

From there, Dawson would go on to make one of the most epic exploratory journeys in Canadian history. Dawson is known to be the first educated man to explore and map the Yukon. Dawson City is named in his honour. Although he was primarily interested in what was beneath his feet, extensive correspondence shows that he captured the interest of those he interacted with as well. He was given the name *Skookum Tumtum*, “brave cheery man”, by the Cree, a First Nations community he met while studying the Lake of the Woods region.

Dawson was keenly interested in the languages and cultures of the First Nations peoples he met in his travels. While studying the coal deposits of the Queen Charlotte Islands (now Haida Gwaii) in 1878, he prepared a comprehensive report on the Haida people, which included a vocabulary of their language.

*Personal notes of George Mercer Dawson on “the Haidas”. 1878.*

McGill University Archives | Dawson-Harrington family fonds. MG1022

The Haidas

Leaving Victoria, Vancouver Island on the 27th of  
 May 1878, in the little Schooner Wanderer of twenty  
 tons burden, we steered north-westward for the  
 Queen Charlotte Islands; & judging our craft not  
 sufficiently seaworthy for the rough outer Coast of  
 Vancouver Island, exposed to the full sweep of the  
 great North Pacific, we were obliged to voyage by  
 the inner Channels & wonderful series of connecting  
 fiords which characterize the Coast of British Columbia  
 & ramify among its half-submerged mountain  
 ranges. Channels like these however well adapted for  
 steam navigation, & wonderfully picturesque & grand  
 though they are, are tedious enough for sailing vessels.  
 The wind blows generally either directly up or down the  
 channel, shut in by its mountain walls, & what with  
 Calms, & the rapid & constantly changing tidal current,  
 we spent many a weary hour at anchor, or even  
 retrogressing. Sixteen days thus <sup>occupied</sup> ~~spent~~ however,  
 brought us to Milbank Sound, whence, abandoning  
 the idea of visiting first the north end of the islands,  
 we lay across for their southern extremity. In making  
 the traverse of eighty miles we were first becalmed  
 & then, not without some discomfort & danger, ~~made~~  
<sup>weathered</sup> ~~made~~ half a gale from the north-westward, & on the  
 12th of June completed our voyage of nearly five  
 hundred miles by casting anchor between the silent  
 wooded shores of a cove in Stewart Channel, which  
 separates Prevost & Moresby Islands.



The object of our expedition was to carry out a preliminary Geological, geographical, & general exploration of the islands, in connection with the Geological Survey of Canada, & in this work we were engaged till the Autumn storms warned us again to seek a more southern latitude. We were furnished, besides provisions for the summer, with dredges & appliances for preserving specimens, photographic requisites & meteorological & other apparatus, with which we were kept busy enough during the season. For the results obtained by these, & with the hammer & compass among the rocks I do not here intend to refer any further, but to present a few details concerning the remarkable race of people living on the islands, about whom, though perhaps one of the most interesting native peoples of America, very little accurate information has yet been published.

Within the limits of the Province of British Columbia, in the absence of a trustworthy census, the native races, or 'Indians' are roughly estimated to number 30,000. Tribes associated by language, & collectively belonging to the great Sioux family, inhabit the whole northern interior of the country. Joining these on the south, & occupying the southern part of the interior are Indians of the Salish connection, divided into many tribes, bearing different names, but all allied in language, the differences between the dialects being generally not so great as to prevent intercommunication. Along the

The object of our expedition was to collect  
 specimens of geological, geographical, and  
 ethnographical interest, in connection with the  
 geological survey of Canada, and the work was  
 now referred to the late Dr. James Macmillan,  
 again to seek a more suitable location, and  
 proceeded, under his direction, for the purpose, with  
 objects & appliances for procuring specimens,  
 photographic apparatus & meteorological & other  
 apparatus, and what we were left with, except  
 during the season. For the purpose of procuring  
 a list of names of persons, among the rocks,  
 I was not for a while to refer any further, but to  
 present a few details concerning the observations  
 and papers found on the islands, about which,  
 first papers on the meteorological and other papers  
 of Geneva, for little accurate information has yet  
 been published.

Within the limits of the Province of British Columbia,  
 in the absence of trustworthy sources, the notes  
 given in the 'Memoirs' are chiefly taken from the journals  
 of 1800, which are associated with language & collection  
 belonging to the great Chinook family, which is the  
 most northern dialect of the country. Among the  
 on the coast, or occupying the western part of the  
 interior are the dialects of the Chinook family, which  
 are many others, having different names, but  
 all allied in language, the differences between  
 the dialects being generally not so great as  
 the present intercommunication. Along the

Coast, & on the outlying islands are scattered a great number of tribes, differing markedly, & in former years frequently hostile one to another. In Customs, modes of life & thought, there is complete diversity between the Coast Indians & those of the interior, a diversity which practically transcends the racial divisions.

In the northern interior, the Indians inhabiting a country for the most part thickly wooded, still remain as they have been heretofore, hunters & fishers, but in many places they now also cultivate small garden patches, where they grow such vegetables as require little attention. For their winter food supply they generally depend chiefly on fish which is dried & cured during the summer. On all the tributaries of the Trovaz, the Salmon is taken, often in great abundance; & those tribes nearest the coast have generally succeeded in maintaining against the Coast Indians the control of some part of the various smaller rivers, on which Salmon can be caught. Thence they make an annual migration, which they look upon as a sort of holiday-making, dwelling during the season in abundance of fresh fish, & on their return carrying back with them a supply for the cold months.

In the southern portion of the interior, the natives have come much more freely in contact with the whites & have already made material progress. In the early days of gold mining labor was in great demand, & consequently every Indian who could or would work was employed at good wages from



of British Columbia

this many of them became stock owners in a small way, were boatmen or packers, while others cultivated the soil, sometimes producing more than they required for their own support.

Along the coast, the <sup>Indians</sup> natives are almost exclusively fishermen. They engage in the chase to a very limited extent & seldom venture far into the dense forests, of which they appear often to entertain a superstitious dread, peopling them in imagination with monsters & fearful inhabitants. Along many of the estuaries & harbours are extensive shell heaps, testifying to the indefinite antiquity of their camping & feasting. At the present day many of the Indians of the coast are moderately industrious, working on farms, in the coal mines at Nanaimo or as sailors in small coasting vessels.

While some of these tribes are still little improved, or have even deteriorated from their original condition, others are moderately industrious, & apply themselves to work in various ways.

