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THE STORY OF THE BEAR AND HIS INDIAN WIFE.

A LEGEND OF THE HAIDAS OF QUEEN CHARLOTTE'S ISLAND, B. C.

LOOKING over my papers a few evenings ago I found the following tale, bearing date of May, 1873, the time when it was recorded. My informant was a very intelligent Haida, by the name of Yak Quahu, whose memory was stored with legends like the following, which he used to repeat of an evening, seated by the camp-fire : —

Not long ago, as our old people tell us, the bears were a race of beings less perfect than our fathers were ; they used to talk, walk upright, and use their paws like hands. When they wanted wives, they were accustomed to steal the daughters of our people.

You ask me to tell you something of bygone days. I will tell you a tale, as I have heard it told round the evening fires by the old people.

Quiss-an-kweedass and Kind-a-wuss were a youth and maiden in my native village, she the daughter of one of our chiefs, he the son of one of the common people. Both being about the same age, and having been playmates from youth, their fondness for each other was such that it was frequently said of them, " If you want Kind-a-wuss look for Quiss-an-kweedass ;" and this youthful fondness in later years ripened into a love so strong that they seemed to live for each other. While they thus loved each other, they knew that by the social laws of the Haidas they could never live as husband and wife, both being of one crest, the Raven. A man who is of the Raven crest is at liberty to take himself a wife from any other except the one to which he himself belongs. By the social laws of the Haidas a mother gives her name and crest to her children, whether Raven, Eagle, Frog, Beaver, or Bear, as the case may be.

While they thus continued to love each other, time passed unnoticed by. Life to them seemed a pleasing dream, from which they were rudely awakened by their respective parents reminding them that the time had come for each to choose a partner in life, from among the youths and maidens of the Haidas, such as would be in unison with their social laws. Seeing that these admonitions passed unheeded, their parents resolved to separate them. In order to effect their purpose the lovers were confined in the homes of their parents, but with them, as with more civilized people, " Love laughs at bolts and bars." They contrived to meet outside of the village, and made their escape to the woods, resolved to live on the meanest fare in the mountain forests, rather than return to be separated.

In a lonely glen by a mountain streamlet, under a shady spruce,

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