

# **A Treatise on the Six–Nation Indians**

James Bovell Mackenzie



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It has seemed to me that it was not quite ingenuous in myself to attribute to the Indian writer in question (Rev. Peter Jones), the reflection on his countrymen, obviously conveyed in my expression, “discovering in him such in–dwelling monsters as revenge, mercilessness, implacability.”

That writer's position, more fairly apprehended, is this: That, while confessing these to be blots on the Indian nature, in the abstract, he yet seeks to fasten them on *many* whites as well.

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**PREFACE.**

The little production presented in these pages was designed for, and has been used as, a lecture; and I have wished to preserve, without emendation, the form and character of the lecture, as it was delivered.

J. B. M.

## INTRODUCTORY

As knowledge of the traditions, manners, and national traits of the Indians, composing, originally, the six distinct and independent tribes of the Mohawks, Tuscaroras, Onondagas, Senecas, Oneidas, and Cayugas; tribes now merged in, and known as, the Six Nations, possibly, does not extend beyond the immediate district in which they have effected a lodgment, I have laid upon myself the task of tracing their history from the date of their settlement in the County of Brant, entering, at the same time, upon such accessory treatment as would seem to be naturally suggested or embraced by the plan I have set before me. As the essay, therefore, proposes to deal, mainly, with the contemporary history of the Indian, little will be said of his accepted beliefs, at an earlier epoch, or of the then current practices built upon, and enjoined by, his traditional faith. Frequent visits to the Indian's Reservation, on the south bank of the Grand River, have put me in the way of acquiring oral data, which shall subserve my intention; and I shall prosecute my attempt with the greater hope of reaping a fair measure of success, since I have fortified my position with gleanings (bearing, however, solely on minor matters of fact) from some few published records, which have to do with the history of the Indian, generally, and have been the fruitful labour of authors of repute and standing, native as well as white. Should the issue of failure attend upon my effort, I shall be disposed to ascribe it to some not obscure reason connected with literary style and execution, rather than to the fact of there not having been adequate material at hand for the purpose.

## THE INDIAN'S CONDITIONS OF SETTLEMENT.

The conditions which govern the Indian's occupation of his Reserve are, probably, so well known, that any extended reference under this head will be needless.

He ceded the whole of his land to the Government, this comprising, originally, a tract which pursued the entire length of the Grand River, and, accepting it as the radiating point, extended up from either side of the river for a distance of six miles, to embrace an area of that extent. The Government required the proprietary right to the land, in the event of their either desiring to maintain public highways through it themselves, or that they might be in a position to sanction, or acquiesce in, its use or expropriation by Railway Corporations, for the running of their roads; or for other national or general purposes. The surrender on the part of the Indian was not, however, an absolute one, there having been a reservation that he should have a Reservation, of adequate extent, and the fruit of the tilling of which he should enjoy as an inviolable privilege.

As regards the money—consideration for this land, the Government stand to the Indian in the relation of Trustees, accounting for, and apportioning to, him, through the agency of their officer and appointee, the Indian Superintendent, at so much *per capita* of the population, the interest arising out of the investment of such money.

*Sales* of lands among themselves are permissible; but these, for the most part, narrow themselves down to cases where an Indian, with the possession of a good lot, of fair extent, and with a reasonable clearing, vested in him, leaves it, to pursue some calling, or follow some trade, amongst the whites; and treats, perhaps, with some younger Indian, who, disliking the pioneer work involved in taking up some uncultured place for himself, and preferring to make settlement on the comparatively well cultivated lot, buys it. The Government, also, allow the Indian, though as a matter of sufferance, or, in other words, without bringing the law to bear upon him for putting in practice what is, strictly speaking, illegal, to *rent* to a white the lot or lots on which he may be located, and to receive the rent, without sacrifice or alienation of his interest—money.

Continued non—residence entails upon the non—resident the forfeiture of his interest.

The Indian is, of course, a minor in the eye of the law, a feature of his estate, with the disabilities it involves, I shall dwell upon more fully at a later stage.

Should the Indian intermarry with a white woman, the receipt of his interest—allowance is not affected or disturbed thereby, the wife coming in, as well, for the benefits of its bestowal; but should, on the other hand, an Indian woman intermarry with a white man, such act compels, as to herself, acceptance, in a capitalized sum, of her annuities for a term of ten years, with their cessation thereafter; and entails upon the possible issue of the union *absolute* forfeiture of interest—money. In any connection of the kind, however, that may be entered into, the Indian woman is usually sage and provident enough to marry one, whose hold upon worldly substance will secure her the domestic ease and comforts, of which the non—receipt of her interest would tend to deprive her. Should the eventuality arise of the Indian woman dying before her husband, the latter must quit the place, which was hers only conditionally, though the Indian Council will entertain a reasonable claim from him, to be recouped for any possible outlay he may have made for improvements.

The Government confer upon the Indian the privilege of a resident medical officer, who is paid by them, and whose duty it is to attend, without expectation of fee or compensation of any kind, upon the sick. His relation, however, to the Government is not so defined as to preclude his acceptance of fees from whites resident on the Reserve, provided the advice be sought at his office. The Government, probably, being well aware of the stress of work under which their medical appointee chronically labours, and appreciating the consequent unlikelihood of this privilege being exercised to the prejudice of the Indian, have not, as yet, shorn him of it.

Another privilege that the Indian enjoys, and which was granted to him by enactment subsequent to that which assured to him his Reserve, is that of transit at half—fare grates on the different railroads. This is a right which he neither despises, nor, in any way, affects to despise, since it meets, and is suited to, his common condition of slender and straitened means. The moderate charge permits him to avail frequently of the privilege at seasons (which comprehend, in truth, the greater portion of the year) when the roads are almost unfit for travel, the Indian, as a rule, going in for economy in locomotive exercise (so my judgment decrees, though it has been claimed for him that, at an earlier period of his history, walking was congenial to him) hailing and adopting gladly the

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medium which obviates recourse to it.

## HIS MEETINGS OF COUNCIL.

The Indian Council has a province more important than that which our Municipal Councils exercise. Its decisions as to disputes growing out of real estate transactions, unless clearly wrong, have in them the force of law.

The ordinary Council is a somewhat informal gathering as regards a presiding officer or officers, and, also, in respect of that essential feature of a quorum, for which similar bodies among ourselves hold out so exactly. The Chiefs of the tribes, who, alone, are privileged to participate in discussions, can scarcely be looked upon in the light of presidents of the meeting; nor can there be discovered in the privileges or duties of any one of them the functions of a presiding officer.

The Chiefs of the Mohawks and Senecas, who sit on the left of the house, initiate discussion on all questions. The debating is then transferred to the opposite side of the house, where are seated the Chiefs of the Tuscaroras, Oneidas, and Cayugas, and is carried on by these Chiefs. The Chiefs of the Onondagas, who are called “Fire–Keepers” (of the origin of the name “Fire–Keeper,” I will treat further, anon) then speak to the motion, or upon the measure, and, finally, decide everything; and they are, in view of this power of finality of decision with all questions, regarded as the most important Chiefs among the confederated tribes. The decision of the “Fire–Keepers” does not, by any means, always show concurrence in what may have been the *consensus* of opinion expressed by previous speakers, very frequently, indeed, embodying sentiments directly opposite to the weight of the judgment with those speakers. As illustrating, more pointedly, the arbitrary powers committed to these Chiefs, they may import into the debate a fresh and hitherto unbroached line of discussion, and, following it, may argue from a quite novel standpoint, and formulate a decision based upon some utterly capricious leaning of their own. I have not been able to learn whether the decision of these Chiefs, to be valid, requires to be established by their unanimous voice, or simply by a majority of the body.

The reason or cogency of the system of debate followed in the Indian Council has not seemed to me clearly demonstrable; nor is the cause for the honour attaching to the Chiefs of the Mohawks and Senecas, and of the Onondagas, respectively, of commencing and closing discussion, very explicable. I believe, however, that the principle of kinship subsisting between the tribes, the Chiefs of which are thus singled out for these duties, governs, in some way, the practice adopted; and am led, also, to imagine that exceptional functions, in other matters as well, vest in these Chiefs; and that they enjoy, in general, precedence over the Chiefs of the other tribes.

The Chiefs in Council take cognizance of the internal concerns, and control and administer, generally, the internal affairs, of the community. There are often special and extraordinary deliberations of the body, which involve discussion upon points that transcend the operation of the Indian Acts, and require the Government to be represented; and, in these cases, the Indian Superintendent, whose presence is necessary to confer validity on any measure passed, is the presiding officer.

As mention is made here of the Superintendent, or, as his title runs in full, the Visiting Superintendent and Commissioner, it will be opportune now to define his powers, so far as I understand them.

It may be said, in general, that he exercises supervisory power over everything that concerns the well–being and interests of the Indian. By the representations made by him to the Government in his reports (and by those, of course, who hold the like office in other Indian districts) has been initiated nearly every law, or amendment to a law, which the pages of the Indian Acts disclose.

