

and is compelled to find or make shelter for herself in the woods, no matter what the season may be. There, without assistance, she must undergo her suffering, usually amid rain and snow—an exposure often fatal alike to mother and child. The pitiable condition of the native women at Sitka induced Dr. Clarence Thwing,¹ in charge of the Presbyterian hospital at Sitka, to open a Maternity Home, where the women could find shelter in their need. Its necessity was promptly proved by the service it rendered in relieving almost a score of women.

The burial ceremonies of the Thlinkets are simple. Formerly cremation prevailed, being practised on all except the *Shamans*, who received, in many instances, scaffold burial. Now, however, under the influence of civilisation, cremation is less frequent, and one sees at Juneau and Sitka various forms of house and tent burial. Until very recently, custom required the sacrifice of one or more slaves when a well-to-do Thlinket died, in order that he might not be companionless. The poor dispose of their dead quietly by cremation or burial, but a great funeral feast is expected after the death of a wealthy man. Preparations for a grand wake were being made at Juneau when our steamer put in, but we left before the solemnity began. The heir is a sister's son or, in default, a younger brother, whose first duty is to marry the widow; this so-called *Levirate* is enforced so rigorously that a refusal to comply with the custom leads to serious disputes—in some cases to tribal war. Not long ago, a bright lad in the Sitka Mission school became heir to a deceased relative, and was promptly claimed by the widow, a woman of advanced years. The Mission authorities refused to deliver him up, thereby causing a disturbance so great and so threatening, that the boy's freedom had to be purchased with a considerable sum of money. If there be no near relative, the woman is not compelled to remain in widowhood; she may choose a mate from some other clan.

The killing of slaves at the death of a rich man is evidence that the Thlinkets believe in continued existence after death; but there is difficulty in obtaining any very definite statement respecting their original beliefs. The well-known disposition of savages and untutored people to give to questioners the kind of information supposed to be gratifying, explains the puzzling contradictions between statements made by missionaries and those made by travellers who are not in search of information to support or to overthrow any definite theory. This difficulty no longer presents itself in Alaska, as the converted Thlinkets do not hesitate to give, as far as possible, true statements respecting the religious beliefs of their race. The most serious difficulty is that experienced in the case of the trans-Mississippi tribes; they have been so long in contact with one form or another of Christianity that traces of Christian legend creep into their myths. It is sufficiently clear, however, that *shamanism* lies at the basis of their beliefs, and their legends deserve a

¹ Of course this refers only to the unchristianised Indians; among the others the condition of women is altogether different; they enjoy well-defined and recognised rights. The wealthiest Sitkan is the "Princess Tom," whose wealth in blankets, furs, and articles of vertu is estimated at from \$20,000 to \$45,000. Her skill as a trader is freely conceded by all tourists.

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