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THE HIDERY STORY OF CREATION.

BY JAMES DEANS.

In a previous paper I showed that the Hidery had two phratries or brotherhoods, and that the representative crests of these two were the raven and the eagle. I also showed that these two were divided into twenty-five clans, who were each of them distinguished by certain coats-of-arms or crests, and these crests were represented by certain animals, fishes and birds,—also by the rain-bow, the sun, moon and the thunder-bird. While speaking of phratries I may say that the neighboring tribes of the Hidery are somewhat different, to this extent: the Tsimsheans have, I believe, four—the raven, eagle, wolf and bear; the Klingat of Southern Alaska, like the Hidery, only two, the raven and wolf—Yehl and Kanuk—phratries. Each of these has almost all the same coat-of-arms. Connected with nearly all of them is a story. These two phratries, to a certain extent, represent good and evil, positive and negative. Every phratry and clan had an instrument with which they could imitate the call of their respective crests. The ravens were not allowed to use those of the eagle, nor the eagle those of the raven. They also had certain dances. The movements in the dances corresponded more or less to those of the animal, bird, or whatever was the subject of the crest. There were certain degrees belonging to these crests, into which a person had to be initiated. These degrees entitle them to a Tuden Skeel of two or more degrees, as the case may be. The Tuden Skeel is shown on the houses and totem posts by a head with a hat. From the center of it rises a sort of cone, with a lot of pieces all of one size, joined together. Each piece represents one degree. They also had masks, or false-faces, cut out of a block of wood. Also a mortuary column with a number of black and white stripes on it. These are all of the same width and encircle the shaft of the column. I saw one at

Skidegat's town, on which were fourteen of these black and white circles. A chief, or a person of high standing, had to wear a sort of cloak, attached to a head-dress. On the front of the head-piece was carved one of the crests of the wearer. Set into its face were a number of abalone shells. Fixed into the top of this head-gear, standing upright, were a number of sealion bristles. These were put in to form a small circle, within which were placed a lot of eagle down-feathers. While dancing and jumping about and shaking their heads, this down would fly about, covering everything. Attached to this head-gear was a yard or two of calico. This had a large number of ermine skins sewed to it. This usually hung down the back of the wearer. The Hidery name for this is *chillka*, the Tsimshians call it *am halloid*, (good or nice halloid). With this I shall finish my description of their social ways for the present, and take the raven phratry.

The raven which is used is the one common to this coast, and is by some ornithologists classed as *corvus catotoff*. Yet he is more than a mere raven, or phratry, in their estimation, because he has always been considered as the embodiment of the creator and preserver of all.

Every nation on this coast has a name for him in their own language. The Sangus, Sauch, Cowitchians and others give the name *Spaul*; the Fort Ruperts, Billu Billus, call him *Cov-e-ah*; the Southern Hidery call him *Chov-e-ah*; the Northern Hidery and the Southern Alaskans call him *Yehl*; the Tsimshians call him *Cauck*. According to the Hidery, the god Ne-kilst-luss, in all of his works of creation and providence, assumed the shape of a raven. All of the above mentioned nations had a god to whom was ascribed the same functions; all of them when asked if they had a god, and what was his name, would always give the name as raven. All the others except the Hidery seem to have lost the old god name for the raven. This god, Ne-kilst-luss, under different names, represented good and evil. As the creator he is known as Ne-kilst-luss; as goodness he is known as Sun-i-a-tlai-duss, and as the evil principle he is known as Haidu-tan-ah. In the shape of a raven he existed from all eternity. Before this world came into being, as a raven he brooded over the intense darkness which prevailed, until after æons of ages, by the continual flapping of his wings, he beat the darkness down to solid ground. After this he gave the new found earth a principle of evolution. For a long time the only light in the world was a dim, hazy one given off by the earth. When the earth was in a condition to receive the stronger light from the sun, moon and stars, he set himself to get hold of them. They were in possession of a great chief named Settin-ki-juss, who lived far up on the Skeeun. He had them in three separate boxes, and kept them only for his own use.

He (Ne-kilst-luss) sent to this chief and told him that the earth was now in a condition to receive more light, and for that purpose he wanted the contents of his three boxes. On no account would the old fellow part with them. So being determined to obtain them, he took the following means: This old chief had a daughter. So, in order to become one of the family, the better to gain the long-wished-for prize, he turned himself into the leaf of a spruce tree and floated on the water she drank, and was swallowed by her. In due season she gave birth to a son, who, of course, was Ne-kilst-luss. He rapidly grew up to be a fine, sturdy boy, and became, not only a great favorite with his grandfather, but a spoiled child. So much did the old man spoil him that he could not refuse him anything. Seeing this, the boy asked for one of the boxes to play with. This the old chief sternly refused to give. The boy, however, raised such a row in the family as only spoiled children can do. He gave the old man no peace. So, in desperation, he pointed to a box, saying, "Take that one, but be careful and do not break it." The boy, after rolling it about for some time, lifted it up and threw it on the floor and broke it open. He took it in his beak. It happened to be the sun he had gotten. Just as he was about to fly away with it he saw that the kinct or smoke hole was shut, but he called to some one, *Ah, ah, kinct, ah, kinct.* So soon as the kinct was opened he picked up the sun and placed it in the heavens, where it has been ever since giving light to the world.

