

struggled and hauled the canoe and boat about but there was always one or more of the stronger ones who could not be ousted, and until the price was paid, the struggle for possession continued.

"So it went on. Article after article went until when the workmen were hurrying to work soon after the breakfast hour yesterday, the greater portion of Willie's goods had been potlatched—his debt was paid.

"This has been a week of celebration on the Indian reservation. On Saturday a big dance was held—the dance of the maskers. A number of Indians took part, all wearing big wooden masks, many having beaks which opened and shut with the pulling of a string, and this morning, as the Colonist reaches its readers, another potlatch is being held."

## In Defence of the Potlatch.

*Audi alteram partem.*

HAVING condemned the Potlatch unsparingly in the foregoing pages, let me now give my readers all that can be said in its defence by its supporters themselves. I must say, however, that to my mind, being behind the scene, this defence reads like a huge joke, being altogether constructed and argued out on the lines of the White-man's (mis)conception of the nature of the Potlatch.—ED

### TEXT OF THE PETITION WHICH THE DELEGATION OF NAAS RIVER INDIANS ARE SENDING TO OTTAWA.

"Having interviewed the superintendent of Indian affairs, Mr. A. W. Vowell, and also consulted with a city lawyer in regard to their complaint, the delegates of the Naas river Indians—Amos Gosnell, William Jeffrey and "Billy" Williams—have forwarded to Mr. G. E. Corbould, M. P., at Ottawa, the following petition:

"The undersigned, delegation of Indian chiefs, in view of the hereditary right of our ancestry would respectfully represent: That we were at the Indian department in the city of Victoria this day at 11 o'clock. In an interview with Mr. Vowell, Indian commissioner, we were informed by an explanation of how that any person giving a potlatch would be imprisoned for six months. It is the desire of the Indian department to civilize us, which meets with our approbation; but we were born Indians, educated according to the laws of our ancestry, and, as nature dictates to us we enjoy their vested rights as an inheritance. We came to Victoria to obtain our natural rights.

"We see in this a contradictory state of affairs adorning your civilization. Churches are numerous;

theatres are located in the various sections of the town; and saloons multiply in numbers; all of which are in conformity with your laws, consequently we wish to know whether the ministers of the gospel have annihilated the rights of white men in these pleasures leading to heaven and hell exactly in different directions. They have kindly forced us out, as we are 'not in it.'

"In the difference of your wisdom have we committed any offence against the Almighty God or civilized humanity by bestowing on our poor Indian brethren the pleasure of our hearts by donation of charity in token of friendship. If it is a sin against nature, or a damage to government, society or otherwise, we will yield with the kindest feeling to your imperial mandate.

"You have your Christmas's, Fourths of July and 24th's of May, all of which you celebrate without interference—*sine qua non*. Money is spent in squandrous profusion with no benefit to the poor of your race.

"We go to the entertainments of your theatres and you charge us money for the privilege. We give our dances at which our guests are welcomed by the testimonial of donations, according to our custom—the inheritance of our fathers.

"If we wish to perform an act moral in its nature, with no injury or damage, and pay for it, no law in equity can divest us of such right.

"We see the Salvation Army parade the streets of your city with music and drum, enchanting the town; leading wanderers, and helping the poor—by making him pay for all he gets.

"We are puzzled to know whether in the estimation of civilization we are human or fish on the tributaries of the Naas river, that the felicities of our ancestors should be denied us.

"Our lands and our fishing grounds are converted to other hands; licenses are imposed for fishing the waters of the White Crest mountains, which we pay with pleasure, for such is your law, and we only ask in connection that our potlatches may meet with your approbation.

"We see in your graveyards the white marble and granite monuments which cost you money in testimony of your grief for the dead. When our people die we erect a large pole, call our people together, distribute our personal property with them in payment for their sympathy and condolence; comfort to us in the sad hour of our affliction. This is what is called a potlach—the privilege denied us.

"It is a chimera that under the British flag slavery does not exist."

(Signed)

WISE-AS-YOU.

SIMH-SAM.

NAAS-QUAH-SO.