

*Notes on the Ethnology of British Columbia. By Dr. F. Boas.*

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NOTE.—The Indian words are spelled according to the system used by the Bureau of Ethnology: q is the German ch in Bach; c is the English sh.

In the following remarks I intend to give a brief summary of the results of my journey in British Columbia. The principal purpose of my researches was to study the distribution of the native tribes, their ethnological character, and their languages. I arrived in Victoria in September, 1886, and spent most of my time among the natives of the east coast of Vancouver island and of the mainland opposite; but in the course of my journeys I came in contact with several individuals of the Tlingit, Tsimpshian, and Bilqula tribes, and I studied particularly the language of the last, of which I had obtained a slight knowledge from a number of men who were brought by Captain A. Jacobsen to Berlin. Among the linguistic results of my journey the most interesting are the discovery of three unknown dialects of the Salish stock and the establishment of the fact that the Bilqula, who are of Salish lineage, must have lived at one time with other Salish tribes near the sea.

Though the culture of these tribes seems very uniform, closer inquiry shows that they may be divided into four groups—the northern one comprising the Tlingit, Haida, and Tsimpshian; the central comprising the Kwakiutl and Bilqula; the southern comprising the different tribes of the Coast Salish; and the tribes of the west coast of Vancouver island. All these tribes are divided into gentes; but, while among the northern tribes, the child belongs to the gens of the mother, among the southern ones it belongs to that of the father. The arts, industries, folk-lore, and other ethnological phenomena of these groups are also different, and the groups have evidently influenced one another.

I shall first show some of these differences by considering the folk-lore of a few of these tribes.

The principal legend of the Tlingit is the well-known raven myth. It is not necessary to dwell upon this myth, as it is known by the reports of many travelers. Vemianow, who lived for a long time among the Tlingit, considers the raven as their supreme deity. It appears from the myths which I collected that besides the raven the eagle is of great importance. One of the legends tells how the raven obtained the fresh water from a mighty chief called Kanuk. This Kanuk is identical with the eagle. Traces of the raven legend are found among all tribes as far south as Komoks. The Kwakiutl consider the raven the creator of the sun, moon, and stars.

The raven legend is not found among the Salish tribes; their supreme deity is the sun, who is called by the Skqómic the great wandering chief, and a great number of myths refer to him. Among the northern tribes of this group and among the Kwakiutl the identity of the sun and the deity is not