

WHERE WITCHCRAFT REIGNS.

A Boy Murdered For Every Tahltan Who Dies a Natural Death.

Witchcraft did not perish from American soil with the last witch burning of Salem. Away up in British Columbia, where the Stikine river flows to shallow to float the rafts of the miners of Glenora and Telegraph creek, a witch boy is killed with terrible tortures for every man or woman who dies a natural death.

For two years Desulta has been a wanderer on the face of the earth, living on what he can kill and the roots he can dig. He dare not mingle with the other Indians, for they would betray him to the authorities; he dare not trust himself with the members of his own tribe, for there is a price on his head. He doubtless considers himself into an enforced retirement; led him a day's march in the wrong direction, and admitted that Desulta must have escaped.

For civilization is of the outward appearance, and it does not reach the deep, black superstitions of the Tahltan people. While the coming of the white man—the miner from the Klondike with his freight to be packed—has brought the comforts of comparative wealth, and a realization of the advantages of civilized dress, food and horses it has not been extended to the point that includes morals and religion. Along these paths they have made no progress. They buy and sell their wares

his self-appointed executioner, but an Indian runner, for a monetary consideration, found Loll and brought him into camp, accompanied by leading Tyees of the tribe. Loll was arraigned before Magistrate Webster at Telegraph Creek, Aug. 18, 1898. The services of an interpreter were secured, and under the influence of proper questioning, Loll deposed as follows: LOLL'S BELIEF IN WITCHCRAFT. "My name is Loll; am Tahltan Indian; have declared for hunt at which Joe Cullihan is to be disemboweled by me and his body sunk in Stikine river, for he has killed one of my tribe. I believe in witchcraft, my tribe has always believed in witchcraft, and executed witches. I do not know if I believe it or not."

Magistrate Webster, at Vancouver, B. C., gave Loll a lecture on the enormity of the crime he was about to commit. He also gave him ninety days in jail to consider the main points in the lecture. Rev. B. Appleyard of the Church of England, who is now in winter quarters at Port Esquimaux, B. C., then came forward and asked the chief of the Tahltans to give him charge of Loll. For five years, that he might be educated. Loll's fate had so frightened the old Tyees that he evidently feared the day of judgment was at hand, placing one hand on the head of the missionary and the other on that of Little Joe, he "sealed" Joe to the minister for a period of five years. Joe, the witch doctor, in his first suit of American clothes and first pair of shoes, is absorbing knowledge and government food at the Indian school at Metlakatla, B. C. Loll, the writer's executioner of this day and age, will be out of jail this month, unrepentant, but resolved to move hereafter in more mysterious ways his executions to perform.

COFFINS OF TIN AND ZINC. On the summit of the mountain that rises back of Telegraph creek there is a burial ground of the Tahltans that is a curiosity to all the white pilgrims who over the telephone trip the last rays of the setting sun fall upon the ground of the savages, and the graves of the Tahltans reflect the sunlight upon the town of Telegraph for an hour later, and the sun could otherwise expect the sun's light. Every grave is above ground—from five to twenty feet above ground—and the coffin is of tin, zinc or painted wood.

The older inhabitants believe in cremation, and when the time comes to bury a corpse they take the remains to the graveyard, lay the body upon a funeral pyre and burn it. The bones are placed in a tin or zinc coffin, and when the body is destroyed they gather up the remains of the bones of the cremated, together with a handful of mixed ashes, and deposit them in a trunk purchased for the occasion, whereupon the trunk is erected upon a pole as high as the deceased Indian's standing in the tribe. To the ceremony come all the Indians in the vicinity, no matter to what tribe they may belong. Into the trunk with the ashes are placed new blankets, new guns and valuable articles of all kinds, everything new. It may seem strange to see an enemy of the dead Indian deposit a new gun and new blanket in the trunk, but these are method in his madness, for the next day the trunk is opened, and must return the gun and blanket tenfold at the next "potlatch."

TAHLTANS ARE GREAT GIVERS. "Potlatch" means "to give." An Indian ranks highest in his tribe according to the amount of wealth he has given away. The Indian takes literally to himself the text to the effect that it is more blessed to give than to receive, and the happiest day of his life is when he can call all the Indians together and give away everything he possesses, down to the clothes he stands in. The Tahltan who has never given a potlatch is buried but a few feet above the ground. He who has given most potlatches of his tribe is the "Hias Tye," or big chief, and his tin trunk is thrust close to the sides than are those of his brethren.

