

would spring up without even an hour's notice.

The coast is rugged and rocky, presenting in its entire extent the appearance of desolation and barrenness. The hills and mountains run down to the beach; the valleys are lakes, and a few patches of low land, to be encountered here and there, are covered with worthless timber. No clear land is to be seen anywhere, and no hopes can be entertained that the west coast of Vancouver Island will ever be available for agricultural settlements.

The climate is not very different from that of Victoria. The seasons of rain and fine weather are about equally divided: the frost is not heavy, and snow seldom falls to any depth, and then lies on the ground only for a few days. With all this, the fall and winter months are dreary beyond expression. The Indians seem not to notice the general depression of the seasons, but for one born and raised elsewhere, accustomed to the society of his fellow white men, there are no words to convey how monotonous it is, and how lonesome one would feel were it not for the thought of the sacredness of the object for which he is here.

Nothing in the world could tempt me to come and spend my life here were it not that the inhabitants of these inhospitable shores have a claim on the charity and zeal of a Catholic priest.

The question has often been asked: Was there ever a Catholic priest or were there Catholic missions established on the west coast before the existence of the present establishments?

My answer, which is in the affirmative, was not sought or found in books or records, but I got it from the Indians themselves. My first informant was an elderly man, not a chief, but one of those men of importance to be found in every tribe, whose chief pride seems to consist in watching all the important events of the day and in assisting the chiefs with their counsel and judgment.

I found my informant (Tragsota) on an early summer morning sitting outside of his house in close conversation with his wife. As I passed by he hailed me and our conversation commenced.

"Was there ever a priest in Nootka?"

"Oh yes," he said, "at the time of the Spaniards there were two priests, big stout men, and they both were bald-headed. My grand-uncle, who told me this, used to come round to Friendly Cove, and the white men would keep Sunday. 'There was the Sunday house'—pointing to a spot about the centre of the present village—"and they would go on their knees and cross themselves, and at the turn of the winter solstice they had a great Sunday and they had two babies—is not that what you now call Christmas? Oh yes, there were priests here, and all the men and women would have to bathe on Saturday and be ready for Sunday, and they learned songs—hymns—I know them yet."

And the old man began to sing, but the only words I could catch were: *Mi-Dios*.

It is evident from the above narrative that at the time of the occupation of Nootka by the Spaniards, towards the end of last century, the missionaries of South America belonging to the Franciscan order, hence described by the Indian as being bald, evidently on account of the tonsure, and as stout, big men because they appeared such in their heavy Franciscan cloaks, were stationed at Nootka for the accommodation of the Europeans and also to a certain extent for the conversion of the natives.

The old man had much more to say about the presence of the Spaniards in Nootka. One of the men was in charge of the cattle, which he would bring home every day; which, of course, argues the presence of those useful domestic animals on this coast before there were any in other parts of the island. He also showed us the spot where the blacksmiths and carpenters had their shops, and gave many other details, which proves that events of importance