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SOME MICMAC TALES FROM CAPE BRETON ISLAND.

BY F. G. SPECK.

THE following tales were written down from the dictation of Chief Joe Julian of the Sydney band, and John Joe of Wycogamagh, Cape Breton Island. As a contribution to comparative mythology they represent local versions of some myths well known not only among the Micmacs, but among the northern Algonkin in general.

GLUSKAP'S JOURNEY.

(The Cape Breton Local Version.)

Gluskap was the god of the Micmacs. The great deity, Ktci-ni'sxam, made him out of earth and then breathed on him, and he was made. This was at Cape North (Ktē'dnuk, "At the North Mountain"), Cape Breton, on the eastern side. Gluskap's home was at Fairy Holes (Gluska'be wi'gwôm, "Gluskap's wigwam").¹ Just in front of the caves at this headland are three little islands in a straight line, long and narrow, known as Ciboux Islands. These are the remains of Gluskap's canoe, where he left it when it was broken. At Plaster Cove (Twô'butc, "Looking Out") two girls saw his canoe broken into three pieces; and they laughed, making fun of Gluskap. At this he told them that they would remain forever where they are; and to-day there are two rocks at Plaster Cove which are the remains of these girls. Next, a little farther north, at Wreck Cove, Gluskap jumped from his canoe when it foundered, lifting his moose-skin canoe-mat out, and left it on the shore to dry. It is there to-day. There is still to be seen a space of fifteen acres of bare ground where the mat lay. Then he started on and went to Table Head (Padalodī'tck), on the south side of Great Bras d'or. Here he had his dinner. Next he struck into Bras d'or Lake straight to Wycogamagh, on the western end, where, at Indian Island (Wi'sik, "Cabin"), he started a beaver and drove him out, following Bras d'or Lake to St. Patrick's Bay. At Middle River he killed a young beaver, whose bones are

¹ This is now known as Fairy Holes, between St. Ann's Bay and Great Bras d'or. The Micmacs tell how, sixty-two years ago, five Indians — Joe Bernard, Francis Bernard, Clement Bernard, Joe Newell, and Tom Newell — entered the caves which honeycomb this headland, carrying seven torches. They walked as far as the torches would light them, about a mile and a half, found eight brooks in the caves, and when they came out discovered how a rock three hundred feet wide had moved since they had entered. The Indians regard these caves as very mysterious.

still to be seen there.¹ Then Gluskap followed the big beaver until he lost track of him for a while. He stood at Wi'sik (Indian Island), and took a piece of rock and threw toward the place where he thought the beaver was. This rock is now Red Island (Pauγenukté'gan). This started the beaver up, and he ran back through St. Peter's Channel and burrowed through underneath, which is the cause of the crooks and windings there now. Then the chase continued outside in the ocean, when the beaver struck out for the Bay of Fundy. Here at Plí'gank ("Split Place"), Split Point, Gluskap dug out a channel with his paddle, forming Minas Basin, Nova Scotia. There he killed the beaver. Near here is a small island, which is the pot in which he cooked the beaver; and there, too, is another rock, near Pot Rock, which is Gluskap's dog left behind at this time. Turtle (Mi'ktcik) was Gluskap's uncle. Here with his pot and dog he turned Turtle into a rock, and left them all there. Near where he killed the beaver are still to be seen the bones turned to rock. When he broke the channel here in Minas Basin to drain the water out, in order to uncover the beaver, he left it so that to-day the water all drains out at each tide. So Gluskap caused the Bay of Fundy tides. Then he crossed over eastward and came out at Pictou, where there were many Indians living. While there, he taught the Micmacs how to make all their implements for hunting and fishing, — bows, arrows, canoes, and the like. After a while he prepared to leave, and told the Indians, "I am going to leave you. I am going to a place where I can never be reached by a white man." Then he prophesied the coming of the Europeans and the baptism of the Micmacs. Then he called his grandmother from Pictou, and a young man for his nephew, and departed, going to the other side of the North Pole with them. Again he said, "From now on, if there should ever be war between you and any other people, I shall be back to help you." He is there now, busy in making bows, arrows, and weapons for the day when the white man may bother the Micmacs. The Micmacs are Gluskap's children. As he prophesied it came true, for in 1610 the first Micmacs were baptized and became Christians. Gluskap had departed just a little before them, because he knew he had to make room for Christ; but he is the Micmac's god, and will come to help them if they ever need him. When Peary discovered the North Pole, he saw Gluskap sitting at the top of the Pole, and spoke to him.

