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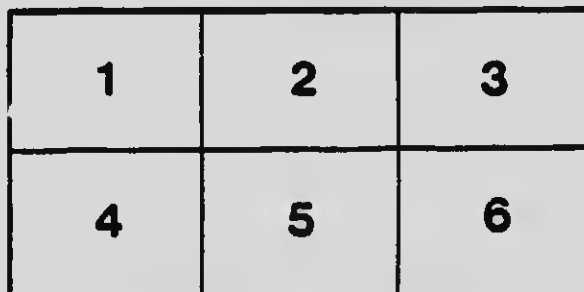
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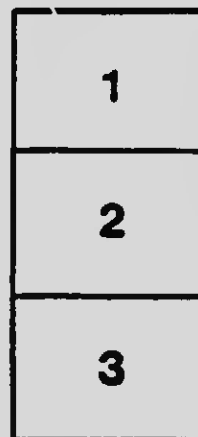
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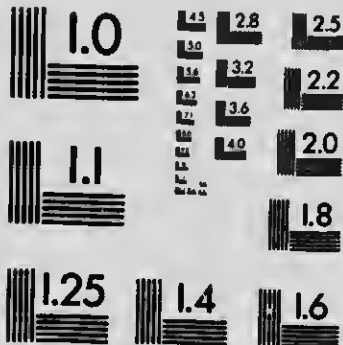
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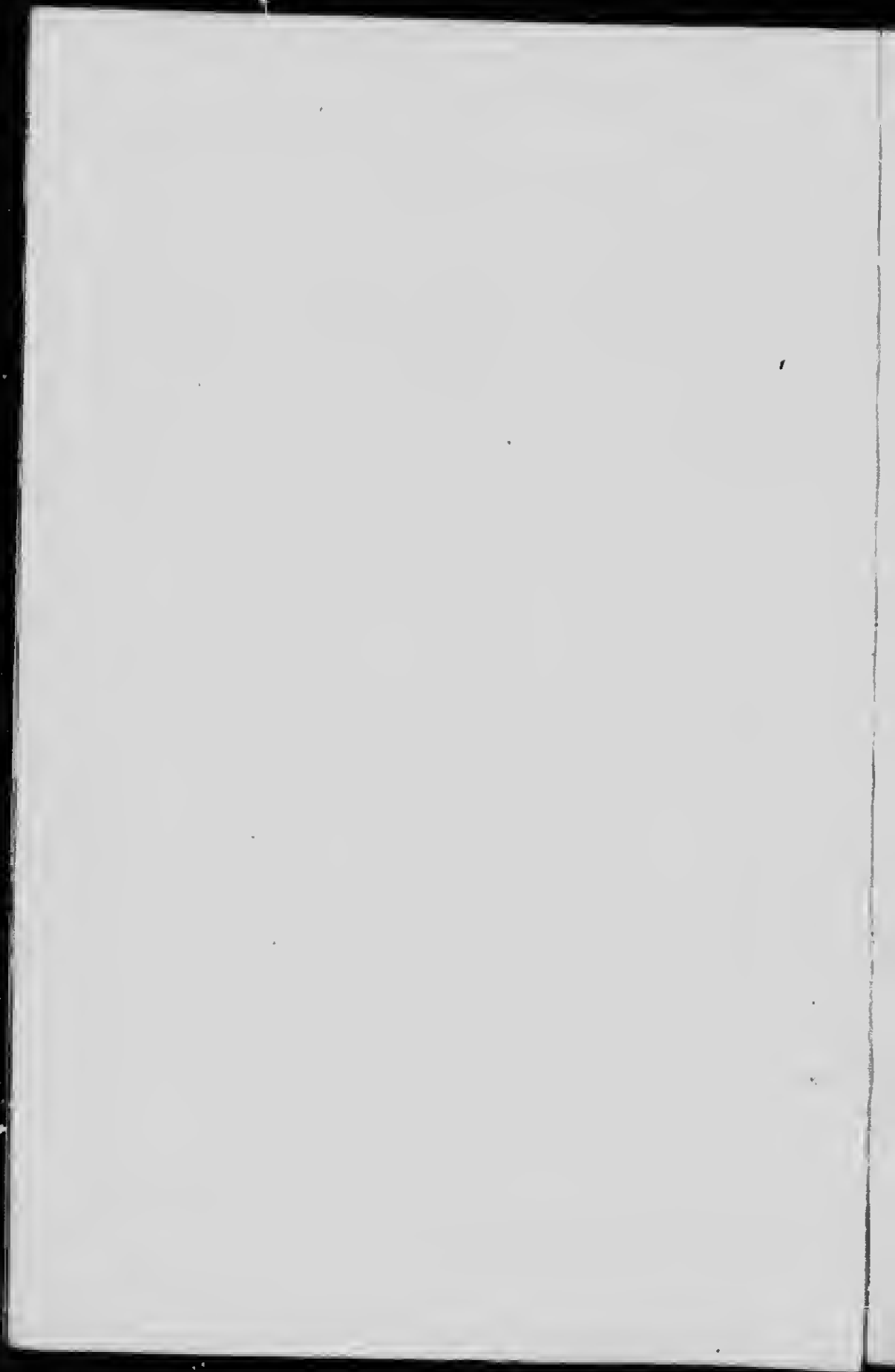
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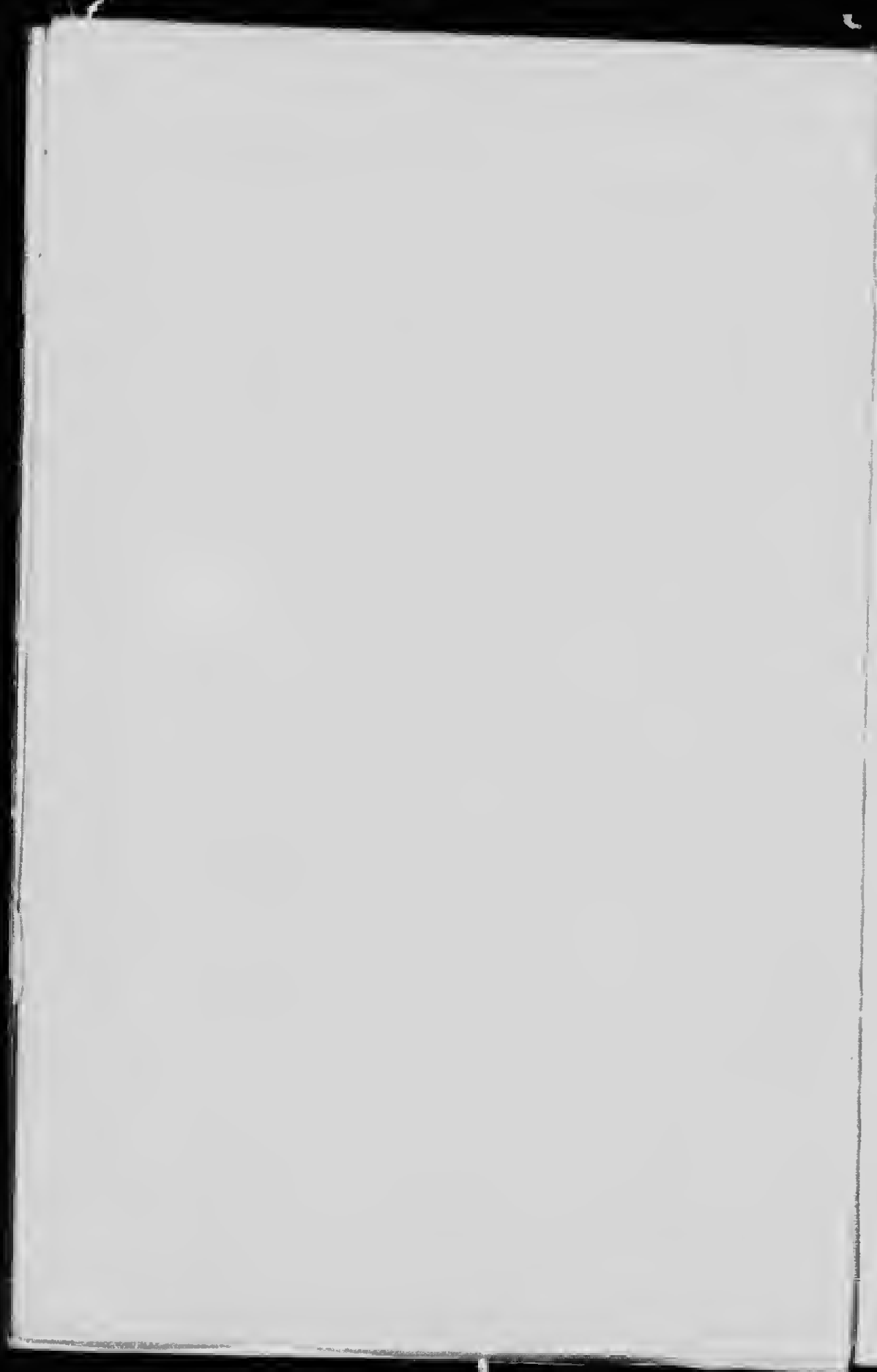


