Blog readings for Dawes Act Debate

**What Were the Results of Allotment?**

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On February 8, 1887, Congress completed passage of [the Dawes Act, or General Allotment Act](http://www.csusm.edu/nadp/a1887.htm), which codified for most American Indians the idea of dividing Indian lands into individual holdings to promote assimilation by deliberately destroying tribal relations.

Allotment was far from a new idea in 1887. According to the 1886 report of the commissioner of Indian affairs, 7,673 allotments had already been made by the year before the Dawes Act became law.[1](http://www.csusm.edu/nadp/#n1) The allotment process mandated by the Dawes Act differed from earlier approaches through treaties, special acts, and informal arrangements mainly in that it was compulsory at the discretion of the president.

The Dawes Act also provided a general purpose process for reduction of Indian lands. The act authorized negotiations for the sale of unallotted land "at any time after lands have been allotted to all the Indians of any tribe as herein provided, or sooner if in the opinion of the President it shall be for the best interests of such tribe."[2](http://www.csusm.edu/nadp/#n2)

Students of U.S. Indian policy have long taken the Dawes Act as a watershed of that policy as it developed until 1933, when John Collier set the Indian New Deal in motion. Historian Francis Paul Prucha, for example, quoted the contemporary declaration of the Indian Rights Association that the Dawes Act was "the beginning of a new order of things."[3](http://www.csusm.edu/nadp/#n3) Another prominent historian of Indian policy, Wilcomb E. Washburn, has written that the act "did not simply rearrange the landholding system of the Indians" but involved "all aspects of the relationship between white men and red," although "sometimes only in a tentative or partial way."[4](http://www.csusm.edu/nadp/#n4) Leonard A. Carlson, an economist whose 1981 book *Indians, Bureaucrats, and Land: the Dawes Act and the Decline of Indian Farming* raises provocative questions about allotment, argued that the Dawes Act "mandated a fundamental change in Indian-white relationships."[5](http://www.csusm.edu/nadp/#n5)

The Dawes Act has also been seen as a profound failure. Prucha stated the conventional view succinctly and directly when he said, "The allotment policy was a failure.The Indians, for the most part, did not become self-supporting farmers or ranchers."[6](http://www.csusm.edu/nadp/#n6) Another historian, Brian W. Dippie, quoted John Collier's argument that allotment as "the principal tool" of the old policy of destruction of tribal life and the cause of "poverty bordering on starvation in many areas, a 30 percent illiteracy rate, a death rate twice that of the white population, and the loss of more than 90 million acres of Indian land."[7](http://www.csusm.edu/nadp/#n7) Leonard A. Carlson contended that "Indians had made and were making progress in self-sufficient agriculture before allotment,"[8](http://www.csusm.edu/nadp/#n8) a conclusion supported by a quantitative study of 33 reservations.[9](http://www.csusm.edu/nadp/#n9)

Carlson constructed a mathematical model of Indian economic activity[10](http://www.csusm.edu/nadp/#n10) that "predicted" that allotment would lead to "an increase in the amount of Indian land leased and sold to whites, a decrease in the rate of capital accumulation by Indian farmers, a decrease in the rate at which Indians learned farming, and a reduction in group cooperation in economic matters that would further retard Indian agriculture."[11](http://www.csusm.edu/nadp/#n11) Carlson's conclusions, based on the Meriam Report of 1928[12](http://www.csusm.edu/nadp/#n12) and Census Bureau figures for the period from 1900 until 1930, amply supported his model's prediction. Carlson said, "Allotment as a means of promoting self-sufficient farming among Indians was a failure."[13](http://www.csusm.edu/nadp/#n13) The careful conclusions of historians and the bountiful data collected by Carlson notwithstanding, their conclusion that Indian agriculture was made a failure by allotment does not explain all the evidence.

