

**MYTHS AND LEGENDS OF THE
PACIFIC
NORTHWEST, ESPECIALLY OF
WASHINGTON AND OREGON**

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Myths and legends of the Pacific Northwest, especially of Washington and Oregon by
Katharine Berry Judson

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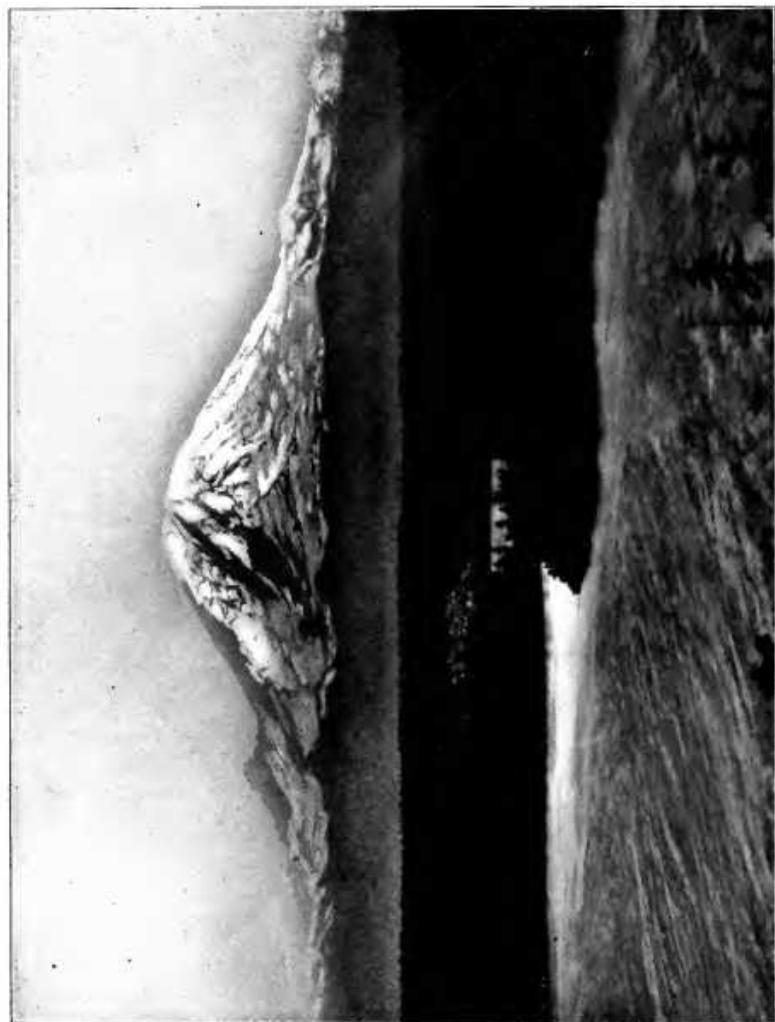
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KATHARINE BERRY JUDSON

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TAKHOMA, "THE WHITE MOUNTAIN," AS SEEN FROM SEATTLE. (MOUNT RAINIER)

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MYTHS AND LEGENDS OF THE PACIFIC NORTHWEST

ESPECIALLY OF WASHINGTON AND OREGON

SELECTED BY
KATHARINE BERRY JUDSON

AUTHOR OF "MONTANA, 'THE LAND OF
SHINING MOUNTAINS'"

WITH 50 ILLUSTRATIONS FROM PHOTOGRAPHS



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PREFACE

IN the days of the first grandfather, when the earth was young, the Indian, armed only with stone knife, stone hatchet, and bows and arrows, found himself confronted with the work of Some One far greater and stronger than himself. This Power, or Powers, for there came to be many of them, had uplifted snowy mountain peaks, had cut deep cañons through the solid rock, had carved out mountain passes, and had blocked the passage of mighty rivers by great rocks and boulders. These Powers were strong and brutal. They had enormous strength and men of only human size were their prey, as helpless as "flybug" under the heel of the Indian. Tatoosh, the Thunder Bird who lived in the sky, was one of these Powers. He shook the mountains with the flapping of his wings. The flashing of his eye was the lightning. He caught great whales instead of salmon for food. Only by crumbling a rock into powder so small that he could not even see it, could he secure a piece small enough

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for the Indian to use as a salmon spear. Because Tatoosh is so terrible and the enemy of red men, his picture is painted and carved on their houses, their canoes, and canoe paddles, indeed everywhere, to soften his anger. Often Tatoosh, as shown in the photograph of the Chilcat blanket, is represented by a single eye—the terrible eye that flashes fire. There is no beneficent deity among these Indians of the Northwest. Sahale does not represent the same idea as that of Manitou, the Great Spirit, among the eastern Indians. Yet Tyhee Sahale, along the Columbia River, and Old Man Above, among the California Indians, represent the clearest idea of a single governing spirit living in the sky. But they are not sure of his friendship. Among most of the tribes, on the other hand, there is an utter lack of any friendly deity, as among the Blackfeet, of Montana, with whom Old Man is simply a trickster, half human, who nearly always gets the worst of it in his encounters with Coyote.

So the Indian felt powerless against the gods who made the earth—the forces of nature which he could not understand. In his helplessness, he was influenced by the animal life he saw about him. In the tragedies of the forest he saw the weaker, smaller creatures escape the larger ones only by cunning. So must he

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by cunning escape the anger of the gods. The crafty animals became his earth gods and in time his helpers. Coyote, the weakest but craftiest of all the animals, became, on the coast, "the chief of all the animals." Fox ranked second.

The adventures of Coyote, like those of Yehl, the Raven, of Alaska, are "so many that no one could tell them all." Professor F. S. Lyman, however, groups them around three or four main heads: the theft of fire, the destruction of monsters, the making of waterfalls, and the teaching of useful arts to the Indians.

Now the animal people lived before the days of the first grandfather, long, long ago, when the sun was new and no larger than a star, when the earth was young, and the tall firs of the forest no larger than an arrow. These were the days of the animal people. People had not "come out" yet.

"Then Coyote said, 'I want it to be foggy.' So it was foggy. Then all the people came out. No one saw them come. Coyote said, 'I want the sun to shine.' So the sun shone and the fog drifted away. Then the people were there. No one saw them come out."

But with people there must needs be fire.

Where did fire come from? This question which

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has puzzled every tribe and nation, each has solved in its own way. With the Greek, as with the red man, fire was first only on a mountain top, carefully guarded as a precious possession, and to be secured only by theft. Among the Greeks, a god took pity on shivering, unhappy mortals. Among the Indians it was an animal god, usually Coyote, who stole it. With both peoples, mountains were the homes of supernatural beings. A comparison between Greek and red men may seem far-fetched to Greek scholars, yet there is a striking similarity, and it is one which is of peculiar interest to those who live within full view of the wonderful "White Mountain." Olympus, rising above Homer's "sounding sea" on which rode the "black ships," was peopled with the immortal gods. Takhoma, lifting its snowy head above the waters of Whulge on which rode the frail Indian canoes, was the home of the dreaded tomanowos. With both peoples the mountains were sacred. Avalanches and volcanic eruptions on Takhoma were caused by the tomanowos and nothing could tempt the red man to climb high above the snow line. If encamped below it, the Indian, awakened in the darkness by the sound of falling ice and snow, started from his blanket and sang a dirge-like song to appease the wrath of the spirits. Takhoma was associated with