**Title: Civilizing the Indian: The Carlisle School's Mission to Transform the “Savage” into American Citizens**

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As the United States carves its path across the continent, one unavoidable challenge has presented itself repeatedly: how to deal with the “Indian problem.” For generations, Native tribes have clung stubbornly to their primitive ways, resisting the forces of civilization that are sweeping over this great land. With every inch of progress, every new settlement, and every mile of railroad, Americans find themselves encroaching on territories long held by tribes who still live by outdated customs and superstitions. The Carlisle Indian Industrial School, established by General Richard Henry Pratt, seeks to tackle this issue head-on by civilizing the Native American youth, transforming them from wild savages into productive citizens fit to live among real Americans.

**The Necessity of Civilization for the Indian**

To many Americans, it is clear that the Indian, left to his own devices, is not capable of adapting to the demands of modern life. Native tribes continue to live in ways that are at odds with the progress of our nation—resistant to change, clinging to what many see as bizarre, primitive traditions, and generally refusing to accept the superior ways of Western civilization. General Pratt’s Carlisle Indian Industrial School was born from the realization that, without radical intervention, the Indian will remain forever bound to his tribal ways, ignorant of the great advances of American society.

At Carlisle, Native children are removed from the harmful influence of their elders, who often teach them only superstition, tribal lore, and disdain for civilized life. By separating the children, Carlisle can begin the process of eradicating these damaging influences and instilling in them a respect for the values and customs of the American way. At Carlisle, these young “savages” learn English, American history, and the Christian religion, in the hope that they might one day live as proper Americans, not as the wild, untamed heathens of their past.

**Discipline and Hard Work: A New Path for the Indian Child**

Carlisle’s method is strict and straightforward. Students are expected to live by American customs, wear proper clothing, follow a rigorous schedule, and participate in military-style drills to foster discipline. Unlike the life of idleness they might have experienced in their tribes, students at Carlisle are kept busy, instilled with a strong work ethic, and taught that hard work and discipline are the cornerstones of American life. For boys, this means learning trades like blacksmithing, carpentry, and farming, while girls are trained in the domestic arts, preparing them to live in American households as wives and mothers.

General Pratt’s approach is seen as both practical and moral by many Americans, who believe it’s the only way to “save” these children from the darkness of their uncivilized heritage. Rather than allowing them to live as ignorant and lawless as their parents, Carlisle offers these children a chance to rise above their birthright. Supporters argue that, through rigorous training, these young Indians may learn the habits and values that make American society great: productivity, faith, order, and respect for property and law.

**The Indian Problem and the Justification of Assimilation**

Carlisle’s mission fits well within the broader philosophy of Manifest Destiny—the belief that America has not only the right but the duty to expand its civilization across the continent. This mission, of course, is hindered by the Native tribes who still cling to their ancestral lands, refusing to step aside for the march of progress. Educating Native children at Carlisle is, in the eyes of many, an essential step in solving this problem. By assimilating the youth, Carlisle seeks to remove any lingering barriers to America’s rightful expansion and to secure the country’s future without the constant threat of “savage” interference.

The resistance of Native tribes to assimilation has long frustrated settlers and authorities alike. Unlike the immigrants who have willingly adapted to American customs, the Indians have proven themselves particularly stubborn, rejecting American values and holding to what they call “heritage.” Carlisle’s supporters see no value in these customs, which they view as pagan superstitions that only serve to keep these people shackled to their so-called heritage. In their view, Carlisle is not merely an educational institution but a place where the Indian is stripped of his “savagery” and given the tools to become a true American.

**Silencing Critics of Civilizing the Native**

While there are some voices of dissent, mostly from those outside American society, who suggest that Native children might benefit from retaining some of their “heritage,” these concerns are widely dismissed. Proponents of Carlisle argue that Native customs offer nothing of value and, if anything, only weaken the ability of Native people to live harmoniously with Americans. In fact, many believe that such “heritage” is not only unproductive but dangerous, fostering hostility and a reluctance to respect American authority and law.

The Carlisle model operates on the understanding that the Indian mind, filled as it is with the superstitions and rituals of his tribe, cannot be fully trusted to choose its own path. For the good of the children—and for the safety of the nation—they must be molded from a young age, trained to think and act as Americans. Those few who argue for some preservation of culture are often criticized as naive, failing to recognize the reality that American culture is superior and that any preservation of Native ways is merely a hindrance to the progress of civilization.

**The Promise of a Civilized Future for the Indian Population**

Carlisle’s supporters envision a future in which Native American children, transformed by the school’s strict regimen, will join the ranks of proper American society. Ideally, the young men and women educated at Carlisle will return to their people and spread the values of civilization, helping to lead others out of the “darkness” of their past and into the light of American progress. In this vision, the Indian population ceases to be an obstacle to American growth and becomes instead a productive part of the nation.

While some Native communities may mourn what they see as the “loss” of their traditions, Carlisle’s supporters view this as a necessary step toward a peaceful and prosperous society. America’s mission to civilize and assimilate the Indian population is, after all, seen as a gift—one that offers these children a chance to live not as “savages” but as part of the greatest nation on earth. The transformation at Carlisle is seen not only as an investment in these children’s futures but as a safeguard for America’s continued success.

**Conclusion: Civilizing the Indian for the Good of America**

In the minds of many Americans, the Carlisle Indian Industrial School represents the best hope for bringing the “savage” Indian into the fold of civilization. Through discipline, education, and immersion in American customs, Carlisle seeks to do what generations of treaties and negotiations have failed to accomplish: to finally and fully civilize the Indian, erasing the last traces of a “savage” way of life and replacing it with the virtues of American society.

General Pratt and his team at Carlisle are pursuing this mission with unwavering determination, and they are supported by a public that sees the initiative as essential to America’s future. For those who believe in the superiority of American values and the right of civilization to spread across the land, the Carlisle Indian Industrial School offers a promising solution to the Indian problem, laying the foundation for a nation unified not by heritage, but by allegiance to the American way of life. In this pursuit, Carlisle’s legacy will stand as a testament to the progress and power of American civilization.