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MYTHOLOGY

## BE-TSÚNE-YENÉHLSHAI[N], HIS GRANDMOTHER SHE-REARED-HIM[1]

PEOPLE were living on an island in a lake. They were fishing through the ice. The women would hear a child crying, and would search for it, but none could find it. When they came close to the place, the crying ceased, and as soon as they went away it was heard again. An old woman went alone to search for the infant. She perceived that the sound came from a large heap of caribou-dung. She scraped it aside and found a baby no larger than her thumb. She placed it in the thumb of her mitten and carried it home.

The baby grew rapidly. One day the little boy, still no larger than an ordinary baby, said: "Grandmother, tell my four uncles, whenever they kill a caribou they are to bring me the front feet. I like to play with them."

Another day he said, "My eldest uncle has a caribou foot and has not brought it to me." His grandmother went to the tipi of her eldest son and said, "My grandchild wants his caribou foot."

He answered: "Oh, that is not for him. I too have a child, and he likes to play with caribou feet."

So she returned without the foot and told her grandson what had occurred. He said: "Grandmother, we will not go with them. We will go west."

"Oh, my grandchild, how would we live? You know your uncles hunt and bring me some of their meat. That is how we live. Who will feed us if we do not go with them?"

"Do not fear. We shall have plenty, and they will be the hungry ones." So they went westward by themselves.

They came to a small lake in which fish had never been caught. He said, "Grandmother, make a hole in the ice and put in your hook." So she heated stones and made a hole in the ice. "Put in your hook, grandmother." As soon as she had done so, he exclaimed, "Somebody is coming!" A fish seized the hook and she pulled out a large trout. "Put in your hook again, grandmother; I think you will catch another

1 A Chipewyan tale.

kind." She did so, and he said, "Somebody is coming!" She drew out a whitefish. "Try again, grandmother; I think you will catch another kind." She put in her hook. "Somebody is coming!" he said. She pulled out a maskinonge. "That will be enough. We have plenty, and l think my uncles will be hungry."

"Oh, do not say that! They are my sons. I do not wish them to starve."

"Grandmother, they will not starve. They will be hungry, but after a time they will kill a bear and then all will be right."[2]

One day the boy said, "Grandmother, make me some snowshoes." She made a pair of tiny snowshoes and bundled him in his *jis-kúre-*i ["mittens round-pointed coat "].[3]She tied a leather belt about his waist, and he went out to play. When night came, he had not returned. She wept, thinking he must have fallen into a snowdrift and frozen. She cried herself to sleep, and in the middle of the night she felt something cold at her breast. Her grandchild had returned and crept under the bedding.

In the morning he stood up and said, "Grandmother, untie my belt." She did so, and a large number of objects fell out.

"What is that, my grandson ?

"Why, grandmother, those are caribou tongues."

"Where did you get them?"

"Oh, I have killed many caribou. Come and see them." They went a short distance and she found a large number of dead caribou. He had been playing with them, and in their gambols he had bitten off their tongues and they had died from loss of blood. The old woman butchered them and filled their tipi with meat.

One day Betsúneyenéhlshai[n] said: "Grandmother, I am going to visit my uncles. I think they are hungry." He put on his little snowshoes and went straight toward their camp, although they had moved

2 A period of unsuccessful hunting is caused by a spell, which is broken when a bear is killed.

3 A coat of caribou-hide for children, with sleeves closed at the bottom and with cap attached, the sleeves slit at the wrists so that the hands could be used when necessary, and the skin sometimes doubled so that there was fur outside as well as next to the skin.

away from the old place. A short distance from the lake where they were now camped he took off his snowshoes and became a small caribou. He went to the holes where they had been fishing, and found the bundles of branches on which the fishermen sat. He kicked them all aside, went back to his snowshoes, and returned home.

Again his grandmother had cried herself to sleep, and in the night found him creeping in to warm himself at her breast. In the morning he said, "Grandmother, I think my uncles will soon be coming."

At their camp his uncles went to fish that morning and saw the tracks of a caribou, which had kicked their bundles of branches aside. They said: "Caribou do not do that. It must be Betsúneyenéhlshai$^{n}$." One of them followed the trail and found where the snowshoes had been left, and saw that the caribou tracks became the marks of snowshoes. He followed them, and came to his mother's tipi. The boy told him to bring his brothers, and when they arrived they feasted on caribou meat. The boy said, "Hereafter you must always bring me the front feet of the caribou you kill."

## BOZÉLI$^{N}$AZE, POWERLESS SMALL[4]

BOZÉLI$^{N}$AZE had two handsome wives and a fine camp. But he was so small that people thought him only a little boy. One day he saw a trail in the snow leading across a small lake. At the other side was smoke. He followed the trail and came to a tipi. Inside were two women, a small one and a large, fat one. They did not move aside and offer him a seat, and he sat down near the door. They were cooking a piece of beaver fat on a spit over the coals. The fat woman said: "Little boy, fetch some snow for water. Some day you may be my husband." She was joking him because she thought him a little boy playing with his father's snowshoes. He took the bark pail and brought snow from the foot of a birch where the dogs had been urinating. The woman angrily threw it out. She cut off a thin strip of fat where the spit-stick passed through it and gave it to him.

He was displeased, because he was used to good food in plenty. So he slipped it inside his shirt and soon departed. On the back trail he thrust into the snow the spit-stick with the bit of fat still impaled on it.

4 A Chipewyan tale encouraging hospitality.

When the husband of the two women came homeward he saw a trail, and beside it the stick with a piece of beaver fat. He went on home and asked, "Who was here?"

The woman said: "Oh, a foolish little boy who brought me snow on which the dogs had urinated. I told him some day he would be my husband, making fun of him."

The man was displeased, because he thought perhaps this boy belonged to good people. The next day he took his wives and followed the trail to a fine camp. Two women outside were working with large quantities of meat. The tipi was lined with beaver fur. There sat the boy. It was plain that he was the man of this camp.

"Come in," said Bozéli$^{n}$aze. The man entered, but his two wives remained outside with the women of the camp. Bozéli$^{n}$aze ordered his wives to prepare food, and they roasted a sheet of the fat that lines a moose's belly. When it was dripping hot grease, Bozéli$^{n}$aze gave it to his visitor, who greedily ate it. Then he gave him a pail of cold water. When the man drank, the hot fat became tallow, and he choked and strangled. Then Bozéli$^{n}$aze went outside and lay with the fat woman who had promised jokingly to be his wife. He came back and said: "This woman promised to be my wife. Well, I have already used her. She is mine. If this makes you angry, you can fight me now."

"No, my friend, you may keep her." So the man went away with his other wife, and Bozéli$^{n}$aze had three.

## TSÉQI TSATSÁ$^{N}$NE HEHÓ$^{N}$HL'AI$^{N}$, WOMAN COPPER SHE-FOUND[5]

AN Eskimo captured a woman and took her northward across the great water. She bore a child and lived in that country two or three years. But she was homesick and cried. One night she took her child and ran away. At the shore of the great water she sat down and cried.

5 Narrated by a Chipewyan. The myth belongs to the Yellowknives, but is well known to all the northern Athapascans. The incident of the greedy child abandoned by the mother through fear of its blood-lust, and that of the woman becoming embedded in the ground, are reminiscent of Kwakiutl mythology. Perhaps the source of these conceptions, so far as the Kwakiutl and the northern Athapascans are concerned, is Eskimoan.

A wolf came close and looked at her. Tears were streaming down her face. The wolf licked them off. He whimpered like a dog, *i*$^{n}$ *i*$^{n}$ *i*$^{n}$, and ran a few steps toward the water. He stopped, looked back, and whimpered. He went a little farther and looked back. The woman thought, "It must be that he wants me to follow him." She got up and followed. The wolf ran down to the water and stepped into it. She found the water very shallow, and days and nights she followed him until at last they came to the other shore. Tired out, she lay down to rest.

Looking back, she saw the water dotted with shapes. She thought the Eskimo were pursuing her, but after a time she perceived that it was a large herd of caribou crossing the water. They landed at a cut-bank, and climbed up by a narrow trail through a gap. At the top the woman waited. She had tied a sharp awl to a stick, and as the caribou passed, she pierced them. But only one was killed. It lay down under a tree and died. The woman butchered it and dried the meat. She cleaned the stomach, filled it with blood, fat, and meat, and cooked it with hot stones. When she opened it to eat, the baby greedily seized it. She saw that he was voracious, and feared him. She said: "My child, wait here. I will carry the dry meat a little way and come back for you. I cannot carry the meat and you at the same time." The child did not object. He was satisfied with the blood sausage.