Having got the sun, his next step was to get possession of the moon and stars. These he obtained in the following manner: Hearing that the chief had gone up Naas river in order to lay in a stock of small fish (*ooluchans*), and to enable him to see, had taken the other two boxes with him. Determined to get hold of, at least the moon, he prepared a small false one. Having got a canoe, he started up the river, to find Sittin-ki-juss, being anxious to get some of these fish, in order to have his canoe covered with scales, because he meant to make believe he was fishing likewise. Going along he saw a shag which he knew had an ooluchan in its stomach. In order to get the fish, he caused the shag and a sea gull to fight. This they did until the shag vomited up all the fish in its stomach. This was all that Ne-kilst-luss wanted. So he took and rubbed his hands and face, and canoe as well, with the fish scales. Having done so, he kept on up the river until he met the old man. When they met the chief asked him where he had been. To this Ne-kilst-luss replied: "I have, like yourself, been fishing; look at my canoe." "How did you see to fish in the dark? You have no moon." Ne-kilst-luss having all the time hid his moon under his feathers. "I have," he replied, letting out a little light, "one of my own, as good as yours." Sittin-ki-juss, seeing an-

other moon, apparently as good as his, became so disgusted that he left, leaving the other two boxes behind. This was Ne-kilst-luss' opportunity. So he broke open the other two boxes and let out the moon and stars. These he placed in the heavens, where they have been ever since.

* * *

HOW YEHL GOT FRESH WATER.

At this date the water on the earth was all salt, and unfit for use. So he, Ne-kilst-luss, or Yehl, as I shall call him in the following story, following the usages of the people of Southern Alaska, from whom I have this story, hearing that Kannuc Wolf had plenty of water, he went off to get some, and a drink as well. This chief, Kannuc, lived on an island to the east of Sitka. He had his house built over his well, in order to prevent any one from stealing his fresh water. Yehl took his canoe, and crossed over to the island. Going over he met Kannuc, so together they went to his house. In order to find where he kept his fresh water, Yehl asked him for a drink. This he got, reserving the residue for further use. After spending the evening in conversation both fell asleep. After awhile Yehl awoke. Seeing his host still asleep, he got up and drank what was left in the bucket, and flew away with it. So full was he with the water that he stuck fast in the smoke hole. Some say he picked up the bucket and flew away with it in his beak. This mishap awoke Kannuc, who, in order to punish him for stealing his fresh water, piled a lot of green fir boughs on the fire. This made such a smoke that Yehl was not only nearly suffocated, but was changed from a beautiful white bird to one of sooty blackness.

When he got out he flew over to the mainland, letting fall as he went along a few drops of water. Wherever those drops fell a large river commenced to flow, and has done so ever since. When he reached Hidery land only a few drops of dirty water remained. This accounts for most of the streams on Queen Charlotte's Island being black and dirty, unlike the others.

Having made the rivers, his next step was to stock them with fish. Having learned that Tsing, the beaver, had plenty of salmon, but kept them in a lake and river where no one could find them. He turned himself into a pretty little boy, and wandered away to the beaver's house. The old chief, seeing him to be a rather nice looking little fellow, made him welcome. The better to suit his purpose the boy, as I shall name him, was attentive to the old beaver's every want, and in all things tried to please him.

One day they had for dinner what the old beaver called his nice salmon, and asked the boy how he liked them. He replied they were the nicest fish he ever tasted, and asked where they

were to be got. To this the old beaver replied he had a lake full of them, and a river of his own, where every season he got a plentiful supply, but no one knew where they were, and he would take care no one ever should know.

As time passed onward he grew more and more fond of his adopted son, and would take him along with him when he went fishing. After awhile he became a better fisher than the old beaver himself. After this he would stay at home and send the boy alone. For a long time the boy never failed to return nightly, bringing with him a supply of the salmon. All this time the boy was nearing the fulfillment of his long-cherished scheme. Getting together one day a lot of fine salmon, he started on his mission, putting in each river as he passed along a quantity of his fish, until his stock was exhausted. This is how Ne-kilst-luss cheated old Tsing out of his fish for the benefit of mankind, and broke his monopoly.

* * *

THE RAVEN'S CONNECTION WITH THE ORIGIN OF MANKIND.

When the raven (Ne-kilst-luss) had this world prepared for the reception of a being who was to be in his own image, part of himself, mankind, he went to seek for that being. Accordingly, as he walked in the shape of a raven one day along Nicoon's well-known point he found lying on the sand a cockle (*Cardium Nuttalli*) and had several connections with it. Returning that way at the end of nine months he found the cockle in the same place. Looking at it he heard a sound like "peep, peep," issuing from it. These noises was the cockle in labor. It gave birth to six beings, of whom he was father. These six partook of both sexes. In order to put them to rights he took the female principle from three, making them males. On the abdomen of the other three he placed six sea snails, or Beches de mere, making them females. Having by these means got the representatives of three families, he told them to have children and replenish the earth, because it was theirs. At first these people were dark-skinned and thickly covered with hair, had long arms and legs, and were unable to walk upright. After many generations, these people, so low in their first estate, by a continued selection of the best and fairest looking, were freed of hair, and became the people of to-day. The people of to-day, though far advanced, have a deal yet to learn, and have a great future before them, because, as descendants of God, they are always progressing and urged onward by a principle of evolution implanted in them by their father and creator.

