

which we witnessed. Now we may see him again, but whatever he is doing, you may be sure that it is something worthwhile." The people searched for him, but he had left no trace anywhere.

STRONG MAN AEMAELK WHO HOLDS UP THE WORLD

(A Tsimsyan myth recorded by William Beynon in 1954, from Heber Clifton and Mrs. Clifton, of Hartley Bay.)

The old people use to train their young men in many ways for them to become strong and to endure hardships and cold weather. During the winter the chief would make the young men of his tribe go out and swim in the cold water for a given distance, usually early in the morning. As soon as the swimmers came out of the water, they were whipped on their bare backs by the chief with switches made of bundles of berry bushes. Then they were fed by the chief's wives. This was kept up for an indefinite period. Those that could endure it the longest were considered the hardest and bravest. This was the custom. A Tsimsyan chief said to his nephews, "I want you four brothers to train yourselves so that you shall be the strongest and foremost athletes. Then we shall challenge the other Tsimsyan tribes and the foreign tribes too. So every morning the eldest nephew and his two brothers got up, swam, and trained themselves under the direction of their uncle. But the youngest brother paid no heed to his elders. He made a sleeping place for himself by the fire, and there he would sleep all day. There was always water where he slept; his folk thought that he urinated where he slept. Soon scabs seemed to be forming on his body. The people all made fun of him and called him *Æmælk*—Scabs. Every morning the brothers would say, "Why don't you try once to bathe and see how it is when you are clean. How can you bear your own filth?" But he paid no attention. At night when all in the house were asleep, he would walk down to the beach, and then go for a very long swim, much farther than any of his older brothers. Then he would climb into the woods, and there he would bathe in a brew made of devil's-club. While all were still asleep in the house, he would return, and his body still soaking he would fall asleep in the hollow in the ground which he used as a sleeping place. No one knew of his secret training. Every day the others made fun of him and referred to him as one that was always inhaling his own stench, while his brothers were training. They went out, and the chief told them, "Go to the small spruce tree and try to tear the branches from it. When you can do it, you will know that you are very strong." The young brothers tried day after day to do this but failed utterly. They were able only to twist the branches but could not tear them out without breaking them. Day after day they tried it again, but could not do any better.



16A. Bear Mother myth illustrated.



16B. Another view of No. 16A.

PART I. TSIMSYAN TEXTS



16C. Another view of No. 16A.

16D. Another view of No. 16A.



During the night the youngest brother, Æmælk, would go to the large spruce tree and try to pull the branches, but he could not without breaking them. While he was trying, there suddenly appeared in front of him a very bright man, who said to him, "What are you trying to do?" "Great supernatural one, my brothers are ridiculing me because I am not strong. So I am trying to pull the branches from this large spruce tree. I want to develop my strength." The luminous person said, "Come here, I shall rub your back. This will give you strength. It will grow, day by day, until you can pull a large tree up by the roots." Before anyone was awake in the house, Æmælk went back to his sleeping place, and tired after his strenuous training, he fell asleep in the water running from his wet body, and his brothers and the other people of the house made fun of him. To all this he paid no heed. The elder brothers kept practising and training steadily all the time, without getting the younger one interested in their activities.

It was now that some other tribes began challenging these young athletes. Soon the brothers overcame the challengers, and they became very haughty, saying, "Everybody should be training as we are." This taunt was meant for their younger brother, who did not care enough to watch them. Other competitors challenged them for their strength. In return, the eldest brother challenged the strongest of the foreign tribes to a wrestling bout. After a long struggle he was thrown aside, nearly dead. Then the next brother sent out his challenge and, like his elder brother, was defeated. He was thrown down, and his back was broken. The Gisparhlawts were jubilant for their victory. Next day, the third brother went down to challenge the champion, and his people went with him. The two strong men struggled for a long while. Finally the third brother was overcome. Now the chief and his people, quite crestfallen, came into their house and looked at the youngest brother. "Had you only trained, you might have been able to overcome the strong man who has defeated your brothers and humbled us. You useless, scabby nobody!"

Æmælk then arose from his sleeping hollow, and said, "Tell the strong man I will meet him to-morrow. Let him be ready!" Everyone in the chief's house was astounded. One of the leaders said to the chief, "Do not let him do as he says he will. Enough ridicule has gathered upon us already. He would only make it worse." The chief said to the youngest brother, "You must not go out as you say, for you have not undergone any training. You are dirty and full of scabs. Is it the like of you we expect to bring victory to our tribe? Outsiders are laughing at me now. What would they do when they see you coming to compete for us?" At first Æmælk was dismayed at these reproofs. Yet he stood up and said, "You shall see the haughty Gisparhlawts humbled. This will I accomplish." He spoke so angrily that nobody could stop him. "Alright, let him go to his own fate!" said his uncle the chief. "It will only heap more ridicule upon us."