The woman took up her load of dry meat, and from the top of the hill she looked back and saw the child greedily devouring the sausage. Many days she travelled. One night she thought she saw the light of a fire, and rejoiced because she would find her people. But the next day she saw no camp. At night she beheld the light again, just as far away as before, and again she found no camp. After observing the light on four successive nights she searched carefully in the place where it had appeared to be. She found two lumps of shining yellow material, the like of which she had never seen. It was heavy and hard. She struck one piece with the other, and found that it could be shaped. She beat out a knife and sharpened the edge by rubbing it on a stone. She proceeded, and on the top of each hill as she journeyed she raised a large stone, marking the trail.

When at last she found her people and told them of her discovery, the men asked her to go back and show them the place. But she said: "I have marked the trail. From the top of each hill you will be able to see a stone on the top of the next." Still they insisted that she accompany

them, and she agreed when they promised not to molest her.

When they arrived at the place, they made what implements they desired. They called the yellow material *tsatsá*$^{n}$*ne.*[6] Then some proposed that they use the woman, and though others objected, they did so. They prepared to return home, but the woman refused to accompany them. The next time they visited the place they found her sitting in the same spot, but her body had sunk into the ground above the waist, and the lumps of*tsatsá*$^{n}$*ne* were half hidden in the soil. They took what they wished and asked the woman to go home with them. Again she refused, and said that whenever they came they should leave meat for her. The third time a party visited the place there was neither woman nor*tsatsá*$^{n}$*ne.* They killed a caribou and left the meat. The next year they found that the flesh had become*tsatsá*$^{n}$*ne;* but that which had been the liver was too hard for use, and that which had been the lungs was too soft.

## THE FIRST BEAVERS[7]

AN old woman fell in love with her son-in-law, and while be was hunting, she killed her daughter. She scalped her, and put the skin over her own gray hair. When her son-in-law returned with a deer, she opened it and they sat down to eat the tripe. Knowing that her toothless gums would not produce the crackling sound made in chewing raw tripe, she secretly threw a handful of ashes on her portion; and lest the man observe her gums, she sat half averted and without speaking to him. Unused to such treatment, he became angry. He grasped her hair to chastise her. The scalp came off.

In the morning he went hunting, and the old woman moved camp after him. During the day he worked back to the old camp and found the body of his wife. He put the scalp on her head and lay down beside her. In the morning she was alive. They rejoined his mother-in-law, and the three lived as before.

6 The word appears to mean "beaver excrement." But the narrator said that to him there is a difference of pitch between the terms for beaver excrement and copper.

7 This Chipewyan myth was cited as evidence that the mother-in-law taboo was not a custom of that tribe.

The woman had a child. One day her mother said, "Son-in-law, when you are breaking trail, leave a sign at every slough, stream, or lake that you cross." So whenever he crossed water he broke down a tree and made a mark in the snow pointing the direction of his trail. One day he crossed a valley so narrow that he thought it useless to leave a sign. He went on, marked the place where they would camp, and proceeded to hunt. In the evening he returned to the intended camping place, but nobody was there. He went back along his trail, and in the valley where he had left no sign he found a beaver-dam and a large pond. He saw a white-headed old beaver swimming with a younger one and a very small one. He realized that these were his family. He called his wife and his child. The smallest one swam close to him, but when he extended his hand, it dived. He begged them to come with him, but the white-haired one said: "You have started something for all time. We shall remain beavers."

It is because beavers were once people that they work like humans.

## DZA-GHÁL-IAZE, LOWER-LEG TREMBLES LITTLE[8]

A GREAT chief was Dzagháliaze. He lived in the tundra country far east of Cold lake. One day a band of caribou were reported to be lying on the ice of a small lake. He sent his men to set snares in all the trails leading into the brush that surrounded the lake, and themselves to take their places beside the trails and wait with their spears. When the snares were set, some of the men rushed out on the ice to drive the animals into the snares. But instead of caribou they found Cree disguised by covering themselves with skins and wearing antlers. A fierce fight ensued. A woman came running to the chief's tipi and told what was going on. He dashed out upon the ice. The strong wind that was blowing retarded him, and he turned his shoulders so as to offer less resistance to it. Just as he reached the enemy, he slipped on the ice and shot forward under the spears that were directed toward him. Their spears struck the ice. He turned and attacked them with his spear; his men rallied and destroyed the Cree. He was a very small man, but

8 "Little Shaky-leg" was probably an actual person whose deeds have attained the status of miracles. The story was told by a Chipewyan.

could run faster than a caribou.

Once the Chipewyan had been looking for the Cree, but could not find them. Much discouraged, Dzagháliaze was walking behind the party. They climbed a small hill, and suddenly drew back. Dzagháliaze came up and asked what was the matter. "Something dangerous! Do not go there!" But he insisted. He started forward, leaving them holding the blanket. They ran to the top of the hill and saw something like a cloud of smoke. When the cloud subsided, they saw their chief standing between two great white bears, leaning with his chin on his little spear. He had killed both animals. They cut them up and feasted.

Then they went on, still discouraged because they could not find the Cree. Dzagháliaze went ahead. He came back and reported that he had found a man and a woman. The men hurried forward to the attack and discovered a great camp of Cree on a point of land. All the Cree in the country had assembled in a large summer camp, and it was for that reason that the Chipewyan had been unable to come upon one of their camps. They rushed forward to the attack. Unobserved by the others, Dzagháliaze went around and attacked from the point of the peninsula. As the slaughter proceeded, he met his men more than halfway, for he had killed more than half of the enemy.

## DA-TSÁ$^{N}$-THI, BEAK EXCREMENT [RAVEN] HEAD[9]

DATSÁ$^{N}$THI, whose mother was a captive Cree, was a great leader in the border country between the Cree and the Chipewyan along the line from Athabasca lake to Cree and Caribou [Reindeer] lakes. He sometimes associated with the Cree, sometimes with the Chipewyan, but mostly with the latter. Fighting was a mania with him. All feared him, but none could kill him. He was called Raven Head because of a skirt of raven-skins, the beaks of which were tied together, two and two.

The people were camped beside a lake, and Raven Head went for birch-bark to make a canoe. While he was absent, the Cree attacked

9 Raven Head (not Crow Head, as the name is usually translated) was probably, Eke Little Shaky-leg, a historical person, a long-ago hero of the Chipewyan.

the camp, and when he and a small boy who had accompanied him returned, they found everybody dead, even the old grandmother with whom he lived. He said, "I am going to sleep here." He placed the dead in a heap and said to the boy: "While I sleep, if you see the Cree coming, call to me, 'Wolverene is coming!'" He slept so long that the corpses were rotting beside him. His power was working to bring the Cree back. At last the boy saw a large number of canoes approaching, and he called, "Wolverene is coming!" But Raven Head lay there like a dead man. He called again, and Raven Head leaped up. When he saw the Cree, be sent the boy into the bush. The Cree did not recognize him, for he was creeping about, crying, calling upon father and mother, as if he were a small boy. The Cree said one to another, "There is a boy we did not kill." They came ashore and leaped out of their canoes. But Raven Head turned suddenly and with a large bone broke their legs and arms. He made them sit in a circle and called for the boy. He gave him his spear and let him kill all the crippled Cree.

## NIYÁNIMÍS OVERCOMES COLD[10]

THERE was a large camp. A baby began to cry and continued far into the night. Its mother tried in every way to soothe it, and at last she impatiently pushed it aside to the door- way, and immediately it ceased. She and her husband fell asleep. In the morning they heard a man and a woman in another tipi suddenly begin to wail, and saw them go from tipi to tipi, crying: "Our baby is lost! The bag is empty!"

The next night their baby cried again, and would not stop until it was pushed aside to the doorway. And in the morning another infant's bag was empty. This continued to happen, and after the sixth child had disappeared an old man came to the tipi of the crying baby. He said, "I will sleep here."

Again the baby cried and was pushed aside, and the parents fell asleep. But the old man watched. He saw the baby begin to squirm and wriggle, and finally slip out of its bag. The baby shook itself and became a white owl. It flew up through the smoke-vent. Soon the old man heard the sound of a baby crying in the air. The sound passed rapidly away into the distance. Then the white owl flew back through

10 A Cree myth.

the vent, alighted on the floor, shook itself, and became a baby. It squirmed and wriggled back into the bag and slept.

In the morning another baby-bag was empty. The old man called the people together and said: "It is this Niyánimís that is stealing your infants. He is a white owl."

The child's father said: "Well, if my child is stealing your children, take him. Do what you will with him. You had better kill him or there will be no infants left."

