

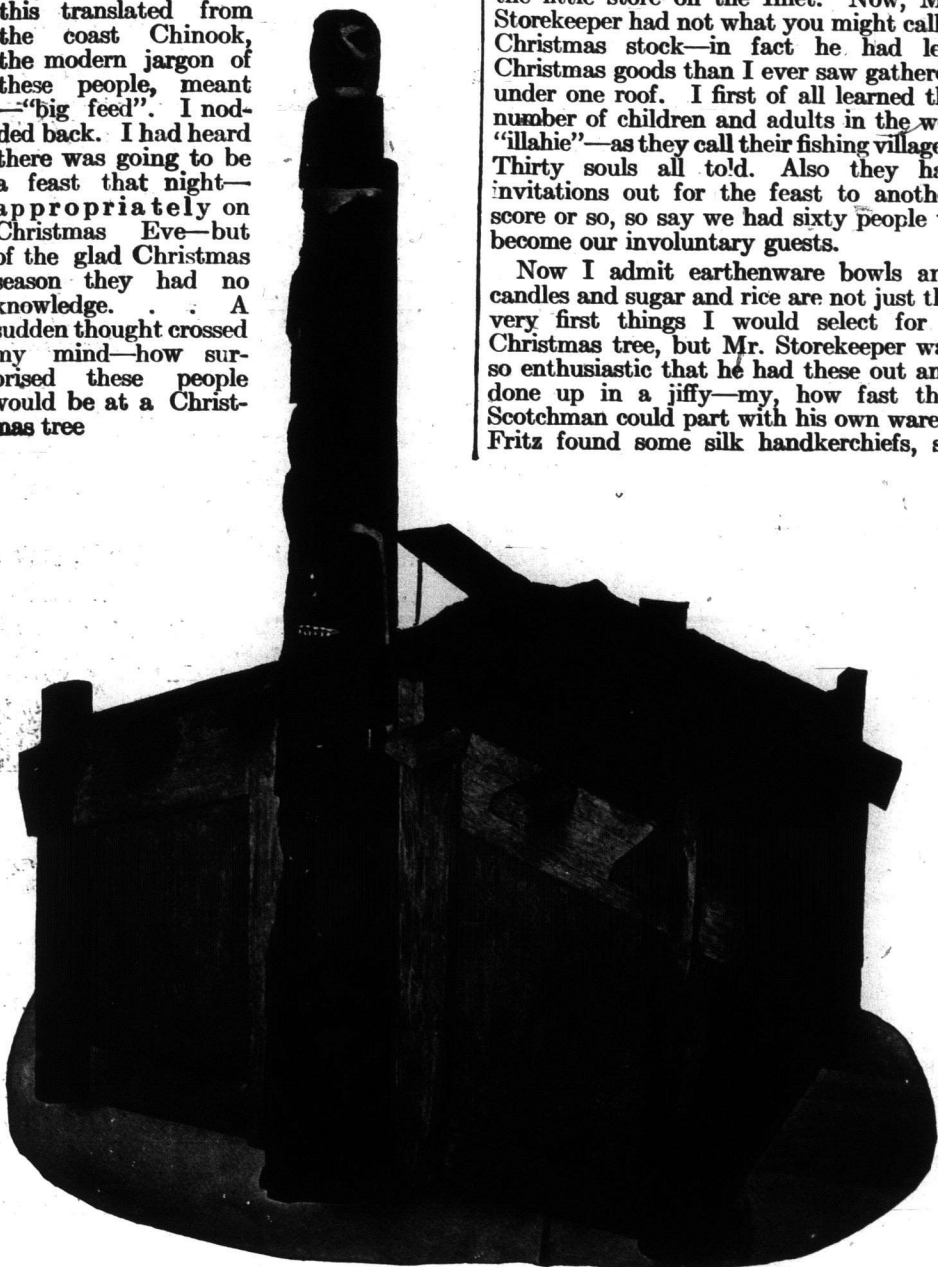
Could this possibly be Christmastide, I asked Fritz. All about us lay the forest primeval, green, luxuriant. How could it be Christmas time when for miles up and down this Coast the fiords and inlets were inhabited by people that, in their native state, knew not a God, neither the true God of the white man nor the Manitou of the Red Indian. These brown-faced semi-Oriental people have no God.