Of the tribes inhabiting the coast, the Haidas are in many respects the most interesting. They dwell on the Queen Charlotte Islands, which they possess, are separated by wide water <sup>stretches</sup> both from the Archipelago fringing the coast of the mainland of British Columbia, to the North East, & from the Southern extremity of Alaska to the North. They form a compact group, & it is perhaps to their comparative isolation & homogeneity that we owe the fact that the Haidas while remarkably distinct from most other tribes of the coast, are in language & customs so nearly the same in all parts of their own territory. The extreme length of the Queen Charlotte Islands is one hundred & eighty miles, with a greatest breadth of sixty miles.





During Captain Cook's last voyage in the Pacific it was discovered that a lucrative trade in furs might be opened between the North-western Coast of America & China, & though the existence of a part of the Queen Charlotte Islands had been known to the Spaniards since the voyage of Juan Perez, dispatched by the Viceroy of Mexico in 1774, it is to the traders who followed in the track of Cook that we owe most of the earlier discoveries on this part of the Coast & it is they who appear to have first come in contact with the Haidas. Forward the beginning & during the earlier years of the present century the Queen Charlotte Islands were not infrequently visited by trading vessels. The sea-otter, however, — the skins of which were the most valuable articles of trade pursued by the islanders — being become very scarce through continuous hunting, few vessels but were coastwise here called at any of the ports for many years back. The islands here lain to, on one side of the traffic to <sup>Alaska</sup> the northern part of British Columbia, which of late years has assumed considerable proportions.

The earliest notice of the Haidas which I have been able to find is that given in Captain Dixon's narrative & bears date July 1787. Dixon first made the land of the islands near their North-western extremity, in the vicinity of North Island;

He writes: \* — "at noon we saw a deep bay which  
\* A voyage round the world, but more particularly to the North-west coast of North America. London 1789

& gives in the narrative of his voyage a detailed account of his meeting & intercourse with the natives & his trade with them for furs.

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During Captain Cook's last voyage in the Pacific  
 it was discovered that a lucrative trade in furs  
 might be opened between the East-India Company  
 Russia & China, & that the distance by way  
 the Bering Strait the distance had been known to  
 the Spaniards since the voyage of Juan Vega,  
 & that the discovery of the Strait of Bering in 1774, it is  
 the distance was determined in the track of Cook that  
 the one half of the entire distance on the part  
 of the coast of it is the whole of the distance  
 was in contact with the Russians. During the  
 opening a strong demand for furs was  
 created in the Bering Strait the distance was not  
 infrequently visited by trading vessels. The  
 trade however - the Bering Strait was the  
 principal outlet of the furs of the  
 being known to occur through the  
 hunting few vessels but some vessels for  
 called at every year for the furs of the  
 the islands for the Bering Strait on the side of the  
 traffic to the Russian part of British Columbia,  
 that of late years has assumed considerable  
 proportions.  
 The United States has also been  
 the fact is that from the Bering  
 navigation a line was run in 1827. This  
 made the land the distance was then  
 between the two in the vicinity of the Bering  
 the water. The distance was then a step by which  
 \* A large number of vessels, but many of them  
 Bering Strait of late years.

The distance between  
 the Bering Strait  
 and the coast of  
 the United States  
 is about 2000 miles.  
 The distance between  
 the Bering Strait  
 and the coast of  
 the Russian Empire  
 is about 1000 miles.  
 The distance between  
 the Bering Strait  
 and the coast of  
 the British Empire  
 is about 1000 miles.

bore north-east by east x x we were determined  
 to make it if possible as there was every probability  
 of meeting with inhabitants. During the night we  
 had light variable winds in every direction, together  
 with a heavy swell from the south west, so that on  
 the morning of the second we found our every effort  
 to reach the bay ineffectual; however, a moderate  
 breeze springing up at north-east, we stood in for  
 the land close by the wind, with our starboard tack  
 on board. At seven o'clock, to our very great joy,  
 we saw several Canoes full of Indians who  
 appeared to have been out at sea, making towards  
 us. On their coming up with the vessel we found  
 them to be a fishing party, but some of them wore  
 excellent iron cloaks. They did not seem, however,  
 inclined to dispose of them - "though we endeavoured  
 to tempt them by exhibiting various articles of  
 trade, such as toes, hatchets, adzes, hammers,  
 tin-kettles, pans &c; their attention seemed entirely  
 taken up with viewing the vessel, which they apparently  
 did with marks of wonder & surprise. This we  
 looked on as a good omen, & the event showed that  
 for once we were not mistaken. After their  
 curiosity in some measure subsided, they began  
 to trade, & we presently bought what skins &  
 cloaks they had got, in exchange for toes, which  
 they seemed to like very much. They made  
 signs for us to go in towards the shore, & gave  
 us to understand that we should find ware  
 inhabitants & plenty of furs. By ten o'clock



we were within a mile of the Shore, & saw the village where the Indians dwell right a-breast of us: it consisted of about six huts which appeared to be built in a more regular form than any we had yet seen; & the situation very pleasant, but the Shore was rocky, & afforded no place for us to anchor in. x x During this time several of the people whom we traded with in the morning had been on Shore, probably to show their newly acquired bargains, but on seeing us steer for the bay, they presently pushed off after us, joined by several other Canoes. x x A scene now commenced which absolutely beggars all description, & with which we were so overjoyed that we could scarcely believe the evidence of our senses. There were ten Canoes about the Ship, which contained as nearly as I could estimate one hundred & twenty people; many of them brought most beautiful beaver Cloaks, others excellent Skins, & in short, none came empty handed, & the rapidity with which they sold them was a circumstance additionally pleasing; they fairly quarreled with each other about what should sell his cloak first; & some actually threw their furs on board ~~if~~, if nobody was at hand to receive them, but we took particular care to let none go from the vessel unpaid. x x In less than half an hour we purchased near three hundred beaver skins\* of an excellent quality, a circumstance which greatly raised our spirits!!

we were within a mile of the shore of some the  
 village where the business should right a short  
 pass; it consisted of about six huts which  
 appeared to be built in a more regular form than  
 any we had yet seen; & the situation very pleasant  
 but the shore was rocky & appeared to have for  
 so a tuncor in. X X being the two houses  
 the people when we landed but in the morning  
 had been in store, perhaps to show their  
 acquisition of arms, but in being no other for  
 the day, they presented baskets of coffee, fruit  
 & several other things. X X were our  
 which showed us all description, what  
 which we were so surprised that we could hardly  
 believe the existence of our houses. There were ten  
 houses about the ship, which contained no  
 more than a few articles of household use  
 than people; many of the things brought  
 than for some cloth, other excellent things,  
 & in short, some good things, & the  
 opposite with which the whole was a  
 circumstances extremely pleasing; the  
 first presented was not the least about what they  
 all in their first, & some things from their  
 from a track of, if there was at hand to  
 receive them, but the first we saw to let us  
 go from the house upon, X X be the  
 help in, from we purchased our  
 have this of an excellent quality, a circumstance  
 which greatly raised our spirits.