They answered: "No, we could not do that. It would not bring back our children."

"If you are not willing to do it," the father said, "I will do it." He raised a knife, but the old man restrained him: "Stop! Do not do it. We will move camp and leave Niyánimís here. Perhaps something good will come of it." For he had had a dream. So the camp was moved and Niyánimís was left lying on the ground in his bag.

Two young men crept back secretly and hid in the bushes. They watched, and saw Niyánimís wriggle out of his bag, shake himself into a white owl, and fly away. Soon he returned, carrying a baby. Seven times he flew away and returned with a baby. The children were just large enough to walk.

Niyánimís said: "Now, my boys, let us try what we can do. Look about and see if you can find some leather." They scattered about the camp-site and soon returned with small bits of leather. Niyánimís stretched them this way and that, until be had many large pieces of tanned skin. He sent his boys to search for sinew, and from the discarded bits they found he made long pieces of thread. They brought a moose leg-bone, and from it be split a sliver and fashioned an awl. Then he made fine clothing for all of them. By this time the two young men had fallen asleep, and when they woke the place was deserted. They followed the trail of their people, but before they overtook them all these things had vanished from their minds. They remembered nothing.

Niyánimís led his companions northwestward, and after many days they came to a spruce tree. He made bows and arrows, and they killed many caribou and made a tipi. They were on the shore of a large, frozen lake. Niyánimís said: "My boys, let us see what we can do. On yonder island lives a man who wishes to wrestle with me. If I lose, he will kill us. If I win, our people will be glad."

They started across the ice. It was so smooth that no man could stand on it. But wherever Niyánimís set his foot a depression was left, and in these his companions stepped and went forward. They reached the shore of the island, and a very large man came down to them. He said: "Well, Niyánimís, have you come to play with me? Come, I will make a road for you to my camp. See if you can follow me." He started toward his tipi, and each time he raised a foot a long sharp knife was left protruding from the earth. Niyánimís set his feet on them one by one, and followed him without harm, and his companions did likewise. At the camp the man said: "You have beaten me the second time. But come, we will eat and sleep, and tomorrow we will play again." So they ate and slept.

In the morning the man said: "Now, Niyánimís, come with me. Leave your boys here. Do you see that hill? We will play there." They went to the top of a hill, and the man caused a hard wind to blow. It became very cold. The trees were cracking with the cold and crashing before the wind. The man became a shaggy buffalo, and Niyánimís became a snowbird. When it grew even colder, the bird crept under the thick hair on the back of the buffalo's neck. At noon the buffalo called, "Niyánimís"

"Yes!"

"Oh, all right."

In the middle of the afternoon he called again, "Niyánimís!" And again the bird answered. Just before sunset he called once more, and after sunset the fourth time. When for the fourth time Niyánimís answered, the buffalo said: "Well, we must go back to camp and eat. You have beaten me the third time." So they went back to the tipi, and the man treated the boys well.

The next morning he said: "Niyánimís, yesterday it was very cold. Today it will be warm. We will take a sweat." He brought out two very large bark vessels and filled them with water. He put in hot stones until the water boiled. He got into one, and Niyánimís got into the other. But Niyánimís had tied a small feather to the crown of his head and had told his boys that so long as the feather remained above the water he would be all right; but if it dropped into the water, he would be dead. All day they remained in the boiling water, and at sunset the man got out and called, "Niyánimís!" And Niyánimís stepped out also. The man said: "Well, you have beaten me the fourth time. I can do

no more. Do with me what you will." Niyánimís took the man's great knife and quartered his body. One piece he threw eastward and said, "You will be East Wind." Another he threw to the south: "You will be South Wind." Another he threw to the west: "You will be West Wind." Another he threw to the north: "You will be North Wind and hereafter you will not blow cold. There will be warm weather so that the people can live." Before this time the wind had always blown from the north, and everything was frozen. But Niyánimís divided its power into four.

Niyánimís said to his companions: "In the morning we shall have a visitor. The people are camping not far from here, and they are starving. Our visitor will look very bad." In the morning came a man.

He could scarcely walk. Niyánimís invited him to the tipi and said, "You must be having a hard time."

"Yes, my people are starving. They can no longer hunt, so weak are they."

Niyánimís fed him and gave him a bag of meat, saying, "If this does not suffice to give your people strength to come here, return tomorrow and get more."

The man carried the meat to his camp and fed the people, but they had no strength to walk. So be returned the next day and received more meat. When he arrived with the second load, the old man who had discovered that Niyánimís had been carrying away the lost children said: "Oh, I told you something good would come! I think this meat is from Niyánimís."

The next day they were able to visit the camp of the strangers. Niyánimís seated his own parents at the left of the door, and one after another he called the parents of his companions and seated them, man and wife together. Then be pointed out to each boy his parents, and all rejoiced. He said: "You will go back to your camp, but we shall remain here. But we are going to marry." He sent all the people apart, except his own parents, and told his mother to bring a certain girl to be the wife of one of his boys. Thus he sent for seven girls. Finally he told her to bring for him the daughter of the principal chief.

## ORIGIN OF THE SUN DANCE[11]

A MAN was constantly trying to seduce his younger brother's wife, but she would not consent. He decided that it would be necessary to kill his brother, but he was reluctant to do it with his own hands. One day he said: "My brother, I know where is an eagle's nest. Let us go and capture the young ones." So they went together. They came to the top of a high mountain, and there in the rock was a deep hole. The elder brother said: "Look down. You can see the eaglets." The younger brother stooped and peered down into the hole. His brother pushed him, and he fell in.

He found himself with a young Thunderbird, who said: "Oh, I am glad to have you. When my parents are hunting, I am all alone. Now I will have someone to play with." When the father Thunderbird came home, bringing a dead body, he said, " I smell a human being I"

"Of course you do, my father. You have brought one with you."

"No, but what I smell is a living person."

"Yes, my father, I have found a man. But I wish you would not kill him. I want him for a playmate."

"Let me see him."

The young Thunderbird raised a wing and showed the young man. "Well, for myself," said the father, "it is all right. You may keep him. But your mother is the worst. She is very bad toward the people."

Soon the mother Thunderbird came. "I smell human beings!" she said.

"Yes," said the father. "Our son has found a man, and wishes to keep him for a play mate. Now, you are very bad toward people. If you will promise not to harm him, you may see him."

"Where is he?"

"No, first you must promise."

So she promised, and her son raised a wing and showed the young man. Her eyes flashed lightning, and her feathers raised.

"Stop!" cried the young Thunderbird. "You have promised I" So she became quiet.

The father Thunderbird said to the young man: "You will remain with us four nights. But our nights are not like yours. When the sun

11 A Cree legend.

rises, sets, and rises again, you call that a day. From summer to summer is a day with us." So the young man remained with them four years. Whenever they returned from their hunting they appeared just like people. Every night the Thunderbird and the young man sang together.

At the end of four years the father Thunderbird said: "Now you will go home. I have taught you my songs. My son will carry you home. When you find your camp, stop on the windward side so that you will not smell them. Go up on a hill, and someone will come to you. Then you can send for your father."

So the young Thunderbird carried the man home and left him on a hill on the windward side of the camp. Soon he saw a boy approaching. When the boy came near, he recognized his own son. But the boy did not know him, because he had been an infant when his father was killed by a wild animal, as his uncle had reported. The man mentioned his father's name and asked the boy if he was alive.

"Yes, he is my grandfather."

"Go and tell him to come."

When the young man's father came, he was told to stop at a short distance. "Go back to the camp and put up a new tipi on fresh ground outside the circle. When you have done so, let no woman go there. Then come again to me."

All this his father did, and the young man went to the tipi. He made four incense fires about the central spot in the tipi, and then called the principal men. There during four days and nights he instructed them in the Sun dance, which he had learned from the Thunderbirds.

## SOME ADVENTURES OF WISÁKECHAHK, THE TRICKSTER[12]

WISÁKECHAHK saw a flock of swans on a lake. He called: "My brothers, come to me! I wish to see you closely and talk with you." They swam to him and he said, " Oh, my brothers, I wish to be like you." The leader answered, "My brother, you cannot do it, we have a hard life."

" Yes, yes, I can do it. I will be one of you."

So the swan pulled out two wing-feathers and gave them to him. He placed one on each arm and blew on them. He became a swan.

12 Wisákechahk is the buffoon of Cree mythology.

At the molting season the old swan cautioned him: "My brother, do not call too much in the evening. The people might hear you, and come in canoes to kill us. For we cannot fly well now. In the day, when the wind is blowing, you can call."

