

The American Books

The Indian To-day.

The Past and Future of
the First American

BY

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CHAPTER VII

THE INDIAN AS A CITIZEN

WE HAVE taken note of the reluctance of the American Indian to develop an organized community life, though few appreciate his reasons for preferring a simpler social ideal. As a matter of fact as well as sentiment, he was well content with his own customs and philosophy. Nevertheless, after due protest and resistance, he has accepted the situation; and, having accepted it, he is found to be easily governed by civilized law and usages. It has been demonstrated more than once that he is capable of sustaining a high moral and social standard when placed under wise guidance and at the same time protected from the barbarians of civilization.

MODEL INDIAN COMMUNITIES

William Duncan, an Englishman, came among a band of Alaskan natives about the middle of the last century, and they formed a

strong mutual attachment. The friendship of these simple people was not misplaced, and Mr. Duncan did not misuse it for his own advantage, as is too apt to be the case with a white man. He adapted himself to their temperament and sense of natural justice, but gradually led them to prefer civilized habits and industries, and finally to accept the character of Christ as their standard. He used the forms of the Church of England, but modified them as good sense dictated.

They worked together in good faith for a generation; and as a result there was founded the Christian community of Metlakatla, Alaska, almost an ideal little republic, so long as no self-seeking Anglo-Saxon interfered with its workings. The Indians became carpenters, blacksmiths, farmers, gardeners, as well as better fishermen. They established a sawmill and a salmon cannery. They built houses and boats, and finally a steamboat, which was run by one of their number. Mr. Duncan never allowed strong drink to enter the colony; he was the only white man among a thousand Indians, and so strong was their faith in him that he was accepted as their leader both practically and spiritually. He devoted his whole life to them, and never

married. Some of the young people he sent away to the States to school: among them Edward Marsden, a many-sided man, who is not only a graduate of a small college in Ohio and of a theological seminary, but has some knowledge of law and medicine, is an able seaman, and an efficient machinist.

The Metlaktlans are not technically citizens, though discharging many civic duties. In 1887 they were compelled to leave their island on account of difficulties with the local church authorities, who were not broad enough to admit the simple sufficiency of Mr. Duncan's lay ministrations. He removed with his people to another island, where they are now living under the protection of the United States flag. In view of the lessons of history, they are likely to undergo a severe trial and considerable demoralization as soon as they mingle freely with the surrounding whites. They have so far developed and enjoyed much of what is best in civilization without its evils and temptations; and whenever one of them does infringe upon their simple but exacting code he is summarily dealt with.

Here is another illustration: In 1869 those Sioux who had been for three years confined in a

military prison, on account of the outbreak of 1862, were placed upon a small reservation at Santee, Nebraska. My father was among them. He had thought much, and concluded that reservation life meant practically life imprisonment and death to manhood. He also saw that our wild life was almost at an end; therefore he resolved to grasp the only chance remaining to the red man—namely, to plunge boldly into the white man's life, and swim or die.

With twenty-five or thirty fellow-tribesmen who were of like mind with himself, he set out for the Big Sioux River to take up a homestead like a white man. Far from urging it, Government officials disapproved and discouraged this brave undertaking. The Indians selected a choice location, forty miles above what is now the beautiful little city of Sioux Falls, South Dakota, and here they established the first Sioux citizen community. The post-office was named Flandreau, and formed the nucleus of a large and flourishing town. Remember, this was six years before Sitting Bull and Crazy Horse made their last stand on the Little Big Horn, where they wiped out General Custer's command, the Seventh Cavalry.

This remarkable Indian colony became known far and wide. The Sioux were *bona fide* homesteaders and met all the requirements of the law. They occupied thirty miles of the finest bottom lands with their timber; except for these wooded river bottoms, the country is all treeless prairie. They were all Presbyterians and devout churchgoers. Rev. John P. Williamson was their much-loved missionary; and their church was served for many years by a native pastor—my brother, Rev. John Eastman. Nearly all built good homes. Mr. Williamson says, and Moody County records corroborate the statement, that for twenty years there was not a single crime or misdemeanor recorded against one of these Indians.