\*  
 Though often called beaver skins, as in this place, in  
 Dec' our narrative, the furs obtained were really sea-otter  
 skins, as appears by other evidence. The skins purchased  
 during this voyage, estimated at the prices then ruling at  
 Canton, must have been worth about \$90,000

Captain Douglas, the colleague of Meares who is  
 one of the best known of the early voyagers on this coast,  
 visited the same part of the islands ~~in~~ a few years  
 later, & gives an interesting account of his dealings  
 with the natives which is, however, too lengthy for  
 insertion here. He is mentioned because on asking  
 the present Chief of that region, Edensaw, for the  
 name of the first white man whom the Haidas had  
 known he at once gave me Douglas, very well  
 pronounced. On pressing him, however, he  
 admitted that Douglas may not have been absolutely  
 the first, & it is probably to some still earlier  
 navigator that the story of their first knowledge of  
 the white man preserved by the natives refers. —  
 It was near winter, they say, very long ago, when  
 a ship under sail appeared in the vicinity of  
 North Island. The people were all much afraid,  
 the Chief sharing in the general fear but feeling that  
 it was necessary for the sake of his dignity to  
 act a bold part, he dressed himself in all the  
 finery used in dancing, went out to sea in his  
 canoe, & performed a ceremonial dance. It  
 would appear that the childish idea was at first  
 vaguely entertained that the ship was a great



\*

The first of the two boats was in the place in  
 the morning, the first boat was ready for the  
 skins, as appears by the evidence. The second boat  
 during the voyage, the first boat was the only one  
 Captain, but for her worth about \$20,000  
 Captain, the first boat, the evidence of the  
 on the first boat, the first boat was on the coast,  
 the first boat, the first boat was on a few days  
 later, a fine and interesting account of his  
 with the natives that is known to be the  
 investigation. It is mentioned in the  
 the present chief of that region, the  
 name of the first boat was when the first boat  
 name, the first boat, the first boat, the first boat  
 mentioned. In the first boat, the first boat  
 admitted that the first boat had been the  
 the first, it is probably to be the first boat  
 the first boat, the first boat, the first boat  
 the first boat, the first boat, the first boat  
 a ship was not appeared in the first boat  
 first boat. The first boat was all about  
 the first boat in the first boat, the first boat  
 it was necessary for the sake of his report to  
 into the first boat, the first boat, the first boat  
 first boat in the first boat, the first boat  
 first boat, the first boat, the first boat  
 first boat, the first boat, the first boat  
 first boat, the first boat, the first boat

bird of some kind, but on approaching it the men on board were seen, & likened from their dark clothing & the general sound & unintelligible character of their talk, to Shags — which indeed sometimes look almost human as they sit erect upon the rocks along the border of the sea. It was noticed that one man would speak, whereupon all the others would immediately go aloft, till, something more being said they would as rapidly descend.

When first visited by whites, the population of the islands probably exceeded 7000, at the present day I estimate it at about 2000, including in this number many who while now living elsewhere on the coast still call the islands their home.

In the Southern extremity of the Colaraskan Archipelago & adjacent to the Queen Charlotte Islands live the Kai-ga-nai Indians numbering about three hundred & in almost every respect the same with the Haidas. They are in fact merely an offshoot from the main stock, for it is to be remarked, that while it might be supposed that traces of the passage of the Haidas to the Queen Charlotte Islands from the mainland would be found, it is known by tradition that the Kai-ga-nai tribe on the contrary migrated to the mainland at a time not very remote & in consequence of intestine wars.

The climate of the Queen Charlotte Islands is exceedingly humid, & they are almost everywhere densely covered with magnificent Coniferous trees. Mountains 4000 to 5000 feet high rise in their central portion,

kind of more kind, but on approaching it the  
 men on board were seen, a Chinese from the  
 back cutting the forest down a considerable  
 character of their talk, & steps - and the  
 look about human as they set out upon the  
 rocks along the banks of the sea. There is a  
 one man, another, a third, a fourth, all the others  
 would be interested for a gift, the something that  
 they said the words as a gift, the  
 when first visited of white, the population of the  
 islands probably reached 200, at the present  
 day probably about 200, including in  
 this number many who still are living in  
 at the coast with all the islands this  
 but the western extremity of the island  
 a passage to the sea, the islands  
 the Kai-pa-mai islands, the islands about  
 the islands a in about the islands  
 with the islands. The sea is deep, an  
 from the islands, the islands, the  
 like it ought to be supposed that the islands  
 the islands to the sea, the islands from the  
 the islands would be found it is the islands  
 that the Kai-pa-mai islands in the islands  
 to the islands also the islands  
 consequence of the islands  
 the islands of the islands is  
 human, the islands, the islands  
 with the islands, the islands  
 this to 200 for the islands

& they are penetrated on all sides by dark deep fjords  
 with rocky walls. To the north east, it is true, a  
 wide stretch of low & nearly level country occurs  
 which may some day support a farming population,  
 but at the present time its sombre woods filled with  
 dense undergrowth & barricaded with perrotate  
 trunks in every stage of decay, offer little to induce  
 either Indian or white to penetrate them. The  
 Haudas therefore, though cultivating here & there along  
 the shores small potato patches, are essentially  
 fishermen. Few paths or trails traverse the interior  
 of the islands, & of these few formerly used when the  
 population was ~~decreased~~ <sup>greater</sup> are now abandoned.

