

THE  
UNITED STATES MAGAZINE,  
AND  
DEMOCRATIC REVIEW.

---

EDITED BY  
THOMAS PRENTICE KETTELL

---

NEW SERIES.  
VOLUME XXVIII.

---

NEW-YORK:  
KETTELL & MOORE,

PUBLICATION OFFICE, 170 BROADWAY.

.....  
1851.

## THE RACE OF AMERICAN INDIANS.\*

THE condition, history, and destiny of the singular race which occupied these American continents, prior to the invasion of the whites, and which is rapidly becoming extinct, form a subject of inquiry of absorbing interest. As a branch of ethnological research, it is of the highest importance, and perhaps possessed of more attractions than any other. It has, however, presented great difficulties, inasmuch as that the repulsive nature of the race, and the rapidity with which it melted away before the approach of civilization, prevented it, so to speak, from coming practically within the grasp of the philosophic mind. Like that of all untamed beings, the nature of the red man was shy, and possessed scarcely sufficient stamina to enable it to withstand even the presence of white pioneers, as wild, as lawless, and almost as savage as themselves; and the approach of settlements was always fatal to their existence. The peculiarity of the Indian mind, in the highest degree suspicious and reserved, presented almost an impenetrable barrier to exploration into the nature of his moral being, leaving it mostly to inferences drawn from the incidental and inaccurate observations of those whom business or accident had thrown in contact with the race. Erroneous theories and supposititious views had, therefore, to a considerable extent, misled the public mind. Meantime the United States, as the successors of this race in the occupancy of the soil, were becoming responsible to the world for an account of the remarkable people whom they dispossessed. This duty, surrounded as it was by difficulties, was reluctantly approached, until at length "the man and the hour arrived;" and a work is now being given to the world every way worthy of the subject, and of the government by whose order it is produced. Mr. Schoolcraft must be regarded, whether we consider his great ethnological, philosophical and philological attainments, or his long and zealous investigation into the Indian character, facilitated by a peculiarly happy combination of personal circumstances, as the standard and chief authority respecting all that concerns the aboriginal race. Much has been contributed, doubtless, by General Cass, Mr. Catlin, and other eminent men, to this department of ethnography, but none have so long and so exclusively devoted to this study learning and abilities of so rare an order.

It may be necessary to the right appreciation of the work before us, to sketch briefly the career of its author: He is of English parentage. His grandfather had, early in the eighteenth century, emigrated to Schoharie County, New-York. His father, Colonel Schoolcraft, is identified with the memorable defence of Fort Stanwix; and our author himself was born near Albany, in 1793. His early turn for literature earned for him the name of the "learned boy," by which he is still remembered by the octo-

---

\*Historical and Statistical Information respecting the History, Condition, and Prospects of the Indian Tribes of the United States. Collected and prepared under the direction of the Bureau of Indian Affairs, per Act of March 3, 1847. By Henry S. Schoolcraft, LL.D. Illustrated by S. Eastman, Captain U. S. A. Published by authority of Congress. Part First. One volume, 4to.

genarians of the neighborhood; and he became without aid remarkably proficient in Natural History, English Literature, Hebrew, German, French, and the philosophy of language. At the age of twenty-four, he had been conductor of extensive glass-works in Geneva, in Vermont, and New-Hampshire, in which his experience led to the publication of a work, entitled, "Vitreology." In 1818, he made a geological survey of Missouri and Arkansas, to the spurs of the Rocky Mountains; and in the following year, published a view of the lead mines of Missouri, which established his scientific reputation. In 1820, the publication of a journal of his tour towards the Rocky Mountains attracted the attention of Mr. Calhoun, then Secretary of State, who commissioned the author to accompany General Cass to the head waters of the Mississippi. The journal of this tour was published in 1821, and was highly popular. In the same year he was appointed commissioner to treat with the Indians at Chicago. From that time, when his reputation had become widely and firmly established, he devoted his attention to the red race. In 1822, he was appointed, by President Monroe, resident agent for Indian affairs at St. Mary's, on Lake Superior, and attended the convocations of tribes in 1825-26-27. In 1831 he was sent on a special embassy to bring the war between the Sioux and Ojibewas to a close. In 1832, being on a similar mission, he traced in a canoe the Mississippi River, from the point where Cass stopped in 1820, to its true source in Itasco Lake, which he entered on the 149th Anniversary of the discovery of the river's mouth by La Salle. While he was at Sault St. Marie, Mr. Schoolcraft married the grand-daughter of the hereditary chief of Lake Superior, or Lake Algoma, as it is known to the Indians. This lady was the daughter of Mr. John Johnston, a gentleman from the North of Ireland, but had long dwelt on the Lakes. She had been highly educated in Europe, and was an accomplished and interesting lady. After residing there eleven years, Mr. Schoolcraft removed to Michilimackinac to assume the joint agency of the two districts. In 1836, he was appointed, by General Jackson, commissioner to treat with the North-east tribes for their lands in the Lake region; and he effected a cession of sixteen millions acres to the United States. In the same year he was appointed Superintendent of Indian Affairs in the Northern district. In 1839 he published two volumes of *Algie researches*, comprising Indian tales and legends. In 1842 he contributed to the Royal Geographical Society of Denmark, of which he was elected a member, a paper on the great mounds of the West.

