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THE INDIAN NATION.

THE FIVE CIVILIZED TRIBES.

Between the broad and fertile acres of Kansas and the broad and only less fertile acres of Texas lies a wild and beautiful region known as the Indian Territory. The imaginary lines which divide it from the neighboring States have been strengthened by national law into strong walls, which, if not impassable, have yet proved substantial barriers. Even the inhabitants of the contiguous States have little personal knowledge of the people or the land beyond a strong hatred of the one, born of an undue lust for the other. The eastern part of this Territory is inhabited with what are called the "five civilized tribes"—the Cherokees, Creeks, Seminoles, Choctaws and Chickasaws. Each of them lives a life absolutely separate from the rest, with its own peculiarities, its own institutions and its own national characteristics for each—let it not be forgotten—each is a nation. But things are true of them all. Common circumstances and common needs have wrought upon common traits of race and character to produce like results. The Government of each nation is Republican, with frequently recurring elections, legislatures, executives and systems of judiciary. Each nation supports common schools and high schools, provides charitable institutions and fosters churches. Whether Choctaw or Cherokee, these Indians carry on large business interests and live intelligent and valuable lives.

The traveler who leaves St. Louis at night awakes to find himself in the prairie country, strewn thick with villages of the peculiar, unthrifty, huddled appearance of Southwestern hamlets. He has scarcely breakfasted before, on a sudden, he discovers the prairie roll away from him, unweaved with hut or herd, and mile after mile the railway strides on through the luxuriant acres, past the fertile bottoms. The mysterious silence and space explain themselves. This is Indian land, and the Cherokee people have as yet found no better use for this northern country than to keep an occupied strip between themselves and their white neighbors. When a town appears, it is still a Southwestern town, but it is a brick and mortar city, with shops and newspapers and a busy life of its own. It is a considerable town on a crevity to discover that this town of Vinitia is also Indian, and altogether Indian, that its business life is full and active and reaching out widely; that its citizens have private interests in many other regions, and affect the affairs of two nations, moving the destinies of an alien and mightier race than their own. Its men and women have their lives in books and thought and music; brave men marry fair women; and children play about the streets whose future hold happiness and prosperity.

This is the most commercial town of this nation. But not its most representative settlement. "Have you seen Tahlequah?" is the instant question asked of him who professes a knowledge of the Indian Territory, and not without reason. Located in the interior of the country, among the mountains, the approach by

the all-day ride among the wooded hills, over the grassy uplands, and through the forest glades threaded everywhere with rushing creeks, serves to heighten the effects.

Tahlequah first discovers itself afar off, across one of the most beautiful of these prospects, in a large and somewhat imposing brick building, standing out alone upon a swelling height. Unneighborhood, and yet requiring a considerable population to fill it, seems something of a mystery, and when the winding road comes face to face with its simplicity and its size, it proves no less mysterious, although in a different way, since it is a public college for Indian boys and young men. Three miles further ride, still in the open country, though no longer through an altogether uncultivated region, brings the traveler into the long main street of a large town. Here sits in serene and self-centered isolation the capital of a nation, containing in itself every element of such a capital except those metropolitan products which belong to crowded centers of the world's life.

In the very middle of Tahlequah is its capitol, a large brick structure surrounded by an open square filled with locust trees. The size and relative importance of this building mark the feeling that this is a nation. Here meets a Legislature composed of two Houses, retaining traces of the common Indian and the white influence over their origin, in their titles of Council and Senate. The Council is provided over by a Speaker and the Senate by the Assistant Chief. Bills must pass both Houses, and require the signature of the Executive. This officer possesses much power, and is a man of many titles, since he is actually President, and is better known as Principal Chief, while in common conversation he is usually addressed as Governor. Under him is an assistant chief answering to our Vice President, a Secretary of State, a Treasurer, a Superintendent of Public Instruction and several other officers. All are elected directly by the people, and for terms of four years. These hotly contested elections occur every two years, when half of the Council are chosen, and in August a month of agricultural vacation, thus marking the chief occupation of the people. All the affairs of the nation—very literally nearly all of them—are debated and settled by this Legislature. The establishment and support of schools, questions of finance, permissions or licenses to railways or telegraph lines, the admission of religious teachers to the privileges of the nation—all these matters are decided as of old, by council, but neither the hereditary right of Indian custom on the one hand, nor the Anglo-Saxon condition of age on the other, admits to this body.

