



A Household God in Alert Bay

ed to drop open on state occasions. At the time of the potlatch, by dint of much writhing and wriggling, the "braves" make their entrance to the house of entertainment through the "Thunder-bird's" open mouth.

It requires but little imagination to see how this beak might be converted into a diabolical trap. Indeed, there is a story common in Alert Bay that at one time a tribe of enemies were invited to "potlatch" and treacherously slain, a man at a time, as they entered the house through the beak, the arrangement being such that no

Indian on the outside knew what was happening till he received his death wound. The entire number of guests were thus wiped out.

Standing before the bird, mystery shrouding the crude mechanism, you feel that it was designed for some such *coup d'etat* as the one cited. It is so simple and so subtle withal. Every time you see an Indian pass it, stolid and reserved he seems to glance that way with satisfaction. Proud that here among his people should be a device that holds the interest of the *white* man, to the extent of repeated