GLUSKAP TESTED BY CHRIST.

One time when Gluskap had become the Indian's god, Christ wanted to try him to see if he was fit: so he took Gluskap to the ocean, and

¹ A Micmac named Tā'mekīan (Tom Stevens) a long while ago is said to have found some of these bones, — ribs eight feet long, — some of which, with a hip-joint of monstrous size, he is said to have brought out. The Indians claim that these remains are now in the Museum at Halifax.

told him to close his eyes. Then Christ moved close to the shore an island which lay far out to sea. When Gluskap opened his eyes, he saw it. Christ asked him if he could do as much as that. Then Gluskap told Christ to close his eyes a while. When Christ opened his eyes, he found that Gluskap had moved it back to its place again.

TAKEN-FROM-GUTS (MUSPUSYE'GENAN).

There were two wigwams in which they were camping, an old man and his son. These two were giant man-eaters (*kogwe'sk*). After a while the young man got married, and a boy was born by his wife. When this boy was about six years old, another was about to be born; and the young giant, knowing his wife was pregnant, went to his father and said, "I'll give you my wife. You can kill and eat her." So the next day the old man took his walking-stick and went to his son's camp. When he entered the wigwam, he told his daughter-in-law to bend her head down; and having put the end of his stick into the fire, when it was red-hot, he poked it into her heart and killed her. The little boy, her first son, was watching his grandfather, and saw what he did. Then the old man took a knife and cut out the mother's bowels, and left them lying near the spring where they got water. Her carcass he took home with him. So the poor little boy was left alone, as his father was away hunting. Every day, as he went to the spring where his mother's bowels were, he saw a tiny boy. He tried to catch him, but failed every time. Nevertheless he saw the tiny creature smile at him. At last one day he did catch him, and he took him home. This little fellow had now grown larger and stronger. He had a little bow and arrow, and a bladder full of oil, and the old man wondered what it was. The elder brother asked him to make him another bow and arrows, and he asked what he wanted to do with them. "Give them to another little fellow," he answered. So another bow and arrow were made, and the elder boy gave them to the small one. One day while they were playing and shooting, they hit the bladder of oil and spilled it. Every night, after playing together about the camp, the small boy would return to the spring before the old man came home; but one day he came early and watched them playing. Then he ran and closed the wigwam, so that the little fellow could not escape. The little boy cried and begged to be freed, but the old man gave the little fellow some blue-jay feathers to coax him to stop crying. At last the little fellow got tame and stopped crying. After this he grew fast, and soon was bigger than his elder brother. This little fellow's name was Taken-from-Guts (Muspusy'e'genan) because he was born from his mother's bowels after they had been cut out by the old giant her father-in-law.

Now, one day Taken-from-Guts asked his elder brother, "Where is mother?" Then the brother told him, "Our father got grandfather

to kill mother." So Taken-from-Guts said, "We'll kill the old fellow." Then they built a big strong wigwam, getting lots of bark and hanging two or three dry trees inside, so that it would burn well. Then they invited their father inside; and as he was tired and sleepy, they made a big fire inside, and soon he fell asleep. Then they got ready and set fire to both ends of the camp at the same time, went out, and closed the door. Then their father began crying inside, but he soon burned to death. When there was nothing left but bones and ashes, the boys gathered the bones; and Taken-from-Guts took them, crushed them into powder in his hand, and blew them into the air. "You will become mosquitoes to torment and eat the people," he said. And so the giant was turned into the mosquitoes who now try to kill people by sucking their blood.

