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THE SOUL OF THE WHITE MAN

MY last work under the auspices of the Government was the revision of the Sioux allotment rolls, including the determination of family groups, and the assignment of surnames when these were lacking. Originally, the Indians had no family names, and confusion has been worse confounded by the admission to the official rolls of vulgar nicknames, incorrect translations, and English cognomens injudiciously bestowed upon children in the various schools. Mr. Hamlin Garland and Dr. George Bird Grinnell interested themselves in this matter some years ago, and President Roosevelt foresaw the difficulties and complications in the way of land inheritance, hence my unique commission.

My method was to select from the personal names of a family, one which should be rea-

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sonably short, euphonious, and easily pronounced by the white man in the vernacular; or, failing this, a short translation in which the essential meaning should be preserved. All the brothers, their wives and children were then grouped under this as a family name, provided their consent could be obtained to the arrangement.

While fully appreciating the Indian's viewpoint, I have tried to convince him of the sincerity of his white friends, and that conflicts between the two races have been due as much to mutual misunderstandings as to the selfish greed of the white man. These children of nature once had faith in man as well as in God. To-day, they would suspect even their best friend. A "century of dishonor" and abuse of their trust has brought them to this. Accordingly, it was rumored among them that the revision of names was another cunning scheme of the white man to defraud them of the little land still left in their possession. The older men would sit in my office and watch my work day after day, before being convinced that the undertaking was really intended for their benefit

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and that of their heirs. Once satisfied, they were of great assistance, for some of them knew by heart the family tree of nearly every Indian in that particular band for four generations. Their memories are remarkable, and many a fact of historic interest came up in the course of our discussions.

Such names as "Young Man of whose Horses the Enemy is Afraid", "He Kills them on Horseback", and the like, while highly regarded among us, are not easily rendered into English nor pronounced in the Dakota, and aside from such troubles, I had many difficulties with questionable marriages and orphaned children whose ancestry was not clear. Then there were cases of Indian women who had married United States soldiers and the children had been taken away from the tribe in infancy, but later returned as young men and women to claim their rights in the tribal lands.

I was directed not to recognize a plurality of wives, such as still existed among a few of the older men. Old White Bull was a fine example of the old type, and I well remember his answer when I reluctantly

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informed him that each man must choose one wife who should bear his name. "What!" he exclaimed, "these two women are sisters, both of whom have been my wives for over half a century. I know the way of the white man; he takes women unknown to each other and to his law. These two have been faithful to me and I have been faithful to them. Their children are my children and their grandchildren are mine. We are now living together as brother and sisters. All the people know that we have been happy together, and nothing but death can separate us."

This work occupied me for six years, and gave me insight into the relationships and intimate history of thirty thousand Sioux.

My first book, "Indian Boyhood", embodying the recollections of my wild life, appeared in 1902, and the favor with which it was received has encouraged me to attempt a fuller expression of our people's life from the inside. The present is the eighth that I have done, always with the devoted cooperation of my wife. Although but one book, "Wigwam Evenings", bears both our

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names, we have worked together, she in the little leisure remaining to the mother of six children, and I in the intervals of lecturing and other employment. For the past twelve years our home has been in a New England college town, and our greatest personal concern the upbringing and education of our children.

None of my earlier friends who knew me well would ever have believed that I was destined to appear in the rôle of a public speaker! It may be that I shared the native gift of oratory in some degree, but I had also the Indian reticence with strangers. Perhaps the one man most responsible for this phase of my work, aside from circumstances, was Major James B. Pond of New York city, the famous lyceum manager. Soon after the publication of "Indian Boyhood", I came from South Dakota to Brooklyn by invitation of the Twentieth Century Club of that city, to address them on the Indian. Major Pond heard of this and invited me to luncheon. He had my book with him, and after a good deal of talk, he persuaded me to go on the lecture

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platform under his management. He took the most cordial interest in the matter, and himself prepared the copy for my first circular. His untimely death during the next summer put a damper upon my beginning; nevertheless I filled all the dates he had made for me, and finding a growing demand, I have continued in the field ever since.

My chief object has been, not to entertain, but to present the American Indian in his true character before Americans. The barbarous and atrocious character commonly attributed to him has dated from the transition period, when the strong drink, powerful temptations, and commercialism of the white man led to deep demoralization. Really it was a campaign of education on the Indian and his true place in American history.

I have been, on the whole, happily surprised to meet with so cordial a response. Again and again I have been told by recognized thinkers, "You present an entirely new viewpoint. We can never again think of the Indian as we have done before." A great psychologist wrote me after reading "The Soul of the Indian": "My God!

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why did we not know these things sooner?" Many of my hearers have admitted that morality and spirituality are found to thrive better under the simplest conditions than in a highly organized society, and that the virtues are more readily cultivated where the "struggle for existence" is merely a struggle with the forces of nature, and not with one's fellow-men.

The philosophy of the original American was demonstrably on a high plane, his gift of eloquence, wit, humor and poetry is well established; his democracy and community life was much nearer the ideal than ours to-day; his standard of honor and friendship unsurpassed, and all his faults are the faults of generous youth.

It was not until I felt that I had to a degree established these claims, that I consented to appear on the platform in our ancestral garb of honor. I feel that I was a pioneer in this new line of defense of the native American, not so much of his rights in the land as of his character and religion. I am glad that the drift is now toward a better understanding, and that he is become the ac-

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knowledgeed hero of the Boy Scouts and Camp Fire Girls, as well as of many artists, sculptors, and sincere writers.

