

"Narrative of Klaxkels" Informant Benjiman tate 1927.

There was a time among the people that starvation was among them and there was a scarcity of animals and no fish for food. There was a man, agitsalasang man <sup>leko's</sup> a gispowadwava and his wife <sup>wi'n katk</sup> winlalk she also was a gitsolasuo woman and was a ganha<sup>a</sup>. This man was worse off than any of the other people as he had no hunting place where he could go. He had to stay on the village and there he was starving.

When all the gitsolasuo people went away to their hunting territories he could not go. The spring was just starting to come and the snow was beginning to thaw so the man called to his wife, "come we will go and find a territory which will be our own." So they set out from the villabe and went down the river Ksiyen and were going to a country he had often seen and which he called Ksogan'ul. And so they started off. That night they reached the mouth of the gitlen river of ksomgot and here they camped. They were in sight of where he intended going. When they had camped for the night the snow started to fall and as they were in an exposed place they remembered that across there were large spruce trees so they went across on the ice and got shelter there. So here the man made a house and the man became very sick and there was no food and this made him grow very weak. His wife packed wood and kept the fires going all the time and she looked after her sick man who was growing weaker all the time. Spring was now coming on and everything was thawing and the woman was down at the water hole of the creek. A hole she had made in the ice. And she saw a great number of small trout very small. The woman thought a long time as to how she would get them. So she went into



the woods and got a large quantity of roots and small shrubs. She then made a very fine meshed basket like trap which she lowered into the water. This took her one day to make and when she had finished this she placed it in the waters of the river/galwolgats, and left it over night and when daylight came the woman went down to the fish trap and she saw there a number of small trout. She took this out and they ~~all~~ ate this and every day there was always trout so then the woman made a larger trap in the same manner she had made this one and with this food the man's strength gradually returned and the man got larger trout from the fish trap. When spring was well advanced the woman went up the river and she saw the bones of salmon on the beach she went and made a big net and put it in the river here where she had seen the bones and they got many salmon. The steelhead and the spring ~~salmon~~ as well as many large trout. The woman saw this was a good salmon country and the man was getting stronger all the time and they now had dry many bundles of salmon. ~~AND THEIR~~ Another day the woman said to her invalid husband "I am going up this river, the ice is all gone I want to see what it is like further up." So she went up and she had gone some distance when she found a chip which had come from a tree and the woman looked at this and saw it was not the work of the beaver but seemed to have been split with an axe. The woman took this chip and returned to their house and the husband looked at it and said, "There must be people living up above. This is not the cutting of the beaver." Not knowing any other people they thought that this was a gitsalasnó people living on the head of this river so they set



out to look for this village. They went in a course over the hills and then followed the river's course up walking all the time. They had gone a day when they saw signs of smoke coming from the tops of the trees. They knew they were getting close. So they camped here and next day when they set out they saw the houses at laxksedin. There were many houses on each side of the river and the people did not go up in daylight and when it came dark the man and his wife went down into the willage and came into ~~an~~ one of the houses. He happened to come into the house of niosliltkgisp giladzano and being a gispowadwava told the people where they were from and how long they had been traveling about. Niosliltk then took the man as his nephew and the woman who was a ganhava became the member of the nioskimes ganhava house. The people had up to this time no knowledge of the Skeena River, until they were told about it by the man and his wife. This village was close to the big Beaver dam and this monster beaver had dammed up the lake so that the river Klaxksis was only a small stream. The people in going to the lake would go up into the hills and around the big beaver at the river side of the dam was much salmon and this was why the people wanted to get rid of this big beaver.

So they planned on destroying the dam and they started in breaking the dam and lowered the waters of the lake and when this happened the waters deepened and became swift in the river and the best hunters from among the giludzaus came and waited on a spot which the big beaver would have to pass. The larskik people on one side and the gispanndwada on the other side.



When the Big Beaver felt the waters of the lake receding it came out of the dam and swam down the river which was very deep. The men on each side of the river speared it and then they struggled among themselves as to whom should pull it to the shore. The men were the stronger and were pulling the Big Beaver in when the wife of the laxskiok man (niosgamdzis) ran over to her brothers the gispasuduada men and called out "I am going to take the hand of your kill." When she said this she cut the spear of her brother and then her husband pulled the Big Beaver over to his side of the river and that is why they use the Beaver as a crest. Had the gispowadwada been able to pull this in they would have used it as a crest. This big beaver had human faas in each paw and on its tail and along its back and was so shown when carved on a pole at Klazkels. The following spring a man by the name of Stogiowan a laxskiok man went up into the valley to go hunting he went up into the hills and when he was nearing his hunting grounds a groundhog called out to him. "Iyo, iyo." This was a bad sign and showed that his wife was unfaithful to him and this the ground hog was telling him. Knowing now that he would have no luck in hinting, but he went on and he could get no game. So he went back to his village and when he was near he waited till night came and when all the people were asleep he came into his house and there was his wife lying asleep with her lover, sunets a gispowuowada man which made her unfaithfulness all the more unworthy because her lover was of the same phratry and a relative of hers. The man was angered and while sunets was asleep killed him and took off his head



and put it over the door and the woman woke and ran away after this stagiowan went away again up into the hills. The woman returned and saw only the trunk of her lover's body left. So this she took and buried and she went away. When she buried this body she buried right under the sleeping place and no one knew of it. Sunets had now been gone two days and no one knew where he had gone to and then the people sent a woman over and said, "Go over and see what happened sunset. Make pretense of borrowing fire." So the woman took a pitch torch and went into the house and said, "My fire went out and I want to get a light." So saying she entered and put her torch in the fire and lighted it while she was going this she looked about her and saw nothing and she then went slowly to the door. When she came to the door she stood and looked around again and a drop of blood fell on her hand. She went out and saw it was blood and she now wanted to return to the house. She knew that it was long past the season for drying salmon so that it was human blood she was sure. So when she got to the river which she had to cross she stumbled and fell and her torch went into the water. She came into the house again and said. "I don't know what is the matter with me I fell into the river and my torch went out." So she dried herself and put her torch in the fire when she went out she looked up over the door and there the head of sunets hanging from the rafters. She told the chief and he was very angry. So that night they prepared to attack the larskiok village and when all were asleep attacked it and killed many. The gisponwdwada chief then called out saying, "that is enough we do not



want to kill all the people" so they ceased and they made peace but many of the Maxskiok took to flight and went on down the river and took refuge among the other timsgan tribes and niosxlo, larskiok went on among the gilando and xiyop went to the gispoxlots.