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ANTHROPOLOGICAL PAPERS

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Vol. X, Part III.

CHIPEWYAN TALES.

BY
ROBERT H. LOWIE.

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INTRODUCTION.

In the spring of 1908 a grant of \$300.00 from the Mrs. Esther Herrman fund of the New York Academy of Sciences enabled the present writer to undertake a short trip to the Chipewyan Indians residing on and about Lake Athabaska in what now constitutes the northernmost part of the provinces of Alberta and Saskatchewan. Starting from New York on May 5th, I proceeded to Edmonton and Athabaska Landing, where I took passage in a Hudson's Bay Company scow. Descending the Athabaska River to its mouth, I arrived at Ft. Chipewyan on June 8th. The Indians were just gathering at the Fort in expectation of the Dominion Commissioner, who makes an annual visit for the purpose of paying annuities. Including a several days' excursion to Fond du Lac, Saskatchewan, near the eastern extremity of the Lake, I remained in the Ft. Chipewyan country until July 6th, when I availed myself of the only opportunity to return prior to the fall transports, and ascended the River in a free-trader's boat.

Owing to the practical difficulties of the work, the tales here presented constitute the main part of the ethnological data secured at Ft. Chipewyan. Taken in conjunction with the *Chipewyan Texts* collected by Dr. Goddard at Cold Lake and Heart Lake, which form part of this Volume, and with the body of folklore published by Petitot in his *Traditions indiennes du Canada Nord-Ouest* (Paris, 1886), these stories will afford a fair conception of Chipewyan mythology. After some hesitation, I have decided to incorporate in this paper parts of the Wisáketeak cycle which were obtained from Chipewyan Indians or Indians of partly Chipewyan and partly Cree extraction, although I am convinced that these tales are of Cree origin. I include them because I am strongly under the impression that the Wisáketeak myths were becoming part and parcel of Chipewyan folklore. While the Cree name of the hero was the only one used by my informants and was said to have no Chipewyan equivalent, there were indications that Wisáketeak was being brought into close relation with other Chipewyan characters of older standing. Thus, Francis Fortin¹ regarded Wisáketeak as one of three brothers, the others being Crow-head and Spread-wings. While the other two always remained with the Chipewyan, Wisáketeak lived alternately

¹ This informant had spent some time with the Beaver Indians. His unknown father must have had some white blood in his veins, while his mother was of pure Chipewyan stock.

among the Cree and the Chipewyan. However this may be, the Wisáketeak cycle of the Cree was certainly very well known among the Chipewyan and part-Chipewyan at the time of my visit and it seemed somewhat arbitrary to exclude it.

While a profitable discussion of Chipewyan mythology will become possible only with fuller knowledge of the mythology of other Northern Athapasean tribes, it may not be amiss to refer here to a characteristic that appears alike in Petitot's, in Dr. Goddard's, and the present collection,—the practical absence of obscene motives. This trait indicates once more the scientific duty of recording such motives when they do occur. An historian of modern literature would surely lose sight of an important fact if he failed to indicate that themes tabooed in England are treated by French writers with the utmost freedom. Similarly, an ethnologist who should eliminate from his collections of, say, Shoshone literature such tales as seemed offensive from his own point of view would obliterate an important difference between the Shoshone and the Chipewyan, and possibly not a few other tribes.

ROBERT H. LOWIE.

November, 1912.

CROW-HEAD.¹

(a)

Soon after Crow-head's birth, his father died. Crow-head knew nothing about him. Once the other Indians were fishing, and there were several medicinemen among them. It was in the evening, and the setting sun presented a bloodshot appearance. One medicineman pointed at it and asked the boy, "Do you see that red sky? That is your father's blood." This made Crow-head suspect that one of the medicinemen had killed his father. He went home, where he was living with his grandmother, and began to cry. "Why are you crying?" "I heard those men talking about my father." "There is no use crying, you will be a man some day." The next day the people were fishing. Crow-head punched a hole in the ice and began angling with a hook. The Indians caught nothing, only Crow-head caught a large trout. He pulled out its soft parts, and hid the bones under his deerskin capote. He started towards the medicineman who had killed his father, pulled out the fish spine, and broke it over him. When the people went home that evening, they missed the medicineman. They did not know what was the matter with him. One man went out and found him lying dead by his fishing rod. This was the first time Crow-head ever killed anyone. By breaking the fish spine, he had broken that of his enemy and thus killed him.

(b)

Crow-head was living with a little orphan, whom he called his grandchild. He used to wear a crow-skin cape, which warned him of the approach of enemies and constituted his medicine. Two girls in the camp once made fun of his crow-skin garment. Crow-head was displeased and said to his grandson, "We will make a birchbark canoe and leave." In a coudée they found fine birchbark. Some Indians from the rocks on either side pelted them with snowballs. "Some bad Indians are pelting us with snow," said the orphan. "That's nothing," replied Crow-head. They took the bark for the canoe and returned. In the meantime the bad Indians, who were Cree, had killed all the Chipewyan. Crow-head piled all the corpses together in a heap. He was a great medicineman. He began to make a canoe. Worms began to come to the corpses. Then he took his crow-skin, laid it

¹ Compare Dr. Goddard's shorter version, this Volume, p. 51

on the dead bodies, and told the boy not to wake him until the next day at noon. While he was sleeping, worms crawled into his nose, ears, and mouth.

Crow-head woke up and started off in his canoe. In the Barren Grounds he made many small lodges, and with his medicine declared that all the dead should be in those lodges. He left and lay down on the worms. The people all came to life again, and nothing remained in place of their corpses save their rotten garments. The Cree started homewards, but Crow-head, lying on the maggots, caused them by his magic to return to the same place. The little boy cried, thinking his grandfather was dead. He pushed the old man, but Crow-head pretended to be dead. At last, the boy pulled him by his beard, then Crow-head awoke and beheld the Cree. The Cree were surprised to get back to their starting point and, seeing the two survivors, decided to kill them also. Crow-head rose, walked to the river, shaved off the bark of a rotten birch, made peep-holes in the tree, hid the boy in the hollow, and ordered him to watch.

Crow-head was a dwarf. He went to the river with the crow-skin on his back and a blanket over it, pretending to mourn his lost relatives. The Cree, thinking he was but a child, said, "There is no use killing a child like that with a pointed arrow." So they shot at him with blunt points, but all the arrows grazed off. Then they pulled ashore, and Crow-head fled to the brush, pursued by the enemy. When far from the canoes, he threw off his blanket, took a deer horn which he carried for a weapon, and ran among the enemy, breaking each man's right arm and left leg. Then they said, "This is Crow-head." They retreated towards their canoes, but Crow-head smashed every one of them. Then he summoned his grandson from his hiding place. The Cree had spears, and Crow-head told the boy to take them and kill their enemies. The boy did as he was bidden. The Cree said to the boy, "If it were only you, you could not do this to us." And they made a "crooked finger"¹ at him.

Crow-head left his grandson. He was gone for many days. The boy cried, not knowing what was the matter. Up the river he heard waves beating against the bank. Going thither, he found his grandfather washing himself. Crow-head asked the boy, "What are you crying for?" "I thought you were lost." "There is no use crying, all our people are alive again." When through washing, he bade his grandson fix the canoe, then he told him to put the slain enemies' mentulae on the gunwale. They started to join the resuscitated Indians. They heard some one playing ball, laughing and singing. Putting ashore, they heard the noise of crying.