As the Big Sioux valley is noted for its fertility, it was not long before the rest of the land was taken up by white farmers. These Indians proved good neighbors. It is told of them that, during the hard years 1873 to 1875, when drought and grasshoppers afflicted the land, they organized a relief society for the benefit of their poorer white neighbors, and in many instances furnished them with cordwood as well as seed-corn and potatoes.

For years the Flandreau Sioux controlled the

politics of Moody County, and although after the district had become more thickly settled they lost their numerical preponderance, they still wielded much influence in years when the parties were pretty equally divided. As late as 1898 they held the balance of power, and were accordingly treated with respectful consideration.

From this little Indian community more than one earnest youth has gone forth to work for race and country in a wider field. My father brought me there from wild life in Canada in 1872, and after two years in the little day school he sent me away to master the secret of the white man's power. Only a few years earlier he himself was a wild Sioux warrior, whose ambitions ran wholly along the traditional lines of his people. Who can say that civilization is beyond the reach of the untutored primitive man in a single generation? It did not take my father two thousand years, or ten years, to grasp its essential features; and although he never went to school a day in his life, he lived a broad-minded and self-respecting citizen. It took me about fifteen years to prepare to enter it on the plane of a professional man, and I have stayed with it ever since.

It is noticeable that when the Flandreaus consented to reënter their names on the tribal rolls in order to regain their inheritance, they fell into the claws of the professional politicians, and a degree of demoralization set in. Yet during the early period of free initiative and self-development, some of their best youth had gone out and are now lost in the world at large, in the sense that they are wholly separated from their former life, and are contributing their mite to the common good. Those who remain, as well as other bands of citizen Sioux with whom I am acquainted, are becoming more and more completely identified with the general farming population of Nebraska and the Dakotas.

LEGAL STATUS OF INDIANS

The door to American citizenship has been open to the Indian in general only since the passage of the Dawes severalty act, in 1887. Before that date his status was variously defined as that of a member of an independent foreign nation, of a "domestic dependent nation," as a ward of the Government, or, as some one has wittily said, a "perpetual inhabitant with diminutive rights." The Dawes

act conferred upon those who accepted allotments of land in severalty the protection of the courts and all the rights of citizenship, including the suffrage. It also provided that the land thus patented to the individual Indian could not be alienated nor was it taxable for a period of twenty-five years from the date of allotment.

Of the 330,000 Indians in the United States, considerably more than half are now allotted, and 70,000 hold patents in fee. The latest report of the Indian Bureau gives the total number of Indian citizens at about 75,000. Those still living on communal land are being allotted at the rate of about 5,000 a year. The question of taxation of allotments has been a vexed one. Some Indians have hesitated to accept full citizenship because of fear of taxation; while white men living in the vicinity of large Indian holdings have naturally objected to shouldering the entire burden. Yet as the last census shows 73 per cent. of all Indians as taxed and counted toward the population of their Congressional districts, it appears that taxed or taxable Indians are not necessarily citizens; though they must be considered, in the words of Prof. F. A. McKenzie, who compiled

the Indian census, as at least "potential citizens."

The so-called "Burke bill" (1906) provides that Indians allotted after that date shall not be declared citizens until after the expiration of the twenty-five-year trust period. This act has served no particular purpose except to further confuse the status of the Indian. The "Carter code bill," now pending in Congress, provides for a commission of experts to codify existing statutes and define this status clearly, and has been strongly endorsed by the Society of American Indians and the Indian Rights Association. It ought to be made law.

There is a special law under which an Indian may apply to be freed from guardianship by proving his ability to manage his own affairs. If his application is approved by the Interior Department, he may then rent or sell his property at will. About five hundred such applications were approved during the fiscal year 1912-13.

