

Indian Customs -- Collecting Tribute.

The Indians of Hoopa Valley, owing to their great number and advantageous location, compared with most of those scattered about through the gulches 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 haughtiness 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 rancherias 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 Eiampum, to collect tribute in
that quarter. They succeeded, after numer-
ous 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 In-
dians started on their return with the same.
Only one, however, ever reached home. The
spirit of rebellion among the South Fork In-
dians 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 es-
caped 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 represent-
ed.

