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THE COMANCHE

GENERAL DESCRIPTION

THE Comanche are the sole representatives of the Shoshonean stock in Oklahoma. Like most of the tribes in that state, they were not natives of it, but were placed there for riddance. However, they differed from most other tribes removed to Oklahoma in that they were not strangers to the region, for it had been part of their hunting and raiding grounds for many years. No North American tribe ranged over so broad a territory. The Comanche were without prejudice in their selection of victims.

Fragmentary tradition collected from the present Comanche indicates that prior to their knowledge of the white race their central habitat was about the headwaters of the Platte river in what is now Wyoming. At that period the Comanche and the Shoshone were no doubt one aggregation, and at a somewhat earlier date had been a mountain people, but with increasing numbers they grew in boldness and moved out on the plains. Jealousy among chiefs and factional strife were responsible for the tribal division which became a permanent separation.

The movement of the group which became known as the Comanche was southwardly. No doubt one factor which influenced the southerly migration was the presence of horses in that direction, introduced by the Spaniards about a hundred and fifty years earlier. By the beginning of the eighteenth century raids by the Comanche extended well into Mexico, and for nearly two centuries they were at the height of their savage glory. By natural accretion and by raiding they accumulated great herds of horses, which afforded to them a freedom of movement not hitherto enjoyed. Their vast domain was dotted with buffalo, which solved the problem of the food quest with a minimum of effort. Their hunting range and raiding territory may be likened to a broadly extended oval with its northern point on the South Platte river in northern Colorado, its southern point well down in Mexico, its western border the Rio Grande in New Mexico, and its eastern limit the hills of Arkansas. In all that region, a veritable empire, the Comanche had no friends.

It would seem that a life characterized by constant warfare would have reduced their numbers materially, but when it is considered

that the principal purpose of their raids was the capture of horses and women, the maintenance of a vigorous and increasing population was not difficult. The problem of feeding a multiplicity of wives was readily solved by the plenitude of buffalo, which supplied also clothing and shelter, as well as almost every other need. Every woman was an expert in tanning. The larger a man's household, the richer he was.

In the early part of the eighteenth century a favorite object of Comanche raids was Pecos and other villages of the peaceful Pueblo Indians of New Mexico; but of these, Pecos on the eastern frontier was the chief sufferer. The principal pueblo of the Southwest in the middle of the sixteenth century, Pecos time and again was so persistently and viciously attacked that the ultimate abandonment by its few survivors in 1838 was due largely to this cause. In the last important raid on Pecos, the Comanche, according to their own admission, killed fully half of the male population and almost all the old women, and carried off more than a hundred female prisoners.

The Comanche were especially hostile toward Mexicans and Mexican Indians. They regarded the Mexicans and Indians of New Mexico as Mexican in nationality, and in recounting their warlike deeds lay great stress on their forays against the "Karisses"[1] among whom the Texans are included. Thus American pioneers in Texas fell heir to this situation, and for a generation constant conflict existed between the people of Texas and the Comanche, with the result that the Indians were ultimately driven from the state. With Americans other than those of Texas, the Comanche seemingly felt that they had no quarrel, hence usually were inclined to avoid conflict. Following the tribal peace with the Kiowa, about 1795, however, they were at times drawn into hostility with the American frontiersmen.

The Kiowa were as inherently hostile to the Americans as were the Comanche toward the Texans and Mexicans. When the Kiowa first moved into the south and came in contact with the Comanche, there followed some years of bitter intertribal hostility which proved

1 In referring to the "Karisses," the Comanche apparently allude primarily to the inhabitants of Pecos, but include also Taos and the villages of the immediate Rio Grande, as well as the Texans. Compare *Keres,* the name of one of the linguistic stocks of Pueblo Indians. The Comanche name for the Pueblo tribes collectively is *Pimíksi*.

so disastrous to both that their chiefs decided it would be better to hunt and fight in alliance than to continue the decimating warfare among themselves. This peace, broken at times through minor dissension, has continued to the present day. The agreement, the Comanche say, was brought about by the effort of a trader whom they called Saparit. The head-chief of the Comanche at that time was Pathiágo; of the Kiowa, Secháre.

The Comanche are a striking example of the variant characteristics which develop from a parent group. The majority of the tribes belonging to the Shoshonean stock, so far as inherent tendencies are concerned, are the antithesis of the Comanche with their fearless blood lust. Truly there is a vast difference between these vigorous, proud rovers of the plains and the lowly Paiute of the deserts of eastern California and Nevada; and an even greater difference exists between them and the mild-voiced Hopi of Arizona, yet they all spring from the same parent group.

Ethnologically the Comanche do not furnish a fertile field of inquiry. The old men, when questioned as to the dearth of ceremonies, folktales, and legends such as existed, for example, with the Wichita and neighboring tribes, made answer, "We were hunters and warriors, and had no time to think of such matters." All information gathered from them indicates that they were so active in warfare, so constantly on the move, that they had little time to give thought to the origin and purpose of their existence; in fact, they seemingly took pride in not doing so. In this connection David G. Burnet[2] wrote in 1847:

The Comanches have no definite idea of their own origin. Their loose tradition is, that their ancestors came from the north; but they have no precise conception of the time when, or from what particular region.... I do not believe they have any traditions of the slightest verisimilitude, running farther into bygone time than the third generation. Their means of knowledge of the past are altogether oral; unaided by monuments of any description. I could never discover that they had any songs, legends, or other mementoes, to perpetuate the fetes of arms, or other illustrious deeds of their progenitors....

