

III.—*The Origin of the Haidahs of the Queen Charlotte Islands.*

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While the society is celebrating the landfall of the illustrious John Cabot upon the eastern shore of our Dominion four hundred years ago, I have thought it not inappropriate to chronicle a possibly more ancient and more adventurous voyage that has left a permanent impression upon the islands of the far west. This voyage was undertaken at some remote period by the ancestors of those natives of the Queen Charlotte and adjoining islands now known as Haidahs. My attention was first called to these Indians by Mr. Francis Poole's book on the Queen Charlotte Islands, published in 1872; for the "Voyages of Captain Meares," published in 1791, give no definite information concerning them. Vocabularies of their language were edited by Gallatin and Scouler in the *Archæologia Americana* and the *Journal of the Geographical Society of London*, and to these was added, in 1877, the collection of Mr. George Gibbs in the first volume of the *Contributions to American Ethnology*, published by the United States Geographical and Geological Survey. In 1880, making use of this scanty material, I instituted a comparison of the Haidah dialects with those of the Malay-Polynesian family, which appears as an appendix to a paper on the "Origin of the Aborigines of Canada" in the *Transactions of the Literary and Historical Society of Quebec* of the following year. About the time that paper was read, I was favoured by Dr. George M. Dawson with a copy of his elaborate report on the Queen Charlotte Islands, which contains seventy large octavo pages on the Haidahs, and twelve of specimens of their language. This volume was supplemented in 1884 by "Comparative Vocabularies of the Indian Tribes of British Columbia," by Dr. W. F. Tolmie and Dr. George M. Dawson, which devotes 26 of its 127 pages to the Haidahs. Finally, in the *Transactions of this Society* for 1895, appears that great desideratum, a Haidah Grammar, from the pen of the Rev. C. Harrison, and edited by Dr. A. T. Chamberlain.

A mere glance at the grammar sufficed to show that the Haidahs could not possibly be ranked as a people of Malay-Polynesian origin, in spite of the resemblance of the vocabularies. The Haidah is a postpositional, and the Malay-Polynesian are prepositional languages. Nevertheless, of all the northern Asiatic tongues, Japo Siberian, Mongol, Tungusic, etc., there is not one that exhibits any affinity to the Haidah vocabulary, although their grammatical structure is more or less accordant. But, scattered through the Malay-Polynesian area, and cropping up more widely in Borneo, New Guinea, Australasia, the New Hebrides and the