

don's. Nothing could exceed the kindness and attention bestowed by Mr. and Mrs. Gordon, to whom Miss Dingman's relatives have expressed warm gratitude and appreciation. For about four years, up to a short time before Christmas, deceased had been a missionary in Liberia, west coast of Africa, under Bishop William Taylor. She was home on furlough, her health being poor, and spent some time during last winter with her brother's family in this city. She was an active, energetic woman, and rather than remain idle she began teaching an Indian school at Chippawa Hill, under the direction of the Missionary Society of the Methodist Church, and was meeting with admirable success, as was attested by the large turnout of Indian scholars and parents at her funeral.—*Stratford Herald*.

[Miss Dingman had been accepted by our Woman's Missionary Society, and it was expected that she would have gone out to British Columbia to take charge of the Crosby Home at Port Simpson, but she passed away before she received the notice of her appointment.]

Habitations of Cruelty.

HEATHENISM is not yet a thing of the past, and its dark rites and cruel superstitions still linger, even on this continent. That the Gospel is still needed among the Indians of the Pacific Coast, is made abundantly evident by the following narrative, which we copy from a recent number of the *Victoria Colonist*. Where the Gospel has been received, such rites and cruelties are unknown, and we hope and pray that the sore needs of these Fort Rupert Indians may speedily constrain someone to go to them with the Word of Life. The story in the *Colonist* is as follows :

It seems incredible that such practices exist among the Fort Rupert Indians as those narrated by Mr. H. J. Simpson, who has just come down from his home near Alert Bay. For years he has lived among the Indians, and his description of the feasts and customs of the Fort Ruperts makes a remarkable and interesting story. He lives on a little island eleven miles from Alert Bay, and scattered around on other islands and the mainland are the rancheries, where the Indians live during the winter, after their return from the salmon fishery, hop picking and other occupations they follow during the summer. During the winter months they carry on what is known as the Red Bark festival, which seems to be the remnant of an ancient custom the legendary reasons for which have been forgotten.

These festivals are connected with certain "coppers," as they are called. A "copper" is a piece of that metal some eighteen inches long and twelve inches wide, roughly fashioned in something the shape of a human head and neck, with mouth, nose and eyes marked upon it. There are only three original "coppers," and they are very ancient, their origin going far back beyond the Indian recollections; consequently they are of immense value in Indian eyes, and to possess one of them an Indian would give anything he owns. One peculiar thing is that one owner must sell if he is offered sufficient price for the "copper" he owns, the value apparently rising so many blankets every time one changes hands. One of these "coppers" is now worth some 5,000 blankets—a pretty considerable sum. There are also imitation "coppers"—that is, quite newly-made—but they are not very valuable.

Every time a "copper" changes hands is the occasion for a wild time. In the first place, one, two or three men—generally relatives of buyer or seller—are chosen to act as "amista" or "a wild man." The "amista" goes out into the bush and remains away for several days, only stealing in in secret to the ranche, and being supposed to abstain from food. Then the other Indians dress up, paint, and deck themselves with green wreaths, and hold a big dance. The dance seems quite innocent enough apparently on the surface, but by and by the "amista" is heard howling like

a wild beast in the distance, and a party of men go out with cedar bark ropes to capture him. At last they succeed, and bring the "amista" into camp. Naked, or with only a loin cloth, the "amista" comes among the dancers, acting like a dangerous maniac. Rushing upon one or another, he bites pieces of flesh from their arms, and finally runs away again. The owner of the "copper" has to compensate those bitten for the wounds inflicted. The "amista" is caught again and gradually is tamed down, the dancing being supposed to act as the proper kind of medicine to quiet his excited nerves. Then comes the last night of the dance, when the most horrible part occurs.

Some two weeks beforehand men secretly find a suitable body from among those hung up in boxes in trees or on the rocks—the way the Indians dispose of their dead—one from which the flesh has nearly disappeared being preferred. It seems that these bodies gradually dry up, retaining at last the skin only upon the bones. This body is put to soak in water for the two weeks preparatory to its being needed, and the skin swells up like leather. This last night the corpse is carried into the room where the dance is going on, and a horrible sight ensues. The "amistas" fight over the corpse like wolves, imitating the snarling of the animals and tearing the skin from the bones with their teeth in a disgusting manner. In fact, so fearful is this sight that some of the Indians will not wait to see it, but go out before the performance begins. After this orgie, "amistas" have been known to die the following day, whether or not from the excitement of their cannibalistic feat is not known. A dance of this kind took place during the past winter at Mar-ma-lily-kully, Mr. Simpson says.

Another disgusting practice at these dances is a young girl in a semi-nude state dancing, while big dogfish hooks fastened in her back have cords tied to them, which are held by an Indian like reins, the object being finally for the girl, by wrenching her body, to tear herself free from the hooks. Two winters ago Mr. Simpson also saw a child, covered with blood in which it had been dipped, dancing at one of these festivals.

A Midsummer Trip Among Our Missions in the North.

(Concluded from page 68.)

SUNDAY morning came bright and calm and peaceful, and with this our congregation; and until the middle of the afternoon we plied our craft in trying to inspire and lead to Christ. Then as we had to be in Edmonton next day, and the road was long and rough we bade farewell and started.

We had since Thursday morning made a big half-circle north, then west, then south, and now our course is eastward over rolling hills, covered with long grass, and across valleys, rich and beautiful. Then we enter a range of hills thickly covered with timber, and with the waning day we come out again into the open country and strike a settlement and camp for the night with a German Lutheran family. Here were eighty-five families of these Protestant Scandinavians. Those we stopped with told me that 100 years ago their fathers had to move into Austria because of religious persecutions, and now from the latter country they had come to the North-West. The old folks spoke German, and the grown young people some English; but the children were learning English fast, and in a few years would use no other language. I found them surrounded with evidences of thrift and industry. The promise of their crops was full and plenty. Their cattle and horses were fat and flourishing. Already these pioneers had straightened the road and graded and bridged many bad places, and we could not but help feeling that these were a very desirable class of settlers. Let them come, here is room for millions.

Thirty-one years ago when I, in coming from Norway House, first climbed the banks of the Saskatchewan where Prince Albert now is, and within a few days rode about in the country between Fort Carleton and the south branch, I began then to believe in this country and in the possibilities of a great future for it. Now my faith is thirty-one times