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THE VANISHING RED MAN

Inhumanity of the White Man toward the North American Indian discussed
By EDWARD S. CURTIS

Foreword and Interview by
EDWARD MARSHALL

THE Indians of North America are vanishing. Within the

span of a few generations they have crumbled from their pride and power into pitifully small numbers, painful poverty and sorry weakness. A few generations more will see quite bared of them the land they held in an exclusive sovereignty when we white men first discovered it. A vanishing race! There is a majestic pathos in the words; a tragedy so great that it must be regarded as an epoch-marking matter.

The man who knows him in all the intimacy of his inner life, his one competent historian, critic, admirer and memorialist, the artist who has fixed his features and his wigwams, his ceremonies and the homely habits of his daily life imperishably on the photographic plate so that he may not by future generations be forgotten, misconstrued, too much idealized or too greatly underestimated, has, for this number and the next issue of THE HAMPTON MAGAZINE, told the story of the Indian and provided for its illustration many of the marvelous pictures he has made beside the red man's campfires, in the dim shadows of his wigwams, amidst the tall grass of his hunting grounds, upon the banks of the swift-rushing rivers which he loves. These contributions must be looked upon as memorable.

It was the mere desire to do something actual in photography which,



A PIEGAN WARRIOR.

Mr. Edward S. Curtis says, first started him at work among the Indians. He wished to touch nature with his camera, and the Indians of the Northwest were ready to his hand. For a time he photographed them busily and very ably, winning prizes with his work, north, south, east and west, and even in the foreign exhibitions, and finding a sufficient satisfaction in these photographic triumphs; then, suddenly, the tremendous

thought came to him that what he had been doing never could be done again by any man, that the race which he was studying was dying from the face of the earth, that even he must work with great rapidity if he would catch a comprehensive picture of the passing pageant of this disappearing people before it sunk behind the curtains of eternity and became invisible forever.

Deciding to prepare a picture record which should be comprehensive in its scope beyond the plan of any man before him, he turned to libraries to find for guidance the red man's written history. To his amazement, none, which was at all complete, existed. This was even more alarming than the lack of photographic presentation, and, impulsively, without any real appreciation of the magnitude of the great task, he forthwith assumed the added burden of the preparation of a document which should forever be a monument to the aborigines of North America.

A survey of the world informed him that aboriginals have always vanished,

utterly, before the march of civilization, leaving behind them only traces, faint, indefinite, easy to interpret incorrectly.

Mr. Curtis has made the North American Indian a notable exception to this rule. For fourteen years he has been laboring on his unprecedented task. It has occupied him to the complete exclusion of all other effort—this and the gigantic work of getting funds for the double field-work of historian and photographer and the great expense of publishing the twenty massive volumes, which, when his task is finished, will contain its total of results. Night and day, week in, week out, from month to month and year to year, he has clung tenaciously to the great labor, desperately earnest lest he should not be quick enough to press the bulb to make some picture which could not again be made, lest he should fail to note among his memoranda some vital word of information dropped from the lips of a dying chief, revealing, possibly, an illuminating secret of the fading people which could not be told again to any man by any man.

With an untiring patience and a self-denial scarcely equaled in the records of ethnologists' achievements and surely not approached in the previous history of photography, with a physical endurance and a mental stubbornness decidedly unusual, he has kept up the steady and laborious study, until now eight splendid volumes of the twenty he proposes to make have been written, illustrated, printed, bound and finished. The last will come out sometime, when this tireless and enthusiastic worker shall have transcribed the final details from his notebooks into well-balanced, well-considered and minutely verified history, and not until he has photographed, engraved and printed the last picture, and earned, or received as a subscription, the last dollar of the fund to pay the cost of the tremendous work.