The halibut is found in great abundance in the  
 vicinity of the islands, & it is more particularly  
 on this fish that the Haudas depend. Their villages  
 are ~~always~~ <sup>invariably</sup> situated along the shore, often on bleak  
 worn-out parts of the coast, but always in  
 proximity to productive halibut banks. Journeys  
 are made in Caves along the coast. The Caves  
 are skilfully hollowed from the great cedar trees of  
 the region, which after being worked down to a  
 certain ~~degree of thinness~~ <sup>small thickness</sup>, are steamed, or spread  
 by the insertion of cross pieces till they are made  
 to assume a wavy graceful form & show lines  
 which would satisfy the most fastidious shipbuilder.  
 In their larger Caves the Haudas do not hesitate  
 to make long voyages on the open sea, & in former  
 days by their frequent descents on the coast of the  
 mainland, & the facility with which they retreated

of the one hundred or all other dark deep blue  
 that look well. At the first part, it is true, a  
 like effect of low a reach but cannot occur  
 what may have any sufficient amount of population  
 but at the present time the number will be  
 more important a proportion with the  
 points in very steps of decay after that a  
 better choice in white a few hundred than. The  
 history therefore, though continuing for a long  
 the others, some of the first, are naturally  
 fishermen. The first to think of the  
 the volume, of it the first part, with the  
 population was then, as now, abundant.  
 The habit is found in part abundance in the  
 kind of the volume, it is now, part of the  
 in the first. That the history, of the  
 are always abundant along the coast, as in the  
 was - but a part of the coast, but always in  
 part of the population, but in the  
 are made in part along the coast, the  
 are always abundant from the first part of  
 the region, which the first part of the  
 Carboniferous system, as shown, of the  
 of the system of Carboniferous the first part  
 to be seen a part of the first part, as in the  
 what would be the first part of the  
 the first part of the first part of the  
 to be seen in the first part, as in the  
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 of the first part of the first part

again to their own islands, rendered themselves more dreaded than any tribe from Vancouver to Sitka.

In their mode of life & the ingenuity & skill which they display in their manufacture of Canoes & other articles, the Haidas do not differ essentially from the other tribes inhabiting the Northern part of the Coast of British Columbia & Southern Alaska. In the Queen Charlotte Islands, however, the peculiar style of architecture & art elsewhere among the Indians of the West Coast were as less prominently exhibited, appears to attain its greatest development. Whether this may show that to the Haidas or their Ancestors the introduction of this is due, or indicate merely that with the greater isolation of these people & consequent increased measure of security, the particular ideas of the Indian mind were able to body themselves forth more fully, we may never know. The situation of the islands & the comparative infrequency with which they have been visited for many years, have at least tended to preserve intact many features which have already vanished from the Customs & Manufactures of most other tribes.

As before stated the permanent villages of the Haidas are invariably situated at the sea shore. They consist generally of a single long row of houses with but a narrow grassy border between it & the beach, on which the Canoes of the tribe (for each village constitutes a chieftaincy) are drawn up. In front of each house stands a symbolical Carved post, while other Carved posts, situated irregularly & differing

again to him on which business transactions were  
 made than any other from London to India.  
 In this kind of life a the expansion of which which  
 the highest in the manufacture of goods & other  
 articles, the trade in the coffee country from the  
 other side including the Indian part of the coast.  
 British America & Southern Africa. In the latter  
 British India, during the period of the consolidation  
 of the British Empire the business of the East India  
 Company was in a measure transferred to the British  
 Government. The latter was then that the  
 the British in their interests to the extent of the  
 in the, as indicated above that with the British  
 Indian people & consequently increased  
 means of supply, the British India was the  
 Indian trade was with a few thousand tons  
 per year, but now it has become the source of  
 the British & the comparative importance with  
 what it has been raised for many years, there  
 at least under the present latest trading system  
 what has been, remains from the Indian  
 manufacture of goods & other articles.  
 to have stated the present situation of the Indian  
 are now almost entirely at the disposal of the British  
 Government of the British Empire and the  
 business of the British Empire is now in the hands of the  
 the British Government (for the British people contribute  
 a chief part) are drawn up. In the present state  
 of the British Empire & especially the British part of  
 the British part, situated in the East India Company

Somewhat in form from those proper to the  
 houses, are generally Memorials to the dead. Such  
 a village, seen from a little distance off, the houses  
 & Forts Grey with the weather, resembles a strip of half  
 burnt forest with dead 'rampikes'. The little cloud  
 of smoke from the various fires may however serve to  
 indicate its true Character.

The general type of construction <sup>with the Indians of the part of the N.W. Coast</sup> of the houses, is  
 everywhere nearly the same, but among the Haidas  
 they are more substantially framed, & much  
 more care is given to the fitting together & ornamentation  
 of the edifice than ~~is~~ elsewhere seen. The houses are  
 rectangular, & sometimes over forty feet in length  
 of side. The walls are framed of planks split by  
 means of wedges from Cedar logs & often of  
 great size. The roof is composed of similar split  
 planks, as bark & slopes down at each side, the  
 gable end of the house - if such an expression  
 may be allowed, - facing the sea, towards which the  
 door also opens.

The door is usually an oval hole cut in the  
 base of ~~the~~ grotesquely carved post forty or fifty feet  
 high, which we may call the totem post, but  
 which to the Haidas is known as Kechen. Stooping  
 to enter one finds that the soil has been excavated  
 in the interior of the house so as to make the  
 actual floor six or eight feet lower than the  
 surface outside. You descend to it by a few rough  
 steps, & on looking about observe that one or two  
 large steps run round all four sides of the house.



The door is usually an oval hole cut in the  
 top of a rectangular board that fits in the  
 hole, which is usually called the door, but  
 which the Indians call the door. Step  
 to enter the house that the door has been removed  
 in the interior of the house so as to make the  
 entrance from the outside. For instance, if a fair wind  
 steps, or on looking about them that one or two  
 large steps are made all round the house.  
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 entrance from the outside. For instance, if a fair wind  
 steps, or on looking about them that one or two  
 large steps are made all round the house.

These are faced with Cedar planks of great size, which have been hewn out, & serve not only as shelves on which to store all the household goods, but as beds & seats if need be. In the center of a square area of bare earth, the fire burns, & it will be remarkable if some one of the occupants of the house be not engaged in culinary operations thereat. The smoke mounting upward passes away by what we may call a sky light — an opening in the roof with a shutter to set against the wind, which serves also as a means of lighting the interior. One is surprised to find what large beams have been employed in framing the house. There are generally four of these laid horizontally, with stout supporting uprights at the ends. They are really hewn & of a symmetrical cylindrical form & are generally fitted into the hollowed ends of the uprights thus.



