars; a store-keeper offered him one dollar, which he refused. Then the store-keeper threw down three bars of soap, worth thirty cents, and offered them in trade, which offer was promptly accepted.

The natives are very improvident. They will loaf continually in the summer, gathering no firewood for winter. In cold weather they will huddle together in a poorly heated cabin, and I have known them to tear down cabins for firewood and rebuild when summer comes. When they have much dry salmon in the summer they sell it to the stores, but when winter comes and they run short they buy it back at a higher price.

MARRIAGE

An interesting old custom was that of the arrangement of marriages during the infancy of the children. The question was settled by the parents, who met in consultation and made all the arrangements for the prospective marriage, choosing for the girl a boy usually about three years older. Between the ages of 10 and 15 the boy left home to live with the girl's parents, although they were not married until the boy was able to hunt and work. The boy became a part of his wife's family and never returned to his own.

Marriage usually took place between the ages of 16 and 20, but sometimes as late as 25 years of age. Although the agreement had been made by the parents of the intended bride and groom, yet their own desires were considered before the actual marriage took place, and they were not forced to marry unless they felt they were suited for each other.

On the death of a wife or husband it was not customary for the survivor to remarry for several years, since the relatives of the deceased might think the survivor was glad of the other's death.

CEREMONIALS

These Indians are quite strong in tradition, and no household event is passed over without ceremonious observances that usually take the form of "banquets," given by the person immediately interested. Thus, at the birth of a child the father celebrates the event by giving a dinner to the entire tribe. A similar banquet is given when the oldest boy kills his first bit of game, thereby attaining his majority and proving himself a hunter. It is incident to the custom on this occasion for the youth to present a bird to the head man of the tribe, while his father also makes the chief a present in token of his esteem and pleasure at his son's accomplishment.

Corresponding to the feast in honor of the boy's maturity, a similar celebration is held when a girl arrives at the age of puberty. Everybody in the community is informed, and the girl's father gives a dinner in honor of the event. The girl then goes about a mile from home, where she lives in isolation for a year under the care of a relative of her fiancé. She does not eat fresh meat during this year, and if she breaks the rule it is supposed to make the game few in number and hard to get during the ensuing year. As a punishment, in case she violates this tradition, she is compelled to stay away for another year and wear a peculiarly fashioned cap in the

form of a cape which extends to her knees. This is to prevent her from seeing any men, though she may talk to them. She may raise her cap only to do sewing or other work in her tent. This custom is still in vogue, but the length of exile is usually cut down to a few months. A neighboring tribe has a custom of not allowing the girls to drink from anything but a special ceremonial drinking cup made of woven roots. This is not allowed to touch her lips; she drinks by making a gutter of the palm of her hand, through which she pours the water into her mouth.

FUNERAL CEREMONY

When a chief, "Ha-kkih," died, men were hired to burn his body, and what was left of bones and ashes was placed in a wooden receptacle hewn from a tree trunk and hung about ten feet high in a tree. The men who burned the body ate no fresh meat for a year, because, according to the law, if those who worked for a dead man should eat fresh meat within a year they would die. They could eat dried meat, but if there was none dried they must wait until some was made.

It is an old tradition that when persons die they go into a woman and are born again as a baby. The man is born again as a male and the woman as a female. They have no notion of transmigration into animals, believing that when an animal dies it is not born again as a man is.

Last winter the Eagle chief died. He had hoarded up much wealth of skins, blankets, traps, rifles, and other property, and, since it is not customary among the Eagle Indians for relatives to inherit the property of the deceased, his kinfolk received nothing of his belongings. By common consent Old Peter took charge of the effects. It was then announced that there would be a "pot-latch" in the spring, when the goods of the deceased man would be given away. Invitations were sent east to the Moosehide Indians up the river, west to the Charlie Creek Indians down the river, and south over the hills to the Ketchumstock Indians. The Porcupine Indians to the north were not invited, because they were not related to the tribe. All the goods were kept intact in the caches until the arrival of the guests. Then Isaac, the Moosehide chief, took full charge of the ceremonies, which lasted several days, during which there was much feasting and dancing. At the dinners, the men first gorged themselves, allowing the women to come in after they had finished and take what was left. Between the ceremonies they assembled

in groups about the village and gossiped or sung to tunes resembling those of Japanese operas. Time was kept by one of the Indians beating upon a caribou-skin drum, while everybody swayed to the time, alternately bending the right and left knee. For the final ceremony a fence about seven feet high was built about an enclosure thirty by sixty feet. The "pot-latch" proper was held in this enclosure during one afternoon, and the people sat about near the fence facing the goods of the deceased, which were displayed at one end by Chief Isaac, who stood in their midst and presided. The first hour of the ceremony was very much like a church meeting, all talking in their native language. The chief then opened with a speech, and when he sat down others rose and spoke as the spirit seemed to move them, apparently eulogizing the great chief. At times the speaker became much wrought up, his gestures showing that he was illustrating a fight with an animal. After the speech-making the goods were distributed one article at a time. The chief would pick up a blanket, walk down the center of the assembly, and with a few remarks toss it to some one, the recipient smilingly responding with brief remarks. Articles were only given to the visitors; the Eagle Indians received nothing.