He has had coöperation of importance. Theodore Roosevelt wrote the foreword of his volumes, Frederick Webb Dodge is named as editor, and J. Pierpont Morgan has helped

substantially with support, but the great effort has been Mr. Curtis's and it is not ended; he must have world-wide support before his plan is wholly realized. The minimum of pictorial plates depicting Indian subjects in his books will be two thousand two hundred and twenty, and but five hundred copies of the complete publication will ever be put forth. The expense of the research and publication is tremendous and the project can never show a profit; but the labor was not planned as a commercial enterprise. The libraries and individuals who are fortunate enough to own such valuable volumes will preserve them for the future, feeling, aside from their appreciation of their beauty and great historical value, the satisfaction of the knowledge that they have in their possession copies of one of the world's most costly printed works, for the books have quite absorbed the life of a real man and an enormous sum of money.

Mr. Curtis selected for them paper, inks and binding which will last throughout the ages. The story of the man's endeavors to secure a time-defying paper and unfading inks would alone form a splendid chapter in the record of persistent and forethinking effort. His devotion has been almost that of a fanatic. No other nation has ever possessed a record so magnificent of the primeval people it supplanted. It is not difficult to see, in what this tireless, loving student of a vanishing race has done, a fine high patriotism. His service has been great, not only to America, but to the world. There has been in his unswerving singleness of purpose a devotion comparable to that shown by men who dedicate their lives to a religion. The work has a value which this generation cannot properly appraise; we can but guess at it; the men of generations yet to come will be much better able to estimate truly its worth.

The interview which follows accurately summarizes Mr. Curtis's conclusions as to the Indian's relations to the continent and to the white man, and the white man's to the red man's.



ASKED Mr.

Curtis four great questions, the first three of which I shall repeat at once, with summaries of his replies, as an introduction to the more elaborate statements following.

"Whence came the Indian?" was my first question.

"That no man living knows, though many have had theories," said Mr. Curtis.

"What was he when we found him?"

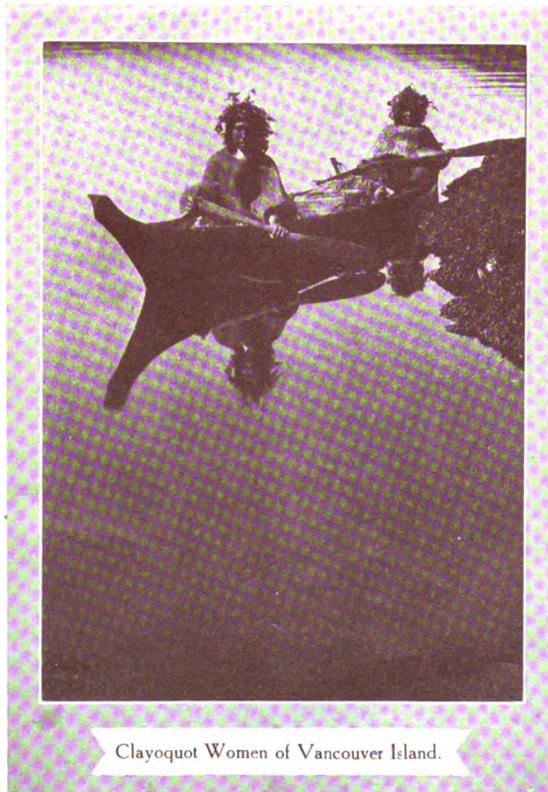
"A fine race, in the usual sense of the term, developing along worthy lines in certain sections of his country, nowhere without his noble traits; perhaps the most admirable primitive of the world."

"What might we have made of him?"

"An ingredient of great value in the foundation of a new American race."

"What did we make of him?"

"We destroyed his tribal entity and scattered his people to the winds; we weakened him by introducing disease and drink, and made him largely



Clayoquot Women of Vancouver Island.

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useless to himself, to us and to the world at large."

And as my first question had been "Whence came he?" I made my last one "Whither goes he?"

I cannot summarize his answer. It was, itself, a summary—a terse, dramatic, dreadful summary. I shall reserve it for the last line on my final page.

"It is the mystery surrounding the far origin of the North American native which so fascinates our interest," said Mr. Curtis, in an elaboration of his answer to my first inquiry. "No satisfactory reply can be supplied to this, the most persistent of the questions to which he has given rise.