In the manner here very briefly sketched, Mr. Schoolcraft passed more than thirty years of a very studious life. The forest and its children have been the objects of constant and enthusiastic analysis, aided by all the facilities which science and learning could afford, together with the peculiarity of his domestic relations, which opened to him the Indian mind, with its hopes, and fears, and religious impressions, so well guarded by the eternal distrust natural to the Indians, from the penetration of the casual observer. The author himself observes: "The theme has been pursued with all the ardor and hopefulness of youth, and the perseverance of maturer years passed in the vicissitudes of frontier life. If, to many, the wilderness is a place of wearisome solitude, to him it assumed, under these influences, far more the choicest recesses of an academic study. This study has only been intruded upon by the cares of business and the higher duties of office; but it has ever been crowned, in his mind, with the in-

effable delights that attend the hope of knowledge and the triumphs of research."

Mr. Schoolcraft had made repeated attempts to give the results of his labors to the world, but publishers could not be found who would undertake so gigantic a work, in a manner commensurate with its importance. Congress, at length, became aroused to the necessity of securing the materials that presented themselves for the performance of the duty; and in March, 1847, a law was passed, requiring the Secretary of War "to collect and digest such statistics and materials as may illustrate the history, the present condition, and future prospects of the Indian tribes of the United States." Mr. Schoolcraft was appointed under this act to carry out its intent, and the volume before us is the first part of the results of his labors. It is a quarto of nearly 600 pages, with 76 colored drawings, illustrative of Indian customs, implements, deities, pictographs, inscriptions, &c., &c. The text is divided into seven general heads: 1. General History. 2. The mental type of the Indian race. 3. Antiquities. 4. Physical Geography. 5. Tribal Organization, history and government. 6. Intellectual capacity and character of the Indian race. 7. Population and statistics. These general divisions embrace a very wide scope, and are treated with an ability which satisfies the mind and wins the confidence of the reader. In relation to the origin of the race, Mr. Schoolcraft adheres to the opinion, that the existing races were not the first occupants of the continent, and that they came hither from Asia, in accordance with the theory of the general dispersion of mankind over the face of the earth, from a common centre in Asia. In sustaining this opinion, he relies with great force upon the unchanged and unchangeable type of the race. He remarks:

"There must be something permanent in the physical type of the man which has produced itself with such amazing constancy through all our latitudes, torrid, tropical, temperate, and frigid; and the facts go nigh to prove that this type is more prominent and important, as faithfulness to organic laws of lineament and corpuscular organization, than is generally supposed. At least, the result of three and a half centuries does not, where the blood is unmixed, much favor the idea of a *progressive physical development*."

It is stated that all the tribes claim to be aborigines, having the earth for a progenitor, except the Algonquins, which alone admit of a foreign origin. The Toltec race, however, claim by tradition to have originated from a land of adventurers from the "seven caves." Hamilton Smith, in his work upon the Natural History of Man, assumed, as theoretic philosophers are too apt to assume when their knowledge falls short, that "caves" meant ships and canoes. This passage of Smith's book, Mr. Schoolcraft submitted to Lieut. M. Maury, U. S. N., chief director of the American Nautical Observatory at Washington, and that gentleman, in a luminous and amusing reply, states:—

"At page 261 the Col. had a stronger case than he imagines. Referring to the Chichimec legend of the 'seven caves,' he conjectures that the Chichimecs might originally have been Aleutians, and that 'caves,' if not denoting islands, might have referred to canoes.