2 In H.R. Schoolcraft, Indian Tribes of the United States, Vol. I, pages 230, 231, 237, Philadelphia, 1860.

The Comanche notions of religion are as crude, imperfect, and limited, as of geography or astronomy. They believe in, or have some indefinite traditional idea of, the Great Spirit; but I have never discovered any distinct mode or semblance of worship among them. I frequently observed, early in the morning, a shield, such as they use in war, elevated at the point of a javelin (the hilt on the ground,) and invariably facing the east. ...

I perceived no order of priesthood, or anything analogous to it, among them; if they recognise any ecclesiastical authority whatever, it resides in their chiefs; but I think their religious sentiments are entirely too loose, vague, and inoperative, to have produced any such institution. The elevation of the shield is the only act I ever noticed among them, that afforded the slightest indication of religious concernment; and I doubt if they have any opinions relative to future rewards and punishments that exercise any moral influence upon them. They have nothing like a system of mythology, and neither do they entertain any religious myths of a traditionary or settled character.

Robert S. Neighbors, special agent to the Comanche, communicated to Schoolcraft the following information respecting them:

The Comanches know nothing positively of their origin, and their traditions on this point are very vague and unsatisfactory. They believe that they have always lived near the same country they now occupy, and they know of but one migration of their tribes; this took place many years since, when they travelled from the west, and met with what they term the "Mountain Spaniards" in the mountains of New Mexico. [3]

This lack of cultural development was understood by the tribes with whom the Comanche had contact. Said the wise men of neighboring tribes, "The Comanche do not know anything; they do not think"; by which they meant that the Comanche possessed no "spiritual knowledge," rather than that they were ignorant of anything pertaining to warfare, the chase, and other temporal matters. It is true that the Comanche had the germ of the usual beliefs in supernatural beings — of good and evil spirits — but there is no knowledge that their religious concepts were highly developed. Sedentary tribes usually gave

3 Schoolcraft, *ibid.,* Vol. II, page 126, Philadelphia, 1860.

more thought to religious beliefs and ceremonies than did the wanderers, among which no Indians were more noted than the Comanche. Few ceremonies were held by them, yet they had the Sun dance, and, as might be expected, went to great extremes in self-torture. In this ceremony they used songs borrowed from other tribes. The customary Sun-dance lodge was not built; they employed instead a large tipi made by using broadly extended poles and overlaying them with several lodge-covers.

The Comanche had also a somewhat elaborate healing rite, known as the "Big Tail Medicine" ceremony, which had its origin in a vision. It is said that a man was fasting in the mountains and in his dream the beaver taught him how to heal the sick. On his return to camp he initiated the healing rite as instructed in the vision, and if he made no mistake in following the divine teachings, the ailing one recovered. Any one with a sick relative could ask the "Big Tail healer" to perform the healing rite, promising the customary gifts if the patient was cured.

For this rite a large oblong tipi was erected, the poles and covering of two ordinary tipis being combined. This lodge was prepared the day preceding the ceremony. At the east a deep trench was dug to symbolize the underground runway of the beaver. In the centre of the tipi was a pool of water, with willow branches and a small willow tree planted at its western margin. At the left on entering the lodge was an earthen mound in the form of a beaver. Directly west of this effigy mound and near the rear wall was a beaver-shape mound of earth on which the patient rested. The giver of the ceremony was a relative of the patient, who first interviewed the healer. Preceding the opening of the rite, the healer and giver entered; next the patient was brought in and placed upon the prepared mound, and then the women filed in, taking their positions in two equal groups at the north and south sides. These were followed by the men, who took their places in a line directly behind the women. Next came the singers, who were seated in two lines in front of the women. Lastly, the healer's assistants in single file came to the entrance and halted. The leader whirled his "thunder-maker" or bullroarer.[4]

4 A thin oblong piece of wood tied to one end of a string about six feet long. By whirling this rapidly, a roaring sound is produced. This implement

The assistants encircled the lodge, stopping at each cardinal point until the leader whirled his thunder-maker, and then took their places in two lines in front of the singers. As soon as they were seated, the ceremonial pipe was smoked by the assistants, but not by the healer. The giver of the rite then approached the healer, offering prayers to him that he might heal the ailing one and reiterating his promise of gifts if successful. The healer, presumably following the instructions of the beaver, treated the patient by the usual routine of incantation, manipulation of the body, and removal of the evil by sucking. Following this somewhat long treatment, the singers rendered four songs. At midday all adjourned until night, when the ceremony was repeated, and it was again performed the next day and night — provided, of course, the patient survived the ordeal. Between each series of healing rites the patient was carried about the camp to various tipis, the procession being led by the assistants and the thunder-maker. Whether this public exhibition of the patient was associated with the thought of producing a beneficent effect is not clear.

The usual restraint as to marriage within the gens did not exist. Individuals were free to select wives as they saw fit, so long as they were not blood relations. There was no marriage ceremony, and polygyny was common. Infidelity of wives was punished in the usual Plains Indian fashion by cutting off a portion of the nose, a disfigurement that would seem to have restrained any potentially errant woman; yet the Indian love of gambling not infrequently induced women to take chances even when their noses were at stake. During the summer of 1926 the author was in an encampment where an Indian wife lost her nose through such an indiscretion, although in this instance the inconstancy was potential rather than actual, as the woman was a participant in the Forty-nine dance, to be described. Indian women generally are not below the average of their Caucasian sisters in chastity. In his description of the various family relationships of the Comanche, Neighbors[5] wrote:

The ties of consanguinity are very strong, not only with regard to

is used in many Pueblo rites to simulate thunder. The movement of the line of men in circling the lodge is in every way suggestive of Pueblo ceremonies.