"From the time of the first explorers down to the present year of 1912, the question of the origin of man upon this continent has been continually discussed. Theory upon theory has been evolved and countless books have been written on the subject, each endeavoring to build fact out of speculation. There have been suggested, among others,



The Bears—Arikara Medicine Ceremony.



A Sioux War Party.

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A Wisham Bride.



Arikara Dancer.



On the Little Bighorn—Scene of the Custer Massacre.

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as the source of human life here, the Ten Lost Tribes of Israel, the survivors of submerged Atlantis, the traditionary Welsh migration under Prince Madog and the more persistent theory of a band of venturers from Asia.

"Supporters of the first theory in the list imagined that they saw Semitic types in both the features and institutions of the Indians. The Atlantis theory originated, doubtless, in the very ease of its conception; it could be neither proved nor disproved. It was Catlin who, after finding blue-eyed Indians among the Mandans of the upper Missouri, insisted that their language, in some respects, resembled the Welsh tongue, and, in consequence, suggested that wanderers from Wales were the forefathers of the Indian race.

"Those who thought they recognized among the Indians Asiatic features and Asiatic manners, believed that their immigration from China or Japan had been so recent, when first found, that even the externals of their lives were still influenced by the customs of the fatherland.

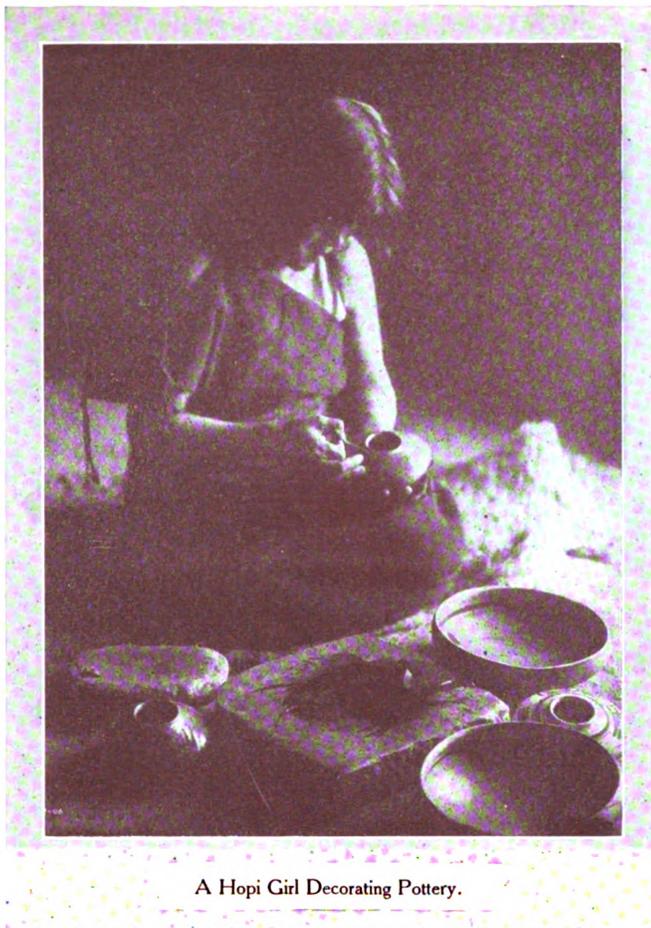
"But all these theories presupposed a very late arrival of the Indian upon this continent, an hypothesis which scientific study seems effectually to have combated. Students who do not agree with any of the sources of speculation I have named, maintain that to obtain an answer to the question of the Indian's origin, geology must lend its aid to archæology.

"This is not unreasonable, and a combination of the sciences declares that man's beginnings in America are hidden far in the still unknown remoteness of the prehistoric ages. The acceptance of the theory that man existed in America much earlier than was formerly supposed is in accordance with conclusions reached by European ethnologists as to early man in the Eastern Hemisphere. The discovery of the 'Heidelberg jaw,' in 1897, carries the period of man in Europe into great antiquity.

