

Is Our Indian System a Curse?

The Oklahoma Missionary, who, probably by motivity more than anything else, criticizes the government system of Indian schools and Agencies as being most vicious and injurious, and making many other assertions, criticising the course the government is pursuing in educating and civilizing the Indians of this country, is certainly a great slanders.

Anyone who is thoroughly familiar with the Indian educational system will, after reading the letter from the said missionary to a recent issue of "The Red Man and Helper," consider him an over zealous fanatic, and his views and statements anything but practical, sensible, or correct.

We all realize that the government is doing its utmost to as rapid and practical a manner as possible to civilize the Indians of this land and make them self-supporting citizens. It is abolishing the reservations wherever possible and wise to do so. The Indians have been given their allotments and made to assume the responsibility of individual ownership and management. They are encouraged and taught to work. The schools are doing a good work and are no death traps, as suggested by the reverend gentleman. He says that the present government methods tend to destroy the home; that the Indian parents should man for their children; that Indian agencies and schools, etc., should be abandoned entirely.

We know of many instances of Indian reservations. If it were not for the faithful oversight, protection and help given the Indians by their agents and superintendents, that there would be no homes. There are hundreds of good and fairly successful Indian families living on reservations, made so by the kind protecting and helpful hand of the government. We also know there are lazy, worthless Indians on reservations who do not improve their opportunities or accept the assistance given them. They will live and die as such, res-

ervation or no reservation.

The government is maintaining its agencies, schools, etc., endeavoring to protect the homes of the Indians, educate him and his children, and keep the white sharks from grabbing everything the Indian possesses. It is also trying to prevent the white man's whiskey from ruining the red man; yet the missionary in Oklahoma claims that the government methods tend to destroy the home. We know that if his wildest schemes and lightning process methods of civilization were put into operation there would be but a few Indians left to tell the tale; their career would be exceedingly short.

As much as the government desires to improve the conditions of the Indians and make them independent self-supporting men and women; abolish the reservation, etc., etc., it certainly will never jump blindly into any impractical scheme.

There are wise, christian men in Washington who have the interests of the Indian at heart and are doing their utmost in the management of Indian affairs to improve their condition. They are anxious to see every Indian reservation and Indian school established just as soon as it can be done. The Indians are being rapidly prepared for that change, which will come just as soon as the respective states are ready to assume control of the Indians and will guarantee them an equal show with the white man in every particular.

The government is maintaining a strong system of non-reservation schools where the young Indians are taught trades, agriculture and equipped with a practical education for going out into the world and earning their own living with-out returning to the reservations. They are induced to stay among the white people and not return to the agencies. Many of them do this and are doing well. A large proportion of them who remain in the reservations work their allotments and many are fairly successful. For any one to say that the whole system of government management of Indian affairs is vicious, must be devoid of reason or else has little regard for the truth.