After watching the ceremony several hours, I was about to leave when the chief called me and handed me a pair of moose-skin moccasins, saying, "This is because you were good to my people."

Next day the food became scarce, so the visitors began to depart for their homes, their toboggans laden with goods from the deceased chief's cache.

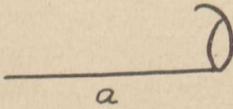
NAMES

A few of the most important Indian names have been given in the previous paragraphs under other subjects. The Eagle Indians themselves are called "kkwi dyik" in their own tongue. In the Porcupine language they are called "vun tte kwi chin," which means "the people of the Willow Creek," since they came from what is now known as Charlie Creek, where willows abound and from which the creek was named by the natives.

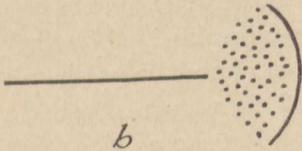
Individuals were given names from incidents of their infancy. Old Simon's name, "Da Hoch," meaning white blood, was chosen from the fact that he had a suppuration in one of his eyes since infancy. The Indians are generally known to the white people by Biblical names which missionaries gave to them.

SIGNS AND SYMBOLS

The Indians do not write, but make signs of one sort or another, a few of which follow. The sign *a* drawn in the snow means a



moose in the direction of the end of the line to which the head is attached. The sign *b* in the snow means caribou on the mountain in the direction of the straight line.



Along a trail, where it divides, if one sees a leaning pole with grass tied to the end, it means no "grub" in that direction, or a pole with willow tied to the end means plenty of "grub."

GAMES

The Indians had an outdoor game similar to volley-ball in which several took part. A ball the size of a baseball, made of caribou-skin stuffed with hair, with a marten tail attached, was used in this game. A party of about ten Indians would take up their position on each side of a line, batting the ball with bare hands from one side over the line to the other, and every time the ball touched the ground it counted against the side on which it fell.

The boys had a game that not only furnished sport, but gave them practice in throwing the spear as well. One person would roll a hoop made of willow before a number of Indian boys standing in a row, each with a long spear-like stick, which he threw at the hoop as it rolled past him, and when one went through the hoop it counted as a caribou killed.

For an indoor game they had one which is not uncommon nowadays. In this game the men sit on the ground with their legs arched in front of them and the women sit tailor fashion, each person having a cloth similar to a handkerchief. Any small article is started down the row; the men pass it under the knees and the women pass it behind their backs, the object being to conceal the article in the cloth or stealthily pass it on without being caught. It was the duty of one to catch a person with the article in his possession. Men and women sit separate in rows opposite each other and watch the other sex play the game.

The nearest approach to gambling among the natives is an old game, the rules of which are as follows: Two rows of men sit opposite one another, each man holding in his hand a bone marked with a

notch. The bones are secretly passed from right to left and vice versa. Some one on one side would call out which of the opponents' hands contained the bone, and the calling side would get as many sticks, from a pile of about sixty, as the number of opponents' hands guessed correctly. Each side called the other alternately. Sometimes they would hold another unmarked bone in the opposite hand so as to confuse the guesser. The side which lost or got the fewer sticks had to give the other something as a forfeit.

They wrestle "catch-as-catch-can," but they usually try for a hold in the following manner: Putting the right arm around the opponent's waist and grasping the breeches at the thigh with the left hand. It is only necessary to throw a man, for as soon as he falls he is beaten. As a mark of friendship on separating, after this sport, the Indians exchange coats or other articles of clothing regardless of their value.

THE MEDICINE-MAN

The word "medicine" should be understood as synonymous with "magic." The medicine-man does not administer potions, but cures by other methods; thus, "make medicine" is synonymous with perform magic; hence, his aid is sought for more purposes than healing the sick, and he can perform to defeat the enemy, to overcome famine, or to make a prospective hunting trip successful. When a man is sick he calls in this Indian doctor, who sings to drive away the disease. Each medicine-man has his own way of singing, though the general form is a chant like those used in dances, in which words are sometimes used, but generally meaningless syllables. The medicine-man goes to sleep and dreams songs, and what he hears in the dream he repeats as an incantation over the sick one.

When Luke, one of these medicine-men, now perhaps forty years old, was a little boy, about 500 Indians encamped in skin houses about a mile up Mission Creek were taken with smallpox and most of them died. The remnant of the band migrated to Forty Mile, where they were attacked in 1897 by an epidemic of coughing and bleeding from the lungs, and many died in from four to six days. The Indians think that each of these epidemics was due to a bad medicine-man from elsewhere sending an evil spirit amongst them. The evil spirit was supposed to enter the man's body in the form of an animal and, by moving about in him, produced sickness.

It seems the medicine-man is still able to do this by taking a weasel skin and causing it to disappear in various ways. Sometimes he

holds it in the fire, whence it disappears without being destroyed, going into its victim; or the weasel skin may be caused to disappear by wrapping it in a cover or holding it between the palms and blowing a puff of breath on it. A medicine-man tried to demonstrate this to me, but the skin did not disappear, though I was assured that it would disappear in actual practice.