"The Aleutians of the present day actually *live in caves* or subterranean apartments, which they enter through a hole in the top; they are the most bestial of the species. In their habits of intercourse, they assuredly copy after the whale and the seal.

“Those islands grow no wood. For their canoes, fishing implements, and *cavehold* utensils, the natives depend upon the drift-wood which is cast ashore, much of which is *camphor* wood; and this, you will observe, is another link in the chain, which is growing quite strong, of evidence, which for years I have been seeking, in the confirmation of a gulf stream near them, and which runs from the shore of China over towards our North-west coast.

“You wish me to state whether, in my opinion, the Pacific and Polynesian waters could have been navigated in early times—supposing the winds had been then as they now are—in balsas floats, and other rude vessels of early ages. Yes, if you had a supply of provisions, you could ‘run down the trades’ in the Pacific on a log,” &c.

In considering the probability of the transition of the race from Asia to America, across the Aleutian Islands, Mr. Schoolcraft remarks:—

“This chain of islands connects the continents of Asia and America at the most practicable points; and it begins precisely opposite to that part of the Asiatic coast, North-east of the Chinese Empire, and quite above the Japanese group, where we should expect the Mongolier and Tartar hordes to have been precipitated upon those shores. On the American side of the traject, extending south of the peninsula of Onalsasca, there is evidence in the existing dialects of the tribes, of their being of the same generic group with the Toltec stock. By the data brought to light by Mr. Hale, the ethnographer of the United States Exploring Expedition, under Captain Wilkes, and from other reliable sources, the philological proof is made to be quite apparent. The peculiar Aztec termination of the substantives in *tl*, which was noticed at Nootka Sound, and which will be found in the appended specimens of the languages of Oregon, furnished by Mr. Wyeth, are too indicative, in connection with other resemblances in sound, and in the principles of construction noticed by Mr. Hale, to be disregarded.”

The identity of the type of the Indian race with the Asiatics, is brought in proof of their origin. They continue to possess not only the physical traits of the inhabitants of Asia, but remain also psychologically the same. The non-progressive state of the oriental Indian mind presents itself among all the tribes of the continent—an apparent assimilation to Asiatic arts and ideas manifests itself, and without any tendency to improvement; utterly destitute of any intellectual propulsion, the Indian mind “reproduces the same ideas in 1850 as in 1492.” It would seem to be the case that at the time of the discovery of the country, the race had rather retrograded than advanced since the monuments which exist of the industry of remote ages have neither been improved upon nor equalled in later years. These antiquities, Mr. Schoolcraft informs us, have been greatly overrated; they are the “antiquities of barbarism,” and not of “ancient civilization,” and do not sanction the belief of any high or general state of advancement before the discovery of the continent. The author states:—

“We perceive in them, if examined by the light of truth, as revealed alike to divine and profane records, a marked variety of the human race, possessing traits of a decidedly oriental character, who have been lost to history, ancient and modern. Of the precise time and manner of their migration to this continent, we know nothing with certainty which is not inferential. Philosophical inquiry is our only guide. This is still the judgment of the best inquirers, who have investigated the subject through the medium of physiology, antiquities, arts, traditions, or whatever other means may have been employed to solve the question. They are evidently ancient in their occupancy of the continent. There are probably ruins here which date within 500 years of the foundation of Babylon.

"As a race, there never was one more impracticable; more bent on a nameless principle of tribality; more averse to combinations for their general good; more deaf to the voice of instruction; more determined to pursue all the elements of their own destruction. They are still, as a body, nomadic in their manners and customs. They appear, on this continent, to have trampled on monumental ruins, some of which had their origin before their arrival, or without their participation as builders, though these are apparently ruins of the same generic race of men, but of a prior era. They have, in the North, no temples for worship, and live in the wild belief of the ancient theory of a diurgus, or Soul of the Universe, which inhabits and animates everything. They recognize their Great Spirit in rocks, trees, cataracts, and clouds; in thunder and lightning; in the strongest tempests and the softest zephyrs; and this subtle and transcendental spirit is believed to conceal himself in titular deities from human gaze, as birds and quadrupeds; and, in short, he is supposed to exist under every possible form in the world, animate and inanimate." \* \* \*

