

One very remarkable character reported in our legends, dimly seen through the mist of untold centuries, is Kwi-wi-sens Nenaw-bo-zhoo, meaning, in Algonquin dialect, "The greatest clown-boy in the world." When he became a man, he was not only a great prophet among his people, but a giant of such marvellous strength, that he could wield his war-club with force enough to shatter in pieces the largest pine-tree. His hunting-dog was a monstrous black wolf, as large as a full-grown buffalo, with long, soft hair, and eyes that shone in the night like the moon. The deity of the sea saw the charming beauty of this wolf-dog, and was so extremely jealous of him, that he was determined to take his life.

So he appeared before him in the form of a deer; and as the dog rushed to seize him, he was grasped by the deity and drowned in the depths of the sea. He then made a great barbecue and invited as his guests whales, serpents, and all the monsters of the deep, that they might exult and rejoice with him that he had slain the dog of the prophet. When the seer-clown learned of the fate of his noble dog, through cunning Waw-goosh (the fox), whose keen eyes saw the deception that cost the wolf-dog his life, he sought to take revenge upon the sea-god. So he went at once to the place where the latter was accustomed to come on land with his monster servants to bathe in the sunshine, and there concealed himself among the tall rushes until the "caravan of the deep" came ashore.

When they had fallen fast asleep, he drew his giant bow, twice as long as he was tall, and shot a poisoned arrow that pierced Neben Manito, the water-god, through the heart. Neben Manito rolled into the sea, and cried, "Revenge! Revenge!" Then all the assembled monsters of the deep rushed headlong after the slayer of their king. The prophet fled in consternation before the outraged creatures that hurled after him mountains of water, which swept down the forests like grass before the whirlwind. He continued to flee before the raging flood, but could find no dry land. In sore despair he then called upon the God of Heaven to save him, when there appeared before him a great canoe, in which were pairs of all kinds of land-beasts and birds, being rowed by a most beautiful maiden, who let down a rope and drew him up into the boat.

The flood raged on; but, though mountains of water were continually being hurled after the prophet, he was safe. When he had floated on the water many days, he ordered Aw-milk (the beaver) to dive down and, if he could reach the bottom, to bring up some earth. Down the latter plunged, but in a few minutes came floating to the surface lifeless. The prophet pulled him into the boat, blew into his mouth, and he became alive again. He then said to Waw-jashk (the musk-rat), "You are the best diver among all the animal creation. Go down to the bottom and bring me up some earth, out of which I will create a new world; for we cannot much longer live on the face of the deep."

Down plunged the musk-rat; but, like the beaver, he, too, soon came to the surface lifeless, and was drawn into the boat, whereupon the prophet blew into his mouth, and he became alive again. In his paw, however, was found a small quantity of earth, which the prophet rolled into a small ball, and tied to the neck of Ka-ke-gi (the raven), saying, "Go thou, and fly to and fro over the surface of the deep, that dry land may appear." The raven did so; the waters rolled away; the world resumed its former shape; and, in course of time, the maiden and prophet were united and repeopled the world.