

"I will give thee the heathen for thine inheritance."

CHAPTER XIV.

BELLA BELLA.

BELLA BELLA, or Fort McLachlan, was the site of a Hudson's Bay Company's Fort, built in 1833. Difficulty arose between the natives and the Company, and the Indians burned the Fort, which had been abandoned in 1839. The Chiefs' names were "Wacash," "Oyellow" and "Wockite." In 1846 the Fort was one hundred and twenty feet square, and there were two bastions mounted with four nine-pound guns each. The Fort was also provided with a quantity of small arms. The square was surrounded with pickets made of small trees, eighteen feet long and about twenty-four inches in circumference. These were mortised into square sills at the bottom and placed so close together that you could not see between them. There were double gates at the entrance, with a small wicket gate. The tops of the pickets were mortised into planks and fastened by spikes. About four feet and a half from the top there was a gallery around the wall inside, so that the watchman might keep a lookout. Inside the entry a man was always stationed to let the Indians in and out to trade, only one being admitted at a time. There was a large house inside for the servants and another for the Governor. Sometimes the Chiefs were allowed to visit the Governor's house.

The natives here were called Millbank Sound Indians and were scattered in a number of villages within ten or fifteen miles of the Fort. They were said to be very treacherous but very ingenious. On the occasion of a

visit by the Company's steamer *Beaver* a writer says: "When we visited them with our steamship they watched everything about us; and after awhile some of them boasted that they could make a steamship from the model of ours. In a short time they fixed up a large 'dug-out' from the trunk of a cedar tree and worked away at it until the model steamer appeared. It was thirty feet long, all in one piece excepting the bow and stern, and much resembled our steamer. It was painted black, decked over and had paddles which the Indians had to turn laboriously to make it go. Seven men were at work and the vessel triumphantly floated around us, going at about three miles an hour—a steamboat without boiler or engines."

These Indians were said to be warlike, and in later years were the dread of some of the Coast tribes, as well as of the white settlers. It is said that at Whitby Island a Colonel Eby was murdered in cold blood by them. This happened years ago when some white man had wilfully shot down one of their number. We can scarcely wonder at their action, for Indian law is life for life. They think that all white men are relatives, and if they cannot get the murderer the natural way is to kill another white man. The Bella Bella tribes are evidently part of the Kwakwalth or Fort Rupert nation, the language of the one being a dialect of the other. They lived by fishing and hunting.

At our second visit to Bella Bella I found a young, aspiring chief who wished by wealth and strength to get the place of Humpshet, the hereditary chief. The people had spoken of the need for a Church building. He said to me, pointing to a pile of property, blankets and furs, "Do you see that? I was going to Victoria to change that for ammunition and muskets to fight that Chief over there," pointing to a village about seven miles away. "Now, sir, if you will bring us a teacher this summer, I

will give you those blankets towards building a Church; but you must come this summer or else it will be too late. We shall fight."

A day or two afterwards I visited the village of Humpshet, the King of Bella Bella, whom all the people delighted to honor. As I sat for several hours with him in the little council chamber attached to his great heathen house, every few minutes someone would come in with a little food in his hands, or in a little dish, for it seemed that no family in the whole village would eat a meal without sending a taste to their Chief, in order to show their great respect for him.

I talked with him about a Mission for his people, and told what the haughty, aspiring young Chief had said about giving us the blankets if we would build a Church. After talking to one of his wives, he pointed to a pile of new trade blankets and said, "I will give those if you will send us a teacher at once." I promised that I would send them a teacher at once and expressed the hope that he and his people would come to the central village and live there. I had to do it in faith. There was no time to send word to Toronto or to wait twelve or thirteen months until the Mission Board should sit, to find out whether they could have a Missionary or not. Under the circumstances, by faith in God, we promised them a teacher.

The people, seeing their Chiefs giving blankets, brought in blankets and rings and bracelets, and some of them furs. Their donations went far to help buy material for our first little Church at Bella Bella. One woman, who looked very poor, taking the ring off her finger, said, "This is all I have that is worth anything in the world; and if you take this, I will give it as my donation to the Church." I was told afterwards that this woman took a

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little canoe, paddled nearly sixty miles to a heathen village, where her sister lived, and brought her back with her. When the teachers came they were both led to Christ and lived happily together. Think of it, travelling one hundred and twenty miles in a small canoe to bring her sister to Jesus!