OJIBWA MYTHS AND TALES

BY

COL. G. E. LAIDLAW

REPRINTED FROM THE ARCHÆOLOGICAL REPORT, 1913.



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OJIBWA MYTHS AND TALES.

Third Paper.

COL. G. E. LAIDLAW.

The author is sorry to inform his readers that John York (Kitchie Penasce—Big Thunder), from whom many tales were got, died at Rama Reserve in April, 1916, aged 97.

According to letters received from those to whom copies of Reprints of Ojibwa Myths and Tales, from Ontario Archaeological Report, 1915, were sent, these myths and tales resemble somewhat those from several other places, viz:—

T. Hugonard, O.M.I., Qu'Appelle Industrial School, Lebret P.O., Sask., letter of 13th June, 1916, says: "The Tales and Myths are pretty well the same as among our Indians (Crees and Saulteaux). They have also Nanapus (Nanbush), Windigo (Giants) and the Thunderbirds.

Mr. J. T. Reader, of Calumet, Michigan, letter of July 13, 1916, says: "I can confirm several of these tales by repetition of some of the local Ojibwa Indians."

Mr. H. A. O'Leary, Brooklyn, N.Y., letter of 13th July, 1916, says: "I have read with much interest the 'Ojibwa Myths and Tales.' From what I can recall of the Eastern Algonquin legends of my old neighbours, the Micmacs and Malecites, as related in the books of Leland and others, there is considerable family resemblance running through many of the stories."

Nanbush (I use local name) seems to be practically the same as the Eastern Algonquin Glooscap; The Middle Algonquin Wesse-ke-jak (Canada Jay or Whisky-Jack), Michabo (The Great Hare), and Shingibis (The Diver or the Loon); the Western Algonquin (Blackfoot) Napi (The Old Man). Inasmuch as he is a mystical person, culture hero, scape-goat, or joker, as the case may be, he appears in all these rôles in the different bands of Algonquin peoples from the Atlantic seaboard through the Great Lakes region across the plains to the Rockies.

The writer has taken no little trouble to list the variants of the name Nanbush and authorities as per following:

Nanabozhoo.—Peter Jones (Kakewaquonaby), *History of the Ojibway*, 1861, pp. 32-35. " (Meaning now lost) was a great man endued with the spirit of the gods; made the world and Indians, was the chief personage in their history of the flood, and now sits at the north pole overlooking all the transactions and affairs of the people he has placed on earth."

Manehojo.—C. M. Barbeau. *Huron and Wyandot. Memoir 80. Geological Survey, Ottawa, Ont., 1915.*

Nanibozhu.—A. F. Chamberlain, *Journal of American Folk-Lore*, July-Sept., 1891. Nanibozhu amongst the Ojibwa, etc., p. 193.

