

TSIMSYANS PROPER

(Port Simpson, Skeena River, Southern Tsimshians)

PORT SIMPSON

List of Totem Poles at Port Simpson (Tsimshian), within the memory of the old informants; recorded by William Beynon in 1918 (with a map of the various tribes).

1. The Gidzarhlæhl tribe on the island under the leadership of Neeshawt. No totem poles here, but there were some belonging to this tribe at Qrado (Metlakatla).

2. The Gitlæn tribe, under Neesyaranæt (informant, Herbert Wallace). The tribe had four poles: (a) the pole of Neeswihamawtk (Wolf), a long round pole, with a Crane or Stork at the top, known under the name of Qasqaws (crane) pole; (b) the pole of Neeshlaranus (Wolf); (c) the pole of Bullhead (*kayæt*) (Raven), representing the Bullhead standing outside the doorway through which the guests entered; (d) the pole of Neesyulawps (Raven), which stood on Gisparhlawts territory, with the permission of paternal relatives.

3. The Gitandaw tribe. Its totem poles were: (a) the pole of Neesyaragunat (Raven), called Pole-of-Bullhead (*ptsænem-kayæt*), similar to that of Neestedaw; (b) the pole of Lueleq (Eagle), with the Beaver sitting at the bottom, on which a long round pole rose, supporting the Eagle at the top; (c) the pole of Kyaihluq (Gispewudwade), a long plain pole standing on top of the Grizzly Bear, the whole pole representing the Fireweed (*hæst*).

4. The Ginarhangyeek tribe. Its poles were: (a) the pole of Halaidemkan (Wolf), a long round shaft with the Wolf at the top; (b) the pole of Liplitsius (Gispewudwade).

5. The Ginaihdoiks tribe. Its poles were: (a) the square foundation pole of Neeswærhs (Gispewudwade); (b) the Prince-Grizzly (*hlkuwelksekem-medeeek*), and the Starfish (*kamats*); the Grizzly with a copper shield in his mouth—Tsyabesæ's crest, the house of Neeswærhs being an offshoot of it; (c) a long rounded pole with the Liguidihl, a revolving figure (myth recorded); a man is shown carrying the coppers.

6. The Gitwilgyawts tribe. Its pole was the Kansuh of Sarhsarht (Wolf), with the large Prince-of-Grizzlies (*hlkuwælksegem-medeeek*); on this pole the Bear was supposed to play, and the pole would shake to and fro (Shaking-pole). Carved by John Tait, whose name was Neesmotk (Eagle, of the Gisparhlawts tribe).

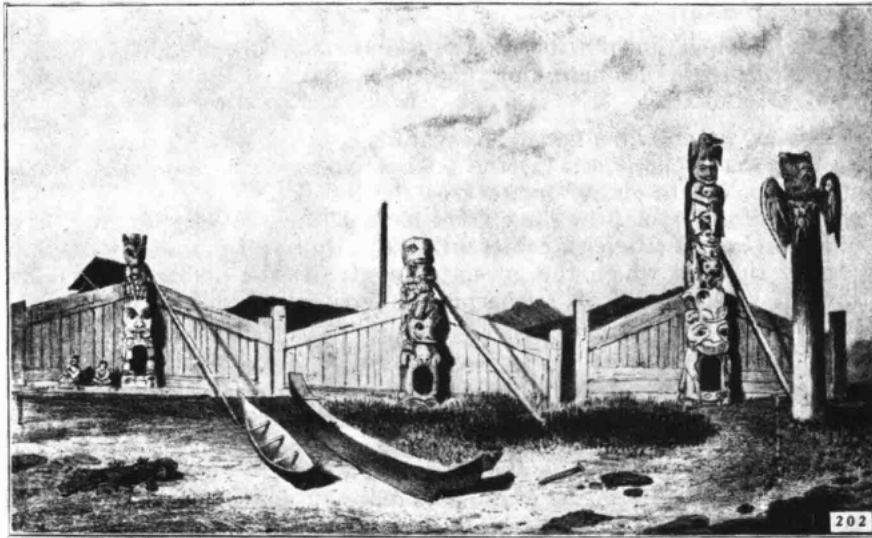
7. The Gillodzar tribe near the Gitsalas canyon. The house of its head-chief was called the House-of-copper-shields (*hayætskem-wælp*). On its front were painted copper shields. It had a special entrance for festivals—a raised platform with a round hole in the centre of the front, and with shaking steps, the aim of which was to make the guests trip.