While excavating for an addition to the local jail at Telegraph Creek, during the past summer, the workmen unearthed coffins of some of the younger and more civilized Tahltans, who did not believe in cremation, yet the fact that they, even, were possessed of some superstitions was proved by finding in the abdominal cavity of one skeleton a quart bottle of some white liquid, which in the grinning jaws of each skull a

martry, for he is the first of his people to be "persecuted" for practicing the pastimes of his tribe. ATTEMPTED WITCH MURDER. There have been other executions among the Tahltans for the crime of witchcraft, even within a few months. In August, 1898, an Indian girl—dead at Tahltan village. Before her death she confessed that she had been bewitched, and declared that little Joe Cullihan, a 12-year-old orphan, who was purchased years ago from the Coast Indians, was the boy that bewitched her. Of course, Joe denied the accusation, but the girl died, and that proved her story, according to the Indian belief. An Indian by the name of Loll took upon himself the right to mete out fate to little Joe, and tied the boy up by the thumbs, according to the best methods of the tribe. As snow would not arrive for at least sixty days, and as it would be contrary to all precedent to order a big hunt until there was snow on the ground and ice in the river, the victim had a considerable

able length of time to attend to his sore thumbs and acquire a better understanding of the disadvantages of being an up-to-date witch, unknown to oneself and friends. But this little boy had a better chance for his life than his predecessors in witchcraft, for the sudden rush of gold-seekers toward the Canadian Klondike had landed within twenty miles of little Joe's home fully 4,000 civilized gold-seekers, 500 Canadian soldiers and a fine body of provincial police, under the command of W. H. Bullock-Webster, and, the matter coming to the knowledge of the latter, the murder was prevented. Mr. Webster sent after the parties concerned in the affair. His officers brought back little Joe, but not

ing on his pony, he hastened to the Tahltan camp. With apparent friendliness he told the Tahltans that officers were coming up the river to arrest them and take them to Victoria, where they would be cast into jail for wrong doing, and advised them to fly to the woods—which they did. Then Chief Shakes returned to his camp, and the white men, represented himself and his tribe as the intended beneficiaries of the government's land potlatch, and made a record of the execution of the Tahltan reservation, which he had added to his own. Then, when the frightened Tahltans came in from their hiding places, old Shakes drove them twenty miles beyond his possessions, where they have remained to this day. As a result of association with their white brethren, as the years roll by, the complexion of the Tahltan Indian grows lighter, and their desire to live in town becomes greater. Time and white blood will doubtless eradicate their belief in witches, and to these factors the authorities at the head of Indian affairs in British Columbia seem content to leave the education of the Tahltans.

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W. F. THOMPSON, JR. WOULD PLEASE MINERS. Unique Form of Christmas Church Entertainment.

The Christmas Klondike supplies a long-felt want in the church socialable and fair market, and if you happen to be planning a holiday entertainment for the benefit of your church, a Klondike should be included in the programme. It is easily managed and only requires a few bushels of sand, a few quarts of nuts, a roll of cotton batting, and a few shovels. These are the ingredients of the Klondike, and the inevitable price. The total cost of preparing it is, perhaps, less than \$4, and an indefinite number of dollars should be the result.

Choose a corner of the room or hall where the fair is held, decorate it abundantly with green tinsel, holly and mistletoe, all growing—a few small evergreen trees are ideal for the background; at the base of the trees heap up two or three feet high, a bank of sand; with gold and silver tinsel and bits of cotton batting (to represent snow) decorate the trees, and if the fair comes off in the evening, introduce electric lights, if possible, among the branches of the trees. The Klondike now needs only its little nuggets of gold—nuts gilded with cheap gold paint—large hickory or English walnuts are best. These are to be buried in the sand, about six or eight inches below the surface. The prize must be of real value and cost at least \$10. It may be a silver watch, a small piece of cut glass, or a gold watch.

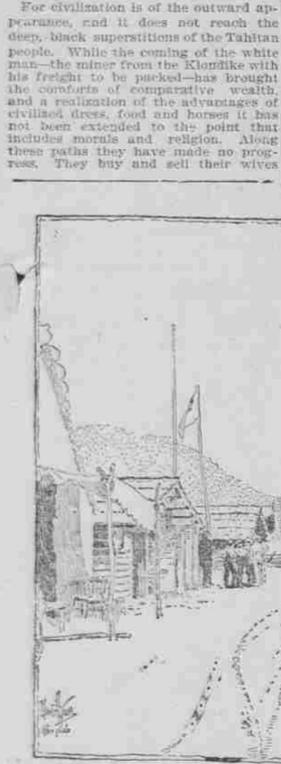
The one in charge of the Klondike is provided with a memorandum book, in which a record is kept of the digging for gold, that is, nuts, to a successful digger, which entitles one to as many digs, a small shovel or trowel being provided for the purpose. A record is kept of the number of nuts dug up by each one, and at the end of the evening the one who has the greatest number to her credit is the winner of the prize. From time to time the nuts are re-dug, and the sand, and, of course, any one can have as many opportunities of hunting for them as he chooses upon the payment of 5 cents altogether. It is an exciting and amusing entertainment.

Another novel feature which is certain to interest the children is an easily prepared but a formidable-looking thing, anything you like; possibly offer a prize to the one who will suggest a suitable name. A bright, new tin pan of mammoth proportions is the first requisite; fill it with little things which please children, dolls, toys, etc. Wrap each one securely and tie the package. Cover the pan with smooth, white paper, pasting it over the edges, which is concealed by a band of ribbon. With a pencil mark off as many three-cornered pieces as there are packages within, numbering each one. Each package, by the way, is also numbered. The child pays 5 cents, chooses a number, and his name is written against it, and when the numbers are all sold, the paper is cut, one number at a time, and the gifts distributed.