That evening Wisákechahk suddenly called, "*Kuku … kukuku…!*" The others in alarm said, "Do not so, brother!" But again he called. Some people in the distance heard him and got into their canoes. They surrounded the swans and killed them, but Wisákechahk was too quick and avoided them. When they had killed all the others, he cried: "Do not kill me, my friends! I am Wisákechahk! Take me into your canoe." They picked him up, and when they came ashore he shook off his swan-skin and participated in the feast.

Wisákechahk saw some geese on the lake. He wondered how he could get them. He made a pack of leaves and grass and carried it down to the lake, and the geese asked, "What have you there, brother ?"

"Oh, you must not ask about it. With that we dance. We close our eyes while dancing."

"That is something strange. We never heard of that kind of dancing."

"I will show you." He made a windbreak of boughs, laid the bundle inside, and seated the geese about the fire. He said: "I will dance first, and then you may dance. But everybody must shut his eyes."

So they sat there with closed eyes, and Wisákechahk danced about the circle, singing, "*Paseqápi-simowin nipétsiwitán* ['shut-eyes they-dance I-brought']." Whenever he came to a fat goose, he twisted its neck. The one beside the door heard the sound of flapping wings. He opened his eyes and cried, "Wisákechahk is trying to kill us, brothers!" The few that remained alive flew up and away.

Wisákechahk said to himself: "I have too many geese for one person. I wish I had someone to help me." He saw a fox limping along, and called: "Come, brother! I have something for you." The fox came limping up, and Wisákechahk said, "Let us go to that hill and race back."

"Oh, brother, you see me, how my leg is crippled. I cannot run fast."

"Oh, that is all right. l will tie a stone to my foot, so that we will be equal. We will have some fun." So they went to the hill, and Wisákechahk tied a stone to one foot. They started back. Soon

Wisákechahk was ahead, and looking over his shoulder he laughed, "Oh, that poor fox cannot run!" But suddenly the fox passed him, running on four good legs. Wisákechahk stopped to remove the stone, but the fox reached the windbreak and ate all the geese. He put the feet in a circle in the ashes.

When Wisákechahk arrived, he said, "That fox has put all my fine geese in the fire!" He took a foot, and found there was no goose. He tried another and found only a foot. He said, "That fox, I wish I could catch him!" He started after the fox. After running a while the fox, his belly full, stopped to sleep, and Wisákechahk came up and built a fire about him. The fox woke and dashed through the flames, and his hair was singed red.

Wisákechahk had a wife, a small son, and a daughter. He pretended to be very ill. He said to his wife: "I am going to die. When I die, you must go away. Move two days, and on the third night a young man will come. Ask no questions, but give him our daughter. He will be a good son-in-law." So Wisákechahk died, and they laid the body outside and moved camp. The next day they moved again, and on the third night the little boy, playing outside the tipi, saw a man coming.

"Mother, a man is coming!"

"Be quiet! That will be your brother-in-law."

The man came into the tipi and sat down beside the girl. He hung his head, and the elder woman turned aside from her son-in-law. After eating, he lay down with the girl.

In the morning he busied himself making the fire, and the boy saw on his buttock a mark which he recognized. He nudged his mother and whispered, "Mother, my brother-in-law is my father!"

"Do not say that. You are foolish."

"But look, mother, at the mark on his buttock."

The woman looked and recognized her husband. She picked up a stick and beat him on the head, crying: " I believed you when you said you were going to die! But you wanted only to marry your daughter!" He leaped out and ran away.

## ISQÉU KA-NAPÉU ÍSIHUT, WOMAN LIKE-MAN DRESSED[13]

A WOMAN was married to a brave warrior. They had two small sons. But she fell in love with a young man, and they met secretly in the bush. One day her lover said, "I wish we could be always together."

"That would be easy to do," she answered.

"How could we do it?"

"Well, I will pretend to sicken and die. Then you can come and get me and we will go away."

So they arranged it.

The woman pretended to be very ill. She ate nothing, and became thin. The shamans could do nothing for her. At last she called her husband and said: "I feel I am going to die. When I die, you must go away at once, for I do not wish my parents and my five brothers to grieve for me." Then she pretended to die. They wrapped her in a skin, tied it with a rope, and placed her on a platform in a tree. At once they moved away.

In the night came her lover. "Are you alive?" he called.

"Yes I Cut the rope and take me out. I am hungry."

He cut the rope and fed her, and they travelled far away. The woman wore her hair like a man and put on a man's clothing. They practised singing together, and when she had learned to sing like a man they went back to their people.

The young man told his family that he had been visiting people far in the south and had brought home a chum; and they were pleased. The two were constantly together. They would go down to the place where the girls got water, in order to make people think they were both young men looking for lovers.

One day the woman's two little boys came for water. She was filled with longing to speak to them, to hear them speak. She said, "Little boys, give me a drink." The elder boy gave her the pail. She drank, and gave it back and laughed. Now when she laughed she had a dimple in each cheek. The boy looked closely at her. He recognized his mother, but said nothing. He went home, and to his father he said, "My father, I have seen my mother."

"Oh, my little son, do not say that!" The man took him in his arms

13 A Cree tale.

and cried. Then he said: "My boy, never say that. Your mother has gone away. She is dead. Never say that. Do not say it to your grandmother and make her sad."

So the boy said nothing more. But a few days later be went again for water, and again the woman asked for a drink. Once more he noticed the dimples, and was sure it was his mother. He went home and told his father what he had seen; and this time his father listened, but told him to say nothing to others.

Early in the morning he got on his horse and rode to the place where they had left the body of his wife; and be saw that the skin was empty and the rope cut with a knife. He returned and said to his son, "Go to your grandmother and ask her for two dishes of service-berry soup." The boy did so, and soon returned with the dishes. Then he sent his son to invite the two who were constantly together; and when they arrived, he placed the man at his left and the woman at her lover's left. He fed them, then gave a large pipe to the young man. The man smoked, and passed the pipe to the woman. But she had not learned to smoke; and when she inhaled the smoke she began to cough, and the sound was that of a woman's cough. Instantly her lover leaped up and out of the tipi. She tried to follow, but her husband grasped her by the hair and forced her to sit down. He had a long knife, and he was a warrior. So she feared to resist.

He sent his elder son to call his grandparents and his five uncles. When they came in and sat down, he said: "My father-in-law, you thought your daughter was dead. This morning I went to the place where we left her. The skin was empty and the rope cut with a knife. There sits your daughter. Look closely and you will recognize her. Now what do you think of her?"

The old man looked closely and saw that it was so. He said: "I thought my daughter was a woman, but I find that she is an animal. I do not want to see her. I thought she was dead. Let her remain dead." He got up and went out. His wife followed, and one by one their five sons departed. The woman's husband took up his knife and killed her.

The young lover disappeared. He intended to let the Blackfeet kill him: that would be better than dying at the hands of his own people. One day as he was picking service-berries, he saw three people on horseback. He hid among the bushes, and when they came close he saw an old woman, a middle-aged woman, and a girl. They tied their

horses and separated to pick berries. The two elder women were close to his hiding-place. He made a noise like a grizzly-bear, and they were frightened. He seized one and plunged his knife into her, then the other. The girl was running for the horses, but he intercepted her. He said by signs: "Do not fear. I will not harm you." He scalped the two women, placed the girl on a horse, mounted another, and drove the third ahead, riding rapidly to escape pursuit.

At night he built a small wickiup. He said: "You will sleep there. I will sleep here."

She was surprised, and asked in signs: "Why do we not sleep together?"

"No, I did not take you for my wife. When we get home you will be the wife of my brother."

It was night when they reached the Cree camp. He told the girl to make herself clean and paint her face. Then he led her to the tipi of the man he had wronged, and by signs told her to enter and sit beside the man she would find there. This she did. The man was surprised, but said nothing. Then the young man came in. He sat down opposite the other and said: "My brother, I did something very bad to you. But take this woman. And here is something more for you." He gave him the two scalps. "Outside are three horses. They are yours. There is one thing more: I give you my body. Do with it what you will." He bowed his head.

The other raised him up and said: "My brother, say not so. I will not harm you. It is true you did something very bad to me, but today you have done something very good. Henceforth you shall be my real brother."

## THE CHIEF'S SON WHO WANTED AN OTTER-SKIN[14]

A CHIEF'S son saw a beautiful otter-skin and asked his father to buy

14 A Cree tale. There was no warfare among the various Cree bands, but between the Prairie Cree and the Woods Cree there was no intimacy, and the former both looked askance at the latter, because they were comparatively poor, and feared them as powerful sorcerers who could project a bit of iron or a bead into the body of a distant enemy and thus cause sickness that could be cured only by an equally powerful shaman.

it for him. The chief went to the owner of the skin and offered a horse, which was refused. He increased his offer to five horses, but nothing would induce the other to sell his otter-skin. The young man was so greatly disappointed that be said: "My father, since my wife is a Woods Cree, I will go with her into the northern country and kill an otter for myself."