The Pueblos and a few other Indians are or may become citizens under special treaty stipulations. The 5,000 New York Indians, although among those longest in contact with civilization, yet because of state treaties and the claims of

the Ogden Land Company, still hold their lands in common, and are backward morally and socially. It is likely that the United States will eventually pay the company's claim of \$200,000 to free these people. A few of them are well educated and have attained citizenship as individuals by separating themselves from their tribe. Professor McKenzie, who has deeply studied the situation for years, proposes a scheme of progressive advance toward full citizenship, each step to be accompanied by decreasing paternal control: as, for instance: (1) Tribal ward; (2) Allotted ward; (3) Citizen ward; (4) Full citizen.

INDIANS AS POLITICIANS

In almost every state there are some Indian voters, and in South Dakota and Oklahoma there are counties officered and controlled by Indian citizens. It is interesting to note that the citizen Indian is no ignorant or indifferent voter. If he learns and masters anything at all, it is the politics of his county and state. It is a matter of long experience with him, as he has been handled by politicians ever since he entered the reservation, and there is not a political trick that he cannot understand. He is a

ready student of human nature, and usually a correct observer. I am sorry to say that the tendency of the new generation is to be diplomats of a lower type, quick and smart, but not always sound. At present, like any crudely or partially developed people, politics is their hobby.

Yet there remains a sprinkling of the old Indian type, which is strongly averse to all unfair or underhanded methods; and there are a few of the younger men who combine the best in both standards, and refuse to look upon the new civilization as a great, big grab-bag. It is not strange that a majority are influenced by the prevailing currents of American life. Before they understood the deeper underlying principles of organized society, they had seen what they naturally held to be high official duties and responsibilities ruthlessly bartered and trafficked with before their eyes. They did not realize that this was a period of individual graft and misuse of office for which true civilization was not responsible.

Among the thinking and advanced class of Indians there is, after all, no real bitterness or pessimistic feeling. It has long been apparent to us that absolute distinctions cannot be maintained under the American flag. Yet

we think each race should be allowed to retain its own religion and racial codes as far as is compatible with the public good, and should enter the body politic of its own free will, and not under compulsion. This has not been the case with the native American. Everything he stood for was labelled "heathen," "savage," and the devil's own; and he was forced to accept modern civilization *in toto* against his original views and wishes. The material in him and the method of his reconstruction have made him what he is. He has defied all the theories of the ethnologists. If any one can show me a fair percentage of useful men and women coming out of the jail or poor-house, I will undertake to show him a larger percentage of useful citizens graduating from the pauperizing and demoralizing agency system.

There was no real chance for the average man of my race until the last thirty-five years; and even during that time he has been under the unholy rule of the political boss and "little czar" of the Indian agency, from whose control he is not even yet entirely free. You are suffering from a civic disease, and we are affected by it. When you are cured, and not until then, we may hope to be thoroughly well men.

CHAPTER XI

THE INDIAN'S GIFTS TO THE NATION

WHAT does the original American contribute, in the final summing up, to the country of his birth and his adoption? Not much, perhaps, in comparison with the brilliant achievements of civilization; yet, after all, is there not something worthy of perpetuation in the spirit of his democracy—the very essence of patriotism and justice between man and man? Silently, by example only, in wordless patience, he holds stoutly to his native vision. We must admit that the tacit influence of his philosophy has been felt at last, and a self-seeking world has paused in its mad rush to pay him a tribute.

Yes, the world has recognized his type, seized his point of view. We have lived to see monuments erected to his memory. The painter, sculptor, author, scientist, preacher, all have found in him a model worthy of study and serious presentation. Lorado Taft's colossal

“Black Hawk” stands wrapped in his stony blanket upon the banks of the Rock River; while the Indian is to keep company with the Goddess of Liberty in New York Harbor, besides many other statues of him which pre-eminently adorn the public parks and halls of our cities.

No longer does the red man live alone in the blood-curdling pages of the sensational story-writer. He is the subject of profound study as a man, a philosopher, a noble type both physically and spiritually. Symmetrical and finely poised in body, the same is true of his character. He stands naked before you, scorning the garb of deception and pretence, for he is a true child of nature.

