

Persuading the Savage to Come to the Show

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THE aboriginal human being is so fixed a feature of present day exhibitions that thousands of people who gather around his equally strange abode to gaze at him take his presence as a matter of course. But if the visitors only knew it, the most interesting thing of all about the hairy Anu, or the giant Patagonian, or the dwarf-like South African Bushman is the manner in which he was induced to place himself on exhibition for the edification and wonderment of, to him, strange people beyond the seas.

Ask one of the coterie of men whose days and years are spent in getting together living ethnological exhibits how he works it, and he will reply after this fashion:

"Why, I tell them that it will be good for them, and I let them take what meaning they want to out of that."

"And do you have to pay them anything?" you may ask. And the answer will be: "They come mostly because it will do them good, and for mighty little money, considering."

All this sounds simple and easy, but in reality it takes a strange people a long while to make up their child-like minds in truly childlike fashion whether the trip proposed by the white man will "do them good," and, more important still, to interpret what "it will do you good" means. Interpreted to their satisfaction, the white man's only difficulty is to keep the entire tribe from coming away with him. Interpreted to their dissatisfaction, even if the heavens were to fall, they would not move one foot in the direction the white man pointed out. So it is that the three months of experiences E. C. Cushman of Washington, D. C., had among the Cocopa Indians is representative.

The Cocopa is about as low a type of Indian as there is. His habitat is in old Mexico, along the Gulf of California, and besides his dirtiness, he is chiefly marked by his head of long, thick, matted hair. He had never been on exhibition or outside his native land until Mr. Cushman induced him to see the big world. He had been labored with three times before, but in each case the paleface left after a few weeks, firmly convinced that a mule's obstinacy is as weak as running water when compared with the particular brand displayed by the average Cocopa.

As a foretaste of the adventures ahead of him, when Mr. Cushman arrived in Arizona, on his way to the Cocopa country, he found that he would have to make a boat trip of several hundred miles down the Colorado river. He secured an Indian guide, loaded the boat with the staple foods that he intended to use with good effect on the Indians, and set off.

Everything went well until he came to a part of the river marked by two channels. The Indian knew nothing about either channel, so Mr. Cushman chose one and headed down stream, only to be caught half an hour later in a rapids extending for several miles.

During the ensuing twenty minutes the two men experienced about as much adventure as is crowded into the whole life of the average man. The rapids are among the swiftest in the Colorado. The Indian became frenzied in his fright, threw himself in the bottom of the boat and tried by his shouts to drown the roar of the swirling river. Mr. Cushman, with his one oar, could not keep any headway, and round and round like a top the boat whirled for miles down stream. Cushman sitting in the bow and every minute expecting the little craft to be capsize or dashed against one of the great rocks sticking up here and there above the boiling water's surface. But at last, after many narrow escapes, the boat was shot with the velocity of a freshly-spiced arrow into comparatively quiet water, the Indian again took his place in the stern, and the rest of the journey to the Cocopa country was made without special incident.

Once in Colonia Lerdo, the little town on the Sonora side of the river where the Cocopas have their tribal headquarters, Mr. Cushman made a feast with a portion of the contents of his boat and invited thereto Head Chief Pablo Colorado, Second Chief Captain Tom Moore, all the other lesser chiefs and their respective followers. The next day, while the taste of the good things served up to them by the paleface still lingered pleasantly in their mouths, Mr. Cushman hung up in a conspicuous place a batch of gaudy lithographs, supposed to represent views of the exposition whither he was anxious to take a group of the Indians as a part of the living ethnological exhibit.

When Pablo Colorado and Captain Tom Moore—goodness knows how he got the name—and their clansmen had gathered about the chromes their new found acquaintance explained them.

"Beautiful," he said in the Cocopa equivalent.

Captain Tom Moore and the rest grunted acquiescence.

"Georgious," he added, and went through a long list of descriptive adjectives, exhausting his knowledge of both Cocopa and



PATAGONIAN MOTHER AND CHILD IN NATIVE DRESS OF SKINS.



HAIKY ANU MOTHER AND CHILD.

English. And every time the listeners nodded.

Then Mr. Cushman came to the point.

"It would do you heap good to go there," he said.

This time the Indians lost their interest. They shook their heads.

"Oh, well," said Mr. Cushman, "if you don't want to go that's the end of it. I knew it would do you good to go and I came down here from thousands of miles away to tell you so, because I'm your friend, but if you don't want to go, all right, I don't care."