The weasel was called a "fetich," and this name applies to other animal skins used in the same manner, such as the marten and wolf, or, in fact, whatever animal the medicine-man sees in his dreams and wishes to employ in his practice. The skull and claws are sometimes removed from the skins, but generally are left on. Formerly they were ornamented about the neck and mouth with porcupine quills, but more recently with glass beads. Although a skin is still most popular, there are many other fetiches in use. A beaver's tooth, wound with beads and suspended on a string, is a useful fetich, and is made to disappear and reappear at the convenience of the medicine-man. Small bones are decorated and used in the same manner. A great many medicine-men dig a certain kind of root from the ground which they carry about in their pockets. It appears to be alive and at times grows larger or smaller. Some medicine-men employ the sun, moon, or stars in their songs instead of an animal, while others call upon the trees, birds, brush, or any convenient object.

The good medicine-man works in the opposite way from a bad one; he cures a sick man by drawing the weasel skin out of the ailing part. I was shown how it was extracted from the ribs, neck, or head. With the skin concealed up his sleeve, or hidden in his clenched hand, the medicine-man reached to the affected part, whence he jerked it forth in the twinkling of an eye. Sometimes in sickness, when all the friends are assembled to assist the medicine-man in singing, he will brush the affected part with his hand as he sings until, with a puff of breath, he blows the disease away. At other times he will firmly grasp at something invisible and appear to pull it out and throw it into the air, driving it away with a puff of breath. The medicine-man, after extracting the evil spirit, returns to the animal its own spirit and sends the evil spirit back to its original sender, whom it kills, because he sent it first.

Whenever a sick man dies the bad medicine-man takes back the evil spirit, and these spirits, which he sees only in the form of animals in his dreams or when he sings, are kept for future use. It is believed that a stronger medicine-man can kill a weaker one's ani-

mal, thus stripping the latter of his power, who thus becomes like any one else and liable to destruction by the stronger one.

If a man wants to become skillful in magic healing he goes to sleep in the same blanket with a medicine-man. When they are asleep and dreaming he is taught the medicine by his instructor. The medicine-man, however, is disinclined to teach others, because he is apt to lose his power and since a stronger one could kill him. A bad medicine-man likes to kill, but a good medicine-man always wants to cure, and it is said the good are apt to live longer.

Their treatment of wounds is most interesting. If a wound bleeds profusely, the medicine-man gets a piece of king salmon skin the size of the palm and cleans it of scales. He takes this between his palms and has another Indian hold his hands together for security; then, as the medicine-man blows, the salmon skin disappears, going into the wound, where it forms a membrane and stops the bleeding. This is extracted again when the wound is healed. This method is also employed when there is a pain but no bleeding.

An odd test used in case of sickness is to put a frog on top of the man's head; if the frog soon jumps away the man dies soon, but if the frog remains on his head for any length of time the man will live a long time.

Last winter one of the Indians had severe tuberculosis, bronchitis, and pleurisy, for which I treated him, unaware that he was a medicine-man, and during the spring he recovered. He has since confided to me that his illness was caused by a bad medicine-man from "Tanana," who sent the quill of a large eagle feather that entered into him and caused his sickness. He insisted that he extracted this quill in the presence of several witnesses, thus defeating with his magic the machinations of his enemy and curing himself. One of the witnesses assures me that this actually happened.

Disease is not always the result of the medicine-man's evil spirit, but sometimes comes of itself, so the Indians have certain actual medical remedies. If they have a cough they chew grass roots or spruce bark to stop the illness, and sometimes the old women boil bark, roots, and brush to make tea, which is drunk for all forms of illness. Originally many kinds of bark were infused in the same mixture, making a sort of general remedy, for it seems probable that the specific use of these herbs was not acquired until later from the whites; at least the medicine-man never used them or any other drug, his practice being limited to psychotherapy.

In war times the medicine-man performs his magic against the

enemy. In experiments of this nature a medicine-man uses for a fetich two pebbles, a few inches in diameter, with natural holes in them, tied to the ends of a string about a foot long, made of caribou-skin wound with porcupine quills. In demonstrating the use of the pebbles, the magician pointed to an imaginary enemy in the distance and, assuming an attitude of forward charge, his countenance showing fierceness and his eyes the glassy, vacant stare of the mystic, he suspended the pebbles by the middle of the string, swung them forward three times, blew on them a puff of breath, and with full strength threw them toward the enemy. Immediately relaxing, with a smile of satisfaction, he said, "They run."

INFLUENCE OF CIVILIZATION

There is an Episcopal mission at the village which most of the natives attend faithfully. It is their principal form of diversion from lying about in their squalid cabins. Strange as it may seem, the most stupid ones and those who cannot speak English make the better church-goers, while those who are more intelligent and can talk English associate with and come under the influence of the saloon loafers. Accordingly, the few crimes I have known to be committed by the natives were by the most intelligent members of the community. Even the bad Indians go to church, though they are hypocritical. I have seen a native take communion, get medicine from the hospital as a destitute, and a few days later offer a white man five dollars to get him some whiskey.