5 Schoolcraft, op. *cit.,* Vol. II, pages 131-132.

their blood relations, but extends itself to relations by marriage, etc., who are considered as, and generally called " brothers" — all offences committed against any member, are avenged by all, or any member connected with the family.... The marriage state only continues during the pleasure of the parties, as a man claims the right to divorce himself whenever he chooses. Polygamy is practised to a great extent — some chiefs having more than ten wives, but inconstancy is the natural result of it, which is frequently punished by cutting off the nose of the trans gressor, and sometimes even by death; but more frequently the woman escapes unpunished, and the seducer is deprived of all his available property which is yielded to the injured party, by custom, without resistance.

The women perform all manual labor, war and hunting being all the occupation of the men. Jealousy is frequently a great cause of discord, but the husband exercises unbounded authority over the person of his wife. Their lodges are generally neat, and on the entrance of a stranger, the owner of a lodge designates the route he shall pass, and the seat he shall occupy. Any infringement of this rule is liable to give offense.

They are formal and suspicious to strangers, but hospitable and social to those they consider their friends. They have no regular meals, but eat when they feel hungry, each party helping himself, and joining in the meal without invitation or ceremony. The parents exercise full control in giving their daughters in marriage, they being generally purchased at a stipulated price by their suitors. There is no marriage ceremony of any description - they enter the marriage state at a very early age, frequently before the age of puberty. The children are named from some circumstance in tender years, which is frequently changed in after life by some act of greater importance. Whatever children are stolen from their enemies, are incorporated in the family to whom they belong, and treated as their own children, without distinction of color or nation. There is considerable respect shown by the younger branches of the community to the patriarchal chiefs of the tribe.

Concerning their mortuary customs, Burnet[6] says:

They imagine that good men (and adroitness and daring in taking

6 *Ibid.,* Vol. I, page 237.

scalps or stealing horses are capital evidences of goodness) are translated at death to elysian hunting-grounds, where buffalo are always abundant and fat. The reverse of this maximum of Comanche felicity is assigned to the wicked. In order to facilitate the posthumous enjoyments of a deceased warrior, they sacrifice some of his best horses, and bury in his grave his favorite implements of the chase for his future use. They have no determinate idea of the locality of these imaginary hunting-grounds. They mourn for the dead systematically and periodically with great noise and vehemence; at which times the female relatives of the deceased scarify their arms and legs with sharp flints until the blood trickles from a thousand pores. The duration of these lamentations depends on the quality and estimation of the deceased; varying from three to five or seven days: after which the curtain of oblivion seems to be drawn around the grave.

In their invocations they address "Father Above" and "Mother Earth." There is an indefinable relationship between Father Above and the Sun. The golden eagle is symbolic of the sun, in fact symbolizes the Infinite. There being such a dearth of culture legends pertaining to precepts and teachings, it is no longer possible to gain a satisfactory insight into the mental processes of the Comanche. They believe that knowledge came from the spirits and was obtained by the individual through long periods of fasting. Such knowledge included that of healing and of ceremonies, and could be transferred to others.

At the climax of their existence the Comanche were apparently divided into twelve or more bands, but through tribal disintegration this band organization is almost lost. The best informants of today name the following bands:

Detsanayúka or Nokóni Penatéka or Penánde
Yápa or Yámparika Tanúme
Ketsetéka or Qáhadi Qásiner
Métsai Ketáte, a branch of some other
Págatsu, the same as Yápa band
Muvínavore, some other tribe.

Each band had a chief and a second chief who were chosen by the

voice of the band in council. Naturally only those noted for bravery and success in warfare were selected. As the dominating position of any band of the organization was dependent in large measure on its chief, it was most important to have as leaders men of great skill and daring. The Comanche did not have the soldier societies so characteristic of the tribal government of most Plains tribes. In his report to Schoolcraft, Neighbors[7] wrote as follows in regard to Comanche chiefs:

The position of a chief is not hereditary, but the result of his own superior cunning, knowledge, or success in war, or some act or acts that rank him according to his merits. The subjects under discussion in council are at all times open to popular opinion, and the chiefs are the main exponents of it. The democratic principle is strongly implanted in them. The chiefs consult, principally, the warrior class, and the weaker minds are wholly influenced by popular opinion . War chiefs commit hostilities without consulting the other tribes. Any proposition or treaties proposed by the whites are discussed privately, and the answer given by the chief as the unanimous voice of the tribe. In deliberations in council, they consult each other and one addresses the meeting. The council is opened by passing the council pipe from one to the other, invoking the Deity to preside. It is conducted with great propriety, and closed in the same manner. There is one appointed as crier or messenger whose duty it is to fill the pipe, etc. Questions of importance are deliberately considered, and considerable time frequently elapses before they are answered; but they are all decided on the principle of apparent unanimity. Capital punishments are rare; each party acting generally for himself, and avenging his own injuries. Each chief is ranked according to his popularity, and his rank is maintained on the same principle. He is deprived of his office by any misfortune, such as loss of many men in battle, or even a single defeat, or being taken prisoner, but never for any private act unconnected with the welfare of the whole tribe. They have no medals except those lately given them, which are worn more as symbols of peace than as marks of distinction among themselves. The priesthood appear to exercise no influence in their general government, but, on war being declared, they exert their influence with the Deity. Any principal chief has a right to call a gen-

7 Schoolcraft, *op. cit.,* Vol. II, pages 130-131.

eral council of his own tribe [band], and a council of all the tribes is called by the separate chiefs of each tribe. The principal chiefs have shown every disposition to advance in civilization, and only require the co-operation of the Americans, to influence their followers in the same course.