He will often watch (though in his commission no obligation, I believe, rests upon him to do this) the trial of an Indian, where some one of the graver crimes is involved, that he may, perchance, arrive at the impelling cause for its perpetration. This may have had its origin, perhaps, in the criminal's having over–indulged in drink, or in his having resigned himself to some immoral bent; or it may have been connected, generally, with some deluging of the community with immorality. If, haply, the origin of the crime be traced, the Superintendent embodies in his report a recommendation looking to a change in the law, which shall tend to suppress and control the evil. If there be indication that a particular order of crime prevails, or that, unhappily, some new departure in its melancholy category is being practised, it will, again, be his place to represent the situation to the Government, to

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the end that a healthier state of things may be brought about. He is authorized, in certain cases, to make advances on an individual Indian's account, and, also, on the general account, where some emergency affecting the entire tribe arises, such as a failure of the crops, confronting the Indian with the serious, and, but for this Governmental provision, insuperable, difficulty of finding the outlay for seeding for the next season's operations.

It is customary for the Superintendent to attend important examinations of the Indian schools, that he may have light upon the pupils' progress, and may report accordingly.

Where an occurrence of unusual moment in the history of any of the Churches takes place; the projecting, perhaps, of some fresh spiritual campaign amongst the Indians; or one, marking some specially auspicious event, he will often lend his presence, with the view to enlightenment as to the spiritual state of his charges.

I have already said, that through the agency of the Superintendent, the Indian receives his interest-money, and it may, perhaps, be interesting to detail the manner in which this is usually drawn. The tribes are told off for this purpose, and, I believe, certain other purposes, into a number of bands; and a given day is set (or, perhaps, three or four days are assigned) whereon the members of a particular band shall be privileged to draw. If the drawing of the money be not marked by that expedition which the plan is designed to secure, but rather suggests that there are a number of stragglers yet to come forward to exercise their right, the turn of another band comes, and so on, the straggling ones of each band being treated with last.

It is usual for the head of each family to draw for himself and his domestic circle.

The present incumbent of the Superintendent's office is a gentleman of fine parts, and one who has striven, during a term of nearly twenty years, with tact and ability, to conserve the interests of the Indian. Speaking of tact, the Indian character exacts a large display of it from one whose relation to him is such as that which the Superintendent occupies, his overseer and, to a large extent, his mentor. There have been outcries against his course in some matters, though these have been indulged in only a small section; but the Indian chafes under direction, and is, for the most part, a chronic grumbler; and his discontent frequently finds expression in delegations to the Government, which, though they *may* be planned with the view of ventilating some grievance, are more generally conceived of by him in the light of happy expedients for giving play to his oratory, or for setting about to establish his pretensions to eminence in that regard, in a somewhat exacting quarter; or, mayhap, for conveying to the powers that be, by palpable demonstration, the fact of his continued existence, and more, of his continued *dissatisfied* existence.

But to return to the Council. Where complaint of irregular dealing is preferred by either party to a transfer or sale of real estate, it comes within the scope of the Chief's powers to decree an equitable basis upon which such transfer or sale shall henceforward be viewed, and carried out. The jurisdiction of the Chiefs also ranges over such matters as the considering of applications from members of the various tribes for licensing the sale to whites of timber, stone, or other valuable deposit, with which the property of such applicants may be enriched; and they likewise treat with applications for relief from members of the tribes, whom physical incapacity debars from earning living, or who have been reduced to an abject state of poverty and indigence; and have authority to supplement the interest-annuities of such, should they see fit, with suitable amounts.

The silent adjudging of a question is something abhorrent to the genius of the Indian, and is in reality unknown. Dishonouring thus the custom, he can grandly repudiate the contemptuous epithet of "voting machine;" so unsparingly directed against, and pitilessly fastening upon, certain ignoble legislators among ourselves. The manner of proceeding that obtained with the Ojibways was somewhat different from the practice I have detailed, and I allude to it now, because the tribe of the Delawares, who are now treated as an off-shoot of the Oneidas, and are merged with their kin in the Six Nations, belonged originally to the Ojibways. With them the decision was come to according to the opinions expressed by the majority of the speakers—a plan resolving itself into the system of a show of hands (or a show of *tongues*, which shall it be?) it having been customary for all who proposed to pass upon a measure to speak as well. The issue upheld by the greater number of hands shown, naturally, as with us, succeeded. Where a measure, in the progress of discussion, proved unpopular, it was dropped, an arrangement which should convey a wise hint to certain bodies I wot of.

It will be readily gathered from what has been said, that the method of voting, in order to establish what is the judgment of the greater number, does not prevail with the Indian Councils.

## HIS ORATORY.

As it is at his meetings of Council, and during the discussions that are there provoked, that the Indian's powers of oratory come, for the most part, into play, and secure their freest indulgence, that will appropriately constitute my next head.

We are permitted to adjudge the manner and style of the Indian's oratory, whether they be easy or strained; graceful or stiff; natural or affected; and we may, likewise, discover, if his speech be flowing or hesitating; but it is denied to us, of course, to appreciate in any degree, or to appraise his utterances. I should say the Indian fulfils the largest expectations of the most exacting critic, and the highest standard of excellence the critic may prescribe, in all the branches of oratory that may (with his province necessarily fettered) fitly engage his attention, or be exposed to his hostile shafts.

The Indian has a marvellous control over facial expression, and this, undeniably, has a powerful bearing upon true, effective, heart-moving oratory. Though his *spoken* language is to us as a sealed book, his is a mobility of countenance that will translate into, and expound by, a language shared by universal humanity, diverse mental emotions; and assure, to the grasp of universal human ken, the import of those emotions; that will express, in turn, fervor, pathos, humor; that, to find its completest purpose of unerringly revealing each passion, alternately, and for the nonce, swaying the human breast, will traverse, as it were, and compass, and range over the entire gamut of human emotion.

The Indian's grace and aptness of gesture, also, in a measure, bespeak and proclaim commanding oratory. The power, moreover, which with the Indian resides in mere gesture, as a medium for disclosing and laying bare the thoughts of his mind, is truly remarkable. Observe the Indian interpreter in Court, while in the exercise of that branch of his duty which requires that the evidence of an English-speaking witness or, at all events, that portion of it which would seem to inculpate the prisoner at the bar, or bear upon his crime, shall be given to him in his own tongue; and, having been intent upon getting at the drift of the testimony, mark how dexterously the interpreter brings gesture and action into play, wherever the narration involves unusual incident or startling episode, provoking their use! What a reality and vividness does he not throw, in this way, into the whole thing! It records, truly, a triumph of mimetic skill. Again, the opportune gesture used by the Indian in enforcing his speaking must seem so patent, in the light of the after-revelation by the interpreter, that we can scarcely err in confiding in it as a valuable aid in adjudging his qualities of oratory. We are, often, indeed, put in possession of the facts, in anticipation of the province of the interpreter, who merely steps in, with his more perfect key, to confirm our preconceived interpretation. It may be contended by some gainsayer, that the Indian vocabulary, being so much less full and rich than our own, gesture and action serve but to cover up dearth of words, and are, in truth, well-nigh the sum of the Indian's oratory; a judgment which, while, perhaps, conceding to the Indian honour as a pantomimist, denies him eminence as a true orator. This may or may not be an aptly taken objection, yet I have no hesitation in assigning the Indian high artistic rank in these regards, and would fain, indeed, accept him as a prime educator in this important branch of oratory.

The attention of his hearers, which an Indian speaker of recognized merit arrests and sustains, also lends its weight to substantiate his claim, to good oratory; unless, indeed, the discriminating faculties of the hearers be greatly at fault, which would caution us not to esteem this the guide to correct judgment in the matter that it usually forms.

The Indian enlivens his speaking with frequent humorisms, and has, I should say, a finely-developed humorous side to his character; and, if the zest his hearers extract from allusions of this nature be not inordinate or extravagant, or do not favor a false or too indulgent estimate, I would pronounce him an excessively entertaining, as well as a vigorous, speaker.

There are in the Indian tongue no very complex, rules of grammar. This being so, the Indian, pursuing the study of oratory, needs not to undertake the mastery of unelastic and difficult rules, like those which our own language comprehends; or to acquire correct models of grammatical construction for his guidance; and, being fairly secure against his accuracy in these regards being impeached by carping critics, even among his own brethren, can better and more readily uphold a claim to good oratory than one of ourselves, whose government in

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speaking, by strict rules of grammar is essential, and whom ignorance or contempt of those rules would betray into solecisms in its use, which would attract unsparing criticism, and, indeed, be fatal to his pretensions in this direction.

## HIS PHYSICAL MIEN AND CHARACTERISTICS.

It will be interesting, perhaps, to notice the particulars, as to physical conformation, in which the Indian differs from his white brother.