Next Taken-from-Guts asked his elder brother, "Where is our grandfather?" When he told him, they went to their grandfather's camp. On the way they killed a moose. When they reached their grandfather's wigwam, the old people were glad, because they expected to eat the two boys. But they said, "We have killed a moose. Tomorrow we will go back and get the carcass." So they went back to the moose and cut up the meat. When they got back to where the moose was, their grandfather, who went with them, was tired and sleepy. When he fell asleep, they warmed the fat from the moose's guts, and held it on top of the old man until in a short time he was dead. Then they cut out his heart and took it back to the wigwam, where their grandmother was waiting. They gave it to her to cook, telling her it was a piece of the moose's heart. She roasted it; and as soon as she ate it, she knew what it was, and said, "He had a very sweet heart." Then Taken-from-Guts took a tomahawk and killed the old woman.

Now they started on, and Taken-from-Guts asked his brother where they were going. Said he, "We are going to kill all the rest of the giants." Soon they reached where Marten and his grandmother were camping. When they entered the camp, Taken-from-Guts asked Marten for a drink of water, as he was thirsty. Marten's grandmother answered, "We can't get any water around here. Unless you have a good-looking daughter, it is impossible." Taken-from-Guts asked, "Why?" She said, "A creature named Bull-Frog (*Ablege'mu*) has taken all the water, and you can't get any." Then Taken-from-Guts asked Marten again for a drink, and Marten went and brought him some rily water; but when Taken-from-Guts saw it, he threw it away. He was so thirsty that he licked his fingers for the moisture. Then Taken-from-Guts went to see Bull-Frog, and beheld in his camp thousands of bladders all full of water. When he entered, Bull-Frog looked up, and Taken-from-Guts hit and killed him with his tomahawk. Then he sent home all the girls that Bull-Frog had taken from

the people in payment for drinking-water. Then he went out and broke all the bladders of water, and rivers and lakes appeared everywhere.

The next day the boys built a canoe to travel on the river. Then they went down the river and stopped at the place where Porcupine had his den. It was all full of rocks. Porcupine's wife was at home; and when they went in, she built up a fire so hot that Taken-from-Guts's brother soon died. Nevertheless Taken-from-Guts said, "I'm very cold," and he wrapped a bear-skin about him. Soon Porcupine-Woman could not stand it any longer. Then Taken-from-Guts revived his brother, and they started on in the canoe until they came to where the giants had built a trap. It was a place where steep rocks crushed everybody who tried to go by. Taken-from-Guts saw the trap ahead, and said to his brother, "Look out! there is a trap ahead. Strike with your paddle!" So Taken-from-Guts broke it away with his paddle, and they passed through.

Soon they came to a pond where there were lots of wild geese, that looked up as they came in sight, and were about to screech. These geese belonged to Gluskap, who lived across the pond. They were his watch-birds, and informed Gluskap when any one approached, by screeching. Then Taken-from-Guts held up his hand and told the geese to keep quiet. The geese kept quiet. Then they landed and went into Gluskap's camp, and quickly put up their wigwam. When Gluskap came out, he saw it, and wondered at such a powerful man. But towards evening he went and visited Taken-from-Guts, and talked with the boys. Taken-from-Guts gave Gluskap a pipe to smoke. Gluskap drew on it once and smoked it dry. Then he gave Taken-from-Guts a pipe, and said, "Fill this." And Taken-from-Guts smoked it dry. Twice he did this. When Gluskap went out, Taken-from-Guts said to his brother, "It's going to be a cold night to-night, I can see it by the clouds." That night was indeed so cold that when he put his pot to boil, one side of it boiled while the other side froze. The next morning it was fine and warm, and Taken-from-Guts went to wake his brother, who said, "I'm frozen to death." At evening Taken-from-Guts said, "It's going to be windy to-day by the looks of the clouds," and he told it to Gluskap, who thought, "I had better fix up my camp, for this is a very powerful man." So he put weights all around his wigwam. That night it blew a gale so hard that he could just about keep his camp up. It nearly blew down. The next day was fine, so the brothers left Gluskap and started on. When they left, Gluskap gave Taken-from-Guts a piece of fur for a present, one skin. Taken-from-Guts handed it to his brother to carry. As they went along, it grew bigger and heavier, until at last he could not carry it any farther. So Taken-from-Guts carried it; but soon he stopped, and

said to his brother, "You stay here and start a fur business with this skin. I can't carry it any longer." His brother then remained.

