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INDIAN KILLER ONCE TERROR OF PITT LAKE
NANAIMO NATIVE RIVALLED DEEDS OF AUSTRALIAN
BUSHRANGERS
BY V. HARBORD HARBORD

**Indian Killer Once Terror
of Pitt Lake**

Made business of secret murder

Recently Mr. S.A. Fletcher wrote a very interesting article for the Province on the last of the Pitt River Indians, and it attracted the attention of Mr. Jason Allard who knows all there is to be known of Fraser Valley Indians.

He knew Slumach, the Indian desperado, by repute. Slumach and his brother were born in S'Nanigmo—known now as Nanaimo—their father being an Indian of the Pitt River and [Pitt] Lake lodges. They grew up to manhood there, when Slumach's murderous career started. Living up the Nanaimo River, any stragglers from the main village of Nanaimo were murdered secretly by Slumach, for no apparent reason beyond the fact, that he liked to be monarch of all he surveyed. Caught in the act of killing an Indian, he had quite a hectic time making his escape, as he was shot twice in the same place and had to do some fine work playing dead in his canoe and then diving and swimming under water. He evidently had made a study of the ways of the animals he had hunted and put his knowledge into practice. Finding life unhealthy after this, he went to his brother's lodge and persuaded him to accompany him to Pitt Lake. They then became outcasts and led a life that rivals anything the Kelly gang of Australia ever did. Living like hermits, they murdered everyone that ventured into their territory. The name Slough Mough (Slumach) means "rain." His brother's name was S'Mamqua, which means "ceremonial undertaker," rather an appropriate name.

When one has seen the weirdly beautiful scenery of Pitt Lake, it does not require a very powerful imagination to make these two strange brothers act their parts; two veritable Ishmaels, who knew the wilds and hated mankind with a consuming hatred.

Desperado's Manners Were Polished

One would imagine that such men would be dead to all manners, but Mr. Jason Allard was Slumach's jailer, when, taken at last for the murder of Louie Poll-al-ee, a half-bred Kanaka, he had to face the justice of the white man. Mr. Allard says that he was a most charming personality, with the manners of a French dancing master. When first captured he behaved

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just as any other wild creature would do. He would neither eat, take his medicine, nor talk. In his cell, he still more closely recalled the creatures of the wild. With long hair, he had wonderfully large eyes which reminded Mr. Allard of the eyes of the grey lynx. All through the days of his captivity he continued to exhibit the same good manners, and when he was sentenced to be hanged, he gave every indication of being quite content with the sentence. He told Mr. Allard that the young man he had killed had tantalized him on ever occasion, calling him horrible names such as no one could put up with.

After the murder of the half-bred Kanaka, Slumach took to the woods and was missing once more. His cabin was searched and all kinds of clothing found, including a convict's suit of clothes. Did he murder him, or help him to escape? The chances are that he murdered him and the lake scenery saw an outlaw hunting and killing an outlaw. One can picture the wild terror of the convict being hunted by this long-haired, strange creature. The country is wild enough to have terrified him half out his mind as it was. So, Slumach died, and the "rain" was over—the rain of countless tears shed by the relatives of those he had murdered.

Chose Graveyard to do His Courting

The brother, S'Mamqua got his peculiar name "ceremonial undertaker," owing to the fact that he always chose the graveyard to do his courting. It was this brother that Mr. Fletcher met and so graphically described. He was the man who used to go away for days at a time to commune with the spirits or the Great Spirit. He had apparently no great love for the white man, but could be hospitable even to them in his own home. It was fitting that a forest fire should burn his corpse and last resting place for he belonged to the wilds and its terrors.

Slumach died and with him died the secret of a great gold mine somewhere up in that wild Pitt Lake country. Had Mr. Allard only known that this prisoner knew of its existence, he might have become a very wealthy man, for the murderer, with his fine manners, would undoubtedly have told him where it was. Slumach was not given to talking, however, and he never boasted about the number of scalps he had taken.

There was a slight difference in the way the names of these two brothers are spelt. Mr. Allard, who tells their story, spells them slightly differently, as he tells his story, but that does not alter its interest. The old Hudson's Bay factor has dozens of such tales to tell, and one does not interrupt him to ask

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questions—to do so would be to bring him back from the land of Indian legends, a land wherein he delights to linger. The day will come when someone will write a book on the Fraser Valley and Mr. Allard's characters will live again.
