

## THE CARLISLE INDIAN SCHOOL.

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In the spring of 1888, having a series of temperance engagements in the neighborhood of Carlisle, Pennsylvania, I made a point of visiting Captain Pratt and the Indian school. I stopped at a wayside junction, hailed the army wagon which was the only vehicle in sight, and was glad to find that it was of Captain Pratt's belongings. A gentlemanly young man welcomed us to seats, and an Indian driver engineered us over rough roads to the military reservation now monopolized by the school. "No admission on Sunday," is the only sign put up by the authorities.

Captain Pratt was soon found and with eager ears and eyes we went to school to him for answers to the "Indian Question."

Captain Pratt is a man six feet in height, and every inch a soldier. His great, well-balanced head, dauntless profile, and kindly smile predict the qualities of a born leader. A native of New York State, reared in Logansport, Indiana, of Methodist parentage and training, but a Presbyterian by reason of his wife's preference, he has the root of the matter in him as a muscular Christian of the nineteenth century. Joining the Union forces as a volunteer at the outbreak of the war, he was appointed lieutenant in the regular army in 1867, and assigned to a post in the far West. From that time he studied the Indian question at first hand and is an expert, not excelled in all the nation. Later on, when his pre-eminent ability as an Indian civilizer came to be known, he was put in charge of the captured "hostiles" in Florida where he remained three years. He now determined to establish a school, and put before our Eastern people a method which should apply Christian common sense to the problem of our red neighbors.

Carlisle had been a military station since 1757; in later years it had been used as a recruiting office and cavalry drill ground for prospective Indian fighters. Captain Pratt, now and for many years belonging to the tenth cavalry regiment, was detailed by special act of Congress to found here and to conduct an Indian school in place of training men to fight Indians. I will try to reproduce some of the words of this statesman as we wended our way with him through the well-kept school, shops, and barracks, on pleasant rising ground dominated by the tall flag pole and the red, white, and blue. His manner of speaking, though most courteous, is earnest and decisive. Many a man "gives a guess" in the very tones of his voice, but his is the voice and the gesture of a man who knows.

"There are about two hundred sixty thousand Indians in the United States, and there are twenty-seven hundred counties. I would divide them up, in the proportion of about nine Indians to a county, and find them homes and work among our people; that would solve the knotty problem in three years' time, and there would be no more an "Indian Question." It is folly to handle them at arm's length; we should absorb them into our national life for their own good and ours. It is wicked to stand them up as targets for sharpshooters. The Indians are just like other men, only minus their environment. Take a new born baby from the arms of a cultivated white woman, and give it to the nurture of a Zulu woman in Africa; take the Zulu's baby away from her and give it to the cultivated white woman. Twenty-five years

later you would have a white savage in Africa, and a black scholar, gentleman, and Christian in America. This sharply illustrates what I mean. We can, by planting the Indians among us, make educated and industrious citizens of them, in the briefest time and at the least expense. I would teach them trades and turn them loose.

"The Indian is naturally religious, an infidel is to them an unknown quantity. All you have to do is to familiarize their reverent minds with the truths of the New Testament. Our Sunday-school and prayer-meeting are the best proof of their readiness to take on Christianity; their testimonies are full of earnestness and genuine religious fervor. If I have a strong point as their friend, it is my intense confidence in the holiness of hard work; the sanitary and ethical power of a useful occupation. Indians, as other people, like to be independent, and to do this they must earn money.

"Here is our printing office, under the supervision of a young lady. Yonder is a Pawnee who has become a first-rate printer, and would be at a premium anywhere; near him is a Tklinket Indian from Alaska, who came to learn this trade that he might go home and teach it, the Rev. Sheldon Jackson having proposed this plan to him. You see that little press only two feet long, that was our beginning, and here are four that go by steam, thus we are branching out, and we print a weekly *Letter* from the Carlisle Industrial School to boys and girls, besides a monthly we call *The Red Man*, and all our reports and documents.

"Here is our bakery, where three strong-armed boys, an Apache, an Arapahoe, and an Oneida, convert two barrels of flour into nice toothsome bread each morning, and attend school in the afternoon. That is our plan, hand-culture one half the day, head-culture the other half, and heart-culture all the time.

"There are about seven hundred persons on the place, and we take almost entire care of ourselves—make our own clothes and shoes, and besides army wagons and four thousand dollars worth of government harness yearly. The girls make all our clothes, do the laundry work, and learn to cook and mend. Those little Apache girls are from Geronimo's band, only twelve months this side of savage life, but you see they can do neat mending and sewing. In all my words and works I constantly impress upon these boys and girls their power to make their own way in the world and at the same time to help the world along. The gospel of humanity must be first of all that of the work-bench where the Carpenter of Nazareth forever dignified and made sacred the use of tools.

"When we wanted a button for our boys' uniforms I asked the Government to cut these words upon it, 'God helps those who help themselves.' They adopted it for the whole Indian service and I believe it is the key to the most substantial success for every Indian that breathes."

