

TRADITIONS OF THE TS'ETS'Ā'UT.¹

I.

IN the winter of 1894-95 I visited ^{the} Portland Inlet, a deep fjord which forms the boundary between Alaska and British Columbia. In this region were said to live the few remaining members of a tribe which had not heretofore been studied. The tribe is called Ts'ets'ā'ut by the Tsimshian and by the Nass River Indians. After a prolonged search I found a few members of the tribe, which proved to belong to the Tinneh stock. Such ethnological data as I have been able to obtain are given in the Tenth Report of the Committee on the Northwestern Tribes of Canada, under whose auspices I visited the tribe (B. A. A. S. 1895). In the following pages I give such traditions as I have been able to collect. As the tribe is reduced to twelve members, it is not likely that much more material will ever be obtained. The traditions resemble in character very much those recorded by E. Petitot from the Tinneh tribes of the Mackenzie Basin, but they evidently have been greatly influenced by Tlingit tales, as will be shown in accompanying notes.

I. BROTHER AND SISTER.

Once upon a time there were four brothers and a sister whose parents had died. One day they went up Tcū'nax River until they reached its headwaters, which are called xāga. There they stayed hunting the mountain goat. The eldest of the brothers had fallen in love with his sister, who returned his affection. Then the other brothers grew ashamed. They tied the two together with cedar-withes, so that the man's head was between the feet of the woman, while her head was between the man's feet, and thus left them. The eldest brother, however, was so strong that he tore apart his bonds, and liberated himself and his sister. He found a cave, which they used as a dwelling-place. After some time his sister gave birth to a boy. One day, when she left the house, she saw many mountain goats grazing on the hill opposite. She ran back into the cave, and called her brother: "Come and look at the mountain goats." He went out and looked at them. On this, they

¹ Indian words are to be pronounced as follows:—

The vowels have their continental sounds, namely: *a* as in *father*; *e* like *a* in *mate*; *i* as in *machine*; *o* as in *note*; *u* as in *rule*.

In addition the following are used: *ā*, *ō* as in German; *ā*=*aw* in *law*; *ē* as in *tell*; *ī* as in *hill*; *ō* as in German *voll*; *ē* = *e* in *flower* (Lepsius's *e*).

Among the consonants the following additional letters have been used: *q* velar *k*; *x* the German *ch* in *Bach*; *x* the German *ch* in *ich*; *X* between *x* and *s*; *c*=*sh* in *shore*; *L* an explosive, dorso-apical *l*; ' a pause.