He maintains a higher average as to height, to fix which at five feet ten would, I think, be a just estimate. It is rare, however, to find him attain the exceptional stature, quite commonly observed with the white, though, where he yields to the latter in this respect, there is compensation for it in the way of greater breadth and compactness. There are, of course, isolated cases, in which he is distinguished by as great height as has ever been reached by ordinary man, and, in these instances, I have never failed to notice that his form discloses almost faultless proportions, the Indian being never ungainly or gaunt. I think, on the whole, that I do no injustice to the white man, when I credit the Indian with a better-knit frame than himself.

I am disposed to ascribe, in great measure, the evolving of the erect form that the Indian, as a rule, possesses, to the custom in vogue of the mother carrying her child strapped across the back, as well as to the fact of her discouraging and interdicting any attempts at walking on the part of the child, until the muscles shall have been so developed as to justify such being made. To this practice, at least, I am safe in attributing the rarity, if not the positive absence, with the Indian, of that unhappy condition of bow-leggedness, of not too slight prevalence with us, and which renders its victim often a butt for not very charitable or approving comment.

The Indian is built more, perhaps, for fleetness than strength; and his litheness and agility will come in, at another place, for their due illustration, when treating of certain of his pastimes.

The Indian has a large head, high cheek bones, in general, large lips and mouth; a contour of face inclining, on the whole, to undue breadth, and lacking that pleasantly-rounded appearance so characteristic of the white. He has usually a scant beard, his chin and cheeks seldom, if ever, asserting that sturdy and bountiful growth of whisker and moustache, in such esteem with adults among ourselves, and which they are so careful to stimulate and insure. Indeed, it is said that the Indian holds rather in contempt what we so complacently regard, and will often testify to his scorn by plucking out the hairs which protrude, and would fain lend themselves to his adornment.

The Indian, normally, has a stolid expression, redeemed slightly, perhaps, by its exchange often for a lugubrious one. I should feel disposed to predict for him the scoring of an immense success in the personation of such characters as those of the melancholy Dane; or of Antonio, in the Merchant of Venice, after the turn of the tide in his fortunes, when the vengeful figure of the remorseless Shylock rests upon his life to blight and to afflict it.

He is easily-moved to tears, though, perhaps, his facile transition from the condition presented in the foregoing allusion, into a positively lachrymose state, will be readily conceived of, without proclaiming specially, the fact. He will maintain a mien, which shall consist eminently with the atmosphere of the house of mourning; in truth, as an efficient mourner, the Indian may be freely depended upon.

It is contended that the complexion of the Indian has had the tendency to grow darker and darker, from his having inhabited smoky, bark wigwams, and having held cleanliness in no very exceptional honor; and the contention is sought to be made good by the citing of a case of a young, fair-skinned boy, who, taking up with an Indian tribe, and adopting in every particular their mode of life, developed by his seventieth year a complexion as swarthy, and of as distinctively Indian a hue, as that of any pure specimen of the race.

If we accept this as a sound view, which, however, carried to its logical sequence, should have evolved, one would imagine, the negro out of the Indian long are this, why may we not, in the way of argument, fairly and legitimately provoked by the theory, look for and consider the converse picture (now that the Indian lives in much the same manner as the ordinary poor husbandman, and now that we have certainly no warrant for imputing to him uncleanly habits) the gradual approach in his complexion to the Anglo-Saxon type? If we entertain this counter-proposition, it will then be a question between its operation, and his marriage with the white, as to which explains the fact of the decline now of the dark complexion with the Indian.

The custom of piercing the nose, and suspending nose-jewels therefrom, has fallen into disrepute, the Indian, perhaps, having been brought to view these as contributing, in a questionable way, to his adornment.

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The Indian woman has a finer development, as a rule, than the white woman. We may, in part, discover the cause for this in the prevalence of the custom, already alluded to, of the mother carrying her offspring on her back, which, with its not undue strain on the dorsal muscles, no doubt, promotes and conserves muscular strength. The Indian woman being commonly a wife and mother before a really full maturity has been reached, or any absolute unyieldingness of form been contracted, the figure yet admits of such-like beneficent processes being exerted upon it. In making mention of this custom, and, in a certain way, paying it honor, let me not be taken as wishing to precipitate a revolution in the accepted modes, with refined-communities, of bringing up children. To a community, however, like that of which we are treating, such plan is not ill-suited, the Indian mother being secure against any very critical observation of her acts, or of the fashion she adopts. Let the custom, then, continue, as it can be shown, I think, to favour the production of a healthier and stronger frame both in the mother and in the child. A good figure is also insured to the Indian woman, from her contemning, perhaps at the bid of necessity, arising from her poverty, though, I verily believe, from a well-grounded conception of their deforming tendencies, the absurdly irrational measures, which, adopted by many among ourselves to promote symmetry, only bring about distortion.

The Indian has very symmetrical hands, and the variation in size, in this respect, in the case of the two sexes, is often very slight, and, sometimes, scarce to be traced. The compliment, in the case of the man, has, and is meant to have, about it a quite appreciable tinge of condemnation, as suggesting his self-compassionate recoiling from manual exertion; and the explanation of the near approach in the formation of the hand of the woman to that of the man, may be found in the delegating to her, by the latter, in unstinted measure, and in merciless fashion, work that should be his. It is rare, also, to find a really awkwardly shaped foot in an Indian. The near conformity to a uniform size in the case of the two sexes, which I have noticed as being peculiar with the hand, may also be observed with the foot. I would sum up my considerations here with the confident assertion that the examination of a number of specimens of the hand or foot in an Indian, would demonstrate a range in size positively immaterial.

The Indian woman keeps up, to a large extent, the practice of wearing leggings and moccasins.

I should be disposed to think that the blood coursing through the Indian's frame is of a richer consistency, and has, altogether, greater vitalizing properties than that in ourselves, since on the severest day in winter he will frequently scorn any covering beyond his shirt, and the nether garments usually suggested by its mention, and, so appalled, will not recoil from the keenest blast.

## HIS CHIEFS AND THEIR FUNCTIONS.

The dignity of a chief comes to the holder through the principle of hereditary succession, confined to, and operating only with, certain families. In the case of the death of one of these chiefs, the distinction and powers he enjoyed devolve upon his kinsman, though not necessarily upon the next of kin. The naming and appointing of a successor, and the adjudicating upon the point as to whether he fulfils the qualifications esteemed necessary to maintain the dignity of the chiefship, are confided to the oldest woman of the tribe, thus deprived by death of one of its heads. She has a certain latitude in choosing, and, so long as she respects in the selection of her appointee, the principle of kinship to the dead chief (whether this be proximate or remote is immaterial) her appointment is approved and confirmed.

The chiefs are looked upon as the heads or fathers of the tribe, and they rely, to a large extent, for their influence over the tribe, upon their wisdom, and eminence generally in qualities that excite or compel admiration or regard. In an earlier period of the history of the Indian communities, when their forests were astir with the demon of war, eligibility for the chiefship contemplated in the chief the conjoining of bravery with wisdom, and these were the keynote to his power over his people. He, by manifesting on occasion, these, desirable traits, had his followers' confidence confirmed in his selection; upheld those followers' and his own traditions; and often assured his tribe's pre-eminence. The chief, in addition, by bringing these qualities to bear in any contact or treaty with a hostile tribe, compelled in a sense the recognition by his enemies of the prestige and power of his entire following. Hospitality was also considered a desirable trait in the chief, who, while habitually dispensing it himself, strove (having his endeavors distinctly seconded by the advocacy of the duty enforced in the kindly precepts of the old sages of the tribe) to dispose the minds of his followers to entertain a perception of the happy results which would flow to themselves by their being inured to its practice, the expanding of the heart, and the offering of a vent to the unselfish side of their nature.

If the chief do not, in the main, conserve the qualities that are deemed befitting in the holder of the chiefship; or if he originate any measure which finds popular disfavour, his power with the people declines.

A number of the chiefs have supplementary functions, conferred upon them by their brother dignitaries. There is, for example, one called the Forest-Ranger, whose place it is to interpose for the effectual prevention and checking of sales of timber to whites, by members of the different tribes; or removal by whites of timber from the Reserve, where a license, which suffers either to be done, has not been granted. In cases where an Indian meditates, in a spirit of lofty contempt for the license, any such illicit sale; or attempts to abet any such unlawful removal, this functionary has authority to frustrate both objects.

The chief who, at present, fulfils these duties has not been permitted to hold barren or dormant powers. In putting into effect that interference which his office exacts of him, he has been more than once terribly assaulted by whites, foiled in their plans, and exasperated by the agency that had stepped in for the baffling of their ill-formed designs. On one occasion, his death was all but brought about by a cruelly concerted attack upon him.

Certain other chiefs are called Fire-keepers, though their functions are not in any way suggested by their rather remarkable title. They are, however, very important persons, and I have already, in treating of the Indian's meetings of Council, touched upon their duty. I believe the name Fire-keeper is retained from the circumstance that, in by-gone days, when the council was an open-air affair, the lighting of the fire was the initiatory step, and, taken in this way, therefore, the most important step, in the proceedings.