Nenebue (c soft).—Dr. F. G. Speck, *Myths and Folk-Lore of the Timagami Ojibwa. Memoir 70, Geological Survey, Ottawa, 1915, p. 28.*

Nenebojo.—Paul Radin. *Some Myths and Tales of the Ojibwa of South-eastern Ontario. Memoir 48, Geological Survey, Ottawa, 1914, p. 1-22.*

Also. *Literary Aspects of North American Mythology, Museum Bulletin 16. Geological Survey, Ottawa, 1915, p. 9.*

- Nanabojou.—Robert Paudash. The Coming of the Mississaugas (prepared by J. Hampden Barnham). Ontario Historical Society Report, 195, Vol. VI, p. 10.
- Manabuzhoo }
Nanaboozhoo } Foot-notes to the preceding entry.
- Na-na-bou-jou.—Louis Falge, M.D. Indian Remains in Manitowac Co., Wis., p. 146, Vol. 11, No. 1, the Wisconsin *Archaeologist*, Dec., 1915. This being the name of a village named after a chief in 1801-5.
- Nanabush } Used by Peter York, Ojibwa, Rama Reserve, Ontario Co., Ontario Pro-
Nanbush } vince, 1915-16.
- Nay-na-push
Nay-nu-boo-shoo Amelia M. Paget, *The People of the Plains*, 1909, p. 165.
- Wá'nibozh'n } A. E. Chamberlain, *Tales of the Mississaugas*, *Journal of American Folk Lore*, Vol. III, No. 1X, Ap-June, 1890, p. 150.
- Nānibozhu }
Nanapus.—T. Hugonard, O.M.I. Letter of June 3, 1916, Qu'Appelle, Indian Industrial School, Lebret P.O., Sask.
- Nanabush.—*The Mail and Empire*, 16th Feb., 1916, a court case, Georgian Bay Indian; present-day names Allan Nanabush and Alex. Nanabush. No answer followed letters of enquiry.
- Nénapue (e soft).—Alanson Skinner, *Plains Cree Tales*, *American Journal of Folk Lore*, Vol. XXIX, No. CXIII, July-Sept., 1916, p. 318. Used by the Crees at Broadview, N.W.T.
- Nānabozhu } William Jones, *Ojibwa Tales from the North Shore of Lake Superior*,
Nanibozhu } *Journal of American Folk Lore*, Vol. XXIX, No. CXIII, July-Sept., 1916, p. 389.
- Manibozho.—By Delewares.
Nanabozhu.—By Ojibwas.
Wanibozhu.—By Mississaugas.
Naniboz.—By Saulteaux of the north.
Manibush.—By Menominees.
Menabozho.—Mary Catherine Judd, *Wigwam Stories*, 1902. Preface and p. 223, etc. Miss Judd states that "The various names of Missaba, Mesaba, Michabo are merely English or French renderings of the same Algonquin word."

No. 30.

THE BAD OLD MAN AND THE GIRL.

Told by John York.

A long time ago in a little village of Indians lived an old man who was a very bad old man for girls, when he got a chance he would take a very small girl away back in the woods and would keep her there till she got big, and then would begin to use her badly.

This old man always passed as an old woman and wore women's dress, and the girls always believed that he was an old woman. One time he took one of these girls to go out hunting porcupines. There were no guns at that time and only clubs were used in hunting porcupines. They saw a porcupine in a tree and he

