

*General Remarks.*

A consideration of the foregoing folk-tales brings out many points of interest. It will be seen, for instance, that the number 4 is an oft-recurring number. It is undoubtedly the sacred mystic number of the Salish stock, as we find it holding an equally predominant place in the myths and stories of the Bella Coola tribe on the coast, between whom and the N'tlaka'pamuq there has been no intercourse from time immemorial. I am unable at present to say how far it is common to the mythology of the other tribal divisions of this stock; but finding it in these two widely divergent branches separated by impassable physical barriers, we may fairly conclude that it is common to the whole. Our knowledge of the mythology of the other great divisions of the Salish is not yet very extensive if we except that of the Bella Coola recently published by Dr. Boas; and it will be interesting and profitable to gather collections similar to these from all the other divisions. Whether all the tribes of the Salish have such a store of folk-tales, or are as imaginative as the N'tlaka'pamuq, I am unable to say. That they possess more, or have more active and lively imaginations, I much doubt, for it seems scarcely possible to find a people more highly imaginative than the folk-lore of the N'tlaka'pamuq shows them to be, or rather to have been. There is not a single, peculiar feature of the landscape which has not its own story attached to it. There is no conspicuous object of any kind within their borders but has some myth connected with it. The boulders on the hill-sides, the benches of the rivers, the falls, the cañons and the turns of the Frazer, the mud slides, the bare, precipitous cliffs, the sand bars, the bubbling spring and the running brook, the very utensils they use, all have a history of their own in the lore of this tribe. Every single peculiarity in bird, or beast, or fish is fully and, to them, satisfactorily accounted for in their stories. The flat head of the river cod, the top-knot of the blue jay, the bent claws and dingy brown colour of the coyote, the flippers of the seal, the red head of the woodpecker, and a host of other characteristics, all have their explanation in story.

Some of the tales here recorded are extremely valuable to us in the glimpses they afford of the past and, for the most part, forgotten life, customs, thoughts, and beliefs of this people. The intense repugnance in which they held incestuous intercourse, the deep shame and disgrace that followed a lapse from virtue in the unmarried of both sexes, and the serious and damaging reflections it cast upon the parents, are portrayed in the somewhat pathetic story of the sister who was wronged by her own brother. The pains she took, and the lonely exile she bore to shield her father's name from dishonour, and finally her own and her guilty brother's self-destruction, all make this abundantly clear. Whether this story has any foundation in fact, or whether it was told merely to inculcate virtue and a hatred of incest, is quite immaterial. That it showed and embodied the feelings of the people on this head is perfectly clear, and that is the point which is of interest to us. The praise and enjoinder of virtue, self-discipline, and abstinence in young men is no less clearly brought out, while the respect and consideration paid by the young to the elders of the family and tribe is an equally conspicuous virtue. In no other way could we learn these things. The folk-tales alone can now recall the vanished past for us. Hence their high value in ethnological inquiry, and the importance of bringing them together and recording them while there is yet opportunity. The pictures which these tales reveal to us of the ancient