

Excerpt from Pratt's speech: "Kill the Indian, and Save the Man," Capt. Richard H. Pratt on the Education of Native Americans. Source: *Official Report of the Nineteenth Annual Conference of Charities and Correction* (1892), 46–59. Reprinted in Richard H. Pratt, "The Advantages of Mingling Indians with Whites," *Americanizing the American Indians: Writings by the "Friends of the Indian" 1880–1900* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1973), 260–271.

A great general has said that the only good Indian is a dead one, and that high sanction of his destruction has been an enormous factor in promoting Indian massacres. In a sense, I agree with the sentiment, but only in this: that all the Indian there is in the race should be dead. Kill the Indian in him, and save the man....

It is a sad day for the Indians when they fall under the assaults of our troops, as in the Piegan massacre, the massacre of Old Black Kettle and his Cheyennes at what is termed "the battle of the Washita," and hundreds of other like places in the history of our dealings with them; but a far sadder day is it for them when they fall under the baneful influences of a treaty agreement with the United States whereby they are to receive large annuities, and to be protected on reservations, and held apart from all association with the best of our civilization. The destruction is not so speedy, but it is far more general.

We shall have to go elsewhere, and seek for other means besides land in severalty to release these people from their tribal relations and to bring them individually into the capacity and freedom of citizens.

Indian schools are just as well calculated to keep the Indians intact as Indians as Catholic schools are to keep the Catholics intact. Under our principles we have established the public school system, where people of all races may become unified in every way, and loyal to the government; but we do not gather the people of one nation into schools by themselves, and the people of another nation into schools by themselves, but we invite the youth of all peoples into all schools. We shall not succeed in Americanizing the Indian unless we take him in in exactly the same way. I do not care if abundant schools on the plan of Carlisle are established. If the principle we have always had at Carlisle—of sending them out into families and into the public schools—were left out, the result would be the same, even though such schools were established, as Carlisle is, in the centre of an intelligent and industrious population, and though such schools were, as Carlisle always has been, filled with students from many tribes. Purely Indian schools say to the Indians: "You are Indians, and must remain Indians. You are not of the nation, and cannot become of the nation. We do not want you to become of the nation."

We make our greatest mistake in feeding our civilization to the Indians instead of feeding the Indians to our civilization.

It is a great mistake to think that the Indian is born an inevitable savage. He is born a blank, like all the rest of us. Left in the surroundings of savagery, he grows to possess a savage language, superstition, and life. We, left in the surroundings of civilization, grow to possess a civilized language, life, and purpose. Transfer the infant white to the savage surroundings, he will grow to possess a savage language, superstition, and habit. Transfer the savage-born infant to the surroundings of civilization, and he will grow to possess a civilized language and habit. These results have been established over and over again beyond all question; and it is also well established that those advanced in life, even to maturity, of either class, lose already acquired

qualities belonging to the side of their birth, and gradually take on those of the side to which they have been transferred.

Carlisle fills young Indians with the spirit of loyalty to the stars and stripes, and then moves them out into our communities to show by their conduct and ability that the Indian is no different from the white or the colored, that he has the inalienable right to liberty and opportunity that the white and the negro have.

When we cease to teach the Indian that he is less than a man; when we recognize fully that he is capable in all respects as we are, and that he only needs the opportunities and privileges which we possess to enable him to assert his humanity and manhood; when we act consistently towards him in accordance with that recognition; when we cease to fetter him to conditions which keep him in bondage, surrounded by retrogressive influences; when we allow him the freedom of association and the developing influences of social contact—then the Indian will quickly demonstrate that he can be truly civilized, and he himself will solve the question of what to do with the Indian.