told the girl that he would go up the tree and knock the porcupine down. He went quite a long way up the tree and somehow he missed his footing and fell to the ground. Well, he fell in such a way that the girl saw that he was not an old woman.* When he got up he asked the girl, "What way he fell." The girl said, "I did not see what way you fell, I only looked at the porcupine." Well, the old man was satisfied with this. One morning when the girl woke up she found some beads on her breast, so she asked the old man what it meant. "Well," he said, "somebody wants to marry you." She thought that there was nobody around close by that would marry her only the old man, for she never saw anybody since she was taken away when she was only a little girl. The old man also told her that if she found some blue beads with one yellow one in the middle that that meant she was to get married right away. She was troubled over this, and one day when the old man was away hunting she got ready and packed up some of her things and ran away. When night came she camped alone. The next morning she started very early and that evening she made a little camp and slept well all night till about daylight, when she got up and made up her mind to trick (give a trick to) the old man whom she knew would come after her. So she got some old logs and fixed them in shape of some one laying asleep, and which she covered with some of her clothes, then she defecated over the supposed sleeping girl. By this time the old man got to the little camp before daylight and a short time after the girl had started out. He said, "You might go a long ways, but I go there too." He began to lay down by the supposed girl, but soon found that he was all over illth. He began to wash his buckskin clothing which gave the girl a good chance to get a long way ahead; while the girl was running she saw some tracks which she followed till she came to four hunters to whom she told her story. One man said, "He will get here in a short time, so we will cut your hair short and put some of our clothes on you, and this will fool the old man, for you will look like a boy." When the old man came up to them he asked them, "If they saw a girl here?" "No, we never saw a girl here," said one of them. The old man looked at the boy and all over but could not find the girl. This bent (fooled) the old man.

Note.—York says that in the olden time if a girl found beads on her breast when she woke up it meant that the giver wanted to marry her. G. E. L.

No. 31.

THE CHRISTIAN INDIAN AND HIS PAGAN WIFE.

Told by John York.—A true story.

One time not very long ago there was a very good Indian who lived a Christian life, but who had a wife that would not believe that there was Christianity, and would not listen to her man when he was making prayers in the morning and evening.

They had two very small children, one about one year old the other about two years. When the man was making prayers the little ones would kneel down with him. One night this man had a dream, and this dream was, that one day very near at hand something was going to happen to their place (home) about one minute to twelve o'clock at noon, and which also meant that the woman was going to turn to be a Christian. Somebody had told him in the dream that his house was to be on fire, so he prayed all the time that his children might be spared.

*"Saw everything the old man carried," York's expression.

He went out to the bush in the morning the same as usual, and about eleven o'clock he prayed for his baby (or babies) to be spared out of that fire. Near noon his wife came out to see what he was doing, when she came near she heard him saying in his prayer that his children would be spared. When he got up from his knees he saw his wife standing near by. She said to him, "What fire do you mean. You have said this in the morning and it gives me a lot of trouble thinking about the fire." He said to her, "You look at our house." She looked and saw the house on fire. She ran all her worth (might) to save the children, but when she got to the house it was too late, the house was all on fire. He came back to the house himself singing and praying. When he got to the house he saw his wife trying to go in the fire. He told her, "To keep away from the fire." After a while he walked a little way off, and saw his two children sitting on a little hill, but did not know who put them there. They were back inside the house when his wife left to see him in the bush. When his wife saw that the little ones were living she knelt down and prayed for the first time in her life, and they both claimed that it was God who put the children away when the house was on fire, for there were no people near by. This made this woman to be a Christian. They lost everything they had, but in a short time had lots of things given to them by other people.

No. 32.

THE WHITE DOCTOR AND THE BIG BEAR.

Told by John York.

In the early days one time there was a white doctor living near a river. He liked hunting and one time he was out hunting small game. He had a little dog that started to bark at something. The doctor tried to take the little dog away, but the little dog would not go. The doctor was in his canoe and the dog was on the shore quite a long way from the river. The doctor got out and left his gun in the canoe, thinking it was only a porcupine. When he got to the big rock, very close by he saw a great big bear coming right towards him. The bear got so close that it touched the doctor's nose and looked at him for a long time. The doctor stepped back easy and the bear stood where he was till the doctor got close to his canoe and jumped in and pulled out. The doctor smelled a strong smell and when he looked he found that he had defecated in his clothes, and was so scared that he did not know it. This is a true story, for John York saw it happen when he was a young man. The doctor came from Lindsay, and the river was the Lindsay River (The Seugog). This story is given to show one phase of the Indian's humor at the expense of the white man, and has a certain scientific value.

No. 33.

THE BATTLE ON TORONTO BAY--WAR OF 1812.

John York.

(Died in April, 1916, aged 97, at Rama Reserve.)