This form of joint seems to recommend itself particularly to the Indian constructive idea everywhere, though scarcely such as would be chosen by one of our Carpenters. The uprights are often about fifteen feet high, with a diameter of about three feet, & it is only when we become acquainted with the fact that a regular bee is held at the erection of the house, that we can account for the movement without machinery of such large logs. The bee is accompanied by a distribution of property on the part of the man for whom the house is being built, well known on the West Coast by the Chinook name Pollatch. Such a house as

the Chinese name, potato. But a horse is  
 being first, well known in the West country  
 of potato in the West of the river. In other the name  
 of potato. There is a description of a distribution  
 for the movement without machinery of land.  
 held out the section of the horse, that the river account  
 of about three feet, out is one, when the horse  
 are after about fifteen feet high, with a diameter  
 chosen by one of our experimenters. The height  
 everywhere, though large, but as we would be  
 particular to the Indian Constitution  
 this form of foot seems to be common and that  
 fitted out the horse, but the height is not  
 a geometrical calculation from a surface  
 height of the horse. The one will have a  
 four other hair height, with a foot supporting  
 supported in forming the horse. The one is usually  
 supported a kind of large horse has been  
 as a means of lighting the interior. One is  
 shells to set against the wind, but there are also  
 Call a little light - an opening in the roof with a  
 inserting upward, passes round of what in way  
 supported in other way, the horse. The horse  
 of some are the occupants of the house to set  
 have built the horse, and will be remarkable  
 sets of wood. In the case of a square roof  
 which is true with the horse, but as horse  
 horse has not, or even with as others, or  
 there are found with other kinds of great size, and



this accommodates several families in our sense of the term, each occupying a certain corner or portion of the interior.

We must return, however, to the Carved posts, which constitute the most distinctive feature of a Haida village. For make one of these a large & sound cedar tree, probably three or four feet in diameter, is chosen somewhere not far from the water's edge, felled, trimmed, & then worked down to the sea. Being launched it is towed to the village site, & by united labour dragged up above high water mark on the beach. It is then stopped & carved, some of the Indians being famous for their skill in this business & earning considerable sums by practicing it. The log is hollowed behind like a trough, to make it light, while the front is generally covered with a mass of grotesque figures in which the animal representing the totem or clan of the person for whom it is made takes a prominent place. It constitutes in fact his coat of arms, & may in some instances be fairly painted. When all is finished the post is taken to its place & firmly planted in the ground, to remain a thing of beauty till under the influence of the climate it becomes grey with age, & hoary with moss & lichen.

The peculiar type of art most fully displayed on the Carved posts is found more or less in all the manufactures of the Haidas. The neat & even elegant wooden dishes, which formerly served all household purposes, embody always some

This arrangement for several families in our town  
 of the town, each occupying a certain corner of  
 further of the corners.  
 The most common however, at the corner of a block  
 consisted the most distinct feature of the  
 village. It was in fact a large of two or three  
 rows, perhaps three or four feet in diameter, so  
 chosen however not far from the water edge,  
 folded, however, a few feet from the sea.  
 being considered it is found at the village, and of  
 which others stopped up with high water mark  
 on the road. It is the object of several, many of  
 the children being famous for their skill in this  
 business of turning, notwithstanding the amount of shouting  
 it. The top is hollowed toward the center, & made  
 it light, with the front is furnished covered with  
 a mass of quills or feathers in which the  
 animal representing the bird is seen in the form  
 of when it is made takes a prominent place.  
 It consists in fact of a cone, & may in  
 some instances be four sided. When it is  
 finished the bird is taken to the place of display  
 placed in the front, to remain a long of hours  
 till under the influence of the winds of change  
 they will fly & away with their victims.  
 The children the great number of displays on the  
 corner of a town were as seen in all the  
 manufacturing of the houses. The best of them  
 spent wooden crates, which however, were  
 all finished in pairs, which always were

peculiar animal forms or grouping of forms more or less complicated as contorted. Though the artist may be able to copy nature faithfully <sup>enough</sup> when he tries, as witnessed in some of the masks used in dancing, he in most cases prefers to follow certain conventional ideas which appear by long usage to have become incorporated with the native mind.

Not the least curious of the customs of the Haidas, & probably with some religious significance, are those connected with dancing ceremonies. It is remarkable too that most of these are said to have been derived from the Ishimians of the neighbouring mainland, a people speaking a language quite distinct, & that within a few years generally at bitter war with the Haidas. The dancing ceremonies are divided, so far as I have been able to learn, into six classes, known respectively as Skā-ga, Skā-dul, Kwai-o-guns-o-lung, Ka-tā-ka-gun, Skā-ut & Hi-att.

Often I have been fortunate enough to see ~~but~~ one, the Kwai-o-guns-o-lung, a description of which, given nearly as written down at the time, may serve to illustrate a class of <sup>performances</sup> ceremonies once common among the native peoples, but which have now almost everywhere passed away.

Standing after dark from our boat at the southern end of the fine sandy beach on which Skidegate village fronts, we found this <sup>part</sup> ~~part~~ of the town apparently quite deserted, but could discern a dim glow of light at a distance, & distinguish the unobtrusive

Here appear the divided into six classes which are being noted as many unorthodox names are necessary here to set down.

The first thing I noticed when I stepped  
 out of the car was a warm blanket of  
 sun on my face. The air was thick with  
 the scent of pine and the distant  
 hum of a lawnmower. I took a deep  
 breath, feeling the world around me  
 come alive.

The sun was high in the sky, casting  
 long shadows across the grass. I  
 walked slowly, savoring the texture of  
 the blades under my feet. The sound  
 of the wind rustling through the trees  
 was a constant reminder of the vastness  
 of the outdoors.

I had heard that the weather was  
 perfect, and it was. The temperature  
 was just what I needed.

The sun was shining brightly, and  
 the air was fresh. I had heard that  
 the weather was perfect, and it was.  
 The sun was shining brightly, and  
 the air was fresh. I had heard that  
 the weather was perfect, and it was.  
 The sun was shining brightly, and  
 the air was fresh. I had heard that  
 the weather was perfect, and it was.

