
Tales from Kodiak Island. II

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TALES FROM KODIAK ISLAND. II.

VI. LIGHT.

LIGHT was not so universal formerly as now. Its cheering influences were then cast over one village only; and even there it depended on the caprices of the chief, who regulated and guarded it jealously. All other villages lived in darkness, although aware of the existence of light in that village. They made many attempts to get possession of it: some, after a few efforts, gave up in despair; others, not so easily discouraged, continued a longer time with the same empty result; and one village, owing to the persistent character of its chief, would never own itself defeated, and persevered in spite of past failures.

Here, in the village hall, the people gathered daily to discuss the all-important question of light, and concluded to call for volunteers to go in quest of it. To the fortunate one the following reward was held out — eternal glory, and the hand of the chief's beautiful and favorite daughter. Considering the inducements, there were no lack of volunteers at first, but, as none of these returned, not even to tell the story of the failure, the list became small and smaller, and after a time weeks would pass without any one offering himself. What became of these eager seekers after light was a mystery. It was generally supposed that some dropped by the wayside, and the others, on reaching the land of light, and finding the task too arduous, decided to remain there always rather than go back without light.

The chief, however, was undaunted, and continued calling the meetings and for volunteers regularly. At one of these the raven was present. He listened attentively to all the speeches, and heard the chief's call for volunteers, and when a considerable time had elapsed without any one indicating his desire to go, he rose and addressed the assembly. Sad to say, his speech has been lost in the dark ages, except the last and memorable words: "I will bring you light." This was followed by such loud peals of laughter and mocking hoots that the building almost shook. The chief, who was deep in thought during the raven's harangue, was aroused from his reverie by this sudden outburst of laughter, and inquired the cause of it. With much derision the speech and boasts of the raven were repeated to him. Although he may have had as little faith in the words of the raven as the others, he was yet too wise a man to let any opportunity, no matter how slim, of obtaining light — the great object of his life — go by unembraced. Instead of joining in the laughter, he mildly reproved his followers, and then addressing himself to the raven, congratulated him on his noble resolution, encouraged him to

persevere, and ended by reminding him of the prize that awaited him whose efforts should be crowned with success.

With this the meeting dissolved. The raven, satisfied with the present and rejoicing in the future, flew home to make ready for the expedition. Joyfully he related the events of the day to his grandmother, a woman. "Caw! caw! caw! Grandmother, to-morrow I start after the light; and on my return with it I shall marry the chief's beautiful daughter and become famous. Make all things ready, for I leave early in the morning. Caw! caw! caw!"

"Ai-Ai-Yah!" she exclaimed. "Better ones than you have tried and failed, and how will you, a raven, get it? Why do you want to marry? Who will marry such a one as you? You smell too strong."

This was too much for him. "You old hag!" he screamed with rage. "Who is asking your opinion or advice? How does my smell concern you? You will not sleep with me. To spite you I will marry, and the chief's daughter at that. Even if I am a raven, I will do what I promise; and you do what I tell you, or you will be sorry."

She was sorry there and then, for he went at her with claws and bill till she begged for mercy, and promised to be more considerate in the future.

Early the next morning he left the village, and after several days of flight in the darkness it lightened up faintly. The farther he went, the lighter it became; and when he reached the village, the light was so strong that it almost blinded him. It was a large and cheerful village; the chief's large barrabara, where the lights were kept, was in the centre. Close by was a spring of water, and there the raven alighted and eyed sharply the women as they came for water. Not noticing the chief's daughter among them, he began to wish that she would appear. A moment later he saw her coming towards him; and when she had dipped out some water, he murmured, "I wish she would drink some of it." The words had barely been said when she bent over to drink. Instantly he changed himself into a tiny piece of down, and, unnoticed, she gulped it down with the water.

She conceived, and in due time gave birth to a son, a raven. Being the first child of an only child, he was fondled and nursed tenderly. The chief was especially devoted to him, and loved him even more than his daughter. He was indulged and humored in all his wishes. Whatever he saw he called for; whatever he called for had to be given to him; and if it was not given him immediately, he cawed, cried, pestered, clawed, and pecked until he got it. In this manner he handled everything on the premises that might possibly contain the lights, except three little caskets on an out of the way shelf. These he noticed one day, and asked for them. The chief was asleep,

and as no one else dared touch them, the request was denied. But he would have them, and he commenced such a cawing, scratching, and hawing that the chief awoke. Not waiting to learn the cause of all this disturbance, he shouted angrily, "O, give him anything he wants, and shut him up!" and went to sleep again.

The caskets were handed him, and he opened them one by one. In the first was night; the second contained the moon and stars; and in the third the sun was shining. He looked at them awhile, and then thrust them aside as worthless. But a few days later, when no one was about, he flew upon the shelf, grasped the two boxes containing the precious lights, and flew out with them. Some of the people outside noticed him, and raised the cry: "A raven flew out of the chief's barrabara with two boxes in his mouth!" When the chief discovered his loss, the raven was miles away.