In 1887, the commissioner of Indian affairs reported that Indians were cultivating 237,265 acres.14 Seventeen years later in 1904, the last year in which the annual report provided comprehensive statistics for Indian agriculture, 365,469 acres were reported being cultivated by Indians.[15](http://www.csusm.edu/nadp/#n15) In 1920, the commissioner reported a total of 890,700 acres cultivated by Indians, 739,708 allotted and 150,992 unallotted.[16](http://www.csusm.edu/nadp/#n16) In 1887, Indian farmers (exclusive of members of the Five Nations of the South in Oklahoma) raised 2,222,067 bushels of grains (about 9.13 bushels per person) and owned 8,265 head of cattle, according to the annual report.[17](http://www.csusm.edu/nadp/#n17) The comparable figures for 1904 were 2,947,563 bushels (about 15.44 bushels per person) and 297,611 head of cattle.[18](http://www.csusm.edu/nadp/#n18)

Indian Office statistics cannot be accepted with complete confidence. Different agents obviously did not apply themselves with uniform diligence to fulfilling their responsibility to gather this data. Sometimes they did not trouble themselves to collect the data at all and reported the figures from the previous year, or made no report at all. Moreover, numbers cannot sweep away the accounts of agricultural failure uncovered by historians studying specific reservations. Nonetheless, the numbers suggest that we have not quite entirely understood what took place in Indian agriculture in the first three decades after the Dawes Act.

A compilation of yet more statistics based on Indian Office data may offer at least a partial answer to this puzzle, but first it is necessary to deal with what appear to be misconceptions regarding the motivations for the Dawes Act. Whatever may have happened to Indian agriculture after 1887, there is no question that enormous amounts of land were lost by Indian communities through the government land purchases that were made part of the allotment process, and through the sale of allotted land. The Indian estate amounted in 1887 to 136,394,985 acres.[19](http://www.csusm.edu/nadp/#n19) By 1920 it had shrunk to 72,660,316 acres, of which 17,575,033 acres were leased to whites.[20](http://www.csusm.edu/nadp/#n20) This loss of land has led historians to ask whether the Dawes Act was in any honest sense a reform measure.

Francis Paul Prucha decided that the Dawes Act was "pushed through Congress, not by western interests greedy for Indian lands, but by eastern humanitarians who deeply believed that communal landholding was an obstacle to the civilization they wanted the Indians to acquire," and who feared that the inability of the government "to protect the tribal reservations from the onslaught of the whites" would leave the Indians with nothing at all if they were not given individual holdings.[21](http://www.csusm.edu/nadp/#n21) Frederick E. Hoxie, in his 1984 book *A Final Promise*, argued that neither land-hungry westerners nor reformers were capable by themselves of pushing through a new Indian land policy:

It is no more accurate to concentrate on western venality than on the reformers' sweet promises," Hoxie said. "Self-interest meshed with idealism, for public policy makers seized on a plan they felt would reconcile the goals of Native Americans and whites.[22](http://www.csusm.edu/nadp/#n22)

Leonard A. Carlson approached this question by constructing two statistical models which he called the guardianship model and the demand for allotment model. He determined that the demand for allotment model, which assumed "that reservations were chosen for allotment based on the potential benefits to non-Indian settlers, speculators, and merchants," was a better fit than the guardianship model. He was no more willing than Hoxie, however, to question the good intentions of the reformers, saying, "The notion that the implementation of the program of allotting lands in severalty was shaped by non-Indian interests does not necessarily mean that the policy was a thinly-disguised scheme for expropriating Indians lands, although in fact it did lead to a large transfer of land from Indians to non-Indians. The argument is that the general program of allotting land in severalty was bent, pulled, and shaped by non-Indian economic interests."[23](http://www.csusm.edu/nadp/#n23)

