

Hudson's Bay blankets and shirts are the usual articles of native attire, and they adorn themselves with nose-rings, ear-rings and fantastic head-dresses of wampum. They have not yet come within the influence of Protestant or Roman Catholic Missions and adhere pertinaciously to the old Indian superstitions and customs, maintaining, as regards their religious and other ceremonies, a jealous secrecy which defies the scrutiny of the white man. The language is the most guttural and difficult on the Coast.

In moral character the Bella Coolas are degraded specimens of the red Indian. Prostitution, polygamy, and other worse vices at which civilized men shudder are of frequent occurrence amongst them. Thieving is an art that all attain to perfection, and, in intercourse with them, I had unpleasant opportunities of becoming acquainted with the incredulity, falsehood and avarice which form prominent traits of their character. Sir Alexander Mackenzie christened Ko-om-ko-otz "Rascals' Village," and I willingly contribute my testimony to the justice of the title.

To their immoral habits of life, and partly also to wars with the Hydahs, the bloodhounds of the northwest coast, may be attributed the gradually progressing extinction of the race, clear evidence of which is afforded by the sight, at different points further up the river, of the ruins of deserted lodges, once the habitations of large families of Indians that have gradually dwindled away by death until the few survivors have incorporated themselves with the larger bands.

Smallpox has this year contributed a sad quota of death. During my stay there this disease, which had only just broken out when I arrived, spread so rapidly that, in a week, nearly all the healthy had scattered from the lodges and gone to encamp, by families in the woods, only, it is to be feared, to carry away the seeds of infection and death in the blankets and other