**Title: Educating the "Savage": The Role of the Carlisle Indian Industrial School in Civilizing the Native American**

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As the United States continues its growth westward, a key question facing our nation is how to address the presence of the so-called “Indian” populations, many of whom resist adapting to the civilized ways of American society. With the expansion of our borders and ideals, we are confronted with the challenge of what to do with these tribes, whose ways of life appear, to the average American, not only foreign but also obstructive to the progress of civilization. The Carlisle Indian Industrial School, recently founded by General Richard Henry Pratt in Pennsylvania, has emerged as a solution, offering a unique way to “civilize” the Native American youth and ultimately assimilate them into our American society. This effort, grounded in the belief of American superiority and the benefits of civilization, marks a significant step in making productive citizens of these children and steering them away from what many see as the “savage” ways of their ancestors.

**The Necessity of Civilizing Native Youth for Their Own Good**

Proponents of the Carlisle Indian Industrial School argue that the initiative is both necessary and humane, providing Native American youth with an education in American values and skills. General Pratt, an ardent supporter of assimilation, advocates for a complete transformation of these children, distancing them from the influence of their tribes. He and others argue that Native Americans are inherently limited by their “primitive” cultures and that the only way to truly “save” them is by erasing these tribal identities in favor of American customs, religion, and language.

The education at Carlisle focuses not only on literacy and arithmetic but also on teaching useful trades—skills the students could scarcely learn from their families. For boys, skills like carpentry, blacksmithing, and farming are taught to encourage a productive life in industry or agriculture. For girls, the curriculum covers domestic duties such as cooking, sewing, and housekeeping, preparing them to enter into American households as valuable, hardworking citizens. This structure, supporters argue, benefits the Native American youth far more than any amount of time spent in tribal life, where education is rudimentary, if present at all.

**Manifest Destiny and the Moral Imperative of Assimilation**

Many believe that Carlisle’s mission fits squarely within the larger philosophy of Manifest Destiny, which asserts that it is both America’s right and duty to spread its values, governance, and civilization across the continent. By educating Native American youth in American ways, Carlisle serves a dual purpose: it provides Native children a chance to escape the “savage” conditions of tribal life while also reducing resistance to American expansion. Assimilation, in this view, is not merely an option but a moral imperative, a necessary step to prepare these children to become part of the American future.

Supporters of this program argue that the "Indian problem," as it is often referred to, cannot be resolved without removing the children from the influence of their communities. These children, they claim, must be taught to reject the superstitions, pagan beliefs, and cultural customs that are obstacles to their becoming upstanding American citizens. Many argue that, just as immigrants from Europe have had to adapt to American customs, so too must the Native Americans. Unlike immigrants, however, Native children are seen as needing more guidance and direct instruction, given that their tribal customs are often viewed as being antithetical to American values.

**Structured Education and Discipline: Building a New Kind of Citizen**

The Carlisle Indian Industrial School operates with a strict regimen of discipline, taking a military-style approach to instill order and obedience. Students must adopt American dress, speak only in English, and adhere to a schedule that emphasizes punctuality and responsibility. This regimentation, proponents claim, is critical to transforming children who are often seen as undisciplined and wild by nature. Carlisle seeks to mold them into individuals who can contribute to American society and live in harmony with its ideals.

Critics of the Native way of life often point to what they describe as “idleness” in tribal communities, claiming that traditional lifestyles lack the discipline and structure necessary for success. At Carlisle, this alleged “idleness” is replaced with purpose and productivity, and students are kept busy with both academic lessons and trade work. The goal is to produce young men and women who are fully prepared to serve as contributors to the rapidly growing American nation, capable of joining the workforce and adopting the values of industriousness and ambition that define American life.

**Resistance and the Fear of Lost Identity**

Of course, there are some voices—primarily from within the Native tribes themselves—that have raised concerns about this initiative. Some tribal leaders fear that boarding schools like Carlisle will strip Native children of their heritage, language, and spiritual practices. Many Native parents, naturally tied to their own traditions, are reluctant to send their children so far away, seeing the separation as a painful break from their communities.

However, supporters of the Carlisle model contend that, while such concerns are understandable, they are misguided. From the perspective of the American settler, what Native leaders see as “heritage” is, in fact, often outdated superstition and practices that, if anything, hold these communities back from progress. Those supporting Carlisle’s mission argue that the American way of life is inherently superior and that the children at Carlisle are not losing anything of value but rather gaining a chance to live as “free” men and women, liberated from the restrictions of a primitive existence.

**A Pivotal Role in the Future of America’s Native Population**

As Carlisle continues to grow and accept more students, it may well serve as a blueprint for similar institutions across the country, creating a pathway for other tribes to assimilate. The ultimate hope among advocates is that institutions like Carlisle will render Native Americans indistinguishable from other Americans, fostering harmony and stability as the country grows.

There is, of course, a pragmatism underlying this view as well. As settlers push westward, conflicts over land and resources are inevitable. Assimilation through education is seen as a way to minimize these conflicts, instilling in Native youth a respect for American property rights, law, and order, values seen as crucial to coexistence. With the United States continuing its westward expansion, Carlisle’s supporters argue that Native populations must either integrate or risk continued hardship and exclusion from American progress.

**A Final Thought: Civilization’s Gift to the “Savage” Youth**

The Carlisle Indian Industrial School represents, in the minds of many Americans, a noble endeavor—a beacon of progress on a continent still contending with what many see as the “savage” remnants of a bygone age. By educating Native youth, Carlisle not only offers them the tools to thrive but also gives them the opportunity to shed what many Americans view as the shackles of a backward culture. Indeed, the Carlisle model aims to transform not just the lives of individual students but the entire trajectory of the Native American population, which many hope will one day be fully integrated, productive, and loyal to the American way of life.

Whether Carlisle will succeed in its aims remains to be seen, but the commitment and confidence of its supporters speak to a profound belief in the mission. As General Pratt and his team continue their work, they do so with the conviction that America’s future, and that of Native Americans, depends upon a shared commitment to the ideals of discipline, industry, and civilization. For those who believe in the virtues of the American way, the Carlisle Indian Industrial School stands as a promising chapter in the ongoing story of American progress and unity