

accuracy and completeness have doubtless suffered under the circumstances, all the tales recorded were checked by frequent repetition, and by independent narration from as many individuals as possible; and for comparison with the mythologies of other tribes, which is, after all, the great object of the work, they will, it is hoped, prove instructive.

To this comparative purpose the tales are extraordinarily well adapted. The geographical situation of the Chilcotin, with contiguous tribes of diverse cultures, immediately stamps them as a promising field for the investigation of the much-discussed question of the extent of influence which contact and communication may have upon custom and myth. It is particularly with reference to the latter point that the present collection is offered.

While, as a general thesis, the doctrine of independent development is doubtless true, at the same time the importance of borrowing from foreign sources as a modifying influence, both in custom and mythology, cannot be denied. In the field of folk-tale and tradition a study of the Chilcotin with reference to this point is suggestive.

Before working over the material, in a brief report to the British Association in 1898, the writer ventured the statement, in referring to the traditions of the tribe, that the general impression was made of a not very rich independent mythology, but of surprising receptivity to foreign influences. This impression a closer inspection has abundantly confirmed. Comparatively few of the following traditions exhibit unmixed Athapascan characteristics.¹

In this connection it may be well to call attention to certain characteristics of the traditions which bear in a more general way upon the point at issue, leaving details of identity and similarity with neighboring mythologies for the footnotes.

Incomparably the most elaborate and best known of the Chilcotin tales is that which describes the adventures of the culture-hero and transformer Lendix'tcux and his three sons. The well-known characteristic of the transformer as a trickster is clearly brought out, and need not be discussed here. The most striking fact which an inspection of the tale discovers is, that nearly every element in the story is found in one or more of the neighboring tribes, while in no one is there a complete correspondent of the whole myth. Naturally, the first search is made among the Carriers, the related Athapascan tribe on the north; and here we find the story "Made Celestial," recorded by Father Morice,² corresponding very closely to the opening of the Chilcotin tradition, but containing no trace of the "Wanderer" element, and closing in a quite different way. As a matter of fact the opening scenes of the Lendix'tcux story, referring to the birth of dog-pups, their transformation into human form, and the education of the children, are common to nearly the whole Northwest, and offer no distinctive features, except that in the Chilcotin version it is the dog father-Lendix'tcux who becomes the chief figure in the subsequent developments, while in the correspondent traditions of

¹ Nos. I, VIII, IX, XII, XIII, XIV, XXI, XXIV, XXV, are typical Athapascan stories.

² See Transactions Canadian Institute, Vol. V, pp. 28 ff.