

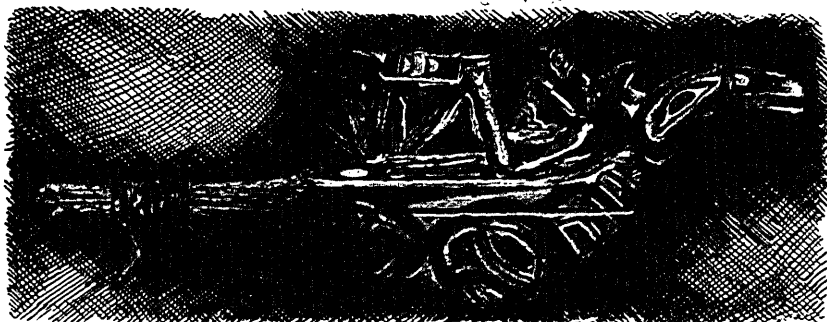
silently stolen away, taking with them much of our firewood.

Mr. Taylor decided to return home, and we accompanied him to Sitka. There I reëngaged Sam and Myers, and, obtaining a new crew, returned at once to a bay about twenty miles south-east of Mount Fairweather. My purpose was to explore the bay, cross the coast range, and strike the upper waters of Chilkáht. On the shores of the bay we found hospitality with a band of Hoonáhs. Leaving the crew with our large canoe under the charge of Myers at this place, I took a smaller one and went with Cocheen, the chief of the band, north-westerly up the bay. After about forty miles' travel we came to a small village of Asónques. They received us with great hospitality, and as our canoe had been too small to carry any shelter, the head man gave me a bed in his own cabin. He had a great many wives, who busied themselves making me comfortable. The buckskin reinforcement of my riding trowsers excited childish wonder. I drew pictures of horses and men separate, and then of men mounted on horses. Their astonishment over the wonderful animal was greater than their delight at comprehending the utility of the trowsers. The Alaskan women are childish and pleasant, yet quick-witted and capable of heartless vindictiveness. Their authority in all matters is unquestioned. No bargain is made, no expedition set on foot, without first consulting the women. Their veto is never disregarded. I bought a silver-fox skin from Tsa-tate, but his wife made him return the articles of trade and recover the skin. In the same way I was perpetually being annoyed by having to undo bargains because "his wife said *clekh*," that is, "no." I hired a fellow to take me about thirty miles in his canoe, when my own crew was tired. He agreed. I paid him the tobacco, and we were about to start when his wife came to the beach and stopped him. He quietly unloaded the canoe and handed me back the



THLINKIT WOMAN. (SITKA KWÁHN.)

tobacco. The whole people are curious in the matter of trade. I was never sure that I had done with a bargain, for they claimed and exercised the right to undo a contract at any time, provided they could return the consideration received. This is their code among themselves. For example: I met at the mouth of the Chilkáht a native trader who had been to Fort Simpson, about six hundred miles away, and failing to get as much as he gave in the interior of Alaska for the skins, was now returning to the interior to find the first vender and revoke the whole transaction. Among themselves their currency is a species of wampum, worth about twenty dollars a string, beaver-skins worth about a dollar a skin, and sable or marten worth about two dollars a skin. From the whites they get blankets worth four dollars apiece, and silver dollars; gold they will not touch (except around Sitka and Wrangell), but they accept copper and silver. They are a laughing, good-natured people,



SHAMÁN'S RATTLE. (ASÓNQUE KWÁHN.)