

BISHOP DURIEU AND HIS WORK AMONG THE
INDIANS. (Reminiscences).—Continued.

Bishop Durieu was very particular in admitting the Indians to Holy Communion, especially at the beginning. He used to say to his Missionaries: if the first ones you admit to Holy Communion in an Indian camp are well prepared and models of piety, the others will follow in the same track, and will be fervent communicants, but if the first ones are allowed to go too easily to the Holy Sacrament, the other Indians will consider Holy Communion a matter of little importance.

The Indians, if not properly prepared, will look upon Holy Communion as a mark of distinction which places them above the others. This recalls something that occurred to one of the first Missionaries on the Pacific Coast. An old Indian woman often supplicated the priest to allow her to make her first Communion. "You see," she would say, "I am old, and sickly, and I am in danger of dying before you return. Oh! give me that wonderful medicine that makes the heart strong." The priest, believing in her sincerity, after instructing her as well as he could, allowed her to make her first Communion. When he returned a few months later, he found that she had returned to some pagan-like practices to which all the Missionaries always objected. He remonstrated with her, when she said to him: "Your medicine is worthless; it is not sweet nor bitter, it has no taste."

The Indians prepared by Bishop Durieu were imbued with the feeling of the Real Presence, which cannot be better demonstrated than by the following anecdote:

Father Durieu, before he was appointed bishop, was visiting one of the numerous camps of his district. A young girl, only ten or eleven years old, had asked to be admitted to her first Communion, and the Father readily took her

name. At the next visit of the priest, she came forward again, and being examined, was found to know all the prayers and catechism that were required; she had been, besides very faithful to make daily visits to the Blessed Sacrament, and nothing could be found against her since she first had asked to be admitted to prepare for her first Communion. She had always been very obedient to her parents, never overslept herself so as to be too late at morning prayer. She never missed being present at catechism or other exercises of the Indians in the absence of a priest. Yet the Father hesitated. She was so young, and he was afraid she had not sufficient discernment, so he decided to make her wait some time yet, until she would be old enough. The little girl cried, but had to submit. One or two days later, Father Durieu, passing before the Chapel after dinner, entered to make his adoration. The little girl was in the Church, and prayed aloud, unsuspecting that she was being overheard. She said: "O Jesus, Son of God, incline the heart of the priest to give me Holy Communion. The priest thinks that I am too young. But I know Thee; Thou art the Son of God, Our Saviour. Thou wast born at Bethlehem. The Blessed Virgin Mary is Thy mother, Thou didst live at Nazareth, and died on the Cross. Thou art now present in the Holy Eucharist. . . ." At the meeting of the Indians the following day, the Father called up the little girl, and asked her how many times a day she had been to visit the Blessed Sacrament. She had made six or eight visits every day. Then the Father asked her what she said to Our Lord, and she repeated what he had overheard her saying in the Church. Father Durieu was then satisfied, and admitted the child to Holy Communion.