He flew many days; and each day it grew darker and darker until he was in darkness altogether. After suffering some hardships he arrived in the village, reported himself to the chief, and requested that the people be called together. When all were assembled, he addressed them, congratulated them, reminded them of the last meeting, the promises made, and concluded by saying: "I have brought you light." In the presence of all he opened one of the caskets, and instantly the moon and stars were visible in the sky. The people and chief were almost wild with joy; and the latter kept his promise, and bestowed on him his favorite daughter.

On the morrow the raven called on his father-in-law, and asked what he had to offer for a still better light than even the moon and stars. "My other daughter," replied the chief. "Call the people, and you shall have it," said the raven. If the villagers were wild with joy on seeing the moon and stars, imagine their emotions on beholding for the first time the sun. Since that memorable day the sun, moon, and stars have illuminated the whole world. The crow married the two daughters of the chief, with whom he is living very happily to this day.

VII. THE GROUSE-GIRL.

Two men, the older lame and unattractive, the younger sound and handsome, lived by themselves in a barrabara, far from other human beings. When they arose in the morning, they drank some oil — to keep hunger away the rest of the day — and then went out hunting; one to the hills, and the other to the beach. In the evening one returned with seal meat, while his partner brought bear meat. Many years they lived in this manner without seeing or even knowing that other people existed.

After the usual breakfast one morning, the older man went to the

beach to hunt, and the younger man to the hills, and in the evening both returned loaded with seal and bear meat respectively. By rubbing together two sticks of wood, they soon had a fire over which they cooked some meat, and, after eating, put on their parkas and sat outside on the barrabara, with their faces toward the sea. While sitting there, a grouse appeared and lit on the barrabara, near the younger man, and commenced pecking. "Why does the grouse come here?" the man asked, and pushed her away. She flew up, but returned a moment later to the place occupied before. Seeing her there again, the handsome fellow said to the other one: "What is the matter with the bird? Her home is on the hills, and yet she is bothering here." He drove her off, but she, not discouraged, came back to him. "What does she want?" he exclaimed impatiently, and forced her away rather roughly. When she descended the fourth time, it was by the side of the lame man who took her in his hand, began stroking her, and finally decided to keep her as his pet. Before retiring, the lame man made a nest for the bird near him, and then all turned in for the night.

The next morning the men went hunting as usual. As they approached the barrabara in the evening, they were greatly surprised to see smoke coming out of it, and on entering to find it clean, a warm supper waiting for them, and a pair of new torbarsar (shoes made of sealskin) garters hanging over the lame man's bed. "Somebody has been here to-day," said the younger man; and although they looked outside and inside, they found no one. The grouse was on her nest, her head hidden under her drooping wings, and looked altogether tired. Perceiving her condition, the lame man remarked: "The bird has had nothing to eat or drink the whole day; she must be both hungry and thirsty."

This little excitement did not prevent them from enjoying their supper, nor did it disturb their sound sleep during the night; and the next morning they proceeded with their daily occupation. As the evening before, they found their home in order, the meat cooked, and a pair of new torbarsars hanging where the garters hung the day previous. The grouse was on her nest, her head under the drooping wings, but no one else was to be found, although they searched a long time. After eating their supper, the older man fed and played with the grouse, and then they all went to sleep.

On account of the stormy weather, the several days following the men remained at home. During that time the bird tried once more to gain the good grace of the handsome man, but he treated her roughly, and would not let her come near him, and she avoided him after this. The first favorable day the two men went in different directions to hunt. As soon as the younger man was out of sight,

the lame man squatted down, saying: "I will watch to-day and see who cleans and cooks for us, and makes torbarsars for me." Slowly and cautiously he crawled back quite close to the barrabara, and waited. The morning passed without giving him a clue, but towards evening he saw smoke coming out of the smoke hole. He crept still closer, and heard footsteps within. While he lay there, guessing who it might be, a young and beautiful girl stepped out. Her face was white, hair and eyebrows black, the parka was of white grouse feathers, and the leggings of the fur seal torbarsars were white with various trimmings. He gazed at her, and when she went in, he followed her, watched her a moment at her work, and then seized her.

"Ai-Ai-Y-a-h!" she exclaimed. "You scared me. Let me go." Instead he drew her fondly to him, and when he did so, her face reddened with blushes.

"I will not let you go," he said; but when he noticed a grouse skin on the nest, he freed her, and although she begged to have the skin back, he took it outside, and hid it.

The handsome man was both scared and amazed, but he asked no questions. Since it was customary for a newly married man to stay at home with his wife for a certain time, it was a long time before the old man went out hunting again. When he did so, he always returned before his partner, and generally found a pair of torbarsars or some other present waiting for him; but the younger man found nothing.

Though the younger man asked no questions, and knew not who the girl was and where she came from, he did a great deal of thinking. It puzzled him to know why the girl preferred a lame, old man to him a young, handsome man. She did not like him, he knew, for she never made anything for him, while the lame man had presents forced on him. He finally decided to take matters in his own hands, and make the girl his wife. One night, when the married couple were asleep, he arose and killed the lame man. Going back to his bed, he called to the girl to leave her dead husband, and be his wife. This she refused to do. "You cannot go away from here," he said; "you will have to be my wife."

