

# Relics of Pacific Coast Native Tribes.

By Bonnycastle Dale.



IT is only a hundred and thirty odd years ago since Captain Cooke, that celebrated British navigator arrived on this northern Pacific Coast. As the Spaniards found myriads of natives lower down the continent of America, so likewise this intrepid sailor found a great host of village dwelling people all along this coast. We know from our painfully gathered history that there were at least four hundred natives tribes along this, then undivided, coast. Where are they or their descendants? Gone, perished as has the innumerable buffalo before the white emigrant. Our new civilization, our fiery liquors, our vices, our patent medicines decimated this host swifter than sword or bullet. Come with my assistant and I as we search for the relics and interview the few pure Indians and the halfbreeds that live in the "rancheries" along the coast now known as British Columbia.

One of the first white men I met on

receives within the next two years, if he would be a mighty man among his people.

I attended the Potlach of the West Coast tribes, they are all branches of the Kwakiutl, the Nittinates, Barclay Sound people and Nootkas. Now to invite all the members of all the adjacent tribes to potlach with you, means that you must have a great house, great enough to accommodate the hundreds that will come. This halfbreed that gave the potlach had amassed by much work several thousands of dollars. He built a Potlach house great enough to give sleeping and eating room for three hundred people, in this work his sons aided. Then he sent greeting to all the tribes within three days journey to come and make Potlach on his daughter's birthday. They came in squadrons along the stormy straits yet called after the haughty Don Juan de Fuca. They gathered in the little harbor on the sea and advanced in formation of columns, all singing the Wahoo—the old folk song. The musicians beat in dull resounding time on the rude drums and the sounding boards. They drew up in front of the big Potlach house, and an ancient chief addressed the giver of the Potlach, then the miscellaneous host scrambled ashore. I saw the provisions they had for the journey. Dried salmon, salmon heads, long grisly arms of the Devil fish—the squid is a tribal dainty. Crabs, clams, sea urchins. Oh, truly the low tide beach and the sea is the poor man's farm. I do wish his farm would splash



Coast Indian killing a Martin.

this coast, a venerable Scotchman, a man verging on to eighty years of age, told me that he could remember when the tribe at the mouth of the little river Sooke was quite numerous. Once, to show their regard for this first white settler and his wife, they brought them a great present, it was heaped in the center of the canoe—a pile of the gory skulls of their enemies. Today one withered old klootchman—woman—is all that remains of this tribe; their last disaster was at the hands of the whites. We man our sealing schooners with them. One turned turtle in mid-Pacific and with it perished from off the face of the earth the braves of the Sooke.

While we have as yet small bands and villages representing the once numerous tribes, and each one of these has its own tribal language, its totems, clans, phratries or brotherhoods, with all the mystic rites and sacrifices, its demonology and beneficent fanciful wood dwelling, ay even its rite falsely described as cannibalism, this rite in which the votary, driven almost to the verge of madness, exumes or tears from their cedar boxes the bodies of his ancestors and savagely bites them. The much misunderstood rite called the Potlach, a giving of gifts, whereby the benefactor of other days receives an hundredfold for his present. And according to the strange custom of the tribe, distributes twice as much as he

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