Another chief is called Marshal, and it is incumbent upon him to co-operate with the officers of the law in effecting the capture of any suspected criminal or criminals, who may lie concealed, or be harbored, on the Reserve. He is a duly qualified county constable, though his services are not often in request, as the Chief of Police in Brantford, whose place it is to direct the way in which crimes (committed, of course, in the city) shall be ferreted out, or their authors tracked, usually confides in his own staff to promote these desirable purposes, from the fact of their accountability to him being well defined, whereas the county constable yields no obedience to him.

## HIS CHARACTER, MORAL AND GENERAL.

It is often claimed for the Indian that, before the white man put him in the way of a freer indulgence of his unhappy craving for drink, he was as moral a being as one unrenewed by Divine grace could be expected to be. Unfortunately, this statement involves no definition of what might be considered moral, under the circumstances. Now, there will be disagreeing estimates of what a moral character, upon which there has been no descent of heavenly grace, or where grace has not supervened to essay its recreation, or its moulding anew, should be; and there will also, I think, be divergent views as to a code of morals to be practised which shall comport with the exhibition of a *reasonably* seemly morality. I cannot, at least, concur in that definition of a moral character, upon which no operation of Divine grace has been expended, for its raising or its beautifying, which accepts that of the pagan Indian as its highest expression; and, distinctly, hesitate to affirm that a high moral instinct inheres in the Indian, or that such is permitted to dominate his mind; and, when I find one of these very writers who claim for him a high inborn morality, discovering in him such indwelling monsters as revenge, mercilessness, implacability, the affirmation falters not the less upon my tongue. That very many of the graver crimes laid at the Indian's door, and the revolting heinousness of which the records of our courts reveal; may be traced to his prescribing for himself, and practising, a lax standard of morals, is a statement which it would be idle to dispute. That the marriage tie exacts from him not the most onerous of interpretations, and that the scriptural basis for a sound morality, involved in the declaration, "and they twain shall be one flesh," not seldom escapes, in his case, its full and due honoring, are, likewise, affirmations not susceptible of being refuted. That, for instance, is not a high notion of marital constancy (marital is scarcely the term, for I am speaking now of the pagan, who rejects the idea of marriage, though often, I confess, living happily and uninterruptedly with the woman of his choice) which permits the summary disruption of the bond between man and woman; nor is paternal responsibility rigorously defined by one, who causes to cease, at will, his labor and care for, and support of, his children, leaving the reassuring of these to those children contingent upon the mother finding some one else to give them and herself a home.

To follow a lighter vein for a moment. The Police Magistrate at Brantford, before whom many of these little domesticities come for their due appreciation (for they disclose, often, elements of really baffling complexity) not less than their ventilation and unravelling, is an eminently peace-loving man, and quite an adept at patching up such-like conjugal trifles. He will dispense from his tribunal sage advice, and prescribe remedial measures, which shall have untold efficacy, in dispelling mutual mistrust, restoring mutual confidence, and bringing about a lasting re-union. He will interpose, like some potent magician, to transform a discordant, recriminating, utterly unlovely couple, into a pair of harmless, peaceable, love-consumed doves. There rises before my mind a case for illustration. A couple lived on the Reserve, whose domestic life had become so completely embittered that every vestige of old-time happiness had fled. The agency of the Police Magistrate was sought to decree terms of separation, as there was an adamant resolve on the part of each to no longer live with the other. Thus, in a frame of mind altogether repelling the notion of conversion to gentler views, or the idea of laudable endeavor, on the part of another, to instil milder counsels, being availingly expended, they repaired to the Police Magistrate's office. He, by invoking old recollections on either side, and judiciously inviting them to a retrospection of their former mutual courtesies, and early undimmed pleasures, gradually brought the would-be sundered people to a wiser mind. I believe there have only been two or three outbursts of domestic infelicity since.

Certain notions, bound up with the Indian's practice, in times now happily passed away, of polygamy, may be construed into an advocacy of the Deceased Wife's Sister's Bill, which engaged the attention of Parliament last session, and bids fair to take up the time and thought of our legislators, in sessions yet to come. The Indian usually sought to marry two sisters, holding that the children of the one would be loved and cared for more by the other than if the wives were not related. The concurrent existence of both mothers is, of course, presumed here. The question remains to be asked, would the children of the one sister, were their mother dead, be as well loved and cared for by the surviving sister, were she called upon to exercise the functions of a step-mother; and would the children of the dead sister love the children of the living sister, were they not viewed upon the same footing as those children?

## A Treatise on the Six-Nation Indians

That the Indian—the *Christian* Indian—frequently contemns the means unsparingly used, and the attempts and arguments put forth, by his spiritual overseers, to restrain his immoral propensities, to bridle his immoral instinct, and to ameliorate and elevate, generally, his moral tone, I fear, will not be gainsaid. That very many, on the other hand, practice a high morality, and set before themselves an exalted conception of conjugal duty, and strive, with a full-hearted earnestness, to fulfil that conception, none would-be so blind or so unjust as to deny.

There are some features in the Indian character to which unstinted praise is due, and shall be rendered.

He is very hospitable; and (herein nobly conserving his traditions) it is in no wise uncommon for him to resign the best of the rude comforts he has, in the way of accommodation, to some belated one, and content himself with the scantest of those scant comforts, impressing, at the same time, with his native delicacy, the notion, that he courts, rather than shrinks from, the almost penitential regime. Though one would naturally think, that the scorn of material comforts, suggested here, and which many others of his acts evince, would scarcely breed indolence in the Indian, yet this is with him an almost unconquerable weakness. It is, indeed, so ingrained within him, as to resist any attempt, on his own part, to excise it from his economy; and as to defy extirpating or uprooting process sought to be enforced by another. The Indian is, in truth, a supremely indolent being, and testifying to an utter abandonment of himself to the power of indolence over him, has often been known, when recourse solely to the chase was permitted him for the filling of his larder, to delay his steps to the forest, until the gnawing pangs of hunger should drive him there, as offering him the only plan for their appeasing.

When I have said that the Indian is hospitable, I have said that he is kind and considerate, for these are involved with the other. He has much of native delicacy and politeness; and though, from deep-seated prepossession, he denies the woman equal footing with himself; and, though through misconception of woman's true purpose and mission in the world, or through failing to apprehend that higher, greater, more palpable helpfulness she brings to man (all these, because self-dictated, self-enforced) he commits to her much of the drudgery, and imposes upon her many of the heavy burdens, of life, the Indian is not wholly devoid of chivalric instinct.

He is usually reticent in his manner with strangers, (but this is readily explained by his imperfect command of English, and his reluctance to expose his deficiency) though voluble to the last degree when he falls in with his own people.

The Indian has been lauded and hymned by Longfellow and others as the hunter *par excellence*; but, to apply this to his present condition, and look there for its truth, would be idle. *The incitements to indulge his taste for hunting are now so few, and of such slight potency, and the opportunities for giving it play so narrowed down, and so rare, that the pursuit of the chase has become well-nigh obsolete, and something to him redolent only, as it were, with the breath of the past. As the Indian is at present circumstanced and environed, he can beat up little or no game, and his poverty frequently putting out of his reach the procuring of the needful sporting gear, where he does follow hunting, it is pursued with much-weakened ardor, and often bootless issue. He is moved now to its pursuit, solely with the hope of realizing a paltry gain from the sale of the few prizes he may secure.*

Though his reputation as a hunter has so mournfully declined, the Indian is yet skilled in tracking rabbits, in the winter season, the youth, particularly, finding this a pleasant diversion. I trust I do not invoke the hasty ire of the sportsman if, in guilelessness of soul, I call this hunting. This very circumscribing of the occasions, and inefficacy of the motive powers, for engaging in hunting, will tend, it is hoped, to correct the indolent habits that the Indian nurses, and the inveteracy of which I have just dwelt upon, and emphasized; for it will not, I think, be denied that his former full-hearted pursuit of the chase (in submission, largely though it was, to imperious calls of nature), is responsible, mainly, for the inherence of this unpleasing trait. Though, of course, hunting in its very nature, enforces a certain activity, it is an activity, so far as any beneficent impressing of the character is concerned, void of wholesomeness, and barren of solid, lasting results; and, viewed in this way, an activity really akin to indolence. With the craving for hunting subdued, the Indian may take up, with less distraction, and devote himself, to good advantage, to his farming, and to industrial callings.

Want of energy and of steadiness of purpose are with the Indian conspicuous weaknesses, and their bearing upon his farming operations may be briefly noticed. He will not devote himself to his work in the fields with that full-intentioned mind to put in an honest day's toil, that the white man brings to his work, often being beguiled, by some outside pleasure or amusement, into permitting his day's work to sustain a break, which he laments afterwards in a melancholy refrain, of farming operations behind, and domestic matters unhinged, generally.