These people have learned to be charity-seekers and the church, it seems to me, maintains a weak influence over them by doling out charity. This is undesirable, for charity is not necessary, since there is opportunity for them to be self-supporting provided they are properly taught occupations and to despise instead of to seek assistance.

In view of these conditions, a Government official should be appointed or detailed to teach the natives agriculture, to act as a health officer and to compel them to live in a sanitary manner, to supervise the care of the sick, to establish a commissary where they may buy at moderate prices, to act as police, and to make further recommendations for their benefit.

FOLK-LORE

The following stories were collected from various individuals, and are presented, as nearly as possible, in the style of the narrator:

CREATION OF THE WORLD

Long time ago the water flowed all over the world. There was one family and they made a big raft. They got all kinds of animals on the raft. There was no land, but all water, and they wanted to make a world. The man of the family tied a rope around a beaver and sent him down to find the bottom, but the beaver didn't reach bottom; he got only half way and drowned. The man then tied a string around a muskrat and sent him down; he reached bottom and got a little mud on his hands, but he drowned. The man took the mud out of the muskrat's hands into his palm and let it dry, then crumbled it to dust. This he blew out all over the waters and it made the world. (All tribes about here are said to have the same story.)

ORIGIN OF THE WIND

A long time ago, when all animals were men, there was no wind. There was a bear that used to go about with a bag on his back. Many people were curious to know what was in the bag and they often asked the bear, but he would not tell them. One day another man caught the bear asleep with the bag on his back. The man's curiosity to know what was in the bag was so great that he cut it open. The bag contained the wind, which then escaped and has never since been confined.

THE OLD MAN AND OLD WOMAN

In the Yukon River between Eagle and Fortymile there are two large rocks which evidently were one before a geological cataclysm separated them. The natives call the one on the north side the "Old Man," and the one to the south the "Old Woman." These were the primogenitors of the Indians in this region. The story follows: These two old folks were once together in the middle of the river, but the old woman pushed the old man to the other side because he left her there. So he went north and she went south, but the children grew up around there. At that time this region was full of all kinds of animals, and they could talk like men. The old man killed off all the bad animals and saved one good one of each kind, which started the families. They have since been unable to talk.

The moose was the head game of the world, because the old man killed the bad moose first. The big swan was once the head of all birds and animals because it was stronger. All animals came together and had wrestling matches. The little teal duck was the strongest animal in the world. First the swan beat the moose, but the teal duck beat the swan after the swan had conquered all others.

ADVENTURES OF THE OLD MAN

The "Old Man" (rock) in the Yukon went down the river where the bear, when bears were men, was fishing. He put his canoe on this side of the river where no one could see it from a point above where the bear was. Then he made a circuit on foot around the bear and reached the river lower down.

The old man then swam up the river, like a king salmon, to the bear's house, where the bear was spearing salmon. The bear tried to spear him for a salmon, but he grabbed the spear point, broke it off, and swam to his canoe and hid the spear point under the bow. Having disarmed the bear he now knew that he was safe. So he got in his canoe and went down to the bear's house to call. He concealed the fact that he had broken the bear's spear, but the bear believed that he did it, nevertheless. The bear wanted the old man to marry his daughter. The bear pointed to a mountain about a mile away, where there was no timber, and said that it was a good hunting place for bear, since a bear came up there every day. The old man went to the woods to get material to make some arrows. The bear had everything fixed dangerous about there, so that when a man touched a tree stump it would fall on him. The old man was cautious and would touch a stump and dodge when it fell. Then he secured the wood for arrows from the fallen stump. Now he wanted some feathers and the bear took him to a place said to be good for getting them. Here were big eagles that would kill men. The old man went to an eagle's nest in a big tree, where there were two young ones. He asked them which one could talk most. One said that he could talk most, and would tell the father and mother eagle about everything, so the old man killed him so that he couldn't tell. He asked the other young eagle how he knew when his mother was coming, and was told that she always followed a gust of snow. He asked when the father eagle came, and was told that he always followed a gust of hail. Then the old man hid under the nest with his spear. Then came the snow and the mother eagle appeared, carrying the upper half of a man. She asked the young one, "Where is your brother?" and he said, "It was too warm here and he went down where it was cool." She said, "I smell something here; what's the matter?" The young eagle said, "You smell that half a man;" but the mother eagle said, "I smell something different." Then the old man under the nest speared the mother eagle, piercing her from belly to crop. Then came the hail, and the father eagle followed and asked the same questions as the mother. He said to the young one, "Where is your mother?" and the young one answered, "She went down to look for brother." The father eagle brought with him the lower half of the man. Then he said, "I smell something," and the young one replied the same as to his mother. The old man was watching from under the nest, and he speared the father eagle too. This father eagle would kill any man he saw. The old man saved the young one. He got enough feathers to make his arrows. When he came back the bear said, "You're all right," which he always said. The old man wanted some pitch to stick the feathers to the arrows. The bear, as usual, led him to a dangerous place, where he told the old man there was plenty of pitch. Here the old man found a lake of pitch boiling like water. The old man wouldn't go near it, but took a long willow switch and dipped it into the lake. With this switch he threw the pitch all over the spruce trees about him. The spruce trees theretofore had never yielded pitch, but have done so all over the world ever since. Then the old man gathered enough pitch from a spruce tree and returned. Now he wanted sinews to bind the feathers and heads to the sticks of his arrows.

