

gate, with a population of 250, and Massett, with 370—620 all told !

Striking as these figures are, much more impressive is a trip along the coasts of these once populous islands. All along we see remains of old deserted villages, while here and there are groves of totem poles, indicating the sites of larger central towns. We may yet follow the direction of the streets, and in a few places some of the substantial old houses are standing almost intact. Entering, we still see in charred bits of wood and burnt stones traces of the central fire which once warmed the home. But all about the walls are piled up old mortuary boxes containing all that remains of those who once filled it with life. An irresistibly depressing sense of desolation comes over us as we wander through the silent town, till the fuller significance of the scene breaks upon the mind, and we realize our own awful responsibility for these things. For of all the causes we will notice for this almost annihilation of a race, war and murder, epidemics of small-pox, and the evil results of contact with our own race, the latter was by far the most potent.

Wars.

The Haidas were always a war-like race, boasting of valour and indifference to pain. From the earlier bone or shell-tipped arrows and spears they protected themselves by complete suits of armour, made from the dried pelts of the thick-skinned sea-lion; but from the later musket-bullet they could get no such protection.

After the introduction of firearms among them, the Haidas became the terror of the nations far and near. The wide seas were their highway. Steel-edged tools, at first in the forms procured from civilization, and later remodelled to

shapes adapted to their own peculiar uses, gave these clever people facility in the manufacture of immense cedar canoes, forty, fifty, and even sixty feet long. With a fleet of these remarkably seaworthy craft, they sped over the stormy waters to the mainland on marauding expeditions, swooping unexpectedly on some town, murdering or carrying into slavery as many as possible, then fleeing again in their canoes over the wide waters where few dared follow. With their pre-eminence in sea-craft and daring, they became veritable vikings of the coast for hundreds of miles up the coast of Alaska, or even down the western shore of Vancouver Island.

In later years, the bloodthirsty nature thus cultivated brought about its own retribution in fierce inter-tribal wars, which decimated the race. Tribal distinctions came to be sharply marked. Inter-tribal laws of minute detail served as excuses to the powerful and rapacious, rather than as protection to the defenceless. Outlying settlements were driven to stronger central towns; and thus originated a feudal system producing the same evil effects on a smaller scale as that of mediaeval Europe. The sorcerers, by intimidation and trickery, backed by the chiefs, and the chiefs by absolute power of life and death freely exercised, reduced the common people to a condition of abject submission but little above slavery. Life became fearfully cheap. In regard to murder, retaliation by the next of kin was the only law. Nor was there any nice distinction made between the murderer and any of his relatives, who might come in the way of the avenger of blood. Under such conditions, we may imagine something of the fearful consequences when, at their frequent great gatherings for feasting or "pot-