As soon as I got home and could make arrangements I sent W. H. Pierce, our native brother, to take charge of the work until we could get a Missionary. That summer Rev. Mr. Tate and his wife were appointed by the Toronto Conference to the Forks of the Skeena, but owing to a strange turn of affairs were not permitted to go, and they were sent to Bella Bella to open up the new Mission there. We at once got out plans for a Church and a Mission House, and ordered our lumber at the Georgetown mills. It was taken down by the Coast boat, thrown off into the water and rafted ashore. After this we commenced in good earnest to clear off ground and put up the buildings. I never saw anyone more enthusiastic or more faithful than many of the young people and some of the old ones, who helped us to carry the lumber up the hill on their backs. This was the commencement of what is now one of the most successful Christian villages on the north-west Coast of British Columbia.

Chief Humpshet and his people joined the Mission. Here he found Christ and, years after, although he had many struggles with heathen tendencies and some of the heathen, he passed safely away, trusting in Jesus. Some time after the young Chief Wockite from Millbank Sound joined the village with all his people.

The Hyhise people joined with the Kitishtus, a band of the Tsimshean nation, and formed a village now called China Hat (from a conical mountain near by). Here



NEW BELLA BELLA—A CHRISTIAN VILLAGE.



A HEATHEN VILLAGE—AN APPEAL FOR THE GOSPEL.

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we now have a Christian village, with Church, School and teacher's residence.

It was found very difficult to keep a regular Missionary at Bella Bella. Mr. Tate remained four years and was succeeded at short intervals by W. B. Cuyler, James Calvert, Cornelius Bryant, R. B. Beavis and G. F. Hopkins. Then Miss Reinhardt, our teacher there, had to take charge for one winter alone. Mr. Brett and his wife supplied for a time; then came Dr. Jackson, who remained only a year and had to leave on account of sickness. This is perhaps one reason why the Bella Bellas never heard their Missionary preach in their own language.

They are a clever, industrious people and have made good industrial progress. The new village is a very neat one with Hospital, Council Hall and Mission House. The Indians own their sawmill, which has been a great help in improving the village. They also have a good wharf and stores, where they do most of their own business. They make canoes, boxes and mats. In later years they have spent a good deal of the time at the salmon canneries, where they do useful work as fishermen. With the exception of the Hydass, the Bella Bellas are said to be more clever than the other Coast people in their own crafts, such as making canoes, boxes and carving wood and stone. A few years ago they made a very large canoe. It was said to be seventy feet long with eight feet beam, and a carrying capacity of from one hundred to one hundred and fifty persons. A short ladder was necessary in order to get aboard. As canoes gave place to launches and Columbia River boats, they became adepts at boat-building.

Rev. C. M. Tate did good work during his stay at Bella Bella. He writes of his experience there: "We paddle our own canoe out to Goose Island, where a large number of Indians are camped shooting fur seal. Ocean breezes and

outdoor life give us good appetites and, although we have service almost every day, besides school, attending to the sick and visiting, yet it seems like almost a holiday. Whilst we listen to the songs of praise and stories of Christian experience, we think of the scenes of heathenism and sin that previous years witnessed on the same spot, for gambling and witchcraft, conjuring and profligacy of the most cruel nature have been carried on here.

"We are right in the midst of manual labor about the Mission premises. It is hard work to get out the old stumps and roots, but we expect to have things cheerful without and comfortable within in a short time. Several of the Indians are building neat little houses this year. This is the way to get them to live like Christian men. We must see to Weekeeno and Hyhise (China Hat). We should have native teachers at both places."

Thus the Missionary reaches out to the regions beyond. The motto, "Go ye," should ever be before the Missionary of the Cross until all the earth is saved. When Mr. Tate left Bella Bella he reported over one hundred converts among the natives on that Mission.

These people are very superstitious and, like most others on the Coast, very much afraid of death. Mrs. Tate, the Missionary's wife, speaks of this in one of her letters: "A child was very sick; I did not go to see it at once; a man passed the house and told me it was dead. I slipped down to the house and found that two or three people were engaged in crowding a lot of blankets and clothing into a large square box. A great crowd of women were wailing around. I requested to see the child; they told me it was all right, it was dead. I thrust my hand between the clothing that they were putting in the box and felt the warmth of the child's body. I pulled the shawls, blankets and other things out. The people in the meantime were

determined that I should not take it out and tried to close down the cover. I managed, however, to get the child out and found its pulse was still beating. It was rolled up tightly in five or six yards of cotton, of which I soon divested it. They were filled with horror at my proceedings. I carried the child to the Mission House, scarcely expecting that they would allow me to do so, but to my surprise they offered no objection. It did not live long, so I had some of them prepare a coffin purposely for it. Their custom is to put the corpse in a deep box in a sitting posture. Who can tell the hours of agony endured by many poor creatures thus buried alive!"