The idea that promotion of Indian agriculture was a serious goal of reformers of Indian policy has been widely accepted. Francis Paul Prucha's definition of the failure of allotment in terms of the failure of Indians to become self-supporting farmers and ranchers has already been mentioned. Frederick E. Hoxie contended that the Dawes act "was an assertion that the gap between the two races would be overcome and that Indians would be incorporated into American society. They would farm, participate in government, and adopt `higher' standards of behavior."[24](http://www.csusm.edu/nadp/#n24)
According to Leonard A. Carlson, who obviously put considerable stress on the role of agriculture, reformers hoped the Dawes Act would accomplish six specific goals, "break up the tribe as a social unit, encourage individual initiative, further the progress of Indian farmers, reduce the cost of Indian administration, secure at least part of the reservation as Indian land, and open unused lands to white settlers."[25](http://www.csusm.edu/nadp/#n25)

The views of reformers on the eve of the adoption of the Dawes Act may be inferred from the minutes of the fourth annual Lake Mohonk conference in 1886. The conferences held during period at Lake Mohonk, in upstate New York, brought together prominent churchmen, politicians other whites professing concern for the situation of the Indians. The Dawes bill was discussed during the second day of the 1886 conference. Senator Dawes explained that his objective was simply absorption of the Indian people into "this body politic" as self-supporting citizens.[26](http://www.csusm.edu/nadp/#n26) The only mention of agriculture in this discussion came when Dawes was asked whether Indians given allotments would be provided seed and implements. Dawes responded, "Whether Congress will be liberal enough to set him up, I don't know."[27](http://www.csusm.edu/nadp/#n27) There is no other mention of the promotion of agriculture anywhere in the 48 pages of the minutes of this conference, and there are few other mentions of agriculture in any form.

When the fifth annual Lake Mohonk Conference was convened in September of 1887, General Clinton B. Fisk opened the first session by declaring that the Dawes Act meant "the beginning of a new epoch in Indian affairs."[28](http://www.csusm.edu/nadp/#n28) Senator Dawes wanted the government to "put [the Indian] on his own land, furnish him with a little habitation, with a plow, and a rake, and show him how to go to work to use them ... The only way is to lead him out into the sunshine, and tell him what the sunshine is for, and what the rain comes for, and when to put his seed in the ground.” Prof. C.C. Painter of the Indian Rights Association noted that Dawes had failed to specify who would do the leading and teaching and began talking about the management of the money that would be made from the sale of Indian property.[29](http://www.csusm.edu/nadp/#n29)

The minutes of this conference filled 68 printed pages but no other mention was made of the promotion of Indian agriculture unless we count a comment by former commissioner of Indian affairs Hiram Price that the government was "giving these simple people pruning hooks instead of spears, and plowshares instead of swords."[30](http://www.csusm.edu/nadp/#n30)
The summary report of the commissioner of Indian affairs for 1887 is similarly devoid of discussion of the promotion of agriculture saving the statement that agriculture and education would gradually do the work of civilizing the Indians "and finally enable the Government to leave the Indian to stand alone." The commissioner made his understanding of "the full import of the allotment act" clear and simple: it was meant "ultimately to dissolve all tribal relations and put each adult Indian upon the broad platform of American citizenship."[31](http://www.csusm.edu/nadp/#n31)

The idea of allotments implies farming, but the lack of interest in that subject shown by the Lake Mohonk reformers and the commissioner of Indian affairs even as the Dawes Act was being implemented suggests that improvement of Indian agriculture was not a serious goal of the supporters of the act Simple arithmetic should have suggested to the reformers and bureaucrats that allotment with agriculture in mind was an absurdity on many reservations. They had the statistical tables included in the annual reports of the commissioner, which listed the estimated amount of tillable land on each reservation and its population. The numbers clearly show that on a majority of reservations, the amount of land required for allotment under the Dawes Act far exceeded the amount of tillable land.

This collection includes compilations of 1887 and 1904 land and agriculture statistics for 113 reservations, agencies and tribal units -- all that could be traced from one report to the other. See [Table 1](http://www.csusm.edu/nadp/atables.htm#table1), and [statistics of individual reservations](http://www.csusm.edu/nadp/astats.htm%22%20%5Ct%20%22_top).