The bear led him to a moose lick where there was a bad moose. The moose didn't have much flesh, but was mostly bone and skin. His hide had such stiff hairs that it was hard for an arrow to penetrate. This moose would kill

every man he saw. There was lots of high grass about there and the old man crept up to the moose on hands and knees through the grass, keeping out of sight of the moose. When the old man got near the moose he stopped and wished for a mouse to come along. He told the mouse to go to the moose and chew the stiff hair off behind the left shoulder. The mouse went to the moose and asked to chew the hair off behind the left shoulder, to use for his nest to keep the young warm. The moose refused, but told him he could chew the hair from his hind quarter. The mouse insisted that he wanted the hair from behind the left shoulder because it was soft and warm. So the moose allowed him to take it. As soon as the hair was off, the old man shot the moose through this spot into the heart, killing him. Then the old man got his sinew from the spinal ligaments of the moose. Then he returned to the bear camp and finished making the arrows. The old man made the arrows with birch-bark heads because the bear said the birch bark was the best. The old man knew that this was false, but he did it to please the bear. The bear said that upon the mountain where there is no timber a bear came every evening, and that the old man could get it. The bear was accustomed to kill men by this ruse. He set his daughter up there dressed in a bear skin, and when a man came near she would hold him till her father bear killed him. The old man concealed bone arrow-heads in the back lock of his hair before starting. The old man and the bear started out to hunt bear. The bear said, "Walk slow" but the old man ran away. As soon as the old man approached the hill he saw the other bear and shot twice with his birch-bark pointed arrows, but they didn't penetrate. The bear when hit, instead of running away, as ordinarily, came toward the old man, who pulled the bone arrow-head out of his hair and shot the bear with it. He now saw it was the bear's daughter, for she hollered, "Father, that man hurt me." The bear said to her, "Catch hold of him," and as she tried to catch him she died. Then the old man ran away and the bear chased him all day. Then the old man ran into Ford's Lake. (Calico Bluff, six miles below Fort Egbert, on the Yukon, is called "Long Point" Clavath, pronounced "Klay-vay," and Ford's Lake, near by, is called Clavathmon, meaning Long Point Lake.)

The bear couldn't catch the old man, so he told the frog to drink all the water in the lake, and the frog drank it all. As soon as the water was gone the old man burrowed into the mud. The bear went all around digging in the mud to find the old man. As soon as he got near the old man, the old man wished for a snipe to come along and it came. He asked the snipe to go and hit the frog twice in the belly. The frog asked the snipe, "Did some one ask you to come?" The snipe said, "No, I am hunting for something for my children to eat." As soon as the snipe got near the frog he hit it twice in the belly and flew away. Then the water all ran back into the lake. The bear now was angry, and made a fish trap, which he put in the creek, from Ford's Lake to the Yukon River, to catch the old man. The old man knew this and made a mud man, which he pushed ahead of him, swimming down the creek. The mud man went into the trap, the bear pulled it up, and the old man swam down to the Yukon and down to the bear's house below Calico Bluff, where he got his canoe and went down the Yukon, and the bear never saw him any more.

THE MIRACULOUS LITTLE MAN

Long time ago, before the "Old Man" and "Old Woman," lots of Indians were together and they fought until all were killed except an old woman and her daughter. This old woman cried every day because there was no man to help her do her work or get her wood. Every day when she had to get her wood from the brush she cried, and each day she had to go a little farther for the wood. One day she heard a sound like a baby crying in the woods. At first she did not go to see what it was, but told her daughter, for she knew there were no people there. Her daughter said, "Next time you hear it; go to it, and if you find a baby bring it." She went for wood again and heard it, and going to it she found a baby boy at the foot of a spruce tree. The boy was not born, but found by the old woman in the brush. When she brought it mother and daughter rejoiced, for bye and bye they would have a man. As soon as they got him home he became strong and could work. As a joke the old woman told him to take their dog and go out hunting, thinking that he didn't know how. She told him to tie a rope around the dog's neck. He tied it on the dog, then went out hunting, and on the way he pulled so hard that he choked the dog and dragged it back with him.

