

12 CRUISE AMONG HAIDA AND TLINGIT VILLAGES.

On the following morning we crossed over to the old village of Kiooste, where there is much of interest; but the place is so overgrown with underbrush that it was only with the greatest difficulty that we could get from one house to another. Recrossing the strait to North Island and anchoring our boat to a piece of kelp, we explored the little egg-shaped rock of Gorgie Sethlingun Nah, or Gorgie's Coffin House. Gorgie was a famous Shaman of Kiooste, and when he died was laid to rest in a handsome little house on the summit of this island. By much hard work we were able to reach the top of the rock; but the house had tumbled into ruin, and two hats were all that remained to tell of the former glory of Gorgie:

Next day we explored the cave of Skungonah. Skungonah was a hermit who lived over a hundred years ago and dwelt here alone, living on raw fish and birds. But in after years the great cave became the burial ground of Kiooste.

We were now obliged to return to Masset for provisions. Leaving Masset at half past ten in the morning, we entered the harbor of Old Tongas at half past nine the same night, having made eighty miles in eleven hours.

We were now in the country of the Tlingits, and before us was Old Tongas—old because it was long since abandoned, and its inhabitants had formed another or New Tongas. Tongas is the southernmost of a chain of Tlingit villages which extends as far north as the Aleutian Islands. Like the Haidas, the Tlingits are slowly but surely disappearing, and the time must soon come when the race will be entirely extinct.

There is but little of interest to-day in Old Tongas except the totem poles and the old ruined houses. Totems with the Tlingits play the same important part in their civil and religious life that they do among the Haidas. Even the corner posts of their houses are carved into totemic designs. Comparing their totem poles and memorial columns with those which we saw in the Haida villages, it becomes apparent at once that the symbols are more boldly executed and the conventionalism less pronounced. The figures are not blended and combined as they are among the Haidas. We noticed also that the human figure is repeated over and over again, and is always portrayed with a boldness and fidelity that are worthy of the highest praise.

One of the unique features of Old Tongas, and one we saw nowhere else, was the ruin of a house which still retained its old front porch made up of heavy logs; while in front, leading up to the porch, was a pair of primitive steps hewn out of a solid log. In another place, almost entirely obscured by vegetation, we came upon a recent house grave surmounted by a cross, showing that the