

English soldiers, sailors, and firemen at Victoria and elsewhere. Of course, if white people were to witness their performances, they, perhaps, would be tempted to ridicule the poor Indians; but we deem it advisable to encourage them, as they seem innocent pastimes, and great sources of amusement for every one in the village.

A very bad custom among the Indians is this: Suppose I had quarrelled with one of my friends, to avoid fighting I would announce my intention to distribute or tear to shreds twenty blankets on a certain night, in the presence of all my countrymen; and if my adversary refused to do the same, the people would esteem me a higher chief than my adversary, and would consequently taunt and provoke my enemy; so much so, that in time he would give forty blankets away; and then the taunt would come to me, and if I did not *potlach*, as they call it, fifty blankets, my adversary would be counted as a powerful and mighty chief, and would, at feasts and elsewhere in public, always have his seat placed higher than mine. A little before Christmas a distribution of blankets on the same principle took place by one of two contending parties; but Mr. Mackenzie, J.P., and I persuaded the other party to desist, and see what the Indian authorities would do in such a case. Thus the distribution of blankets in return was avoided, and the wretched man who gave away his blankets would, at the present moment, like to regain them, because he sees that the man who has plenty of blankets, and very many goods, &c., is one whom we term a chief; but he who gives away all his goods, and is in a state of poverty, we call a poor man. The action of the above man who distributed his blankets simply to have revenge on his adversary, and to make him distribute more, is a return to the old Indian custom of settling disputes; and such a case has never occurred since Mr. Collison came amongst them, until the case mentioned above.

On December 12th the people buried two chiefs, according to their old heathen ideas.

These were indeed grievous sights to witness, and sufficient to stir up the sympathy of all Christians for the