

These virtues do not exist by chance, but, like the frontier vices, are the direct result of social conditions. In a new country, where the people are strangers to each other, and where it is necessary to trust men before they have proven their worthiness of trust, fidelity to the obligations of professed friendship is of exceptional importance, and the lack of it is, naturally, discouraged by a social odium exceptionally severe.

Not less naturally does generosity spring up among a people subject to frequent changes of fortune. The man who is, in the frontier slang, "well heeled" to-day, may be "strapped" to-morrow. When poor he needs help and when rich he readily sympathizes with misfortunes he has shared, and holds his suddenly acquired gains on an open palm. Courage is, of course, possessed by frontiersmen, for brave must be the men, and braver still the women, who voluntarily incur the perils and privations of pioneer life, and who are daily schooled in that familiarity with danger which breeds contempt for it. Among the perils of frontier life was to be reckoned, at one time, the danger of being scalped by the "poor Indian," whose "untutored mind" is much less esteemed by frontiersmen than by those who are unfamiliar with its savage vagaries. It is very seldom now that Indians are a terror, but what to do with them continues to be one of our unsolved national problems. Their number in the United States, including the civilized tribes in the Indian Territory, is estimated at only two hundred and fifty-nine thousand two hundred and forty-four. But this small number holds by treaty, patents or acts of Congress, one hundred and thirty-seven million seven hundred and twenty-four thousand five hundred and seventy acres of land, or an average of five thousand three hundred and sixteen acres per individual. There are seventy-nine thousand in the Indian Territory, which has an area of forty-one million acres—sufficient for the support of three million whites. But the recklessness of the government in devoting its domain to barbarism reached a climax in the treaty with the Utes, framed in 1868, which guaranteed them four thousand acres for each man, woman and child in the tribe. In contrast with this, it should be noted that the land surface in the United States, exclusive of Alaska and the Indian Territory, gave only thirty-seven and nine-tenths acres per individual at the last census, and that this amount constantly decreases, owing to the increase of the white population, while the allotment to each Indian constantly increases, for a converse reason, unless disturbed by some new apportionment. The excess of land in most of the reservations does the Indians no good. On the contrary, it encourages them to lease their surplus territory to cattle men, with the result that, by stealth or mistake, their small bands of cattle are absorbed in the great herds of the cattle kings, and bad blood, with blood-shed, ensues. With the exception of these cattle kings, frontiersmen are opposed to the vast extent of reservations. They believe that the earth is for man, and should be for the best of the race, and they recognize no principle of equity which excludes millions of civil-

ized white men from some of the garden spots of this continent in order to keep them as game preserves for the occasional wanderings of a few thousand savages. They believe that it should be the aim of the government to break up as completely and quickly as possible the tribal relation, so that the red man may learn that, like white and black and yellow men, if he would eat he must work; that if he will not work he must starve; and that if he prefers murder and marauding to starvation, he will be subject to the same laws that punish those crimes among the whites. They point to the admitted fact that Indians have made the most rapid progress in civilization on small reservations, and that there they are best prepared for that allotment of lands in severalty\* which is indispensable to their further progress.

The desperado is often taken as the typical frontier character, but it is as true now as when Brackenridge wrote of Daniel Boone, that while the frontier "is certainly the refuge of many worthless and abandoned characters, it is also the choice of many of the noblest souls. It seems widely ordered that \* \* \* where the force of law is scarcely felt, there should be found the greatest amount of real courage and disinterested virtue." In Emerson's striking phrase, "Wild liberty develops iron conscience," and of the frontiersman it may be said, as of the child in the nursery ballad, that "when he is good he is very, very good," though "when he is bad he is horrid." "The world," says an Arabian proverb, "is sustained by four things only—the learning of the wise, the justice of the great, the prayers of the good and the valor of the brave." On the frontier one sees, not many learned, not many prayerful, not many whom the world calls great, but there, if anywhere, one sees the brave.

To make a country, as the phrase is, out of the wilderness, to build roads, open mines and break the virgin soil, is a task which prematurely ages its performers. But when, at night, the toil-worn pioneer returns to his lonely cabin and lights the open pine-wood fire, which is his only luxury, hope whispers in his ear "her flattering tale." He draws, in fancy, the highest prize in the mining lottery of the golden hills. The sooty walls of his cabin disappear beneath the magic of his dreams, and, in a palatial home, he beholds himself blessed by the love of some good and beautiful woman, whose tender babes are smiling upon his knee. On the morrow he resumes his life of work, worry and weariness; whole years roll on, in which he works and is worn. The golden vision still allures, and still it disappoints him, until, at last, he sinks into an unremembered grave, while the pampered sons of civilization, the "wise men from the East," and those not so wise, enter the country which he has opened for them, and reap the harvest which his brave hands have sown.

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\* Since the above was written Congress has passed a bill for the allotment of lands in severalty to Indians, and it is hoped that this measure will result in the ultimate opening to settlement of our large reservations.—Ed