The old woman still had friends in another place. So she and her daughter and the little man went amongst these Indians again. The boy was small and didn't grow. When he went hunting he would put on an eagle-skin like a coat and fly. He was a pretty good hunter. People asked him, "How do you cut moose with a knife? You are too small." He said that when he kills a moose he is like a big man, but is small when he comes home again. He does all miracle work. He does not bring his eagle-skin home again, but leaves it two miles away on a tree. The daughter found the eagle-skin and took one tail feather to stick in her hair. The boy found it out and was angry, so he said to his sister, "I wish all your friends would be killed again." Then she said, "What are you going to do with your mother?" (the old woman), and he said, "I will put her in the corner of the birch-bark basket." In a little while war came and all were killed except the old woman and the daughter and the little man. Then the little man made lots of very small arrows and made a few from a bear's ribs. He worked all the winter making these arrows, because he was going to fight the people all by himself. These people who killed his friends lived by a big lake. The old woman was with the little man, but the daughter had been captured by these people. He got lots of bags for arrows, and, being small, he walked under the snow and hid a bag of arrows about every 50 yards apart, so that when he shot away his arrows in fighting them he could run back to get some more. When he came near, the people thought that he was a raven because he was such a small black thing. His sister said, "You people didn't kill the little man with the old woman." There was one man who wasn't in the fight, so he was selected to kill the little man. The man took a small stick to kill the little man, thinking it would be easy, but the little man threw a small object at him, striking him in the chest and killing him. Then all the people, thousands in number, ran after him without their arrows, because he was too small to shoot. He ran back the same trail on which he came. He would come out of his hole and shoot some; they would rush after him, and back he would go and come up elsewhere and shoot again. Every time he shot he killed. He killed all those people in a day. He brought his sister back to the old woman at home.

After the fight he said he would make a big pot-latch (a celebration with feasting and giving of presents), because he had wounded and killed lots of people. Then he went hunting every day, and killed all kinds of game and saved the hide and meat. The mother and daughter tanned all the skins, dried the game and cached it. The little man said he was going to give the skins as presents to other people. The old woman said, "All the people are killed, so who can you give them to?" and he said, "Bye and bye lots of people will come." This was on a big island just this side of the Old Woman rock. When he collected his meat and fur he began to sing every day that he wished that lots of people would come from up and down the river to the pot-latch on the island, and they came without being told. They all moved about together and sung as usual at a pot-latch. When they did it the island cracked in two parts, because too many people were on it. The people feasted every day. After the feasting he gave away all kinds of skins and furs. He made the big time because he killed lots of people and was sorry for it. He killed the people because they killed his friends first.

THE BOY IN THE MOON.

See the mark in the middle of the moon like a man? That was a little Indian boy when nobody had anything to eat. During the famine this boy dreamed that they were going to kill lots of caribou.

The boy said that when they killed all the caribou he wanted the leader caribou. The boy's uncle gave him the wrong caribou, because the uncle did not believe the boy dreamed it. Then the boy cried for two nights because he didn't get the right kind of caribou. The boy told his father, who brought home the hind quarter of caribou, to never cut the flesh off it to the bone, but to cut off what he needed, wrap it in a skin, and put it under his head to sleep on. The father did this and when he awoke he found a whole hind quarter, and thus forever he could eat caribou from this leg and always have it whole. Next night the boy, who always slept between his father and mother, was gone and nobody could find him. The boy wore marten-skin pants. In the morning the left leg of the pants was found on the tent-pole where the hole is in the roof for the fire. Hence they concluded that he went up through the hole and the left pants' leg was torn off going through. He went up to the moon and was seen there the next night, and it was proved, for he had a larger right leg than left, because the right leg has pants on. From his right hand hangs a little round bag with the wrong caribou meat in it. That night a big storm came and snowed all over where the caribou was cached. Then all the killed caribou came to life and went away, and the Indians couldn't find their meat. Then they all starved to death except the boy's father and mother. During the fall and winter with clear sky, one who has been properly instructed can readily make out the outline of this boy in the moon.

THE CAMP ROBBER

The camp robber is a slate-colored Alaskan jay, well known for its habit of stealing food from camps.

When all animals were men the camp robber was a medicine-man. One time the people had nothing to eat, and they asked the medicine-man to get them some food. For six nights a different man each night dreamed to find a way to get something to eat. The camp robber was the last and sixth man.

He dreamed and called all the people together to bring their snares with them. He made a pack of the snares and put them on his back. The people made the snow in a big heap. Around this he went, chanting and saying, "Bye and bye meat will come." Then he reached into the snow heap and pulled a caribou's head out by the horns. He did not kill it, for it was not a real caribou; only a spirit. So he painted the horns and tail red, with red ochre, and let it back into the snow heap. Next day they got lots of caribou, and the one with red horns and tail was amongst them. That is why an Indian never kills a camp robber when he steals grub, but lets him go because he helped them in the days when he was a medicine-man.

THE RAVEN

The raven lies more than any other game. Long time ago all the animals were good except the raven. He was an habitual liar and robbed everybody. Whenever he found dead game he ate the eyes first. Once when the raven was like a man he came to a strange camp and told a man to kill his old dog and throw it into the river. The man did so. Then the raven followed the dog down the river and pulled it out and ate its eyes. Thus he went from camp to camp as a deceiver.

