

until that answer is given we are loath to believe that the Supreme Court will accept a view which virtually subordinates its functions to those of another branch of the Government. We cannot but think that the Supreme Court, as well as the *Sayward* claim, is on its trial.

THE trial is over and the Supreme Court has recorded a verdict of "Not Guilty" in its own favour. Since the foregoing paragraph was sent to the printer, Chief Justice Fuller has announced that the court has decided to grant the counsel representing the British Government the leave sought to file an application for a writ of prohibition to prevent the District Court of Alaska from proceeding to carry out its decree of forfeiture made in the case of the schooner *Sayward*. The main question involved will now, no doubt, come before the court on its merits, in the argument and decision which will be next in order, as to whether the writ of prohibition shall issue. The more we thought on the matter, the more disposed we were to believe that, notwithstanding the specious arguments of the Government attorneys, and the strange consensus of opinion amongst United States lawyers to the contrary, the Supreme Court would maintain its dignity as the Judicial branch of the Government, just as independent in its own sphere as are the Legislative and Executive branches in theirs. The fact that it has done so affords an additional assurance, if any were needed, that it may be relied on to judge righteous judgment in the case, as between nation and nation. It would be, however, a novelty in international disputes, as well as an unprecedented judicial triumph, should these proceedings result in virtually settling the main point of a diplomatic quarrel of six years standing by a decision given in due course by a court of justice of one of the contending parties. The fact would add a unique chaplet to the laurels which already adorn the brow of the Goddess of American justice, who sits enthroned in the Supreme Court at Washington.

THE scenes that accompanied the passage of the Dominion Franchise Act, in the eventful session of 1885, are brought forcibly to mind by those of which the United States Senate has recently been the theatre. In their determination to prevent the passage of the Lodge Election Bill, the Democratic party in the Senate have carried Parliamentary obstruction to its utmost limit, and thus far the attempt of the Republican majority to force the measure to a vote has proved unsuccessful. The proposed amendment to the Senate rules providing for the closure of debate is little likely to be carried, while there remain in the opposition ranks men capable of occupying, as did one Senator from Mississippi, four days and nights in reading what are alleged to have been old historical essays. Vice-President Morton shows no disposition to revolutionize the constitutional method of procedure by any such arbitrary assumption of power as that by which Speaker Reed in the Lower House has established his ability to rule; and unless the majority in favour of the Bill, which is estimated at only from one to nine, can find some way of upsetting his decisions, the House will probably adjourn with the measure still unpassed. This result seems on the whole, from the national point of view, desirable. Undoubtedly, under the present system, in hundreds of Southern districts the negroes are deprived by fraud or force of their right to vote, and many Democrats are returned to Congress where the exercise of the franchise by the coloured population would elect Republicans; and whatever may be thought of the wisdom displayed by the statesmen of the Reconstruction period in indiscriminately bestowing the full rights of citizenship on the newly liberated slaves, it is admittedly a grave evil that Federal legislation should be rendered nugatory by sectional opposition, and the refusal of State officials to perform their duty. But to attempt to cure this evil by legislation that would inevitably intensify very greatly both the existing race hatred in the South and whatever of rancour remains in the relations of the ex-Confederacy to the North, while it would, at the same time, revolutionize the method of national elections in all the States, seems to onlookers very like applying a remedy which is sure to prove worse than the disease. The Lodge Bill certainly goes far to justify the accusation brought against the Republican leaders of endeavouring to still fight their battles on war issues. Quite apart, however, from the question of the intrinsic character of the Lodge Bill is that of the right of a narrow majority in the Senate to pass a measure against which the people of the Republic may be fairly held to have just pronounced a crushing verdict. This certainly seems to unprejudiced

eyes a proceeding utterly opposed to the spirit of representative institutions, and one that affords the Democratic party a strong justification for their obstructive tactics. If shelved by the Senate, the measure will in all probability never be heard of again. Its passage by the Senate, and approval by the President, with the knowledge that two-thirds of the Representatives-elect are opposed to such action, would be a queer procedure in the country, in which above all others the people are supposed to rule. Since the above was written it is announced, on what seems to be good authority, that the Election Bill has been dropped by the Republican leaders.

A SKETCH OF INDIAN LIFE IN BRITISH COLUMBIA.