How has he contributed to the world's progress? By his personal faithfulness to duty and devotion to a trust. He has not advertised his faithfulness nor made capital of his honor. Again and again he has proved his worth as a citizen of his country and of the world by his constancy in the face of hardship and death. Racial antagonism was to him no excuse for breaking his word. This simplicity and fairness has cost him dear; it cost his country and his freedom, even the extinction of his race as a

separate and peculiar people; but as a type, an ideal, he lives and will live!

The red man's genius for military tactics and strategy has been admitted again and again by those who have fought against him, often unwillingly, because they saw that he was in the right. His long, unequal struggle against the dominant race has produced a brilliant array of notable men without education in letters. Such were King Philip of the Wampanoags; Pontiac, the great Ottawa; Cornplanter of the Senecas, in the eighteenth century; while in the first half of the nineteenth we have Weatherford of the Creeks, Tecumseh of the Shawnees, Little Turtle of the Miamis, Wabashaw and Wanatan of the Sioux, Black Hawk of the Foxes, Osceola of the Seminoles. During the last half of the century there arose another set of Indian leaders, the last of their type—such men as Ouray of the Utes, Geronimo of the Apaches, Red Cloud, Spotted Tail, and Sitting Bull of the Sioux, Chief Joseph of the Nez Percés, and Dull Knife of the Northern Cheyennes. Men like these are an ornament to any country.

It has been said that their generalship was equal to that of Cæsar or Napoleon; even greater considering that here was no organization, no

treasury, or hope of spoils, or even a stable government behind them. They displayed their leadership under conditions in which Napoleon would have failed. As regards personal bravery, no man could outdo them. After Jackson had defeated the Creeks, he demanded of them the war chief Weatherford, dead or alive. The following night Weatherford presented himself alone at the general's tent, saying: "I am Weatherford; do as you please with me. I would be still fighting you had I the warriors to fight with; but they no longer answer my call, for they are dead."

Chief Joseph, who conducted that masterly retreat of eleven hundred miles, burdened with his women and children, the old men and the wounded, surrendered at last, as he told me in Washington, because he could "bear no longer the sufferings of the innocent." These men were not bloodthirsty or wanton murderers; they were as gentle at home as they were terrific in battle. Chief Joseph would never harm a white woman or child, and more than once helped non-combatants to a place of safety.

In oratory and unstudied eloquence the American Indian has at times equalled even the lofty flights of the Greeks and Romans. The

noted Red Jacket, perhaps the greatest orator and philosopher of primitive America, was declared by the late Governor Clinton of New York to be the equal of Demosthenes. President Jefferson called the best-known speech of Logan, the Mingo chief, the "height of human utterance."

Now let us consider some of his definite contributions to the birth and nurture of the United States. We have borrowed his emblem, the American eagle, which matches well his bold and aspiring spirit. It is impossible to forget that his country and its freely offered hospitality are the very foundation of our national existence, but his services as a scout and soldier have scarcely been valued at their true worth.

THE INDIAN SOLDIER AND SCOUT

The name of Washington is immortal; but who remembers that he was safely guided by a nameless red man through the pathless wilderness to Fort Duquesne? Washington made a successful advance upon the British army at Trenton, on Christmas Eve; but Delaware Indians had reported to him their situation, and made it possible for the great general to hit his enemy hard at an opportune moment. It is a

fact that Washington's ability was shown by his confidence in the word of the Indians and in their safe guidance.

In the French and Indian wars there is abundant evidence that both armies depended largely upon the natives, and that when they failed to take the advice of their savage allies they generally met with disaster. This advice was valuable, not only because the Indians knew the country, but because their strategy was of a high order. The reader may have seen at Fort George the statue of Sir William Johnson and King Hendrix, the Mohawk chief. The latter holds in his hand a bundle of sticks. Tradition says that the chief was arguing against the division of their forces to meet the approaching French army, saying: "If we are to fight, we are too few: if we are to die, we are too many!"