## A Treatise on the Six–Nation Indians

Though the white has endeavored (and I the more gladly bear my witness to these attempts at the redemption of the Indian from some of his weaknesses, since the white has been so freely charged with ministering to his appetite for drink, and to the evil side of his nature generally) to infuse these qualities of energy and resolution into the Indian, my observation has not yet discerned them in him. Though irresolute himself, the Indian will not tolerate, but is sufficiently warm in his disapprobation, of any unmanly surrender to weakness or vacillation on the part of whites set in authority over him.

He imbibes freely (I fear the notion of a certain physiological process is embraced by some minds, and that these words will be taken as curtly enunciating the Indian's besetting weakness; but pray be not too eager to dissever them from what is yet to come, as I protest that I am not now wishing to revert to this sad failing). He imbibes freely—the current fashions of the hour amongst whites. If raffling, for instance, be held in honour as a method for expediting the sale of personal effects, the Indian will adapt the practice to the disposal of every conceivable chattel that he desires to get off his hands.

## HIS PRONENESS TO DRINK.

The Indian Law, it is well known, puts a restraint, not only upon the purchase of liquor by the Indian, but upon its sale to him by the liquor-seller, or its supply, indeed, in any way, by any one. It forbids, as well, the introducing or harboring of it, in any shape, under any plea, on the Reserve. The law, in this respect, frequently proves a dead letter, since, where the Indian has not the assurance and hardihood to boldly demand the liquor from the hotel-keeper, or where the latter, imbued with a wholesome fear of the penalty for contravening the law, refrains from giving it, the agency of degraded whites is readily secured by the Indian, and, with their connivance, the unlawful object compassed. Of course the white abettor in these cases risks trifling, if any, publicity in the matter, and is inspired with the less fear of detection. There are some few hotel-keepers who, though they more than suspect the purpose to which the liquor these whites are demanding is to be applied, permit rapacity to overpower righteous compunction or scruple, and lend themselves, likewise, though indirectly, to the law's infraction. Happily, the penalty is now so heavy (\$300) that the evil is, I think, being got under control.

The effect of drink on the Indian is: to dethrone his; reason; cloud, even narcotize, his reasoning faculties; annul his self-control; confine and fetter all the gentler, enkindle and set ablaze, all the baser, emotions; of his nature, inciting him to acts lustful and bestial; and, with direful transforming power, to make the man the fiend, to leave him, in short, the mere sport of demoniac passion. It may be thought that this is an overdrawn picture, and that, even if it were true, which I aver that it is, to have withheld a part of its terribleness would be the wiser course. I wish, however, in exposing all its frightful features, to secure the pointing of a moral to all who lend themselves to the draughting of such a picture, or, in any way, hold in favor the draughts which lead to its draughting. Let not the Indian, then, resent this picturing of him in such unpleasing and repugnant light, but let him rather apply and use the lesson it is sought to teach, that it may turn to his enduring advantage. Let him overmaster the enslaving passion; let him forswear the tempting indulgence; let him recoil from the envenomed cup, which savors of the hellish breath and the ensnaring craft of the Evil One, ever seeking to draw chains of Satanic forging about him. The Indian will plead utter obliviousness of the *fracas*, following some drunken bout, and during the progress of which the death-stroke has been dealt to some unhappy brother. He will disavow all recollection of the apparently systematic doing to death, when drunk, under circumstances of the most revolting atrocity, of an unfortunate wife.

Though the proximate result of drink is with the Indian more alarming than with the white, the ultimate evils and sorrows wrought by continued excess in drink are, of course, identical in both cases: moral sensibilities blunted; manhood degraded; mind wrecked; worldly substance dissipated; health shattered; strength sapped; every mendacious and tortuous bent of one's nature stimulated, and given free scope.

## HIS HUMOR.

In its very nature this essay will partake largely of the element of historical preciseness, and if it do not, I have so far failed to gain my end. I have wished to introduce matter of a kind calculated to relieve this, and to insure the escape of the essay from the charge of a well-sustained dryness.

Of the humorous instinct of the Indian, as indulged toward his fellow-Indian, I cannot speak with confidence; of the malign operation upon myself of the same instinct, I can speak with somewhat more exactness, and with somewhat saddening recollections. The cases, indeed, where I have been exposed to the play of his humor exhibit him in so superlatively complacent an aspect, and myself in so painfully inglorious a one, that I refrain, nay shrink, from rehearsing the discomposing circumstances. I should be pleased if I could call to mind any instance which would convey some notion of the Indian's aptness in this line, and yet not involve myself, but I cannot. I would say, in a general way, that the Indian is a plausible being, and one needs to be wary with him, and not too loth to suspect him of meditating some dire practical joke, which shall issue in the utter confusion and discomfiture of its victim, whilst its author shall appropriate the main comfort and jubilation. Though the Indian, perhaps, does not conceive these in the determinedly hostile spirit with which the Mohometan who seeks to compass the Christian's undoing is credited, there is yet such striking accord in the two cases, so far as exultant approval of the issue is concerned, that I am disposed to look upon his creed in this respect as a modified Mahometanism. I could relate many instances, affecting myself, where trustfulness has incurred payment in this coin, but, having no desire to stimulate the Indian's existing proneness to practical joking, I stay my hand at further mention of the peculiarity.

## HIS INTELLECTUAL GIFTS.

The Indian has little hope of occupying a sphere, where the discipline and cultivation of the mind shall be essential to the proper balancing and developing of its powers, and shall render it equal to the collision with other keen intellects. It would, therefore, be equally idle and unprofitable to attempt to measure his mental capabilities, until we shall have experience of his intellectuality, with proper stimulating and inciting influences in play, or under circumstances, conducing, generally, to mental strength and vigor, to note; and which we may employ as a reliable basis for judgment; and it would be manifestly unfair to argue weak mental calibre, or to presage small mental capacity in the Indian, from his present deplorable state of inertness, a condition which has been sadly impressed and confirmed by repressive legislation, and of which that legislation, by practically denying him occupation of improving fields of thought, and, indeed, scope for any enlarged mental activity, seeks to decree the melancholy perpetuity.

In some of the few cases where supervenient aid has enabled him to qualify for, and embrace, a profession, I have perceived a tendency to subordinate its practice to the demands of some less exacting calling, which has rendered nugatory any efficient mastery of the profession. Memory is, undoubtedly, the Indian's strong point, and I can myself testify to exhibitions of it, truly phenomenal. The interpreter will placidly proceed to translate a long string of sentences, just fallen from a speaker's lips, to engraft which upon our memory would be a performance most trying and difficult; and to have their repetition, even with a proximate adherence to the sense and the expressions used, imposed upon us, in the peremptory fashion in which it is sprung upon the interpreter, would carry the wildest dismay to our mind. Those understanding the Indian tongue have frequently assured me that the Indian, when interpreting, reproduces with minuteness, if he be granted, of course, a certain latitude for differences of idiom, the speaker's thought and expressions. It is said by one of his own writers that the Indian is much more prone to follow the evil than the moral practices of the white; and there can be no doubt, I think, that, if habitually thrown with a corrupt community, or one where a low order of morality should obtain, the acquisition of higher knowledge would tend to make him better skilled in planning works of iniquity, than to give him higher and purer tastes. Actual experience of the Indian, in one or two cases, where there has been a more than common accession to his mental accomplishments, rather gives color to the notion of the misdirection of those accomplishments (even without the baneful white influence) that has been hinted at.

I should think the Indian would, probably, even with proper discipline to bear, lack powers of concentration, with the kindred faculty of being able to direct the mind to the achieving or subserving of some one grand purpose or aim, and would, likely, be deficient in other allied ways, by which a gifted and powerful mind will be asserted; and would imagine, on the whole, that there is slight ground for thinking him capable, under the most favourable circumstances, of imperilling the eminence of the white in respect of intellectual power and attainments.

## HIS PASTIMES.

Lacrosse, it is well-known, is the Indian's national game. The agile form with which nature has gifted him, and which I have mentioned already as one of his physical characteristics, brings an essential pre-requisite for success or eminence to a game, where the laggard is at heavy discount.

Though a white team can often boast of two or three individual runners, whose fleetness will outstrip the capacity of an equal number on the side of the Indians, I think, perhaps, that it will be allowed that the Indian team, as a rule, will comprehend the greater number of fleet members. While the Indian, then, can scarcely be said to yield to the white in this respect, he lacks obviously that mental quick-sightedness which, with the latter, defines, as it were, intuitively, the exact location on the field, of a friend, and, with unerring certitude, calculates the degree of force that shall be needed to propel the ball, and the precise direction its flight shall take, in order to insure its reposing on the net of that friend. In the frequently recurring *mêles*, begotten of the struggle amongst a number of contestants for the possession of the ball, the Indian exhibits, perhaps, in more marked degree than the white, the qualities of stubborn doggedness, and utter disregard of personal injury.