¹ A gesture of contempt, signifying, "Ne cuncto quidem equivalet." The left thumb is held between the index and middle finger of the same hand, and the palm is turned towards the speaker.

They went into a lodge and asked what the crying was about. "Two friends of ours are lost, they have been killed by the Cree." Then they recognized Crow-head and his grandson.

The two girls who made fun of Crow-head's crow-skin were not restored to life by him.

(c)

Late in the fall, when the Chipewyan were going to a lake to fish and it was commencing to freeze, two boys came running and told the people that two giants taller than pine trees had killed all their friends. The Chipewyan were camping on the edge of a big lake. None of them slept that night for fear of the giants. The next morning the giants were seen approaching. Crow-head said, "There is no use in running away, they will kill me first." He put on his crow-skin and went towards them on the ice. The first giant wished to seize him, and with long fingers shaped like bear claws he tore Crow-head's crow feathers. The giants fought for the possession of Crow-head, each wishing to eat him up. Crow-head hit both of them with his deer horn, and killed them. He walked homeward. He was so angry that he could neither speak nor sleep. His eyes were like fire. He went to the lake and, beginning at one point, he commenced to hammer along the edge until he got back to his starting place. There he fell dead, for his heart was under the nail of his little finger and by hammering the ice he had injured it.

(d)

Everyone was moving. Two girls were making little birchbark vessels for Crow-head. They were just sewing the edge with roots. One of them said, "This Crow-head knows everything, but he will not know this." And she pulled out one of her pubic hairs and twisted it in with the roots. The two girls were married, but never told Crow-head of their husbands, who were far out on the lake. An Indian in league with them plotted to have Crow-head killed by the husbands, and invited him to run a race to the place where they were. But Crow-head beat his opponent in the race, and killed the women's husbands with his spear.

The Indians were angry and desired to kill Crow-head. They began shooting at him, but he merely took his deer horn from his crow-skin tippet and pointed it at them, so that they hit only the point of his weapon without being able to touch him. At last he said, "If you don't cease, I shall kill all of you." Then they were afraid and let him alone. Nevertheless, many medicinemen tried to make medicine against him in secret. They attempted to throw a beetle (?) at him. Crow-head had left the people and

was living by a lake. Once he was thirsty and pulled out the grass growing by the water edge. He began to drink and found a beetle in the water. He killed it. Then he bit his own tongue and spat out the bloody spittle to make his enemies believe they had killed him. They went after him, but when they found the slain beetle they knew their medicine was not strong enough for him. Then they sent a big bear after him. Crow-head had lain down to sleep. In the night the bear caught him, and without hurting him held him by his feet and legs, waiting for the arrival of the Indians. But Crow-head twisted round and round in the bear's grasp until he got free. Then he crawled away between his legs. He turned back and dispatched the bear with bow and spear. He cut up the animal, spread out its flesh and skin, and started off again. The Indians made a big feast when they found the fresh bear meat all ready to be eaten.

Crow-head, by his medicine, restored the two women's husbands to life.

He traveled along as far as a lake. There was no snow, but only clear ice. He looked through the ice and saw a great many people below it. "I will kill all these people," he said. He began pounding the ice with a club. But what he had taken for people were only arrows, and one of them entered his little finger, where his heart was. The Indians following him found him dead.

Crow-head was so called because he made a crow-skin collar that became his medicine.

(e)

Once Crow-head left his crow-skin in his lodge and went off. Coming back, he did not find it in the position he had left it. He asked his grandmother why she had allowed any one to abuse it. "Someone has counted every feather on it and has been laughing at it. I will go away and let the Cree kill the people." "What shall I do?" asked his grandmother. "I will take you along." That night the Cree killed all the Chipewyan, but Crow-head and his grandmother escaped.

(f)

Crow-head and Spread-wings¹ started traveling, knowing that no one could kill them. Long ago the Indians did a great deal of fighting. Crow-head and Spread-wings always helped the Indians they stayed with. They were related to everybody. Crow-head the older of the two, knew it was impossible to kill him. Spread-wings could be killed, but had three lives.

Crow-head started off towards the place where the sun is close to the earth, and he will not come back here until the end of the world.

¹ See pp. 179, 173.

SPREAD-WINGS.¹

(a)

Spread-wings was off on a deer hunt. He went towards the Barren Grounds, leaving his partner with a canoe at the foot of a mountain. A band of Cree began to pursue him. He fled towards the canoe, but was headed off. He had no arrows, but only spears. He ran along the river, the Cree pursuing him. By his medicine he made them stupid, so that they passed by his canoe without noticing it. They may be running even to-day.

Spread-wings called for his partner who was very much scared. They got to a high knoll. Spread-wings said, "I'll get on top and look out for Indians." He told his partner to paddle to a certain point, where Spread-wings would meet him. There was a very steep hill between, but Spread-wings thought, "I'll try to get there before you," and arrived there first. There was an inlet there, but Spread-wing's comrade, for fear of the Cree, did not go ashore, but paddled on. Spread-wings walked; again he had to cross a steep mountain. His partner paddled beyond the next inlet, thinking Spread-wings was ahead. At last, Spread-wings actually got ahead and threw sticks across the next narrows, barring his companion's path. He himself hid in the bushes. When his partner came and found the path barred, he tried to turn back, but a strong current prevented him. Then Spread-wings jumped into the water and pulled him ashore.

Spread-wings caught a large jackfish, which they cooked and ate. Then they started off again and traveled along a great lake until they got back to their own people. Spread-wings told them how timid his partner had been and said henceforth he would travel alone.

The next day he started off by himself. He stopped at a little lake. There he heard a noise behind him. A great frog, as big as a moose, was going to attack him. In fear for his life he tried to work his medicine, and, seizing some rotten pine branches along the shore, he threw them at the frog, hitting it between its eyes and killed it.

He continued traveling with his blankets. When tired he stopped, made a lodge of spruce wood, and lay down to sleep. When rested, he went out without making a fire or arranging his bed. He traveled about all day, killed some deer and cached them. When he returned to his lodge he found a fire burning in it and his bed was arranged. This happened several days in succession. One day he thought he would find out who was doing this.

¹ Adam said that he was related to this hero, while Forth claimed to have seen him when he was old and blind and unable to walk.

He came home earlier than usual and saw smoke rising from the lodge. Gently lifting the door flap, he saw a woman sitting there. Two beds were prepared, one for him and one for herself, not side by side, but with only the pillows together. She told him she was sent from heaven, because God pitied him on account of his loneliness. She was, however, not a real person, but a moose. Spread-wings did not know this, but rather suspected it. They lived together until the fall. Then the woman said, "My relations bade me meet them at a certain mountain." They got to the mountain, at the foot of which there was a coulée with willows and birch. Spread-wings knew this was a moose country. Not long after they got there a noise of moose was heard, and the woman said, "My son is coming," and, a little later, "My son-in-law is coming," and, finally, "My husband is coming." She ran off to her husband, turning into a moose before she got to the brush. Before going she told Spread-wings not to return home, but to wait for her there for two nights. She stayed in the brush for two nights, then she turned into a woman again and re-joined Spread-wings.