"As to early man here in America, Dr. Frederic A. Lucas, in an article on the antiquity of man, cites a discovery in South America, by Nordenskjöld, showing that the extinct giant ground-sloth, mylodon, a predecessor of the mastodon, was kept in a state of domestication by then existent human beings.

"South America seems to produce evidence of man's existence at a period much earlier than has been indicated by anything so far discovered on the northern continent. So, while no careful student is yet disposed to hazard a definite theory as to the actual time of man's beginning here, all apparently agree that it occurred in a period so remote that the culture of the North American Indian was indigenous, having borrowed nothing from nor having been in any way influenced by another habitat.

"At the time of the discovery, the American race, considering North and South America together, had multiplied until its members could be counted by the millions, and had, in more than one direction, developed a remarkable cul-



A Hopi Girl Decorating Pottery.

ture. On the plains of Mexico and Central America had been built great temples and massive structures, marvelously beautiful, architecturally beyond criticism. No fixed date for their origin has yet been fixed, but it is safe to assume that some, at least, of these extraordinary piles, ornamented with conventionalized sculptures, and in other details showing an advanced progress in the arts, antedated the Christian Era.

"These people of the South were not only architects and sculptors of much ability, but they were versed in other arts; they were expert workers in metal; they handled clay with wonderful skill, and with their looms wove beautiful and elaborate fabrics. Their temples furnish evidence of an important and well-developed religion and the existence of a powerful priesthood.

"Turning from Southern to Northern America, we find that, at the time of the discovery, the important Atlantic Coast tribes of the Algonquian stocks were both agricul-

turists and hunters. The Seminoles, of Florida, were wearing tunic-like garments, reminding us of Roman costumes.

"Branches of the Siouan stock had migrated from their early southern habitat to the North Atlantic Coast, thence reached into the region of the Great Lakes, and later passed southward and westward to the buffalo plains beyond the Mississippi River. The Mandans, another branch of the Siouan stock, and the first to reach the upper Missouri plains, were well established there, dwelling in earth-and-timber houses, cultivating crops and hunting buffalo. They were worshipers not alone of the divine ones who ruled over game, but also of the spirits of plant life.

"The tribes of southern Arizona lived in massive structures built of kneaded clay and grouped into important villages; they practiced agriculture with the aid of irrigation and had aqueducts miles long, suggesting no mean engineering skill.

"The 'Stone House People' of what is now Arizona and New Mexico were agriculturists of marked ability. With shaped stones they had built homes and sanctuaries, sometimes carrying them to several stories in height. Thousands of such substantially built structures had served their day of usefulness, had been abandoned by a dying or migrating people and were already crumbling into ruin on the day of the white man's discovery of the Americas. The people of this 'Stone House Region' doubtless possessed a remarkable ceremonial and religious life and were skilled in handicraft.

"The coast-dwelling tribes of the North Pacific region were, when Columbus first sailed westward, living in large community structures of hewn planks and going out upon the sea in canoes, both large and small, for the capture of fish, seal and whale.

"Thus it may be said, in answer to your second inquiry, 'What was he when we found him?' that the Indians at the time of the discovery were a fine race, in many ways progress-



A Flathead Dance—Montana.

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Medicine Man of the Sioux Tribe.

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A Sioux Warrior.

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ive and progressing; full of great potentialities."

In elaboration of his answer to my third question, "What might we have made of him?" Mr. Curtis, whose long and close association with the Indian has made him his intense admirer, told me:

"We might have made of him a racial ingredient of inestimable value to us and to the world, had we not instead, shortsightedly, sentenced him to death, and, directly or indirectly, put this sentence into operation. We debauched, infected and slaughtered him.

"Had we preserved him, and accepted from him those fine qualities of blood and brain which he would, in that case, certainly have given us, the American of now and of days to come would inevitably have been a finer, a more distinctive race. It is our fate to build ourselves of blended blood, yet we scornfully refused one of the best strains that offered, accepting instead much which is inferior from the European races which have formed a part of our enormous immigration, and which we have welcomed with open arms.