The worsting of the Indian by the white in the majority of competitions of this kind is due to the latter submitting to be governed by system, and to his recognizing a directing power in the captain. The Indian, on the other hand, will not bend to such controlling influence, but chafes under direction of any kind. He has good facilities for practice at this game, and, I believe, really tries to excel in it, often, indeed, the expense of duties, which imperatively call him elsewhere than to the lacrosse-field.

The Indian is a proficient canoeist, and will adventure himself with confidence in a canoe of the frailest construction, which he will guide in safety, and with surpassing skill. He will dispel the fears of his disquieted and faithless fellow-voyager (for the motion at times in canoeing is, unmistakably, perturbing and discomposing; indeed, in this unsettling experience, the body is a frequent, if not an inevitable, sharer) who, in view of his sublime disregard of danger, will quickly re-assert the courage that had waned. If, however, there be a second Indian in the canoe, he usually strives to counteract the reassuring effect that the pilot's bearing has upon you. He stands up in the bottom, and sways, to and fro, and, with fell and malignant intent proceeds to evolve out of the canoe a more approved see-saw action than *a priori* and inherently attaches to that order of craft. On that really "Grand" river, which was his sometime heritage, the Indian can well improve his skill in this modest branch of nautical science.

## HIS TRADING RELATIONS WITH WHITES.

The consciousness of unsatisfied pecuniary obligation does not, as a rule, weigh heavily on the Indian mind, nor does it usually awaken, or offer food for, burdensome reflection.

The Indian Act, which decrees his minority, disables him from entering into a contract of any kind, though it scarcely needs any statement from me to assure my hearers that the law does not secure, nor does the majestic arm of that law exact, from him, the most rigid compliance.

The Indian will make and tender to a white creditor his promissory note with a gleeful complacency. There are usually two elements contributing, in perhaps equal degree, to produce in him this complacent frame of mind: The first, that, for removing from his immediate consideration a debt, he is adopting a temporizing expedient, which in no way vouches for, and in no sense bespeaks, the ultimate payment of the debt; the other, that his act records his sense of rebellion against a restrictive law, ever welling up in his breast, and seeking such–like opportune vent for its relief.

In trading with a merchant, who, appreciating the wiliness of his customer, felt a natural concern about trading upon as safe a basis as might be secured, it was, until quite recently, customary with the Indian to anticipate his interest–money, in paying for his goods. That the merchant might have a guarantee that previous instances of the setting on foot of this plan in the individual Indian's case, had not effected the entire appropriation or exhaustion of his allowance, or that in the immediate transaction with him, the Indian's allowance would not be exceeded, a chief of the particular tribe to which the Indian belonged, who was assumed to keep track of the various amounts that at different times impaired the interest–fund, signed an order for him to tender to the merchant; and in order that the Superintendent might properly award and pay the balance coming, these orders would go into his possession, before he should proceed with the season's payments. Now, however, the place and times at which interest payments are made, are not allowed to be viewed by merchants and others as a collection *dépôt*, or as occasions on which their orders from Indians may be confirmed, or debts from those Indians made good.

The merchant, foreseeing that a large proportion of the debts from Indians that he books are not recoverable, will frequently—and I presume there is nothing savoring of dubious dealing in the matter—add, perhaps, thirty or forty per cent. to the usual retail price of the goods sold to them, that the collection of some of the debts may, as it were, offset the loss from those that are irrecoverable.

It is not pleasant to impugn the character of the Indian for uprightness and probity, but that there is no conspicuous prevalence of these qualities with him, I fear, can be sufficiently demonstrated. I am disposed to ascribe this state of things, to a large extent, to the operation of the Indian Law. If the Indian who buys, and does not pay, and who never intends to pay, were not exempted from the salutary lesson which the distraint, at suit of a creditor, upon his goods, teaches, he would not seek to evade payment of his debts.

If, again, the Indian were not regarded as one “childlike,” shall I say, “and bland” (no! I must dissever these words from the otherwise apt quotation, as, though this be to proclaim how immeasurably he has fallen, and to dissipate cherished popular beliefs about him, I conceive him to be bland, without being so decreed by the law) there would be a manifest accession to his fund of self–respect. The idea of holding him a minor, and as one who cannot be kept to his engagements is a mistake, and its effect is only to stimulate the dishonest bent of his nature, prompting him to take advantage of his white brother in every conceivable way, where the latter's business relations with him are concerned.

## HIS RELIGION.

The pagan, though not so alive to the serene beauties of the Christian life, and not so attracted by the power, the promises, and the assurances of the Christian religion, as to evince the one, and embrace the other, or to make trial of the moral safeguards that its armoury supplies, would yet so honour, one would think, the persuasive Christian influences, operating around him and about him in so many benign and kindly ways, as to abandon many of the practices that savour of the superstition of a by-gone age. Though there has been a decline, if not a positive discontinuance, of his traditional worship of idols; though his adoration of the sun, of certain of the birds of the air, and of the animal creation, is not now blindly followed, and the invocation of these, for the supposed assuring of success to various enterprises, is rarely put in effect, there is yet preserved a relic of his old traditions, in the designs with which he embellishes certain specimens of the handiwork, with which he oft vexes the public eye. (I must really, though, pay my tribute of admiration for the skilled workmanship many of these specimens disclose.) It is common for him, when at work upon the elaborate carving in wood that he practises, to engrave some hideous human figure, intended, obviously, to represent an idol. Does it not excite wonder with us that such refinements upon hideousness and repulsiveness could ever have provoked the worship or adoration of any one?

One almost insuperable difficulty that the missionary experiences in his attempts to instil religious principles into the Indian mind, is to get him to entertain the theory that the human race sprang originally from one pair. The pagan believes in the existence of a Supreme Being, though, his idea of that Being's benignity and consideration relates solely to an earthly oversight of him, and a concern for his daily wants. His conception of future bliss is almost wholly sensual, and wrapped up with the notion of an unrestrained indulgence of animal appetite, and a whole-souled abandonment to feasting and dancing. His supreme view of happiness is that he shall be, assigned happy hunting-grounds, which shall be stocked with innumerable game, and where, equipped in perfection for the chase, he shall ever be incited to its ceaseless pursuit.

Of course, such impressions, clogged and clouded as they are with earthliness, have been dispelled in the cases of those, who have opened their minds to the more desirable promises of the Gospel.

The Indian's expectation of attaining and enjoying a future state of bliss, which shall transcend his mundane experience, is often present to his mind. I remember once walking with rather measured gait along one of the roads of the Reserve, bearing about me, it *may* be, the idea of supreme reflection, when an Indian stopped me, and asked (though, as my eyes sought the ground at the time, I cannot conceive how his attributing to me thoughts of celestial concernment could have been suggested) if I were thinking of heaven. I should have been pleased to own to my mind's being occupied at the time with heavenly meditations, a confession not only worthy, if true, to have been indulged in, but one having in it possibly force for him, as helping, perhaps, to confirm the course of his thoughts in the only true and high and ennobling channel, which his question would suggest as being their frequent, if not their habitual, direction.

Truth, however, compelled me to admit the subserviency of my mind, at the moment, to earthly thought.

The pagan Indian celebrates what he calls dances, which frequently, if liquor can only be had, degenerate into mere drunken orgies. Here the war-whoop, with its direful music, greets the ear, carrying terror and dismay to the breasts of the uninitiated; and here the war-dance, with all the accessories of paint and feathers, gets free indulgence.

## HIS MODE OF LIFE.

A mode of life will be suggested by the individual's estate and surroundings, and will, naturally, be accommodated to the exactions merely of the society in which he moves. With the Indian, poverty shapes his habits of life, and he bends to compulsion's decree in the matter. If we consider his hypothetical translation to a higher sphere, the Indian might develop and maintain a course of living which should not, in those altered circumstances, discredit him.

As our notions of early Indian life are so associated with the wigwam, a description of the manner and stages of its construction may be interesting. Poles, twelve or fourteen feet long, are placed in the ground, these meeting at the top, and leaving an opening through which the smoke may escape. Over the poles are placed nets, made of flags, or birch bark, and, sometimes, the skins of animals.

The Indian, in defining comfort, evidently does not mean soft beds and generous covering. His couch, as often as not, is the bare floor, without mattress, or, indeed, aught that might be conceded to a weak impulse; and his covering *nil*, as a rule, in summer, and a buffalo robe, or some kindred substitute, in winter. He adopts very frugal fare, doing high honour to maize, or Indian corn. Indeed, to the growth and cultivation of this order of grain he appropriates the greater part of his land.

In walking, the man usually goes before the woman, as he thinks it undignified to walk alongside. Nothing like social intercourse ever goes on between man and wife; and in their domestic experience they have no little pursuits in common, such as cheer and brighten life with us.