"My grandfather was one of the men who fought when the Americans came in and he told this story.

"There were a lot of them, and our side had very few men. Of course all the Indians wanted to fight before the fight took place. We got one of the American men (soldiers) that was killed and took him back to our camp, and our leader or

commander (war chief) and the warriors cut the white man to pieces, and the commander called all the fighting men to come to where he was. The first man came in to where this war chief was. The chief took a small piece of flesh of the white man and gave it to this man to eat. The man took it and ate it without any trouble. The next man came in and took one piece and ate it, and swallowed it, but in a short time the piece came out (was vomited up). Well, this man is let go home because he is no good, and all the men that swallowed pieces that stayed in their stomachs were the ones that went to fight. That is the way men were examined in those days.

"All our men (Indians) got ready on the shore and they could see the American boats coming towards where they were. The Indian leader or war chief could see the Americans getting ready on the other side, without using a glass. He said, 'They are starting out now. Get ready.' And it took a long time before anybody else could see the boats coming. When the boats came in close our men began to shoot and kept up a hot fire all day long, and killed many. This war chief stood right at the front and never was touched all day. Towards night he told his men 'To run back in the woods.' By this time the American Indians got away back of them, and our men fought hard not knowing that they were surrounded by the American Indians, and our war chief got shot from behind and fell with a broken leg, and lay for a long time till the next day. He was then shot to death by his own men to prevent him falling alive into the hands of the American Indians, and they all ran away for their lives. When the battle got through the bush was all smoke, and it took a long time to bury the dead. All the men that escaped death walked all the way from Toronto Bay to Orillia, and never got any pay from the Government."

No. 34.

NANABUSH (INCOMPLETE). (No. 9.)

Told by Jonas George.

My father has often spoken of him as having travelled about the district of Lake Superior and the country about Hudson Bay. Nanabush was travelling easterly along the north shore, Lake Huron. He saw a very large beaver. He took a large tree and tried to spear the beaver, but did not get it, only wounded it. (The beaver must have weighed about 500 lbs.) He then left the shore, after having lost the beaver, and coming east went up a rock and down the other side, when he saw a partridge which flew up with a loud buzzing roar. . . . Nanabush was still coming east many miles and sat down to rest. He heard a voice which seemed to be the voice of God saying to him that he could eat the animals about him. Nanabush thought that he would like some ducks. He called the ducks to him. They came near to him and he picked up as many as he wanted to eat. He still kept travelling eastward towards the French River. His mind seemed to be filled with thoughts of God. He noticed a vine climbing about a tree and in tasting it found that it was sweet. He thought his grandchildren could use this in the years to come. On the journey he came across Lake Couchiching, landing at Quarry Point and sat on a large, flat stone leaving an impression where he sat on the stone, which can be seen to this day (impression is about 21½ feet square and 8 inches deep). Nanabush was a big powerful man and must have been a heavy man.

Note by G. E. L.—Jonas George got mixed and forgetful at this part of the story, he forgot the young partridges and their questioning by Nanabush, also their answers, and how Nanabush changed their colour by defecating upon them. Partridges were formerly white. This missing portion prevails in other tales of Nanabush in other Algonquin bands in Ontario.

No. 35.

BELIEF IN WITCHES.

R. J. Markle.

The Ojibwa Indians on Parry Island Reserve believe in witchcraft. The most intelligent of them stick to this belief. For instance, they believe a witch who is never known to the rest of the people can turn into a cat or dog, etc., and has the power, if angered, to inflict the most terrible punishment on its victim, in the disease, such as tubercular trouble, bone decay, etc.

No. 36.

OJIBWA AND MOHAWK—THE WILD INDIANS. (No. 6.)

Told by John Wesley, Ojibwa, Rama Reserve, who has two Indian names, Py-ash-ē-gōb and Mūk-kō-got.

