

MESKEEK--UUM--PUDAS

The Bottomless Lake

I sleep in the sea, I sigh for the sky,
I follow in no man's wake,—
Earl of the open sea am I,
Lord of the bottomless lake.—SEA SHELL.

WOULD you learn of a dark sparkling lake without inlet or outlet,
Nor rises, nor falls, lying still, though no scum ever gathers,
Where the band is in charge of the mythical bull-frog *Ablegumoo*;^{*}
A lake clear as crystal, and brimming in summer or winter?

Hear the tale of the bottomless lake, of *Meskeek-uum-Pudas*,
By the side of the great western road, at the Indian Portage,
On the Island called *Epaygwit*, *Abegweit*,¹ moored close alongside—
Though since named Prince Edward for honoured Victoria's father;
This gem of the sea in the yielding embrace of *Megamagee*.²

A portage it was, where the supple and strong-bodied *ulnoo* ³
Would hasten across with his *kweedun*⁴ from water to water,
And drive on before him his spouse with the household utensils,
Ulbadoos and *abitas*⁵ in terror close-scrambling behind her,
With the infant *mijooajech*⁷ lashed in the *koobilsakun*,⁸
All silently staring, alert and intensely excited;
For here was the home of *Chepitchkaam* the horrible dragon,—
Half-serpent, half-turtle, fiend, spirit incarnate, whole monster.
The fabulous bull-frog himself would not utter a murmur.
Unless he were sure that *Chepitchkaam* desired his presence !

¹ "Epaygwit" "Abegweit," Micmac name for P. E. I., meaning at rest on the sea, moored alongside.

² "Megamagee," Micmac name for Maritime Provinces, the home of the true men, the Micmacs.

³ "Ulnoo," man.

⁴ "Kweedun," canoe.

⁵ "Ulbadoo," boy (pronounced 'lbadoo.)

⁶ "Abitas," girl, young woman.

⁷ "Mijooajech," infant.

⁸ "Koobilsakun," cradle-bed without rockers, in which the baby was lashed with thongs.