No individual action is considered as a crime, but every man acts for himself according to his own judgment, unless some superior power, for instance, that of a popular chief, should exercise authority over him. They believe that when they were created, the Great Spirit gave them the privilege of a free and unconstrained use of their individual faculties.

The dress of these nomads closely resembled that of the Plains tribes of the north, for the men dressed in deerskin shirts, leggings, and moccasins. The women wore one-piece costumes of tanned skin, and distinctive, beautifully made, knee-length boots. Indian women take great pride in their footwear, and every tribe had distinctive boots, moccasins, or moccasin-leggings. Once inquiring of a middle-age woman as to why this was so, with a twinkle in her eye she said to the writer, "To attract the eye of man." In the matter of dress, Neighbors[8] wrote:

Their [the men's] common dress is the breech-cloth and moccasins, with a buffalo robe flung loosely over the shoulders;... They [the Comanche generally] have a great variety of ornaments, many of which are of pure silver, principally fashioned into large brooches. Their decorations are derived from birds and shells which are bartered to them by the traders. The hawk and eagle feathers are the most esteemed of the bird. They use several native dyes, produced from roots. Vermilion, indigo, and verdigris are sold them by the traders. They also paint with white and red clay on particular occasions.

The Comanche of today live on an allotted reservation in Caddo county, Oklahoma, set aside for them, as well as for the Kiowa and the Kiowa Apache, under the treaty of 1867. Their fertile lands possess splendid agricultural possibilities.

Many of the more progressive men till their lands successfully, notwithstanding the fact that before being assigned their reservation

8 Schoolcraft, *op. cit.,* Vol. II, page 133.

the Comanche were in no sense an agricultural tribe; but the majority prefer to lease their holdings to white settlers. The old wrinkled men, as a rule, sit about and tell of the days of their ancestors when life was real and full of action. And the men of all ages spend the major portion of their time, as do those of other tribes, in discussing the suits brought or contemplated against the Government on account of broken treaties.

MYTHOLOGY

OLD WOMAN IN THE MOON

Four young girls once wandered, in their playing, a long distance from camp. The eldest girl carried a baby on her shoulders, and a little dog accompanied them. They played all the afternoon, wandering farther and farther from the camp. As it began to grow dark, they thought of returning and retraced their steps, but on their arrival they were dismayed to find that the camp had moved.

They started off through the woods, following the route taken by the people, but in the darkness lost the trail. They began to walk aimlessly, searching for the path, and the baby commenced to cry. It cried and sobbed, and the elder sister was unable to stop it, for it was very hungry.

Suddenly they heard a voice from the darkness, the voice of Giant Owl who ate little children, "You are making my granddaughter cry!"

The baby stopped wailing and yelled: "That's my grandmother calling! I want my grandmother!"

The other children did not want to go over to Giant Owl, for they suspected her; but the baby continued to cry and at last they submitted to its entreaties. Giant Owl led the way to her cave, where she fed them all. They were so sleepy that they could hardly keep awake. Giant Owl, in a kind manner, showed them some beds at one side of the cave where all the children, except the Eldest Sister, went to sleep at once. But Eldest Sister had seen Giant Owl put a pot on the fire to boil. This made the girl suspicious, so she spoke to the little dog, "Little Dog, if that Giant Owl comes to our bed during the night, you scratch my foot and wake me."

In the middle of the night, Giant Owl stealthily approached the

sleeping children, but when she was between the simmering pot and the bed, the dog scratched Eldest Sister's foot so that she awoke and saw the giant bird. She asked, "What are you doing, and what do you want, grandmother?"

"I thought perhaps you had rolled over on the baby and that she was smothering," answered the Owl. Several times she tried to get one of the children, because she was very hungry, but each time the little dog scratched Eldest Sister's foot so that she awoke in time.

In the morning, after breakfast, Eldest Sister planned for a way to escape. Finally she said, "Grandmother, we are going down to the creek to wash some of the baby's clothes."

"All right, grandchild; but come back when I call you."

Down at the creek Eldest Sister saw a huge Bullfrog. She begged: "Brother, help us! Giant Owl wants to eat us, and you must help us escape. When she calls, you answer that we are not quite finished."

This Frog promised to do, and the children began their flight. Soon Giant Owl called, "Come back to the cave, children!"

Frog answered, "We're not quite finished yet, grandmother." Several times Giant Owl called, and each time Frog answered, until she grew suspicious. After she called out again, she sneaked to the creek where she saw Frog, head out of water, answering.

In a rage, she cried: "I shall kill you for this, you Frog! You have let my food escape!"

Frog only swam to the opposite bank. Giant Owl chased him back and forth from bank to bank, but could not catch him. She soon tired of her efforts and left the creek, following the trail of the children. Travelling very fast, she soon came so near to them that they spied her and ran the faster. When they were nearly exhausted, they reached a stream where they saw Crane balancing on one leg. Eldest Sister panted: "Brother Crane, help us! Giant Owl wants to eat us, and she is after us now! Help us across!"

Crane made answer, "Pick a louse from my head and crack it with your teeth; then I shall help you to cross."

They cracked a louse and Crane stretched his legs from bank to bank so that the children crossed safely and continued their flight.

When Giant Owl came up, she ordered: "Crane, my food is escaping! Help me across!"

"Pick a louse from my head and crack it in your teeth; then I shall

help you across," answered Crane.

Owl cracked it and started over Crane's legs, but when she was midway she spat it out, saying: "Oh! That tastes too rotten!" As soon as she did this, Crane folded his legs and she fell in the water, but scrambled out on the same side that she had left. With great difficulty she reached the other bank, where she took up her pursuit.

