

CHAPTER XL.

EVOLUTION OF THE SONGHEES.

I OFTEN pass through the Songhees Reserve, and the recent controversy respecting the reserve, and the dilapidated state of the former homes of the Indians, induce me to recall the reserve as I knew it first, when it was swarming with "flatheads," men, women and children. The term "flathead" was applied to the Songhees on account of the shape of his head, which was pressed flat with a piece of board strapped to his forehead while he was in a state of infancy.

In this state of bondage, if I may so term it, the "tenass man" (infant) passed his infancy. He was fed, took his sleep, and carried on his mother's back by a strap passing around his mother's forehead; thus he got his fresh air and exercise.

The mother, in fact all the females, chewed gum. I have always credited our American cousins with having originated this beastly practice, but now I suppose the credit for the discovery belongs to the Songhees, who must have taught our friends, and then gave it up themselves. Groups of men may have been seen carving miniature canoes with carved Indians paddling in them, also totem poles and bows and arrows, while three or four Indians would be at work shaping a full-grown canoe which might possibly hold half a dozen Indians. It was very interesting watching them at work and many an hour I have spent watching them when a boy.