Taken-from-Guts, however, kept on, and at last came to two camps where old woman Skunk lived. She had some daughters. When he entered, she said, "Come in the back of the wigwam, my son-in-law!" The next day she said, "We'll go to the island and get some eggs." So they did go; and when they reached the island, the old woman told him that there were more eggs farther in from the shore. "I want you to get them," she said. So he went farther in, and she paddled off in the canoe and left him there. When he came back to the shore, she was gone and he was alone. The Gulls came by where he stood, and he asked them to carry him to the mainland. The Gulls did so, and he reached the camp ahead of the old woman. At this she was very much astonished. When night came, she told him, "I shall have to sleep with you to-night. That's the rule."—"All right," said he. That night she covered him up with fur and skins and lay down with him, intending to stifle him with her odor when he was asleep; but Taken-from-Guts made a hole through the coverings with his knife. Through this hole he could breathe. She tried very hard to kill him with her smell; but he breathed through the hole, and the next morning got up all right. The next day she had another test for him. She had a deep hole where she threw her other sons-in-law to kill them, and into this she threw Taken-from-Guts. When he reached the bottom, he found an old Turtle sitting there waiting for his prey. Turtle looked about for his knife to kill Taken-from-Guts; but while he was looking, Taken-from-Guts climbed out safely. They could not kill him.

RABBIT AND OTTER (THE BUNGLING HOST).

There were two wigwams. Otter lived with his grandmother in one of them, and Rabbit with his grandmother in the other. So one day Rabbit started out and wandered over to visit Otter in his camp. When Rabbit came into the wigwam, Otter asked him if he had anything to eat at home. "No," replied Rabbit. So then Otter asked his grandmother to cook something for Rabbit, but she told him she had nothing there to cook. So Otter went out to a pond which was right in front of the camp. He jumped into the pond, and caught a nice long string of eels. Meanwhile Rabbit was looking on to see what Otter would do to get his food. So when he saw Otter go home with his string of eels, Rabbit thought he could do the same. So he went over and asked Otter to come over to his camp the next day and have dinner with him. Accordingly the next morning Otter went over to Rabbit's camp. When he arrived, Rabbit asked his grandmother to hang the pot and cook something for dinner. "We have nothing, no fish, meat, or anything," she said, "but you go out and get something."

Then Rabbit went out to the pond, the same as Otter had done, and dived in to get eels; but he could not get anything, not a fish, as he was unable to dive no matter how hard he tried. In the mean time his grandmother was waiting. After a while, however, Otter went out to see what ailed Rabbit, and, after searching near the pond, found him all wet and with nothing to show for his efforts. "What's the matter with you?" he asked. "I'm trying to get something to eat," he replied. So Otter jumped into the pond and got a big string of fish for him, and so they had dinner. Then Otter went home.

The next day Rabbit started out to visit Woodpecker. When he reached Woodpecker's wigwam, Rabbit found him there with his grandmother. So the old woman started for a pot to make a stew or something; but she said, "We have nothing to cook." Then Woodpecker went out. There was a dry tree-trunk in front of the wigwam, and he went to it and picked a quantity of meal out of it. This he brought in to his grandmother, and they all had dinner. Rabbit had watched how Woodpecker got his meal; so he invited Woodpecker to come over to visit him, and went home. The next day Woodpecker went over to visit Rabbit. When Woodpecker arrived, Rabbit asked his grandmother to hang up the pot and cook dinner. "But we have nothing to cook," she said. So Rabbit went outside with his birch-bark vessel to fill it with meal, as he had seen Woodpecker do. He started to pick meal out of the trunk with his nose, as Woodpecker had done. After a while Woodpecker came out to see what ailed Rabbit, and there he found him with his nose all flattened out and split from trying to break into the wood. So Woodpecker left. Ever since then Rabbit has had his nose split.

