

# INTRODUCTION TO TRADITION OF THOMPSON RIVER INDIANS OF BRITISH COLUMBIA.

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## INTRODUCTION.

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THE Thompson River Indians, whose mythology has been recorded in the following pages by M. James Teit, form a branch of the Salishan tribes which inhabit large portions of the States of Washington, Idaho, Montana, and of the Province of British Columbia. The languages constituting the Salish stock may be grouped in two main divisions, — the coast Salish and the Salish of the interior. While the former is divided into a great number of languages spoken by the tribes extending from Tillamook in Oregon to Bella Coola in British Columbia, the languages of the interior show greater uniformity. The Salish proper is spoken in the interior of Washington, Idaho, and Montana, and extends into southern British Columbia, where it is spoken by the Okanagon. The Shuswap, that is spoken in southeastern British Columbia, is closely affiliated to it. Between the Shuswap and the coast, two other languages are spoken, — the Lillooet in the north; the Thompson River language, or *NLak'a'pamux*,<sup>1</sup> in the south. The last-named tribe lives on Fraser and Thompson rivers, a little above and below their confluence.

The tribe is divided into five divisions, — the *Nkamtci'nemux* on the upper part of Thompson River, the *Cawa'xamux* in Nicola Valley, the *NLak'apamux'o'ē* or real *NLak'a'pamux*, around the confluence of Thompson and Fraser rivers, the *SLaxa'yux* on upper Fraser River, and the *Utā'mqt* farthest down Fraser River. The *Nkamtci'nemux* are neighbors of the Shuswap. The *Cawa'xamux* come into contact with the Okanagon, while formerly they were neighbors of a small Athapascan tribe which live on the upper part of Nicola River. The *SLaxa'yux* live next to the upper Lillooet, while the *Uta'mqt* come into contact with the coast Salish on the lower course of Fraser River.

The greater part of the following traditions were collected among the *Nkamtci'nemux* and *Cawa'xamux*.

The *NLak'a'pamux* are primarily hunters and fishermen. They subsist largely on venison and salmon, although berries and roots which are collected by the women constitute an important portion