"No, no, my son!" said the chief. "Those are very bad people. They will do you harm."

Nevertheless the young man asked his wife if she knew where to find otters. She said: "Yes, I know a place where a river runs between two lakes. Otters go back and forth between the lakes to fish. The river is open in certain places all winter. If you watch at those places, some time you will see an otter come out from under the ice, and you can shoot it." So they loaded their horses and rode northward.

To their camp in the bush one night came an old man, and the Prairie Cree invited him to come in and sit down. To his wife he said, "Prepare food for my friend." She gave the visitor a dish of pemmican and the old man ate. His clothing was very old and dirty. His leather leggings were so old that they were baggy at the knees and shrunken about the calves. His cloth shirt was so dirty that the young chief's son was loath to look at it. He laid before the old man a new shirt and a pair of new leggings and said, "Here is something for you. The man said: "Ho! Nobody ever treated me in this fashion!" He seemed to be displeased. The young man thought he was not satisfied, and laid before him a new Hudson's Bay coat.

"Ho! This is a very strange way!" It was plain that the old man was not pleased. The chief's son brought out a new blanket and laid it before him. Then the old man became really angry, and at this the other exclaimed: "Begone! I wish to see you no more! I thought to please you by giving you these things, but you are only displeased. Leave my tipi and go! I know what you are thinking. You think you know something. But see that animal outside? He is covered with hair. Yet the things I know are more numerous than the hairs of his hide. Do not try to do anything bad to me,[15] for if you do, I will be there myself with this

15 *Ekáwiya ki-manitú-wiwín ohtsi wi-mayi-tútawín.* do-not your supernatural (future with verb) (future ) bad make-me

knife. I am a Prairie Cree and a brave man. I fight with a knife and not with sorcery." His visitor departed without a word.

As soon as he had gone the chief's son got up and followed him. Soon he saw a small camp. The old man went into a tipi. The chief's son crept close and heard him call to the others in the camp: "Come and talk! I have something to tell you!" The others assembled, and the young man heard his visitor saying: "I found a tipi and was invited to eat by a handsome young man, a Prairie Cree. When I had finished, he laid a new shirt and a pair of leggings before me. This did not please me, because he was giving them only so that afterward he might laugh at me. Then he brought out a coat, and this displeased me the more; then a blanket, and by this time I was really angry. He told me to go home, and he said that if I tried to do anything bad to him, he would be right here with a knife. He had a strange animal outside his tipi. Its foot had only one toe. It was covered with hair, and he said that the things he knows are more than the hairs of its hide. Now I want to see if he spoke the truth. I am going to try." He began to sing.

By this time the young man had crept up to the tipi, and now suddenly he stepped in with his knife upraised. "I told you that if you tried to harm me, I would be here with my knife. Now this is the way I kill people." He grasped the old man's hair and raised the knife higher. The man fell back lifeless with fright, and the others rushed out.

When the old man came to life, he whispered, "Sit down, my friend." The young man sat down. "My friend, do not be angry. Stay where you are. Fear nothing. I am going out." He disappeared, but soon returned with a pack of skins-otter beaver mink. "These are for you, my friend. Take them, and do not be angry."

The young man selected the otter-skins and departed. As soon as be reached his camp, he said: "Now we are in danger. Surely they will try to kill me. Come, let us go." They packed their horses and rode southward to the prairies. When they arrived home, the chief feared that the Woods Cree might try to kill his son by sorcery, and he engaged a man who understood these things to guard the young man's tipi. But nothing happened to him.

## MISSÚ GHUNNISÁGHA, HIS-GRANDMOTHER REARED HIM[16]

A MAN was camping alone. His wife was pregnant. He always warned her that when she heard any sound about the tipi she must not peer out to see what caused it. He hunted daily. One day she heard a sound. Curiosity overcame her. She punched a little hole in the tipi with a bone awl and peeped out. She beheld a man. He came in. She cooked food for him, and offered it in a wooden dish. He said, "I do not eat from that kind of dish." She removed it and put the food in the dry integument of a stomach. He refused this, and she put it in a bark dish. "No," he said, "I do not eat from that kind of dish." She removed it and put the food in her blanket. "That is nearly right," he said. "But l do not eat from that kind of dish." She removed a moccasin and put the food in it. "That is better, but still I do not eat from that kind of dish." She tried a legging. He said, "You are coming close to it, but I do not eat from that kind of dish." She took off her dress and placed the food in it, and he said, "It is very close, but still I do not eat from that kind of dish." Then she lay down in front of him and put the food on her abdomen, and he said: "That is right. That is where I always eat." He ate. He devoured the food and the flesh of her abdomen. Inside he found two infants. He threw one into the creek and the other between the tipi-cover and the lining. He laid the woman's body with the face in the fire. The features became drawn as if she were laughing. He placed her then with the face in the doorway, and departed. Then her husband approached. He asked: "Why are you laughing? It is seldom you do that." He came close and looked at her. He perceived that she was dead. "Did I not warn you?" he complained. "This is what has happened." He laid her in the tipi opposite his bed. He had a small dog. He went up on a high hill and cried far into the night.

One evening when he came home from the hill of mourning, he saw in the cold ashes a very small footprint. He wondered about it. He made a bow and some arrows. He went back to the hill, left his blanket there in a heap as if he were still sitting there, and crept back to the tipi. He became a feather and flew close. The little child behind the tipi-lining called to his brother in the creek: "Come up! Our father made a bow and some arrows for us to play with." The man went back

16 A Sarsi tale.

to the hill, and that evening he saw the prints of two pair of feet. He thought, "There must be two of them." So he made another bow and more arrows. The next morning he left his blanket again on the hill, made himself like a small log, and lay across the doorway just inside the tipi. The little boy behind the tipi-lining peeped out and called: "One-that-was-thrown-into-the-creek, come up! Our father has made another bow. There is one for each." The two played in the tipi. He crept to them and caught one. He wanted One-that-was-thrown-into-the-creek, but caught One-that-was-thrown-behind-the-tipi-lining. The other slipped under his arm and ran to the creek. The little boy struggled. He kicked and bit. But the man quieted him, saying: "You are my son. There is your mother, lying dead." Finally the boy ceased to struggle. The man said: "Look, my son. Try to catch your brother for me. I will leave my blanket on the hill and turn myself into a log." So he did this. The boy called his brother, "One-that-was-thrown-into-the-creek, come up and play!"

"No, our father caught you. I am not going to play with you."

"No, our father did not catch me. I got away. Our father is up on the hill. You can see him there."

So the other came and played. His brother seized him, and called, "Now, father, I have him!" The man took his other son. The boy struggled, but they talked to him and finally he yielded. They lived together.

One day the boys said, "Father, make two good arrows for each of us." He made them. They painted two black and two red. They said: " Now, father, we are going to get our mother back. Take her out and lay her on her back with her head eastward." When he had done this, they directed him to go to the hill and watch from there. One-that-was-thrown-behind the-tipi-lining said: "My brother, let me shoot my arrow first. If my mother moves her foot, we shall get her back." He spat on his bow and arrow four times, and shot into the air above his mother's body. As the arrow descended, he cried: "Look out, my mother, look out! The arrow is coming!" Her foot moved. His brother said, "You should have done this way." He spat four times on his bow and arrow and shot into the air. As the arrow was coming down, he cried: "Look out, my mother; look out, my mother! The arrow is coming down!" She moved both legs. One-that-was-thrown-behind-the-tipi-lining said, "I will do better." He shot the other arrow and cried: "Look out, my mother; look out, my mother I The arrow is coming down!"

She moved, and tried to sit up. One-that-was-thrown-into-the-creek then shot his second arrow and cried: "Jump up, my mother; jump up, my mother! The arrow is coming down!" She jumped up and shook her blanket. Then their father came running down from the hill.

He warned his sons: "Do not go in that certain direction. There is a buffalo with*ditílli* horns."

"No, my father, we will not go there. He must be very dangerous."

They went to shoot little birds, and soon turned in the direction of the buffalo. When they saw him, they said, "Charge at us; charge at us!" The buffalo charged, and they shot him dead. They said, "Oh, that was not dangerous." When they got home, they said, "Father, we killed that animal you thought was dangerous."