"The influence of the civilization of the Zea Maize on the semi-civilization and history of the Indian race of this continent, has been very striking. It is impossible to resist this conclusion in searching into the causes of their dispersion over the continent. We are everywhere met with the fact that those tribes who cultivated corn, and lived in mild and temperate latitudes, reached a state of society which was denied to the mere hunters. The Indian race who named the Mississippi Valley at the era of the first planting of the American colonies, were but corn growers to a limited extent. It was only the labor of females; while the men were completely hunters and periodical nomades. They spent their summers at their corn fields, and their winters in the wild forests, doing just what their forefathers had done; and the thought of their ancestors having had the skill or industry to raise mounds, or throw up defences on the apex of hills or at sharp defiles, never occurred to them till questioned on the subject by the whites."

Mr. Schoolcraft admits the claim of the Scandinavians, as put forth by the Royal Society of Northern Antiquaries at Copenhagen, as having visited this continent as early as the tenth century, or nearly six hundred years before its admitted discovery. All the supposed evidences that have been discovered, of the presence of Europeans upon this continent, are carefully collated; but they fail to impress the mind with any very strong convictions upon that point. The inscriptions upon the famous Dighton Rock of Mass., were the subject of elaborate and profound research. The Royal Society of Copenhagen appeal to this rock as bearing upon its face an Icelandic inscription, supposed to have been made by Scandinavian adventurers as early as the tenth century. This inscription is surrounded by Indian rock writings. Mr. Schoolcraft submitted a copy of the inscription to an old chief skilled in that Indian art. He interpreted the whole as relating to strife between two tribes of Indians, rejecting, however, some characters as not Indian, and precisely those which are claimed as Icelandic. He had for inspection two copies of the inscription—one made in 1790, and the other forty years afterwards, in 1830. The latter wants many lines and figures which appear in the former; and this discrepancy is ascribed to the action of the tide, which rises and falls over the inscription twice a day. This naturally suggests the doubt as to how far the lapse of the previous six centuries might have affected the inscription, if forty years was known to produce such changes. Nevertheless, the characters are generally admitted to be Icelandic.

We can see no practical importance attached to the fact of visits to the continent prior to those of Columbus. They left no evidences or de-

tails which could throw any light upon the then condition of the race which inhabited it, and whose barren possession is now being brought rapidly to a close. It is remarkable that this race, which has been so non-progressive physically—never having learned by experience or profited by observation—should nevertheless possess a high degree of poetic fancy, strongly imbued with the supernatural cast of thought which is so peculiarly oriental. Some of their allegories are beautifully sustained, and give evidence of much intellectual invention, as in the following:

THE MAGIC CIRCLE IN THE PRAIRIE.

"A young hunter found a circular path one day in the prairie, without any trail leading to or from it. It was smooth and well beaten, and looked as if footsteps had trod in it recently. This puzzled and amazed him. He hid himself in the grass near by to see what this wonder should betoken. After waiting a short time, he thought he heard music in the air. He listened more attentively, and could clearly distinguish the sound, but nothing could be seen but a mere speck, like something almost out of sight. In a short time it became plainer and plainer, and the music sweeter and sweeter. The object descended rapidly, and when it came near, it proved to be a car, or basket of osier, containing twelve beautiful girls, who each had a kind of a little drum, which was struck with the grace of an angel. It came down in the centre of the ring, and the instant it touched the ground they leapt out, and began to dance in the circle, at the same instant striking a shining ball. The young hunter had seen many a dance, but none that equalled this. The music was sweeter than ever he had heard, but nothing could equal the beauty of the girls. He admired them all, but was most struck with the youngest. He determined to seize her, and after getting near the circle, without giving alarm, made the attempt; but the moment they espied a man, they all nimbly leapt into the basket, and were drawn back to the skies. Poor Algon, the hunter, was completely foiled. He stood gazing upward as they withdrew, till there was nothing left, and then began to bewail his fate. "They are gone forever, and I shall see them no more." He returned to his lodge, but he could not forget this wonder. His mind preyed upon it all night, and the next day he went back to the prairie, but in order to conceal his design, he turned himself into an opossum. He had not waited long when he saw the wicker car descend, and heard the same sweet music. They commenced the same sportive dance, and seemed even more beautiful and graceful than before. He crept slowly towards the ring, but the instant the sisters saw him they were startled, and sprang into the car. It rose but to a short distance, when one of the eldest spoke: "Perhaps," said she, "it is come to show us how the game is played by mortals." "Oh, no!" the youngest replied; "quick, let us ascend." And all joining in a chant, they arose out of sight. Algon returned to his own lodge again; but the night seemed a very long one, and he went back betimes the next day. He reflected upon the plan to follow to secure success. He found an old stump near by in which there were a number of mice; he thought their small form would not create alarm, and accordingly assumed the shape of a mouse. He first brought the stump and set it up near the ring. The sisters came down and resumed their sport. "But see," cried the youngest sister, "that stump was not there before." She ran affrighted towards the car. They only smiled, and gathering round the stump, searched it in jest, when out ran the mice and Algon among the rest. They killed them all but one, which was pursued by the youngest sister; but just as she had raised her stick to kill it, the form of the hunter arose, and he clasped his prize in his arms. The other eleven sprang to their osier basket and were drawn up to the skies. He exerted still to please his bride and win her affections. He wiped the tears from her eyes. He related his adventures in the chase. He dwelt upon the charms of life on the earth. He was incessant in his attentions, and picked out the way for her to walk, as he led her gently

