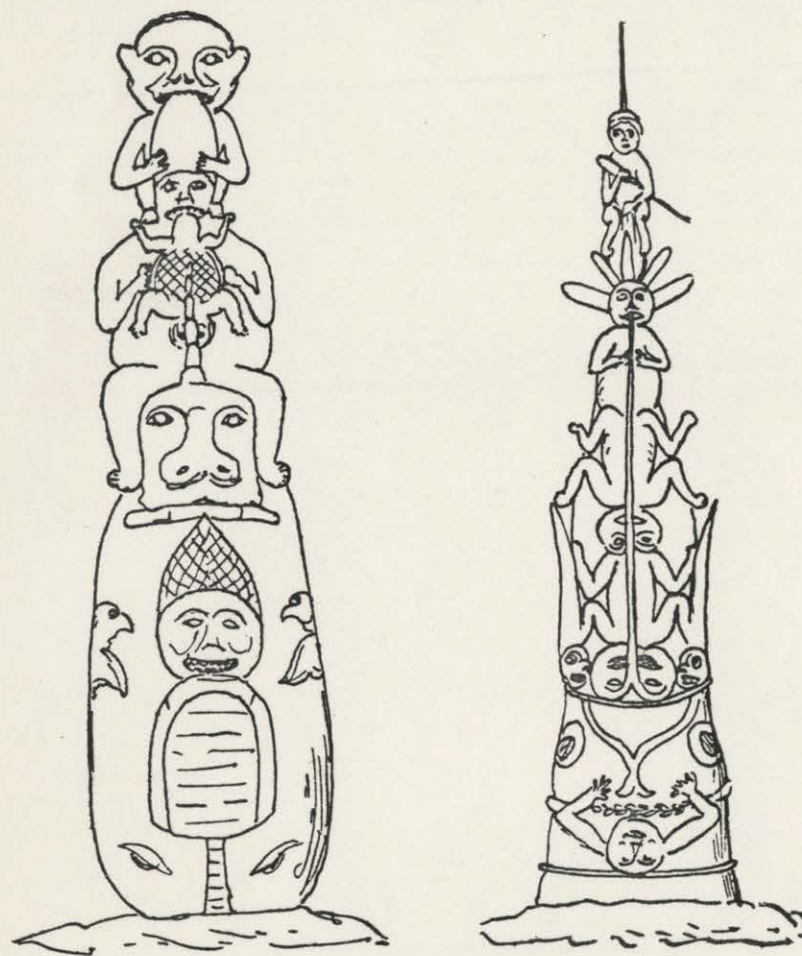


and novel were the wooden carvings that stood above the entrance of almost every house; the grotesque designs showed much ability. These carvings seem to take the place of coats of arms, since no two of them are alike. The quaint images placed in a curious manner one above another and carved on a single tree-stem were sometimes 20 feet high and more, and rose considerably above the huts, whose apparently quite small entrances were between the carvings.

Over the houses of the Methlakatla chief was a copper plaque with an eagle on it, and beneath the name of the owner the motto: "My crest is the eagle, the king of the birds"—truly a proud device! The houses are all very large and can shelter 20-25 persons comfortably. Those which stand by the water's edge are built on piles, and when at high tide the water sweeps under them they can only be reached by means of ladders.

We did not go into the houses, as our guide advised us not to do so on account of smallpox and scarlet fever, which was rampant at the time. But we were everywhere received with a friendliness that bordered on respect, and my sketches seemed very greatly to interest the Indians who stood round me. It was quite amusing to see how, looking over my shoulder, they were delighted when they thought they saw that the drawing resembled the original and they called my attention to any instance in which they thought I had overlooked any detail of the carvings.

The people whom we did manage to see were very sturdy and well-grown, many of them being quite six feet high without their shoes; and as a whole they seemed quite superior to the Indians whom we had met hitherto. All the men and women wore as their sole garment a blanket sometimes decked with beads. The squaws generally had silver bangles and rings on their arms and feet and in a few cases through the ears and nose. The children, even the bigger ones, went about quite naked. The boys exercised themselves with bows and arrows, whilst the girls plaited and sewed. Amongst the older people many of the



Fort Simpson
INDIAN CARVING, FORT SIMPSON.