Æmælk now came out of the house and went down to the beach where the people were gathered. The Gisparhlawts were there challenging, "Come on! Where are the strong men you are famed for? Come, we will fight them." After this, there was much jeering from them. When the folk saw Scabs come down to challenge the Gisparhlawts' strong man, they cried out, "Look who is coming to challenge the champion. They have no one else to send but the one who sleeps in his own filth." The Gisparhlawts' strong man ran towards Æmælk intending to humiliate him. He reached out for him. But Æmælk took hold of him and threw him away up into the air. When he fell down he was hurt and angry, for he had expected an easy conquest. He rose to his feet, and made another rush at Æmælk, with a loud angry yell. This time Æmælk took the strong man and threw him down on the boulders so hard that he broke every bone in his body and left him dead. A great clamour came up from his uncle's people, who now forgot their jeers. Æmælk turned about and went into his house to his resting place. He would speak to nobody, although they all wanted to speak to him. He heeded them not.

The athletic contests kept on and on. Other strong men went out. The oldest brother had now recovered his strength, and he joined the competition. The athletes then went into other forms of contests. One man went into the woods and pulled out the lower branches of the small trees and brought these in. Another went and pulled up a small tree from the ground. This was an outstanding feat, and the Gitrhahla strong man who accomplished this was considered the strongest. All other contestants were greeted with jeers. Among them was Æmælk's oldest brother. Æmælk meanwhile remained unconcerned in his sleeping place, while his people came back humiliated at the jeers from the Gitrhahla tribe who were cheering their own strong man. His folk came in and taunted him, "If only you could outdo the Gitrhahla instead of always sleeping in your own water."

Æmælk did not reply. But early next morning while all were asleep, he went down to the beach and bathed; then he walked up into the woods. He was very downhearted. A bright shining man, a spirit (*narhnorh*), suddenly appeared to him, asking, "Why are you so sad, my son?"—"My brothers have been overcome and are now being ridiculed by the Gitrhahla."—"Do not be downhearted. You will come up here and pull a large spruce tree out by the roots and carry it down to the water's edge, in full view of all the people. You shall be the strongest. Soon the forest, the animals, and then the mountains shall challenge your strength. But you shall overcome them all. But first, go back and rest in your sleeping place." The young man returned home, and when the people arrived they hurled the usual taunts at him. "If only you had trained instead of sleeping in the stench of your own filth!" Æmælk, although hearing all this, pretended to be asleep. So



17A. Bear Mother myth illustrated.



17B. Opposite side of No. 17A.

TSIMSYAN MYTHS

no one was found to challenge the Gitrhahla athlete who outdid all who came forward, while the Gitrhahla were shouting taunts, especially at the chief who had proclaimed his nephews as champions.

While this was going on, Æmælk got up, and without saying anything to anybody he went out and stood before the taunting crowd. He called out, "Who will stand up beside the big spruce tree and pull it out into the sea, the whole tree? That little canoe pole which the Gitrhahla strong man brought down is not really a tree." The Gitrhahla people began to laugh and taunt him, saying, "See who is challenging our strong man! It is he who sleeps in the stench of his own filth!" In answer, Æmælk went into the woods, and standing in full view of the people, he put his arms around the large spruce tree and pulled it up from the ground, roots and all. Then, holding it up in the air, he walked down the beach and threw it into the sea. The tribes were silenced. No one said anything. The Gitrhahla were dumb and embarrassed after their taunts. Æmælk walked back to his sleeping place and lay down. His household were also ashamed for what they had said, but nevertheless they jeered at the other tribes.

In those days the animals were very closely connected with human beings, and at times they assumed human forms. Now that Æmælk's fame had spread far and wide, the animals heard of it, and they consulted among themselves. "We must do away with this man before he destroys us." So the various animals came at different intervals to combat Æmælk. But he was invincible. He killed them all. There were moose and wolves and black bears and grizzly bears and wolverines. All tried in turn and were overcome. Then the beings of the sea did the same as the land animals had done, and they were also overcome, and were destroyed. Æmælk's people now had plenty of food from his many conquests.

The forest itself came to life, and giant trees began to try and crowd the people from their village into the sea. But Æmælk pulled the huge trees out by the roots and threw them, one by one, into the sea, until these were all overcome. The mountains were the only things remaining to try their strength against that of the young man. At that time, the mountains were all at the water's edge. They planned to push Æmælk's village into the ocean. So they began to slide into the village. The people ran in with alarm, "We shall all perish. No one can overcome the mountains. It is better that we flee." Æmælk arose from his sleeping place and went to the rear of the village. He saw the mountain slowly advancing towards the houses. He then ran to the mountain with great speed. When he came in contact with it, the whole earth shook. He pushed the rock wall back until it was thrown back a long way and faced in another direction. They had been overcome. Æmælk had vanquished everything. He now became known all over the world as Strong-Man.