THE RAVEN RESTORES THE SUN TO THE SKY

The raven was the cleverest deceiver of all animals, but has one good deed to his credit. At this time, when all animals were men, a bear, who was a bad man, did not want the people of the world to have light, so he took the sun down from the sky and hung it with a string on his neck and kept it covered with his coat. The raven came to his house and pretended to be a friend, and soon married the bear's daughter. They very soon had a child who could walk as soon as born, and grew up in a very short while. The raven told the boy to get the sun from the bear, so the boy cried for it very much and finally the bear allowed the boy to play with it, but watched him carefully. There was no hole in the roof, but the raven made one, and when the bear's attention was away for a moment the boy threw the sun up through the hole into the sky and the bear couldn't get it any more. The raven then ran away and never came back, for the bear would like to kill him.

THE RAVEN AND THE COOT (MUD HEN)

The raven wanted all the birds to look nice and he painted them with their various hues. He painted the coot last. The coot was then in turn to paint the raven, who wanted to be very richly variegated with colors. The coot was painting the raven gorgeously with his right hand, but had charcoal concealed in his left hand. Then, for a joke, while the raven's attention was away, he smeared the raven all over with charcoal. The raven was angry and chased but couldn't catch the coot, so he grabbed and threw a handful of white mud, spattering it over the coot. That is why the coot has white spots on his head and back. The coot flew away and the raven has remained black ever since.

THE WOODPECKER

The woodpecker was a very domestic sort of a man-bird. He used to get married lots of times. When he would get married he would go away from

the people with his wife. After a while he would come back without his wife. He would say that she died. Then he would get another wife. One girl was very smart, so she married him to find out what he did with his wives. They went away together. When he found a good hunting ground he stayed there. Whatever game he got he only gave fat and grease to his wife and ate the meat himself. Whenever she wanted a drink of water he gave her grease to drink. Every time he went hunting he took about ten days, and brought back fat and grease and blueberries and cranberries and all kinds of berries, but no meat. The girl knew by this that he was going to make her so fat that she couldn't walk, for already when she would lie down she could hardly get up. Then, before he went hunting again, at her request, he prepared a dugout on the bank of a creek. She told him she was lonesome and wanted to be where she could see the creek running. This dugout was to be her home while he was away. The door was covered with brush. She told him to make a small, sharp spear for her, so she could keep the mice away with it. As soon as her husband went she took the spear and dug a tunnel from the dugout to the creek for her escape, for she knew he would kill her when she became very fat. She was too fat to walk, so she rolled down to the creek through the tunnel, and stayed in it a whole day, until the fat came off from her. Then she went into the woods and watched till her husband came back. As he approached she saw that he was picking a lot of berries. When he reached the dugout, where the hole was covered with brush for concealment, he ran his spear through the brush so as to kill her; but she wasn't there. Every time he jabbed the spear in and withdrew it he tasted of the point to see if it stuck her. Then he said aloud to himself, "Some spirit must have taken her away." The woman now was sure that he wanted to kill her, so she ran away back to her family. She told them all about it, saying that he killed his wives and ate them, and that he fed them berries to flavor their meat. The man came back then. His wife's mother previously put her in a sack and hid her. He cried much, pretending to be sorry for the death of his wife. He said to the mother, "My wife has died again." Everybody else cried, to deceive him into thinking they believed him. Next day everybody moved again. The old woman gave him a heavy sack to pack along and told him it belonged to his brother-in-law, who needed it. She told him to hang it high on a tree, so the dogs couldn't get it. She told the other men not to help him lift it up. He tried so hard to lift it up that he broke his back-bone.

When the man was injured nobody took care of him. The hunting party went away without him. When they returned and saw that he was sure to die, they let him see his wife, so that he would know that he was found out. His wife was in the sack. Her mother then arrived with other Indian women, untied the sack, and let her out, and she was safe. He died then. They preferred to let him kill himself in this way.

THE ROBIN

The robin had a husband, but she loved another man. She had a family of four—a husband, son, daughter, and self. When she sat on a tree she would laugh. Because she loved another man, she wanted her husband and son to die, so that she and her daughter could live with this man. Every time she sang she would say, "I wish my husband and son would die," then she would laugh. Then she would say, "I wish I and my daughter would live," then she

would laugh. Her husband did whatever she said, and he died. The boy died too. Her husband and son died because she wished them to die. She wished this, so she could get the man she wanted.

The native still chants the words in his own language, meaning, "I wish my husband and son would die," to the tune of a robin whistling. The laugh referred to is the clattering noise which a robin makes when excited.

THE MARTEN

The marten has a white or reddish bridge across his breast. Whenever he was in an Indian camp and they were sitting around the fire eating he always looked hungry and watched every one eat, looking greedily for something for himself. One Indian didn't like being ogled, and threw a chunk of king salmon grease which struck him on the breast and made this bridge-mark.

THE WOLVERENE AND THE TRAVELER

The wolverene is supposed to be the marten's uncle and the wolf's brother-in-law.