That was the last Mr. Cushman said to the Indians on the subject for days. In the meantime he lived their life and occasionally judiciously placed a square meal inside Captain Tom Moore, his head chief and the rest. But the indifference about those gaudy chromos and the great exhibition they portrayed was supreme.

After a time, just as a child acts under similar conditions, the Cocopas became intensely interested in the white man's proposal on account of this very indifference, and the first thing Mr. Cushman knew they had called a pow-wow. The talk lasted for three nights. When it was finally at an end Mr. Cushman was informed that the Indians had decided against his friendly advice.

"Oh, well," he said, "it's immaterial to me. But I'm sorry for your sakes, because the trip would do you good."

Again he employed indifference and free food, and after a week he was again rewarded by the knowledge that the tribe was indulging in another talk.

This time the red men announced that some of them would probably go if they were paid enough. What would the pay be?

Mr. Cushman hedged. What did they want?

In a devious way it came out. Then Mr. Cushman shook his head. He couldn't give so much. The real benefit was the good it would do them, not the money. But maybe, if enough of them would go, he could give so much.

More powwow, more indifference, and more food eventually led to a compromise and the Indians putting themselves on record that they would accompany their friend to the ends of the earth.

That night Mr. Cushman slept in the seventh heaven; the next day he dropped back to earth with a thud. A delegation of Cocopas stood before him. They had come to tell him, their spokesman said, that they couldn't go after all. They had forgotten, the day before, that the crops were to be planted during the time when they would be away. That would never do, they would have no food when they came back. Then what would they do, and their women and children? Their white friend would have to go to the great show without them.

As the Indian's argument unfolded Mr. Cushman had a happy inspiration. When it came his turn to talk he said:

"You want to go with me because it will do you good. I want you to go for the same reason, because I am your friend, and you are my friends. I will fix it about



TYPICAL COCOPA INDIANS.

the crops. I will show you how to put in your crops before you go, so you will not miss the good I have told you about."

The Indians fell back with astonishment. Change the planting time? Impossible. Their white friend could do many great things, but not that.

"But I can," he insisted, "and I will, if you don't want to miss the good I've told you about."

Curiosity at last led Pablo Colorado and Captain Tom Moore to beg Mr. Cushman to show them how such a wondrous thing could be done. He did, to their complete satisfaction, and thereafter, until the task was finished, the Cocopas labored alongside of their white friend tilling the soil and planting the crops that ever since they had come to the land had not been put in until weeks later on. Then Mr. Cushman got promises from relatives to harvest the crops of the members of his party, and once more he was all ready to start eastward with his group.

But no one can count on the morrow. While one of the Indians was engaged in settling up his affairs preparatory to departure, a white man ran amuck and ended that Indian's life by putting a bullet through his body. In the words of Mr. Cushman, "that stampered the whole bunch, and I had all my work to do over again."

He did his work over not once, but twice more. Then, one day, as the end of the third month of his stay among the Cocopas was near, he bade the tribe goodbye, and with twenty of its number, Head Chief Pablo Colorado and Second Chief Captain Tom Moore among them, and a three-ton Cocopa house in wagons, started overland 100 miles to reach the nearest railroad running east.

The two men who brought the first Patagonians (now here) to this country also

spent weeks at the task. Their difficulty was twofold—first, to locate the Patagonians, and after that to prevail upon them to fall in with the exhibition scheme for the personal good and glory there is in it. The Patagonian is like the proverbial flea—now you have him, now you haven't. As a result Vicente Cane and his companion had to travel on horseback over the pampas for weeks before they succeeded in locating any Patagonians who could be made to believe the good that would come to them in far-off America would infinitely more than offset the discomforts attendant upon breaking home ties and a trip over the great waters that made men sick unto death in their heads and stomachs.

For a time the success of this expedition was imperilled by the strong insistence of Chief Gachico's wife, Lorenza, that her pet dog accompany her on her travels. "If do me good, do him good, too," she argued.

Mr. Cane tried to dissuade the old woman from her purpose, but when she threatened not only to stay at home herself, but keeping her husband from making the voyage as well, Mr. Cane gave in. The dog is now in America. It cost Mr. Cane a pretty penny to get him here—something like \$100 for food, fare and customs duties.

Just at present there is an American in the heart of Africa who is gaining all the novel experiences that fall to the lot of the agent of living ethnological exhibitors. He is Samuel P. Verner, a former Presbyterian missionary from Alabama. He has been among the little people of Africa for months. When last heard from he was trying to cajole a powerful potentate, known as King Ndombe, into the state of mind that would eventually cause him to sell his kingdom rather than forego the good a trip to America would surely bring him.

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