One day, being out of food, Rabbit thought he would go and see Otter and steal some eels. He got into the habit of doing this every second night. Towards spring Otter began to wonder where his eels went to, as the barrel was getting low. So one morning Otter found Rabbit-tracks around, and said to himself, "I'm going to kill Rabbit for stealing my eels." Now, Rabbit knew what was going on; and when Otter reached Rabbit's camp, Rabbit had fled. Otter then asked Rabbit's grandmother, "Where has Rabbit gone?" She answered, "I don't know, last night he brought home some eels and then went away." — "He has been stealing my eels," said Otter, "and I'm going to kill him." So Otter started to trail Rabbit, who knew that Otter was following him. As Otter began gaining on him, Rabbit picked up a little chip and said for it to become a wigwam. At once this became a wigwam, and Rabbit turned himself into an old man sitting inside. Soon Otter came along and saw the wigwam. He went to the door, and there saw a little gray-headed man sitting inside. The old man was blind too. Otter did not know this was

Rabbit himself; so out of pity for him he gathered some fire-wood for him, and asked if he had seen anything of a Rabbit passing by. "No," replied the old man; and Otter started on again. After a while Rabbit left his wigwam and struck out on another road. Soon Otter could not find any of Rabbit's tracks, so he returned to the wigwam, only to find it gone. Only a chip remained in its place. Then he saw the tracks where Rabbit had jumped out: so he was very angry, and cried, "He won't trick me again!" Then Rabbit knew that he was being overtaken again, and, taking another chip, he wished it to become a house, and there was the house. So when Otter came along, he saw the house. There was a verandah outside, and a big gentleman walking back and forth all dressed in white. He had a paper which he was reading. This, of course, was Rabbit himself, but Otter did not know it. "Did you see Rabbit?" he asked. The big gentleman appeared not to hear him. The second time he asked, the big gentleman said, "Sek, sek, sek, abelī'gēmūtc."¹ This was supposed to be English he was speaking, and to mean "Never saw Rabbit;" but Otter looked hard at him, and noticed his feet, which were those of Rabbit. So Otter suspected that this was the person he was seeking. Then the big gentleman gave Otter some bread and wine, and Otter started on after Rabbit again. This was the second time he had been tricked, and he soon turned about and hurried back to the house. When he came to the place, the house was not there. Otter could see the tracks where Rabbit had started running away. "He won't trick me again, that's his last time!" declared Otter. So Rabbit started off, and soon came to the head of a bay where there was a little island so small that a person could almost jump over it. Rabbit jumped on to the island, and wished it to become a big man-of-war. When Otter came out to the shore, he saw the big ship anchored there, and the big gentleman in a white suit walking on deck. Otter cried, "You can't trick me now! You're the man!" Then Otter swam out toward the ship, to board it and kill Rabbit; but the big gentleman said to his sailors, "Shoot him! He's worth a lot of money over in France."

BADGER DISGUISES HIMSELF AS A WOMAN, MEETS WITH HERON, AND IS
KILLED BY A GIANT BIRD.

Badger lived with his younger brother in a big wigwam. He was a nice and quiet fellow. The wigwam had two doors, one of which was Badger's. He never used any other door in going in or out, lest he lose his good luck. He was very careful to preserve his good luck. One morning when he went out, he saw an ill-omened creature (elēmu-dj'tckwetc); and that spoiled his luck, as the creature was a kind of

¹ *Sek* has no meaning; *abelī'gēmūtc* signifies "rabbit."

witch. So Badger left his home, saying downheartedly, "I won't have any good luck any more." As he went on, he soon got to another village. He transformed himself into a young girl, and entered a small camp, dressed as a woman. This was where Marten and his grandmother lived. As soon as Badger in the guise of a strange girl came in, Marten went and told the chief that a strange young girl had come to his camp. The chief had a young son who was of an age to get married, so he thought he would marry this strange girl to his son. Then he went and proposed to her for his son. "Yes," she answered, "I will marry him." Soon they were married, and after a while the chief's son went away hunting in the woods. Then Badger went to the chief, her father-in-law, and told him it was the custom in her country for the wife to live in her father-in-law's wigwam and sleep with her sisters-in-law while her husband was away. So Badger slept with the chief's daughters.

Now, after a while it was expected that the chief's son's wife would bear him a child, as it grew time, and everybody was waiting for it. So Badger got an unborn caribou and fixed it up to appear that a child had been born. Everybody was glad that the chief would have a grandson. So Badger told them that in her country they always had a separate camp built for a woman having a child, and obeyed everything that she asked. Said she, "In my country the child of a chief is never seen by any one until after they have made a big feast and dance." So whatever she said was all carried out, and a big feast was made. Then Badger covered up the young caribou so that no one should see it before the feast. The first to see it would be the father. Then they brought the child over to the feast to be shown. Old man Big-Turtle, a shaman, was there, and knew that it was not the right kind of a baby; so he said to himself, "To-morrow I'll have that caribou for myself to eat." He was a shaman. Now, when they took the child from the little camp over to the big feast, Badger ran away. When the baby was uncovered, it was found to be nothing but a young caribou all dried up. The people could not imagine who the mother was, or where she had come from. Then old Big-Turtle told them, "It was Badger!"

