



MASS-ET.

METLAKAHITLA.

whose soul he had caught, and he at once announced to the soulless body what he had done. He was immediately sent for in case of illness, and upon his arrival he seated the sick man or woman upon a mat and began his incantations, shaking his rattle. When he had re-deposited the captured soul in the head of its owner, he was well paid for his services.

More serious illness, the Indians thought, might be the result of the spite of evil-disposed persons. They said that some individuals had the supernatural power of conveying a poisonous substance into the body—in fact, they simply believed in witchcraft. It was therefore dangerous to give medicine, food or drink to an Indian, lest a subsequent sickness or other calamity should be attributed to it, and the benefactor pay for his kindness with his life.

The power of the medicine-men over their deluded followers was absolute and despotic, and was constantly exercised for their own aggrandizement and profit. Mr. Duncan relates the following inci-

dent to illustrate this: During one of his journeys he visited a distant tribe and preached to them. Great interest was manifested in his teaching, and the medicine-men were alarmed lest their power and authority should be destroyed. The next morning Mr. Duncan was called to witness a strange scene. Out upon the beach was a row of Indians vomiting as though

they would throw out their internal organs.

Mr. Duncan inquired of some of his Indian friends as to the cause of this epidemic sickness, and was told that the medicine-men had reasserted their authority and had assured their dupes that some great sickness or other calamity would certainly come upon them as a result of listening to Mr. Duncan's words, and that the only way of escape would be by vomiting out what they had absorbed. So the greater part of the tribe had taken an emetic and gone out upon the beach to spew the missionary's words out of their mouths.

The wild Indians of the Northwest had some beliefs that paved the way for the reception of Christianity. In their legends they made frequent mention of the "Son of God," and he was always spoken of as a benefactor. They had also many remarkable legends about Satan, and his name in their language means "The Father of Liars." They believed him to be an avaricious being, always prowling around seeking some-