After a while she again told Spread-wings that her relatives wanted to meet her in another place. They started out. Near that place she bade Spread-wings wait. She heard a moose calling, but several times she did not recognize the voice and did not go. The fourth time she recognized her moose husband's voice. Again she bade Spread-wings wait for her for four days. Spread-wings heard the moose call, and thought to himself, "I am sure my wife is going to turn into a moose now." He traveled after her, but after a while turned back, leaving his blankets hanging. He went to hunt chickens and partridges. Finally, he turned back. He found that the woman had already erected a brush lodge, from which smoke was rising. This time she had arranged the beds next to each other. "Why did you make the beds this way now and not before?" She said that before she had not received her friends' and husband's permission, but now it had been granted. "You can do with me as you choose." The man said that was what he had always wished, but did not care to ask for.

They lived together. About spring the woman fell sick. Her husband did not go hunting. She gave birth to two young moose. On the next day she gave birth to two young boys. She told her husband she should not stay with him any longer, but should return to her own people.

She had been sent for one year to bear him sons, who were to help him. As she was nursing the boys, she had been obliged to neglect the little moose. She made for the brush and called like a moose, then the young ones followed. The man also followed her, but only found her discarded clothes and came home crying. Before going she bade him stay in that place for a month until his boys were big enough to help him.

After a month Spread-wings began traveling with his boys. They came to a pine bluff. The younger one said, "There's a very strong smell here, it smells of people." "Perhaps it is nothing." "Yes, there are people here." They found the tracks of a band of Cree. The younger brother did not want to follow on account of the strong smell, and kept behind his father and brother. After some time they got to the Cree.

The younger brother was in the habit of not obeying his father, but only his elder brother. The elder brother wished to get married, and with his father's consent he married a Cree woman in the fall.

Once the two brothers started on a moose hunt. They came to a little lake. Being thirsty, they wanted to drink. The younger brother said, "Let me drink first." The elder brother consented. The younger drank, then, while the elder was drinking, he ran into a bush and turned into a moose. The elder brother followed him for a distance, then started in another direction, found moose-tracks, shot a moose, cut it up, eached it, and went home. He tried to track his brother, whom he found sleeping with little horns on his head. The horns fell off. The elder brother took his horns, waked the younger one, and took him homeward. The younger brother was very thin when he got there. He found the smell of the Cree too strong for him.

The younger brother did not want to get married. He stayed there all winter, but in the spring he felt like traveling. The smell of people was too strong for him. He traveled away as a moose and lived as one. The elder brother started on a moose hunt, and began tracking until he got a moose. He was going to shoot it, but thought it might be his brother, so he called out, "Brother!" Then the moose really turned into a person again. He took him home, but fell on the way, and then the younger ran away again as a moose. The elder brother ran after him and caught him, and then he turned into a human being again. But when near the camp, he again changed into a moose and escaped. The elder brother cried, "After this, don't let me catch you, or I'll shoot you." But he never could catch him.

(b)

One winter no deer were to be found and all the wolves were starving. The wolves started toward the big sea. They saw some large object lying on the shore. It turned out to be a walrus (?). All piled on top of it, and though many were killed they finally succeeded in killing the monster. The wolves had a good feed on the walrus. Two deer were allowed to pass.¹ A herd of deer were coming.

¹ I do not understand this sentence.

In the Barren Grounds the wolves nearly died of thirst. When they got to the top of a mountain, all began to scratch there, trying to get water from a hole by magic, but they did not succeed. At last they asked Spread-wings, who was a wolf at the time. "If you fail, we shall die." Spread-wings always kept an arrow with which he had once been shot. Beginning to sing, he pointed the arrow towards the sky. Clouds came, rain began to fall, and the hole was filled with water. All the wolves drank of the water. Spread-wings held the arrow upward until all had drunk their fill, then he reversed it, and the water disappeared from the hole.

BETSUNÉ-YENÉCAⁿ.¹

Many Indians were camping together. One evening they heard a little baby crying in the brush. A number of young girls ran thither, but as they approached the noise ceased. Not long after, the crying was heard again. This occurred three times. The fourth time an old woman went to see what was the matter. Again she heard the sound as if it came from directly in front of her. She found some deer dung. Scratching it up, she found a baby about eight inches long. She picked it up, and it began speaking to her. The old woman had sons who had gone off hunting. When they returned, the baby asked one of them for the front leg of the smallest deer slain by them. It was given to him, and he fed on that. Another time they killed plenty of deer. Betsuné-yenécaⁿ again requested his grandmother to ask for the leg of the smallest deer, but the men refused, saying they wanted it for their own children, and offered him some other part. When the old woman returned without the leg, Betsuné-yenécaⁿ was very angry. "Because I am small they insult me, but I will make them starve." The other people heard what he said and were angry. They said, "We'll see whether the little boy can make us starve." They went away. The grandmother stayed with the child.

Betsuné-yenécaⁿ told the old woman to cut plenty of pine branches, to put the ends in the fireplace of each abandoned lodge, and to let him know as soon as the tips of the sticks were burnt. After a while she called him. In his uncles' lodges the sticks were burnt in deer hoof shape, in the other lodges they were burnt round (?). "This means that my uncles will always have deer, while the other people will starve." He started off with his grandmother, who was afraid of starving. Betsuné-yenécaⁿ said to her,

¹ The meaning of the name is "His-grandmother-raised-him." Compare Dr. Goddard's version this Volume, p. 50, and Petittot, pp. 385-398.

"There need be no fear of starvation, just do as I tell you." She carried him on her back. They got to a muddy little lake. "Stop and fish here," he said. "Why, there is nothing here but worms." "Take me down and I'll drop my hooks." Some animal with a white covering came to the hook. It was a gigantic jackfish. Then Betsuné-yenécaⁿ told her to lower the hook, and she caught a black trout. "That's enough," said the boy, "there won't be any more now. Build a brush lodge here, dry the fish, make grease, and we'll camp here." The old woman did as she was bidden. Betsuné-yenécaⁿ went out. She thought he was only playing, but at noon he was not yet back. She saw his snowshoe tracks leading to the brush. Then she began to bemoan his loss and was afraid that all alone she should starve. But in the evening she heard a noise, and he came in covered with ice. "I think, you have fallen into the ice." "No, take off my belt." Inside his coat there were plenty of deer tongue tips. He had killed the deer by biting off the tips of their tongues, and what seemed to be ice on him was only the foam from their mouths. The next morning he said, "Let us go where I have killed the deer. The first one we see you will dry and pound for me; gather the grease but don't eat any yourself." It was a little bit of a deer, which was lying on the lake. Betsuné-yenécaⁿ bade his grandmother build a shelter. She dried the deer meat, of which they had plenty.