THE Indians of British Columbia, unlike their confreres in Oregon and Washington Territory, are as a rule peaceful and law abiding, and one reason is, they have ever been justly and humanely treated, both by the settlers and the various Governments that have existed in the country since the first great immigration of white men in 1858. Another reason is, they have learned to respect laws that are impartially administered, alike to the Red and White man, the settlers and natives (thanks to this), never having been brought into collision by deeds of violence, entertain no bitter hostile feelings towards one another; indeed, their relations are characterized by amity and good fellowship—they are mutually dependent on one another—the settlers want labourers and the Indians want labour.

The Indians are now, whatever may be said to the contrary, more comfortable and quite as independent as formerly, when they ranged the country, "sole monarchs of all they surveyed"; they have learned to appreciate the luxuries of civilization, and they are able to earn a fair share of them by their industry.

The Indians possess a singular degree of acuteness and penetration, but at the same time they are very childish, confiding and sensitive; they have a great idea of their own dignity, and are as proud and jealous as the Highlanders of Scotland were two centuries ago.

The Roman Catholic clergy with their usual self-denying philanthropy have freely mixed with the natives, and have by unfailing sympathy and kindness won their confidence and respect. The priests possess great influence with the natives, and it has been said that they are inclined to exert it in a rather arbitrary manner, but it must be acknowledged that they always show their influence on the side of decency and order. The Indians have many peculiar habits and customs that must be very disgusting and shocking to their instructors, whether Catholic or Protestant, such as swapping their wives and selling their daughters, to say nothing of their loathsome practice of exhuming their dead every now and then, and dressing the mouldering remains in new garments and holding a feast or Patlatch in their honour.

The Indian's religion is purely emotional, and they will join in religious services with great fervour, but they cannot carry it into their daily life; they will refuse to eat meat on Friday, or to work on Sunday, but think nothing of petty stealing or lying. Under the influence of the priests, polygamy is dying out, and few of the men have more than one wife at a time, but their domestic relations are decidedly complicated, owing to their propensity for trading their wives—sometimes for new ones, sometimes for houses; there seems to be no real love or affection amongst them, save in some rare instances between father and son, or mother and daughter, though they always mourn and lament over their dead relatives, and pay their debts in a most exemplary manner, superstition, no doubt, having a great deal to do with this, as they are horribly afraid of the spirits of the dead.

The Indians are inveterate gamblers and will often gamble away every rag of clothing they possess, even the garments they are wearing, and leave themselves in a state of utter destitution.

Their civilization is very much retarded by their passion for strong drink, for in spite of the stringent Canadian laws the Indians in the interior of British Columbia can get all the whiskey they want, and they do get it. The settlers are all too indolent and apathetic to try to put an end to practices that may eventually bring ruin on themselves as well as demoralization to the unfortunate Savages.

Let us take a glance at one of their encampments. On the bank of a clear shining river under the shade of a clump of cotton and alder trees stands a small Indian encampment. Some of the lodges are made of rush mats thrown over a circular frame of poles. An aperture is left at the top for the escape of the smoke from the fire which smoulders in the centre of the lodge; the door is made by simply throwing back an end of one of the rush mats and opening a space sufficient for the ingress and egress of the occupants. In this encampment civilization has made some progress, and you may see a number of well-made tents. These are mostly used by the younger members of the community who like to imitate the whites in all things, good and bad. The elders prefer their old manners and customs, possibly because their habits were fixed before the whites settled in the country, and it is impossible for them to change now, though nothing seems to delight them more than to see their sons and daughters growing up in