8. The Gisparhlawts tribe. The house of its chief, Legyarh, was called "The Nest-of-the-Eagle" (*nluehlkehl-rskyæk*). On the front was painted the Eagle with outspread wings. The ceremonial entrance was at the base of the painting, on an elevated platform.

This record may not be quite complete.

KILLER-WHALE PHRATRY

The Pole of Neeswairhs, the chief of a Gispewudwade sea-coast clan of the Ginarhangyeek tribe, at Port Simpson. This clan was related to that of Tsyebesæ, head-chief of the Gitrhahla tribe on Porcher Island. It stood on the island between the Mirage and the Grizzly-Bear poles. It is shown in an old photograph here reproduced.



Totem poles at Port Simpson, about 1860-1870

Description. It consisted of a single carved figure, human-like, at the top of a long plain pole. The Ligidihl was of an exceptional nature, having been at first a "spirit" (*narhnok*) connected with warfare. Its head kept turning from side to side, like that of a jack-in-the-box. When, in former times, a raiding party in a war canoe went to the attack of the enemy, a warrior held up the Ligidihl in the centre of the canoe and made it move just as if it had been a real head-chief, so as to draw the arrows of the defenders, while the others kept their heads down. It was also used as a "spirit" (*narhnok*) in the feasts (*yæawk*); as a crest, it belonged first to Shaiks of the Ginarhangyeek; then it was handed down to his kinsman, Tsyibesæ of the Gitrhahla tribe on Porcher Island; Neeswairhs belonged to the same group as Tsyibesæ.

Function, carver, age. It stood in memory of a former Neeswairhs. It was carved by Neeslut or a Gispewudawade clan in the Ginahdoiks tribe, about sixty years ago, when the informant, Herbert Wallace, was a grown-up man. In 1926 it had fallen but had not yet been cut up.

(Interpreter, William Beynon, 1926.)

The Ligidihl, crest of Weesaiks and Tsyibesæ among the Coast Tsimyans, according to Herbert Wallace, head-chief of the Gitsees tribe; William Beynon acting as interpreter, 1915.

The Ligidihl was chiefly a *narhnok* or a device displayed in spirit performances. It consisted of a Person (*gyet*) carved out of wood, whose

movable limbs were controlled by strings, like a puppet, and looked more or less like the white man's jack-in-the-box. It was more generally used when a canoe-load of warriors prepared to land and attack a village. While the armed men crouched within the canoe, they raised the Ligidihl above their heads, as if it were a leader, and moved it, to draw the arrows from the shore upon itself.

Weesaiks, head of the Ginarhangeek tribe, first used it as a crest. When he died, it passed to his relative Tsyabesæ of Gitrhahla.

At Port Simpson the Ligidihl not so long ago stood on top of a totem pole on the island.

The Pole called Mirage (*hlek'an*) of 'Weenæs, chief of a Gispewudwade clan in the Ginahdoiks tribe, at Port Simpson. It stood on the western side of the island.

Description. Three human heads, separated by sections of the plain log with one such section at the top, represented the Mirage, one of the crest of this household. Below these heads stood the Grizzly Bear (*medeek*) holding the Killer-Whale, head down, the tail of the whale in its teeth, its perforated fin jutting forward. (An old photograph, here reproduced, shows this pole, as well as the two next poles to the south.)

Carver, age. It was carved by a former Neeswairhs of Port Simpson, about sixty years ago. In 1916 it had already fallen down and was lying along the path.

(Informant, Herbert Wallace; William Beynon, interpreter, 1926.)

The Mirage Hlækan, Pole of Weelarhæ (Gitsees tribe, Gispewudwade phratry) among the Tsimisyans of Port Simpson, according to Herbert Wallace; interpreter, William Beynon, 1915.

This crest was used in two ways by the Weelarhæ household: first, painted in black and red in a grade (*da'arh*) of the house and realistically representing human beings in various positions; second, carved on house poles inside the house of Weenæs (Ginaihdoiks tribe, Gispewudwade phratry). This pole, of which there is an old photograph, was lying along the path on the island in 1915.