"I know of nothing sadder which Americans may contemplate than this mad shortsightedness, this monumental error, this great and inexcusable cruelty. The aborigines on this Continent were a valuable heritage to our race, but now they are departing into the Unknown, forced ever onward by our greed and inhumanity.

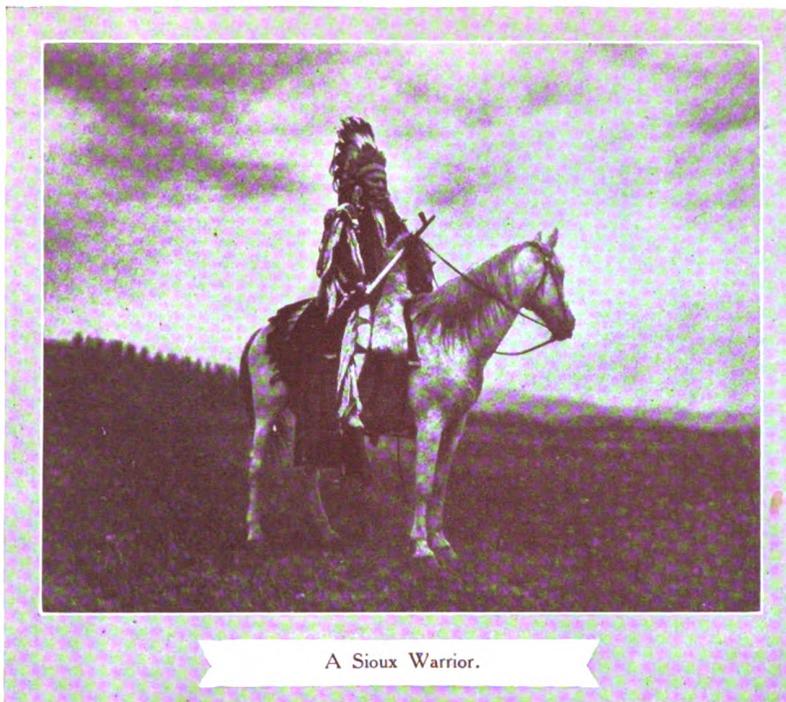
"The Indians could have given us that physical vigor which must be one of the foundations of any lasting and important mental strength; they could have helped us in the creation of a literature, for they were marvelous in the beauty of their free, poetic thought, full of imagery such as white men have never known—their souls were those of poets; they could have helped us in our music; their music was a real part of their lives, a genuine expression of emotion; they could have aided us vastly in our decorative art; in a broad sense, they could have helped us in our morals, for, in all their dealings, they were fair until we taught them theft and lying.

"Their lives were often ruled by high impulses, sometimes rising to real grandeur of self-sacrifice in their consideration for their fellows. They were untainted by commercialism. Their pride might well have been transmuted into a mighty asset for the new race we were forming, but we preferred to graft upon the sturdy stock of independence which induced our forefathers to cross the seas the sad subservience of worn-out peoples, incapable of taking the great plunge of immigration until the way had been prepared for them and made comparatively easy, fleeing to us, finally, only after they had been crushed into bent-backed humility and dull-eyed apprehension by centuries of violent oppression."

In his elaboration of his answer to my fourth inquiry, "What did we make of him?" Mr. Curtis spoke at length and with much feeling. He knows. His contact with the Indian has been sympathetic beyond the possibility of any contact of officialdom with him; he knows him in the North and in the South; knows what is left of him in

Photo copyrighted by Dr. S. Curtis.

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A Sioux Warrior.

Middle West and East.

He has slept in his tepees and eaten with him, has trusted him, has been trusted by him; he knows his legends, his religions and his music; he has heard his melancholy history intoned at dying council fires through the thin lips of old men, his futile aspirations, his unrealized ideals, the whole somber tale of his tremendous disappointments; he has been behind the scenes the while upon the stage of the sparse, narrowing Indian domain in the United States—domain? ah, no; retreat!—the final

act of this extraordinary, harrowing drama has been in course of presentation. It has been this man's pathetic privilege to listen to the last, despairing cry of many a once great but now decaying chief: "Woe! Woe to me and my lost people! Woe!" And more than once has Curtis knelt beside a weary, stoic chieftain as he died.

