

II.—*Notes on the Cosmogony and History of the Squamish Indians of British Columbia.*

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The following notes on the cosmogony and history of the Squamish Indians of British Columbia, a sept of the great Salishan stock, were gathered by myself from an aged Indian of that sept some time last summer. Through the kindness of the Roman Catholic bishop of the district, Bishop Durieu, I received a cordial reception at the hands of the chief men of the tribe, and on learning what I wanted they brought out of his retirement the old historian of the tribe. He was a decrepit creature, stone-blind from old age, whose existence till then had been unknown to the good bishop, who himself has this tribe in charge. I am disposed, therefore, to think that this account has not been put into English before. I first sought to learn his age, but this he could only approximately give by informing me that his mother was a girl on the verge of womanhood when Vancouver sailed up Howe Sound at the close of last century. He would, therefore, be about 100 years old. His native name, as near as I could get it, is "Mul'ks." He could not understand any English, and as his archaic Squamish was beyond my poor knowledge of the language, it was necessary to have resort to the tribal interpreter. The account will, in consequence, be less full and literal. Before the old man could begin his recital, some preparations were deemed necessary by the other elderly men of the tribe. These consisted in making a bundle of short sticks, each about six inches long. These played the part of tallies, each stick representing to the reciter a particular paragraph or chapter in his story. They apologized for making these, and were at pains to explain to me that these were to them what books were to the white man. These sticks were now placed at intervals along a table round which we sat, and after some animated discussion between the interpreter, who acted as master of the ceremonies, and the other old men as to the relative order and names of the tallies, we were ready to begin. The first tally was placed in the old man's hands and he began his recital in a loud, high-pitched key, as if he were addressing a large audience in the open air. He went on without pause for about ten minutes, and then the interpreter took up the story. The story was either beyond the interpreter's power to render into English, or there was much in it he did not like to relate to a white man, for I did not unfortunately get a fifth of what the old man had uttered from him, and it was only by dint of questioning and cross-questioning that I was