The Sun as a House-Front painting of Neeyuks and Neeshaiwærhs of the Gitlæn tribe of the Tsimisyans on Skeena River. Informant, James Lewis; recorded by William Beynon, 1948. Lewis, aged about 65, received his information from several sources, in particular two old men of the same family. The following is an extract from a long narrative:

These people traced back their origin to Temlaham, the Good-Land-of-yore. Their crests, as explained in their myth of origin, were the Sun, the Stars, and the Rainbow. Their house was named Sun-House (*gyærem-wælp*). When the house was built and painted, the guests came in for the feast of its recognition. The owner, Neeshaiwærhs, pretended to speak in a foreign language to his guests, which his sister interpreted. As the name of Tæni and an experience of visiting heaven were part of the supernatural experience recounted, it may be presumed that this happened under the influence of the Bini new religion, established about 1820 among the neighbouring Carrier Indians. The sign of the cross was also for the first time introduced there by the Wolf chief who, being of the paternal family, signed himself and, while touching his forehead, said: "I will see with my eyes the powers above. . . ." Therefore this Sun-House of the Tsimisyans

came into existence a little over a hundred years ago.

The Pole of Neesloot and Weenæs, members of a Blackfish (Killer-Whale) clan of the Ginahdoiks tribe of the Tsimisyans, according to Mrs. Viola E. Garfield (50: 211).

One of the last fine-carved totem poles, which is now lying by the path in front of his former home, was raised about 1890-95 by Weenæs, a Blackfish of the Ginahdawks tribe. The unusual part of this occurrence was that Weenæs raised the pole, not in the name of himself and his ancestors, but in the name of his successor. He announced that he was giving his special crests, privileges, and property to his nephew, his name to be transferred at his death. Weenæs held the potlatch, fearing lest his successor depart from the old customs. His fears were justified, as the nephew later moved to Old Metlakatla and gave up the name and all lineage privileges to a younger relative who was more conservative than himself.

While the pole was being lifted into place, a son of Weenæs brought out a Chilcat blanket, which he had recently bought. He stopped the proceedings, ran to the top of the slanting pole, and nailed the blanket to it. This he did in honour of his father and his father's lineage, and the blanket became their property. Since he was under no obligation to make such a gift, his act was generously applauded.

Porpoise-like Pole. The Watkunærhs or Porpoise-like crest of Damks, Gispewudwade chief of the Gisparhlawts tribe of the Tsimisyans. Informant, old Arthur Wellington Clah of Port Simpson; recorded by William Beynon, 1915.

This information is embodied in a long text entitled "Myth of Nugwen'aks, also the myth of the Gispewudwade who came from Gidestsu (China Hat)."

The Watkunærhs is a fish which, though resembling the porpoise, has a large mouth and sharp teeth. It was the exclusive crest of the household of Damks and was engraved on his totem pole; it was reproduced on the robe worn at the ceremony of taking the chief's name. It was also used as a head-dress carved out of wood and painted black and red, with a fin on each side of the body, about the middle part, and the tail.

Gamayæm's Flagpole, belonging to the chief of that name in the Git'andaw tribe; it belonged to a Gispewudwade clan.

Description. The name of Gamayæm was engraved on it, as if to take the place of a totem.

Function. It was erected in a feast, in the same manner as a totem pole, to commemorate a former Gamayæm.

(Informant, Herbert Wallace; interpreter, William Beynon, 1926.)

The Fireweed Pole (*hæst*) of Suhallait, chief of a Gispewudwade clan of the Gisparhlawts tribe at Port Simpson, stood on the mainland near the bridge to the island. The identity of a human figure at the base — the only carving — is now unknown. It was erected about sixty years ago.

(Informant, Herbert Wallace; interpreter, William Beynon, 1926.)

The Pole of Suhallait, a Blackfish (Killer-Whale) clansman of the Gisparhlawts tribe of the Tsimisyans Proper, according to Mrs. Viola E. Garfield (50: 210, 211).

One pole with a single figure carved near the base serves as an electric light pole. This one belonged to Suhallait, a Blackfish clansman of the Gisparhlawts tribe. The figure represents a Being that his ancestors saw rise out of a lake, one of the experiences they encountered in their migrations from the mythical Prairie Town (Temlarh'am) to the coast. The plain section above the figure represents the fireweed, which also occurs in their myths. Since it is leaning badly, some of Suhallait's relatives wish to remove the pole, but those who have sufficient money to finance the necessary potlatch say that they will let it fall. If anyone is hurt when it falls, they will take care of that situation when it arises.

RAVEN PHRATRY

The Mortuary Pole of Dakawmilsk, a Raven of the Gitsees tribe at Port Simpson, according to Mrs. Viola E. Garfield.