Sound of the drum. Scrambling as best we might  
 in the dark by the path which zig-zags along the  
 front of the row of houses a narrowly escaping fall  
 over various obstacles, we reached the house in which  
 the dance was going on. The door was here a little on  
 the side of the middle of the front, & did not open  
 through the base of the carved post as is generally the  
 case with the older fashioned buildings. Pushing  
 it open, <sup>the door</sup> a glare of light flashed out, which had  
 previously been seen only as it filtered through the  
 various crevices of the house; & entering we found  
 ourselves behind & among the dancers who  
 stood within the house with their backs to the front  
 wall. Edging through them we crossed the open  
 space in which the fire - well supplied with  
 various logs - was burning, & seated ourselves  
 on the floor amidst a crowd of onlookers at the  
 further end. The house was of the usual oblong  
 shape, but was not excavated in the centre as  
 is often the case, but on a level with the ground  
 outside. The floor <sup>was</sup> covered with cedar planks  
 with the exception of a square space in the  
 centre for the fire, & the goods & chattels of the  
 family were piled here & there in heaps along  
 the walls, leaving the greater part of the interior  
 clear.

The dancers, as already stated, occupied the front  
 end of the building while the audience <sup>was arranged</sup> dispersed themselves  
 along the sides & at the further end, ~~was~~ filling  
 almost every available space, squatting in





various attitudes on the floor, & consisting of  
 men women & children of all ages. The smoke of the  
 fire escaped by wide openings in the roof without  
 causing any inconvenience & its glow brightly  
 illuminated the faces & forms full present. The  
 performers, in this instance about twenty in number,  
 were dressed according to the uniform plan, but  
 attired in their best clothes — or at least their  
 best showy ones — with the addition of certain  
 ornaments & badges appropriate to the occasion.  
 All, or nearly all, wore head-dresses variously  
 constructed of twisted cedar bark & ornamented  
 with feathers, or, as in one case with a brilliant  
 circle of the whiskers of the sea-lion. Shoulder-  
 girdles made of cedar bark coloured or  
 ornamented with tassels were very common.  
 One man wore leggings covered with pieces of  
 puffin beaks strung together, which rattled as  
 he moved. Many, if not all, held sprigs of fresh  
 spruce in the hand, & were covered about the  
 head with downy feathers, which also floated  
 in abundance in the warm air of the ~~room~~ house.  
 Some had rattles, & added to the din by shaking  
 these furiously at the accentuated parts of the  
 song. Five women took part in the dance,  
 standing in front in a row & were dressed  
 with some uniformity, several having the  
 peculiarly valuable cedar-bark & goats-wool  
 stowls made by the Ishimians. The head-  
 dresses of the women were all alike, consisting

Various attributes in the face & contour of  
 the nose & chin are of value. The shape of the  
 the nostrils & their opening in the soft part  
 bearing any resemblance to the form of the  
 illustrates the form of the nose & chin. The  
 appearance, in the nostrils about the tip, in shape  
 has been accounted for by the expansion of the  
 bones in this part of the face - but that the  
 part - there are - but the position of certain  
 elements & their appearance to the observer.  
 All on head all nose has - bones forming  
 structure of the face & chin & nose  
 and teeth, as in one case with a  
 Circle of the orbit of the eye - the  
 profile view of the face & chin & nose  
 environment with teeth was the  
 The nose was lying over the bridge of  
 upper lip & being together with teeth as  
 the nose. View of the nose & bridge of the  
 spine in the hand, & was seen about the  
 had not many features, but also features  
 in abundance in the nose as in the nose  
 but had little or none in the air & looking  
 the form of the nostrils part of the  
 nose. The nose took part in the  
 standing in front in a way & was  
 but too prominent, even having the  
 features of the nose & chin & nose  
 stands back of the nostrils, the  
 bones of the nose & chin & nose

in each case a small mask or semblance  
 of a face carved neatly in wood, & inlaid with  
 nearly haliotis shell. These attached to a cedar  
 bark erection & built round with gay feathers &  
 tassets, stood before the forehead, while at the back,  
 in some cases, depended a train with ermine  
 skins. The faces of both men & women engaged in  
 the dance were gaily painted, Vermilion being  
 the favorite colour.

One man, acting as master of the ceremonies,  
 stood in the middle of the back row of performers  
 slightly higher than the rest. He was dressed almost  
 altogether in white, & held in his hand a long wand  
 with which he kept time & led off the singing.  
 A second man held a white stick with a split &  
 trimmed feather at the top. He occupied a prominent  
 place at one side, in the front row of dancers,  
 & seemed to speak in a recitative voice at times  
 when the others merely gave utterance to meaningless  
 sounds.

The performer on the drum, — a flat tambourine-  
 like article framed of hide stretched on a hoop —  
 sat opposite the dancers & near the fire, so that  
 they could mutually see each others movements.  
 The drum was beaten very regularly with double  
 knuckles, thus — turn turn — turn turn — turn turn — &  
 with the sound the dancers kept time in a sort  
 of chant or song to which words are set, & which  
 swells into a full chorus or dies away according  
 to the motions of the <sup>a leader who stays among the dancers</sup> master of the ceremonies, as I

in last case for small amount on bank  
 for five years bank was in order & interest was  
 paid habitually. Then after a while  
 bank was in a bad way and pay  
 interest, then before the bank was  
 in poor case, it was a time with  
 skins. The price of skins was a  
 the skins were paid for in  
 the previous year.

One man, who was a member of the  
 stock in the bank of the bank  
 light lighter than the rest. He was  
 always in white, & he was a  
 man who was not off the  
 ground was a white stick but a  
 business partner at the top. He occupied a  
 place at one side in the bank  
 & seemed to speak in a  
 when the other party for  
 business.

The performance of the bank  
 like article former of which  
 set opposite the business & was  
 the bank was not very  
 but the bank was not very  
 of about a year & a half  
 well into a full year on  
 to the bank of the bank

Love called him, who besides marking time with  
 their steps <sup>gave</sup> a few words of direction or  
 exhortation. For the drumming & singing the  
 dancing also keeps time, following it very closely.  
 At every beat a spasmodic twitch passes through  
 the crowd of dancers, who scarcely ~~move~~ <sup>lift</sup> their feet  
 from the floor but wobble by double jerks, shuffling  
 the feet a little at the same time. Those who dance  
 best — especially the women before referred to —  
 turn about half round in three or four jerks &  
 then turn back again in the next three or four.  
 These women also allow their heads to wobble as  
 though loosely supported on pivots, nodding idiotically  
 as they shuffle about. When the chorus swells to  
faste, the rattles are plied with tenfold vigour  
 & the din becomes very great. After the performance  
 has continued for ten minutes or so the steward  
 of the Ceremonies gives a sign & all suddenly  
 stop with a loud hugh! The dance is again  
 resumed by the perspiring crowd, at the signal  
 of the drum, which strikes up after a few moments  
 rest has been allowed.

