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High Prowed Canoes arrived

noiselessly—only the youngsters gave voice to their odd clacking tongue. I peeped into the big house once—all was as we found it in the morning—save a little garret room near the roof at one end—a ladder and a couple of dangling ends of ropes.

Christmas Eve at last. How we longed and pined for our own firesides—alas, they were thousands of miles away, and heart-felt greetings were all we could send. At five o'clock the feast was in full swing—Fritz and I just peeped in. All along the rude platform the old and the young were feasting. The sea had sent the squid and the shellfish, the crab and the skate. The great hills had presented the deer and grouse, the squirrel and the quail, stream had sent as its Christmas gift m., a salmon; these had been smoked and were eaten co'd. The lagoon gave of its wild-fowl, as did the beach, and duck and goose, oyster catcher and plover, gull and plover were there in quantity. The silver of the white man had bought pilot biscuits and there were "ashcakes" too. With much clacking of tongues the feast progressed.

Now the great fires are roaring in the centre and two long lines of males and females are swaying and bowing in the old-



The Kwakiutl village children running past the Totems, fearing our approach

time dance—out go all the right hands and the walls are covered with many grotesque shadows—

"Nika Potlatch Yaka" sing the men—"Klahowya"—"Klahowya" answer the Klootchmen. "I will give" was the burden of the men's songs, and "thanks" and "how are you" the answer of the women. After this dance had been kept up until both lines showed signs of exhaustion, the real "Potlatch" or "Gift Feast" began. The old canim builder gave to each guest a handful of our money. I should think he gave away fully a thousand dollars—I have known a host to give four thousand. His gun, his canoes, his blankets—every-

thing that he owned he gave away, freely and smilingly to his dusky guests—truly this was threatening to lapse into a wonderful gift feast. Now his guests began to repay the favors they had received from each other during the year. They paid them back with huge interest, ten-fold, an hundred-fold. A perfect carnival of gift-giving took place—a riot of generosity almost unbelievable to our staring eyes. Piles of blankets changed owners p with lightning-like rapidity. The young gave their little all, truly a frenzy had seized the simple people—but I found out later that this custom is of ancient origin. Now the dance is about to start again, to be kept up until the sun peeps over the tall Olympics, but the old host has a word to say. He said it in the true Kwakiutl language and, although I have their clacking tongue noted down I will give you the English sense only.

The great dim hall quieted down as the old man made his way towards the huge fires in the centre. He raised his spare old brown arm and silence fell on the throng—

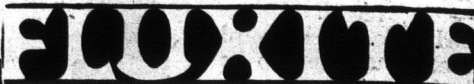
"Here are four white men. They tell that in their country this day is the great Potlatch Day. They wish to make Potlatch with us."

All the dusky figures seated themselves upon the platforms. I had seen two dark figures climb the ladder to the little room that had been built on the poles at the end of the great hall. I missed Fritz. Soon I saw him. He was busy at the end of the hall lifting a sail off our strange medley of gifts. Now I heard music—a Jew's harp by all that's believable. A dim light is beginning to glow from that little attic room. It increases. Soon a blinding glare of a searchlight is pointed downwards—and in the bright column of light descends to the floor—slowly and with many a creak—said creak almost covered by the loudly played Jew's harp—a brilliantly-lighted Christmas tree, covered with many a bright paper parcel and flickering candle. I was so surprised at the results of our own work that I could not help cheering and the "wa-hoos" of the tribe swelled out—surprised for once from their solemn habit. With never a halt the tree sailed down and Fritz cunningly guided it into its socket—still the music sounded out—aided and abetted by a large pair of feet that swung in the opening whence the tree had descended. "Rolling home across the sea"—I think a board slipped just then, for he missed a line, but "Dear land to thee" came along in good time and two dark figures slipped down the column of blinding light.



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