Soon the children saw Giant Owl coming up fast. They were worn out when they reached a herd of Buffalo. Eldest Sister cried out to the big Buffalo Bull leader: "Brother Bull, help us! Giant Owl is after us and wants to eat us! We are too tired to go any farther!"

"Go around behind me, my children, and we shall take care of her."

When Giant Owl ran up, Buffalo Bull charged her, but just as he was almost on her she picked up a club and hit him so hard on the skull that he died.

A second and a third Bull met with like fate. There was left one small Bull who charged the Owl. When he came close, Owl raised her club and struck, but he stopped short and she broke the club on the ground. Then he tossed her on his horns. When she came down, he tossed her again, this time higher in the air. At the third toss Owl went up out of sight, and when he tossed her the fourth time, she went on to the moon, where she is seen today with her boiling-pot.

THE EYE OF THE RACCOON

One day Raccoon was travelling leisurely through the forest. As he went along, in a playful way he would take out an eye and throw it up in the branches of an elm tree, where it would land in a fork. Then he would call it and it would come back.

Fox was watching him and became very desirous of knowing how this trick was done. Finally he asked Raccoon just how he did it.

Raccoon said, "If I should tell you how I get back my eye, you would be sure to make a mistake and throw yours on the wrong tree."

Fox promised so much and pleaded so hard that at last Raccoon showed him how to do the trick and then went on his way. Fox was greatly pleased and went along, playing with his eyes, throwing them up in elm trees and calling them back. But at last he became oversatisfied with himself, and thought: "That Raccoon just did not want me to know more than he does. I am smart, and I really know more

than he. I shall try a different tree." So he took out his eye and threw it up into another tree, but when he called, "Eye, come down!" it did not move. He called several times, but the eye stayed there. Finally he thought, " I shall knock it down with the other eye." He threw up the other eye, but it remained beside the first one and would not come down. Fox was now completely blind.

FOX'S MEDICINE

Some people were sitting by the side of a trail when Fox came along carrying a heavy bag. When they asked him what he had in the bag, he answered: "This is my medicine. When I feel sick, I eat some of it and then I get well."

"If it is so good, what will you trade it for?"

"I would not trade my medicine for anything," he answered. "It is hard to get, and comes from a long way off; but if I were going to trade, it would be for a horse, so that I could ride away and get more of it."

They bargained a long while, and finally Fox agreed to trade his medicine for a horse. "After you give me the horse, I am going over the hill, but you must not open the bag until I am out of sight, and then you must turn toward the wind when you open it."

After he had disappeared over the hill, the people opened the bag and found nothing in it but dried meat.

FOX AND PELICAN

One winter day when the river was frozen and food was scarce, Fox became very hungry and decided to visit Pelican, who usually managed in some way to get fish.

"What do you want of me, brother Fox?"

"I am hungry and I came over to eat with you."

"All right; but I must first catch a fish."

Pelican rose into the air over the ice until he could see a fish swimming beneath. Then he dived, breaking the ice with his head and bringing up a catfish. After they had eaten, Fox invited Pelican to visit his place some time.

When Pelican came on his visit at a later time, Fox was without food; but remembering how Pelican had obtained his fish, he decided that if the bird could catch a fish that way, he could do so too.

So climbing a cottonwood tree which overhung the river, he said his prayer to the spirits, then boastfully called out, "Pelican, watch me catch a fish!" With that he dived head-first, but when he struck the hard ice he broke his neck. Pelican tried to pull him out, but he was dead, so Pelican dived and got the fish.

FOX AND BEAVER

Big Tail lives in the water, and once Fox went there to make him a visit. When he arrived, Big Tail asked him what he wanted. "I came to see you, because I am hungry and want something to eat," answered Fox.

Big Tail called in his wife to tell her that Fox was hungry. She called in the children, selected the fattest young beaver, and killed him. Then she dressed the carcass and cooked it. When they began to eat, Big Tail said, "Be sure to clean the bones well, so that we can make him alive easily."

After all had eaten, Big Tail collected the bones, tied them in a bundle, and threw them into the pond. As they struck the water they turned back into the little Beaver who swam ashore to his family.

Fox then invited Big Tail to come to visit him some time. Later he did so, saying he had come to eat with his friend Fox. Fox, imitating Big Tail, called in his wife and ordered her to kill the fattest child and cook him, just as he had seen Big Tail do with his child. After the meal, he threw the bones in the water; but he had neglected to tie them in a bundle, so they scattered. The minnows got them and dragged them about. Then Big Tail took pity on Fox and swam in, collecting all the bones except one leg-bone that some fish had taken. Then he showed Fox how to hold the bones and throw them to bring back life. The little Fox returned to life, but he was minus a leg.

FOX AND OWL

One day Fox went to visit Owl, because be was very hungry, with nothing to eat at home. Owl's food was nearly exhausted, but he had his wife pound some meat into a ball. The meat had no grease to hold it together, so Owl called for a sharp stick, with which he poked out his eyes. These he mixed with the meat to make it greasy. After the two had eaten, Owl rubbed his wings on his breast and rubbed his eyebrows. His eyes came back to him, so that he could see as before.

Fox thought that was a very good trick to know.

Some time later, Owl came to visit Fox, and it happened that Fox had plenty of meat, but no fat. He thought of what Owl had done, so called to his wife to bring a sharp stick, with which he poked out his eyes. They ate heartily, and, at the end of the meal, Fox rubbed his breast and eyebrows just as he had seen Owl do, but his eyes did not come back. He was blind.