One Ojibwa man and his son were out hunting down the Severn River some time ago. They went away for a little time, then they came back, when they got out on the lake, which is called Sparrow Lake, the old man said to his son: "You see those pine trees across the lake." The son said, "Yes." "There are about twenty wild Indians (Mohawks) right under those trees, and they already see us," the old man said. This man and his son have got to go very near where these wild Indians were hiding, which was about where the Severn River goes into Sparrow Lake. "Well, I guess we will have to face them," the old man said and so they went on. It was about sundown when the man said to his son, "They are watching us very close, when we go in the River they will follow us and you have to paddle all you are worth. We will try and get up the river as far as we can, there is a little creek about two miles above." The boy got ready and just as they went in the old man said to his son, "Now they get in their canoes to get us," so they paddled hard till they got to this little creek and paddled their canoe up to the bank which was pretty high. He told his son, "If they know that we are here as soon as they face their canoes right where we are you shoot both barrels and run away all you can go, straight south all the time till you come to our Lake" (that is Lake Couchiching). They watched the wild Indians. The old man said, "Here they come: I am going to fight all I can and will try and kill them all before they get to the shore. They are coming pretty fast." The wild Indians went by. "They never saw us," said the old man, "and I guess we are all right." The place was wild and nobody near by till they got to Washago where the first house was to be seen. They staid there all night till next morning. This man said, "We will see those men before we get to our Lake, and I guess they will watch for us at the portage." This portage was about two miles long which they had to make to get home. They went up the river anyway, they got to this portage and on to Lake Couchiching. When they got out of the river the old man said, "We are safe now, but those men are there just across the bay, we will go hy close, we will see if they

are *men enough*. They will hit us with something, stones or a piece of stick. If they do that I will jump out and follow them." (Nature of a *double dare*, a *dare* on each side.) Just as they went close by the rock where the wild Indians were a little stone fell in the water. Just then the old man paddled for the shore. He saw the wild Indians running away all their worth leaving some pipes and tobacco and other things that they did not have time to pick up, which this old man took away and got home safely.

Notes by G. E. L.—The expression "men enough" or "man enough" means "brave enough" or "courageous or daring enough," or "able to do such and such a thing." "Wild Indians," in this sense, means non-Reserve Indians, or "bush Indians." The man and his son were Rama Reserve Indians. The others were probably a roving band out for plunder, but not on the war path.

These Mohawks were for robbing this old man, but were scared away when they got to Lake Conchiching by the Rama Indians.

No. 37.

THUNDERBIRDS. (No. 3.)

Told by Jonas George.

(Another version of No. 4, Report 1915, The Big Monster Eagle Story.)

About four hundred years ago, as the Indians tell it, there were six camps of Indians somewhere in Canada. One man was newly married and was out hunting in the bush trying to catch some game. It was in the fall hunting, and he camped there all fall till the lake froze up. He hunted beaver through the ice. He cut holes through the ice to find the hole in the ground where the beaver went in. (Bank beaver who live in holes in the banks of lakes and rivers.) He hunted with a dog. This man's father heard what they said (rumours). Trouble might come at night on the ice. Might be something come on you or happen to you, so the man went to go home after dark and crossed the ice, about two hundred yards across. There was little moonlight. He got about half way over, and for just a moment he could see the moon. Something just like a dark cloud came over the moon and he heard something over his head which came down (this was a big monster eagle with wings about twenty feet long and body about eight feet wide) so this big bird (Thunderbird) caught the man in its claws and took him up in the sky and the man never knew anything for a long time, and was taken right over the clouds. This man began to wake up laying inside the big bird's claws. He has his pole (ice chisel) in his hand yet, what he used to cut through the ice with in hunting for beaver. This man is big and heavy. The eagle had long claws about twelve inches long, lots of room for the man to lay in them. This man looks up and sees a rock where the eagle goes to, a big bluff and a very high place. The eagle takes a rest on top. The eagle lets the man go. The man looks around and sees some young eagles sitting down. The man takes a "sit down" and looks at the young birds who are moving all the time towards him. The man began to be afraid of them.