"I will never be your wife," she answered; and getting up, she searched for the grouse skin among her husband's things, and found it in his tool bag. This she hid under her parka. When he called her again, saying, "Come, you are my wife," she replied: "I came here to be your wife, but you did not take me. Three times I came to you, and three times you chased me away. The last time you hurt me. I will not be your wife now." While speaking, she pulled out the grouse skin, shook it three times, and, when she had finished,

pulled it on herself, and flew out through the smoke hole, leaving the young, sound, and handsome man wifeless and partnerless.

VIII. THE "UNNATURAL UNCLE."

In a village lived a man, known to his neighbors as "Unnatural Uncle." When his nephews became a few years old, he would kill them. Two had already suffered death at his hands. After the second had disappeared, his wife went to the mother of the boys, and said: "Should another boy be born to you, let us conceal the fact from my husband, and make him believe the child a girl. In that case he will not harm him, and we may succeed in bringing him up."

Not long after the above conversation another nephew was born. Unnatural Uncle, hearing that a child was born, sent his wife to ascertain the sex of the child. She, as had been agreed upon, reported the child a girl. "Let her live," he said.

The two women tended and dressed the boy as if he were a girl. When he grew older, they told him to play with the girls, and impressed upon him that he should at all times imitate the ways, attitudes, and postures of the girls, especially when attending to the calls of nature. Unnatural Uncle watched the boy as he was growing up, and often wondered at his boyish looks. One day the boy, not knowing that his uncle was about and observing him, raised up his parka, and so exposed his body. "Ah," said Unnatural Uncle to his wife, on reaching home, "this is the way you have fooled me. But I know everything now. Go and tell my nephew I wish to see him." With tears in her eyes the poor woman delivered the message to the nephew, told him of the disappearance of his brothers, and, of his probable fate. The father and mother of the boy wept bitterly, for they were certain he would never return. The boy himself, although frightened, assured his parents to the contrary, and begged them not to worry, for he would come back safe and sound.

"Did my brothers have any playthings?" he asked before going.

He was shown to a box where their things were kept. In it he found a piece of a knife, some eagle-down, and a sour cranberry. These he hid about his person, and went to meet his uncle. The latter greeted him, and said: "Nephew, let us go and fetch some wood."

When they came to a large forest, the boy remarked: "Here is good wood; let us take some of it, and go back."

"Oh, no! There is better wood farther on," said the uncle.

From the forest they stepped into a bare plain. "Let us go back. There is no wood here," called the boy. But the uncle motioned to him to come on, telling him that they would soon find better wood. A little later they came to a big log. "Here is what I want," ex-

claimed the uncle, and began splitting it. "Here, nephew, jump in, and get that wedge out," called the uncle to the boy, as one of the wedges fell in. When the boy did so, the man knocked out the other wedges; the log closed in on the boy, and held him fast. "Stay there!" said Unnatural Uncle, and walked off.

For some time the boy remained in this helpless condition, planning a means of escape. At last he thought of his sour cranberry, and, taking it in his hand, he rubbed with it the interior of the log from edge to edge. The sourness of the berry caused the log to open its mouth, thus freeing him.

On his way back to the village, he gathered a bundle of wood, which he left at his uncle's door, announcing the fact to him: "Here, uncle, I have brought you the wood." The latter was both surprised and vexed at his failure, and determined more than ever to kill the boy. His wife, however, warned him: "You had better not harm the boy; you have killed his brothers, and if you hurt him, you will come to grief."

"I will kill him, too," he savagely replied.

When the boy reached his father's home, he found them weeping and mourning. "Don't weep!" he pleaded. "He cannot hurt me; no matter where he takes me, I will always come back." In the morning he was again summoned to appear at his uncle's. Before going, he entreated his parents not to feel uneasy, assuring them that no harm would befall him, and that he would be back. The uncle called the boy to go with him after some ducks and eggs. They passed several places abounding in ducks and eggs, and each time that the boy suggested, "Let us take these and go back," the uncle replied: "Oh, no! There are better ducks and eggs farther on." At last they came to a steep bluff, and, looking down, saw a great many ducks and eggs. "Go down carefully, nephew, and gather those ducks and eggs. Be quick, and come back as soon as you can."

The boy saw the trap at a glance, and prepared for it by taking the eagle-down in each hand, between thumb and finger. As the boy took a step or two downward, the uncle gave him a push, causing him to lose his footing. "He will never come back alive from here," smiled the uncle to himself, as he walked back. If he had remained awhile longer and looked down before going, he would have seen the boy descending gently instead of falling. The eagle-down kept him up in the air, and he lighted at his own pleasure safe and sound. After gathering all the ducks and eggs he wanted, he ascended by holding up the down, as before, and blowing under it. Up, up he went, and in a short time stood on the summit. It was night before he sighted his uncle's home. At the door he deposited

the birds and eggs, and shouted : "Here, uncle, are the ducks and eggs."