As an Indian, and having often heard my people discuss strategic details, I am almost sure that the chief anticipated the tactics of the enemy; and the pathetic sequel is that he was selected to lead a portion of the English forces to Fort Edward that morning, and when only a mile or so out was ambushed by the enemy. He stood his ground, urging his men to face the foe; and when he was shot dead, they were so

enraged that with extraordinary valor they routed the French, and thus Hendrix in dying was really the means of saving Forts George and Edward for the colonists.

History says that Braddock was defeated and lost his life at Fort Duquesne because he had neglected and disregarded his Indian scouts, who accordingly left him, and he had no warning of the approach of the foe. Again, the Seminole war in Florida was a failure so long as no Indians were found who were willing to guide the army, and the Government was compelled to make terms, while the swift and overwhelming defeat of the Creeks, a much stronger nation, was due more to the Cherokee and Chickasaw scouts than to the skill of General Jackson. Of course, once the army is guided to an Indian village, and the warriors are surprised in the midst of their women and children, the civilized folk, with superior weapons and generally superior numbers, has every advantage.

✓ The Indian system of scouting has long been recognized as one of the most useful adjuncts of war. His peculiar and efficient methods of communication in the field by means of blanket signals, smoke signals, the arrangement of rock-piles, and by heliograph (small mirrors or

reflectors), the last, of course, in more modern days, have all been made use of at one time or another by the United States Army. It is interesting evidence of the world-wide respect for our strategy and methods, that when the Boer commission came to Washington a few years ago, Mr. Wessel called upon me to advise him how he might secure one thousand Sioux and Cheyenne scouts in their war against Great Britain. Of course I told him that it could not be done: that I would not involve my country in an international difficulty. I was similarly approached during the Russo-Japanese war.

• The aid of friendly Indians in the case of massacres and surprises of the whites must not be overlooked. It may be recalled that some Cherokee warriors, returning from Washington's later successful expedition against Fort Duquesne, were murdered in their sleep by white frontiersmen after giving them friendly lodging. Here again is brought out the genuine greatness of the Indian character. The Cherokees felt keenly this treacherous outrage by the very people to whom they had just sacrificed the best blood of their young men in their war against the French. Some declared their intention of killing every white man they could

find in retaliation for such unprovoked murder; but the chief Ottakullakulla calmly arose and addressed the excited assembly:

✓ “Let us have consideration,” said he, “for our white neighbors who are not guilty of this deed. We must not violate our faith or the laws of hospitality by imbruing our hands in the blood of those who are now in our power. They ✓ came to us in the confidence of a pledged friendship; let us conduct them safely back within their own confines before we take up the hatchet!”

✓ He carried his point to some extent, and himself saved Captain Stewart, his friend, by giving up all of his property to ransom him. In difficulties between the races since colonial times there has been an unbroken record of heroic work in the rescue of missionaries and other white persons resident among the Indians by ✓ their native converts and friends. In the Minnesota Sioux outbreak of 1862 there were many notable instances. A man named Arrow stood beside Mr. Spencer and dared the infuriated warriors to touch him. There were over two ✓ hundred white captives saved by friendly Indians and delivered to General Sibley at Camp Release. During the following December some

young Yanktonnais Sioux voluntarily ransomed and delivered up two white women and four children. I knew some of these men well; among them Fast Walking, who carried one of the children on his back to safety, after giving his own horse to redeem him. Seldom have such deeds been rewarded or even appreciated. When these men became old and feeble an attempt was made to have them recompensed by Congressional appropriation, but so far as I am informed it has been unsuccessful.

I do not wish to disparage any one, but I do say that the virtues claimed by "Christian civilization" are not peculiar to any culture or religion. My people were very simple and unpractical—the modern obstacle to the fulfilment of the Christ ideal. Their strength lay in self-denial. Not only men, but women of the race have served the nation at most opportune moments in the history of this country.

HISTORIC INDIAN WOMEN

- ✓ It is remembered that Pocahontas saved the first Virginia colony from utter destruction because of her love for Captain John Smith, who was the heart and brain of the colony.
- ✓ It was the women of the Oneida and Stock-

bridge Indians who advised their men not to join King Philip against the New England colonies, and, later, pointed out the wisdom of maintaining neutrality during the war of the Revolution.