We went into the schools of all grades, where eleven accomplished lady teachers dignify their sex by their skill in teaching. A Pawnee had drawn the inside of a steam-engine; a Modoc had pictured in colors the lever and the screw; a Piute placed upon the black-board maps of South America and the United States. Representative Indians from thirty-eight tribes were at work with books and brain; the boys in

United States uniform, all friendly and content, all sinking their varied vernacular in that masterful English language which shall unify the nations.

"How do your scholars stand upon the temperance and tobacco questions?" was my natural query.

"We are a section of the millenium, as I can prove," replied the Captain with pardonable pride. "In my nine years upon this hill I have had thirteen hundred pupils—eight hundred of them young men. Intoxicating liquors and tobacco from the first are represented to them as unhealthful, uncleanly, and wasteful, and they are expected and required to give them up. Except once at a county fair, where whisky-sellers tempted my boys to go behind the cattle sheds and drink, and where three of them yielded, I have not in nine years had a single case of drunkenness among them. Considering the utter lack of training and the universal tobacco heredity, I consider this remarkable. We furnish them very simple food, insist upon strict personal cleanliness, and our young people readily fall in with the prevailing usages."

I asked the Captain's opinion of the rule that only the English language shall be taught in Government schools. He said that in the first place this rule did not prevent the use of the Dakota Bible in that tribe, nor the use of any Indian language in teaching religion or morality to those whose vernacular it was, but only provided that all secular education should be conducted in English, that the aborigines might be the sooner and better prepared for citizenship under the government by which they had been trained. He commended President Cleveland's Indian policy in general, saying that Secretary Vilas promises to be an admirable Secretary of the Interior, with broad views and modern methods. He said that Eliot's Indian Bible prepared at such untold expense of time is now valueless except as a relic; the people for whom it was prepared having all abandoned their old language, and the only man who professes ability to read it, being the librarian of Harvard College. The same will soon be true of the Dakota Bible. What we want is to teach the enduring, civilizing English language to the Indian. There are eleven thousand Indian children in schools, of whom only *two hundred fifteen* on an average are supported entirely by the churches, take them all together, even including the Catholic. Three thousand are taken care of in part by societies, religious and philanthropic, but on each of these the Government pays from \$100 to \$167 per year. This leaves seven thousand and more who are totally cared for by the Government schools, and it is a rule that their secular education shall be in English, and it is entirely just.

"We keep them moving," said the Captain as we passed from shop to shop in this great, humming hive of industry; and they have no time for homesickness—none for mischief—none for regret."

We saw a Pueblo Indian making for himself a chest in which to put the kit of carpenter's tools he had bought with his own earnings. He is going back to New Mexico and will make two dollars a day. We saw an Alaska Indian learning the tinner's trade; a Sioux repeating the constitution of the United States (who as a boy witnessed Sitting

Bull's fight with Custer); two little Apache girls fresh from the mountains of Arizona, working out on the blackboard the four ground rules of arithmetic with a celerity that we would not have dared to emulate.

"Are the girls as smart as the boys?" was my ever-recurring question.

"Every bit, rather quicker-witted on the whole," was Captain Pratt's reply.

"How long can they stay with you?" I asked.

"Five years, and more if we think best. We put them out on farms and like especially to get them homes; twenty went yesterday. They can come back if they like. We treat them as individuals—not as a mass."

"The history of the Indians as set forth in books is a bundle of falsehoods," he said. "They are like other people, and unprovoked by outrage and injustice behave far more peaceably than they get credit for."

After we had visited the bright, clean private rooms of the students, their reading and assembly rooms, schools, shops, and bath houses, we went to the great gymnasium, 150 feet long by 60 wide, to see the drill. Mr. Campbell, disciplinarian of the boys, and a most accomplished gymnast, took his position in the gallery, a well trained Indian youth standing beside him and going through all the motions of a varied and beautiful gymnastic exercise. The boys marched in by companies, with their officers all observing military discipline, and as they stood there in orderly ranks of blue, Indians from forty tribes, moving in perfect accord, all as one, I thought it the most beautiful of object lessons. "Better to capture them by love, uniform them in blue, and kill them with kindness than to send out our own boys in blue to be killed by them," was my grateful thought.

Beside me in the gallery whence we looked down, was Mrs. Pratt, intelligent and gracious.

"My husband is much better at capturing Indians by this method than he was at chasing them down," she whispered.

"Geronimo's band, one hundred six, are here; all tribes are represented, from British America to Arizona, but especially the hostiles," she explained.

When the long line of boys passed out, the girls came forward, and in their pretty dresses, also blue, with their long black hair braided down their backs and red ribbons adorning braids and throat, went through their graceful evolutions.

"They carry papooses almost from the time they can walk, and wearing blankets adds to their tendency to stoop," said Mrs. Pratt, "so that our girls need this drill to give them a free step and dignified bearing, even more than do the boys."

After this lovely sight, the choir came forward and sang a fresh, blithe April song in perfect tune and time, and strange to say, they "spoke their words" so much better than most singers that we knew what they sang.

With all these pleasant sights and voices in our ears we left the Carlisle Indian School, that home of hope and order, good work and good will, feeling that never in all our varied wanderings had we rejoiced in a more blessed object lesson of Christianity.