

observation of the tribes of British Columbia and on that of the Pueblo tribes of the southwest²¹ agree, in that they tend to show that the ritual and, we may say in a more general way, the social system, have been foisted upon the myths, thus producing variations, which tend to establish harmony between mythology and social phenomena.

The Salish tribes, to which the Thompson River Indians belong, owing to their wide distribution and diversity of culture, offer a very interesting example of the influence of social organization upon mythology. The great body of the people have the same loose organization that we find among the Thompson River tribe; but among the tribes living on the coast more complex conditions prevail. They have been under the influence of the tribes of the coast of British Columbia for so long a time, that their customs and beliefs have undergone material changes. The loose village community has been replaced by one claiming common descent from one mythical ancestor.

This transition may be observed among the tribes of the Delta of Fraser River, who are closely allied to the Thompson River Indians. Each village has a mythical ancestor, and some of these are described as animals. It may be well to make clearer the peculiar character of these tales by means of a few abstracts of myths.

The ancestor of the Mā'sxui, a tribe whose village is near the mouth of Fraser River, was Sqelē'yil (derived from sqelā'o, beaver). When the transformer visited his village they had a contest, in the course to which they tried to transform each other. Finally the transformer proved to be the stronger of the two. He transformed Sqelē'yil into a beaver. It seems that in a few cases these traditions contain memories of historical events. Such seems to be the case in the tradition of the origin of the Stēē'lis, who live on Harrison River. The name of their ancestor is Ts'ā'tsemiltx. One of his descendants is said to have invited a chief named Qulqe'mex'i'l, whose ancestors were the marten and the mountain goat, to descend from the mountains and to live with him. Since that time the descendants of these two chiefs are said to have formed one tribe.²² I think the occurrence of these traditions must be explained in the following way: The coast tribes north of Fraser River are divided in totemic clans, each of which has a clan tradition. All the privileges of the clans are explained by the clan traditions, which, for this reason, are considered a most valuable property. That this is so is indicated by the jealousy with which the property right to certain traditions is guarded by the families of the coast tribes. When the Salish tribes began to be thrown into contact with the coast tribes, the lack of family traditions must have been felt as a great disadvantage. Their