At first and for many years or ages the land they lived in was always warm and nice, consequently they never were in need of anything wherewith to warm themselves.

But a change came after many generations; it grew colder; then they were in need of something to afford them warmth, and latterly to cook their food. So in order to give them fire, Ne-kilst-luss learned that all the fire was in the possession of a chief who lived on an island far out at sea. So donning his coat of feathers, he flew over to the island to get a supply. Seeing a brand with a nice glow on it, he picked it up in his beak and quickly flew over to the mainland. Before he got over a part of his beak was burned off. As soon as he reached the other side he let the brand fall among some sticks and stones, breaking it into sparks. As soon as these sparks fell on the sticks and stones they quickly absorbed the fire. So ever since whosoever strikes two of these stones together, they will give out the fire, also if any one rub two of the sticks together, they, too, will do the same. This is how the Hidery got fire.

* *

THE SCAMSUM AND MAMMA CHICKA.

Long ago, as I have said, the climate was warm, and at the same time the land was very moist, and consequently brought forth mosquitos of an enormous size. Their bites were terrible and deadly, many of the people dying from their bites. A sad cry went up to Ne-kilst-luss for relief. He heard their prayer, and sent the Scamsum (mosquito hawk), and gave him the mosquitos for food. This hawk was unable to eat them all. Seeing this, Ne-kilst-luss sent the Dragon Fly (*mamma chicka*), to help him. So there soon was relief from their tormentors; likewise, the climate growing colder, very much helped to do away with them.

The laws of evolution established by Ne-kilst-luss were immutable. So in course of time this Northern climate not only grew colder, but ice began to form, and snow deeply covered first the hill tops, then afterward, the lowlands. Finally the cold became so intense that they had to move farther south. This they did, led by a woman whose name was Call-cah-jude (woman of the ice). They left in a body for a warmer home, where they lived for many generations. Afterward, when the climate again got warmer, they moved to Alaska and to Queen Charlotte's Islands.

* *

AN ACCOUNT OF A GREAT FLOOD.

The same laws which brought the snow and ice brought also a terrible rush of water, which finally covered the whole earth, at least Hidery land. Thunder and lightning and rain which fell in torrents on the earth, quaked and rent it everywhere. Out of these rents came fire and water. The people, terribly afraid of the rising waters, made for their canoes and for the high mountain near Gumshend, Queen Charlotte's Islands, which

was above the rising waters. Many of them lost their lives before they reached the mountain, because their canoes were broken by the floating drift wood. Those who were fortunate enough to reach the mountain remained there until the waters dried up. Then they ventured down again and tried to find the homes they left, but all was so changed no trace of them was to be seen. Being few in number, the survivors became quite disheartened. Seeing them in such a state Ne-kilst-luss, in shape of a raven, appeared to them and advised them to be of good cheer, saying if they would do as he told them they would soon have plenty of company. They replied they would be glad to do anything for the best. Well, then, all of you gather together a pile of stones. Then stand with your faces toward the pile. Then all of you pick up the stones and throw them over your head backward, and await the result. This they did, all of them. Each stone as soon as it touched the ground jumped up either a man or a woman. So they soon had plenty of companions and felt much better.

Yehl, or Ne-kilst-luss, himself, in shape of a raven, was preserved during the flood by sticking his beak into a cloud and holding on until the waters left.

For a long time the people lived in fear of another flood. As time passed onward without another visitation, they felt more comfortable, and soon everything went on as before, always getting better as time passed.

When Yehl wished to regulate the seasons, he called together in council all the animals, in order to have their opinion with regard to the number of months in each of the four seasons. There was a deal of argument as to the length of the summer and winter quarters; some wanted three months of winter and four of summer, others of them, more especially the sleepers, wanted three months of summer and four of winter. While the subject was being discussed Yehl asked Saugh the (raccoon) for his opinion. Holding up his hand with his five fingers upward, he said, "I want five months of winter and four of summer." As soon as the Saugh expressed his opinion Yehl took a hold of his thumb and wrenched it off, saying, "four months of winter we shall have forever." And so it was decided. Of course, this refers to Southern Alaska.

When Yehl had finished his labors he retired to the east in order to have a long rest. In the far east, near the source of the river Naas, there is a very high mountain with a large hole in it. He lives in this hole, from which he often flies when the east wind blows. The name of this mountain is Naas Shieky Yehl—that is, Yehl's dwelling on the Naas.

This is all I can say about the raven as a crest or clan and phratry. In my next paper I shall take the Sun clan and tell its story.