

worthy successor of the paternal Ty-ee, but there are many other requisites to secure the acknowledgment of the dignity. The "claimant" must do more than prove that his mother had acknowledged him as the true heir. He must be a man of intelligence and eloquence. Formerly, he must also have been a proved and scalp-laden warrior. These accomplishments, however, would be all in vain, if the candidate neglected the greatest of all flat-head virtues, viz., the profuse giving away of gifts. Can there be in this rude custom or instinct of the poor savage—pagan and unbeliever though he be—something that may be held to emulate the highest and brightest of Christian virtues, and fill his simple soul with a sense of attempting to do at least his duty towards his neighbour? It may be nothing more than an ignorant following of old traditions, yet it remains as a fact that to-day, among the despised Western aborigines, not only the rank of chief, but all other subordinate social positions, can alone be achieved and maintained by lavish public "benevolences." At irregular intervals, and in uncertain places, great gatherings are held, sometimes of many tribes, for a "pot-latch," or gift distribution.

These strange customs have had their origin in some dead past which no ray of historical light can ever penetrate; yet they are not without their lesson for those who, like Longfellow, when he sings his Indian legend,—

— "Have faith in God and Nature,
Who believe that in all ages
Every human heart is human:
That in even savage bosoms,
There are longings, yearnings, strivings
For the good they comprehend not;
That the feeble hands and helpless,
Groping blindly in the darkness,
Touch God's right hand in that darkness,
And are lifted up and strengthened."

The grandest affair of the kind that has been held upon Vancouver Island for many years, came off in April last, at Victoria.

Across the snug little harbour, at a point where it narrows to about 200 yards in width, opposite the busiest of the wharves, there is an Indian Reserve of considerable extent. The ordinary residents number only about three hundred, and have been reduced from several thousands by the proximity of civilization, which means to them—whiskey, demoralization, and death. A few weeks ago I was looking through a large lodge in this reserve, when an intelligent young Indian complained to me in his broken English, that "long time ago plenty Indians in this house—whiskey kill 'em—whiskey kill all my faders, all my modders, all my brodders, all my cousins." He also explained that liquor was sold every day by white men, and was very indignant about it, yet his zeal for temperance was somewhat questioned by me afterwards when he stood up, and turned out to be so very drunk himself that he could barely stagger along. The houses or lodges of the Coast Indians have been well described by Chief Justice Begbie, as "roomy and substantial, being a sort of one story card castle, (only firmly fastened,) of axe-hewn timber." They can accommodate a number of families, who sleep, cook, and live most harmoniously in the one large room. The different fires are lighted upon the floor of earth, and the smoke has to take its own chance of escaping from the domestic hearths through chinks or knot-holes. It serves effectually to dry and smoke the fish and venison hanging from the roof-tree, and does something to conceal the effluvia of varied repasts, and the indescribable "ancient and fish-like smell" that pervades the interior and vicinity of the lodges. The roofs are supported by strong posts, sometimes carved and painted most grotesquely. In the lodge of the Chief of the Songhees, at Victoria, there are a few curious carvings. This chief is known among whites as "Jim," and among his followers as "Skomi-ax," or fir tree. Tall wooden figures, ten feet in height, are found there,