

head-dress was constructed, but the old man immediately extinguished it with his hands.

After a little while, amidst the singing of the whole assembly of men who accompanied the dance, the caribou again managed to ignite its head-dress to such an extent that the old man had much trouble in extinguishing it.

Meanwhile, the wily muskrat, who had beforehand made all necessary preparations by burrowing through the earth, and who was watching his opportunity, furtively took a piece of fire while the old man's attention was taken up with the fruitless attempts of the caribou, and disappeared in the ground. A short time after somebody discerned a huge column of smoke rising from a mountain towering at the horizon. Soon smoke was followed by immense tongues of flames, and thus men knew that the muskrat had succeeded in getting for them the long-coveted fire.

Creation of Water.—However, men had as yet no water, and they were thirsty. As they could not obtain any from the only old man who enjoyed its possession, *qstas*, who was very cunning, resolved upon a trick to get it for them. This same old notable had a daughter, a virgin. One day, as she was bending to drink from the water barrel,¹ which was always kept in a corner of the lodge, she perceived a spruce frond floating therein. In order to avoid swallowing which, she moved it aside; but as often as she did so it returned to the same place on the water. Getting wearied of her unavailing attempts to avoid it, she swallowed it, soon after which she became pregnant. In the course of time she gave birth to a son, who was no other than the wily *qstas*, who had for the purpose transformed himself into a spruce frond.

He had no sooner been born than he began to grow up at a prodigious rate. His great pastime was to amuse himself with the barrel containing the water, which he was constantly rolling in the direction of the doorway. His mother would then carefully take it back to its original place in the lodge. When the boy commenced to walk he would even roll it out some little distance from the door; but his mother as often put it back in its place. At last, having grown up to be a young man, he one day dashed away with it to distribute its contents to his fellow-men. With his index finger *qstas* sprinkled water where we now see rivers; lakes and the sea resulted from his spilling out with his hand larger quantities of the liquid; and when he had well-nigh done with his distribution, he threw away, by a rapid movement of his arm, what remained in the barrel, thereby producing what we now call *Neto pənṛən*,² which circumstance accounts for the great length of that lake. Thus it is that *qstas* gave us water.

Should it be necessary to point out the extraneousness especially of this latter part of the myth and thereby of its hero, *qstas*, I would just add that: 1. The mention therein of a wooden water box or jug (modernized into a barrel) can have originated only where such vessels were manufactured, and that was among the Coast Indians; and, 2. The very reference to *Neto pənṛən*, or French Lake, is to me unmistakable evidence that the story came to the Carriers proper through the *Hwotso'tin*, the *Kitikson's* immediate neighbours. That lake is one of the *Hwotso'tin's* favourite hunting resorts, and, among the other subdivisions of the tribe, there is not, I dare say, one out of fifty Indians who ever as much as saw it, let alone obtained an exact idea of its dimensions.

¹ This word will, no doubt, sound as somewhat modern, but I can find no fit substitute for it since the Indians insist that *qstas* was in the habit of *rolling* the vessel thereby designated. It is called *thū-chengreḡ* (etymology: water-wood [or wooden]-pack), whereby are also denominated the square wooden boxes imported from amongst the Coast tribes, but which obviously cannot be *rolled*.

² *Français*, or French Lake. See the map.