"What! back again!" exclaimed the man very much mortified. His wife again pleaded with him to leave the boy in peace. "You will come to grief, if you don't," she said. "No; he cannot hurt me," he replied angrily, and spent the remainder of the night thinking and planning.

Although he assured them that he would return, the boy's parents did not have much faith in it; for he found them on his return weeping for him. This grieved him. "Why do you weep?" he said. "Didn't I say I would come back? He can take me to no place from which I cannot come back."

In the evening of the third day the aunt appeared and said that her husband wished the boy. He told his parents not to be disturbed, and promised to come back soon. This time the uncle invited him to go with him after clams. The clams were very large, large enough to inclose a man. It was ebb tide, and they found plenty of clams not far from the beach. The boy suggested that they take these and go back, but the uncle put him off with, "There are better clams farther out." They waded into the water, and then the man noticed an extraordinarily large clam. "Take him," he said, but when the boy bent over, the clam took him in. So confident was Unnatural Uncle of his success this time that he uttered not a word, but with a triumphant grin on his face and a wave of his hand he walked away. The boy tried to force the valves apart, but not succeeding, he cut the ligament with his piece of a knife, compelling the clam to open up little by little until he was able to hop out. He gathered some clams, and left them at his uncle's door as if nothing had happened. The man, on hearing the boy's voice outside, was almost beside himself with rage. His wife did not attempt to pacify him. "I will say nothing more," she said. "I have warned you, and if you persist in your ways, you will suffer."

The next day Unnatural Uncle was busy making a box.

"What is it for?" asked his wife.

"A plaything for our nephew," he replied.

In the evening the boy was sent for. On leaving his parents, he said: "Do not feel uneasy about my absence. This time I may be away a long time, but I will come back nevertheless."

"Nephew, here is something to amuse you," said his uncle. "Get inside of it, so that I may see whether it fits you." It fitted him, so did the lid the box, and the rope the lid. He felt himself borne along, and from the noise of the waves he knew it was to the sea. The box was lowered, and with a shove it was set adrift. It was stormy, the waves beat over the box, and several times he gave him-

self up as lost. How long he drifted he had no idea ; but at last he heard the waves dashing against the beach, and his heart rejoiced. Louder, and louder did the joyful peal sound. He gathered himself together for the sudden stop which soon came, only to feel himself afloat again the next moment. This experience he went through several times, before the box finally stopped and he realized he was on land once more.

As he lay there, many thoughts passed through his mind : where was he ? was any one living there ? would he be saved ? or would the flood-tide set him adrift again ? what were his people at home doing ? These, and many other thoughts passed through his brain, when he was startled by hearing voices, which he recognized, a little later, as women's. This is what he heard : —

“ I saw the box first,” said one.

“ No, I saw it first,” said the other.

“ I am sure I saw it before you,” said the first speaker again, “ and, therefore, it is mine.”

“ Well, you may have the box, but its contents shall belong to me,” replied the other.

They picked up the box, and began to carry it, but finding it somewhat heavy and being anxious to know what it contained, they stopped to untie it.

“ If there are many things in there, I shall have some of them,” said the first speaker, who rued her bargain. The other one said nothing. Great was their surprise on beholding him. He was in turn surprised to see two such beautiful girls, the large village, the numerous people, and their peculiar appearance, for he was among the Eagle people in Eagle land. The full grown people, like the full grown eagles, had white faces and heads, while those of the young people, like those of young eagles, were dark. Eagle skins were hanging about all over the village ; and it amused him to watch some of the people put on their eagle skins and change to eagles, and after flying around, take them off and become human beings again.

The girls, being the daughters of the village chief, led the boy to their father, each claiming him. When he had heard them both, the chief gave the boy to the older girl (the second speaker). With her he lived happily, but his thoughts would very often wander back to his former home, the people there, his parents ; and the thought of his uncle's cruelty to them would make his heart ache. His wife noted these spells of depression, and questioned him about them until he told her of his parents and uncle. She, like a good wife, bade him cheer up, and then went to have a talk with her father. He sent for his son-in-law, and advised him to put on his (chief's) eagle skin, soar up high until he could see his village, fly over there,

visit his parents, and bring them back with him. He did as he was told, and in a short time found himself in the village. Although he could see all other people, his parents were not in sight.

This was in the evening. During the night he went out to sea, brought back a large whale, and placed it on the beach, knowing that all the villagers would come out for the meat. The first person to come to the village beach in the morning was Unnatural Uncle; and when he saw the whale, he aroused the village, and a little later all, except the boy's father and mother, were there, cutting and storing up the whale. His parents were not permitted to come near the whale, and when some of the neighbors left some meat at their house, Unnatural Uncle scolded, and forbade it being done again. "I can forgive him the killing of my brothers, the attempts on my life, but I will revenge his treatment of my parents." With these thoughts in his mind, the eagle left his perch, and flew over to the crowd. He circled over its head a little while, and then made a swoop at his uncle. "Ah, he knows that I am chief, and the whale is mine, and he asks me for a piece of meat." Saying this, he threw a piece of meat at the eagle. The second time the eagle descended it was still nearer the man's head, but he tried to laugh it off, and turn it to his glory. The people, however, did not see it that way, and warned him to keep out of the eagle's clutches, for the eagle meant mischief. When the eagle dropped the third time, it was so near his head that he fell on his face. The fourth time the eagle swooped him, and flew off with him.

