

FORCE OF TRIBAL LAWS AND CUSTOMS.

It was with admiration that I listened to the clear exposition of the relations of our government to the Ojibways in the council at Chippeway agency. Yet I felt humiliated when the honorable Commissioner of Indian Affairs of the most powerful nation in the world, in answer to a query by a degraded savage as to what was to be done about the murder of Hole-in-the-day, the head chief of the tribe, who was shot down in sight of the agency by two Indian young men, well known to all, and boasting of their sneaking dastardly as an act of prowess, was forced to reply, in accordance with treaty stipulations, that although the murder was committed in the State of Minnesota, yet as it was within the Indian reservation the white man's law could not protect nor operate; thus acknowledging these degraded people, as a nation, an *imperium in imperio*. As long as the Indian tribes are recognized within our borders as separate nationalities to which our laws are not applicable, I am sure that with your discrimination and experience you cannot be sanguine relative to their improvement. In addition to the recognition of tribal law, we have degraded them and lowered our own dignity by encouraging their heathen customs. Why should we, a civilized people, condescend to attend councils with a company of savages who have passed hours in decorating themselves with more care than Parisian fops? If it was once understood that no Indian could be admitted to the presence of a government official, except in a civilized dress and with a clean face and a clean shirt, and that they must transact business according to the usages of business men, quickly would the streaking of their bodies with vermilion, chrome green, or lamp-black be discarded, and they would learn to dress in modern coats, perhaps at first like the robe of Joseph, of many colors, but in time they would become neater and less gaudy. If Congress has thought it a matter of sufficient importance to enact how the representatives of the nation abroad shall be attired at public receptions, why should they not pass a law that no Indian agent shall tolerate a savage dance in his presence, nor encourage them to daub their faces with cheap paints and appear half naked in council?

INFLUENCE OF INDIAN PRIESTS.

Moses, by those who do not concede his inspiration, is recognized as a sound statesman and legislator, and he felt that the Hebrews could not be brought out of Egyptian darkness as long as Egyptian customs were tolerated. In Egypt, the cutting of the hair in a certain way was an idolatrous rite; wisely, therefore, was it enacted, "Ye shall not round the corners of your heads, neither shalt thou mar the corners of thy beard." If in connection with heathen worship a kid was prepared in a certain way, it was not puerile to enact "Thou shalt not seethe a kid in his mother's milk." As long as the old customs of the savage are preserved, their priests are not disturbed, for they retain their influence over the