FOX AND THE BEARS

Two Bears lived together in a cave. One of them was very ill, near death, and the other was doing all in his power to save him. Fox, hearing about it, came around to see what he could do, but in spite of all his doctoring, Bear died. As they were about to bury the body, Fox said: "No, do not bury the body in the ground, because some animal might come along and dig him up. It would be better to throw him in the water."

Fox went home and told his children to go downstream; that when they saw Bear floating, to haul it out of the water and bring it home. It was not very long before the Fox family were holding a big feast with Bear for meat. As they ate, Bird came down and asked for some food, which they refused. Bird said: "I know what and whom you are eating. If you do not give me some, I shall go and tell Bear what you are doing with the body."

"Go ahead and tell all you know. We shall not give you any meat."

Bird flew away, and Fox became frightened. He hid all the meat, cut the fur off his children, and covered himself with ashes. He began to mourn for Bear. Soon the other Bear appeared, and looked long and carefully at Fox, who was walling loudly over the death of his Bear friend.

Bear spoke: "Bird flew over and told me that you were eating the flesh of my brother. I came to see if that were true, but I can see that Bird was spiteful and lying."

Bear went away, and after he was out of sight, Fox dug up the meat and they renewed the feast.

THE MAN AND THE FOX

One day as a man was walking down the trail with a load of meat, he

saw Fox lying by the roadside. He asked, "What is the matter, brother Fox?"

"I am dying of hunger, and am too weak to get up and get anything to eat."

The man took pity on him, giving him a large bite of the meat he was carrying. Fox thanked him and told him which path to take, adding that there were others as hungry as himself on the road. When the man was out of sight, Fox jumped up and circled around, coming in on the trail again ahead of the man, where he stretched out as before. Soon the man came up and gave him meat to eat, taking pity on his starved condition. Fox played the trick again successfully; but the fourth time, when the man held out the meat for him to bite, he saw particles of food clinging to the teeth of Fox and suspected a trick. The man ran away. Fox chased him to eat him as well as the remaining meat, but the man jumped in the river and swam away to safety.

FOX AND OPOSSUM

Opossum once went along the bank of a stream, digging up wild onions with his tail. Fox saw him and wondered how Opossum could do it. He asked Opossum how he managed it; if he would give him the magic so that he too could dig the root. Opossum replied, "I might tell you the secret, but if I did so you would not keep it long and you would do it all wrong."

"No, I should not do it wrong, for I have watched you and I should do just as you are doing."

"Well, this is the secret: You must put your tail in the ground just this far and no farther. If you dig your tail in deeper, you will get caught."

"I shall do just as you say and we shall travel about together."

"Whatever you do, do not stick your tail in the ground over that mark. We shall travel together." Opossum also told the rest of his secrets.

The two went along together, and the first time Fox put in his tail just the right distance he brought up a wild onion. He had learned the method, so that he thought he knew all about it. He thought to himself. "I know how to do this, so I do not need to travel with Opossum any longer. I shall go by myself."

Opossum said, "You can go by yourself, but be very careful and

never put your tail in too far."

After a time Fox thought: "I think that Opossum must have been fooling me. I shall try just once and put my tail in beyond the mark and get a lot of onions. Opossum just wanted to get more than I."

So Fox stuck his tail all the way into the ground, but when he tried to draw it out he found that he could not. He went round and round, but his tail was stuck fast. Finally he died there. Opossum came along and said, "You can just lie there; you know what I told you!"

COYOTE AND POLECAT

Once Polecat and Coyote met on the plain. Said Coyote, "What are you looking for?"

"I am very hungry and am looking for something to eat."

"If you will do as I say, I know where there is a prairiedog town where we can get all the food we want."

"I shall do as you say, brother. How are we going to get something to eat?" asked Polecat.

Coyote answered: "Early in the morning we shall go to the town. There you will go to the middle of the village and pretend that you are dead. I shall go around crying to the Prairiedogs that their worst enemy is dead. The rest will be easy."

Polecat did as instructed, and Coyote called out all the Prairiedogs. He said, "Close up your holes tight and come and look over your worst enemy!"

They all circled around Polecat, and Coyote sang a song for their dance over the enemy.

At last he said: "We are going to have one last dance over Polecat, and this time I want you all to shut your eyes and not make a sound."

All the Prairiedogs danced around Polecat with their eyes closed. As they passed Coyote, he hit the fat ones over the head with a club, but at last one Prairiedog opened his eyes and squealed the alarm to the others. This one Polecat shot dead, but the Prairiedogs ran to their homes. Many of the homes were so tightly closed, by the order of Coyote, that the two killed a great number of Prairiedogs before they could dive underground to safety.

These two gathered outside the village and divided their spoils. Coyote took his share to the woods, where he built a fire to cook the meat in the hot ashes. As he was cooking, another Coyote, badly

crippled in the shoulder, came along and asked for something to eat. Coyote did not want to give him any, and thought of a way out of the difficulty, seeing that this one was crippled.

He said, "I shall give you some if you can beat me in a race."

"I cannot run, for I am crippled."

"Well, I shall get a stone and tie it on my foot to even things up, then we shall run around that hill yonder. Whoever comes back here first is the winner."

They started, and the crippled Coyote held back, while Coyote ran ahead easily. He ran all the faster, thinking of the meal that was awaiting him.

He ran ahead out of sight and around the hill, but the crippled Coyote cut through a deep ravine and back to the fire, where he stole all the meat.

THE WOMAN WHO BETRAYED HER HUSBAND

In a camp there lived a woman with her husband and four brothers. One night a hostile tribe raided the camp and stole the woman. The husband and brothers took up the trail with the intention of rescuing her, following until they reached the hostile camp. Once there, the husband posted the brothers in a cottonwood grove, while he hid himself near the water-hole, for he knew that his wife would come there sooner or later.

