

The Milky Way is the dog's trail. The thunder is caused by a great bird that lives far up in the sky. The lightning is made by the shooting of its arrows. At first there were no clouds. The daughter of the coyote married the thunder, and her father gave the clouds for a blanket. The Kootenays believe that they came from the East; and one of their myths ascribes to them an origin from a hole in the ground east of the Rocky Mountains. Another account says they sprang from the hairs of the black bear, which fell on the ground after he came out of the belly of the great fish that had swallowed him. There were no women at first. By and by an Indian went up into the mountains, and from a spirit who lived there received the first Kootenay woman. The origin of horses is ascribed to a medicine man who made a stick into the shape of the animal and then threw it away, whereupon it became a horse. The belief prevails that the white men get their cattle from the sea. It is said that they go every year to the Pacific Ocean to receive the cattle which come out of the waters. Many of the animal myths remind one of Uncle Remus.

Some very interesting legends are related by Prof. George W. Dawson as communicated to him by Mr. J. W. Mackay, Indian agent at Kamloops, from the stock of the Shuswap Indians. Like most of the Indian people they have a culture or creation hero with supernatural attributes, who with them figures as a coyote or small wolf, and is named Skil-ap. In the old times the salmon could not ascend the Fraser River on account of a dam which two old witches had made at Hell-gate Cañon. He told the people he would go down the river and break the dam, so that the salmon could come up, and instructed them that he would make his approach known by a great smoke. He transformed himself into a smooth, flat piece of board, floated down to the dam, was picked up by the women, who undertook to use the board as a plate, emerged from it as a child, and was cared for by them, till one day when they were absent he put something on his head that made him invulnerable, and destroyed the dam, after which the salmon began to go up in great numbers. Then he followed the bank of the river, keeping abreast of the vanguard of the salmon, and making a great smoke by setting fire to the woods as he proceeded, so that the people knew that he was coming. Near the outlet of the Kamloops Lake he stopped to eat, and made a fish weir at a spot where some high rocks may still be seen. At the mouth of the Clearwater he completed a salmon dam he found the people making; and there are to the present day steep rocks on either side of the river, and above them a large pool or basin where he fished with his scoop-net and which is still a noted salmon-fishing place. On the rocks may be seen the prints of his feet where he stood to fish. Thus the salmon were