

**THE INDIANS
AT OMAHA.**

The government's exhibit of Indians, perhaps the only really unique display at the Trans-Mississippi Exposition, becomes more interesting as its end approaches. Only a little more than a month of it remains, and one who fails to examine it will have missed a chance that will not come to him again. There will always be expositions, and there will always be machinery, pictures, fabrics, food-products and foreign wares, to amuse and instruct us, but there will not always be Indians. To watch those dark-skinned but very human people, and think that natural law is working sure extermination upon them, is a curious sensation. There is one tribe represented whose end is almost in sight; there are only twelve men of them living; fifty-seven persons in all speak their language; they can communicate with other Indians only by signs, or in English.

There are now twenty-five tribes represented on the grounds, and the number of men, women and children is between six and seven hundred. There are Indians from nearly all of the important tribes west of the Mississippi. The Crows, Blackfeet and Flatheads are still there, and the Sioux village entire; the Chippewas and some others have gone home; but a large delegation from the Southwest, including Apaches and Pueblos, have lately arrived, and more than fill their place.

The large open space that was at first left immediately inside the gate is now occupied. A lodge of the Kiowas is the first thing in sight, standing rather isolated. The Kiowas would seem to be shy; they have further shut themselves in with a high wall, or windbreak, of boughs, once leafy, but now hardly sheltering their privacy. They have further works in progress, however; here is a muscular squaw toiling all by herself at the erection of some kind of a scaffold, which is to begin with posts set in the ground. She has no post-auger, but needs none; she has sharpened her stakes with her axe, and is forcing them into the ground by the strength of her arms; when in position, they are so firmly fixed as not easily to be shaken.

Next on the right is a Wichita community. The house they are building, in the corner of the grounds, is like no other in the collection. It is a permanent structure, apparently, and reminds one somewhat of King Opechancanough's palace, in Captain John Smith's history; it is built of heavy poles, thatched from the ground up with reeds and grass nearly a foot in thickness, bound in position with other encircling poles; on these the bare-footed squaws stand as they carry the covering higher and higher, directed from below by a stern chief, whose hair, bound with flannel into two red ropes, hangs far down upon

his breast. The hut will have, when finished, a height of eighteen feet or so with a diameter of at least twenty-five, and will be rounded gracefully from base to apex.

Next came the Apaches. These seem to be an exclusive lot of Indians. They live in wall-tents

GERONIMO.

of the regular army kind, which are enclosed by a rope barrier and seem always to be kept carefully shut. In the midst of the tents is a lofty red-and-white canopy, over a board floor, and there, in a chair in the shade, sits Geronimo, with the women and young men sitting about his feet, like the angels around Heine when he dreamed he was the Lord God, and the little brown babies crawling over everybody's knees. It is a picture that will stay by one, in spite of the incongruity of the surroundings. Geronimo is not the first in rank in the delegation; he is only a headman, and his chief is present, an inconspicuous Apache; but Geronimo is a prisoner of war of the United States government. He has killed more of us with his own hands than Cervera did with his whole fleet, and that is why we love him. Whenever he appears in the procession the beholders cheer him wildly, just as they would have done Cervera if they could have got at him. Cervera was kindly protected from the applauding public, and finally escaped to Spain; Geronimo can only retire behind his rope and sit under his canopy; but there he is sufficiently inaccessible. Presently, however, he comes forth to lead his white horse to water, and can then be met and observed. He marches firmly, in high boots; there is nothing Indian in his costume, unless it be his old hat; he looks you in the face, and you like him at once for a gentle old man. His dark face is deeply seamed, but quiet and kindly; he has been a prisoner of war for a great many years.

The whole encampment, while not nominally prisoners, are under strict

REGULATIONS.

control. It comes with a shock to many a sympathetic visitor, that among all the thousands that are tramping the Springfield gravel to smithereens, the Indians are the only ones who may not step around on the Midway and mitigate the dryness of the season by drinking some beer. Though they cannot pass the officer at the gate without a special permit, they practically come and go at will; but woe to the man who would give them fire-water! This is forbidden as far as the laws of the United States extend; an alarming precedent, one might think; but these are the nation's wards, and our law-makers show no signs of wishing to extend the prohibition over any other of the savage nationalities that we have among us.

This gathering, while to the visitor it is only a part of the show, is rightfully called an

THE PIPE OF PEACE.

Indian Congress. It is quite conceivable that it may be a

very serious event to the red men themselves, not only from the stories they will have to tell when they get back to their people, but also from the friendly relations into which it has brought them with Indians of other tribes, who have been, generally speaking, after their scalps from time immemorial. This consideration may very likely have had weight with the Department, when it was brought to favor the scheme. The amicable footing upon which all the Indians stand toward one another, and the pains which they take to welcome new arrivals, have already been described in THE CONSERVATIVE. It appears that there is really a concerted movement among the chiefs and headmen to bring about an era of good feeling among the various tribes, and in this way the gathering amounts to a Congress indeed, and one which may mark an epoch in Indian history.

An instance of this is a banquet which was lately given by the Crows to the two chief men of each tribe on the grounds. The Crows made large preparations, and it was a mighty feast. In addition to the resources of their own cookery, they sent out and bought pie, and all the delicacies that the Midway's market afforded: cream puffs, no doubt, peanuts and pop-corn and Turkish candy. Then when the guests were met, the feast was set, and along with the eating there was a brilliant program of oratory. It is said that there were regular toasts and set speeches, and that all the burden of the talk was that it was very good for them all to be there and on such good terms one with another.

One who wishes to observe the Indians seriously should go by himself. This is

GO ALONE.

because two Americans can hardly be together but they must begin scoffing. It is easy to ridicule the ways of these natives, but it is easy also to be impressed. The old settlers will tell you that they saw enough of the Indians in former days, and have no wish to see more; but they might find these different from the Otoes and Pottawattomies of thirty years ago. One cannot but wonder whether these are fairly representative men in their several tribes, or if they are not rather selected for manly beauty. Watch them for a while, and then watch the white Americans who stroll past, and you will not find the average advantage, in stature, carriage nor apparent vigor, on the part of the white man. This notwithstanding that the best white type is infinitely more admirable than the best of the red. The noblest looking man that the writer has seen in a long time was a colossal white-bearded farmer from Missouri, who was enjoying the fair in the company of his little old wife. But there are faces and figures here and there among the Indians which fix themselves in your mind so that it hardly seems as