Then the boy went to see his uncles. He got to where they were, but concealed himself. By a lake he saw their hooks set for jackfish. He took off his snowshoes, turned himself into a deer, and scratched around near the hooks. Only his two uncles were alive, subsisting on fish and bear meat; the other Indians had perished. They noticed the deer. "It is odd that that little deer is continually scratching around where our hooks are." Then one of them said, "That was a queer boy that our mother found; perhaps he is a medicineman and has turned into a deer to laugh at us. We had better track him." They got to a clump of pines; there the deer tracks ceased, and snowshoe tracks began. The men followed them until they got to a lake, where they saw a spruce tree lodge. They found their mother having plenty of meat and fat. The little fellow was there, so small that he could hardly be seen. After the arrival of her sons, the old woman soon fell sick and died. The boy turned into a deer again and disappeared towards the Barren Grounds. Before leaving he said, "As long as you and your children live, you will always tell a tale about me."

THE MAN IN THE MOON.¹

Once there was a great beaver hunter. Returning from the chase one day, he made a lot of grease and forbade the people to touch it. Nevertheless, one man put his finger in, and tasted of the fat while the hunter was pulling down his leggings. When the beaver hunter noticed what had occurred, he was furious. He went outside, followed by his little dog, and announced to the people, "Henceforth you can look for me in the moon." That is where one can see him, with his leggings down and a little dog sitting on his lap.

THE SUN-CATCHER.²

A man named Ayás was traveling about in the brush. He came to a trail, where he found all the sticks burnt. He lay down to sleep there, and while he was sleeping something passed over him and burnt up his deer-skin coat. He woke up and was very much vexed at the sight of his burnt garment. Unstringing his bow, he cried, "I'll find out what passes this place." He made a snare of the string, setting it in the road. He went home. The next day, there was no sign of the sun's rising. Ayás' sister suspected that her brother was to blame, and said, "You are always after some mischief." He replied, "I set a snare the other day, I'll see whether I have caught anything." He found that he had snared the sun. All the animals tried to release it, but it jumped to and fro, so that it was too hot for them. At last, a small yellow mouse began gnawing at the string until it was gnawed through, but the mouse was burnt to death. The sun started on its path. This is how the skin of one species of mice came to be yellow. If it had not been for the mouse, the sun would have remained a prisoner.

THE CROW.³

A large band of Indians were living along a lake. All kinds of white birds came there. A man called out to them, "I shall paint you with different colors, it does not look well for all of you to look alike!" He left the white wavy as it was, painted the loon black and white, and so gave a

¹ In another version the final statement is to the effect that one can see the kettle with beaver grease and the little dog.

² Compare Petitot, p. 411.

³ Compare Petitot, p. 379.

different color to each species. At last came the crow, who was quite white. "I'll spot you like the loon," said the man. But the crow protested strongly, saying he did not want his clothes painted at all. But the Indians caught him, and the painter blackened him all over, saying, "You are too conceited, I'll blacken you." All the other birds and the Indians ran away. The crow tried to catch them, but only managed to get hold of the blackbird. The crow said, "You, at least, shall be of the same color as myself," and rubbed his paint all over the blackbird.

The crow continued to be angry. He started first south, then northwards to the Barren Grounds, and built a fence to prevent the deer from coming to the Indians. The painter bade different birds scour the country for deer, but they returned without having found a trace of them. A long time after, the night-owl, perching on a tree, saw the crow coming from the south. The crow was seated on a pine; he wore a necklace of deer's eye-balls. The people said, "The crow is getting deer away from us." The crow laughed, and said, "You made me black, you are looking black from starvation now." The bird-painter bade the night-owl watch the crow's movements. He saw the crow fly first south, then return and go in the opposite direction to the Barren Grounds until he disappeared between two big mountains. All the Indians started after him. They found a big enclosure with two gates between the rocks. Several animals were sent to get through these entrances, but the crow beat them back with a club. The wolves tried first, then the lynx attempted to crawl through, putting in his nose, but the crow dealt him a blow that flattened his nose to its present shape. Then two white foxes were sent. They got through the first door, and the crow, instead of hitting them, only broke his own gate. The foxes got through the second door. Then the deer began to sally forth. The night-owl was watching them and cried out, "They are coming as plentiful as maggots!" There were so many that they trampled down the track so as to become invisible, they could only be heard coming. The crow wept at the loss of his game, but by his medicine he made the skins of the escaping deer so hard that weapons could not pass through them, so the Indians continued to starve. At length, the crow said, "You played me a fine trick, but I played you one also by making you starve. But from tomorrow on you shall be able to chase the deer again, only leave me the liver and the inside fat." The people promised to do so as long as he lived. Then their young hunters went out and got plenty of meat. The Indians still leave the guts and fat for the crows to feed on.

“EDĒ’KHUWÈ.”¹

Formerly the Indians would play with caribou, making them stand quiet by patting them. Some silly girls once said, “Let us mark some of them.” So they took some string from the back of their hair, tied it around the deer’s necks and cut their ears. “We’ll know these deer when they come next year.” In the fall the deer returned to the Barren Grounds. Next year there were no deer. The people began to starve. One man said, “I’ll see whether I can’t find them.” He kept on traveling until he reached a big body of water. On the sea there was a dead calm. He saw deer swimming, many of them with strings around their necks and with marked ears. These would not let the others return to the Indian country, but drove them back. The hero went to the deer and cut off the strings from their necks. He seized one little deer and led it off towards his people. Its mother followed. Then all the other deer also followed. They got to a big mountain. The Indians were on the other side and perceived Edĕ’khuwè with something beside him. After feeding, he sent the little deer to the Indians, and all the others started in the same direction. Without Edĕ’khuwè no more caribou would have been seen in this country.

THE SNOW-MAN.

Once it continued to be winter for two years. There were no geese in the country, and moose, deer, and caribou had no horns, the people did not know why. The ice never thawed during all this time. The Indians could not dig holes for their nets. They made big fires, heated stones red-hot, and threw them on the ice, but it was too thick to be broken through. The Indians were beginning to starve. Towards springtime there was a little thawing, but then it became winter once more. Many died of starvation. The survivors were crying for fear. One man started off towards Fond du Lac to set snares for partridges. When visiting his snares he met a person on the road. This person was quite white, and behind him came nothing but snow. It was the Snow-Man. The Indian said, “What are you coming here for? The Indians up north are killing all your children.” When Snow-Man heard this, he turned right about to the Barren Grounds. Then summer came, the geese returned, and moose and deer had horns once more.

¹ The meaning of this name is “Worms-in-his-horns.”

THE TRIP TO THE SKY.¹

Once in the summer, the Indians had neither fish nor game to eat. They had a council and decided to make medicine. One man said, "Let us get some squirrels." They got one squirrel and put it alongside the fire. They worked medicine until the squirrel's hair was singed yellow. The medicine-worker thus found out where good weather and bad weather, rain and snow, as well as all the animals, were kept. He told the people all the animals had gone up to the sky, and advised them to go there also.

The people set out in canoes and kept traveling for a time, then they made a portage to a little lake. They saw a cloud hanging across the sky. All animals were kept in this cloud in different sacks, and the last sack was nearest to the sky-hole. The men paddled up (*sic*) their canoes until they got to the cloud, and a little fellow told them what kind of animals were contained in each bag, until they got to the last. They asked him several times what was contained in it, but he refused to answer.

At last they seized the sack and ascended to the sky with it, then they dropped it through the sky-hole. The sack contained all the heat, and in falling it burst, so that the heat came out and burnt up the world. They also took the jackfish and threw it down that is why it has such a peaked head now.

