

OUR INDIANS.

The census of 1900 was the first to include the untaxed Indians in the statistics of the total population. The results of this enumeration, printed in the latest Bulletin of the Census Bureau, include 129,518 untaxed Indians in the total population of 76,303,387. This does not take in the Indians of Alaska, however, who would swell the number considerably.

These wards of the nation are rather less numerous than had been supposed. The handbook "Statistics of the Indian Tribes," published by the government in 1899, estimated the number of Indians at nearly 250,000, basing these figures mainly upon the Indian agency reports. The fact, however, that fewer than 130,000 untaxed Indians were counted in the last census does not indicate that they are rapidly dying out. It has long been known that half-breeds have figured to a large extent in the census returns as white persons. Inter-marriages between white men and Indian women have become numerous in the past twenty years, most of all in the Indian territory, but also in other centers of Indian population. The pure bloods are becoming less numerous, not by extinction but by absorption into the mass of the whites around them.

The enumeration of the Indians last year was probably a close approximation of their actual number. The fact that they are less numerous than they were generally supposed to be is an interesting confirmation of the conclusions reached by the most careful students of our Indian tribes, who have asserted for years that the pure bloods were decreasing and the mixed bloods increasing in number. It was estimated by Mr. Lewis H. Morgan, for example, that the admixture of white blood in the Sioux, Chippewa and Pottawattamie families had lightened the color of their entire tribes from one-sixth to one-fourth. According to Prof. Daniel Wilson of Toronto, not a single pure blood Indian remains in some of

the Canadian bands. About half of the Cherokees, the largest nation of the Indian territory, are half or quarter breeds. The mixed bloods in Minnesota are not classed as Sioux or Chippewas, but as white persons. Many of them are well educated and highly respected citizens, graduates of the best schools in the west, and some of their fathers gave their names to counties in the state, were its territorial governors, or helped form its state constitution.

Those philanthropists who deplore the "unhappy fate" of the Indians seldom take into account the fact that the aboriginal population was always extremely sparse and never could have become large in the nomad conditions under which it lived. All the evidence seems to prove conclusively that the New England Indians never exceeded 20,000. Bancroft could find no reason to believe that more than 300,000 Indians ever inhabited, at one time, the vast area between the Atlantic and the Rocky Mountains, the St. Lawrence and the Gulf of Mexico. Hunting tribes greatly predominated over the settled, agricultural tribes who were in a state of decline when the whites first came to America. Large populations have never been found among men who lived by the chase. It is not surprising that there were incessant wars among the hunting tribes in order to preserve or enlarge their territory. According to Sir John Lubbock, the proportion of game animals to the population in communities living by the chase must be 750 to the man. These animals must be renewed from year to year; if the population increases, the number of animals must be largely increased; thus it happened that the preservation of human life was much less important than the preservation of game in aboriginal America; the tribes attacked each other to keep the game for themselves. The changed conditions that have made the life of an Indian more important than that of the animals which nourished him can scarcely be regarded as an unmixed evil.—*N. Y. Sun, June 12, 1901.*

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