

legs would there be in an ordinary crowd of Englishmen?' Imagine a sculptor and a critic questioned, like Mrs Todgers, in presence of a *sans-culotte* House of Commons! The complexion of the Aht people is a dull brown, no duller and no browner than that of the English people would be, if they were perpetually exposed to weather, and if they lived exclusively on oil, blubber, and fish. They swim well, are unrivalled as divers, and bathe every day in the sea, which, though the climate of Vancouver's Island is, on the whole, milder than that of England, is colder than on any part of the shores of Great Britain. The Ahts are much less dirty in their habits than many civilised people; it clashes with one's notions of wild people to find daily ablutions *de rigueur*, and to learn that the women wash themselves, and arrange their hair, after their day's work, like our own housemaids, only more thoroughly. The men wear blankets, since they have been introduced to them; a single garment of bear-skin was the primitive dress: the women wear a kind of shift in addition to the blanket. The head and feet are uncovered, except on canoe-journeys, when hats and capes made of grass are worn. The men are beardless and whiskerless, except at Nootka Sound, where some, supposed to have Spanish blood in them, have large moustaches and whiskers. They are a gentle race, and Mr Sproat observes: 'It is a characteristic of these natives that men sometimes saunter along holding each other's hand in a friendly way; a habit never to be observed in civilised life, except amongst boys, or sailors when intoxicated.'

The natives wear their hair, which is a dark, dull brown, long, and either tied in a bunch on the crown, or hanging loosely under wreaths of grass or feathered bird-skin. The women are careful of their hair, and have little boxes in which they keep combs and looking-glasses. The men are singularly disdainful of ornaments, and such toys as readily tempt the negro, have no charms for the sober-minded Ahts. The women are more like their sex everywhere; they are seldom seen without rings, bracelets, and anklets of beads and brass; their blankets are beautifully ornamented with beads; and a brilliant bit of cockle-shell, or horse-shoe-shaped piece of brass, often adorns their well-formed noses. The teeth of the natives are regular, but stumpy, and deficient in enamel, in consequence of the large seasoning of sand to the dried salmon to which they are accustomed. Tattooing is not practised among the Ahts, and the head-flattening process has fallen much into disuse. 'The traveller,' says Mr Sproat, 'leaves on this side of Cape Scott a people with fine broad, though slightly flattened, foreheads, and heads well set on, and soon finds himself on the north side of the cape, among the Quoquotth nation, a people with disfigured heads, and who speak a different language. The sudden change from vigour to decrepitude, from maturity to age, in these people is very remarkable. As in some climes there is no perceptible twilight, so in their lives there is no intermediate stage in their existence between full manhood and the first steps into age.'

The Ahts have extraordinary strength in their hands, and are fleet of foot, and their skill in managing their canoes cannot be surpassed; but Mr Sproat has seen a crew of Indians beaten by a trained crew of white men in a long canoe-race on the sea. Their method of encampment is very curious and interesting. Their movements follow

those of the salmon, which forms their chief sustenance. Following the lordly fish as they swim up the rivers and inlets, the natives place their summer encampments at some distance from the seaboard, towards which they return for the winter season, about the end of October, with a stock of dried fish. By this arrangement, being near the sea-shore, they can get shell-fish if their supply of salmon runs short, and can also catch the first fish that approach the shore in the early spring. When the purveying-work is done at each place, the camp is broken up, and the putrid heaps of refuse are left to the scavenger services of the elements and the birds. The following description of the method of removing from an encampment makes one regard these wild tribes with wondering admiration. 'Two large canoes are placed about six feet apart, and connected by planks—the sides and roofs of the houses laid transversely upon each other, so as to form a wide deck the whole length of the canoe, space enough for one man being reserved at the bow and stern. On this deck are baskets full of preparations of salmon-roe, dried salmon, and other fish, together with wooden boxes, containing blankets and household articles. The women and children sit in a small space purposely left for them. Each canoe is managed by two men, who, with the women and children, raise a cheery song as they float down the stream. The principal men send slaves or others to prepare their quarters; and among the common people, it is understood beforehand who shall live together at the new encampment. A willing, handy poor man sometimes is invited to live for the winter with a richer family, for whom he works for a small remuneration.' The houses of the natives, at their camping-grounds, are large and strongly constructed, built of cedar-wood, 'far superior to the hovels of Connaught, or the mud-cabins in the west of Sutherland,' and very often beautifully situated; not that the natives have any sense of, or feeling for, the beauties of nature; in that respect, they are on a par with all other savages; but that the encampment is arranged with regard to the vicinity of firewood and water, and to getting the advantage of the frequently found fantastic masses of rock which keep off the wind. The picture of these rude houses is not unattractive. The tribes assemble like families, great respect being shown to the chiefs—for these people have the strictest notions on rank and precedence—and pass the winter evenings in gossiping and dancing. They are given to laughter and joking, and their quarrels are neither many nor virulent; the active form of them being confined to pulling one another's hair. The Ahts are excessively polite, and have an etiquette by which the receiving of guests and visitors, to whom they are most hospitable, is regulated. 'Compared with the manners of English rustics or mechanics,' says Mr Sproat, 'their manners are simple and rather dignified. In meeting out of doors, they have no gesture of salutation; in their houses, it consists of a polite motioning towards a couch.'

Great feasts take place in the winter, of which the whale-feasts are the favourite. An Indian who thinks anything of himself, never gets a deer or a seal, or even a quantity of flour, without inviting his friends to a feast; but the captor of a whale is an Amphitryon of note. The festivities are carried on with much form and dignity, and not only is a plentiful portion assigned to each guest, but the