A mortuary pole with the figure of a sea-lion atop a machine-dressed shaft was erected about 1880 by the nephews of Dakawmilsk, a Raven of the Gitsees tribe. Before his death he had called his relatives together and requested that they put up this pole in his memory, on the site of the old plank dwelling belonging to his lineage. A gun was originally placed in the mouth of the sea-lion, but it has long since fallen, and the top and tail of the animal have rotted away. When a comment was made to the clan grandniece of Dakawmilsk that it was sadly in need of repair, she replied, "Let it fall down, it has cost my relatives too much anyway!"

Totem Poles of the Sea-Lion, called Kanem-teeben (pole of *T'eeben*, the Sea-Lion; or *Halidæ-T'eeben*, Where-Sits-the-Sea-Lion) belonging exclusively to Takawmilsk, member of a Kanhade clan in the Gitsees tribe of the Tsimsyans Proper; also the totem pole of the Raven, which follows.

Description. This pole once was a long plain log standing with the carving of the Sea-Lion at the top. It now stands about 15 feet high. It was still there in 1947, at the end of the bridge on the island at Port Simpson. At one time, the Sea-Lion doubled (i.e., spread out and doubled) was painted on the house front of the owner; also at the inner end. The same owner also used the Supernatural-Starfish (*narhnarem-kamæts*) with numerous tentacles carved on his pole and painted on his house front.

The Pole of the Raven (*ptsænem qæq*). The Raven was



(In foreground) Totem pole called Mirage at Port Simpson. (Centre) The Ligidihl of Weesaiks. (In the distance) Pole of the Grizzly Bear

carved and represented sitting on this pole; it had a long bill. The pole (no longer in existence) stood in front of the owner's house. The Starfish, with an entrance hole through it, was represented on the base front of the pole. On each side the Sea-Lion was painted, spread out.

Function, carver, age. It was put up by a follower in memory of Takawmilsk. The carver, about sixty years ago (at the time when they built the school), was Kalksek of the household of Neesyaranæt, a Kanhade head-chief of the Gitsees tribe at Port Simpson.

(Informant, Herbert Wallace; interpreter, William Beynon, 1926.)

The Klameen pole of Neeshawt (the Raven head-chief) of the Gitzarhlæhl, at Port Simpson; William Beynon, interpreter, 1915.

At the base of this pole was represented the Woman. Above her rose a long round pole, at the top of which the Raven was perched; the pole was unpainted, but the bird was painted black. A very finely shaved pole rose far above. The Woman was black all over except for red around her white eyes. It was almost similar to that of Neesyaranæt, Raven head-chief of the Gitsees tribe; on this last the Raven seemed to sit on a nest to hatch young birds. The pole for this reason was called "Where-the-Raven-nests."

The Chief-Raven (*semoigidem-qærh*), house front of Chief Neeshawt (Raven, Gitzarhlæhl tribe). Informant, Albert Nelson; interpreter, William Beynon, 1915.

On the very low and long house of Chief Neeshawt at Kadow (near the present Metlakatla) was painted the Chief-Raven, black and red. The ceremonial door was in the centre of the painting. A back door was also used in this house, and a partition inside at the back was intended to keep secret the supernatural devices of the chiefs.

The Raven and Salmon-River crests (*rhlaw*) painted on the house front of Chief Neeshawt's (Raven) at Kadow (near the present Metlakatla). According to Albert Nelson (Neeshawt); interpreter, William Beynon, 1915.

The Raven, carved out of wood with the body painted black, and eyes and face red, and with a long beak, decorated the house front. The painting showed the liver of the salmon represented here as white weasels. The Raven was eating weasels. The informant saw this painting at Metlakatla, in its Kadow section.

The Pole of the Dog (*hæs*) in commemoration of Narærht of Port Simpson, standing on the mainland near the head of the bridge to the island. Narærht belonged to a Kanhade clan of the Gitsees tribe of the Tsimsyans Proper.

Description. From the top down, the figures were: (1) Dog (*hæs*), in a running position, from back to front. In 1915 it no longer rested there but had been taken into the house of Neeskwanu. It was considered a good carving. (2) Supernatural-Starfish (*narhnarem-kamæts*), engraved with a human face in the centre and one on each of the four limbs, on a broad plank fixed crosswise on the post; the outline of the faces was painted black; the limbs of the starfish were red; the central face was green. (3)

Supernatural Raven (*narhnaem-qæq*). At one time the Raven had wings and the pole was much taller, but it was reduced to about 12 feet in length (1915). (4) Frog (*kanaao*) was engraved on the pole and painted on the house front.

