

for observing the effects of civilisation, however carefully carried out, upon the savage; and also, that at last I sufficiently gained the confidence of the Indians to obtain from them a knowledge of their religious opinions and practices—a point on which, I believe, some writers on savage life have been led into error. Their moral and intellectual characteristics have not been, as far as I can judge, to any important degree, moulded by surrounding conditions external to them as a nation—at least in modern days. If I am right in considering these social and moral feelings, religious notions, etc., as ancient national characteristics, the fact affords evidence that men can have remarkable usages, opinions, and beliefs—remarkable, whether or not peculiar or new, in savage life—such as the Aht natives on this coast exhibit, and yet be in a physical condition not much above that of brutes, without even idols, without metals; without domestic animals, and with no knowledge of agriculture; a condition, in fact, similar to the earliest and rudest state of mankind that can be conceived. Having made these general remarks, I will proceed with my more immediately personal narrative.

In August, 1860, I entered Nitinaht, or Barclay, Sound, on the outside coast of Vancouver Island, with two armed schooners, *Woodpecker* and *Meg Merrilies*, manned by about fifty men, who accompanied me for the purpose of taking possession of the district now called Alberni, from the Spanish navigator who first discovered the inlet at the head of the Sound. Having reached the entrance of this inlet, we sailed for twenty miles further up it, as up a natural canal, three quarters of a mile wide and very deep, bordered by rocky mountains which rose high on both sides, almost perpendicular from the water. The view as we advanced up this inlet from the sea was shut in behind and before us, making the prospect like that from a mountain lake.

Near a pretty point at one side of the bay, where there was a beach shaded by young trees, the summer encampment of a large tribe of natives was to be seen. Our arrival caused a stir, and we saw their flambeaux of gumsticks flickering among the trees during the night. The clattering of the cables of the ships was a noise hitherto unheard in that place, and one that might well be remembered by the people, for their land really passed into the unrelaxing English grip as our anchors sank to the bottom.

Sending for their chief in the morning, I explained to him, through an interpreter, that the tribe must move their encampment, as I had bought all the district from the Queen of England. He replied that he was willing to sell the land, so for the sake of peace we paid him what he asked, on condition that the whole village should be removed. He did not keep his engagement, and the Ahts seemed determined to attack us, but dread of our