

Old Indian Legend Telling of Famous War of Winds

(As Related by Dr. Kaykendall of Pomeroy, Wash.)

Among all savage tribes the operations of nature are ascribed directly to living beings. The tides, the movements of the heavenly bodies, the coming of the salmon, the winds, rain, hail, snow, thunder, earthquakes and other meteorological manifestations are all the active manifestations of somebody. The savage, whether in Africa or America, has no conception of natural laws as we understand it. And yet, in his talks and harangues about "Coyote," the Indian Zeus, the red man often says "Coyote made the laws thus and so." It is however, a part of the Indian philosophy that phenomena are caused by a person, rather than through the operation of fixed laws. If the wind blows, some person is blowing it; if the snow falls and stays for a long time on the ground, some malign influence is at the bottom of it. Each and every separate operation of nature is a direct intervention of a somebody. Earth, air, mountain, vale river and canyon are peopled with spirits and powers.

In the long, long ago, the warm Chinook wind, which is the most striking meteorological manifestation of the powers of nature in the inland Empire, was, so the story runs, caused by five brothers who lived at the mouth of the Columbia river. These brothers were demi-gods and had almost omnipotent power over all the Pacific coast.

But there was another force of an antagonistic character to the Chinook, known as the Umatilla or cold east wind, which was caused by the five Umatilla wind brothers, who lived east of the Cascades and were generally to be found near the mouth of the Umatilla or Walla Walla rivers.

The Wind Brothers.

The five Chinook wind brothers each had grandparents—old people who lived north of the Columbia river and near the mouth of the Yakima river. These east winds had always been blowing over the inland empire very hard. Sometimes the warm Chinook winds would come along and dash over the Indian camps, blow down trees, tear up the earth and fill the air with dust, sand and stones, melting the snow and causing the streams to swell. Then, while the Chinook was in full career, the ice-breathed Umatilla wind would put in an appearance and freeze everything solid with its stinging breath, so that between the battles of the west and the east winds the Indians led a miserable existence.

Once upon a time the Umatilla wind brothers, tired of the complaints of

the Indians, challenged the Chinook wind brothers to a wrestling match, the losers to forfeit fame and title. The Chinook wind brothers accepted the challenge and came to the mouth of the Umatilla river, the place of combat. Coyote, or Speelyal, was chosen as umpire, the vanquished to lose their heads.

Speelyal, who was a good deal of a scamp, pretended to favor both sides but betrayed each. He cunningly said to the grandfather and grandmother of the Chinook brothers, "If you see your sons are about to be thrown, you must pour oil on the ground where they are wrestling and your sons will not fall." To the grandparents of the Umatilla wind brothers, he said, "If you see your sons about to be defeated, throw ice upon the ground."

So they cleared off the ground and made everything smooth for the contest, and the eldest of the five brothers on each side took hold for the contest. When the Chinook brother was about to go down, Speelyal would say to the old grand-

father, "Throw on oil," and he did so, and then the other grand father threw on ice, and soon, between the oil and the ice, the ground was so slippery that not even a god could keep his feet. The Chinook brother went sprawling down and while he was down Speelyal cut off his head with a huge stone knife.

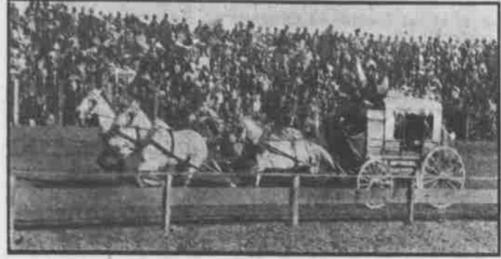
The second Chinook wind brother then took hold. He shared the fate of his older brother, fell and was beheaded. During the wrestling the old grandparents always threw on oil and ice; but the cold wind grandfather always threw on his ice last, and so the Chinook brothers were all killed.

It happened, however, that the oldest brother who was killed first had a wife down at Astoria who was about to become a mother. She shortly af-

ter gave birth to a boy. In process of time he became a strong lad and his mother said, "Your father was killed by the cold wind brothers; therefore, you must exercise yourself to become strong, and practice wrestling so that you can avenge yourself of the blood of your father."

