

fish, or animal; particularly the eagle, the raven, the fin-back whale, the grisly bear, the wolf, and the frog. Among the Tsimshians and their neighbours, the Hydahs, great importance is attached to this heraldry, and their crests are often elaborately engraved on large copper plates from three to five feet in length, and about two in breadth. These plates are very highly valued, and are often heir-looms in families. No Indian would think of killing the animal which had been taken for his crest. While two members of the same tribe are allowed to intermarry, those of the same crest are prohibited from doing so under any circumstances. The child always takes the mother's crest: if she belonged to a family whose crest was the eagle, then all her children take the eagle for their crest.

The most influential men in a tribe—not excluding the chiefs—are the medicine men. Captain Mayne, R.N., thus speaks of them* :—

“Their initiation into the mysteries of their calling is one of the most disgusting ceremonies imaginable. At a certain season, the Indian who is selected for the office retires into the woods for several days, and fasts, holding intercourse, it is supposed, with the spirits who are to teach him the healing art. He then suddenly reappears in the village, and, in a sort of religious frenzy, attacks the first person he meets and bites a piece out of his arm or shoulder. He will then rush at a dog, and tear him limb from limb, running about with a leg or some part of the animal all bleeding in his hand, and tearing it with his teeth. This mad fit lasts some time, usually during the whole day of his reappearance. At its close he crawls into his tent, or falling down exhausted is carried there by those who are watching him. A series of ceremonials, observances, and long incantations follows, lasting for two or three days, and he then assumes the functions and privileges of his office. I have seen three or four medicine men made at a time among the Indians near Victoria, while twenty or thirty others stood, with loaded muskets, keeping guard all round the place to prevent them doing any mischief. Although a clever medicine man becomes of great importance in his tribe, his post

* *Four Years in British Columbia and Vancouver Island*, p. 260 (Murray, 1862).