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TWO BILOXI TALES.<sup>1</sup>

DURING January and February of this year, I was in the central part of Louisiana, where I found the survivors of the Biloxi tribe. These Indians belong to the Siouan linguistic family, their language being closely related to those of the Tutelo of Canada, the Hidatsa of North Dakota, and the Kwapa of Indian Territory. In order to record any of the texts in the original Biloxi, it was necessary to have present not only the aged woman who told the myths to the others, but also her daughter and son-in-law, as only the last could be induced to dictate the myths sentence by sentence and in an audible voice, the others prompting him from time to time.

The first myth which I shall present is one entitled "The Rabbit and the Frenchman."

The Rabbit and the Frenchman were two friends. The Rabbit aided the Frenchman, agreeing to work a piece of land on shares. The first season they planted potatoes. The Rabbit, having been told to select his share of the crop, chose the potato vines, and devoured them all. The next season they planted corn. This year the Rabbit said, "I will eat the roots." So he pulled up all the corn by the roots, but he found nothing to satisfy his hunger. Then the Frenchman said, "Let us dig a well." But the Rabbit did not wish to work any longer with his friend. Said he to the Frenchman, "If you wish to dig a well, I shall not help you." "Oho," said the Frenchman, "you shall not drink any of the water from the well." "That does not matter," replied the Rabbit, "I am accustomed to licking the dew from the ground." The Frenchman, suspecting mischief, made a tar baby, which he stood up close to the well. The Rabbit approached the well, carrying a long piece of cane and a tin bucket. On reaching the well he addressed the tar baby, who remained silent: "Friend, what is the matter? Are you angry?" said the Rabbit. Still the tar baby said nothing. So the Rabbit hit him with one fore paw, which stuck there. "Let me go or I will hit you on the other side," exclaimed the Rabbit. And when he found that the tar baby paid no attention to him, he hit him with his other fore paw, which stuck to the tar baby. "I will kick you," said the Rabbit. But when he kicked the tar baby, the hindfoot stuck. "I will kick you with the other foot," said the Rabbit. And when he did so, that foot, too, stuck to the tar baby. Then the Rabbit resembled a ball, because his feet were sticking to the tar baby, and he could neither stand nor recline.

Just at this time the Frenchman approached. He tied the legs of

<sup>1</sup> Read at the Annual Meeting, Cambridge, December 29, 1892.

the Rabbit together, laid him down and scolded him. Then the Rabbit pretended to be in great fear of a brier patch. "As you are in such fear of a brier patch," said the Frenchman, "I will throw you into one." "Oh, no," replied the Rabbit. "I will throw you into the brier patch," responded the Frenchman. "I am much afraid of it," said the Rabbit. "As you are in such dread of it," said the Frenchman, "I will throw you into it." So he seized the Rabbit, and threw him into the brier patch. The Rabbit fell at some distance from the Frenchman. But instead of being injured, he sprang up and ran off laughing at the trick which he had played on the Frenchman.

This tale resembles one told by the Omaha tribe of two persons who had been sent by Wakanda, a superhuman being, to instruct mankind. The first teacher, who resembled the Rabbit, chose the wrong parts of several kinds of vegetable products. The second teacher always got the right parts, though he gave his companion the first choice and never played any tricks on him. The second tale is that of "The Rabbit and the Grizzly Bear."

The Rabbit and the Grizzly Bear had been friends for some time. One day the Rabbit said to the Grizzly Bear, "Come and visit me. I dwell in a very large brier patch." Then he departed home. On his arrival he went out and gathered a quantity of young canes, which he hung up. Meanwhile the Grizzly Bear had reached the abode of the Rabbit, and was seeking the large brier patch; but the Rabbit really dwelt in a very small patch. When the Rabbit perceived that the Grizzly Bear was near, he began to make a pattering sound with his feet. This scared the Grizzly Bear, who retreated to a distance and then stopped and stood listening. As soon as the Rabbit noticed this he cried out, "Halloo! my friend, was it you whom I treated in that manner? Come and take a seat." So the Grizzly Bear complied with the Rabbit's request. The Rabbit gave the young canes to his guest, who soon swallowed them all, while the Rabbit himself ate but one, that is, the Rabbit minced now and then at one piece of cane while the Grizzly Bear swallowed all the others. "This is what I have always fancied," said the Grizzly Bear, as he was about to depart. Said he to the Rabbit, "Come and visit me. I dwell in a large bent tree." After his departure, the Rabbit started on his journey to the home of the Grizzly Bear. He spent some time in seeking the large bent tree, but all in vain, for the Grizzly Bear was then in a hollow tree, where he was growling. The Rabbit heard the growls and fled in terror, going some distance before he sat down. Then said the Grizzly Bear, "Halloo! my friend, was that you whom I treated in that manner? Come hither and sit down." So the Rabbit obeyed him. "You are now my guest," said

the Grizzly Bear, "but there is nothing here for you to eat." So the Grizzly Bear went in search of food. He went to gather young canes. As he went along he was eating the small black insects which stay in decayed logs. These are called "Bessie bugs" by the white people, and A-kí-di-sip'-si-wé-di by the Biloxi, from the noise ("Sp! sp!") which they make when they are disturbed. After a long absence he returned to his lodge with a few young canes, which he threw down before the Rabbit. Then he walked in a circle around the Rabbit. In a little while the Grizzly Bear said "Oh!" and turned back toward the Rabbit, before whom he vomited up the black insects which he had devoured. "Swallow these," said he to the Rabbit. "I have never eaten such food," replied his guest. This offended the Grizzly Bear, who said, "When you entertained me, I ate all the food which you gave me, as I liked it very well; but now when I give you food, why do you treat me thus? Before the sun sets, I will kill you and lay down your body." As he spoke thus the Rabbit's heart was beating rapidly from terror, for the Grizzly Bear stood at the entrance of the hollow tree in order to prevent the Rabbit's escape. But the Rabbit, who was very active, managed to dodge, and thus he got out of the hollow tree. He ran at once to the brier patch and took his seat, being very angry with the Grizzly Bear. Then he shouted to the Grizzly Bear, "When they are hunting for you, I will go towards your place of concealment." For that reason it has come to pass ever since that day that, when dogs are hunting a rabbit, they find a grizzly bear, which is shot by the hunter.

*J. Owen Dorsey.*