"We have made of him," he said, "a race totally discouraged. We have robbed him of the last thing which, through ages of association and race-building, he had learned to love. Think of it, the melancholy of it, for the Indian and for his conquerors! He knows well that, as he now is, after the century and more of wrong we have inflicted on him, he cannot adjust himself to the environment we press on him. He has been handled very maladroitly and is perfectly aware of it, and is tortured by it. But forced to the wall with no escape, he has accepted his dull fate with the grim stoicism of his race, and has ceased to try to combat or avert it. Our efforts to extend assistance to him have been insincere and he has known it; linked, unwillingly, with cupidity and stupid lack of understanding, even the work of those few honest men who really have tried to help him has been wasted—has been worse than wasted, for it has been harmful.

"We have always wronged the Indian, but the greatest wrongs we are doing him to-day are born of our misunderstanding of him. The hardest of his manifold misfortunes came through the ever-changing policies by which we managed him after he had been fully conquered. We have ever been and still are vacillating and uncertain in our dealings with him, just as instability of method in the conduct of its commerce would ruin any business corporation.

"Suppose the Standard Oil Company, for instance, at intervals of four years, and, sometimes, at intervals of two years and even less, was placed under the control of new men, without knowledge of the plant or output. Would it not quickly go to ruin? Such, largely, has been our method with the Indian. Even the official, in control of Indians, serving out a full administration, learns but little in the four short years. Just as he begins to gather wisdom he is certain to be ousted and supplanted by one new to the great problem, whose strongest impulse, inevitable to our system, is to tear down all his predecessor may have done, and rebuild—somehow.

"We have told the Indian to-day that we would or

(Continued on page 308)

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THE VANISHING RED MAN

(Continued from page 253)

would not do certain things; to-morrow, we have done the things we had declared we would not do and failed to do the things we had assured him we would do. He does not understand such methods; they have puzzled him far more than they have angered him; they make him believe us to be worse than we really are, which, as far as our treatment of him goes, is saying a great deal.

"The Indian has never realized that 'Washington,' as used in our discussions and agreements with him, means a government, impersonal, unsympathetic; to him 'Washington' is still the 'Great Father,' a deathless and all-powerful man. Naturally, he has come to think him changeable and unfair. The tremendous awe and admiration which he once felt for him have been supplanted by distrust and fear. When 'Washington' to-day tells him to do one thing and to-morrow tells him that he must not do that thing, under pain of a hard penalty, but must straightway do another thing which was forbidden yesterday, he is wholly at a loss.

"Of course we have, in furthering our own suggestions, made agreements with the Indian which he has looked upon as treaties, sacred, inviolable. He has promptly carried out his part of them and then we have delayed the execution of the first detail of our part of the compacts for five years, or even ten; there have been instances in which we have ignored such contracts utterly; at other times we have interpreted them fantastically, to suit ourselves, with a total disregard of justice.

"Imagine a like case among white men. Suppose one comes to you to-day, saying: 'Give up certain lands to me and I will give you certain other lands in payment.' You let him have your lands; he takes immediate possession; but he gives you no lands in return. You wait five years, for you are very patient, very hopeful, always trusting. Then you question him about the matter, and he answers that there was a sad mistake somewhere; he has found it quite impossible to give the lands to you. But he refuses, nevertheless, to return to you the lands which you have given him and is so powerful that you cannot force him to make restitution.

"Naturally, if such things happen, you will decide that man to be—well, you know how transactions of that sort would make you classify that man. Many times have we done such things to the Indian, and if he does not think us liars, thieves and cut-throats, it is because he is of broad and noble mind, ever forgiving; or else it is because he has been fooled iniquitously.

"We have wronged the Indian from the beginning. The white man's sins against him did not cease with the explosion of the final cartridge in the wars which subjugated him in his own country. Our sins of peace against the Indian have been far greater than our sins of warfare; much of our warfare with him was due to our own fault, not his.