One time a man was walking down along a creek. It was winter. He met a wolverene coming up. The wolverene had no sled nor toboggan nor anything except a caribou-skin blanket on him. As soon as the man saw him, the wolverene went into the woods and filled his blanket with brush from spruce trees and made believe he had a load of utensils. His family was following a few miles back. The wolverene sat on his load and made the spruce sticks break. Then he told the man that he had broken his utensils. The man sat on his snow-shoes. The wolverene was bad and reached a long copper hook under the snow to catch hold of the lower snow-shoe and trip him. The wolverene would eat men. The man watched the wolverene because he knew what the wolverene would do. The wolverene, after tripping the man, would kill him with his copper ax. The man put his rabbit-skin cap under himself, so when the hook came under him it caught the cap and pulled it out instead of catching his leg. Immediately then the man jumped on the wolverene, grabbed the wolverene's ax, and killed him with his own ax. The man built a camp. He cut off the wolverene's right leg at the shoulder and hung it over the fire to cook. Then he laid the wolverene on his right side to conceal the cut-off shoulder. He put the hook in the wolverene's left hand, giving him the appearance of poking up the fire. This was to deceive the wolverene's family that, coming soon, would think he had something and was cooking it. Then the man hid in the snow about fifty yards away and watched. When the wolverene's family came the young ones tried to wake him up to tell him that the shoulder was cooked, but they could not wake him up. Then they ate up the shoulder, not knowing it was their father's. Then they tried to wake him up more, and found out that he was dead and his shoulder off. Then they knew that they had eaten their father's shoulder. They took their spears and hunted all around for the man. They knew he had come down the river to the camp by his snow-shoe tracks, but he concealed his last tracks. They went about stabbing their spears into the snow to find him. When they came near him he jumped up on his snow-shoes and they all ran after, trying to catch him. The man could not run fast enough, so he wished for a warm wind to come so that the young wolverenes would get overheated and have to throw their coats away. The mother wolverene followed them, and every time one

would throw his coat away she would pick it up and eat it. The man now knew that the young wolverenes had no coats, so he wished that a cold storm would come. Then the storm came and they called to the man, "Partner, come and build a fire for us, because it is cold and we won't kill you." The man started to build a fire. He got wood together and started a fire under it. He didn't want it to burn right away, so he put a little snow on the fire. Then he told the young wolverenes to sit in a row and all blow the fire at once together. As they bent to blow it he struck all of them over the heads with a long pole, killing them all with the one blow.

THE WOLVERENE AND THE HUNTER

The wolverene used often to go out hunting with a man, but every time he would return without his partner. One man decided to go out with him and find out what he did with them. They traveled together all day. Every time they saw a moose track the man wanted to follow it, but the wolverene said, "That's no good; we must go long way to get good hunting." At dark they made a camp. There was plenty of wood about, but wolverene said that he would get a hollow rotten stump and a large squirrel's nest (the kind built on pine-tree branches). The man had stripes about his pants below the knees, made of porcupine quills. The wolverene didn't have any stripes on his pants. They both got wet. The man knew that the wolverene was going to do something bad with the rotten wood. They stretched a pole across the fire and hung their pants on it to dry.

The man turned his pants inside out, so the wolverene did the same way. The wolverene sat on the left of the fire and the man sat on the right, with their pants on their respective sides, so that they would know whose pants each were. They both went to bed without pants on, beside each other. This man was smarter than the wolverene. The man did not sleep, but pretended to. He would snore; then the wolverene would go to get up quietly; then the man would move a little and the wolverene would lie down. The man did not go to sleep, but kept awake till the morning hours, when he was sure the wolverene was asleep. Then the man got up and changed the place of the pants and went back to bed. The wolverene now woke up and took the pants which he thought was the man's. He put them inside the hollow stump and laid the squirrel's nest over it. Then he put it in the fire and burned it. At daylight the man got up. The fire was out, so he built another fire. After that he took his pants down. Then the wolverene got up and said, "Partner, that's my pants." The man said, "No, they are my pants." The wolverene tried to take them away, but the man said, "You haven't any stripes on your pants; there are the stripes, so they're mine." The wolverene was sorry he lost his pants, and said they must have fallen on the fire and burned. The man got lots of small wood, no large pieces, so that it would burn up quickly; then he told the wolverene he would go home to get a pair of pants and come back after him. When he started he got a few hundred yards away; then he called to the wolverene and said, "I have found out now what you do with your partners. I won't come back to you any more." Then the man went home and let the wolverene freeze to death.

A FAMILY ANECDOTE

When Arthur, my interpreter, was a little boy, a lot of youngsters used to get together and some old man or old woman would tell them anecdotes and folk-lore stories. One of them is as follows:

Arthur's mother narrowly escaped death by a big moose once. The moose kills dogs by stamping with the fore feet or kicking with the hind feet. The Indian women went out with the dogs to bring home a lot of cached caribou meat. They dragged the meat over the snow, wrapped up in caribou-skin. A moose appeared at the cache and all the dogs went after him. The women did not want to kill the moose, but they tried to do so because they could not get the dogs away. So they fastened a knife to a stick and tried to spear it. The moose ran toward Arthur's mother and planted both fore feet in front of her but she sat humped up and kept perfectly motionless, and the moose turned away without harming her. If she had moved he would have trampled her to death.