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FRIDAY, JUNE 18, 1897

HAS AN INDIAN RIGHTS?

Has an Indian any rights that his pale-faced brother is bound to respect? The answer is a most emphatic No! History proves it. From the time the Spaniard first set foot on American soil, the native has known no rights, except such as he could maintain by force. Cortez made him a beast of burden and a slave. His gold was taken from him in Mexico, and his daughters fell a prey to the Spaniard's desires. It was no better along the Atlantic shore. Having no gold of which he could be despoiled, the white man took his broad lands, not by force, but by superior knowledge and superior trading power. He gave a handful of beads, or a few dollars' worth of gew-gaws for priceless acres. He took advantage of the Indian's lack of knowledge to cheat him in trade, instead of robbing him by force. Of the two systems that of the Spaniard was the more manly.

The time came when the encroachments of the white man showed the Indian that he must resist them or be crowded off the face of the earth. He resisted the best he could; but against the superior knowledge of warfare and superior weapons he was powerless. He ran up against the inevitable and was annihilated. Across the Alleghenies the conquering pale-face forced his way; then down through the fertile valley of the Ohio, across Kentucky's battleground, he swept his resistless way. The Indian fought and lost. He was told to move on, until across the Mississippi, far from the graves of his ancestors, a new home was selected for him. The white man had crowded him into what was then considered the great American desert. That's what the white man thought it was, but it was good enough for an Indian, simply because the lands the white man drove him from were "too good for an Indian."

Here he might have been permitted to stay had the white man's idea of the country been correct; but it wasn't. The great American desert was a great American myth. True, there was some of that so-called section unfit for agricultural purposes, but the countless thousands of buffalo proved it to be a great grazing country, and a grazing country was too good for an Indian, simply because it was good enough for a white man. Besides this, a bountiful creator had filled the mountains with precious metals, and what use had an Indian for money, anyhow? The mountains were too good for him, too. And so he was kicked from pillar to post for no other reason than that the white man wanted the earth, or at least so much of it as could possibly furnish existence for an Indian.

The native son resisted, and he did right. He fought for his home, for his rights; only he hadn't any, or at least none that a white man was bound to observe.

And so, by slow degrees, leaving behind him a trail of blood, he was moved at the white man's will, steadily decreasing in numbers, steadily fighting the unconquerable. At last broken in spirit, he was herded on reservations, a prisoner in the land of his fathers, with metes and bounds set, beyond which his feet dare not tread. He is conquered at last, ground exceedingly fine between

the millstones of greed and selfishness. The white man found him 400 years ago a gallant, generous, kindly-hearted, chivalric man; a child of nature, free from vice, who extended to the pale faced brother from over the sea the hand of hospitality. The white man was a stranger and he took him in; but the white man in turn took the Indian in also, and all that was his. He rewarded the Indian's hospitality with the same generous return that the germs of measles, scarlet fever, of smallpox, do the gentleman who furnishes a home for them, the only difference being that those diseases would have spared some.

But this is not what we started to say; it is simply a digression, a sort of prelude to the crowning act against the simple child of the forest.

Down among the Cheyennes some forty Indians, or bucks, are living in a state of polygamy, having, in the aggregate, one hundred wives, or an average of two and a half each. The secretary of the interior heard of this, and it struck him as too many. He looked around among his white brethren, and realizing that one wife made life worth living (over again) to most of them, his heart went out in a great wave of pity for those forty Cheyennes. He issued a decree, from which there is no appeal, commanding these forty bucks to each choose of his wives one, and to discard the others. It was a cruel and a wicked thing to do. We do not believe in polygamy, God forbid! but we recognize the position these poor simple-minded Indians are placed in.

Whatever else may be said of Indians, they are human, and the paternal instinct is developed in them as in all humanity. For the male Indian the injury is slight; but how about the squaw? How about the children! How about the family separated? We know that concerning civilized white folks, who robbed the Indian of a continent, these things are considered immoral. For a white man they would be, for he must draw the line some place; but what harm would have been done to have allowed these poor red remnants to have finished their days along with the families their customs had permitted them. We have taken their lands, their homes. The graves of their fathers are turned up by the white man's plow, and the bones of their loved ones are cast aside to make room for the white man's buildings. We have forced our laws upon them, and our religion.

And now at the nod of the secretary of state the last of their customs vanishes, and these forty Cheyennes, in their old age, are told to segregate their families and then to choose between their wives. Alas! poor Lo.

Camp Jackson.

It will be but ten days until the military encampment at Hood River will take place. The engineers corps, under Lieutenant Povey, will reach Hood River Thursday evening, June 24th, and will lay out the camp ground. The next contingent to arrive will be the Third battalion infantry, which will leave The Dalles Monday morning, June 28th, on the 8:30 train. Companies D, La Grande, C, Pendleton, and A, Wasco, will arrive at Hood River on the morning of the 29th. The balance of the troops from the west side of the mountains will reach Hood River the evening of the 28th. The camp is very favorably located about two miles west of Hood River, and has been named Camp Jackson, in honor of the distinguished officer detailed by the government as instructor of the Oregon militia. When the boys get in camp once, there will no doubt be many of their friends visit them.

By order of Hon. Frank Menefee, mayor of Dalles City, notice is hereby given that on Friday evening, June 18th, at 8:30 o'clock, a public meeting of the legal voters of Dalles City, will be held at the county court house, for the purpose of nominating city officers.

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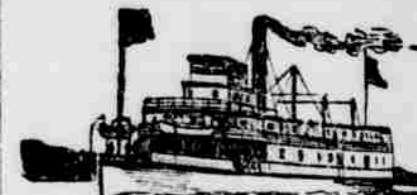
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