The crowd of fairly painted, gaily dressed  
 savages by the kind light of the fire presented on the  
 whole a rather brave & imposing appearance, &  
 when excited in the dance the Haida may yet  
 almost imagine the grand old days to remain  
 when hundreds crowded the villages now occupied  
 by tens, & nothing had eclipsed the grandeur  
 of their ceremonies & doings.



of stories connected with localities, or accounting for various circumstances, there are no doubt very many among the Haidas. Of these <sup>a few</sup> I have been able to collect a few. The fundamental narrative of the origin of man & the beginning of the present state of affairs is the most important of their myths. This, as given below is I believe in all its main points correct, that is to say unaltered from its original traditional form. Minor shades of meaning may in some cases be indefinite, as it was obtained through the medium of the Chinook, aided by what little English my informant was master of.

Very long ago <sup>the day,</sup> there was a great flood by which all men & animals were destroyed, with the exception of a single dove. This creature was not, however, exactly an ordinary bird, but — as with all animals in the old Indian stories — possessed the attributes of a human being to a great extent. His coat of feathers, for instance, could be put on or taken off at will like a garment. It is now related in one version of the story that he was born of a woman who had no husband, & that she made bows & arrows for him. But there, when old enough, he killed birds, & of the skins she sewed a cape or blanket. The birds were the little snow-bird with black head & neck, the large black & red woodpecker, & the Mexican woodpecker. The name of this being was Ne-kil-shtas.

When the flood had gone down Ne-kil-shtas





looked about, but could find neither companions nor a mate, & became very lonely. At last he took a cockle shell from the beach, & marrying it, he constantly continued to brood & think earnestly of his wish for a companion. By & bye in the shell he heard a very faint cry like that of a newly born child, but which gradually became louder, till at last a little female child was seen, which growing by degrees larger & larger was finally married by the roven, & from this union all the Indians were produced & the country peopled.

The people, however, had many wants, & as yet had neither fire, daylight, fresh water, or the oolachen fish. These things were all in the possession of a great chief or deity called Settin-Tki-jash, who lived where the Nassee River now is. Water was first obtained by Ne-Kil-sltas in the following manner. The chief had a daughter, & to her Ne-Kil-sltas covertly made love; & visited her many times unknown to her father. The girl began to love Ne-Kil-sltas very much & trust in him, which was what he desired, & at length when he thought the time ripe, he asked on one occasion for a drink of water, saying that he was very thirsty. The girl brought him the water in one of the closely woven baskets in common use <sup>for that purpose</sup>, but he drank only a little, & setting the basket down beside him waited till the girl fell asleep. Then quickly donning his coat of feathers, & slipping the basket in his beak, he flew



out by the opening made for the smoke in the top of the lodge. He was in great haste, fearing to be followed by the people of the chief, & a little water fell out here & there causing the numerous rivers which are now found, but in the Haida country a few drops only fell, like rain, & so it is that there are no large streams there to this day.

Ne-Kit-sltas next wished to obtain fire, which was also in the possession of the same powerful being or Chief. He did not dare, however, to appear again in the Chief's house, nor did the Chief's daughter longer show him favour. Assuming therefore the form of a single needle-like leaf of the spruce tree he floated on the water near the house, & when the girl - his former lover - came down to draw water, was lifted by her in the vessel she used. The girl drinking the water swallowed without noticing it the little leaf & shortly afterwards bore a child who was no other than the cunning Ne-Kit-sltas, who had thus again obtained an entry into the lodge. Watching his opportunity, he one day picked up a burning brand, & flying out as before by the smoke-hole at the top of the lodge, carried it away & spread fire everywhere.

All this time, however, the people were without daylight, & it was next the object of Ne-Kit-sltas to obtain this for them. This time he tried still another plan. He pretended that he also had light, & continued to assert it though the chief denied

Similar childish stories serve to explain the origin of light & the prisoned soulless fish.

out to the opening bank, to the bank in the top  
 of the gorge. He was in great haste, having to be  
 followed by the people of the chief, & a little while  
 fell out for a time. Coming to the numerous houses  
 which are now found, but in the House camp  
 a few weeks ago, fell the same, & so it is that  
 there are no large streams here to this day.  
 The old-ster had wanted to obtain fire, which  
 was done in the presence of the town  
 being a chief. He did not dare however, to appear  
 again in the chief's house, so he the chief  
 brought the paper down from his house. Consequently  
 therefore the paper was sent to the chief of  
 the house. He had to be on the water here the  
 house, & when the first - his house was - done  
 then the house was, was left by him in the  
 house the same. The first coming to the water the following  
 without getting to the water of a short distance  
 for a chief who was or other than the coming  
 the old-ster, who had then again obtained an  
 copy out of the gorge. Working his opportunity,  
 he one day picked up a burning brand, &  
 flying out to take to the bank - but at the top  
 of the gorge, crossed it away, & appeared fire  
 everywhere.  
 All the time however, the people were waiting  
 daylight, & it was not till the night of the old-ster  
 obtained this for them. This time he took the  
 matter down. He had seen that he was not left  
 & continued to travel to the top of the gorge.

The old-ster  
 was the first  
 to see the  
 paper of fire & to  
 bring it down.

the truth of his statement. He, however, in some way made an object bearing a resemblance to the moon, which, while all the people were out fishing on the sea in the perpetual night, he allowed to be partly seen from under his coat of feathers. It cast a faint glimmer across the waters, which the people & Sittin-Ki-jish though was caused by a veritable moon. Disfuted at finding he was not the sole possessor of light, & losing all conceit of his property, the great chief immediately placed the sun & moon where we now see them.