Function, carvers, age. It was erected in memory of Narærht, member of a Raven clan of the Gitsees tribe. The carving of the pole taken as a whole was by a former Qawm of the Gitsalas tribe at the canyon of the Skeena; the Dog was the work of Kaltk (of a Wolf clan in the Gitsees tribe), who was considered a good carver and was the assistant of Qawm; the Starfish was made and put on many years later by Larh'ayæorh (of an Eagle clan of the Gitka'ata tribe).

It was erected when informant Herbert Wallace had reached the age to be married. He was 72 in 1926, when these dates were recorded with him; William Beynon acting as interpreter.

The destruction of this pole took place in 1921; it was accompanied by a ceremony during which speeches were made. These were partly recorded by William Beynon.

(Informant, Herbert Wallace; interpreter, William Beynon, 1926.)

The Dog on Totem Poles among the Tsimsyans, according to Herbert Wallace, Kanhade chief of the Gitsees tribe; J. Ryan acting as interpreter, 1915.

The (Indian) Dog was used as a head-dress and also was placed horizontally on top of the totem poles of two chiefs at Port Simpson: (1) Gæni; (2) Narærht; both Kanhade of the Gitsees tribe at Port Simpson.

The Bullhead Poles of Nteetshleelks, of the Kanhade phratry in Port Simpson, and of another Kanhade family in the Gitandaw tribe of the Tsimsyans at Port Simpson, according to Herbert Wallace, head-chief of the Gitsees; J. Ryan acting as interpreter, in 1915.

The Finned-Bullhead (*haliopes-kayait*) raised the spikes on its back and looked like an owl. The Bullhead, its head down, occupied the whole totem pole from top to base. It was the property of all Kanhades among the Coast Tsimsyans, but it was actually shown as a crest, its body decorated all over with abalone pearls, only by the Kanhade chief, Nteetshleeks of the Gitlæn tribe.

The Gitandaw Kanhades used the Bullhead in the same way, but without pearls. It was also used on at least one totem pole among the Gitrhahlas.

WOLF PHRATRY

The Pole of Halaidem-kan, a chief of a Wolf clan of the Ginarhangyeek tribe at Fort Simpson.

Function, age. It stood in memory of a chief of the same name, also of another of the same household named Swandesk.

No description could be obtained of this pole, which no longer existed in 1915 and was still new as far back as the informant, Herbert Wallace, could remember, in 1926. (He was then 72 years old.)

(Interpreter, William Beynon.)

The Dancer-of-Wood. Totem pole of Halaidem-kan, chief of a Wolf clan in the Ginarhangik tribe at Port Simpson, according to Mrs. Viola E. Garfield (50: 211).

One of the finest carved figures still standing in Port Simpson is the pole of Halaidem-kan (*halait*, 'dancer'; *kan*, 'wood'). It is a commemorative pole erected about 1880 by the man who held the name Dancer-of-Wood (*Halaidem-kan*). He belonged to the Wolf clan in the Ginarhangik tribe. The figure represents an ancestor of the same name, who was a famed shaman and sorcerer, but not of the rank of chief. The house to which the name belongs is now extinct.

EAGLE PHRATRY

The Dogfish-Fin of Legyarh. (*nekemqæt*), a crest on the pole of Legyarh, Eagle head-chief of the Tsimsyans at Port Simpson, according to Herbert Wallace, Kanhade head-chief of the Gitsees. Interpreter, J. Ryan, 1915.

As a crest, the Dogfish-Fin was used by Legyarh on his long totem pole then (1915) lying on the beach at Port Simpson. Other chiefs of the same high Eagle clan had also a right to use it, but they usually displayed it only on head-dresses and garments.

The Pole of Lukawl, chief of the Gitwilgyawts tribe; it stood at the south end on the mainland of Port Simpson.

It was one of the oldest poles, and Herbert Wallace, our informant, saw only the lower part of it after it had fallen. He could not furnish more information about it. Interpreter William Beynon stated that he had a reproduction in miniature of it, carved in Alaska.

MIXED

Tsimsyan Pole at the Field Columbian Exhibition in Chicago (1893). Description published by James Deans "Totem Pole or heraldic column of the Tsiw Indians." (36: 89, 90).

