

# The Chemawa American,

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### A Typical Village.

Last Sunday's Examiner contains a historical sketch of the town of Metlakethla, Alaska, by Herbert Bashford, and entitled, "Wonderful Work Achieved by Wm. Duncan in Alaska with Chimayan Tribe of Indians."

William Duncan, more commonly known as Father Duncan, was sent to Alaska in 1857, as a missionary. He was sent among the Chimyan Indians, and stationed at Fort Simpson. Finding these Indians in the lowest state of barbarity, he at once set about to improve their conditions and by his kindly friendship at once won their confidence. Fort Simpson at that time was a trading post established by the Hudson Bay Co., which brought with it only those evil qualities of civilization that serve to destroy and degrade. To avoid these evil influences, Father Duncan chose fifty followers among his converts and left the post for Annette island, four years later, where the village of Metlakethla was founded. Following Father Duncan's work from the time he went among these people in 1857 the writer, in giving the result of this faithful man's efforts 46 years later, says in part:

This Arcadian hamlet, which attracts the especial attention of tourists who visit Alaska, and the fame of which is by no means restricted to our country, contains about 300 houses, the greater number of them of pretentious dimensions, neatly painted and decidedly modern in their furnishings. The church is a stately edifice. A comfortable rectory adjoins it. There is a spacious public hall, a schoolhouse built after the most approved models and several handsome structures used for business purposes for Metlakethla is commer-

cial as well as industrial.

There are stores conducted entirely by the natives which carry groceries and general merchandise. All the imposing structures to be seen here were built by the Indians with the lumber sawed and planed in the mill operated by them, the machinery of which they put into place and thoroughly understand. Father Duncan has conducted along with his religious work an industrial school, teaching the villagers the arts necessary to their comfort, and dividing the fruits of their labor among them. Under the co-operative plan formulated by him a salmon cannery was established which is, perhaps, the most noteworthy of the town's various industries. This cannery is scrupulously neat and clean, doubtless owing to the watchfulness of the superintendent when it was first put in operation—although the work is done throughout by the natives. The cans are made, filled, soldered, varnished, labeled and packed for shipment by these former savages.

A steam launch used in towing the fishing boats to the cannery is manned by the swarthy parishioners of the white-haired missionary.

The bewildering mechanism of the marine engine has been mastered by some of these once-savage natives.

The Metlakethla salmon bring the highest price in the London market. Thousands of cases are being shipped to foreign ports each year, with a constantly increasing demand from home buyers.

The women of Metlakethla have been taught to spin and weave. The fleece of the mountain goat is woven into shawls, blankets and cloths of various kinds.

Boots, shoes and leather goods of fine quality are among the many articles manufactured by these natives, many of whom

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