"This was true at the beginning of our occupation of the country; it was true of the Nez Percés War, fought in the early seventies, and one of our last blows at Indian resistance. This struggle was fomented by crude liquor sold to Indians by white men at a time when those who bought it had already been half-crazed by our injustice. The Indian spirit, as a whole, had long before been crushed; that forced war crushed the spirit of the great Nez Percés nation. In peace we changed the nature of our weapons, that was all; we stopped killing Indians in more or less fair fight, debauching them, instead, thus slaughtering them by methods which gave them not the slightest chance of retaliation."

"But it is said," I interposed, "that the Indian population of this country is increasing. Official figures show it."

"Facts do not," said Mr. Curtis. "Experts sometimes try to answer the most important question regarding a race without sufficient study. All the early enumerations of the Indians were mere guesswork. Three census reports cover twenty years. Can you get the facts about any people in the span of twenty years when the first count, which must be the basis of investigation, is admitted to have been a mass of errors? Statements that the Indians are increasing, rather than decreasing, in their aggregate of number, have been based upon inaccurate figures.

"The last census, however, was as re-

liable as the circumstances permitted, and will furnish a firm basis for future accountings. It disproves the frequent claim that we have as many Indians to-day as there could have been upon the continent at the time when white men first set foot upon it. This falsehood is picturesque and has been widely circulated.

"The most conservative estimate of the number of Indians here at the time of America's discovery places the total at 1,000,000. Some experts claim that there were probably a million and a half. Whatever the number was, they all were full-bloods. We have, to-day, 335,000 gross Indian population, including all people known to have in their veins a trace of Indian blood, even those who are but one-sixty-fourth Indian, and it counts thousands of whites who have joined Indian tribes, because of indolence or greed. There are not, in fact, to-day, upon the Continent of North America, 100,000 full-blood Indians, hence it is not difficult for one to draw a conclusion."

(In the next issue of THE HAMPTON MAGAZINE, Mr. Curtis will go into further detail of this tragic story of the rise and the decline of a great race, taking up, among other things, the matter of possible remedies for the great wrongs we have done the Indian. He will discuss the admirable domestic customs of the people whom we have displaced, showing that white men and women might learn something with advantage to American morals, and that white parents might learn something with advantage to American childhood; and he will briefly and dramatically indicate the inevitable nature of the last act of the great tragedy.)

THE MYSTERY OF THE CHURCHILL PEARLS

(Continued from page 257)

She was once more studying the necklace. And once more she shook her head.

"But I am left-handed," she was explaining, as she still looked down at them, "and I had my clasp, here on the ruby at the back, made that way. This clasp is right-handed. Don't you see, it's on the wrong side."

"But you've only got the thing upside down," cried her brother. And I must confess that a disagreeable feeling began to manifest itself in the pit of my stomach as he moved closer beside her and tried to reverse the necklace so that the clasp would stand a left-handed one.

He twisted and turned it fruitlessly for several moments.

"Isn't that the limit?" he finally murmured, sinking back in his chair and regarding me with puzzled eyes. The girl, too, was once more studying my face, as though my movement represented a form of uncouth jocularly which she could not quite comprehend.

"What's the answer, anyway?" asked the mystified youth.

But his bewilderment was as nothing compared to mine. I reached over for the string of pearls with the ruby clasp. I took them and turned them over and over in my hands, weakly, mutely, as though they themselves might in some way solve an enigma which seemed inscrutable. And I had to confess that the whole thing was too much for me. I was still looking down at that lustrous row of pearls, so appealing to the eye in their absolute and perfect graduation, when I heard the younger man at my side call my name aloud.

"Kerfoot!" he said, not exactly in alarm and not precisely in anxiety, yet with a newer note that made me look up sharply.

As I did so I was conscious of the figure so close behind me, so near my chair that even while I had already felt his presence there, I had for the moment taken him for my scrupulously attentive waiter. But as I turned about and looked up at this figure I saw that I was mistaken. My glance fell on a wide-shouldered and rather portly man with quiet and very deep-set gray eyes. What disturbed me even more