Continuing, Mrs. Tate refers to the happy deaths of some of the children: "A little girl named Maggie, about thirteen years of age, was taken away by death. Ever since the Mission had been organized Maggie was found in her place both in religious meetings and school. She had already learned to treasure and read her Bible and she frequently expressed her love for and trust in Jesus during her illness. She was perfectly happy, for she said she was going to be with Jesus. The night before her death, she asked her mother how near it was to Sunday, for she wanted to learn one more text before she died; but before Sunday Maggie was in the presence of Him who is the Word.

"Little Willie, aged about eleven, who died February 1st, had been confined to his bed for many months. During the long, sleepless nights he delighted in singing the hymns he had learned at school, 'Jesus loves me, this I know,' and 'Come to Jesus, He will save you.' As the end drew near I was often surprised at the clearness of his ideas about the way of salvation, as he had received but little instruction.

"The most interesting was Jane, who died February

12th. She was about thirteen years of age. She had attended school very regularly, was foremost in her class and could read the Bible remarkably well. Early last fall she told her mother that she would not be long here; she said she loved Jesus very much and thought He would soon call her to live with Him. She wanted her mother to leave the old ways and think of Jesus' way. On one occasion her mother expressed her regret that she was so poorly clad. 'Never mind, mother,' she replied, 'Jesus will give me a beautiful dress by and by.' In January she went to the hunting-grounds with her parents. She got worse and they brought her home to the Mission House. We tried all in our power to restore her health, but after three nights of watching she passed away. One of her last conscious acts was to take her Bible from under her pillow and, kissing it, exclaim, 'Oh, how I love Jesus!'

Again the Missionary writes: "Some souls have been brought to Christ. Some of the old people come frequently to the Mission House for a chat with the Missionary and tell of the terrors of heathenism. They were kept in fear by the Chiefs and medicine men and, most of all, by the surrounding nations, who were wont to pounce upon them at their fishing camps, kill all the men and take the women and children captives."

As Chairman, on my visit to Bella Bella I reported: "A great change has taken place since my last visit. Surely the blessed Gospel has done wonders for Bella Bella. On Saturday the Missionary in charge and I took a trip to the neighboring village, with about thirty people, in canoes. We found the people in the midst of a heathen feast. We went from house to house, singing the songs of Zion and praying. Later on in the day we preached to most of them in a large house."

Rev. W. B. Cuyler, in October, 1884, says: "We arrived

safely in Bella Bella on August 6th. A great work has been done for these poor people. They show upon their arms scars where in former days mouthfuls of flesh were torn off; and, comparing the past with the present, we conclude that the former days were not better than these."

In November, 1885, speaking of the death of Chief Humpshet, he says: "The singing of hymns and the hearing of strange stories, the evidence of which they were incapable of understanding, did not fully satisfy the Indians. Their old system of feasting and dancing gave something for their sensual natures; the new system denied these and, so far as many had gone, did not satisfy the soul's desires. We frequently sang, prayed and talked to Humpshet and about four days before he died he was completely broken down and wept like a child. Who can tell the struggle going on in that Chief's breast? Indians regard the shedding of a tear as a great mark of weakness on the part of man. Crying is the work of women." The Chief passed away, requesting with almost his last words, the singing of "Come to Jesus."

It is now our sad duty to refer to the sickness and untimely death of our dear Brother Cuyler. Here let me quote from one of my reports, dated November 2nd, 1886: "I am just back from a trip to Bella Bella. I had hoped to hear that Brother Cuyler was somewhat better, but the dear brother had become so sick that he had to leave his work and go south. Miss Reinhardt had just heard that he was not likely to be back, as the doctors said he must seek another climate. It would be a sore trial to him, for no man loved his work more than he and the poor Indians loved him in return. We thought to take Mr. and Mrs. Nicholas from Bella Coola to supply at Bella Bella. In this case Bella Coola would be left. Our noble Sister Reinhardt, who had been teacher at Bella Bella, said she

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would rather stay alone all winter and carry on the work until some one came from the East than let Bella Coola go without a teacher."

