

Another (poorer) version
of suwig.ans,
raid on Ietsant

adds nothing to
other accounts

THE QALDO AND THE TSETSALT FIGHTING

(Informant: Wawso^elarhae, Robison, a Gitksan, and interpreter, Mrs. Constance Cox, at Hazelton, in 1920. This tradition has come down from Robison's ancestors, where Suwiraus, of the Wolves, belonged. The informant at the time of recording, was old and sick, lying on his filthy couch in a tent pitched on a jack pine flat opposite Glen Vowell. He said to the interpreter that I was likely to "take his breath away and interfere with his life." ~~He~~ did not like to tell any other stories, but asked for things: a sweater, matches, cheese...)

The Tsetsalt (a nomad Déné tribe of the interior) lived in holes in the ground (semi-subterranean huts, with exit ^{by} through a notched ladder through the top). They were ever roving in the woods, and it was their way of hiding. The Qaldo (or the uppermost Gitksan tribe, at the headwaters of the Skeena) wanted to fight these Tsetsalt who were hiding in the earth. They came down to Kispayaks and they got the help there of the first of the warriors^s, Gutkwinurhs, who was the bravest of ~~the warriors~~, and would walk in front of them (be their leader). They reached a place where Suwirus^a (another brave warrior) lived, near Qaldo. Their plan was to go and get a grizzly bear to entice these Tsetsalt who were hiding in the earth. They took the hide of a grizzly bear and placed it in front of them. A warrior dressed up in the fur as an armour, which was covered with pitch and sand. They all started out. The braves were ahead. As the night approached, they looked for ^a very large pine tree under which to camp, and they all slept underneath its shelter. At the foot of the tree there were plenty of cones lying around. The bravest of the warriors slept on one side of the tree and the others on the other side. All at once they heard a great thud as if something had fallen. They heard the thud as they were in lying down, being all asleep. They felt something falling on them. One of them put his hand on his blanket and felt something, mud on his blanket, and he said, "Those brave warriors are making fun of us. They are throwing mud at us." And they went to see round the other side of the tree. There was nothing;

they were asleep. And they found out it was not their work. So they went to lie down again.

In the morning they found that there was a man up in the tree, who had no blanket. He was quite naked. It was he who had done this mud throwing [dropping excrements]. One of the braves said, "We will climb up and throw him down the tree." A brave went up the tree, that is, Suwirus, the bravest of all. When Suwirus got to that naked man, he was looking very fierce, and he changed his position on the tree. So down Suwirus came. It was too much for him. Then two more braves tried it; they went up the tree. As soon as they got near that naked man, he changed his position again, and he looked dangerous. All the braves tried to dislodge him, all except Gutkwinurhs. It was now his turn. Gutkwinurhs climbed up the tree. He was not ^{afraid} like the rest. He went past the naked man, went above him in the tree and, when there, he kicked him down. After he had thrown him down, they gave him ^{help}. That is why, in the chief's house at Qaldo, you will see a [carved] man sitting in a tree. They did not really kill him, but they knocked him about and they left his body at the foot of the tree.

Then they travelled on, ^{and} when they came to a beautiful flat. There was nobody camped there, but there was plenty of smoke. They had found here where the Tssetsaut were encamped. So the warriors all encamped in the brush. Early in the morning, one of the braves got inside of the bear's skin [the armour] and ^{went} got out. It was a decoy. And some of the Tssetsaut ^{came} got up and looked all around. One man went back in and said, "Look! I have seen a grizzly bear walking." But it was Suwirus who was walking as a decoy. The Tssetsaut got out in great force, took their arrows and their sharp spears. They tied the spearheads on their arrows and they went for a bear hunt. They all ^{followed} went after the bear, and the bear, unhurt, came nearer. They kept shooting the arrows at the bear. But they ^{it} had no effect. So they began to throw the spearheads at it. The bear led them right where the Qaldos were lying in ambush. The Qaldo reached out and killed all the Tssetsaut. Then they went into the holes and killed all those that were inside. When they returned, Suwirus gave Gutkwinurhs the Man [monster] who lived

in the tree, as a crest. Chief Tebae of Qaldo still owns it to this day, in his house. That is the way they defeated the Tsetsaut and were saved.