"My sons, you should not have done that. You might have been killed. But I will warn you again. In yonder direction is a dangerous bear. Do not go near it."

"No, we will not go there. It must be dangerous. We will play outside for a time." They soon crept around in that direction. They saw the bear and said, "Come, charge at us!" The bear charged, and they killed him. They told their father, and he said: "You should not have gone there, you might have been killed. Now, in this other direction is the person who killed your mother. Please do not go there, for he certainly will kill you."

"Oh, we will not go there, father. He might kill us as he did our mother." They played outside, and agreed to go and see that person. When they came to the place, they found an old man lying under a brush shelter. "What are you doing, grandfather?"

"Oh, I am just sunning myself. My grandchildren, look in my hair. See if there are any lice."

One-that-was-thrown-behind-the-tipi-lining whispered to his brother, "I will be the one to look for the lice." He knew how the old man would try to kill them. He protected his abdomen with a flat stone. While he was lousing the old man, his brother was tying locks of the man's long hair to the trees. The other said, "Grandfather, my brother is tying your hair to the trees."

" Oh, that is all right. He is just playing." He was sitting with his head bowed over the boy's abdomen. His teeth gnashed against the stone. The boy asked, "What is that, grandfather?"

"Oh, my old teeth clatter together."

"Grandfather, lift your head a little."

The old man raised his head, and the boy slipped out and leaped away. The man snapped at him, but missed, and the other brother killed him with an arrow. They returned and told their father about their adventure. He said: "Well, my sons, you might have been killed. Now I warn you again. There is a hill. If you go there, a strong wind will blow you into it."

"We will not go there. We are afraid of it. We will play outside." But they went to the hill and said, "Now, blow, blow!" The wind blew, and they were carried into the hill. It was a monster that swallowed people. Inside were many human skeletons. Above their heads hung a large object. It was the heart of the hill. They said to the skeletons: "Get ready! We will have a dance." While they danced, they poked at the heart with an arrow. The hill moved. Then they knew it was the heart. They shot an arrow into it, and it dropped. They began to cut the flesh away from the ribs of the hill, and all the dead people came to fife. They went home and told their father.

"My sons," he said, "you do not heed my warnings. Some day you will find something that has greater power than yours. I warn you again. There is a red eagle on yonder hill. Do not try to touch its feathers."

They went outside and said, "Let us go and see this red eagle." They found it sitting on a tree. One of its feathers hung down loosely. One-that-was-thrown-behind-the-tipi-lining said, "Oh, I think I will take that one."

"No, you know what our father said."

" It would look pretty in my hair." He put out his hand to take it. The instant he touched it the eagle flew up into the air and the boy was carried along. His brother cried, and cried, and cried, and cried, until he began to grow smaller and smaller and smaller and smaller, and at last he was a baby once more. It was autumn.

One day an old woman was looking for medicine-roots. She heard something crying. She thought, "Somebody must have thrown a baby away." She searched and found the infant lying on a mass of eagle-feathers. She picked it up with the feathers and carried it home. She had ten sons, all grown men. She had a tipi of her own, but she thought it would be best to take the child to the lodge of one of her sons. "My son," she said, "I have found a little baby. May I keep it in your tipi?"

"No, it would cry and annoy me. I do not want it."

She tried each of her sons, and all except the youngest refused her. When he consented to take the baby, she gave him the eagle-feathers and said, "Do not give any of these to your brothers."

The baby was covered with scabs, and they called him Tsillúnna [scabby head].

One day the chief of the camp announced: "There are two silver foxes. If anybody catches them, he shall have my two daughters for the skins." He had a Water Bundle and wanted the skins for it. All the young men tried, but none could trap the foxes.

When Scabby Head heard about it he cut four small, dry service-berry shoots. He asked his grandmother to sharpen them for him. She did so, and he took them to the fox burrow. He thrust them into the hole with the sharp ends projecting out. He went apart and sat down to watch. A fox came out, and he made a loud noise. The fox leaped back, and the sharp ends pierced its throat. He took it away, and set the trap again. The second one was killed in the same way. He covered his tracks so that nobody would know he had been there, and took the foxes away and skinned them. He hid the skins under a pile of wood outside the tipi.

"What have you been doing all day long, you silly boy?" asked his grandmother.

"I have done something, grandmother. I have killed the two silver foxes."

She would not believe him, and he brought a few hairs to prove it.

"Grandson, you should not do this. Do not pluck my old dog's hair. It is going to be a cold winter. The dog will freeze."

"Well, since you will not believe me, I will show you more." He brought some hairs from the other skin.

Still she did not believe. "Surely you will freeze my dogs, plucking their hair like this."

He said, "Well, then, I will bring the skins." So he brought the skins to her, but she said: "My grandson, you are not good enough to marry those girls. You are scabby. Let me give the skins to one of my sons."

"No, grandmother. When I was a baby you went from one to another, asking them to take me in, and all refused." And her youngest son said: "Yes, do not give them away. Take them to the man who has the Water Bundle. He said nothing about scabby heads. He said who-

ever killed the foxes should have his daughters."

She thought, "Well, I might as well take them to him." She had never visited the chief, for she was poor. When she came to him, he said: "Sit down, sit down. This is the first time you have visited us." To his daughter he said: "Feed her well. Feed her of the berries in the Water Bundle."[17]

The old woman ate, but her courage failed and she did not show the skins. She went home and said: "My grandson, I was ashamed. You are so scabby. I could not tell him you have killed the foxes."

Her son answered: "You should give him the skins. Go back with them."

Once more she went and returned without having shown the skins. The third time, after they had fed her and she was about to depart, one of the skins fell from under her blanket. The chief quickly picked it up.

"Come back and sit down," he said. She did so. "You have ten sons. Which one is it?" She answered: ' No, my son. I was ashamed, that is why I came three times without telling you. It is that Scabby Head grandson of mine."

He turned to his daughters: "You have heard who it is. Him you will have for husband." The elder began to vomit, and said, "I do not want that scabby thing." But the other said, "I will marry him, my father."

So the younger daughter of the chief and Scabby Head were married.

The people were camping at a buffalo pound; but all winter they had been unable to get buffalo, and they were starving. One day Scabby Head said to his wife: "Tell your father to prepare the pound again. I am going to drive in some buffalo." He went out very early in the morning. A short distance away he hid on a hill. As the hunters passed on their way to attempt to drive in a buffalo herd, he counted them. All day he waited, and when in the evening they returned he counted again. He saw that all had returned. He went down from the hill, picked up some buffalo-chips, and began shouting at them as if stampeding a herd. The chips became a buffalo. He had told his wife

17 An unusual honor, since the dry berries in the Water Bundle are reserved for ceremonial use.

to have her father watch for him. So when be drove a buffalo into the pound, the chief saw him. He killed the animal, and his grandmother's share was only one foot.

The next day he brought in two buffalo, and his grandmother received a larger portion. The third day he drove in three buffalo, and the old woman received a hind-quarter. The fourth day he told his wife to warn her father to have the people make the pound strong, and himself to go up on the hill as usual. "When he sees me bringing the buffalo, call the people to the hill and watch Missúghunniságha bringing the buffalo. There will be a white buffalo among them. Let none kill it except me." He departed in the morning. He gathered some chips and crushed them with his heel. He put a white pebble in the midst of the pile of dust. It became a large herd of buffalo, and the pebble became a white buffalo. About noon his father-in-law on the hilltop saw the young man coming with a herd of buffalo. He shouted to the people, "Come out and see this Missúghunniságha bringing in the buffalo!" So the herd was driven into the pound, and Missúghunniságha went home, leaving the people to kill the animals. But they did not molest the White buffalo.

At the tipi he told his wife to put her hands behind her to the wall of the tipi, and draw them out as if pulling something from a bag. She did so, and brought forth a fine dress. Thus she provided herself with every article of clothing. He did the same for himself. They arrayed themselves, and he put his hand behind him and brought out bow and arrows. He went with his wife to the pound and killed the white buffalo. He began to butcher it. When his wife scraped the blood from the pieces of meat, she used arrows which she then tossed aside as if they were of no value. The people scrambled for them. When her sister observed this, she went to Missúghunniságha and asked, "What can I use for scraping my meat?"

"Oh, take a stick," he said.

She tried in every way to make advances to him, but he would have nothing to do with her. She troubled him so much that sometimes he had to sleep on a hilltop and spend part of his days there. Finally she learned where he was sleeping. She became a mole and dug a burrow at the place, just large enough for his body. When he went there again to sleep, he fell into the burrow.