As Badger fled, he soon came, at about sunset, to where three girls were up in a tree. When they saw him coming, they said, "There is Badger!" because he had returned to his proper shape. Then they took their hair-ribbons off and tied them on limbs as tightly as they could. Badger was very glad to find the girls, and called to them to come down and make camp for the night for him. "Very well," they said, "we'll build camp; but you go up the tree and get our hair-ribbons, but don't break them, and we'll build camp." When he went up the tree, they went off a little distance, saying that they were

going for some wood and boughs for the camp. When the girls got a short distance away, they ran off. Soon they reached a little brook, and saw Heron standing on the shore. The girls asked him if he would let them cross over on his neck. Heron allowed them to cross, and they hurried on. After a while Badger came along; and when he saw the old Heron, he said, "Hurry up! take me over, stretch your neck!" Then Heron let him start across on his neck; but when he was midway, he turned his neck over and let Badger fall into the river. Badger did not escape until he was carried way down river; and when he did, he met two boys. These boys were Sea-Gulls. He asked them where they camped. They told him. "Who's home?" he asked. "Grandmother," they answered. So Badger went to their camp and saw the old woman. He addressed her as "mother;" but she answered, "Badger is not my son, I never had Badger for a son." Badger replied, "My name is not Badger, it is Wearing-a-Diaper (Ēdona'bes)." — "No," said the old woman, "you are not my son." — "But I am," said Badger; "I can tell you what kind of a day I was born on, in sleet weather I was born" (mê'daγanâskup ê'nawī'a'neq). She counted all her sons, and said, "No, none was born then. You are Badger all right." The old woman had a big pot in which she was about to cook meat. Whenever she wanted any grease for food, she pulled out one of her hairs and put it into the pot. This would make two or three inches of grease in the pot. Then Badger was angry with her for denying him, so he took his tomahawk and cut her head off and put it in the pot. The two little boys saw him do it. This old woman was mother of the birds. After Badger ran away, Crow, one of the old woman's other sons, came home, and saw their mother's head in the pot. "Who did it?" he asked. "Badger," the little boys answered. "Which way did he take?" And they told him. Then Crow pursued Badger; and when he caught up with him, he could only snatch off his cap, as he was not strong enough to do more. When Crow took his hat away, Badger cried, "Oh, I'm so glad! My hat was so warm, I'm glad you pulled it off! I'm very glad!" So Crow had to give up. But next came Eagle, another brother, who caught up with Badger; and he tore off Badger's coat, as he was bigger and stronger than Crow. "I'm so glad!" said Badger, "my coat was so warm and heavy!" Next came a giant bird (*kellu'*), strong and big. He lifted Badger right up. "Well, I'm glad, because I'm very tired. Lift me up as high as you can." Badger knew he was going to be killed. When they were very far up, Badger began singing, "The whole earth looks as smooth and soft as the boughs on the floor of a camp." But the giant bird took him over a ledge of rocks where he dropped caribou to kill them, and let Badger drop. When Badger had fallen about halfway, he said to himself, "Just let the backbone be

left." So he fell, and was all broken to pieces, — all but his backbone, — and the backbone is there yet, I guess.

WHY THERE ARE NO PORCUPINES OR SKUNKS ON CAPE BRETON.

During the war between the English and the French in Canada, the English soldiers at Louisbourg, Cape Breton, captured a French priest. They tortured him by putting him naked into a pen with porcupines and skunks, to kill him by their quills and the odor. Then he said that never again would skunks or porcupines live on the island, and now to-day there are none here. Even if they are brought to the island, they die when they eat the things that grow here, on account of the curse.¹

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¹ Not only are skunks and porcupines absent on Cape Breton, but red deer and raccoons seem likewise lacking.