The hut (for, in the majority of cases, it is really little better) that, with excess of boldness, commingles its cramped, unpleasing outlines with the forest's wealth of foliage; and has reared its unshapely structure on the site of the historic wigwam, obliterating, in its ruthless, intrusive, advent, that lingering relic of the picturesque aspect of Indian life—a relic that, with its emblems and inner garniture of war, bids a scion of the race indulge a prideful retrospect of his sometime grandeur, and pristine might; that has power to invoke stirring recollections of a momentous and a thrilling past; to re-animate and summon before him the shadowy figures of his redoubtable sires, and re-enact their lofty deeds: in view of which, there is wafted to him a breath, laden with moving memories of that glorious age, when aught but pre-eminence was foreign to his soul; when, though a rude and savage, he was yet a lordly, being; when he owned the supremacy, brooked the dictation, of none; when his existence was a round of joyous light-heartedness, and he, a stranger to constraint—this habitation of the Indian, to my mind, emphasizes his melancholy, and, perhaps, inevitable decadence, rather than symbolizes his partnership with the white in the more palpable pursuits of a practical, enlightened, and energetic age, or co-activity with him on a theatre of enlarged and more vigorous action. It is in some respects more comfortless than even was his experience under his primitive style of living, and is usually composed of one room, answering all the purposes of life—eating-room, bed-room, reception-room, principally, however, for the snow and mud, which have been persuaded here to relax their hold, after antecedent demonstration of their adhering qualities.

## **HIS ALLEGED COMMISSION OF PERJURY.**

The Indian very frequently has the crime of perjury alleged against him, though what is assumed to be perjury is usually demonstrated to have nothing whatever of that element in it.

These imputations come about in this way: If the Indian, about to give evidence, be declared to have a reasonable mastery of English, the Court, sometimes rather hastily, I think, dispenses with the interpreter, in order to save time. A question is put to a witness, who, though not understanding it sufficiently to appreciate its full import and bearing, yet protesting, in a self-sufficient spirit, that he does (for the Indian likes to have imputed to him extensive knowledge of English) returns an answer apart from the truth, and one which he really never intended to give, and becomes, through the interpreter, committed to it on the records.

Or, the allegation may arise after this fashion:—The interpreter, having to master several different languages, will almost insensibly, in the confusion of idioms, misinterpret what has been said. The outrageous prevalence of this supposed perjury would of itself point to an explanation of this kind, since, we cannot believe that the Indian wishes to canonize untruthfulness.

## **THE INDIAN AS A MUSICIAN.**

The Indian's musical taste is conceded on all hands. He is a proficient in the use of brass instruments, the Mohawk Brass Band always taking high rank at band competitions. He has usually fine vocal power, and is in great request as a chorister. He has a full repertory of plaintive airs, the singing of which he generally reserves for occasions, resembling much the "wakes" that obtain with Roman Catholics, where he watches over night the body of some departed member of the tribe.

## **THE INDIAN AS AN ARTIST.**

As an artist in wood-carving, the Indian, I should say, stands almost without a rival. He will elaborate the most beautiful specimens in this kind of work; though he generally directs his skill to the embellishing of walking sticks and the like articles, which (their ornate appearance alone precluding their practical use) the white only buys with the view of preserving as ornaments. The Indian, therefore, would do well to allow his skill in this line to take a wider range, since, by so doing, he would not only bring about larger sales to enrich his not over-filled money-chest, but he would also extend his fame as an artist. The pencil, in the hand of the Indian, is often made to limn exquisite figures, and to trace delightful landscape-work. I am confident that he would, with appropriate training, cause his fame to be known in this line also. The Indian woman is a marvellous adept at bead-work, though her specimens disclose, usually, finer execution, than they do a tasteful or faultless associating of colours.

## **HIS SCHOOLS.**

The New England Company, an English Corporation have established, and maintain, in addition to the Mohawk Institute, which is on unreserved lands, a large number of schools for the education of the Indian youth. It is a question whether these schools really secure the patronage that the philanthropic spirit of their founders hoped for. The shyness of the girls is so marked (a trait I have observed even among the adult women) as to lead to a small attendance, of this element, at least, where the teacher is a white young man—in truth, a very ultra–manifestation of the peculiarity.

The Mohawk Institute contemplates the receiving of pupils who have reached a certain standard of proficiency, their boarding, and their education. It is an institution the aim of which is truly a noble one, the throwing back upon the Reserve of educated young men and women, who shall be qualified to go about life's work, fortified with knowledge, to pave the way to success in any walk of life that may be chosen. The Mohawk Institute has secured, in the person of its principal and directing power, one who is imbued with the desire so to use its powerful agency as to compass the maximum of good among the Indians.

## HIS MISSIONARIES.

The missionary demands notice as he, above all others, has left his impress on the life and character of the Indian.

The Ven. Archdeacon Nelles may be regarded as the pioneer missionary to the Indian. His work covers half a century, and, though, for some years, he has not been an active worker amongst the Indians, a solicitude for their welfare still actuates him. His province has been rather that of general superintendence of the New England Company's servants, than one involving much active mingling with the Indians. The association of his name with that time-honoured and revered structure, the old Mohawk Church, is his, grandest testimonial to his fruitful labour on the Reserve.

The Rev. Adam Eliot, whose widow still lives in the old missionary home, was a man of a singularly gentle and lovable disposition. In his contact with the Indian, the influence, if haply any could be exerted, was certain to be on the side of the good. He was one who moved about the Reserve with the savor of a quiet and godly life ever cleaving to him, a life, radiating forth, as it were, to circle and embrace others in the folds of its benign influence. He was tender, and unaffected in his piety. His life and work have left their abiding mark on the Indian character.

The Rev. R. J. Roberts was the first missionary who was really a constant resident on the Reserve, and this circumstance, no doubt, assured in larger measure his usefulness. I believe him to have been filled strongly with the missionary spirit, and with ardent zeal for the furthering of his Master's cause. His poor health always handicapped him, but I feel confident he leaves behind him, in the kind memories of many of his charges, a monument of his work not to be despised.

The Rev. James Chance was one of the old English type of clergyman, cheery, genial, and whole-souled. Had he planned nothing higher than the infusing of some of his own geniality into the Indian nature; and, had his missionary work effected nothing greater than this, his would have been no unworthy part. As the spiritual husbandman, he strove so to break up the fallow ground, that the harvest of souls might be the more bountiful.

I have not referred to the later or present occupants of the mission-field amongst the Indians, as they were, or have been identified for so short a time with them. I would also say, that it is from no denial to them of the achieving of solid, lasting work, that I have not alluded to missionaries outside of the Episcopal body. I have merely made such allusions here as personal contact with the missionaries has enabled me to record.

It may be thought that any work which contemplates the chronicling of the Indian's history, will be incomplete, which should fail to trace the career of Thayandanagea, or Chief Joseph Brant; or which should, at least, withhold reference to that mighty chieftain. Lest my making no mention of Brant here might be taken as denying to him the possession of those sublime qualities, which have formed the theme for so much of laudatory writing, I make a passing allusion to his life, passing, because his acts and career have engaged the ability and eloquence of so many writers of repute for their due commemoration, that I cannot hope to say anything that should cause further honour or glory to attach to his name.

Brant, above all others of his race, deserves an abiding place in the memories of his countrymen, and he is entitled to be held in enduring remembrance by us also.

In the war waged by Britain against the United States in 1812-15, he allied himself, it is well known, with the British. He bridled license and excess among his people, and strove to add lustre to the British arms, by dissuading them from giving rein to any of those practices, nay, by putting his stern interdict on all those practices, into which Indian tribes are so prone to be betrayed, and to which they are frequently incited by merciless chiefs. He posed, indeed, during the war as the apostle of clemency, not as the upholder of the traditional cruelty of the Indian.

He always displayed conspicuous bravery, and was the exponent, in his own person, of that intense and unflinching loyalty, which I verily believe to be bound up with the life of every Indian.

His loyalty was untainted with the slightest suspicion of treachery, another vile characteristic from which he redeemed the Indian nature.

The position of Brant and of Sir Walter Scott, so far as each has left living descendant to uphold his name, is almost analogous, and marks a rather interesting coincidence. The male line in both families is extinct. Sir

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Walter's blood runs now only in the daughter of his grand-daughter: two daughters alone of a grand-daughter are living, who own the blood of Brant.

Brant is buried in the graveyard of the old Mohawk Church, a building instinct with memories of the departed might and prowess of the Indian.

## CONSIDERATIONS UPON HIS STANDING AS A MINOR.

Is it a wise or a politic thing in the Government to seek to brand the Indian, in perpetuity, as a minor in the eye of the law? Repressing in him anything like self-assertion, is not, to hold him such, fatal to his self-respect? Does it not make him doubt his manhood entirely? Does it really, save in the single respect of the restraining of his drinking, conserve his true interests?

Is that a judicious law, which, while decreeing the Indian's disability for making a contract with a white man, yet visits upon him no penalty when he evades and contemns such law; which, guaranteeing to him immunity for violating or dishonouring his engagement, prompts him to cast about for some new and, haply, more admired expedient, whereby he may circumvent and defraud his creditor? Is that an enviable position for one to be placed in, who, ignorant of the disability I have mentioned, and guileless enough to suppose, that an Indian, who has fair worldly substance, when he gives a promissory note, means to pay it, and who, in that belief, surrenders to him valuable property, only to find afterwards that the debt is irrecoverable by legal process, and the chattels are likewise, by moral, or any other effectual, process?

