

to the potlatch proper, always necessarily the most flexible part of a ceremonial), partly to the exercise of varying *topāti* features, and partly owing to differences in the exact rendering of ceremonial elements that depend on the varying traditions of different families (thus, in a puberty ceremonial that took place two weeks later among the *Ts!icā'atn* there were only one thunder-bird dancer and four "torches").

We left the pubescent girl at the end of the "torch" ceremony. The rest of this paper may be appropriately taken up with a brief account of the menstrual seclusion and taboos that were formerly rigidly enforced but are now only laxly, if at all, attended to. At the puberty ceremonial the girl is supposed to wear over her forehead an ornamented head-band known as a *ts!isāsīm*⁵. This consists of a horizontal row of strips of sea-lion or other skin strung with dentalia; sometimes the head-band of a chief's daughter consists of two such rows, one being less in length than the other. The *ts!isāsīm*⁵ is covered solid with dentalia for its full length around the head. For the first four days following the "torch" ceremony (a period known as *'aitsaqō'i*) the girl must stay behind the painted boards (or mat screen) night and day. During this period she must not eat or drink anything; she must not sleep, but must remain seated with folded arms; she must not scratch her body with her fingers, but must use a cedar-stick scratcher (*kits'yak*) for the purpose. An even number of girls (generally six, eight, ten or twelve) sit with her and sing *!amā* songs for her more or less continuously; they are known as *'aitsō'i*. Older women sit around in front of the boards and help sing; the father or guardian of the girl pays the girls and women for their singing. No men are allowed behind the boards. The girl is allowed to go out of the house for the necessities of nature only once during the twenty-four hours, at night, so that no one may see her.

At the end of this period of rigorous seclusion, the pubescent girl, often accompanied by three or four other girls in the same condition as herself, goes out unseen to a creek and takes ten or other appropriate number of bunches of hemlock branches (*fič!im*⁵), each of which she ties about at one end. She washes herself vigorously with each of these once, then lays them down against a log with their "heads" pointing to the east. This is supposed to keep her from getting old quickly. Bathing and rubbing oneself with hemlock branches are (or were) very frequently indulged in by the West Coast Indians in connection with secret prayers for health, long life, or powers of various sorts. The bathing of the girl cleanses her from the impurity of her condition and marks the end of the first period of taboo. She is now termed *'aits!āt* "one who has done with her menstrual (period)." In distributing the gifts at the main (second) puberty potlatch the speaker always