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HISTORICAL SKETCHES.

NO. 17—CALEDONIA AND ITS FIRST BISHOP.

IN the year 1776 the celebrated explorer Captain Cook landed at Friendly Cove and took possession of the country known as British Columbia in the name of his sovereign. In 1792 Captain Vancouver explored the same region, and in the following year, Alexander Mackenzie, an active member of the North-West Fur Company, which afterwards amalgamated with the Hudson's Bay Company, pushed his way westward across the Rocky mountains and persevered in his journey until the waters of the Pacific brought it to an end.

In 1806 Mr. Simon Fraser, of the same company, established the first trading post in British Columbia, near to the noble river which ever since has borne his name. Indeed, these three names are intimately connected with this North-West region,—Vancouver Island and the Mackenzie and Fraser rivers. This country, so long unknown to European civilization was inhabited by numerous tribes of Indians, differing from one another by many marked characteristics.

In the Queen Charlotte Islands were found the Hydah Indians, and in the island of Vancouver a tribe entirely different from them, while on the main land there were the Alaskan tribes and the Tsimshians. These last, the Tsimshian Indians, are a tall manly race, numbering about 8,000, and reside chiefly in the region of Fort Simpson. They have among them, however, many degrading and horrible customs; but these are confined largely to their medicine men, who, some twenty-five years ago, were thus described by Captain Maine of the royal navy in his "Four Years in British Columbia and Vancouver Island":—

"Their initiation into the mysteries of their calling is one of the most disgusting ceremonies imaginable. At a certain season the Indian who is selected for the office retires into the woods for several days, and fasts, holding intercourse, it is supposed, with the spirits who are to teach him the healing art. He then suddenly reappears in the village, and, in a sort of religious frenzy, attacks the first person he meets and bites a piece out of his arm or shoulder. He will then rush at a dog, and tear him limb from limb, running about with

a leg or some part of the animal all bleeding in his hand, and tearing it with his teeth. This mad fit lasts some time, usually during the whole day of his reappearance. At its close he crawls into his tent, or falling down exhausted is carried there by those who are watching him. A series of ceremonials, observances, and long incantations follows, lasting for two or three days, and he then assumes the functions and privileges of his office."

In 1856, Captain J. C. Prevost, also of the royal navy, found that in addition to their native savagery, these Indians had been brought face to face with a new enemy in the "fire water" and other vices of miners who had been attracted to British Columbia by the hopes of finding gold, and represented to the Church Missionary Society in England that a wide and useful field for missionary labor lay here as yet untouched by Protestant effort. The result of this appeal was that Mr. Duncan, a young school master of England, was called upon to undertake this dangerous work. Single handed and alone he labored among these savage people until he succeeded in gathering a number of them together in a village of their own, a village well known by the name of Metlakatla. Here the Indians were taught to live the decent and industrious lives of civilization. They were



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