THE TOMAHAWK.

"Truth before Favor."

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The TOMAHAWK.

GUS. H. BEAULIEU - - - Publisher.

White Earth Agency, Minn.

☞ A WEEKLY NEWSPAPER devoted to the interests of the White Earth Reservation and general Northwestern News. Published and managed by members of the Reservation.

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BEAULIEU . . . . MINN.

CODDLING POOR LO.

Simon Michelet Believes Minnesota Indians Could Be Made More Independent.

Many of the Young Element Well Qualified to Earn a Living.

Simon Michelet, Indian agent at the White Earth agency, has been in Minneapolis for several days disbursing to claimants in Minneapolis and St. Paul the last of an annuity payment of $90,000.

Mr. Michelet has made a study of the Indian question since he became agent of the Indian department and has some ideas in regard to the policy of the government toward the Indian which seem to be well worth consideration by the department and by the congress. Mr. Michelet calls attention to the fact that, on his list of beneficiaries of this annuity he has men worth all the way from $5,000 to $40,000 or $50,000 and that the government is paying large sums annually to 10,000 Indians in the state of Minnesota, half of whom probably are able to earn their own living, and the majority of whom are positively damaged by this annual annuity.

Under the existing laws, while Indians are allowed to take lands in severalty and the greater part of the White Earth reservation has already been alloted, they are not allowed to sell their holdings or lease them for anything except cash rent. The result is that land that is not occupied and used by the Indians is idle. Very few tenants leasing small tracts are able to pay cash rent, or are willing to do so. Mr. Michelet would permit certain Indians to sell their land, if they desire, whenever the government came to a final settlement with them and cut off the relation of guardian and ward.

AN ADVANTAGE TO INDIANS.

There are, of course, a good many old Indians whom the goverment is under obligation to take care of and those who have made but little progress toward civilization, as the Blanket Indians of Leech Lake, who are not yet ready to be thrown upon their own resources. But if the government were to exercise proper discrimination in the matter, thousands who are now on the annuity rolls could, with great advantage to themselves as welll as to the government, be thrown upon their own responsibility. It would be of material advantage to the Indians, because most of the young men and women have been educated in at least the rudiments of a common school education and are equipped to earn their own living, either on their own land or in any occupation which may attract them and for which they are adapted, the same as white boys and girls. When this is done the Indian question is settled, and, with this plan adopted, twenty-five or thirty years would wind up the Indian business. There would be Indians, of course, "breeds" and full bloods, but they would be mixed in with the whites and so thorougly absorbed by them and so civilized that their existence in the state would be of no more significance than the presence here of so many people of some foreign nationality who are freely received under the immigration laws.

INJUDICIOUS CHARITY.

The Indian is not different from the white man when it comes to making a loafer of him by injudicious charity. So long as the Indian is the ward of the state he is inclined in greater or less numbers to rely upon such means of support as the government provides. Naturally, he feels less responsibility for his own support and has inclination to provide it. If, however, he were given a piece of land to do with as he pleased—to farm it, to sell it or to rent it; if he were settled with in full for all his claims upon the government, and turned loose upon his own resources, he would be compelled to develop industry and capacity, which are now thorouhly discouraged by the unwise policy of the government.

This is the conclusion of Mr. Michelet from his own observation extending over a period of two years on White Earth reservation.

No man has had a better opportunity to study the question and his opinion is certainly entitled to serious consideration. He concedes that some of the Indians would waste their resources and soon lose all they had, but argues that they would still be able to work and earn their own living and since the government has educated the young men and women and fitted them to make their own way there is no reason why they should not be required to do so. Furthermore, he says that a great many of them are anxious to be placed in a position where they can control their own property and assume entire responsibility for their own support.—Minneapolis Journal.

The Indian; Right and Wrong.

☞ "We hold these truths to be self-evident; that ALL MEN are created equal; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights; that among these, are LIFE, LIBERTY, AND THE PURSUIT OF HAPPINESS"—Declaration of Independence July 4th, 1776.

WE SURELY WOULD.

G. H. Beaulieu has begun the publication of the TOMAHAWK at White Earth. How about you, Gus, will you take scalps—on subscription?—Minneapolis Both Sides.