Perhaps no greater service has been rendered by any Indian girl to the white race than by Catherine, the Ojibway maid, at the height of Pontiac's great conspiracy. Had it not been for her timely warning of her lover, Captain Gladwyn, Fort Detroit would have met the same fate as the other forts, and the large number of Indians who held the siege for three months would have scattered to wipe out the border settlements of Ohio and Pennsylvania. The success of Pontiac would certainly have delayed the settlement of the Ohio valley for many years. It is not to be supposed that Catherine was moved to give her warning by anything save her true womanly instincts. She stood between two races, and in her love and bravery cut short a struggle that might have proved too full of caprice and cruelty on both sides. She was civilization's angel, and should have a niche in history beside Pocahontas.

Sacajawea, the young Indian mother who guided Lewis and Clark in their glorious expedi-

tion to the Pacific, was another brave woman. It is true that she was living in captivity, but according to Indian usage that would not affect her social position. It does not appear that she joined the expedition in order to regain her tribe, but rather from a sense of duty and purpose of high usefulness. Not only as guide, but as interpreter, and in rescuing the records of the expedition when their canoe was overturned in the Missouri River, the "Bird Woman" was of invaluable aid, and is a true heroine of the annals of exploration.

THE CHILDREN'S HERO

Nearly all the early explorers owed much to the natives. Who told the white men of the wonders of the Yellowstone Park and the canyon of the Colorado? Who guided them and served them without expectation of credit or honor? It is a principle among us to serve friend or guest to the utmost, and in the old days it was considered ill-bred to ask for any remuneration. To-day we have a new race, the motive of whose actions is the same as that of a civilized man. Nothing is given unless an equivalent is returned, or even a little more if he can secure it. Yet the inherent racial traits

are there: latent, no doubt, but still there. The red man still retains his love of service; his love for his country. Once he has pledged his word to defend the American flag, he stands by it manfully.

✓ In the Civil War many Indians fought on both sides, some of them as officers. General Grant had a full-blood Indian on his staff: Col. Ely Parker, afterward Commissioner of Indian Affairs. At one time in recent years a company of Indians was recruited in the regular army, and individual red men are still rendering good service in both army and navy (thirty-five ex-students of Carlisle alone), as well as in other branches of the Federal service. We have lived to see men of our blood in the councils of the nation, and an Indian Register of the Treasury, who must sign all our currency before it is valid. An Indian head is on the five-dollar bill and the new nickel.

George Guess, or Sequoyah, the inventor of the Cherokee alphabet, is the only red man admitted to the nation's Hall of Fame in the Capitol at Washington. The Indian languages, more than fifty in number, are better appreciated and more studied to-day than ever before. Half our states have Indian names, and more

than that proportion of our principal lakes and rivers. These names are as richly sonorous as they are packed with significance, and our grandchildren will regret it if we suffer the tongues that gave them birth to die out and be forgotten.

Best of all, perhaps, we are beginning to recognize the Indian's good sense and sanity in the way of simple living and the mastery of the great out of doors. Like him, the wisest Americans are living, playing, and sleeping in the open for at least a part of the year, receiving the vital benefits of the pure air and sunlight. His deeds are carved upon the very rocks; the names he loved to speak are fastened upon the landscape; and he still lives in spirit, silently leading the multitude, for the new generation have taken him for their hero and model.

I call upon the parents of America to give their fullest support to those great organizations, the Boy Scouts and the Camp Fire Girls. The young people of to-day are learning through this movement much of the wisdom of the first American. In the mad rush for wealth we have too long overlooked the foundations of our national welfare. The contribution of the American Indian, though considerable from any point of view, is not to be measured by material

acquirement. Its greatest worth is spiritual and philosophical. He will live, not only in the splendor of his past, the poetry of his legends and his art, not only in the interfusion of his blood with yours, and his faithful adherence to the new ideals of American citizenship, but in the living thought of the nation.

THE END