

with huge heads of superhuman aspect—the hair painted blue, the flesh red, and eyes white. In the arms of one monster, and crawling up his body, are huge black lizards or crocodiles. This animal does not certainly represent the crest, or totem, of Skomi-ax, but is probably a traditional symbol of stupendous import, which "Jim" delights to parade on rare and momentous occasions. The figures are set off by a coat of very fresh paint, and so much valued is this conglomeration of carving and sign-painting art by its proprietor, that the first time I saw it he had veiled the faces with pieces of calico. An incident occurred connected with these very calico curtains, that affords a curious illustration of the expansive and assimilating power of language. There is among the West Coast Indians a dialect of commerce that fills the place of interpreters between the white and red men, and even between the native tribes themselves. This is known as "Chinook," and is a jargon that would surprise philologists in its extraordinary power of expression, with an extremely limited vocabulary, and scarcely any grammatical inflections. It is neither Indian, French, nor English, but a curious combination of all—with an addition of eccentric words, that are probably the result of mere whim. I wish Max Müller had a good dictionary of it sent to him, and then heard the varied uses to which simple words are applied by changes of relative position and accentuation. He might be puzzled in reconciling this curious tongue with the latest theories of the origin of language. Few Indians understand English, and fewer whites understand the native languages, but almost every native can speak Chinook, and so can all the whites who meet or trade with him. The letter "r" is unknown in the language, and when they adopt a French or English word containing that letter, it is changed to "l." As for instance, "lalam" is "oar," evidently French, and "lope" is our "rope." Some of the words convey profound sugges-

tions, and it can not be considered difficult to trace out the idea which led the framers of the tongue to indicate the habits of the dusky maids of the forest by calling a mirror "She-look-um." To return to the carved figures in the lodge of Skomi-ax, which suggested this digression—we were lifting up the curtains with our walking-sticks when a gentleman with me asked an Indian, in Chinook, why they covered up the figures. He answered with a laugh, "Hy-as ty-ee (great chief) putten-on-airs!" My friend admitted the entire novelty of the expression, but we felt its force.

The Indians gathered to this Potlatch to the number of over two thousand, and came from the East Coast of the Island, and a few even from Puget Sound, in American Territory. The latter are called in Chinook, "Boston" Indians, as distinguished from British or "King George" Indians. They all belong to the tribes who speak the Songhee tongue, or are their ancient allies. They arrived in canoes, which, to the number of several hundred, were drawn up on shore. Some of their canoes are forty feet long, hollowed each out of a single tree, and with about five feet beam. The larger ones are fearlessly taken out many miles in the Pacific Ocean, carry a sail very well, and can live in almost any sea. They are of an entirely different model from the birch-bark canoe of the East, running up quite high fore and aft, and with beautiful lines. They are built in a faultless way, and always without either drawings or measurement—simply by the eye. It seems as if the canoe were a result of the same kind of instinct that teaches the bird to build her nest.

There are intervals during the time of the festivities that are not employed in gift-making, and something of interest is always going on. The natives are inveterate gamblers, and although I have seen the Indians playing cards in Nebraska and Utah, near the railway stations, yet the west-coast tribes stick to their traditional game of "Lahal-