Not far from the shore was a high and steep rock, and on its summit the eagle put down the man, placing himself opposite. When he had taken off the skin, and disclosed himself, he said to his trembling uncle: "I could have forgiven you the death of my brothers, the four attempts on my life, but for the cruel treatment of my parents you shall pay. The whale I brought was for my parents and others, and not for you alone; but you took entire possession of it, and would not allow them even to approach it. I will not kill you without giving you a chance for your life. Swim back to the shore, and you shall be spared." As he could not swim, Unnatural Uncle supplicated his nephew to take him back, but the latter, putting on the eagle skin, and hardening his eagle heart, clutched him, and from a dizzy height in the air dropped him into the sea.

From the beach the crowd watched the fatal act, understood and appreciated it, and, till it was dark, continued observing, from the distance, the eagle. When all had retired, he pulled off the skin, and set out for his father's barrabara. He related to his parents his adventures, and invited them to accompany him to his adopted land, to which they gladly consented. Early in the morning he put on

again his skin, and, taking a parent in each claw, flew with them to Eagle land, and there they are living now.

IX. THE BOY WHO BECAME A MINK.

In a small barrabara, away from other barrabaras and other people, lived an old woman and her young grandson. While the boy was small, the grandmother supplied both with food and clothing by hunting and fishing. She also taught him how to hunt and fish; and when nearly full grown, she surprised him one morning by telling him that a one-hatch bidarka (which she had made unbeknown to him) was on the beach ready for him.

It was there, sure enough, equipped and ready for hunting. He was supremely happy; for he had obtained that which for years he had been looking forward to. Every morning he went out hunting and fishing, and in the evening returned loaded with fish and game. In a little while he became very skilful in the handling of the bidarka, and daily ventured farther and farther out to sea.

His grandmother called him one morning, and said to him: "Son, you may go anywhere, except into yonder bay, and you will be safe; if you ever go there, you will never return to me. Take this mink skin, put it into the nose of your bidarka; this bag containing four tiny bows and arrows keep about your person. Should you ever be in trouble, turn to them, and they will help you."

He promised never to venture inside the bay, accepted the gifts, and disposed of them as he was told.

In those days, when this boy lived, there were no winds at all; the waters were always smooth and calm. One could go long distances from shore, and not be in danger of the winds and the waves. Not many days after the promise to his grandmother, the boy, while pursuing a seal, went much farther from shore than one would dare go now, and when he finally stopped paddling, after killing the seal, he found himself at the mouth of the bay.

The interior of the bay looked so inviting and alluring that he laughed at his grandmother's fears, and steered for the beautiful island in the middle of the bay. He beached his bidarka, took the mink skin, and started for the summit of a hill where he noticed a barrabara. As he began to ascend, large rocks came rolling down, blocking his way and nearly crushing him. The farther up he went the more difficult and dangerous it became. In order to save himself he jumped into a hole. The rocks fell over the hole, covered and blocked it.

He tried vainly to get out; the rocks were too heavy to be pushed off, and the openings too small to crawl through. While thinking over the situation, the mink skin occurred to him. Seizing it, he

commenced chewing and stretching it until he pulled it over his head. As he did that, he changed into a mink. By scratching and squeezing, leaping and dodging, he escaped from his prison, and reached the summit, where he was surprised to see that all the rocks came from the barrabara.

Taking off the mink skin and becoming a boy again, he went into the barrabara. On the floor sat a very large woman making mats. When she saw him, she screamed in a loud and angry voice :—

“Who told you to come here !”

Reaching behind her, she pulled out a long, sharp spear and threw it at him. Before the spear reached him, he changed himself into a mink ; the spear went over his head, sticking into the wall. Quickly assuming his boyish shape, he grabbed the spear, and called to her : “Change and save yourself if you can !” and hurled it at her, cutting her in two.

A loud report and earthquake followed his action. The barrabara trembled, tumbled in, and he was again a prisoner. His mink skin came into good use ; by scratching and dodging he managed to crawl out and run down to the shore, and, after pulling off the skin, pushed the bidarka out and started homeward.

He had not gone very far when he heard some one calling, and on looking around saw people on the shore motioning to him. An old man greeted him as he landed, and taking him by the hand, led him into a barrabara where sat several girls. Pointing to one of them, he said : “You can have her for a wife.”

This made him very happy, and glad he did not obey his grandmother. A dish of seal meat was placed before him, and after eating, they all lay down to sleep. The following morning the old man asked him to go to the woods, and bring wood for sled runners. In his position of prospective son-in-law he could not refuse any request of his prospective father-in-law, so he went.