There was no earth then, only water was left.² The people sent down birds from the sky to dive for land. They dived down but came back without finding land. At last one bird (pin-tail duck) dived. It did not return for a long time. It came at last, with mud in its mouth and feet. It was sent out again, and brought more mud. It kept flying back and forth, bringing more mud; and thus gradually built up the earth again.

THE ADULTERESS.³

There was a woman who did not care for her husband. Every evening she went out to gather firewood for the night. However, she never got enough to last through the night, so she would leave in the middle of the night under pretext of fetching more. In reality she went to a rotten birch

¹ Compare Petitot, p. 373.

² This is unintelligible from the version here presented, but becomes clear from Petitot's tale, in which the expedition to the sky takes place during an exceptionally severe winter for the purpose of getting heat from the upper world. When the sack is opened, the heat spreads rapidly, melting all the snow and thus producing a flood.

³ Compare Petitot, p. 407.

tree as large as a lodge, in which two large ants were dwelling. These would embrace her. At length her husband grew suspicious and followed her one night. He saw her tapping the tree and turning her back towards it. The ants came out and embraced her. When the man saw this, he turned back home and left the country. Not finding him on her return, his wife tracked him, but never found him. Perhaps they are still traveling that way to-day.

THE GIANTS.

A giant used to hunt beaver along Lake Athabaska, going about half way to Fond du Lac. He was bringing up a little Indian boy, whom he called his grandchild, and whom he kept alive after killing all the other Indians. In hunting beavers he broke the beavers' lodge, and they all escaped. He broke another lodge. One beaver went across the lake, another up the river. The giant looked around for the former, found a little hole and saw the beaver's head popping out. He struck it with a stick, so hard that blood was sprinkled all over, hence the reddish appearance of the rocks there. The beaver that went up the river escaped, that is why there are many beavers there.

The giant cut off the beaver's tail. Seeing the scales he said, "This is not good to eat," and threw the beaver's tail away. The Indian boy picked it up and put it in the fire. The scales fell off, and the inside was found good to eat. This was the first time the giant ever ate a beaver tail. When through eating, he put his grandson in his mitten, and walked off. He found moose tracks, but said, "These are rabbit tracks." His grandson said to him, "These are not rabbit tracks but moose tracks." They got to a moose, and Hotcowe, the giant, put it in his belt as one would a rabbit. Then he went to the Barren Grounds, and thence to the sea, where he met another giant, named Djéneta. Djéneta was fishing in the ocean with a hook.

Before reaching Djéneta, Hotcowe took his grandson out of his mitten, and bade him approach the fisherman half way and deliver him a challenge to fight. The boy did as he was bidden, and when near enough shouted, "Grandfather!" Djéneta asked, "What do you want?" The boy delivered his message, and ran back, but by that time the giants had already each made a step forward and were already fighting above him. The fisherman was getting the best of the contest, when Hotcowe called to his grandchild, who always carried a beaver tooth, to cut the giant's ankle. The boy obeyed, causing the giant to fall down so that Hotcowe could easily dispatch him.

The fisherman's head fell on this island ¹ while his feet reached another land. Mud gathered on his corpse, connecting the island and the other country, and then deer for the first time ran from the new land into this country.

THE MAGICAL TREES.

Long ago men and women going off together would sometimes leave their little ones alone at home with a small fire and, by medicine, could send in large trees to feed the fire. But when the medicine got weak, the branches would sometimes hurt the children. Once a woman, returning home, found a baby's belly torn and the tree covered with blood. She was furious, and began beating the tree. Since then the trees can no more be made to come in by themselves.

THE ORIGIN OF A SAND-HILL.

There was once a big beaver that was killed by a giant. It was on this lake. While dying, it kicked about with its legs and thus originated a sand-hill.

MARTEN-AXE.

Marten-axe was a wonderful man. He used to travel among his friends. Whenever he found Cree, he would always kill them. He was in the habit of staying with the Chipewyan. Once he started out to travel, and came to a band of Cree. He knew all languages. So he told the Cree that he was a Cree himself and that the Chipewyan had killed all his friends. He traveled with the Cree to the top of a high mountain, where he lay down. In the night, while the Cree were sleeping, he tied all their legs with a cord, to the same rock. Then he rolled the rock down the mountain, killing all the Cree.

ADVENTURES OF TWO BOYS.²

A band of Indians was staying along a lake. Once two little boys were playing by the lake, while the Cree came and killed all their people. When they returned home, one of them said, "All our people are killed, I don't know what to do." They walked about crying. Towards evening two

¹ My interpreter suggested "North America."

² Compare Dr. Goddard's version, this Volume, p. 46, and Petitot, p. 352.

young unfledged geese came swimming along. The boys caught hold of them. Finding an old canoe by the shore, they tied the geese to it and bade them swim off to their country. The boys fell asleep, while the geese pulled their canoe along. When they woke up, the geese were full-grown. They were hungry and had nothing to eat, so they killed the geese, roasted them, and ate their flesh.

They started off traveling and continued going for a long time. They got to a lodge. There was a giant family living there. The children were outside. The mother came out; she did not know what kind of people the boys came from. She took them in, and they were kept there for a long time. After a while, the giant dreamt that some Indians were coming. He said to the boys, "My grandchildren, I am hungry for fish and beaver. Walk along the shore, and if you see anything white rising, cry out, 'My grandfather would like to eat some beaver and fish!'"

The little fellows started out. They saw something white rising from the water and called out as bidden by the giant. Then a beaver and a trout came out of the water, and they killed both. They carried them to the lodge. The giant cut up and dried the trout. Of its eyes he made pemmican for the little fellows. He made two bows and arrows and gave them to the boys. "If you shoot with *this* arrow, and it should get stuck anywhere, don't remove it, but leave it in that place. This other arrow will never stick, but will always fall down again." Then he bade them refrain from eating all their meat at once, but ordered them always to leave a remnant. He showed them the way to their own country, and they started out.

They had something to eat when they got hungry, but, remembering the giant's caution, they pushed a part of their meat back into their sack. In the evening they opened the sack, and it contained as much pemmican as before. They ate all but a small piece, which was replaced in the bag. In the morning the meat was still of the same size as originally.

They hunted some chickens perched on a tree. One was killed and fell down, but the arrow stuck. The boys took the chicken and started off again into the bush, but there they found the arrow lying in front of them. They walked on. Again some chickens alighted on a tree, not very far away. They shot at it, and the one arrow got stuck though rather close to the ground. One boy was going to get it. His brother said, "We were told not to go after that arrow." The first boy said it was not high, and insisted on getting it. As he touched it, the arrow ascended higher. "I'll jump up and get hold of it." "No, don't," said the other boy, but his brother disobeyed and jumped. Then the arrow went up with him to the sky.

It was summer when he was traveling on the earth, but in heaven it was winter. The arrow stopped, and the boy began to travel about. It looked like his own country in winter. He saw partridge tracks, and finally he got to people's tracks. Following them for a long time, he got to two lodges, one being large and the other small. He entered the small one, and found an old woman sitting there all alone.

In the large lodge people were heard singing and laughing. The old woman took a lot of coal and blackened the hero's face with it. After a while her two girls came in from the large lodge. Seeing the boy, they called out that their mothers had a fine-looking visitor. They went back to their large lodge and told the other inmates about him. Meanwhile the old woman washed him and dressed him up nicely. When the girls returned, and saw the boy nicely dressed, they no longer laughed at him, but were surprised. They told the people of the lodge what a nice boy was staying with their mother.

