

## Family Life of the Haidas, Queen Charlotte Islands.

By Rev. C. HARRISON.

THE Haidas seem to be related from the lowest in rank to the supreme chief of the nation. Slaves, who were in thralldom until quite recently, do not rank. They were formerly bought and sold like dogs, but within the past fifteen years the missionaries have succeeded in inducing the Indians to free their slaves. Before the advent of the missionaries, a Haida chief had one or more wives, together with female slaves for concubines. The children of free born wives were alone reckoned as his, and the children of the slaves were sold or retained in slavery as he desired. The members of one crest cannot marry with others of the same crest; for instance, a bear cannot marry a bear, but must marry a whale or an eagle.

## THE CAMP OR RANCHERIE.

The houses of the old Haidas are objects of intense interest to visitors. These structures are rectangular 70 x 60 feet, and are built with cedar hewn to the proper proportions with stone adzes or axes, having been erected before iron implements were known to the Haidas. The rafters are immense pieces of timber running the full length of the building, and hewn flat on the inside. The chopped surface is so level that a person would believe at a casual glance that the timber had been sawn. Some of the houses are built over pits, between which and the walls there is a space ten feet wide. The pits are about ten feet deep, and are entered by two steps, each five feet high, which is an evidence of the exaggerated notion Indians generally have of themselves. The pits serve as a protection from dampness, from smoke, and from sudden attacks of enemies.

## THE CAMP FIRE.

In the centre of the pit is the camp fire. During the winter months they always keep a good fire burning both day and night. I have seen as much as two cords of cedar piled up at one time. Around this fire the Indians sleep, and the children play. It is also their cooking department, and there all the food is made ready. There the Indians tell of olden times, and there it is where the family discussions and conversations are held. Around this structure the ladies and gentlemen of the Haida nation dress and make their toilets, and all the duties performed in the white man's bedchamber were there discharged in the palmy days of old. They also eat their food around the camp fire. The old Indians do not need tables, and chairs are also dispensed with. A few good sized kettles are placed on the ground near the fire, and the family squat on the ground around them. One contains boiled