The figures represent, counting upward, as follows: first, the Raven; second, Dogfish; third, Man; fourth, Wolf; fifth, the Killer-Whale; and sixth, Eagle. On the above-mentioned column, reading from below, the first is the carving of an Indian with his head encircled by feathers. This represents the party who owned the house in front of which this column stood. The second figure is the Raven, called by these people Cauch (*qaq*). This, the Raven, is the phratry or principal crest, along with the Eagle phratry of all these people. The next is the Dogfish, which along with the Raven phratry, was the crest of the man who had this house built for himself. The third figure is a Man, perhaps designed to represent the one whose portrait this was and to show that he belonged to the tribe amongst whom the house was built. By saying this, I take a Haida standpoint; with the Simshians it may be different, although I hardly think so. The next or fourth figure above is a Wolf. This is the crest of the Wolf gens. How it came to be placed there I can hardly say. This much I know: it showed a connection with that crest or, in other words, a connection between the party who built this house and the clan bearing the Wolf crest. The fifth figure is a Woman with head-dress and is evidently a figure of the housewife. Above her is the figure of a Killer or Fin-back Whale, with two young ones, one on each side of its mouth. The sixth figure is the crest of the Wife. The young one shows her to have had a family, which, like herself, would have the Whale crest. The next or seventh figure is that of a woman, showing that the wife was connected by birth with the tribe in which she lived. The upper or last figure is the Eagle and designates the phratry to which she belonged. This column was part of a house that stood in an Indian town on the Naas River, British Columbia. It was sent by a Mrs. Morrison, an exceedingly intelligent half caste, her mother being a native Simshian.

Comment. The assortment of crests of all four phratries of the Tsimsyans on the pole shows that it was not genuine. This could not happen in actual

life. Obviously Mrs. Morrison had a carver (presumably at Port Simpson or at Metlakatla) carve a pole for the World's Fair at Chicago.

Totem Pole of Skeena River (Harriman), at the Field Museum of Natural History, Chicago; seen there in 1915. Collected by O. Morrison, No. 18144.

From the date furnished and its contents, it seems to have been carved for outsiders and not actually for any given commemoration. Its museum label read as follows:

"This pole represents crests of the four great clans into which the Tsimsyans are divided. At the top is the eagle, the principal crest of the Eagle clan [phratry]. The second is a grampus or killer-whale, the principal crest of the Bear clan [incorrect — the Killer-Whale forms a distinct phratry under its own name]. The third is the wolf, the principal crest of the Wolf clan [phratry]. And the fourth represents a man. The fifth is a sculpin, a minor crest of the Raven clan, of which the sixth, the Raven, is the principal one.

"These posts are erected with much ceremony, feasting and distribution of property in front of the dwellings. They indicate the clan to which the owner belongs through his mother and may also show the crest of his wife, if she had aided with property. Rarely the crest of the owner's father is also shown."

(Cf. E. H. Harriman Expedition to Alaska: pole No. 19341.)

TSIMSYANS PROPER

(*Canyon of the Skeena*)

Robin-Woman and Blue-Bill-Duck-Woman (myth of origin). (Recorded by William Beynon in 1947 from Mrs. Bradley, aged 70, of Port Simpson.)

While the Tsimsyan tribes were living on both sides of the Metlakatla Passage, the shores of the Krhain were the home of the Gitwilgyawts people. Their chief at that time was Neeslaws, member of an Eagle clan. It was before the coming of this tribe of the Gispewudwade group of Sarhsarht. A great scarcity of food prevailed among all the coast people, and many died of starvation. Chief Neeslaws' two wives were Robin-Woman (*ksemgilarkiyaw*) and Blue-Bill-Duck-Woman (*ksem'ægyik*). Both of these women were supernatural beings, and they used to vie with each other for the favour of Neeslaws, their husband. During the winter, when food was hard to get, the chief woman, Blue-Bill-Duck-Woman, would bring in all the different sea and shell foods. She would take her slave women in her own canoe and bring in great quantities of halibut and seals. There was always a plentiful supply of food, and she taunted the chief's other wife, Robin-Woman, with her failure to provide it. Day after day she led the people of her husband's tribe to the place where seals, sea-lions, and whales were most plentiful, and the houses of all the Gitwilgyawts people were full of food. And thus it was all winter long, and her husband gave many feasts at a time when there was a scarcity of food.

Now came the moon of the spring salmon. The other wife of the chief, Robin-Woman, brought the young men of her husband's tribe together and said, "To-morrow we shall go away. Get your canoes ready and we will go