

MALECITE TALES

GLUSKAP MYTHS

(1). Gluskap.¹

Gluskap and his mother came to St. John harbour from the south. Their canoe was an island. They landed at March creek below St. John. The Indians saw him coming and were amazed at the sight of his canoe. At once they knew that he had greater power than anyone else, for he was doing amazing things.

The winter following his arrival he went up the St. John river to where the beaver had their dam.² After examining it he proceeded up river in search of more beaver dams, going as far as Mactiquack creek, a little above Kingsclear. Here travelling was difficult with snowshoes; so he slipped them off and left them there. To-day you can see them, for those two islands opposite Mactiquack are called "Gluskap's Snowshoes."

Then he went up as far as Grand falls, across which the beaver had built a dam. He tore it to pieces, as you can see to-day, and drained the water off. He did this so that when he returned to St. John and broke the beaver's dam there, they would have no other pond to go to.

By the time he had finished doing this, spring had come; so he built a canoe and paddle out of stone and went down the river to the place where St. John now is. When he came, the Indians knew that he must have great power to use a stone canoe, so they made him their chief; and in a short time he was known everywhere as the Chief of the Indians.

During that summer he went to the mouth of the Kennebecasis, where the beavers had their homes. These he examined and then he returned to the dam, which was located where the Reversing falls are to-day. He took a stick and broke the dam, so that the

¹ The following long myth of the culture-hero Gluskap, was obtained from Jim Paul, of St. Mary, New Brunswick, in August and December, 1910. The first 57 pages, that is, through the adventures of Turtle, were obtained in August. Jim Paul said he had first heard the story more than forty years before, when he was camping with his father and father-in-law. The rest of the story was obtained in December. Jim Paul had gotten it in the meantime from Newel John, of French Village, N.B. The difference in the style of the two portions is quite evident.

² The Reversing falls are supposed to be the remains of this dam. The size of the animals was much larger before Gluskap transformed things to their present size. Beavers were much larger than men and threatened their existence.