The next day he was missing, and his father-in-law announced,

"My son-in-law has disappeared since yesterday." When she heard that, his elder daughter went to the hill and perceived that he was buried in the burrow. He said, "Take me out, and I will marry you." "No, you refused me. Stay where you are." She defecated on him.

After waiting and searching a long time the people moved away, and all the while the woman was using the burrow for defecating. The younger sister mourned. She cut her hair and her legs, and kept her face dirty. After the camp was moved, Missúghunniságha lay in his burrow crying.

Wolf Old Woman came to him. She looked down into the hole. He begged: "Help me! Take me out!" She began to howl, and soon a band of wolves, badgers, coyotes, all the large burrowing animals, gathered there. Wolf Old Woman said: "I have found something. Whoever takes this man out shall have him for a son." All tried in turn to take him out. When they had nearly released him, Wolf Old Woman said: "Oh, you cannot do it! Let me show you." She finished the work and took him for her son. She said to the other wolves, "Go and kill a buffalo, and I will make him a robe." When they brought a skin, she prepared a robe. At night the wolves would put their tails together in a row, and on them the man lay down, and others covered him with their tails. So he lived among the wolves, and he howled like a wolf.

The people used to hear a strange voice in the wolf pack. They would say, "There is a man with the wolves." They made traps. The first wolf caught was Wolf Old Woman. The chief, father-in-law of Missúghunniságha, said: "All you people, hide yourselves. The next time the wolves howl, let us surround them and see if you can catch the man who is among them." When the wolf pack was heard again, the people surrounded it and caught the man. He tried to fight them off. They told him: "Your wife is grieving for you. Do not struggle." So he became quiet and they took him to the camp. He asked for the skin of Wolf Old Woman, and they gave it to him. He took it by the tall and shook it, and howled. She got up and ran away.

One day Missúghunniságha said he would drive in some buffalo. He found a herd and said to a young buffalo: "When I shoot you with an arrow, do not die in the pound. There is a clump of trees a short distance from the pound. Die there." He drove the herd into the pound, and the people killed all except that one, which Missúghunniságha shot. It ran away and died in the clump of trees on the bluff. He went

to his tipi, and as before he and his wife drew fine clothing from behind them and put it on.

"Ask your sister to come with us," he said. His wife spoke to her sister, who thought, "Now he is going to marry me." So she went with them. He cut the best part of the animal for his wife, and sent her home. His sister-inlaw he told to remain and pack home the rest. As soon as his wife was gone, he began to howl like a wolf, three times, and with the fourth time all the wolves and other animals came. "Now," be said, "the reason I have called you is this: Here is the woman for you; you know what she did to me." He went home, and the wolves leaped upon the woman and devoured her. Wolverene snatched her vulva and ran up a tree with it.[18] When Missúghunniságha got home, he called in all the men and related his history from the beginning, and how his sister-in-law had treated him. They approved his killing her.

## THE GIRL WHO MARRIED A STAR[19]

A MAN had the Water Bundle. He called some old people in to eat and smoke. It was night, and the moon was full. He had two daughters. Outside was a pile of wood. The girls were sitting on it. They were looking at the sky. The younger said, "I wish that little shining star were my husband." The next morning they went to the river to gather fuel. A young man, very handsome, stood before them. He said to the younger, "I have come for you."

"I do not know you. Who are you?"

"Yes, I was in the sky last night when you were wishing I was your husband."

"It is true, I did wish it."

"Well, close your eyes."

She did so, and they went into the sky. They lived there.

She had a child. Her husband said, "When you are walking about, do not dig parsnips." One day however she dug a root of that kind. It

18 According to folklore, a young man lonesome for his lover and wandering about thinking of her may meet a wolverene in her likeness, with clawed fingers carefully concealed. If he embraces her, he becomes insane. Therefore wolverene, *kayízí*, is called by the epithet *ts!ikáatiichi*' ("turns into woman").

19 A Sarsi tale.

was growing from the midst of a buffalo-chip. When she lifted it out, she saw a hole, and she looked down through it and beheld a large camp far below. She began to weep. She could not cease, for it was the camp of her own people. When her husband came home, he perceived that she had been crying.

"Why have you been weeping?" he asked.

"Yes, I saw my people down below."

"Did I not warn you not to dig parsnips ? Well, I will hunt, and get all the skins I can." So he brought home many skins, which he cut into strips to make a long rope.

"Where is the hole?" he asked. She led him to the place. He wrapped her and the infant in a skin, tied the rope to it, and lowered them through the hole.

Down below the men were playing the wheel-and-arrow game. A young man with sore eyes was watching them. He lay on his back gazing into the sky, and saw something black coming down. "See what is coming down from the sky, something black," he chanted. But the others could see nothing. They threw dirt into the youth's eyes, thinking he was trying to deceive them. He said, "It is close; look at it." Then they saw it. They piled all their robes in a heap, and the bundle dropped on it. The girl cried: "Drag me away quickly! The rope is coming behind me!" They pulled her away, and a great pile of rope dropped down. They opened the bundle, and found the girl who had disappeared from the camp.

## THE CREATION[20]

THERE was no land, only water. Old Man called Muskrat and said, "I am going to make land." He gave Muskrat a bit of dirt, and said: "Be very careful with this. Run around it, and as it grows larger, keep running around it." So Muskrat ran around it, but the bit of dirt did not grow. Old Man said: "I know the trouble. I shall have to get different dirt." He sent Muskrat to dive into the depths of the water, and said, "Try hard to get a bit of mud from the bottom." Muskrat dived three times, and the fourth time he touched bottom and got a bit of mud under his nails. When he came up, Old Man took the mud, rolled it

20 A Sarsi myth.

between his palms, and it began to swell. When it was as large as he could handle, he called Plover, and said: "Keep going around this earth. Do not stop, because it must be a large earth. There will be many people." Plover started to run round and round the swelling disc, which became constantly larger. Soon it was as large as Old Man desired it.

He thought of making a man. He took a piece of clay and created people. He made birds and animals of different-colored clays. The crow was among the last. He said: "I have no good clay. I forgot you." He took charcoal and made the crow. He said, "You will be in every society."

He took a long stick and as he walked he struck the earth in various places, and formed streams. He told humans, beasts, and birds how they should do. When he was ready to leave the earth he remembered that he had not created the Sarsi. He rolled up some cuticle and made them.

## SARSI MIGRATION MYTH

THIS is the way the story goes. Buffalo lake northeast of Edmonton, right there when ice was on the water people were travelling across it. There was no snow on the ice. Half of the people got across. Some were still on the ice, and some had not yet started across. Among those on the ice a small boy saw a horn embedded in it. He asked his mother to get it for him. He cried. She took a large knife and began to chop it out. When she had nearly released it from the ice, the animal [a water monster] moved, and the ice was suddenly broken up. The people sank. Those who had crossed went southward, and those who had not yet started across went back northward. These were Sissúwu [Chipewyan]. It was heard afterward that they divided, some going west and some east. The former still speak our language, but the latter have changed. Those who went south began to fight among themselves and split up into different bands. The Sarsi were the largest band. A great rain flooded the country. The people ran to the mountains. After the water went down the Sarsi walked back, and two or three bands went south to the mountains.

## HIS BROTHER CHOPPED THE TREE DOWN WITH HIM IN THE WATER[21]

THERE was a young married man. He had a younger brother. They were catching eagles in a pit. He had a pretty wife. His brother was a handsome youth. She was in love with him. Every morning the elder brother went to the eagle trap. At the same time the younger brother would go up the hill so as not to be left alone with his sisterin-law. She always was thinking how she could entice him. One morning he was sleeping when his brother left the tipi. She came to him and tried to lie with him. He repulsed her several times, then he went out. She thought, "He will tell my husband." So she scratched her legs. She watched, and as soon as she saw her husband coming, she began to cry. He asked why she cried, and she answered: "Yes, I have reason to cry. You say your brother loves you. As soon as you left the tipi be tried to make love to me and scratched me." He believed her.

On the trail to the eagle pit was a tree growing out over the edge of a precipice and over-hanging the river. In the tree was an eagle's nest. When the younger brother returned, they ate, and the elder said, "Let us try to get that eagle's nest." They went to the tree, and the younger brother climbed out along its sloping trunk. The other followed him, and then climbed down, cutting off the branches as he came.

"My brother, why are you doing that?" asked the other. Then he remembered what had occurred, and said, "Perhaps you are angry for what your wife did to me."

"Yes, I did not believe you would do it to me," answered the elder. He cut the tree, and the youth dropped into the deep water. He was carried down-stream.

Far below lived an old man, his wife, and their daughter. They had a large herd of buffalo, but they ate frogs and snakes. The girl went to get water, and saw a young man floating in the river. She ran home and said: "There is a handsome young man floating in the river. I want him for my husband."

