

THE INDIAN ADVOCATE.

"AND THE DESERT SHALL REJOICE AND BLOSSOM AS THE ROSE."

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THE INDIAN ADVOCATE

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From Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs Colonization of Tribes.

Stolid and unyielding in his nature, and inveterately wedded to the savage habits, customs, and prejudices in which he has been reared and trained, it is seldom the case that the full blood Indian of our hemisphere can, in immediate juxtaposition with a white population, be brought further within the pale of civilization than to adopt its vices; under the corrupting influences of which, too indolent to labor, and too weak to resist, he soon sinks into misery and despair. The inequality of his position in all that accords dignity and respect, is too glaring, and the contest he has to make with the superior race with which he is brought into contact, in all the avenues to success and prosperity in life, is too unequal to hope for a better result. The collision is to him a positive evil. He is unprepared, and in all respects unfitted for it; and by necessity soon sinks under it and perishes. It must be recollected, too, that our white population has rapidly increased and extended, and, with a widening contact, constantly pressed upon the Indian occupation territory necessary for the accommodation of our own people; thus engendering prejudice and creating difficulties which have occasionally led to strife and bloodshed—inhabited from different races under such circumstances—in which the weaker party can but rarely survive.

And, further, that in the progress of the white population and westward, that the same is a great successive advance in moral decline and degeneracy of our Indian population. Cannot this and the increasing tendency of things to check, and the fact to at least necessarily require by better results in the future? It is believed they can; and, indeed, it has to some extent been done already, by the wise and successful system of policy put in operation some years since, and which, if steadily carried out, will soon give to our whole Indian system a very different and much more favorable aspect.

The policy already begun and relied on to secure that objects to colonization, so desirable to every Christian and philanthropist, is, to rapidly and in an easy and judiciously to draw to colonies our Indian tribes beyond the reach, for some years, of our white population; confining each within a small district of country, so that, as the game decreases and becomes scarce, the tribe will gradually be compelled to resort to agriculture and other kind of labor to obtain a subsistence, to which aid may be afforded and facilities furnished from one of the means obtained by the sale of their former possessions. To establish, at the same time, a judicious and well devised system of manual labor schools for the education of the youth of both sexes in letters—the males in practical agriculture and the various necessary and useful mechanic arts, and the females in the different branches of housewifery, including sewing and weaving; and these schools, like those already in successful operation, to be in charge of the excellent and active Missionary Societies of the different Christian denominations of the country, and to be conducted and the children taught by efficient, exemplary, and devoted men and women, selected with the approbation of the Department by their Societies; so that a physical, intellectual, moral and religious education will all be imparted together.

The strongest propensities of an Indian's nature are his desire for war, and his love of the chase. These tend him to destroy game, to hunt, and to engage in the chase, to the neglect of agriculture, and to the neglect of his family and himself. He is indolent and inert, physically and mentally, unless on occasions of war or chase, when he is not only vigorous and active, but also intelligent and capable of extraordinary exertions, and of extraordinary degrees of endurance. But everything else is abandoned, and chiefly repugnant to his feelings and nat-

ural prejudices. He considers it a degradation. His subsistence and dress are obtained principally by means of the chase; and if this resource is insufficient, and it be necessary to cultivate the earth or to manufacture materials for dress, it has to be done by the women, who are their "bearers of wood and drawers of water." Nothing can induce him to resort to labor, unless compelled to do so by a stern necessity; and it is only then that there is any ground to work upon for civilizing and christianizing him. But little if any good impression can be made upon him in these respects, so long as he is able freely to roam at large and gratify his two predominant inclinations. Nor can these be subdued in any other way than by the mode of colonization, to which reference has been made. When compelled to face the stern necessities of life, and to resort to labor for a maintenance, he, in a very short time, becomes a changed being, and is then willing, and frequently eager, to receive information and instruction in all that may aid him in improving his condition. It is at this stage that he begins to perceive and appreciate the advantages proposed by the white men, and to desire also to enjoy them; and, if too far advanced in life for mental instruction himself, he asks that it may be provided for his children. Such is the experience in the cases of several of the tribes not long since colonized, who a few years ago were more nomadic and hunter; and, when settled in their new colonies, were opposed to labor and to any thing like schools or Missionaries; but who are now, on the contrary, both the better for the benefit of their children and themselves, and are becoming prosperous and happy from having been induced to provide a certain and comfortable support for themselves and their families by the cultivation of the soil and other modes of labor. The most marked change, however,

in the habits of the Indians, has been the change and the desire, that begins to assume two positions as an equal, and his labor is transferred from the field to his household—to the care of his family and children. This great change in disposition and condition has taken place, to a greater or less extent, in all the tribes that have been removed and permanently settled west of the Mississippi. It is true, that portions of some of them enjoyed a considerable degree of civilization before they were transplanted; but prior to that event, they were retrograding in all respects; while now, they and others, who have been colonized and confined within reasonable and fixed limits, are rapidly advancing in intelligence and morality, and in all the means and elements of national and individual prosperity; so that within many years, if we carefully observe all our obligations towards them, they will have reached a point at which they will be able to compete with a white population, and to sustain themselves under any probable circumstances of contact or competition with it. If this great and to be accomplished, however, material change will soon have to be made in the position of some of the smaller tribes on the frontier, so as to leave an ample outlet for our white population to expand and to pass towards and beyond the Rocky mountains; else, not only will they be removed and exterminated, but all may be materially injured.