Both desired to marry him. In the night the boy slept in the old woman's lodge and the girls came in and lay down on each side of him. He turned to the youngest, et sub vestem manum introduxit, sed aliquid manum prehendit, and he pulled it back. Tunc ad utrius filiae vaginam pedem suum propellit, sed iterum aliquid eum prehendere conatus est. He pulled it back. One woman had mice under her dress, the other one ermines. They all fell asleep. In the morning the boy still slept soundly. He sunk way down into the ground. The old woman and the girls started off with their lodge-poles. The girls in one place smelt a person. They heard some animal calling underground. "One of us had better get ribs to dig up this fellow." They got a rib and began digging, but it broke. Then they got a moose rib, and with it they succeeded in digging up the boy who had turned into a wolf. He recognized the girls, and said, "You pretend to know much, but I know nearly as much as you. Here are two arrows, if a female comes, it shall belong to the Ermine girl, if a male comes, it shall belong to the Mouse girl."

The girls saw the tracks of a male and of a female moose. The wolf said, "If a moose starts running, just shoot your arrows and follow into the bush." They soon came to the female, cut it up and dried its meat. The male was shot and treated in the same way. As the wolf had directed, one girl stayed by one moose, the other by the other, while the wolf remained with the mother. The wolf and the old woman heard wolves howling in the distance. Starting in that direction they found that one girl had been rent to pieces by the wolves and that a lot of ermines were running about there. The wolves had only torn the Mouse-girl's dress and there were a lot of mice running about there. The wolf said, "Your daughters thought

they knew lots, but I know more." He started off with the wolves. Then he turned back into a person and married the Mouse-girl. The three then stayed together.

The boy was a great hunter. They had plenty of dried meat. The old woman would make rawhide cordage and when she had made a great deal of cord, she said, "I know a place where there is a hole in the sky, and where we can go down to another world."

They traveled a long time to the sky-hole. She made a moose-skin bag for the boy, passed a line through it, and said, "I'll let you down to your own country. When it stops, you'll open the sack and come out. Pull the line to let me know you have arrived." He descended for a long time, until the sack stopped. He got out, and jerked the rope, whereupon the sack immediately ascended again.

He found himself on an island, and all around it was nothing but foaming rapids. He got to an eagle's nest. Only the young eagle was there. He said, "I am very anxious for you, for my people are wicked. I'll try to save you. Hide under my wing-feathers." So he pushed the boy under his feathers. Then he continued, "My mother will soon come. When she approaches it will be dark like a cloud. When my father comes, it will sound like a big wind." After a while it began to grow dark. "My mother is coming." When the female arrived she said, "My son, I smell some people here." But the eaglet replied, "There is nothing here." She repeated, but he insisted that no one was there. After a while a big storm was heard, and the father bird arrived. "My son, I smell the odor of people here." The boy denied that there were any people there. The father repeated his statement, but the boy persisted in his denial. After a time the old eagles started off again. Then the eaglet said, "Pull out two feathers from each side of my body, and try to fly." He put the feathers on the boy's arms, and said, "Fly around." The boy began to fly but his legs hung down. "Pull two feathers from my tail, and attach them to your legs." The boy did so, and then flew about like an eagle. "Now you can fly to your country, but always stop for the night," said the eaglet. "When you reach your country, stick my feathers on the trees." The boy flew to his country. He arrived there by night, and stuck up his borrowed feathers. He traveled homeward, camping every night, as ordered by the eaglet. One day he was hungry, and began to break a beaver lodge, making a chisel of rib bones and a spear. He watched for the beaver, but though something stirred in the water, no beaver came up. As it grew dark, he camped. Suddenly something caught hold of him from behind. It was one of the big eagles, who flew off with him. They got to a frozen creek, all covered with blood. There the bird threw the boy down, but the latter

just put out his chisel, and was not hurt by the fall. Then the bird again seized him, carried him off, and hurled him against a sharp ice-crag. But again he put forward his chisel, so that it stuck in the ice, and he was saved. Then the eagle said, "My children will kill him." So he took him back to the eyrie. The young ones recognized him. The old bird said, "I've brought you a person to kill when you are hungry." The young birds said, "We'll keep him for company, let him stay with us." After much discussion the old eagle finally consented. Then the old eagles flew off. The young eagle again gave feathers to the boy, and he flew off.¹

THE STOLEN WOMEN.

A band of Chipewyan were staying by a lake. While the men were hunting, some Cree stole two of the Chipewyan women, who were sisters. Returning, the Chipewyan wanted to go after the Cree, but there were too few of them. So they stayed where they were, and continued to hunt deer. Each man would skin his deer, put all the deer meat in the hide, and thus drag it to the lodge. The brother of the stolen women was a medicineman. He was very angry and started alone after the Cree. On his way he passed three birds' nests. He had to speak to each before they allowed him to pass, and they gave him information as to the Cree. The fourth animal he met was a flying squirrel. It told him where he might find his sisters. "First, you must pass a snail, and if you lack food, ask the snail for some. Then you will get to an old woman." The man traveled on, until he camped by a creek. He had nothing to eat. When a snail came, he asked it for food. The snail dived into the water, brought up four white fish and gave them to him. But on opening the sack, he found the fish transformed into snails. So he threw them away, and traveled on until he got to a lodge. He entered. There was an old woman there. "Grandmother, I am very hungry." "I have nothing to give you, but go to the bush, and you will be sure to find some chickens. Pluck a chicken on the spot where it falls dead, stir up the feathers with a stick, and blow on them. Then every feather will turn into a chicken." He acted accordingly, and each feather changed into a chicken that flew on the trees.

He started off again. His wife had been tracking him. He had been pulling along his deer hide with meat all the time, not noticing how his load was lightening as pieces of the meat fell out. The increased lightness of his load he attributed to his increasing strength. His wife had fed on these

¹ The narrator insisted that nothing further was known of the boy's adventures.

lost scraps of venison. She knew he had only one deer and kept track of the pieces found. She knew after a while that only the head was left. At last she found the head, and then she thought she had better turn back, or she should starve, that being the very last piece.

Her husband continued until he got to an old woman. She was a toad. She said, "You won't travel a day, before you'll arrive at your destination. I can't tell you how you can best rescue your sisters, you'll have to judge yourself when you get there." He walked on, and got to the tracks of the Cree. At sunset he saw smoke far ahead. He saw a lodge without poles, but tied together of sticks, with an opening at one side. He watched in the bushes all night. He heard the people talking Cree, but stayed in the brush all night. Some one had left a moose hide outside.

In the morning he saw two women coming out of the lodge. They were his sisters. He made signs to them, and one of them came to him. The other woman worked at the moose hide. The man said, "This evening I'll try to rescue you from the Cree. Cover yourself with a blanket and tie it with a rotten string, so that when your husband tries to pull you back, the string will break. Tell your sister about it." In the evening the two women ate with their husband. They donned blankets and put sinew around, but the older sister used a kind of strong rag (?). The younger sister went ahead. She told their husband that they were going to fetch wood. The younger one started off. Her husband tried to restrain her, but the string broke, and she escaped. But the string of the older did not break, and so her husband held her back. The Chipewyan and his younger sister escaped. Every night, by their medicine, the Cree transformed the camping place of the fugitives into an island with fierce rapids around it, but in the morning the Chipewyan, by his medicine, conquered that of the Cree. Thus they got away in safety.