The old eagle took the man for food. The man had the pole in his hand and walks towards the young birds and hit one of them and killed it, rolled it to the edge of the rock, opened the belly, took all the insides out, and went in himself. He had string to close up the opening by sewing. The man began moving and the bird fell down off the rock. He can't tell where he goes down for a long time. He

can't see anything for a long while. And when he didn't feel any moving (movement) he began to cut the string and got out and looked around. He was standing on the ice on the shore of a lake, so he went on. He goes very far and came across a snowshoe track. He went on and came to a house where someone was living. He saw an old man and woman. These people spoke and asked him if he was hungry, so he got something to eat. It was nice, and he stayed with them for a long while. The old man went out every day and came back after sun down, and the woman went out every night and came back just at daylight.

One time the old man spoke and said, "I take you home to-morrow morning." This man got on the old man's back, who walked very fast. The old man spoke, "You look out if you see any track on the snow." He looked and saw old track and the old man dropped him down.

This man went on. Travelled long distance. He came to a long, narrow place and stood up and looked around. The place was almost like where he was in the first place when the eagle took him.

This man began to know quite well where he had camped. He went a little way and began to know that he was at his landing. He saw a woman coming to the shore, an old grey-headed woman. That was his wife. He had been away for years, and his wife was very old. I think he is living there yet.

No. 38.

OJIBWAS AND MOHAWKS. (No. 7.)

Told by Mrs. Peter York, Indian name, Me-an-jo.

Once there were three Ojibwa men out in a canoe fishing. Suddenly they saw a Mohawk war canoe with ten men in it who began to chase the Ojibwas. These Ojibwas started off, the bow and stern men paddling for all their worth. The third Ojibwa man, who was a big rough fellow sat in the centre of the canoe and would not paddle. The others told him to "Pull, pull, or else we will be caught," but he would not paddle. The Mohawks, though they used short paddles gained on the Ojibwas. The big rough fellow said, "Let me get in the front of the canoe." "No," the others said, "you stay where you are, and paddle for all you're worth." "If you don't let me get in front we'll all die," said the big fellow. So they let him pass up to the front. When he got there he reached under his coat and took the skin of a fish duck (Ah-zig, Shell drake) out of his medicine bag, which hung over his right shoulder. This skin had the feathers on and the big fellow held it in front of the canoe and said, "Ah-zig! ah-zig! ah-zig! ah-zig!" as fast as he could. The skin began to flap its wings and paddle its feet (in the manner of the Shell drake, skimming along the top of the water) and took the canoe along so fast that they soon escaped the Mohawks and the Ojibwas were saved.

No. 39.

THE MAN FROM THE SKY.

Told by Jonas George (Wah-sa-ghe-zik).

About four hundred years ago there were five or six hundred Indians living together somewhere south from Barrie, on what is now called "Pine Plains." These Indians had a big time at that place.

Two Indians walked up and looked around those plains. They went a little ways (about 200 yards) and saw somebody sitting on the grass. This was a man, so they went to see. The man put up his hand to keep them back, so they stopped and looked. After a while the man spoke and said, "I don't belong to this land, I dropped down from above, yesterday, so I am here now." Those two men wanted him to go with them down home. "Yes," he said, "you go home and clean the place where I will stay, and come back again, then I will go with you in a few days."

The two men went home and told the people about it. They began to clean the place where they were to keep the Skyman for two days, then they went to get him. Sky man was a nice looking man, clean and shining bright. Just at sundown he looked up just like he was watching. He spoke sometimes in a clear voice. Just after dark he spoke. He said, "Stay in two days. I'll go up, something will come down and get me to go up."

This wise man said that he was running from where he came. There was an open place and he couldn't stop running, so he got in and dropped. The next day he said, "It's a nice country where we live, everything good. To-morrow noon I am going up, I will leave you, and you people all be good. Every Indian must be home to-morrow to see me go up."

Just after noon the next day he looked up and said, "It's coming." Everybody looked up but could see nothing for a long time. The man that kept Skyman at his home could see good, and saw something like a bright star shining away up. The other people didn't see anything till it came near the ground. This thing was the nicest thing ever seen in this world. Two men got hold of it and pulled down heavy, then Skyman got in and said, "All right," and away he went up happy. I guess he's living there yet.