A gruesome sight met his gaze on entering the woods. Human bones and skeletons were scattered everywhere ; and he began to fear lest another trap was laid for him. He went about his work, however, and the woods soon rang with the reports of his axe.

A very frightful and horrible noise coming from the interior of the woods made him stop. The nearer it came the more terrible it sounded. “It must be a wild beast coming to eat me up,” he thought.

Soon a very ferocious beast appeared and came running towards him. The boy looked for his mink skin ; it was not about him, for he had left it in the bidarka ; but still he had his bows and arrows. Quickly pulling them out of the bag, he sent one tiny arrow into the side of the monster, knocking him over ; and when another arrow

pierced the other side, he ceased kicking. Approaching him to withdraw the arrows, the boy found him dead.

On his return to the barrabara, after finishing his work, the old man looked surprised and uneasy — the old man was a shaman, and had been in the habit of sending strangers into the woods to be killed by the monster, and then eating them — and asked the boy : —

“Did you see or hear anything strange in the woods ?”

“No, I did not,” the boy replied.

The morning of the second day, while the boy was eating breakfast, the old shaman from outside called to him : —

“The girls want you to come out and swim with them !”

To refuse would have been unmanly, so he went to the beach, undressed himself, taking, however, the mink skin ; for he suspected trouble, and swam after the girls, who were some distance from him. As he advanced, they retreated ; and when almost up to them, a big whale appeared between them, and before he knew what to do, he was in the whale’s mouth. In there, the boy put on the mink skin, and when the whale appeared on the surface, the boy escaped through the blow-hole, and swam for the shore.

When the shaman saw him, he was vexed and troubled, saying to himself : “He is the first one that I could not overcome, but I will.”

That evening he had again a supper of seal meat ; his bride sat where he could see her, but he dared not talk to her.

Early next morning the old man called him to have another swim with the girls. On the beach was a large whale, and the girls were climbing on his tail. When they were all on, he switched his tail, sending them through the air some distance into the sea.

The girls dared the boy do likewise. Stripping himself, and unnoticed by them — they were quite a distance from him — he took a tiny arrow in each hand. Instead of at once climbing on the tail, he approached the head of the whale. Sticking the arrows into the head, he asked the girls : —

“Am I to get on here ?”

“No, further down,” they answered.

He stuck the arrows into the whale, as he moved down towards the tail, repeating the same question and receiving the same answer. When he finally stood on the tail, it did not move ; for the whale was dead. The girls, after waiting some time, swam to the shore to report to the shaman, who returned with them only to find the whale lifeless. Furious was the shaman ; and in his heart he swore he would yet eat the boy.

The following morning the old man asked the boy whether he had any relatives, mother or grandmother, whom he would like to go and see before he settled down with them.

"I have a grandmother," said the boy, and went off that day.

Paddling first on one side of the bidarka, and then on the other, he was making good progress, when all of a sudden the mink skin startled him by calling to him: "Look out, you are in danger!" He looked ahead; there was nothing dangerous there, so he paddled on. Again the mink skin called to him: "Look out, you are in danger!" Ahead everything was safe; but as he looked behind, he was almost overcome with fear; for a huge wave, high as a mountain, was coming his way, and would soon overtake and overwhelm him. As quickly as he could, he shot one of his arrows into the wave, breaking it, and he was once more safe.

Towards evening he steered for the shore, in order to eat and rest there, and when near the shore, a large sea monster appeared and swallowed him, bidarka and all. He pulled out and put on the mink skin, and when an opportunity offered itself, he escaped through the monster's gills, and swam to the shore.

His grandmother, who was also a shaman, had been watching the grandson's doings, though far away, punished the monster by sending two large ravens to peck his eyes out.

Being on shore, and without a bidarka, the boy started to walk home. He did not take off the mink skin, and so was still a mink. On the way he came to a large lake, abounding in fish; there he stopped, fed on the fish he caught, and in a short time became acquainted with the minks of the neighborhood. This easy life pleased him so well that he decided to remain there; and there (in the neighborhood of Kodiak) he is at present. The shamans, only, can tell him apart from the other minks.

X. THE SAD FATE OF UCHATNGIAK.

It was a very large settlement, and over it presided only one chief. This chief had a son whom, from babyhood, he kept secluded in a barrabara. Two men watched continuously over him, giving him no opportunity either to go or look out. The boy, Uchatngiak, as he grew up and heard the shouts of the men who were shooting ducks in the bay with their bows and arrows, the laughter of others, playing "nabada" (a stick is set up and stones thrown at it), the cheering of still others, testing their skill of marksmanship on a piece of kelp, tried in vain to guess the reason of his seclusion. One day in early spring, being very restless and hearing more noise than usual, he decided to see what was going on outside. While one man was after fresh water, he sent the other one to fetch him some roots, and in the mean time pulled out the seal-intestine window, and looked out. A rapturous sight greeted him: the green grass, the flowers just beginning to bloom, the clear sky overhead, the young

men happy and sportive, hunting and playing games ; he gazed till blinded by tears, then fell on his bed, and wept.