THE BEAR AND THE MAN.

Once a man was cutting out the gunwale of his canoe in the brush. He carried it homewards, one end on his shoulder, the other trailing on the ground. From time to time it seemed to get heavier, and he said to himself, "I am sure, a bear is pulling at the wood." He turned around, and saw it was really a bear. The Bear said, "Do you hear the noise of the creek near by?" The man said, "Yes." "There are lots of fish there, let us go thither." They started off. The bear bade him leave his wood behind, and he did so. They walked on and on for many days, and by autumn they had not yet reached the creek. Then the Bear said, "Let us make a house." He dug a hole in the ground, and told his companion to get grass to stop up

the entrance. They went inside, and the boy was told to sit farthest from the door. "If you get thirsty," said the Bear,¹ "you may suck me, and if you get hungry, you can do the same. Thus you will be able to live with me all winter."

They lived together in the cave. Towards spring, the Bear said, "Some of your friends are thinking of you and will soon be thinking of me." When the snow began to melt he said, "Perhaps to-morrow your people will be here. Make a mark with your hand outside the cave, so they'll know that you are here and won't shoot inside." Next day they heard a noise above, and snow began to fall down the airhole. The Chipewyan detected the mark of the boy's hand and said, "Surely some person is inside." The Bear said to the boy, "Tell them there is a bear-man here. If they kill me, you may eat my flesh, but not my entrails, though your friends may." The boy went out, and the people shot the bear, made a big fire, roasted him and feasted on him. The boy went on the opposite side of the fire, where it was smoky, and began to cry on account of his friend's death. When they asked him why he cried he said it was on account of the smoke.²

WISÁKETCAK.

(a)

Long ago it commenced to rain. It rained incessantly. The Indians fled to higher ground. They gathered on the highest mountain. Wisáketcak, who had expected a flood, built a canoe. When the land was nearly submerged, he embarked. The other Indians were having the water up to their knees. Wisáketcak did not permit anyone to get into his boat. The Indians asked the beaver to punch a hole into the canoe with his teeth. When the beaver got near the boat, Wisáketcak asked, "What are you coming for?" "Just to look at your canoe." "Let me see your teeth, I think they are sharp." Wisáketcak threw a stone down the beaver's throat so that he could not injure his canoe. When the mountains were flooded, all the Indians were drowned. Wisáketcak called a kind of long-tailed duck. "Brother, come here! It has ceased to rain. Dive down, and see whether you can find any mud." It dived for a long time. At length it came up with some mud on its feet. It dived again and again, and every time it rose to the surface it brought up some mud until the earth was entirely rebuilt.

¹ Said to be a male by the narrator.

² In some respects this story resembles an Assiniboine tale collected by myself (this series, Vol. IV, p. 190).

(b)

Wisáketeak was traveling about. He got to a deer skull. There were many maggots inside. He addressed them as follows: "Brethren, let me eat with you." They consented. He shoved his head inside; it stuck fast, so that he could not get it out. He turned himself into a deer, and continued to travel along. He got to a river. Not seeing any one near by, he began to swim across. When more than half way across, he caught sight of four birchbark canoes coming down. The people in the canoes were saying, "There's a deer crossing the river ahead of us, let us shoot him." They hurried towards him. The deer got ashore on a rocky bank. Falling down, he struck his head against the rock and broke his skull. He turned into his natural shape, and ran into the brush. The people cried, 'This is Wisáketeak!'

He was traveling alone through the brush when he heard a bear running. "Brother, why are you running away from me? Stop there." The bear stood still. Wisáketeak began to feel about his ribs. "You are very lean, how is that?" "There are no berries around here, that is the reason." Wisáketeak said, "I know a place not very far from here, where there are lots of berries, let us go there." They started out, Wisáketeak leading. They got to the place, and the bear began to eat. When he had eaten his fill, he lay down in the sun, then he ate again. Wisáketeak noticed that the bear was fattening. He felt his ribs again. The bear asked, "What are you doing this for?" "Oh! I always do that to my brother." Wisáketeak began breaking some sticks. "What are you doing this for?" "Oh, I just feel like working." Wisáketeak continued breaking sticks. While the bear was eating, Wisáketeak from time to time felt his ribs, saying this was but an old trick of his. Finally, the bear lay down, and fell asleep. Wisáketeak went up close to him, took a stick and struck him over the head, ears, and stomach until he had killed him. Then he cut him open, and feasted on him. He ate so much fat that he began to have pains in the stomach. Looking around, he caught sight of two juniper trees growing together. "Brethren, spread apart, I have pains in the stomach." They obeyed, and he got between them. The trees closed, and jammed him tight. While he was in this position, some whiskey-jacks came and began to eat of the bear meat. "Little brethren," said Wisáketeak to the trees, "let me go to watch my food." However he could not get out. In the meantime, the birds devoured all the food, leaving nothing but bones. "Brethren," he said again, "separate and let me get out." After a long time, he succeeded in freeing himself. Being angry at the trees, he began to twist them about. Since then junipers have had irregular trunks.

When he got down, he found nothing but the bear bones. Pounding these, he extracted the marrow and put it in a bladder, because it was too hot to be eaten. He got to a creek, sat down, and caught sight of a muskrat swimming there. "My brother, come here, and cool this grease for me in the water." The muskrat replied, "My tail is too big, I can't swim well with it." "Come here, and I will fix it for you." He pulled the muskrat's tail and made it small. The muskrat said, "My brother, I feel quite well now, let me have the bladder now, I will cool it." "Be careful, so that it will not burst." The muskrat dived down. The bladder burst, and the grease began to float down stream. Wisáketeak ran along, dipping it up with his hands.

Wisáketeak traveled along night and day. He found fresh tracks; they were those of a moose-cow and two young moose. "My brethren, why are you running away? Wait for me." They stood still, and he caught up to them. "My brethren, you are foolish to stop like this. The Black-heads (Chipewyan) are following your tracks and will kill you. Keep traveling in a circle, back and forth, turn about, and lie down on the leeward of your path. Then they will not know which tracks to follow, and you will be able to scent them and make your escape." This is what the moose do to-day, because Wisáketeak taught them.

Wisáketeak started off again. He found that his eyes were getting weak. When he came to a big lake, he said, "I will try to get new eyes." He cut out his eyeballs, and went about blind. Whenever he struck a tree, he would ask it, "Brother, what kind of a tree are you?" And the tree would answer, "Poplar" (or whatever other species it belonged to). At last he got to a pine, and the tree answered, "I am a pine, I have plenty of gum." Wisáketeak found the gum, chewed it, rolled it between his palms and put the gum balls into his sockets. Thus he got new eyes.