It will be said that the white should not be a party to a contract with an Indian. Well, man is often trustful, and he does not always foresee the disaster that his trustfulness shall incur. He frequently credits his white fellow with an honourable instinct: why may he not, sometimes, impute it to the Indian?

The law, so far as it involves the restraining of the Indian's drinking, cannot be impeached: and in the application to the white of a similar law lies the only solution of the temperance problem.

## REFLECTIONS AS TO THE POSSIBLE EFFECT UPON HIM OF ENFRANCHISEMENT.

We cannot estimate the transforming power that his enfranchisement might exert over the Indian character.

The Indian youth, who is now either a listless wanderer over the confines of his Reserve; or who finds his highest occupation in putting in, now and then, desultory work for some neighbouring farmer at harvest-time; who looks even upon elementary education as useless, and as something to be gone through, perforce, as a concession to his parents' wish, or at those parents' bid, would, if enfranchisement were assured to him, esteem it in its true light, as the first step to a higher training, which should qualify him for enjoying offices or taking up callings, from which he is now debarred, and in which, mayhap, he might achieve a degree of honour and success which should operate, in an incalculable way, as a stimulus to others of his race, to strive after and attain the like station and dignity.

There can, I think, be no gainsaying of the view that the Indian, if he were enfranchised, would avail much more generally than he does now, of the excellent educational facilities which surround him. The very consciousness, which would then be at work within him, of his eligibility for filling any office of honour in the country, which enfranchisement would confer, would minister to a worthy ambition, and would spur him on to develop his powers of mind, and, viewing education as the one grand mean for subserving this end, he would so use it and honour it, as that he should not discredit his office, if, haply, he should be chosen to fill one.

## **CONCLUDING REMARKS.**

The present Indian legislation, in my judgment, operates in every way to blight, to grind, and to oppress; blasts each roseate hope of an ameliorated, a less abject, estate: quenches each swelling aspiration after a higher and more tolerable destiny; withers each ennobling aim, cancels each creditable effort that would assure its eventuation; opposes each soul-stirring resolve to no longer rest under the galling, gangrenous imputation of a partial manhood.

Though not authorised to speak for the Indian, I believe I express his views, when I say that he cherishes an ardent wish for enfranchisement, a right which should be conceded to him by the Legislature, though it should be urged only by the silent, though not, therefore, the less weighty and potent, appeal, of the unswerving devotion of his forefathers to England's crown.

He desires, nay, fervently longs, to break free from his condition of tutelage; to bring to the general Government the aid of his counsels, feeble though such may seem, if we measure him by his present status; aid, which, erstwhile, was not despised, but was, rather, a mighty bulwark of the British crown; and pants for the occasion to assert, it may be on the honour-scroll of the nation's fame, his descent from a vaunted ancestry.

## ADDENDA TO SECTION ON ENFRANCHISEMENT.

It will be said, perhaps, that to harbor the idea of the Indian's elevation, following, in any way, upon his closer assimilation with the white; his divestiture of the badge of political serfdom, and deliverance from even the suggestion of thralldom—all of which his enfranchisement contemplates; or that these would assure, in greater degree, his national weal, would be to indulge a wild chimera, which could but superinduce the purest visionary picture of his condition under the operation of the gift. Some might be found, as well, to discredit the notion that there would supervene, on the consigning to the limbo of inutile political systems of the disabling regime that now governs, an epoch, which would witness the shaking off, by the heavy, phlegmatic red man of the present, of his dull lethargy, with the casting behind him of former inaction and unproductiveness; and his being moved to assert a healthy, genuine, wholesome activity, to be directed to lofty or soulful purpose, or expressed in high and honourable endeavour. And it might be set down as a reasoning from the standpoint of an illusory optimism, to look for, through any change in the Indian's political condition, the incoming of an age, which should be distinguished by a hopeful and helpful accession to his character of honesty, uprightness, and self-respect, or by their conservation; or which should be the natal time for the benign rule over him of contentment, charity, and sobriety, or for the dominance of a seemly morality. That, likewise, might be deemed idle expectancy, which would foresee, as a result of the changed order of things, now being prospectively considered, a season in the Indian's experience, when should be illustrated the greater sacredness of the marriage relation, and the happy prevalence of full domestic inter-communion, harmony, and order; or should be honored a more gracious definition of the woman's province, with the license to her to embrace a kindlier lot than one decreeing for her mere slavish labour; or project a mission, to see its fruit in the softening and refining, and in the reviving of the slumbrous chivalry, of the man, or to leave, mayhap, some beauteous impress on the race.

It may be maintained, indeed, that the withdrawal from the Indian of the Government's protecting arm, and the recognition of his position, as no longer that of a needy, grovelling annuitant, but as one of equal footing with the white before the law, would—far from bringing blessings in their train—promote, with other evils, a pernicious development, with calamitous reaction upon him, of the aggrandizing instinct of the white, who would lure and entrap him into every kind of disastrous negotiation—its outcome, in truth, a very maelstrom of artful intrigue and shameless rapacity, looking to the absorption of the Indian's land, and of the few worldly possessions he now has. Nay, many would foresee for the Indian, through the consummation of his enfranchisement, naught but gloom and sorest plight. These would invest their picture with the sombrest hues; and, making this assume, under their pessimist delineation, blackest Tartarean aspect, would crown it with the exhibition of the Indian, as one sunken, at the instance of the white, in extremest depths of human sorrow; as plunged, engulfed, and detained in a horrible slough of degradation and misery. Such would, in short, have an era opened up, which should mark, at once, the exaltation of the white to a revolting height of infamy, proclaiming the high carnival of unblushing trickery and chicane; and should signalize the whelming of the Indian in the noxious flood of the high-handed, unrighteous, and unprincipled practice of the white, who would project for him, and through whose unholy machinations he would be consigned to, a state of existence which should be the hideous climax of physical and moral debasement.

Now I contend that the claim to ascendancy of the Indian over the white, in respect of sagacity and cunning and craft, which this condition of things presupposes, is not satisfactorily made out. And I can readily conceive of the application of that astuteness, that distinguishes the Indian in his present trading relations with the white, to the wider field for its display, which would arise from the extended intercourse and more frequent contact with the white, that would ensue upon the Indian's enfranchisement; and of this astuteness operating as his efficient shield against evil hap or worsening by the white in any coping of the kind with him.

I do not deny, however, that there might be realization, in part, of such painful spectacle, as has just been imagined, were enfranchisement, *pure and simple*, conferred upon the Indian; and I would distinctly demur to being taken as an advocate of enfranchisement for him without certain safeguards. Yet I honor a somewhat wide use of the term, and discredit the system of individual election for the right (if I may so call it)—which, I believe, obtains—with its vexatious exactions as to mental and moral fitness, and the very objectionable feature, to my

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mind, of laying upon the band, as a collective organization, the obligation of assigning to the individual member seeking enfranchisement so much land, thus imposing upon it, in effect, the onus of conferring the land qualification. Let its consummation be approached gradually, and with caution; and let a modified form of it, designed to meet the Indian's peculiar situation, be recognized and enforced. Let the enfranchisement be made a tentative thing; and let there be a provision for the divestiture of the Indian of the right, in case disaster to him should supervene upon its application.

I have spoken elsewhere of the *fact* of the Indian's enfranchisement prompting him, in view of the prospect of occupying various stations of dignity in the country, which, through the extension to him of the franchise, would be thrown open to him, to set a greater value upon education, as qualifying him for enjoying and filling with credit these stations. Perhaps, it would be the stricter view, and more apropos, to regard the Indian's more thorough education as that which would lead him to more readily perceive and better appreciate the full import and significance of enfranchisement; which would bring home to his mind a clear apprehension of the duties and obligations it exacts, and enable him, as well, to exercise the rights thereto pertaining with a wiser foresight and greater intelligence.

Let a higher order of mental attainment than he now displays be insured, by all means, and if possible, to the Indian; and, to this end, let the authorities concerned invite, through the inducement of something better than a mere bread-and-butter salary, the accession to the Reserve of teachers, no one of whom it shall be possible for an Indian youth of tender years to outstrip in knowledge; or shall be reduced to parrying, as best as he can, the questionings of a pupil on points bearing upon merely elementary education.

I would mention a prospective result of the Indian's enfranchisement, which would suggest, forcibly, the desirability of, and the need for his anticipatory instruction in the English language. He, unlike the German or Frenchman, has never been able to maintain, indeed, has never had, a literature; and I can scarcely conceive of his *tongue* even surviving the more general mingling with the white, which would be the certain concomitant of enfranchisement, which, indeed, with its other subverting tendencies, would seem to me to ordain its utter effacement.