

The Outlook Company  
287 Fourth Avenue  
New York

February 3, 1904.

My dear Colonel Pratt:

Your letter of January 6th was duly received, and should have been earlier answered, but I have just returned after a ten days' absence from the city, and have had to leave my reply until my return.

My only object in seeking the transfer of the care of the Indians to the Army Department, was two-fold: first, to take the appointment of the agencies out of politics, and secure the appointment by assignment of abler and more efficient men than we are likely to get under the present system; and secondly, to get the Indians in charge of a department which would be interested to close up the agency business at the earliest possible moment, and accelerate the scattering of the Indians among white populations. Possibly the

The Outlook Company  
287 Fourth Avenue  
New York

2

time for the change has now gone by. I am sure that ten years ago it would have been a wise change, and I am inclined to think it would be now.

General Grant's plan of working through the church did not prove successful. Church administration is honest, but it lacked practical capability for such an affair.

I have always been in sympathy with your idea of breaking up the tribal organization and scattering the Indians among the white people; but I think this idea must be carried out with reasonable regard to the rights and the prejudices of the Indian peoples, and this necessity of regarding their rights and prejudices makes the process at times irritatingly slow. It is certain that the process will result in the destruction of the Indian race as a distinct race, but that, I suppose, is a thing to be desired and not lamented. It will probably result in the destruction of a good



The Outlook Company  
287 Fourth Avenue  
New York

3

many individual Indians, but when the question is between a process which will practically destroy them all, as the Reservation system has in this State, or the destruction of those who yield to temptation and to vice, as the process of distributing them is certain to do, the latter seems to be preferable to the former.

As to the Reservation system, I have not much faith in the capacity of Federal Government to carry on a charitable and missionary work at a distance so great from headquarters as the great majority of the Indian tribes necessarily are. Officialism and charity do not seem to me to go together generally very well.

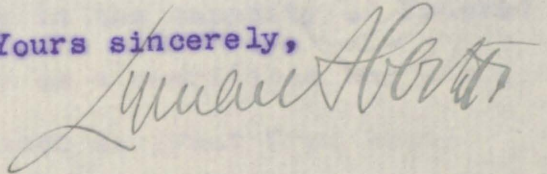
I note what you say about the possibility of coming up to New York some time to talk these matters over with me, and I should certainly urge you to do so, were it not that in a week or two I am going to Harvard for an absence of ten days, and immediately on my

The Outlook Company  
287 Fourth Avenue  
New York

4

return I start for the Pacific coast, and shall not be back until the last of April. Perhaps after my return we can arrange to meet some time in New York; possibly on the occasion of your passing through the city at some time, and discuss the situation over the lunch-table. I should be very glad if we might do so.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Lillian Albert".

Colonel R. H. Pratt,  
Carlisle,  
Pennsylvania.