Fritz and I walked on, past the big rambling Potlatch House. The lad's bright eyes noted the dried salmon swinging in the wind, the big tub of Devil-fish (giant squid) tentacles near the door, the great heap of freshly gathered clams and cockles and mussels upon the sand—"Hyas Muck-a-muck," he called to me—this translated from the coast Chinook, the modern jargon of these people, meant—"big feed." I nodded back. I had heard there was going to be a feast that night—appropriately on Christmas Eve—but of the glad Christmas season they had no knowledge. A sudden thought crossed my mind—how surprised these people would be at a Christmas tree

Kwulh," I called to Fritz. "Please wait here for me." The old man, although a native, is susceptible to bribery, so in a way untold I managed to get him to fall in with my idea, and he rented me the Potlatch house, feast and all. I hurried back to the Captain and in a few words told him of my plans, gave him full and copious instructions—he almost spoke once—the last I saw of him and the mate they were ambling down the shore laden with axe and rope, pulley and saw—in fact they were almost hurrying.

Fritz threw on the power in the "Terra Nova"—her enemies call her the "Turn Over" but she never did—at least not while we were on her, and off we sped for the little store on the Inlet. Now, Mr. Storekeeper had not what you might call a Christmas stock—in fact he had less Christmas goods than I ever saw gathered under one roof. I first of all learned the number of children and adults in the wee "illahie"—as they call their fishing villages. Thirty souls all told. Also they had invitations out for the feast to another score or so, so say we had sixty people to become our involuntary guests.

Now I admit earthenware bowls and candles and sugar and rice are not just the very first things I would select for a Christmas tree, but Mr. Storekeeper was so enthusiastic that he had these out and done up in a jiffy—my, how fast this Scotchman could part with his own wares. Fritz found some silk handkerchiefs, so



Model of the true Kwakiutl House with the family totem pole in front

This idea recurred to me at each step over the yielding sand. Ahead of us lay the little village, a mere cluster of beach-combed cabins—the harvest of the sea, gleaned from flotsam and jetsam. Some from the white man's mills, some from the tide, some from the cedar tree in form or shakes for the roofs—all copies of white man's work.

As we approached we found the little ones intent on a game of—well we would call it "Duck-on-the-Rock"—they had a funny name for it in the Chinook—remember this language is a manufactured one, from Kwakiutl, French, English and Spanish—"Hant-mit-lite-stone" they called it. Anyhow away flew rock and duck and boys and all upon our approach, as they seem afraid of unknown whitemen. However, their curiosity made them return and Fritz soon had them looking through the marine glass and into the lens of the big camera. I snapped them when they were running. Still that thought held sway—What would they think of a Christmas tree?

The captain and mate of the little vessel I had hired to transport me along this rude coast came rolling along just then and I put the question to him. It always takes time to get an idea through the headpiece of the Captain—after a few footshiftings and trouser hoistings and the installation of a new cud of tobacco he broke forth with "Good," he is always so garrulous.

"We have an axe," I suggested. "There is also a store up the inlet and we have a little filthy lucre."

Another "Good," and the mate almost spoke—so I considered things looked favorable. "I am going back to see

weird, so insanely colored that we felt an apology was necessary to our guests if we gave them. Bags of flour are not just glittering tree ornaments—but these paper bags were well ornamented with the name of the miller in various colors. Soap—it does not appeal to me as Christmassy enough—but the man works fast and it is papered ere I could venture my weak objection. Nails—Now, Fritz, we must insist—too late—the man has them bundled. We bought a little of everything from candy to socks, hairoil to canned peaches—and by great good luck we found a lot of clippings of all sorts of colored paper in a packing case in the warehouse—there were just fourteen toys—they were so faded and decrepit-looking that my heart almost failed—but the man's nimble fingers did not—he evidently looked on me as some insane person—perfectly harmless, that had to be humored. We "put-put-puttered" out of the little Inlet with a goodly part of his stock aboard.

When we arrived at the Potlatch House there was no sign of any change in the interior, so we cached the goods on one of the wooden platforms that surrounded the earthen firehole in the centre of the huge room and off we set for the boat again. Lo, the Captain has a noble idea, the Mate is almost eloquent in his nods and shruggings and coughs, and I joyfully agree—a little case is lugged out of the boat and off roll the two sailor men towards the big cedar house once more.

All during that bright December day high-prowed canoes arrived and were anchored in a little inlet near the Potlatch House. Ancient men of the tribe and their "Kloutchmen" arrived—silently,



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