If the editor of Both Sides will confine himself to one side for a brief period, namely: the Indian side, and deliver to them the political scalps of the land examiners and those who were instrumental in securing the passage of the Morris Act, and get a bill through Congress authorizing the Government to pay the Indians for 225,000 acres of land which the act has arbitrarily taken away from them for forestry purposes, we, will agree to furnish him and all his friends with each a copy of the TOMAHAWK during their natural lives, and we have no doubt that the Indians would willingly add a few thousand dollars a year to our donation as a pension to pay him for the very valuable services he would render them if he succeed in accomplishing our suggestions.

SHOULD BE STOPPED.

It is reported that several persons, not all members of this reservation, have been making a daily practice of shooting ducks and prairie chickens this Spring. During the past month one of these persons also shot a deer near Ledeboer's farm, much to the indignation of the Indians who, as a rule, will not shoot deer at this season of the year. Something should be done to stop these violations of the game laws, and if the state courts have any jurisdiction in the matter, some steps should be taken to prevent a repetition of the outrages.

TRY US.

In an interview with the Minneapolis Evening Journal, which will be found in another column. agent Michelet advocates a policy towards the Indians which meets with the popular sentiment of this reservation; is in line with the recommendations of President Rosevelt in his first message to congress, and, we are informed, has been favored by the commissioner of Indian affairs.

While we doubt the wisdom of giving, indiscreminately, to all the Indians the right to dispose of their allotments by sale, we believe it would be unquestionably to their best interests to set aside every restrictive rule which applies to the leasing of these allotments, and give them the right to use their own judgements in this respect. If the Indians on this reservation were permitted to do this there would not be such a large area of wild and unused land here, and they would soon learn to do business and protect their interests, become more self reliant than they now are, and, consequently, more prosperous.

Under existing laws an Indian cannot lease his allotment without the sanction of the interior department, which requires the fulfillment of rules that prohibit a poor man from securing a lease on any Indian land.

Year after year the government has advanced theories regarding the settlement of Indian questions, but its policy towards them remains practically the same as it was prior to the passage of the general allotment act of 1887. If an Indian attempts to assert his rights he is compelled to appeal to the courts, and the necessary expenses of a law suit frequently prevent him from taking any steps towards securing what the laws provide for him.

If the present administration of the government wishes to solve the Indian question so far as this reservation is concerned, it should recommend to Congress the passage of a law which will give to all the Indians, upon satisfactory proof to the secretary of the interior that they are capable of protecting their interests and conducting their personal business affairs, full and complete control of their allotments with the right to alienate the same if they so desire, and to also give them their proportionate share of the tribal funds of their bands, and thus place them in a position independent of the government, and compel them thereafter to shift for themselves.

The full blood Indians are inevitably doomed to extinction by mixing up with the whites. This has been pretty well demonstrated on this reservation during the past twenty five years. In 1875 the membership of this reservation in proportion to its numbers consisted of two-thirds full-bloods and one-third mixed-bloods but the conditions have been rerversed so that now the mixed bloods outnumber the full-bloods three to one. It is therefore not too soon to permit the white settlers to come here and acquire lands by purchasing the allotments of those who, on account of their professions or otherwise, are employed outside of the reservation, and cannot without financial loss to themselves come back here and cultivate their lands.

These settlers, besides cultivating the lands that are now idle, would have a very decided and beneficial effect on the Indians who would find employment with the former on their farms, and by constant contact with farmers become practical farmers themselves.

Of course it would be expecting too much from the Indians to have them all become farmers, for this would be as impossible as it would be to make farmers out of all the whites, therefore those who might be competent to administer their personal affairs should have their allotments secured to them with the right of alienation if they so wished, and those who might be found incompetent to look after their interests should have every restriction removed so far as the leasing of their allotments are concerned.

We say, experiment on us by adopting Agent Michelet's propositions, and we will take chances on the results.

"The Tomahawk."

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THE OJIBWAS.

Their Customs and Traditions.

AS HANDED DOWN FOR CENTURIES FROM FATHER TO SON.

WAY-NAH-BOZHO.

His Origin, Birth and Life.

BY THEO. H. BEAULIEU.

It is undoubtedly well known to a majority of our member that Way-nah-bozho is but a fictitious myth, existing in mind only, and is the basis upon which many of the traditional and legendary tales, as well as the general "pastime stories" and fables of the Ojibways have originated.

