

the soul after death, published three years ago in "The Western Dénés."<sup>1</sup> It cannot be doubted that our Indians owe it to the Tlingit through the Tsimshians. Readers of a comparative turn of mind will not fail to remark that the peculiar belief, according to which yawning is an infallible means of attracting the departed soul's attention, deducible from that story, is also shared by the Tlingit, as evidenced by a myth of analogous character related by Dr. Boas.<sup>2</sup> According to that writer, a resuscitated shaman thus describes his experiences in the land of the shades :

"I resolved to go into the land of the souls. Soon I arrived at a fork in the road. A much-trodden road led one way, while the other seemed to have been seldom used. I followed the former. \* \* \* At last I arrived at a steep rock, the end of the world. At the foot of the rock a river flowed sluggishly. On the other side I saw a village and recognized many of its inhabitants. \* \* \* I cried : 'Oh, come, have pity on me! Take me over to you!' But they continued to wander about as though they did not hear me. I was overcome by weariness and lay down. \* \* \* I stretched my limbs and yawned. Then the people in the village cried : 'Somebody is coming! Let us go and take him across the river!'"

In the Carrier narrative the shaman is replaced by two young men lost in the woods. Here are the corresponding parts of the legend as told by our Indians :

"Out of curiosity they crawled in [a hollow tree lying on the ground] to see where it led. \* \* \* After some hard creeping on all fours through a dark subterranean passage \* \* \* the road widened and darkness ceased. Then they suddenly found themselves to be on the top of a hill commanding the view of a broad river, on the other side of which stood a village. This consisted of innumerable board houses, some of which were black, others red. It was the abode of the shades who were enjoying themselves on the lawn. \* \* \* At this sight one of the young men ran away and hid himself in the bush. As for his cousin, \* \* \* perceiving several black and red canoes hauled up on the other side of the river, he hallooed for somebody to come and take him across ; but the tumult was such that they did not hear him. At last, after repeated efforts to attract attention, having inadvertently yawned, one of them heard the movement of his jaws. Having apprised his fellow-spirits of the fact, some of them, at length, came across to fetch him."<sup>3</sup>

To such as might be tempted to suppose that the original of this story came from inland, I would say that this cannot be the case, for three excellent reasons : First, because, to the best of my knowledge,<sup>4</sup> this legend has no counterpart in the mythology of the eastern or main portion of the Déné nation. Secondly, because a significant point of the Carrier account is the mention of *board* houses which, though common all along the coast, were unknown here, the material of which they were generally formed, split cedar, being wanting all over the Carriers' territory. Lastly, only a few of the subdivisions of the Carrier tribe are acquainted with this story, and these profess to have received it from

<sup>1</sup> Proceedings Can. Inst., October, 1889, pp. 159-160.

<sup>2</sup> Fifth Report on the North-Western Tribes of Canada, 1889, pp. 47-48.

<sup>3</sup> Loc. cit.

<sup>4</sup> I have not seen Petitot's latest collection of Déné legends, but am well acquainted with three other works or papers of identical nature by that author, which could not but include this important myth, if it had course among the Eastern Dénés.