

POETRY

He leads us on

Through all the unquiet years:

Past all our dreamland hopes, and doubts
and fears

He guides our steps. Through all the
tangled maze

Of sin, of sorrow, and o'er clouded days.

We know his will is done:

And still he leads us on.

Selected

The Native Indian Art

Paper Read by Miss Angel De Cora,
Before the Department of Indian
Education at Los Angeles, Cal.
July 8-12, 1907.

The time has not been long enough since the subject was put into practice to show some of the possibilities of adapting Indian art to modern usages.

Indians, like any other race in its primitive state, are gifted in original ideas of ornamentation. The pictorial talent is common to all young Indians.

The method of educating the Indian in the past was to attempt to transform him into a brown Caucasian within the space of five years or little more. The educators made every effort to convince the Indian that any custom or habit, that was not familiar to the white man showed savagery and degradation. A general attempt was made to bring him "up to date." The Indian, who is so bound up in tribal laws and customs, knew not where the distinction, nor what of his natural instincts to discard, and the consequence was that he either became superficial and arrogant and denied his race, or he grew dispirited and silent.

In my one year's work with the Indians at Carlisle I am convinced that the young Indians of the present day are still gifted in the pictorial art.

Heretofore, the Indian pupil has been put through the same public school course as the white, with no regard to his hereditary difference of mind and habit of life; yet, though the only art instruction is the white man's art, the Indian, even here, does as well and often better than the white child, for his accurate eye and skillful hand serve him well in anything that requires delicacy of handiwork.

In exhibitions of Indian school work, generally the only trace of Indian one sees are some of the signatures denoting clannish names. In looking over my pupils native design work, I cannot help calling to mind the Indian woman, untaught and unhampered by white man's ideas of art, making beautiful and intricate designs on her pottery, baskets and beaded articles, which show the inborn talent. She sits in the open, drawing her inspiration from the broad aspects of Nature. Her zig-zag line indicates the line of the hills in the distance, and the blue and white background so usual in the Indian color scheme denotes the sky. Her bold touches of green and red and yellow she has learned from Nature's own use of those colors in the green grass and flowers, and the soft tones that were the general tone of ground color in the days of skin garment are to her as the parched grass and the desert. She makes her strong color contrasts under the glare of the sun, whose brilliancy makes even her bright tones seem softened into tints. This scheme of color has been called barbaric and crude, but then one must