

cularities. A curse was pronounced on all of these and they are fallen, have lost speech, and are but shabby representatives of their former greatness.

All, or nearly all, of the tribes in the Columbia and Snake river valleys believe they sprang from the ancient animal god, Coyote, or Speelyai. This Speelyai was the big Indian god among the Eastern Oregon and Washington tribes. The coyote of to-day is a contemptible animal in the sight of the Indian, but the ancient Speelyai was a god, creating and destroying whomsoever and whatsoever he pleased. In their mystic stories he seems to have been the ruling spirit among the other *Wat-té-tash*. *Whái-a-ma*, the eagle, *Amash*, the owl, and *Wish-poosh*, the beaver, were gods of dignity and power, doing many wonderful things. It was from the beaver that Speelyai made the Indians. The grizzly bear was a monster worse than the devil himself. The Indians say he was so large he used to destroy people by snuffing them up his nostrils. To this day they have a superstitious dread of the grizzly, and they say that if one speak derisively of a grizzly's tracks or excrement, the bear has some kind of a mysterious way of knowing it, and will sometime avenge the insult. The rattlesnake and owl were great personages, and both were, according to the Indian stories, "big medicine men" among the animal people. With the present animal race, nearly every peculiarity is accounted for by something that occurred in the *Wat-té-tash* times. The stripes on the chipmunk's back, the white on the magpie, and the black tip on the coyote's tail, are all thus accounted for.

The ancient animal age was full of violence; the strong were destroying the weak, and nearly all were in constant dread of danger. Nearly every mountain, stream, waterfall, canyon, gorge,

great rock, or deep hole in the rivers, has some myth or legend connected with it; something strange happened there in ancient times.

There is a legend, that, away back in the animal age, most of the country east of the Cascade mountains was covered with water. The Kittitas, Yakima, Klikitat and Columbia river valleys were lakes, having no outlet. The Yakimas say that in those days, Speelyai, the Indian god, and the other animal people, lived in the surrounding mountains, and they used to see monster beasts swimming on the surface of these lakes. On the lake that covered the Yakima valley, they saw one of these monsters, which had brown hair, frequently wallowing and swimming in the water. In time the lake dried up and the monster died. The Indians used to point out his bones, somewhere near the point where the Northern Pacific railroad enters the Yakima reservation. The bones were, probably, those of a mastodon. It is probable, that, many years ago, there may have been hair found at the spot. It is even possible that there may have been the remains of the hairy elephant found there by the Indians. These myths about monster animals, most likely, originated from their knowledge of the fossils of prehistoric mammals.

Another legend accounts for the origin of the tribes, and at the same time, explains how some of the great lakes east of the Cascade mountains were anciently drained. A long, long time ago, they say, before the present race of Indians, there lived, at Lake Cle-el-lum, an immense beaver god. He owned and controlled the whole lake, and was lord of everything around it, in short, was a sort of Neptune of that little sea. This great beaver lived at the bottom of the lake. His eyes shone like fire, his eyebrows were red, and his claws glistened like silver. He was fierce, and destroyed