After many had come and gone, and when his patience was nearly at an end, the wife came to the hole for water. When he had signalled her to where he lay in hiding, she appeared glad to see him. After they had finished their talk, she said that she would take the water to her captor and then return to go home with him.

The wife went up to her captor, whom she had married in the meanwhile, and told him of a dream that she had had. She said that she dreamed of four enemies hidden in a grove of cottonwoods near the creek, and of another hidden near the water-hole. She said that this man was her former husband, and she described how he was dressed. She begged that if her dream was true, they would not hurt the husband. The captor and some warriors surrounded the grove and killed the four brothers, while they captured the husband. That night they treated him roughly, playing many tricks on him, while his wife urged them on in their language. Then they set up two poles and hung him

from them by his wrists. In the morning the camp broke up, leaving the husband to die suspended from the poles.

When all were leaving, one old woman hung back, apparently looking around the camp for anything of value that might have been left behind. She came to where the man was hanging, and said: "I have a son who looks just like you. For his sake, I shall cut you loose."

She cut him down and gave him a horse to enable him to get back home.

THE WOMAN WHO MARRIED A HORSE

Once there was a woman who became lost from the camp, and although they searched everywhere, they could not find her. It happened that two years later they returned to this campsite and there found a number of wild horses grazing. As the horses ran off, they saw the woman running behind them.

Some of the band mounted on their fastest horses and gave chase, surrounding the wild herd and roping the woman, whom they took back to camp. Because she was as wild as a horse, she fought so hard that her people had to tie her. In the course of time she became normal again and lived peaceably with her family. She had married a horse.

THE BOY WHO WAS STOLEN BY A WATER LIZARD

The tribe one day made camp by a river. In this tribe lived a man, his wife, and small son. The next day when the man started out on a hunt, he told his wife not to let the boy out of her sight; but as she was tanning a deer-hide, she forgot to look after him. When she had finished the hide, she looked all over for her son, but was unable to find him. Late in the evening the husband appeared and asked where the boy was. "I forgot all about him while I was working. I have looked all about and I can not find him anywhere," she answered.

It was then dark, so they had to wait until morning before they could pick up the boy's trail, which led to a deep pool. They saw where he had taken a drink of water, but there were no tracks leading away from the water. Then they thought that some water animal had dragged him down, and they sat and cried as if he were dead. At last the father declared, "I am going to find the body!"

He cut a long pole and poked about in the pool until he found a hole under the bank. Then he told his wife that he was going to dive in and find out what was under there. He took his knife, so that if any animal lived there he could kill it, saying before he dived in, "If I do not come out by noon, go back to the camp, for I shall be dead."

He dived in the pool and crawled along the hole. Far in the distance he could see a light, and when he came to it he saw his boy sitting there, crying. A large Water Lizard spoke to him then: "My own son has brought this little boy in here, but you may take him back with you. My son had no business bringing him here."

He gave the glad father four pebbles, with instructions to throw the first one when he came to water so that it would part for him, and when the waves came back to throw in the second one, doing the same with all four.

The father did as he was told by Water Lizard, and soon, with his son, came out on the banks of the river.

HOW THE PEOPLE OBTAINED BUFFALO

There was once a Coyote, who lived with his wife and son off by themselves. The Coyote had the buffalo corralled in a large cave. The people were very hungry, for they had no buffalo. They wanted to obtain these animals, but they did not know how to go about it, because Coyote kept them very well guarded.

After much talking they planned to leave a little dog somewhere near the home of Coyote where the son could easily find it. They thought that the boy would take the dog home for a pet, and once there he could easily stampede the herd out of the corral.

They told the little dog just what he was to do and left him near the home of Coyote. When Coyote boy was out at play, he found him, and was happy because now he had some one to play with. When he brought his pet home, Coyote voiced his suspicions: " 1 do not like the looks of that dog. I think I shall kill him."

The boy cried and begged to keep his pet, until finally Coyote consented, but told his son, "You must not take that dog near the buffalo corral."

One day when Coyote and his wife were busy, little Coyote said to his pet, "Let us go and see the fat buffalo."

The little dog remembered what he had been told, and as soon as

they came to the corral he ran in among the animals, barking and snapping at their heels. The buffalo ran round and round the corral, then broke through and scattered all over the plains.

That is how the buffalo came to the prairie.

THE BOY WHO ESCAPED FROM THE GIANT

One day a small boy was playing alone at quite a distance from the camp. A Giant came by, picked him up, and put him in a bag which he carried on his shoulders.

The boy tried in every way to get out, but the mouth of the bag was drawn tightly, and it was too strong to tear. After trying many times to escape, he had to give up. As the Giant walked along, a little Bird came and perched on the bag. When the boy heard the Bird, hope returned, and he asked his feathered friend for help. The Bird flew away and returned with a fire-drill, which he gave to the boy, saying, "Set the bag on fire and burn up the Giant!"

The boy set fire to the bag, and when a hole had been burned through, he jumped out. While the Giant was fighting the fire, the boy escaped.

THE SKEPTICAL COMANCHE

As a party of men were returning from the warpath, they came to a creek where was supposed to dwell a Water Monster. To appease this Monster and to insure a safe crossing, it was the custom to sacrifice a horse, accompanied by many prayers.

One of the members of this party expressed his disbelief in the existence of the Monster, and laughed at the others as they prepared to make the offering. The rest went ahead with their sacrifice of horse and offering of prayers, but asked that the skeptic remain behind until they had crossed first, so that they might reach the other side in safety, even if he was taken by the Monster.