It is not only the Ojibwas who are familiar with the legend of Way-nah-bozho, but almost every school child in the United States has heard of it through Longfellow's poem of Hiawatha, and it was from this legend that the now famous poem originated.

It is somewhat difficult to now obtain the "unadulterated" substance of which the legend was originally composed and the manner in which it was recited many winters since, and ere its originality was corrupted by the brilliant fiction and romance of a recent civilization; and there is much of the legend, whilst being of amusing interest to the Indian ear, loses its sweetest charms when given an English version; there are, other portions also that would be considered proper and modest when related in the native tongue, that would sound extemely harsh, course, vulger—when translated into English. And to attempt to clothe the stories of the legend with acceptable fiction and romance we must needs sacrifice much of their originality, and when we do this their traditional charms and value, alike vanish. Thus our readers will see the difficulties naturally arising in the translation and publication of the legend. If we fail to interest and entertain you it will not be from a lack of effort on our part to do so.

With this brief explanation we make our bow and respectly present you with the origin and birth of the Thor of the Ojibway Indians.

BIRTH OF WAY-NAH-BOZHO.

A great many winters since, and when this country was occupied and owned exclusively by Indians, there lived on the shores of a large lake, in the Chippewa country, with his band, a powerful but unprincipled chief, who had a son who, besides being as unprincipled as his father, was a profligate and despised by his people.

In the same village there lived a widow with a daughter who was a virgin pure and beautiful, with whom the chief's son was infatuated, but whose advances were repulsed by the maiden. Finally, tiring of the repeated failures of his suit, he decided to rely on his prerogative of a chief's son by having a wife selected by his father whose requests or commands would have te be obeyed by the parents or guardians of any Indian in the band in the selection of a wife for the son. He informed his father of his desire to secure as his wife the girl in question. In due time the chief sent the customary presents to her mother with a demand for her daughter as a wife for his son, but the widow refused this, and with her daughter made her escape from the village.

After travelling five days and five nights without camping they arrived at a beautiful lake where the widow decided to build a wigwam and live permanently. For some unaccountable reason the spirits ignored and excluded the presence of man from this vicinity, and which seemed to have been the meeting grounds of the four powerful spirits representing the four winds. One day while the young girl was gathering wild rice the North Wind spirit,, who chanced to be passing by, espied her and became very much enamored of her. When she returned home she related to her mother what she had observed. The latter became very much alarmed and warned her daughter to be very careful whenever she went out thereafter, and to be very neat about her dress and person, and to guard against the wiles of the North Wind, who was a very harsh fellow and might carry her off. Some days after this, the young girl went into the woods to gather blue berries, that grew in abundance along the banks of a brook which ran through a beautiful grove of pine trees.

While she was busily engaged gathering berries, the North Wind Spirit, in a very noisy and boister-manner, came to her, took her in his arms and kissed her, fluttered her garments and then departed from whence he had come. For some time the young girl was overcome with a delicious feeling of joy and happiness, and she reclined to rest.

When she awoke from this delicious stupor every tree in the forest were mingling their voices with the birds in piping forth their sweetest songs. Again when she had returned home she related to her mother what had taken place. The latter listened to this in silence, and when the young girl had concluded, said; "My daughter this was fore ordained" and then the young girl knew she had conceived and would become a mother. In the course of time the young girl became very sick and for several days she lay in pain on a couch of boughs.

One day feeling a little better than usual, she went outside and laid down beneath the shade of a balsm tree. While resting thus she heard voices talking as if they were in dispute and at the same the sweet tones of a nightengale were heard as if endeavoring to to pacify the disputants. Suddenly there was a rustle, and a great gust of wind from the north swept by and taking the young girl in its embrace disappeared from the Earth. The girl's mother, who had been enjoying a nap, was awakened by the commotion, looked about the wigwam for her daughter, and being satisfied she was not within hurried outside searching and calling for her beloved child, but the sweet tones of the nightengale were the only sounds that answered her call. At last, worn and with grief and weeping she returned to her now lonely wigwam, and while passing the tree under which her daughter had so lately reclined she overheard a wee little voice say: No-ko-mis (grandmother) do not cry, I am your grandchild, and have been left here to comfort and to take care of you. My name is Way-nah-bozho, and I shall do many things for the comfort of you and my people, and when my work is done I will take you home to your daughter, my mother, where you will never be parted from her again.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

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