The guards on their return, finding him in this condition, were frightened, thinking he was ill, or what was worse, perhaps he had looked out ; in that case they would be severely punished. He would not answer their many questions at first ; but when he became composed, told them everything, and ordered them to go to his father, and say to him that he desired to go and stay outside. One of the men went to the chief, and reported to him what happened and how it happened, and delivered the son's message. The chief thought a while, and then said : " My son is now grown up, he may come and live outside."

The chief ordered some of his servants to dress his son in a sea-otter parka and torbarsars, to spread skins on the ground for him to walk on, to place a bearskin on the roof of the barrabara for him to sit on ; others of his servants he sent through the village, inviting the people to come and see his son, concerning whom they knew nothing. Uchatngiak, seated on the barrabara, gazed with astonishment on all the people and wonders about him. Five white geese, who happened to fly by just then, had a special fascination for him, and he eyed them till they settled down some distance off. " People hunt them. I too will go and hunt them," thought he. Sending his guards away on different errands, he snatched a bow and arrow, and started after the geese.

When he came to the place where the geese seemed to alight, he saw a lake and in it five beautiful girls bathing and enjoying themselves. In order to get a better look at them, he began sneaking around the lake, and, while doing so, came across five white geese skins. Taking one, the smallest, he sat down at a distance to see what would happen. Pretty soon the girls, who were sisters, came out of the water, and walked to the place where they left their skins. The four older sisters were soon ready to fly, but waited impatiently for the youngest sister. " Do hurry, we must be going," they called.

" I have looked all around here for my skin, but I cannot find it," she weepingly said. The others joined with her in the fruitless search, until Uchatngiak was espied, when the four geese flew up and away, and the girl ran to him, and begged : " O give me back my skin." Looking at her beautiful form, he said : " No, I will not give it back to you." He dressed her in his parka and torbarsars, and asked her to come home with him. For ten days she lived with him in his barrabara before his mother learned the fact, but she said nothing. During the day Uchatngiak hunted, and his wife went to the lake to feed on the delicate grasses that geese like so well. In this manner the young couple lived happily together until the following spring. A son was born to them in the mean while.

Uchatngiak had a very meddlesome sister, who disliked her strange sister-in-law, and often, in speaking with other women, would remark that her sister-in-law had a peculiar mouth, resembling that of a goose, and that, whenever she laughed, she covered her mouth, so that no one could see her teeth. One day, while Uchatngiak was away from home, his sister called and shamefully abused his wife, and called her a goose. The wife endured the abuse a long time, and then, putting on her goose skin, flew out through the hole in the roof and away. An alarm was given, that a goose flew out of the chief's son's house; and some chased after her, but in vain. Uchatngiak, when he returned and found his wife gone, grieved for her, and complained bitterly.

Several years passed. The boy, who was now five years old, was in the habit of going everywhere with his father. One day they were on the beach, Uchatngiak was fixing his bidarka, and the boy was amusing himself with a bow and arrow; while there, five geese flew right over their heads, and lighted on the rocks near the point. The boy noticed them, and said: "Father, I will go and shoot them." Not returning soon, the father went to look for him, and could not find him, but in the distance saw the five white geese flying. "His mother joined her sisters, and they came and took my son from me!" he cried out, and felt very miserable and lonely.

This happened in the fall; and he decided to go immediately in search of his wife and son. He took with him a stone hatchet, five dried salmon, and one sour salmon. (Formerly, the Aleuts buried the salmon for the winter, and when they took them out, the salmon were "sour.") Eastward he went a half of the winter before anything unusual broke into the monotony of his journey. One day, while following a very narrow path, he came upon two fierce foxes fighting in the path. He asked them several times to let him pass, but they heeded him not; finally, one of the foxes said to him: "Give us your sour salmon, and we will let you pass." Dividing the salmon in two parts, he threw one part to one side and the other to the other side of the path; and while the foxes rushed for the fish, he passed on. From the top of the mountain which he ascended, he saw in the valley below smoke coming out of a small barrabara, and a path leading down to it. The path led him to the door of the barrabara, and when he pushed it in, he saw a very stout woman seated on the floor, making fine sinew threads. "May I come in?" he asked. Without raising her head, she replied: "If you are alive, you may, if a ghost, do not."

"I am alive," and walked in.

"What do you want?" she asked, still without raising her head.

"I wish to know where my wife and son are?"

"I will not tell you, but if you give me half of a dried salmon, I will tell you how you may find out."

