Indian Customs -- Collecting Tribute.

The Indians of Hoopa Valley, owing to their great number and advantageous localization, compared with most of those scattered about through the gulleys and on the streams above them, are known to exercise a controlling influence over the less favored tribes, or, more properly, rancherias or villages. Their very appearance and bearing would indicate that they have been recognized as superiors, and looked up to as such, until the unmistakable bounte of the master has become their distinguishing characteristic. The love of power seems to be inherent in every species of the genus Homo, from the savage to the most enlightened, and the propensity to abuse it is as natural as the desire to enjoy it, and these Indians are no exception to this rule.

We understand that they have a law, established, perhaps, like the Common Law of England, upon custom so old that "the memory of man runneth not to the contrary," requiring those situated on the Trinity above them, and its tributaries, to pay a certain tribute, or tax, for the privilege of catching fish. The fish, in their ascent from the ocean, must pass up the river through their settlement, which, they suppose, gives them a sort of lien on them, and to release which they levy the tax. The claim is about as reasonable as the Sound dues of Denmark, which the commercial world has submitted to for ages. Occasionally tax-gatherers are sent

Out to the rancheros above, to collect the tribute, and sometimes hostile demonstrations are necessary to enforce payment. In 1855 three Hoopa Indians were sent up the South Fork, above Williamson, to collect tribute in that quarter. They succeeded, after numerous objections, remonstrances and grumbling usual among tax payers, particularly where the tax is unjust in getting the amount due. It was paid in various articles and lawful Indian currency, and the three Indians started on their return with the same.

Only one, however, ever reached home. The spirit of rebellion among the South Fork Indians was raised to its height by the last payment of tribute, and they determined to slay the emissaries from Hoopa and recover their property. But when the one that escaped got home, a "mighty army" was at once raised and marched to the territory of the rebels, which had the effect to reduce them again to submission. They were also, in the language of diplomacy, compelled to make reparation for the past and give indemnity for the future.

In the conduct of these savages many great nations might see themselves represented.