He traveled on, and got to a big lake, where he found many Cree Indians. The Cree recognized him, and asked him whether he knew of any Chipewyan near by. "I did not come here to tell you about my brethren." He left them, and went towards the Barren Grounds. There he espied a great many lodges in the open country, and encountered a large band of Chipewyan. "My brethren, don't stay here too long, for many Cree are looking for you." He started off again. After a long time, he reached another band of Chipewyan, who were starving. "My brethren, why are you starving? There are plenty of deer not far from here, you ought to go and live there." In those days they had no guns. They started in the direction indicated, and got the deer. They constructed a deer pen and set snares near its opening. Some began to drive deer, and many were dispatched with bows and arrows. At that time the Indians had no clothes.

Wisáketeak said, "It will not be always like this. You will not wear deer raiment forever. Some time you will wear another people's clothes." And this has come true.

Wisáketeak left the Indians. He got to a range of rocky mountains. "My brethren, you are too high, you had better come down into the valley, then I shall walk better." They came down, and he continued his journey. He reached a creek. Being thirsty he stooped to drink. He saw some fish. "Little brethren, what are you doing here?" "We are eating." "Where is your father?" "We don't know, he is just traveling." "If you see any Chipewyan Indians with nets, enter the nets and feed them."

He started off again. He got to two mountains, where there were many birches, all without a single branch. "Brethren, you look too pretty without branches, you can't live long that way." He picked up brushes, threw them on the birches, and thus made numerous holes. That is why birches are striped nowadays, and Indians find it hard to make birchbark canoes.

He went on traveling. He reached a little lake. He saw ducks swimming there. "Brethren, come ashore here." There was a female with young ones. "This little one looks like you," he said. "There are lots of you. If you see any Chipewyans, or Crees, fly around them, so that they may kill you and feast on you."

He went on. He got to a little river, where he slaked his thirst. He saw two otters swimming towards him. "Brethren, what are you doing? You have exceedingly short legs, they are not good for walking on land." "We are meant to live in the water." "Live wherever there are fish. There are plenty of Chipewyan and Cree Indians going around starving. Go, and put fish on top of the ice to help them." The otters consented.

Late in the fall, Wisáketeak reached a little river. He saw two beavers eating. "What are you doing here?" "We are just eating." "Why don't you build a house? Stick birches and poplar branches around, use mud for plastering, and put branches at the bottom. Thus you may live in the winter. Build a dam. If you don't do this you will have no water to swim in." He taught them. Since then they have always built dams. He further told them not to swim about before sunset, or the Indian hunters would kill them.

Wisáketeak continued his journey. He came to a herd of buffalo. Some of them began to run away. "Brethren, don't run away, I have come to see you." Then he asked, "What are you eating?" They said they were eating branches and trees. He told them to eat nothing but grass. "If you see starving Indians, let one of you lag behind so that the Indians can feed on you."

He traveled on. He got to a clump of pines.¹ All the trees looked alike. "You all look alike, I will make one of you different." Addressing one of them, Wisáketcak said, "Brother, be stickier than the rest. You shall have more gum than the others." Thus originated the balsam fir, of which the gum is still used by the Cree.

He started off again. His buttocks were getting blistered. He tore off the scabs and threw them on birch trees. Thus originated touchwood.

Wisáketcak came to a lake. There he saw a flock of geese, some old, some young. "Brothers, come here for a little while. I am making a dance not far away, and I should like you to accompany me." He erected a lodge, and bade the geese enter. He called all kinds of other birds inviting them to join. He bade all shut their eyes. They began to drum. Wisáketcak, as the leader of the dance, sat on one side. They danced around. Whenever a fat bird got near him, Wisáketcak pulled it over, killed it, and threw it aside. At last one young goose opened one eye and saw Wisáketcak pulling its father by the leg. "Wisáketcak is killing us!" it cried. The surviving birds all fled. As the water-hen and the loon were running out, Wisáketcak stepped on their feet. That is why their feet are not fit for walking on land. Wisáketcak cooked the fattest geese, and had a great feast. Of the rest he took out the gizzards and put them aside, then he went in search of a stick to put them on. He forgot all about them, however, and traveled on.

He reached a place where there were plenty of ants. "Little brethren how do you live in the winter? You have a very low dwelling." "That is why birds are killed." (?) He showed them how to build ant-hills.

(c)

Wisáketcak was traveling in the spring. He came to a place where a bear had been defecating and saw the excrements covered with fish scales. He laughed at the scales. The bear came, and said, "I heard you laughing about my excrements; I have come to see what you are laughing for." Wisáketcak said, "I was only saying it was a pity there were no bones or berries there instead of scales." They quarreled, and began to fight. Wisáketcak called on the ermine to help him. "My little brother, get into the bear's anus and destroy his guts, or he will kill me." The ermine entered the bear's body, ate his heart, and thus killed him. When the ermine came out, Wisáketcak washed him, holding him by the tail, that is why ermines have white bodies and black tails.

Wisáketcak continued traveling. He got to a rocky mountain, where he found plenty of black objects which cause flatulency. He ate many of them. After a while he began to break wind and was unable to stop. So he

¹ I am using, of course, my interpreter's designation.

heated a stone, and sat on it. His rump became covered with scabs. He was obliged to scratch the itching parts until he tore them off and threw them up on the top of birch trees, where they are still visible.

Wisáketeak set out to travel. He saw a band of geese. "My brethren, come hither." They came down. "Give me half of your feathers, so that I may fly with you to your country." They consented, and he flew along with them. They were obliged to pass through a rocky, mountainous country, where many Indians were living. Nets had been set to catch geese. When the birds approached these snares, they scattered to avoid them, but Wisáketeak's borrowed feathers dropped off and he fell down among the Indians. "This is Wisáketeak again, we will dung on him." They placed him in a pit. "Whoever shall defecate, shall befoul him." In the night an old woman rose to ease herself and went to the pit, but in the meantime Wisáketeak had got out, merely leaving his clothes. The old woman soiled his clothes.

Wisáketeak went traveling again. He saw two moose. "Brethren, wait for me." He overtook them. "Brethren, you had better give me some hair, then I shall be a moose and stay with you." He became a moose and traveled with them. They told him that no Indians were near by. He joined about twelve moose. About the time of the heavy ice crust, Wisáketeak and one of the moose heard a noise. "It seems," said Wisáketeak, "that some one is coming after us. I will travel ahead and let you follow." The Indians came and killed the moose, one by one. Wisáketeak was left alone. When they got close, he tore off the moose-skin, turned into his real form, and ran off, leaving the skin behind. The people said, "That's Wisáketeak again."

Wisáketeak was traveling. He came to a big lake where he saw some swans. "Brethren, come ashore to me." He asked them for some of their feathers, saying that he should like to be a swan. They consented, and he became a swan. One calm evening, one of the swans said to Wisáketeak, "You had better not cry so loud, or the Indians will hear us." It was the swan's molting time. Wisáketeak replied, "There are no Indians near by." However, he caught sight of some canoes going after them. The swans started out on the lake to escape, but got too tired to fly. Most of them were killed. At last, two of them and Wisáketeak were the only ones that remained. The two birds approached the shore and were also killed. Wisáketeak set foot on shore and tore off his skin. The people said, "That's Wisáketeak again."

Wisáketeak got tired. He sat down. "I will not travel any more." He seemed to turn into a stone. For a long time he continued to sink below the ground. Only his hair was still visible on the outside of the rock. That was the end of him.





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