It may be said that we have commenced the establishment of two colonies for the latter tribes that we have been compelled to do so, on the head waters of the Missouri river, and the other South, on the Western borders of Missouri and Arkansas, the Southern limits of which is the Red river. The Northern colony is intended to embrace the Chippewa of Lake Superior and the upper Mississippi, the Winnebago, the Menominee, and the Sioux, if any, or any others to remain in that region, and all other Northern Indians East of the Mississippi (except those in the State of New York) who were yet to be removed West of that river. The Southern boundary of this colony will be the Wash river, which is the Southern limit of the country of the Chickasaw, who have removed since from their old habitations. The Menominee have been removed from Green Bay, in Wisconsin, to the head waters of the Wisconsin river, a treaty having very recently been concluded with them to that effect. Above them, to

our Northern boundary line, and Westward to the head river of the North, the country is owned by the Chippewa, many of whom now live there, though they still own a large tract East of the Mississippi, computed at 10,743,000 acres, and lying above a line running nearly due East, from opposite the junction of the Crow Wing and Mississippi rivers to a point about 90° 15' West longitude; thence due North to the St. Louis river, and down that river to Lake Superior. Many live North of the above line, but, as stated in my last annual report, a considerable number still remain South of it, on lands heretofore ceded by them, which, for reasons given at that time, they should soon be required to leave for their own country. But with reference to the civilization and welfare of these people, should be a wise, and even necessary step, to purchase all the lands they own East of the Mississippi, and concentrate them elsewhere upon those that would still remain to the West of that river. Until this shall have been done, they will continue in no degree a condition that it will be difficult, if not impossible, to do anything effective towards their permanent improvement. You are aware that an effort to effect such a purchase was made last year and failed; but it is believed, that if renewed, in connection with the removal of those on the ceded lands, and the transfer of the agency to the Mississippi from Lapwai, Lake Superior, where it now is, it would be successful. These people and the Menominee being removed West of the Mississippi, the remaining Indians East of that river, to be sent to this colony, would probably not exceed 3000. Of the Sioux, it is probable many will remain for any considerable period in the Mississippi region. They are not amenable, and scattered over an immense extent of country, so effort could not be made to remove them; and, living wholly by the chase, they are a very different people from those who have been removed.

It is a very interesting people, being mild and tractable in disposition, and much attached to the whites. Were they in a better position, they might, with proper measures, be easily civilized, and be made the instruments of imparting civilization to others. Their proper position would be with the Osage or Kansas, as they speak nearly if not quite the same language, and are probably of the same primary stock. They are the original owners of the soil, and receive no annuities from the United States; and as they are circumscribed in their hunting expeditions by the Sioux and Pawnee, they are liable at times to destitution and great suffering. The Sioux also not infrequently attack and murder them in their own country, so that their situation is truly an unfortunate one. Their country is estimated to contain from five to six millions of acres of valuable land, which could be obtained at this time at a very moderate price; and so tractable is their character, there would be no difficulty in making ample provision out of the purchase money for their civilization and improvement. Reasons of a similar kind exist for buying out and removing, at an early period, the Otton and Missourians, whose affinities of character and language are said to be with the Ioways. The lands claimed by them are estimated to embrace from two to three millions of acres. These two measures consummated, the Pawnee all removed North of the Platte, and the Sioux of the Missouri restrained from coming South of that river, they would be a wide and safe passage for our Oregon emigrants; and for such of those to California as may prefer to take that route, which I am informed will probably be the case with many.

Eventually, when the Sioux shall have left the Mississippi region, and the Pawnee been displaced in one or other of the ways mentioned, and when all other intervening tribes shall be removed to within the latter, an ample outlet of about six geographical degrees will be opened for our population that may desire to pass or expand in that direction; and thus prevent our colonized tribes from being injuriously pressed upon, if not swept away; while to the South of the Southern colony there will also be a sufficient outlet for such portion of our population as may take that direction.

In the able and interesting report of that excellent and efficient officer, the Superintendent of Indian Affairs at St. Louis, he refers to the necessity of providing lands suitable for agricultural purposes, for such of the prairie tribes as have no lands of their own of that character; in order that they may be saved from the perils which threaten them when the resources of the chase, on which they now almost wholly rely, shall have been cut off by the extermination of the buffalo—a circumstance that must ere long occur; and he recommends that lands be obtained from the Omaha and Pottawatomie for that purpose. This would be contrary to the policy I have recommended, and which I think is the correct one, of procuring and keeping open their lands for the access and expansion of our own population; but aside from this, though, according to no very accurate knowledge of the subject, I am induced to believe, from such information as I have been able to obtain, that none of the tribes to which he refers will, or could be induced to incline eastward to the Missouri river; but that they will gradually follow the buffalo towards the Rocky mountains, and continue towards New Mexico, in which direction they may ultimately find a resting place. A considerable portion of the Sioux, and probably the Pottawatomie, will probably take the same direction. Indeed, I am informed that there are now a very large Sioux living in the region of the head waters of the Platte river, where a few years ago there were none to be found. Such of that tribe as do not migrate in that direction, will, as heretofore stated, probably take their course up the Missouri river, in which direction a suitable outlet could on no day be found for extending them and the other tribes in that quarter, should they ever become tractable. But should these tribes prove more rest, suitable locations could no doubt be found among or in the rear of our colonized tribes, for such of those referred to by the Superintendent, as might be compelled to come back to our Western border to settle.

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