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INTRODUCTION

THE dominating cultural influence of the tribes treated in this volume was their dependence upon sea food. The waters of the Pacific teem with life in countless forms, and the dwellers upon the wind-swept shores of the ocean and the more placid waters of the sounds, bays, and harbors drew fully upon this supply, from the clam to the whale. Men, women, and children almost lived in canoes, and possessed most remarkable skill in navigating stormy waters in their frail craft.

Great personal hardihood was evidenced in the expeditions of war, which, having for their purpose the stealthy surprise of a village or the ambush of a travelling party, nevertheless sometimes resulted in pitched battles fought upon the water, where great fleets of canoes came together and the warriors wielded spear and club with slight regard for personal safety. There have been few people who held life so lightly as these coast dwellers. They were head-hunters, and nowhere, unless it be in the more northerly portion of this coast, can more gruesome stories of primitive warfare be found.

The people were in the main sedentary, inhabiting well-made wooden houses; but the long summer was spent in moving from place to place where the food products of the season were obtainable. Agriculture was unknown. The lands were fertile, but heavily wooded, and the ease with which food could be had from the sea left no incentive for the development of an agricultural life. The majority of the tribes hunted little on land. The forest jungle was difficult to penetrate, and the flesh of land animals was not particularly relished.

Generations of canoe life developed a people peculiarly strong of chest and shoulders, but squat in stature: a type not particularly prepossessing. Their mental inferiority to the more picturesque tribes of the Plains has been considerably exaggerated by many observers; they were far above the stage of savagery, and their development was well suited to meet the peculiar demands of their environment.

In gathering and preparing this material I have had the constant valued and important aid of Mr. W.E. Myers, and Mr. A.F. Muhr's able assistance in the laboratory continues.

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