A Masterful Tactician. (Judge) Mrs. Frost—What, you low-down, ill-

MERRITT AT BEVERLY FORD. "The ensuing engagement, known as the battle of Beverly Ford, is recognized by military writers as the most conspicuous cavalry engagement of the war. The numbers on each side were nearly equal, the ground was favorable for mounted operations, and the fighting lasted all day, from 5 in the morning until nearly 7 at night. The result was a tactical draw. Merritt and Stuart, being in the same command, I remember his course in this battle well. For a time we were exposed to the attentions of a rebel battery, which fired over our heads, which, of course, we could not return. Merritt rode up and down, saying nothing, but evidently chafing at the delay in getting the rebels. When the shells got to falling too close he would stop and shift the position of his men a little, careful, as he always was, not to sacrifice his men unnecessarily. After what seemed a mighty long time, the order came to advance against the enemy. With a charging cry, the regiment dashed out, Merritt at its head. At the bottom of the slope was a ravine, and beyond this ravine a regiment of the enemy was waiting for us. To cross the gulch was necessary to get to the front, but not a moment was lost, and we were dashing pell-mell, sabers in hand, against the enemy. The shock of the charge carried us right into the rebels, who were thrown into confusion, and the two commands were pretty well mixed up. Then it became a fight of sabers and pistol shots, while every moment the dust and smoke and the steam from the horses made it more difficult to see what was going on about one.

FIGHTING SABER TO SABER. "Fifteen minutes before Merritt had been the careful commander, looking out for his men, but now all his fighting blood was up and he cut and slashed with the best of his followers. He had just emptied his revolver when he saw a rebel officer riding at one of his men. Merritt rushed forward, but was too late to get a word in edgewise. "Colonel, you are my prisoner." "The only answer he got was a slashing swing at his head from the confederate sabre. Merritt parried the blow and started in to make it warm for that officer, but Lieutenant Quirk, the only one of his own men near him, seeing that they had become separated from the rest of the command and were surrounded by rebels, fairly dragged the captain away. The confederates saw the chance to capture a couple of Union officers and began yelling to them to surrender, at the same time sending a shower of pistol shots around their heads. But the two plucky youngsters had no intention of becoming prisoners and they cut their way through the crowd that surrounded them and got back to their own command. Merritt lost his hat, knocked off by a sabre blow, but that was all the damage he suffered. He afterwards believed that the confederate officer with whom he



A TAHLTAN SETTLEMENT AND ONE OF THE BRAVES.

and children; they practice their healthful religious rites, their medicines and witch dances; they believe in and practice a very rude method of cremating the dead, and worst of all, they believe in witchcraft. Every natural death in the tribe is ascribed to witchcraft, and for every "bewitched" Indian there dies some poor Indian boy is barbarously murdered. To their open-air life and the healthful climate of the Klondike district is due the low death rate of the tribe and the correspondingly low "murder" rate.

A "WOLF" EXORCISES A WITCH. In the winter of 1886 an Indian woman lay near unto death in her home at Tahltan village, and the wise men of the tribe decided that she had been bewitched. She belonged to the faction of the Tahltans known as the "Wolves," so a "Wolf" witch doctor was called upon to drive out the witch that had crept into the mortal body of the Klondikeman. The doctor came dressed in wolfskins and made up to resemble as nearly as possible a wolf, and for two hours he danced about the couch of the dying woman, uttering horrible cries and making threatening gestures calculated to drive the witch out of the woman. The witch did not appear, and as the woman was apparently worse than before the medicine man's performance, it, of course, became immediately apparent to the Indian mind that the dying woman was possessed. The responsibility must be fixed on with a howl and a leap, the "Wolf" doctor seized upon the 12-year-old son of a widow of the tribe and dragged him to the couch of the dying woman, who admitted that she had been bewitched; that the boy was responsible for the bewitchment—and thus she died.

The mother wept and pleaded for the life of the child, but he declared that he would not know how to go to work to bewitch any one, but what could the mother and child do against the death-bed confession and accusation of the bewitched Klondikeman? From such a court there was no appeal.

"TIED UP BY THE THUMB." A brave of the tribe (his name was Desulta) here took charge of the proceedings. The boy was tied up by the thumbs and beaten with switches as punishment for the witch. A big hunt was organized and set for a date two months ahead, and while waiting for the final act in the tragedy the boy was frequently tied up and whipped, to bring him to a realizing sense of his condition.

The mother of the doomed lad doubted of the wisdom of the elders of the tribe and the justice of her boy's sentence, so she journeyed to Telegraph Creek and laid the matter before John H. Whitehead, a white merchant, who is still in business there. Mr. Highland immediately communicated with Superintendent of Indian Affairs, Howell, at Victoria, who sent a detective to Tahltan village to stop the murder and secure the executioner. In those days, means of communication between Victoria and the towns in northern Canada were not up to their present mark, and the detective arrived too late. The hunt occurred, and at a convenient spot on the banks of the Stikine, Desulta's hunt-knife, dexterously wielded, disemboweled the poor little Siwash, and the boy was slipped under the ice of the Stikine, a river that seldom gives up its dead.