

TRANSACTIONS
OF
THE CANADIAN INSTITUTE.

THREE CARRIER MYTHS.

With Notes and Comments.

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[*Read 2nd November, 1895.*]

INTRODUCTION.

In point of length and general diffusion, the most important of the legends current among the Carrier Indians is that which records the adventures and many deeds of *ǵstas*, their national culture hero. But it cannot be described as a Carrier legend: it is merely a Carrier version of a myth which is the original property of the Pacific Coast Indians. Barring some details due mainly to local colouring, its chief incidents are identical, and its hero is but a counterfeit of the *Yētl* of the Clingit, the *Ni-kil-stlas* of the Haida and the *Kaneakeluh* of the Kwakwiutl. Hence, as my studies have so far had for objective the distinctive traits of strictly *Déné* life and the morphology of the *Déné* languages, I do not acknowledge myself open to the charge of negligence in not having, to this day, collected more than fragments of that story.

It were tedious, as well as unprofitable, to repeat here what I have said in my former essays of the mixed origin of the Carrier sociology and mythology¹. It must suffice to remark that better opportunities and prolonged investigations have not changed by the length of one iota my convictions in that respect. Even one of the three legends which I now introduce to the lovers of folk-lore, the second, has but a dubiously *Déné* origin. I find no equivalent of it in the collection of the "*Traditions indiennes du Canada Nord-Ouest*" published in 1888 by the Abbé E. Petitot². Yet its details and intrinsic features would seem genuinely Carrier.

With the exception of the third, which is widely diffused among different *Déné* tribes, none of them has, in the eyes of the natives, any paramount importance. If I single them out among the others which I

¹Are the Carrier Sociology and Mythology indigenous or exotic? Trans. Royal Soc. Canada, Sect. II, 1892.

²Alençon, E. Renaud de Broise, Place d'Armes, 5.