the ways of civilization. The occupants of the tents are all well dressed and their surroundings comfortable, if not luxurious. Just look at yonder tent; inside you will find two comfortable beds made upon soft silky bear skins, the blankets are fine, the sheets white and clean, the quilt is neatly made of pretty bright coloured calico—to the ridge pole is hung a good sized looking-glass. Outside the tent a canvas is spread about a foot from the door and china cups and saucers are set on it for four. A tin coffee pot stands close to the fire which blazes about two yards off and a sputtering frying pan full of beans and bacon is set on some coals raked out of the fire, and there in front of the fire is a plate full of pancakes, guarded by a boy dressed in a striped shirt and blue jean trousers, while the owners of the tent have gone down to the river to make their morning toilet; leaning against the side of the tent, strapped to a stick about two feet long and ten inches wide, is a small brown baby, with a very low forehead and very black eyes, and enormous cheeks. It watches the sputtering frying pan, and as its eyes and mouth are the only parts not immovably bound up, it sticks out its baby lips, making hideous grimaces and rolling its large black eyes in an appalling manner; near the baby lies a large white dog, and a cock and two hens are picking just outside, sometimes they come dangerously near the pancakes and the boy throws up his arms and runs at them "cish, cishing," and yelling at the very top of his voice; but while he pursues the hens, the old cock doubles on him and running round the tent manages to dab his beak into a pancake; the boy starts after him, then the hens return to the charge and the unfortunate youngster, gathering up all the sticks and chips within reach, begins to throw them at the troublesome fowls. The dog now thinks it high time for him to join in the fray, and rushes out barking furiously upsetting the poor little mummy on the stick in his haste. The yells of the boy, the cackling of the hens, the barking of the dog and the screams of the baby bring the mother up from the river.

Fresh and clean from her bath in the river she looks as if she had brought back some of the bright sparkle of the water with her. Her black shiny hair is smoothed carefully and hangs down her back in two thick glossy braids, her neatly made calico dress fits lightly on a figure whose only fault is square shoulders, and is fastened at the neck by a gaudy brooch; ear-rings to match hang in her ears, and, if her ears are not all that could be desired, the hands and arms that dandle the little mummy are faultless. Her face if not pretty is pleasing. She looks so young no one would believe that the man just sauntering up from the river is her seventh husband, but it is true. The man is somewhat older than the woman, and is dressed in black broad-cloth, and sports a white shirt with studs; across his breast a showy chain is connected with a large silver watch he carries in his vest pocket. He is very proud of his watch and as he comes up takes it out and looks at it. An elderly woman in a loose jacket and short petticoat joins the group and they sit down to their breakfast.

But these are the exquisites of the tribe. Look under that pine tree—four men are squatting together playing cards. One is a tall gaunt fellow with long hair hanging over his shoulders and a most repulsive countenance; he has no clothing except a pair of buckskin trousers. The man opposite him is a short thick set ruffian, very comfortably clothed; he is gambling with an air of indifference, quite a contrast to the two eager boys from whom he is winning their week's wages; they have been playing all night and will not stop until they have nothing left to play for. But see there, lying on a deer skin outside the entrance of one of the mat houses, is an old Indian "*in puris naturalibus*"; his thick shaggy hair is of an iron gray; his skin is dark and wrinkled, his broad chest, excessively long powerful arms and short legs, reminding one forcibly of Mr. Du Chaillou's description of the Gorilla. He is resting on one elbow. In his hand he holds a pipe, made of a peculiar kind of stone, much used by his tribe for making pipes and knives, and many other articles; he seems to be enjoying his smoke to the very utmost, for every time he puts the pipe to his lips he inhales a long breath of the smoke, then slowly exhales it through his nostrils, and his cunning old eyes follow the white smoke as it ascends into the clear morning air and is dispersed by the gentle summer breeze. Near him at play with some old dead bones is a dirty untidy young savage; her short thick unkempt hair is plentifully sprinkled with dust and ashes, though she does not seem to be mourning for her youthful sins; indeed, she seems rather to enjoy taking the ashes up in handfuls and pouring them on her ugly little head. Her cunning little Mongolian eyes bear a strong resemblance to the old man's, and they light up and glisten with love and delight every time he calls her to his side to take a whiff at his pipe.

A little way off are two women dressing a deer skin, which is stretched over a pole; they scrape and pound at the skin with pieces of hoop iron set in rough wooden handles. These two women are quite as savage looking as the old man and the child. The elder woman wears a short buckskin dress, ornamented by sundry fringes, and her short rusty black hair hangs loosely on her shoulders; her feet are bare. The other woman wears a jacket and petticoat of some kind, but dirt and rags are the most prominent features of her attire. We have looked at them long enough; let us turn to the large white tent. It belongs to one of the head men of the tribe. In the absence of a regular priest, this worthy always officiates, and now he sits waiting for the sun to pop up from behind the