

ABUKS TLALUMKWAKS.

Chief Jessa related the following at the January Social Meeting of the Epworth League at Kitamaat. Translated by the missionary.

"In the Fall of the year a long long time ago, after the flood (not before), the husband of Abuks Tlalumkwaks was lost, most probably by the capsizing of his canoe in the Kitamaat arm of the sea. His widow felt such great grief that she decided not to return at the close of the salmon run, with her people, to the winter village for the festivities of the season. Her brother aided her in building a house on the banks of the Kiough River, then left her with her two children to spend her allotted time of mourning in solitude.

The tribe thought she would die from cold or lack of food; however she found a number of dead salmon in the river, these she smoked, and before the snow fell she had gathered a large quantity of sticks for the fire which was kept burning day and night.

One bitterly cold night shortly after the New Year, Abuks Tlalumkwaks heard a wolf howl at a distance from the house. It came nearer and she was afraid; the howling turned into a loud cry of pain,—

ah, ah, ah, ahoo, ahoo, ahoo!!!
said the wolf, then it grew fainter as the wolf retreated into the forest. In the early morning she looked out and saw the wolf had made a zigzag track, as if crazy.

The following night as she was putting her children to bed, she heard the wolf again, not an angry howl, but rather the noise was similar to that of a dog when it is about to die happily. She covered her children with new cedar bark mats, that the wolf should not scent them. By this time the wolf was pawing and scratching at the door, she unfastened it and left it slightly open then sat down on the floor and poked up the fire, anxiously awaiting the result.

The great gaunt hungry wolf came in and she was afraid of him, thinking he wanted to eat her, she said;—

"Nohloch, Nohloch,* what is it you want?" The wolf did not answer, but by the light from the blazing logs, she saw he kept his head on one side, and his

jaw was swollen double its usual size.

"Come here," she said, and as the wolf approached her, she felt sick hearted seeing he was suffering intense pain. He placed his head on her knee, she opened his mouth and saw at once the cause of his misery; firmly lodged between his teeth was a piece of bone broken out of the thigh of the mountain goat upon which he had doubtless some days before died. Taking up a piece of stick she sharpened one end, and with it pried out the bone.

At once the wolf found relief.

"Now," she said, "pity me, pity me, you see my food is short, my salmon is nearly finished, and the winter is not ended." The wolf said nothing, believing that "*actions speak louder than words*".

He went out to a mound of earth some distance from the house, and lifted up his voice calling all his tribe to a council. Wolves came from all quarters. Their chief told of his ailment, and of the kind, skillful treatment he had received at the hands of Abuks Tlalumkwaks.

"I want to shew her," he said "that *one good turn* deserves another." So quickly and before dawn have at her house all kinds of food."

His tribesmen, being thus dispatched, obeyed without question, making the valley ring as they went to hunt. They were successful in the chase, and returned bearing grizzly and black bear, cariboo, venison, also such delicacies as porcupine and beaver. These they piled against the front of her house, and in the morning her surprise and joy was great.

She took a pointed stick and toasted some bear meat before the fire, and handed it to the children. The elder would not eat believing it to be poisoned, the younger ate and did not die so his brother also took some, and after the family had feasted on the fresh meat as long as they could, the remainder, which filled up the house was cut and dried for future use. They lived well throughout the rest of the winter.

In the spring as soon as the ice left the river, the wife of the brother of Abuks Tlalumkwaks said to him; "you had better take your canoe and go and find out what

* NOHLOCH IS AN EXPRESSION USED BY THE KITAMAATS WHEN ADDRESSING WHATEVER IS AN OBJECT OF FEAR.