One thing more, much desired, still remained in the possession of Sittin-Ki-jish — the oolachen, a little fish highly prized by the Indians of the North-west Coast as a source of edible oil. Now the shag was a friend or companion of the chief & had access to his property, including his store of oolachens. Ne-Kil-shtas contrived that the sea-gull & the shag should quarrel, by telling each that the other had spoken evil of him. At last he got them together, when, after an angry conversation they followed his advice & began to fight. Ne-Kil-shtas knew that the shag had an oolachen in his stomach & so urged the combatants to fight harder & to lie on their backs & strike out with their feet. This they did, & finally the shag threw up the oolachen, which Ne-Kil-shtas immediately seized. Making a canoe from a rotten log, he smeared it & himself with the scales of the oolachen, & then coming at night near the great chief's lodge

the death of his father. He however, in some  
 long walks in the night during a storm, the  
 snow, which all the people were not going  
 on the sea in the forepart of the night, he  
 found that there were his coat of feathers. He  
 sent a great number across the water, which the  
 people of Little-Nick thought was caused by a  
 hostile power. He found that the coat was not  
 the same as of light, or having all round of  
 his feathers, the first chief understood the  
 the same as in the case we saw the same.  
 One day more, some time, the same  
 in the forepart of Little-Nick - the other  
 a little bit of the feathers of the  
 part was sent as a mark of tribute to the  
 the ship was a friend or companion of the ship  
 has seen to the forepart, including his  
 of feathers. He has the feathers that the  
 he said a the ship was general of things but  
 that the other was spoken out again. It was  
 for the feathers, when the ship was  
 the feathers his advice before to fight. He  
 him that the day but in order in his  
 a he says the feathers of fight have a to be  
 on their backs a strike out with their feet. This  
 the day a little the day then up the other  
 with Little-Nick immediately said. Nothing  
 a canoe from a better way. He however is a  
 himself with the feathers of the other, a then  
 coming in night near the great chief's

said that he was very cold & wanted to come in & warm himself, as he had been making a great Catch of *oolachens* which he had left somewhere not far off. Setten-Ke-jan said that this could not be true as he only possessed the fish, but Ne-kil-letta invited the Chief to look at his clothes & at his canoe. Finding both covered with scales the Chief became convinced that *oolachens* indeed were true which he had must exist, & again in disgust at finding he had not the monopoly, he turned all the *oolachens* loose, saying, at the same time, that every year they would come in vast numbers & continue to show his liberality & be a monument to him. This they have never failed to do since that time.

This Handa story of the origin of things is substantially the same with that which I have been told by Indians of the Siwash stock in the northern part of the interior of British Columbia. My surprise on hearing it gradually unfolded as a Handa myth was very great. It would be hazardous to theorise on the cause of this similarity in tribes so distant & so dissimilar in habits, but it is certain that both its versions are derived from a common source not very remote. As is always the case with these aboriginal stories a local colouring has been given to the narrative of the Handas, & the story of the *oolachen* is an addition to that which I have heard from the Siwash. It shows the great value set on this fish that it should be cleared





among the primary necessities of existence,  
such as light, water & fire.

Ne-kil-sltas of the Haidas is represented in  
function & name by Us-tas of the Carrier Tsimsh.  
Of Us-tas an almost endless series of grotesque  
& often disgusting adventures are related, &  
analogous tales are reported about Ne-kil-sltas.

One of these tells of a man that having disguised himself  
as a dead raven, & floating upon the surface of the  
sea, he was swallowed by a whale, which, by  
violent pains being then induced to strand  
himself became a prey to the Haidas, & visible  
Ne-kil-sltas meanwhile walking out of the whale's  
belly at the proper moment.

The collection &  
study of

Such details as <sup>are</sup> true above given concerning the  
habits customs & thoughts of a people semi-barbarous,  
& disappearing even before our eyes in the  
universal mainstream of civilization, may seem  
to be of little importance. They lead, however, into  
a wide & interesting region of speculation, embracing  
the question of the origin & interrelation of the American  
aborigines, their wanderings, & all the unwritten  
pages of their history, which we can hope to know  
~~more~~ even by the most careful inquiry, only  
in their outlines. We are led to ask ourselves  
in particular <sup>in regard to the Haidas</sup> what has been the origin of the  
grotesque but highly conventionalized art which  
exhibits itself in many of the works of these people, &  
the social customs, which with a power almost  
as strong as that of fashion among ourselves.

Causes them to devote so much of their time to  
ceremonies apparently meaningless but which  
serve to form the bonds & rough working machinery  
of society among them. Have there been traces of  
a people who —

"Flying, found shelter in the Fortunate Isles,  
And left their usages, their arts & laws.  
To disappear by a slow gradual death,  
To dwindle & to perish one by one"  
Starved in their narrow bounds."

or have they been developed slowly in a community  
separated from the human stock at a very early  
period, & might they, — had they never been brought  
face to face with a superior power — have grown in  
the course of ages into an independent civilization  
like that of Mexico or Peru? We can never hope  
to answer such questions fully, but in regard  
to these people of the North-West Coast we know  
that there are on record several instances in  
which Japanese junk's driven by the prevailing  
winds & currents have been carried across  
the whole breadth of the North Pacific, and that  
the passage across Behring's Strait to the  
North is short, & is even occasionally at the  
present day made on the winter ice by the Esquimaux.  
It is therefore very stem probable that people,  
with their rude arts, may from time to  
time have been borne to the western coast  
of America, & that it is to Eastern Asia  
that we must look for the origin of its peoples.



One question at least, of a practical character must be answered for the Haidas & other similarly situated tribes of the North-west Coast. What is to be done with them? It is probable that they have already nearly reached that Critical point of their first contact with the whites, beyond which they cease to diminish, & may begin to increase in numbers. It would be a mistake to attempt to bring these people back into a state of tutelage such as that which has resulted in keeping some of our Eastern Indians in a condition nearly stationary, with regard to civilization, for a period of one or two hundred years. They do not require reserves of arable land, for though having strict ideas of their proprietary right in their native islands they are essentially fishermen. Some amicable arrangement must, in the first instance be made for the land, while the people are taught to cure their fish in such a way that it will have a merchantable value, instructed to become artisans — for in handicraft the Haidas show a special aptitude — & encouraged to become sailors. —

George W. Dawson.

MUA

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The first part of the paper is devoted to a general  
 consideration of the problem of the origin of  
 the human mind. It is shown that the mind  
 is not a simple entity, but a complex  
 of many different parts, each of which  
 has its own special functions. The paper  
 then proceeds to a detailed study of the  
 various faculties of the mind, and shows  
 how they are all interconnected and  
 dependent upon each other. The author  
 concludes by pointing out that the mind  
 is a very mysterious and complex  
 organ, and that we are still in the  
 beginning of our knowledge of its  
 powers and functions.

John D. Brown

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