After the others were across, the skeptic entered the water and the Monster gave chase to him. The men saw him disappear in a swirl of foam, and waited a long time before he reappeared. When he came to the surface, he called out: "See how foolish you were! I have killed the Monster! I do not have to kill a horse to cross this river!"

THE ANT WHO WENT UP IN THE SKY

There was once a person who lived in a beautiful lodge in the sky, who had a handsome daughter, but if any one came to his home after the daughter, the father ate him. Ant heard about the beautiful girl, and decided to go up into the sky after her, although all tried to keep him from going, especially Coyote, who was jealous of Ant. Coyote said: "If you go up there, you will lose your life. You are small, and the father will eat you up."

But Ant replied: "I am small and I shall get in some way. He will not be able to find me, even I if I am with his daughter."

Ant went up into the skies and crawled into the lodge through a crack, thus avoiding the father. He was so successful that he married the daughter and lived with her. After a while the father heard that some one had married his daughter, but although he tried hard to learn, he never could find out who it was. One time when the father looked about for the hus band of his daughter, Ant was beside him and was not seen. Ant bit the father on the hand so that he swelled up and died. Then Ant took possession of the house and the other daughter.

THE MAGIC ARROWS

There was once a man who was returning from the warpath, over a hilly area of country. As he walked along, he heard a voice calling out as if in distress, but he was unable to locate the owner of it. It kept calling: "I need help if anybody is around! Something is after me!"

Still the man could see no one; but he went toward where he last heard the voice, and at his approach a hawk flew into the air. Then he heard the voice again, and looked down. There at his feet was a tiny Dwarf. The hawk had been hunting the Dwarf, who shot at it with his tiny arrows, but always missed because the sun was in his eyes.

The man and the Dwarf stayed in that place overnight, and in a dream the Dwarf told the man: "You have saved me, and I am going to give you a power. I am going to give you my bow and arrows — you must throw away yours. If you ever see a hawk, do not try to kill it, for you can never kill the hawk. Throw away your war gear and take mine. Whenever you want to kill game, use the two arrows without the flint heads, but always remember never to try to kill a hawk. You will always be able to kill game with my arrows, no matter how far off it may be. just aim at the animal and the arrows will reach their mark."

THE WOMAN AND THE DWARF

There was once a woman who was returning home through the hills. Her husband had accompanied her, but he had been killed on the way. It was fast growing dark, and as she went along, she heard some one calling to her, but she saw nobody whichever way she looked. Finally she looked down at her feet and saw a Dwarf standing in the door-way of his house. He had a quiver full of arrows over his shoulder. He said to her: "You get in this house and stay there.

It is growing dark, and there is a Giant who is on your trail. If he ever finds you, he will eat you."

The woman hid, and soon a Giant came along. He asked the Dwarf: "Have you seen any one come along this trail? I am following a woman, and I want something to eat."

"No, I have seen no one tonight."

"Her tracks lead up to your door."

"There is no one here. If you do not believe me, lift up the house and look in. There is no one around."

The Giant lifted up the house and looked in. As he bent over, the Dwarf cut his head off and threw it away. He called the woman out, and told her: "The Giant is dead. Start home now, because your camp is a long way off. You would have been eaten that time, but I saved you."

THE WOMAN WHO MARRIED A GIANT[9]

One day a young mother went down to the creek to bathe, taking her little son with her. When they were about ready to go home, a handsome young man came by who asked the woman to go home with him. She agreed at last, and they started; but as it was a long way, they married first. After much travelling they reached his home, late in the evening, and by moonlight she saw that it was made of silver.

When she awoke in the morning, she found that her husband beside her had become a Giant, which frightened her greatly. She thought over many plans to escape and make her way back to her own camp, but none seemed suitable. After several days the thought came to her

9 Compare Old Woman in the Moon

to go down to the creek, so she said to him, "I am going down to the creek to wash clothes for my boy." The Giant saw nothing wrong with this plan, and let her go.

Once there, she saw a large Bullfrog on the bank, to which she spoke: "Brother Bullfrog, the Giant will call us in a little while, and I am afraid of him. When he calls, say that we are still washing."

Frog said: "Sister, I shall help you," and he gave them a bag of medicine to aid in their escape — a downy feather and a piece of buffalo cow's stomach — saying, "The Giant will pursue you, and when he does, throw down these things."

After they had fled, every time Giant called, Frog answered, "We are still washing."

Finally Giant became suspicious and went down to the creek to see why they were staying there so long, but he found no one. In a rage he pursued, gaining rapidly upon them. When they looked back they could see him coming up fast, and the woman in alarm threw down what Frog had first given her, the downy feather. Immediately a dense fog rose behind her, in which Giant became lost and groped about for a long time. Finally he emerged and picked up the trail again. When he came near a second time, the woman threw behind her the stomach of the buffalo cow, which turned into cañons and draws behind her. The Giant became entangled in this rough country and found his way out with great difficulty, but at last he followed the trail again and began to overtake them.

They reached a river, with no means of getting across, and followed along the bank until they came to where Crane was standing, of whom they begged: "Brother Crane, the Giant is following us to eat us! Help us!"

"Here is a louse from my head; crack it in your teeth on your way across," Crane instructed. He planted his long legs on both banks, and they crossed in safety over his body. Soon Giant came long; he could see that his victims had crossed safely. He angrily ordered Crane: "Put me across! If you do not, I shall kill you!"

Crane stretched out his legs for Giant, but when he reached midway, Crane folded his legs and Giant fell in the water. The last the woman saw of him he was floundering about in the stream.

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