Every lad among the Cherokees may vote and be voted for. In the capitol are the various officers of the President, the Treasurer and the others of State, and there they spend busy days, for it is no trifling matter to administer the affairs of this little nation of 25,000 souls. If it be little it is also rich; \$95,000 come every year into the hands of its Treasurer in gold drafts of the United States, interest on the funds held by us

in trust for these Indians, and as much more from the great cattle companies who have leased some of their unoccupied northern land. From this money are paid the salaries of all the officials and the expenses of the machinery of the government, the public works are carried on, schools and convict systems are maintained. The Cherokees pay no taxes, the nation is so rich; quite otherwise, for now no then, when a need arises, or the United States rents fresh lands, a money payment is made to each inhabitant. Out of the windows of the Capitol may be seen the less imposing but spacious building where the Supreme Court sits, with its three judges of learning and character. The particulars of a judicial system are seldom dramatic, but it is interesting to learn that the Courts are modeled on our own and are very successful. The laws of this nation fill a large book, and the strictness of some of its provisions—notably those relating to intoxication—would make a Puritan envious. The Code in general would do credit to any community, and its laws are well enforced by mounted police—a body of men so much honored that positions in its ranks are greatly coveted; and if crime is somewhat too frequent in this region, it must not be forgotten that the nation is burdened with a class of most disreputable white men, entirely exempt from its own law, and difficult to reach by any other. If its convict system is not as elaborate as that of Crofton or Elmira, it seems to be effectual in its results, since its convicts may be seen making its roads, under a slight guard, or wholly unguarded, doing the janitor's work in the Capitol. A well appointed asylum holds the indigent blind and other unfortunate of various kinds.—Harper's Magazine.

While speaking of this subject I will quote from a recent editorial of a Washington paper. "High finance and local option may put a temporary check on the progress of the prohibition movement, but will not discourage the honest and irrepressible zealots who are pledged to make relentless war on alcohol. This check will give the Republican party a respite, but cannot annul the decree that dooms it to disintegration through the instrumentality of prohibition fanaticism.

Any kind of license, high or low, is simply abhorrent to persons who regard liquor-selling as an infamous crime, and the number of such persons is increasing rapidly. They would as soon have laws enacted for the sale of licenses to steal as to have liquor licenses provided for by legal enactments. It is an easy matter to call such zealots ugly names, to sneer at them and deride their work, but sneers and derisions do not diminish their number or energy. They mean business and their cause has very significant staying powers. The liquor traffic, in its various phases, is the one topic that keeps near the front all the time.

The Senate Committee on Foreign Relations have decided by a party vote that the Fisheries Treaty ought not to be ratified. The American Alliance will hold a National Conference in this city on the 23d of May, to which at least one delegate will be sent from every Congressional District in the country where the organization has established councils. The object of the conference is to consider what policy is most expedient to pursue with reference to the approaching Presidential campaign. It is not probable that the Alliance will place a ticket in the field, but its action may have some effect in shaping the platform of the two great party conventions to be held in June.

The Alliance believes in the restriction of immigration to the extent of excluding its undesirable elements and requiring of foreign born citizens a residence in this country of twenty-one years as precedent to the exercise of the elective franchise, and prescribes no religious tests, makes war upon no church.

"Will you be kind enough to," said Bobby in a low, well modulated tone of voice, "to give me another piece of pie?"

"No sir," replied the old man, "you've had enough."

"Ma," said Bobby, with a dubious air, "you told me that politeness always pays."—New York Sun.

Political affairs in France are decidedly mixed. The radicals have captured the premiership and the opportunists the presidency of the chamber of deputies. Political power in France is now of very uncertain duration.

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