He gave her what she asked, and when she had eaten it, she said: "Go to the top of yonder hill, there you will see two paths, one leading to the right and the other to the left. Follow the one to the right until you come to my brother who will tell you where they are." Giving her the other half of the salmon also, he walked up the hill, took the path to the right, and followed it many days without seeing a sign of habitation. At last, one evening, while in a very narrow path, he heard a noise and then some one singing very softly. The music led him to the beach where an old man sat, singing and chopping off chips from a large stick. On closer observation, he noted that the smallest chips on falling into the water turned to trout, the larger chips became humpback salmon, the still larger ones changed to dog-salmon, those next to the largest were transformed to king-salmon, and the largest chips swam away silver-salmon. He crept closely behind the old man, watched him, and thought: "If I could get the stone hatchet, he would be obliged to tell me where they are." The old man continued singing and chopping, and, once, as he raised up the hatchet to cut off a king-salmon, it slipped from his hand, falling at the feet of Uchatngiak. When the old man turned around, and saw the stranger, he said:—

"You have my hatchet."

"No, I have it not; but if you will tell me where my wife and son are, I will give you your old hatchet and a new one besides."

"Give them to me;" and when he had them, he said, "I am about to cut off a king-salmon. Just as soon as he appears in the water, clutch him and hold fast to him; he will take you to your wife and son."

He grabbed the salmon, the salmon seized his clothes, and away they went through weeds and kelp, current and stream, along the bottom of the sea, then gradually in shallow and shallower water and sandy bottom. Close to the shore he looked up and saw his son, with a bow and arrow in his hand, eying the salmon. With his feet he steered the salmon close to the boy who shot and killed the salmon, and, on pulling him out, was greatly surprised to see his father sticking on.

"Where is your mother?"

"In the barrabara," the boy replied.

"Go and tell her that I wish to see her."

"You had better wait outside until I go and see about it."

The boy started off, and, when he came near the barrabara, commenced to cry. Going to his aunt Akcheten, he said: "Uchatngiak fell down; go and bring him in." She pushed him aside, saying:

"We left him afar off; and we cannot go now in winter and bring him in." From her he went to aunt Chavillo, Qulo, and Podonigyuk, who put him off in the same manner as aunt Akcheten. Leaving them, he approached his mother, saying, "Uchatngiak fell down; go and bring him in."

"Where is he?"

"Outside the barrabara."

She looked, and there, as the boy said, sat Uchatngiak. She seemed glad to see him, and began questioning him: "Why and how did you come here? You cannot live with us. This is "Bird Heaven." (The Aleuts believed that the birds, on leaving Alaska in the fall, went to a place somewhere above the earth, known as Bird Heaven or Bird Home.)

"I came to see my wife and son. Can you not manage to keep me with you a short time?" he pleaded.

They promised to keep him, if he would promise not to go out of the barrabara. The village in which he now found himself was very large, containing many inhabitants of various colors: some red, others black, still others a mixture of colors; in fact, people of all colors and shades conceivable. In the early spring evenings his wife, her sisters, and the boy, putting on their goose skins, would fly away and not return until dawn. Before going, they made him pledge not to leave the barrabara; but during the night, as he heard many people talking, and strange and mysterious noises outside, he wished that he could go out and solve the mystery. Later in the spring, instead of going in the evenings and returning in the mornings, his folks flew away in the morning, and remained away all day. He begged to be taken along, but they paid no attention to the request.

In one end of the village was an extraordinarily large barrabara, and thither, he noticed, the different people, his own among them, gathered and remained the whole day. Two days he observed them assemble without learning their doings; on the third day his curiosity overcame him. Sneaking out of the house, he crawled to the barrabara, and, pushing aside the grass and sticks, peeped in. The interior was filled with birds, dressing and painting themselves with the variously colored rocks lying about. Everybody was already dressed or dressing, except two who were still naked. Akcheten and Chavillo spied him, and, turning to Agoiyuan (his wife), said, "Uchatngiak is peeping." The alarm was given instantly, and the birds hurried to dress the two naked ones, sea-gull and raven. In the excitement the raven was painted black all over and the sea-gull all white, which colors they have retained to this day. Uchatngiak had seen enough, and hastened home; and when the family returned

he was scolded severely, and told that the following day the whole village would depart. He pleaded not to be left behind until they finally consented to take him with them. The eagle was asked to take him on his back and carry him across safely; but when the raven heard of this arrangement, she came coaxing and begging to be allowed to carry him.

"You will soon tire, and you might hurt him," the sisters, refusing her, said.

"If I tire, and I will not, I will turn over, and you can all see."

She coaxed so long that they promised to let her try. The next day all the birds left Bird Heaven earthward. Uchatngiak was perched on the raven's back, with the other birds around them to render assistance should it be needed. When about half way across, the raven began to turn over, but soon steadied herself.

"Let the eagle carry him, let the eagle carry him; you are tired, you will drop him," they all began to clamor.

"I am not tired, and I can carry him myself," she haughtily replied.

They had gone only a little farther when, without warning, the raven went down with her burden into the deep sea. All the other birds hovered about the spot of the accident, ready to do what they could. The eagle had his claws in position to snatch Uchatngiak when he should come to the surface. But the same Uchatngiak never appeared; for he was changed to a white whale. The raven became a drifting, large-rooted tree-trunk. Seeing the sad ending, the geese left the mournful spot, and in time came to the earth where they laid eggs, and hatched them, and have continued doing so ever since.

F. A. Golder.