Later, in the *Outlook*, Dr. Sutherland writes: "Letters from the Pacific Coast convey the sad news that Brother Cuyler has fallen in the battle. For several years he has been in charge of the Bella Bella Mission, where he was much beloved by the people. He was 'in labors abundant,' and it was through exposure in 'journeyings off' that he contracted the disease of which he died. Brother Cuyler was obliged to desist from active work in the early part of the Conference year and went down to Victoria for medical advice. For several months he had been residing in the Nicola country; but, finding that his strength was failing, he expressed a strong desire to return to his old friends in Ontario. A start was made but, after one day's drive towards the nearest station, he was unable to proceed, and in a few hours fell asleep. His devoted wife was with him to the end and in her hour of sore bereavement has the sympathy and prayers of the whole Church."

From the reports of Rev. James Calvert we gather still further news of Bella Bella: "Our week-night services are encouraging; we hold nine services a week and practise singing nearly every night besides. There have been four deaths since my arrival, touching but triumphant. One dear little fellow, the brightest scholar in the School, after several months of sickness, fell peacefully asleep. His education being complete, the Master called him away."

Mr. Calvert did not stay long, as his wife's health would not permit it, and the Rev. G. F. Hopkins took his place at Bella Bella. In March, 1892, Mr. Hopkins writes: "Two or three years ago a subscription was started among the Indians here to build a new Church. Nothing further, however, was done until, last fall, Mr. Thomas Hooper,

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architect, of Victoria, B.C., kindly presented us with plans and aided the work in other ways. We got at the building. The main part is thirty by forty feet, and there is also a pulpit recess sixteen by sixteen feet and a porch eight by eight feet, which gives a tower eight by eight feet, crowned with a four-square spire, the tip of which is eighty feet from the ground. The whole makes a very neat and beautiful exterior. This replaces the first little Church, which became the Council Room and School. The Indians of this place have acted as carpenters and, with the superintendence of your Missionary, have done almost all the work. Our people promise to subscribe again after the fishing season. We need about two hundred and fifty dollars, which does not include lamps or stoves. The two native trading companies here gave money enough to purchase a forty-pound bell. It has a sweet, clear tone. The people have built up a nice village, all European-shaped houses. They have built for themselves a good strong wharf, and the village of Bella Bella is said to be one of the prettiest along the Coast."

In association with our work at the Bella Bella Mission a branch was opened at Rivers Inlet. During the visits of the Rev. Mr. Tate to the Owee-Kenno tribe he discovered the wonderful rush of salmon up that inlet and made it known to some white men. This led to the establishment of the first cannery, where there are now seven. In the summer we have a large field of operations there. Heathen people and Christians for hundreds of miles along the Coast, also Chinese, Japanese, and a number of white men, visit and work at these canneries.

We have five Churches in the Inlet and a Hospital in a central place. Mr. and Mrs. Brett, Mr. W. H. Gibson, our long-tried and faithful Lay Missionary, and Dr. R. W.

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Large, one of our most successful Medical Missionaries, have in turn had charge of the work at Rivers Inlet.

At Bella Coola, which was once a branch of the Bella Bella field, we have now a flourishing Mission with Brother Gibson in charge. With Bella Coola are associated the names of Dr. Spencer and Brother and Sister Nicholas.

At Kimsquit, up the north Bentick Arm, we have another little Church and still another at Namu, where Mr. Draney's salmon cannery is situated, about twenty-five miles south of Bella Bella.

The China Hat Mission, where the people are all professed Christians, is composed of part of the old Hyhise and Kit-ee-stue villages. Some of the people speak the Tsimpshean language, while the remainder speak the Bella Bella; but they are all united in trying to serve God under our long-tried and enthusiastic native teacher, Mr. G. Edgar. This is a very nice place, well sheltered for the small craft on their way up and down the Coast. The people mostly live by fishing, hunting and getting out cordwood, with the exception of the summer, when they go to the salmon canneries. There they earn good money to help them through the winter. This part of their lives is not always the most conducive to spiritual health.

The success of the present Bella Bella village is mainly due to Dr. Large's judgment and enthusiasm in pushing on the work. There is a wharf, a School, a Hospital, and a well-organized village. It is still the centre from which other villages are easily reached.

THE NAAS MISSION.

Early Visits to the Naas—Sick-sake—How the Naas got its
Missionary—Scenes of Mission Life—Back to
Heathenism—Treasures in Heaven—
The Band—Oolachan—A
Retreat.