

BOYS AND GIRLS

Lo, the Rich Indian.

New Metlakahtla, Alaska.

(Olive McGregor, in the 'Christian Endeavor World'.)

The passengers on the Alaska steamer 'Queen' were awakened early one morning last summer by the stopping of the machinery. Then, as our royal vessel slowly turned, we noticed that it was headed toward an island, upon which all that could be distinguished in the early dawn was a great white cathedral building.

But as the gangplank was thrown out on the new Metlakahtla pier, at four o'clock on this bright July morning, a score of Endeavorers were ready to land. The village was wrapped in slumber, save an Indian boy who vigorously rang a bell on the wharf to announce the arrival of the steamer. Stepping from the pier on to the smooth plank sidewalk, which stretches in unbroken lines along four miles of the village streets, we aimed first to visit the great white church.

The air was cool and clear, the village silent, and streets deserted; so that the pervading atmosphere of peace, comfort, and sweet cleanliness, all three so foreign to heathen Indian villages, was felt by all.

Disappointed, though not surprised, at finding the church locked, we enjoyed viewing the imposing exterior with its two square towers; also other buildings near by; the schoolhouse built in the shape of a cross; the octagonal Council House with its roof of eight gables diverging from a small cupola in the centre; and the large new circular building that was being erected for Mr. Duncan, his assistants, and guests.

As the villagers were not yet awakened, the beach presented the next attraction. On the way we stopped to look at the fire-engine house, with its alarm bell on top, and within it the hose-reel and hand-pump. Each cottage is supplied with its own permanent ladders, reaching in sections from the ground to the highest part of the roof. A nearly completed system of village water-works supplies the water. As the town suffered greatly from fire several years ago, every precaution is now taken to avoid another such disaster.

Each citizen pays a tax of three dollars a year for town improvements, keeping up the sidewalks, etc. Before the beginning of 1898, electricity furnished all the light for the village.

Just ten years ago every foot of the ground now occupied by these hundreds of pretty cottages, the homes of one thousand Christian Indians, was a dense forest, untouched by man's hand. Now, through the unaided efforts of these Indians, every tree, and even every stump, has been removed. The absence of huge, decaying stumps is an unusual thing in an Alaskan town. Here you do not see the barn-like 'communal houses' of the 'rancheries' or Indian villages, of Sitka and Juneau, but well-painted houses, with fancy gabled roofs, pretty bow windows, and neat front piazzas; each house the home of one family, not of ten or fifteen families, the usual number in the 'communal' houses of heathen Indians.

As each property-holder wished a corner lot, Mr. Duncan wisely laid out the town with four lots to each block, each cottage

surrounded with a well-tilled garden and enclosed by a picket fence. Strawberry beds, ingeniously covered with an old fish-net to keep out greedy crows, made attractive many of the front yards.

The beach in front of an Indian village in Alaska is an extremely repellent place, because of foul odors and disgusting sights; but a more attractive spot could not be found than the clean sand beach of New Metlakahtla. No herd of fierce lean dogs feeding on odoriferous dead fish; no litter of decaying wood and filth of all kinds, usually surrounding an Indian village, could be found here, but instead a clean stretch of sand and scores of well-painted boats.

Strolling back to the pier, we were gladdened by a sight of one who may reverent-



REV. WILLIAM DUNCAN.

From a 'snap-shot' taken of him by one of the travellers mentioned in the article.

ly and truly be called the 'patron saint' of this village and people, Mr. William Duncan, looking hearty and strong in spite of his sixty years. He is little more than five feet tall, rather fleshy, with a ruddy complexion; kindly, shrewd, and often twinkling blue eyes; firm mouth, and chin covered with a sandy grey beard.

He stood, surrounded by an eager questioning crowd, rapidly recounting the story of his forty years of earnest Christian work, God's blessing, and the wonderful result among these dusky people of the forest.

Pointing to a building near, one young lady asked, 'What is that little building for?'

'That,' said Mr. Duncan, 'is our jail'; and with a twinkle in his eye he added: 'We use it only to punish naughty boys. Sometimes a boy is too unruly to be easily governed by his parents, and is brought to me. I lock him up in that little room for half an hour, and he is subdued and repentant when he comes out. We have no need of a jail here. There has not been a crime committed during the ten years we have been on this island.'

This is easily explained by the fact that not a drop of alcoholic liquor is to be

found on the island, or is allowed to be brought there, and gambling is unheard of.

All who wish to become citizens of New Metlakahtla must sign, and agree to comply with, the following rules, or what is called the 'Declaration of Residents':—

We, the people of Metlakahtla, Alaska, in order to secure to ourselves and our posterity the blessings of a Christian home, do severally subscribe to the following rules for the regulation of our conduct.

1. To reverence the Sabbath, and to refrain from all unnecessary work on that day; to attend divine worship; to take the Bible for our rule of faith; to regard all true Christians as our brethren; and to be truthful, honest, and industrious.

2. To be faithful and loyal to the government and laws of the United States.

3. To render our votes when called upon for the election of the Town Council, and promptly to obey the By-laws and orders imposed by the said Council.

4. To attend to the education of our children, and keep them at school as regularly as possible.

5. To abstain totally from all intoxicants and gambling, and never to attend heathen festivities, or countenance heathen customs in the surrounding villages.

6. To carry out strictly all sanitary regulations necessary to the health of our town.

7. To identify ourselves with the progress of the settlement, and to utilize the land we hold.

8. Never to alienate—give away or sell—our land or building-lots, or any portion thereof, to any person or persons who have not subscribed to these rules.

Signed _____ Witnessed _____
Date _____

A large sawmill, wholly under the control of Indians, furnishes employment for a number of men, while a larger number of both men and women are employed in the salmon-cannery. This, also operated entirely by Indians, turns out twenty-five thousand cans of salmon a day. Besides making tin cans and packing-cases for their own use, they make them to sell to other factories operated by white people in other places. Every part of this building is scrupulously clean, and shows evidence of good management. On the mountain slopes of Annette Islands are said to be hidden vast quantities of valuable mineral ores not yet disturbed.

A scrap of the conversation held between myself and a grave, courteous elderly Indian on the wharf will serve to show the spirit of the people and their simple faith.

I asked, 'Was it not very hard for you to leave your homes in "Old Metlakahtla" —ten years ago, and come here to begin all over again in this wilderness?'

His face expressed wonder, surprise, and slight indignation as he replied: 'We love God; we cannot quarrel. If we stayed there, we must quarrel with the authorities.'

'We love God; we cannot quarrel,' he repeated.

Then I asked, 'How many of the people in the village are members of the church?'

He answered: 'All who are old enough. Yes, all our people belong to the church and love Jesus.'

Such simple purity of Christian faith