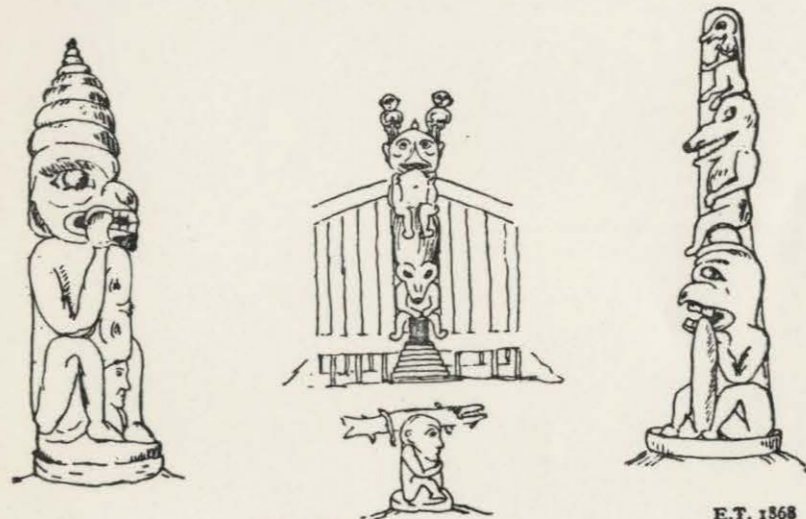
with the unscrupulous whites and consequently—this was our friend's conclusion—it was with great regret that he saw any intercourse between strangers and his Indians. As appeared later, our captain, who had spent a night on shore amongst the Indians, had behaved disgracefully, and it was probably his conduct which had given rise to Mr. Cunningham's remarks. There was complaint also against one of our sailors, who had wisely not put in an appearance at the fort. A short time previously he had been at Fort Simpson in company with a French trader in a small merchant vessel, and during his stay had sought to form a liaison with the squaw of the captain of his boat; and when the jealous husband threatened to shoot him he was compelled suddenly to leave the ship (in which he had a share) and take refuge on land. Being entirely without resources he was looked after in the fort and promised a passage to Victoria on the next steamer of the Company. Instead of showing himself grateful for this kindness he left the fort without saying good-bye, spent several days in the company of some dissolute Indians and finally joined an Indian trail to the south, whereby he got to Victoria.

Thus we got an even poorer opinion of our two sailors than we had had before and our confidence in them was entirely destroyed. Yet we were probably bound to these wretches for some weeks to come.

FORT SIMPSON—III.

Meanwhile the messenger came back to the fort and brought with him only one old Indian who was ready to go with us as pilot. From our conversation with this man, in which the Factor acted as interpreter, it appeared that many of the "Bucks" in the settlement knew the way but none of them were disposed to make the journey with us because of the Stikeen Indians who dwelt midway along the route to Sitka and with whom they were in open feud. The old man who *was* ready to go proved, on cross-examination, not to have been at Sitka himself, and

only once, as he explained in rather an original manner, had he seen from a distance the mountains behind which he was told Sitka was situated. We could, of course, not conceal the fact that we were reluctant to trust ourselves to such a guide and as Mr. Cunningham, who clearly knew the character of his Indians, held out no prospect of overcoming their timidity, there was nothing for us to do except try our luck with the next Indian tribe, the Tongass. Possibly some of the soldiers landed at Tongass by the *Oriflamme* which had passed Fort Simpson, some eight days before, could help us to find a pilot.



INDIAN CARVING, FORT SIMPSON.

E.T. 1368

Accompanied by the Factor and despite the rainy weather (which seems to be the general rule here) we went to the Indian town to buy a canoe to replace the small boat which we had lost at Nanaimo and missed greatly whenever we wanted to land. The canoe, together with paddles and a bailer, we obtained for six dollars. The vendor was credited at the fort with the amount which we paid to the Factor.

I could not lose the opportunity of making some sketches of the fort and its surroundings. Particularly interesting