

ands, the facts which could be obtained as to the *potlatch* or donation-feast of these Indians and of the Tshimsian were detailed. This custom is common to all the coast tribes of this part of North America, and has extended, though in a less marked form, into the interior of the continent. The main features of the custom are probably identical, or nearly so, among all the tribes of the British Columbia coast. They are certainly nearly the same with the Haida, Tshimsian, and Kwakiool peoples. Among the latter, this ceremony is known as *pus-a* or *ya-hooit*, these terms probably denoting special forms of the ceremony appropriate to certain occasions.

As a particular instance of the custom, let us suppose that a Nim'-kish, of Alert Bay, has collected together as his own, or obtained control of, say, five hundred blankets, and wishes to make a potlatch to the Fort Rupert tribes. He goes to the Fort Rupert village and makes known his intention of distributing a thousand blankets at a certain date. He begins by lending out his stock of five hundred blankets, giving larger numbers to those who are well off, and particularly to such as are known to have the intention of giving a potlatch in return. This loan is reckoned a debt of honor, to be paid with interest at the proper time. It is usual to return two blankets for every one borrowed, and Indians with liberal ideas may return even more. The greater the number of blankets loaned out to any individual, the more he knows that his wealth and standing are appreciated by the stranger, who, later on, taking with him a thousand or more blankets, returns to his home at Alert Bay; at which place also, in due time, the Fort Rupert people arrive. The potlatch does not, however, then occur at once, as much preliminary talk, ceremony, and feasting are in order, and the Nim'-kish must entertain their visitors—first one and then another volunteering feasts and diversions. It may also, very probably, happen that delay arises because the man about to give the potlatch has not obtained the requisite number of blankets, many being owing to him and others having been promised by friends whom he is obliged to dun. The Fort Rupert people, becoming weary of waiting, lend all the weight of their influence to coerce the debtors into payment, and these may, in the end, be forced to borrow from others to enable them to redeem their pledges—all such arrangements leading to interminable haggling and worry. At length, however, all is ready, and, with the accompaniment of much bombastic speech-making and excitement, the mass of blankets is distributed in exact proportion to the social position of those taking part—or, what is the same thing, in proportion to their individual contributions.

To surpass the man who has last given a potlatch, and acquire a superior standing to his, the next aspirant must endeavor to