towards his lodge. He felt his heart glow with joy as she entered it, and from that moment he was the happiest of men. Winter and summer passed rapidly away, and their happiness was increased by the addition of a beautiful boy to their lodge circle. She was, in truth, the daughter of one of the stars, and as the scenes of earth began to fall upon her sight, she sighed to revisit her father. But she was obliged to hide these feelings from her husband. She remembered the charm that would carry her up, and took occasion while Algon was engaged in the chase, to construct a wicker basket, which she kept concealed. In the meantime, she collected such rarities from the earth as she thought would please her father, as well as the most dainty kinds of food. When all was in readiness, she went out one day while Algon was absent, to the charmed ring, taking her little son with her. As soon as they got into the car she commenced her song, and the basket rose. As the song was wafted by the winds, it caught her husband's ear. It was a voice which he well knew, and he instantly ran to the prairie. But he could not reach the ring before he saw his wife and child ascend. He lifted up his voice in loved appeals, but they were unavailing. The basket went up. He watched it till it became a small speck, and finally vanished in the sky. He then bent down his head to the ground, and was miserable. Algon bewailed his loss through a long winter and a long summer, but he found no relief. He mourned his wife's loss sorely, but his son's still more. In the meantime, his wife had reached her home in the stars, and almost forgot, in the blissful employments there, that she had left a husband on the earth. She was reminded of this by the presence of her son, who, as he grew up, became anxious to visit the scene of his birth. His grandfather said to his daughter one day, "Go, my child, and take your son down to his father, and ask him to come up and live with us. But tell him to bring along a specimen of each kind of bird he kills in the chase." She accordingly took the boy and descended. Algon, who was ever near the enchanted spot, heard her voice as she came down, in the sky. His heart beat with impatience as he saw her form and that of her son's, and they were soon clasped in his arms. He heard the message of the star, and began to hunt with the greatest activity, that he might collect the present. He spent whole nights, as well as days, in searching for every curious and beautiful bird or animal. He only preserved a tail, foot, or wing of each, to identify the species; and when all was ready, they went to the circle, and were carried up. Great joy was manifested on their arrival at the starry plains. The star-chief invited all his people to a feast, and when they had assembled, he proclaimed aloud that each one might take of the earthly gifts such as he liked best. A very strange confusion immediately arose. Some chose a foot, some a wing, some a tail, and some a claw. Those who selected tails or claws were changed into animals, and ran off, and others assumed the form of birds, and flew away. Algon chose a white hawk's feather, which was his totem. His wife and son followed his example, when each one became a white hawk. He spread his wings, and followed by his wife and son, descended to the earth, where his species are still to be found.

---

## THE TEAR.

FROM THE FRENCH.

A TEAR will sometimes bliss impart  
 To him who flies from pleasure's charms;  
 The wise man finds it in his heart,  
 The warrior in the noise of arms;  
 The lover owes it to sweet thought;  
 The young girl to her jewelled hair:  
 'Tis nowhere, by the vicious sought,  
 But to the virtuous, everywhere!