So he grew up, gaining in stature and increasing in strength by practicing at pulling up trees. He became so strong that he could snatch up a large pine or fir tree with one hand and toss it away like a weed. Then he decided he was strong enough to undertake the avenging of his father's death, and besought his mother's consent that he might do so.

Gaining her permission he started in the night and went up the Columbia. First he encountered the lofty Cascade mountains and had much difficulty to cross. So sharp was the conflict that he was thrown a mile into the air and could not get down until he was almost a hundred miles up the river, but he made such a roaring in the sky that everybody was terrified at what was to happen; men



could hear his warcry far above their heads but could not see him; reports came that forests were being uprooted in the Blue mountains and that huge banks of snow were being melted by his breath. The Umatilla and Walla Walla rivers were over their banks and many Indian camps were swept away in the night by the rising waters.

Two or three days after these reports came to the Columbia, there was a terrific commotion along the river. Immense clouds of dust and sand were seen whirling up the streams, huge cottonwoods were wrenched from their base, and the whole country from the mouth of the Yakima to the Walla Walla was a wreck of uprooted trees and whirling sand.

He went up the Yakima, reaching the mouth of the Satus at daybreak and then lay down to rest against the south hillside. The Indians yet point out the impression of his body where he rested. He remained there all day, sleeping peacefully, and that evening started on again toward the home of his grandparents. Ever since the first Chinook brothers had been killed these old people had suffered great indignities at the hands of the Umatilla brothers. These five overgrown churls were beastly and low, having no sense of decency.

Chinook the Hero. They would break into the tents of the unhappy old folks and subject them to the most shameful insults so that their lives were a burden to them. Learning of their wretched situation the young giant Chinook determined to relieve their distress. Raising his warwhoop he rushed across the river and approached the ancestral home. Along in the night the old folks heard the frame of their hut squeak strain and weave. It seemed as if it were about to be lifted from the ground but the old man, recognizing the cause, exclaimed: "Oh my grandson, you have come at last." The earth trembled; the hut shuddered, rushed the young Chinook giant.

The old folks were much rejoiced to see their heroic grandson come to their relief. He said to them, "You must put me under your pillows and keep me out of sight until night comes again and then I will obtain satisfaction for all of your wrongs." It was the habit for the cold wind brothers to torment the old folks in the daytime. Then the young man said: "Grandfather, take your canoe and go fish for sturgeon."

The old man got into the canoe and went upon the river. When the cold wind brothers, who were upon the north side, saw him load his boat with fish they would pursue him and rob him of his sturgeon. This was repeated five times, but thereupon the grandson devised a strategy. He accompanied the old man on the sixth trip, lying flat down in the canoe out of sight. When the boat was full of fish the marauders came in pursuit as before. The old man pulled hard for the shore and the race was close. The old fellow got down to his work, the five cold wind brothers being close astern. Just as they ed; the mat was torn aside and in were about to seize him, the grandson, lying in the stern, would make a slight movement, the boat would shoot ahead and the pursuers would fall behind. This occurred five times.

The old man made his escape but the Umatilla winds became suspicious that something was wrong. When the boat landed the young man picked up all of the sturgeon, carrying them easily on his little finger. He then took the old people, who were very filthy, to a nearby spring and washed them. The fish that came from their bodies turned to speckled trout which, despite their origin, are as fine as any in the world.

The news of the Chinook giant's arrival soon spread abroad and Speel-

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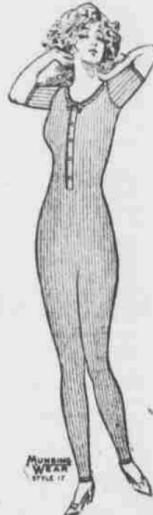
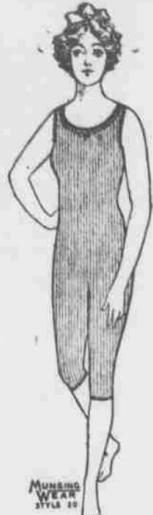
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