"Yes, my daughter. Make four sweat-houses." She built them. "Now, my daughter, take this wooden platter and scoop him up very carefully. Do not lose him." For the young man was in the form of

21 A Sarsi tale, also known as Having Buffalo.

froth. She lifted the body out on the dish very carefully. All the sweat-houses faced east. She brought the body in from the west to the first lodge. Her father was inside, and she handed the platter to him. He made steam, and from the outside she lifted the cover four times, to admit fresh air. Her father went into the second lodge, and she handed the platter to him. In the first house a large heap of sand was left. The second and the third sweats were taken, and the sand left behind was less and less. His body was becoming cleaner and cleaner. In the fourth bath the young man sat up. No sand was left.

The old man said, "Now, my daughter, put up your own tipi." She did so, and be said, "Take your husband into your tipi." Her mother said, "Feed your husband." They cut up a cooked snake and she took it to him. He said. "I do not eat that kind of food." She took it away and brought frogs. He refused them. She offered him*táhltlanní* ["huge thing" -the water monster]. He refused it. She brought pieces of lizard, and he refused. She began to caress him and asked, "What do you eat?"

"I eat these dogs of yours."

She told her parents, and the old man said: "That is what I thought. Now, my daughter, call your pets down to the watering place. Here are bow and arrows. Let him take these and use them. When they come out after drinking, let him kill what he needs."

The girl called the buffalo, "Maníhlts!í-tliká ['wind-against dog,' that is, dogs that graze to windward]!" They came running to the watering place. As they came out, the young man shot the fattest heifer. When the girl saw one of her pets killed, she cried, but her father said: " Be still. It is for the husband you have found." She watched the young man cook the meat, and it was repulsive to her. He cooked the tongue and cut off a bit, and began to caress her. She slipped under him. He put the piece of meat in her mouth, and she vomited. He said, "No, hold it. It is good." She chewed it slowly and sat up. "It is good. Give me more." Then he gave her the entire tongue and she ate it. She informed her parents that the dogs were good to eat.

They lived there a long time, and had a child. The young man became homesick, wondering about his relatives. One day he came to a spring, and idly he thrust a sharp stick into it to test its depth. When he drew it out, there was blood on it. He took it home and showed it to his wife. She reported this to her father, who said: "Oh, my son-in-law has killed something for me to eat. That is*táhltlanní*." He went to the

spring, and there he found the water monster dead. He cut it up and brought the meat home.

Still the young man was lonely. The girl asked why he was so quiet. He said: "There are many brothers and sisters, a father and a mother, who are missing me. I am lonely when I think of them. I want to go home. You have a son, and here are your parents. You will not be lonely. After I have seen my people I shall return."

She repeated this to her father, and said, "I love my husband, and I wish to go with him."

"Good, my daughter. You may do so. Take your pets with you. When you are hungry, kill them for your use."

So the two started. They travelled far, and when they were hungry she called her pets and they killed one. Three nights they camped. He said: "The fourth night we will reach my home. Now, I want to kill two of these buffalo. I will go ahead and find the camp." So he killed two buffalo and went on. He saw the camp. He entered it and looked about until he found the tipi of his parents. He peeped in and saw them. Their hair was cut short in mourning for him. He slipped away and returned to his wife. "Tonight we shall move. Nobody will see us." So they did, and stopped close to the camp.

Early in the morning they were astir. He said to his little son: "See yonder tipi where the smoke is rising. Go and raise the flap. Inside you will see an old man and an old woman. Tell them your father wishes them to come and eat."

The little boy went to the tipi and looked in. "Grandfather, grandmother, my father wants you to come and eat." Then he ran back. They waited, and no one came. He sent the boy again. "Grandfather, grandmother, why do you not come? My father wishes to feed you.

The old man said to his wife, "Observe where this boy goes." She looked out and saw a new tipi outside the camp. Then the two went to the strange tipi. When they entered they beheld their own son. They embraced and caressed him and wept with joy. They inquired what had happened to him. He said: "Wait. Later l will tell you. But now eat." After they had eaten, he said, "Call the people to eat, and then I will tell my story." The old man called: "Get up, all! Get up and come! My son has made something to eat, ready for you!"

The first to appear were the elder brother and his wife, Said the younger brother: "Wait. Do not come near me just now. Let the others

come first." After all the others had eaten, be called these two. They attempted to embrace him, but he said, "No, do not touch me." He picked up two large stones. While they sat there, he cast the stones and struck them on the chest. With his knife he killed them. He related then what had occurred and why he had killed his brother and his sister-in-law. "Now I will give you buffalo meat. When you wish more, tell me." There was famine in the country. His father said, "We want to see buffalo on the fourth day." The others said: "You are foolish. Why not say tonight ?" But he paid no attention.

The young man said: "Now I must tell you. On the fourth night let none look out of his tipi, no matter what you hear." When the time came, his wife went outside and called her pets. The young man had told his father to come early on the following morning. When he came, he called: "You lazy people! Get up and chase the buffalo!" They came hurrying, and the men hunted and killed the buffalo. The girl said: "From now on the buffalo will increase and you will have plenty. You will never have another famine."

## NATÚUSUGHU-SITÍNNE, SNAKE SLEEPING[22]

SLEEPING SNAKE had a wife. His father-in-law used to send him his elk-hom scraper to be sharpened. One day he said: "I am getting tired of sharpening this thing. Tell your mother to make some moccasins. I will get *ditílli.*[23] The old woman made many moccasins, and he and his wife went southward. They had two dogs that dragged their travois. They arrived at a large camp. The people asked, "Where are you going?"

He said, " I am going to get*ditílli."*

"You are foolish. The man who has it likes pretty women. You will lose your wife. But it is the fourth camp."

At the second camp the people bad a small quantity of*ditílli,* which they gave to the travellers and advised them to go home. But they went on. At the third camp the people gave him a little more*ditílli* and advised him to turn back. But he said he would go on. "I want to

22 A Sarsi tale.

23 Hard, inflexible. *Ditílli* is the term applied to iron. Apparently it was originally the word for flint.

see this man. If he is more powerful than I, he will beat me."

It was night when they came to the fourth camp, and they slept unseen close by. The next morning Sleeping Snake said to his wife: "Make your hair unkempt. Put something on your face to make it dirty and ugly." She did so. He had a charm, the tongue of a wolverene.

The chief of this camp was Tsa-múhl-tahkaíya.[24] When he rose and saw a strange tipi, he said to one of his many wives, "Go and see who is camping there." The woman reported, "The man is very ugly, and the woman also." He sent a younger wife to invite the strangers to eat. When she had delivered the invitation and departed, Sleeping Snake said to a wife: "Make yourself pretty. I know what he wants. He wishes to take you away from me. Take this wolverene's tongue, and when we go into the tipi, sit nowhere but close to the door. When you sit down, put this in the ground beside the door." So they went to the camp, and the people came out to observe them. When they entered the tipi, Tsamúhltalikaíya saw that the woman was beautiful. He said, "Come and sit close to me." But she answered, "No, I will sit here by the door." just inside the door were two huge rattlesnakes, one on each side. As soon as the visitors entered, they raised their heads and shook their rattles. The man said: "Be quiet! I am Sleeping Snake." They sank back to the ground. The people of the camp came in to see what would happen. They gave the visitors a drink of poison; but before putting the cup to his lips, Sleeping Snake blew on it and the liquid disappeared. He handed back the empty cup.

Tsamúhltalikaíya filled a large pipe. Inside it was a rattlesnake. He handed the pipe to Sleeping Snake and struck him lightly on the nose with it. He said, "You are not going to take your wife out of this tipi." Sleeping Snake lighted the pipe, and before he had taken two puffs the snake shot out of it; so he finished the smoke and gave back the pipe. He said: "You have not the power I have. It is useless for you to try to kill me." He said to his wife, "Come, let us go." They went out, leaving the wolverene's tongue in the ground. As soon as they reached their tipi, they struck it and packed up. The people came from the camp and gave them a great quantity of *ditíllí.* Tsamúhltalikaíya came outside to see if they had gone, for he was still determined to kill the man and

24 *Tsa,* stone; *muhl*, for *mus*, knife; *tahkaíya,* unexplained.

take the woman. As he passed the door, the wolverene's tongue leaped from the ground and pierced his heart. By sunset he was dead, and all his people were crying. They made a great fire on his body, which broke into fragments of flint. On his way home, Sleeping Snake got much*ditílli* from each of the camps he had passed. That is how the people first got *ditílli*.

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