I was invited to represent the North American Indian at the First Universal Races Congress in London, England, in 1911. It was a great privilege to attend that gathering of distinguished representatives of 53 different nationalities, come together to mutually acquaint themselves with one another's progress and racial ideals. I was entertained by some well known men, but there was little time for purely social enjoyment. What impressed me most was the perfect equality of the races, which formed the background of all the discussions. It was declared at the outset that there is no superior race, and no inferior, since individuals of all races have proved their innate capacity by their standing in the universities of the world, and it has not seldom happened that men of the undeveloped races have surpassed students of the most advanced races in scholarship and ability.

One little incident caused some of the

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delegates of the Asiatic peoples to approach me with a special friendliness. I was at a committee meeting where the platform of the Congress was being drafted, and as the first paragraph was read, I noticed that the word "Christian" appeared several times. I rose and said, "While I am myself a believer in the simple principles of Christianity, we who are met here are not all of that religion, and I would suggest that we substitute a term to which we can all subscribe, since we meet here not in the name, but in the spirit of Christianity, of universal brotherhood." Several sprang up to second the motion, among them Mr. John Millholland and Dr. Felix Adler, and as I saw Mr. Edwin D. Mead of Boston near by, I began to feel more at home. I was invited by some oriental representatives present to visit them in their own country, but as I was tied up with Chautauqua engagements, I had to take the next boat for home.

A very pleasant occasion of my meeting men and women distinguished in literature, was the banquet given to Mark Twain on his seventieth birthday. Another interest-

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ing meeting was the dinner given by the Rocky Mountain Club of New York to fifteen western governors. I believe I was the only speaker there who was not a governor! When I addressed the Camp Fire Club of America, composed largely of big game hunters in all parts of the world, I began by telling them that I had slept with a grizzly bear for three months, and often eaten with him, but had never thought of giving him away. They seemed to enter into my mood; and when I went on to tell the old chief's story of the beaver woman with one hand (she had lost the other in a steel trap) and what she and her descendants did for the tribes of men and animals, as compared with the harm wrought by the too hasty builders of a frontier town, I could not ask for a more sympathetic audience.

It has been my privilege to visit nearly all sections of our country on lecture tours, including semi-tropical Florida and the Pacific coast, the great prairie states, and almost every nook and corner of picturesque New England. I have been entertained at most of our great colleges and universities, from

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coast to coast, and had the honor of acquaintance with many famous and interesting people, among whom I might name almost at random, W. D. Howells, Hamlin Garland, Ernest Thompson Seton, Dr. George Bird Grinnell, authors; Lorado Taft, sculptor (at the unveiling of whose colossal Black Hawk I was privileged to officiate), Edwin W. Deming, Ernest Blumenschein, and other noted artists; Mme. Bloomfield Zeisler, pianist; John Hays Hammond, engineer; Presidents G. Stanley Hall, Ernest Fox Nichols, Eliot, Stryker, Harry Pratt Judson, Dr. Luther Gulick, and other noted educators; Rabbi Stephen S. Wise, several bishops, and prominent clergymen of all denominations, together with a large circle not so well known to the public, but whose society has been to me equally stimulating and delightful.

Like every one else who is more or less in the public eye, I have a large correspondence from unknown friends, and among the most inspiring letters received have been those from foreign countries, where, until the outbreak of the European war, I had not

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only generous critics, but translators of my books in France, Germany, Austria, Bohemia, Denmark. I am frequently asked to recommend to readers books on all phases of Indian life and art, also to criticize such books both in print and in manuscript.

My work for the Boy Scouts, whose program appeals to me strongly, has given me a good deal of practice in camp management, finally leading to the organization of summer camps for both boys and girls on charming Granite Lake in the hills of southern New Hampshire, where my whole family are enthusiastic helpers in the development of this form of open-air education, patterned largely upon my own early training.

From the time I first accepted the Christ ideal it has grown upon me steadily, but I also see more and more plainly our modern divergence from that ideal. I confess I have wondered much that Christianity is not practised by the very people who vouch for that wonderful conception of exemplary living. It appears that they are anxious to pass on their religion to all races of men, but keep very little of it themselves. I have

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not yet seen the meek inherit the earth, or the peacemakers receive high honor.

Why do we find so much evil and wickedness practised by the nations composed of professedly "Christian" individuals? The pages of history are full of licensed murder and the plundering of weaker and less developed peoples, and obviously the world to-day has not outgrown this system. Behind the material and intellectual splendor of our civilization, primitive savagery and cruelty and lust hold sway, undiminished, and as it seems, unheeded. When I let go of my simple, instinctive nature religion, I hoped to gain something far loftier as well as more satisfying to the reason. Alas! it is also more confusing and contradictory. The higher and spiritual life, though first in theory, is clearly secondary, if not entirely neglected, in actual practice. When I reduce civilization to its lowest terms, it becomes a system of life based upon trade. The dollar is the measure of value, and *might* still spells *right*; otherwise, why war?

Yet even in deep jungles God's own sunlight penetrates, and I stand before my own

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people still as an advocate of civilization. Why? First, because there is no chance for our former simple life any more; and second, because I realize that the white man's religion is not responsible for his mistakes. There is every evidence that God has given him all the light necessary by which to live in peace and good-will with his brother; and we also know that many brilliant civilizations have collapsed in physical and moral decadence. It is for us to avoid their fate if we can.

I am an Indian; and while I have learned much from civilization, for which I am grateful, I have never lost my Indian sense of right and justice. I am for development and progress along social and spiritual lines, rather than those of commerce, nationalism, or material efficiency. Nevertheless, so long as I live, I am an American.

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