Only one strong man was known who the people thought might be stronger than their own athlete. It became known that the world was held in position by a strong man who balanced it on the end of a huge pole. He was famous as the world's strongest man and had been so for ages and ages.

One night, while Æmælk was in his hollow, apparently asleep, a great number of strangers gathered outside his house. The household heard these strangers speaking among themselves, "Yes, this is the place; he must be in here." They had come in a strange-looking canoe and had landed just as it was getting dusk, at nightfall. They walked up directly to the house where Æmælk lived with his uncle. Then they stepped in, and one of them, who seemed to be the leader, turned about, looked all around the house, and saw the sleeping Æmælk. He turned to his companions and said, "Yes, this is the house; he lies sleeping just as our master said we would find him." The spokesman of these strange men approached him and said, "Master, prince, your uncle has sent us to fetch you to him. He is getting old and weak. Only you can bring him rest. He is tired from having had to hold the world up for so long. Now he is weakened, so he wants you, as only you will be able to take his place."

Without replying, Æmælk rose from where he slept, and taking the bear robe upon which he slept, he stood up, saying, "Come, we will go at once!" He took his robe with him and followed the strangers out without saying a word to anybody. It was then that the people knew he had become a supernatural being. The strange-looking canoe (*narhnorh*) moved away. It had not gone far when those watching from the shore saw a huge whirlpool forming. Into it the canoe headed and was swallowed up. When the people saw the canoe go down, they began to mourn for their prince. When they looked about, it is said, they discovered one of these strange canoemen had been left behind. He now came forth and told the people. "Your prince is not dead. He is now going to take the place of the world's strongest man who holds up the world and is a great *narhnorh*. Your prince is his nephew. He is about to replace his uncle who is now getting weak and old. If he should die, the world would crash. The reason for so many earthquakes (*'iyæk*) lately is that every time he has to move his body to another position the earth shakes. Should he drop the earth from the great pole upon which he holds it, everything would be broken and all the people would perish. The duck folk bring him food. That is why you see the ducks diving down into the bottom of the sea. They also oil his body so that he may always keep fit. You will never see your prince again. But whenever you feel the earth trembling or shaking, remember that your prince is changing his position as he must always remain lying down, holding the large pole on his chest. The ducks also are his messengers. The only person with him now is his aged uncle, whose place he is taking."

After this strange man had spoken and told the people what was happening, he walked down the beach and jumped into the sea. The people saw a huge loon (Kawl) floating about. It emitted its call, then dove down, and never more was it seen.

This is a narrative of the Gitzarhlæhl tribe of the Tsimssyan.

DZARADILAW AND HIS COPPER CANOE

(Recorded by William Beynon in 1953.)

Kse'om¹, in Tsimssyan, is known as the house of Dzaradilaw. This supernatural being with the copper canoe rescued the woman captured by the Grizzly Bear, after she had escaped. Here is the narrative about it.

Rhpeesunt came from the Gitsees village of Kiyæks. She was the daughter of the chief. Along with her companions, she set off to gather berries on the opposite side of the river. When they were travelling up to the berry grounds, the princess Rhpeesunt stepped into bear excrements and was so humiliated that she grew very angry. All day long she kept harping on this and cussing the bear responsible. The other women with her went on picking berries and soon filled their berry baskets. As the princess was the last to fill hers, she lagged along behind the others.

In the early evening they headed for the canoes to return to their homes. Rhpeesunt had not gone far when her basket strap broke, and all her berries spilt on the ground. She stopped to pick them up, while her companions kept on going toward the canoes. She started off again on the trail, but she had not gone far when the strap broke once more. It was now getting dark, and she was away behind the others. Then she met a young man, who spoke to her, "Let me help you; let me pack your berries, princess!" Rhpeesunt, thinking that this young man was sent to meet her, followed him. She did not notice that they had taken another trail.

Soon they came to a strange village up on the mountainside. The young man, who was very handsome, led her to a large house. "Wait here, until I see my father," he said. The young man stepped into the house, and she overheard a very loud voice inquiring, "Did you get what you went for, my son?" "Yes, she stands outside," replied the young man. "Bring her in! Do not let my daughter-in-law stand outside. Bring her here to me!" The young man went out and led the princess into his father's house, saying, "Rhpeesunt is now with us."

The young man now took the princess in and sat her by the chief, a very large man. She noticed that there were many people in the house, some wearing bear robes. Many aged people were assembled in the house. When she sat down, she felt some one pinch her leg. Looking, she saw a little old

¹Kse: waters of; 'om, sand or mud, or sandy or muddy waters. Its present name is Blind Slough. Its name for a group of Iceland settlers is Osland.