

condition. The mission Indians learned English, were taught trades, and were trained to habits of regular industry. They were employed in preference to others in canneries, on fishing-boats, and as labourers in mines and on the steamer piers. Other Indians, seeing these advantages, promptly tried to imitate those connected with the missions. Comparatively few men now remain in the larger towns during the summer, for excellent wages are offered at many places; but in the long winter there is ample opportunity for the expenditure of wages earned during the summer. The clothing for the most part is like that of the Whites. The houses show a great improvement; instead of the low log houses barely eight feet high, one sees in the towns many good buildings, not of logs but weather-boarded, sometimes two or more stories in height and with bay windows to the top. Such a building was seen at Wrangel, with two great *totem* poles and an alligator in front; while almost the best house in Sitka is the new residence of "Dick the Dude," at the north end of Indiantown. Dick, who is a mission Indian, had held his "house-raising" only a few days before our arrival; the pot-latch, or feast, on that occasion is said to have cost him not less than five hundred dollars. The interior of the houses shows as great an advance as the exterior; instead of clay, one finds plank floors raised above the ground and in many instances provided with blankets or rugs. Not a few of the large houses have no chimney except the opening in the roof, which is usually provided with a movable cover. And these changed conditions exist beyond the immediate reach of missionary influence, largely because of the keen appreciation of comfort, for they are said to be equally marked at the canneries; but it must be remembered that the best workmen at the canneries are the mission Indians, and that the changes there are due to their example.

Thlinket women, whether Christian or heathen, whether they wear blankets or frocks, love dress and ornament. The uncivilized women paint their faces and pierce the lower lip for the hideous labret or *kolosh*. This ornament is seldom more than an inch long and its diameter is that of a large goose quill. The early navigators spoke of it as more than an inch in diameter; but that must be exceptional, for only small labrets were seen at towns where the steamer stopped. The taste exhibited in selection of dress-patterns is quite as startling as that sometimes displayed by white women. A shopkeeper at Juneau showed me a piece of brocaded silk which had been laid aside for a young "blanket" Indian, who wanted it for her Fourth of July dress. The material was too light in colour for hangings, too stiff for upholstering furniture, and hardly heavy enough for a grain bag; but its figures were large, well proportioned and artistic in general design. As a dress it would be a success for an Indian girl; it would fill all rivals with the bitterness of despair.

The future of Alaska is a problem. The seals of the North-west will soon be a thing of the past, like the *Rhytina* of the neighbouring waters; already the diminution apparent this year is bringing consternation to those whose interests depend on the catch; the prospect is that before many years have passed the skin of the fur-seal will bring prices as fabulous as those quoted for the skin of the practically extinct American bison. But the fish supply is incredible; at present it is utilised only at salmon

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