* Forty-eight of the 113 units had been allotted by 1904. (That number does not include the Five Nations of the South in Oklahoma. No statistics were reported for them in 1904, the year Oklahoma became a state. Acts passed in 1893 and 1896 pushed the nations into allotment as a part of the process of changing Oklahoma from an indigenous enclave into a state dominated by non-natives.[32](http://www.csusm.edu/nadp/#n32))
* On 13 of those units, allotted land exceeded the estimate of tillable land in 1887. In all, land allotted on those units amounted to about two-fifths of the quantity of tillable land.
* Between 1887 and 1904, these units as a group almost doubled the land being farmed, more than tripled their grain production, and more than doubled their cattle. See [Table 3](http://www.csusm.edu/nadp/atables.htm#table3)
* On the 28 units which were allotted by 1904 on which land allotted was greater than tillable land, allotted land was about triple the amount of tillable land.
* Land farmed dropped by more than one-six during the 17 years in question and grain production dropped by almost one-half.
* The number of cattle increased by half, however, which suggests that some people given land unsuitable for farming made the best of the situation by turning to stock raising. See [Table 4](http://www.csusm.edu/nadp/atables.htm#table4).
* Forty-seven units were still unallotted in 1904.
* Unallotted units also showed an increase in land farmed and grain production, and more than quadrupled their cattle, as a whole, although some of the increase was due to the fact that some of these reservations did not exist in 1887.
* In the case of one reservation which had less tillable land than was allotted, the Siletz Reservation in Oregon, a sample of 29 allotments including approximately 2,320 acres was compared with current country zoning maps.
* On the basis of current zoning standards, only about 340 acres was considered suitable for agriculture.
* Another 120 acres was zoned rural residential, and 240 acres were within the city limits of Lincoln City.
* The rest of the land, about 1,620 acres, was zoned for forestry.[33](http://www.csusm.edu/nadp/#n33)
* Virtually no crops are grown for market on the former Siletz Reservation.
* Raising cattle has for many years been the only paying proposition in the county from an agrarian point of view.

Supporters of the Dawes Act either knew or should have known that in many cases it would mean allotting land that could not be farmed. While they occasionally trotted out the Jeffersonian concept of the independent farmer as window dressing, they failed to take even the most basic steps to bring it about. To the extent that allotment may be said to have failed as a means of improving Indian agriculture, the cause is clear, and it does not lie, as some historians have suggested, in any inability of Indian people generally to adjust to farm life. As Leonard A. Carlson's model of Indian economic activity suggests from a different angle, the cause was that Indians made rational decisions not to farm unprofitable land. Moreover, the argument can be made that Indian allottees were roughly as successful as white homesteaders.

As we have seen, however, the improvement of agriculture was not an important consideration. The question that remains is whether the more significant goals of the supporters of the Dawes Act were realized. As stated by Henry Dawes in 1886 and the commissioner of Indian affairs in 1887, those goals can be summed up as absorption of Indian people into the general population as individuals, implying a significant reduction in both Indian lands and government support. If absorption can be measured in cultural terms, as the Indian Office attempted to measure it, then allotment can at least be said not to have retarded absorption.

* In 1887, the Indian Office reported that slightly more than 24 percent of Indians wore "citizens' dress," that is, the kind of clothing worn by whites.
* Only a little more than 10 percent spoke English.[34](http://www.csusm.edu/nadp/#n34)
* In 1920, the comparable figures were almost 59 percent wearing "citizens' clothing" and almost 40 percent speaking English.
* Between 1913 and 1920, the number of Indians considered self-supporting increased by a little more than 15 percent and the number drawing rations from the government decreased by almost 31 percent.[35](http://www.csusm.edu/nadp/#n35)

Nonetheless, the Indian affairs establishment did not wither away, nor has it withered away to this day.

As a means of reducing Indian lands and putting them in the hands of whites, the process of purchasing "surplus" property provided by the Dawes Act apparently was quite efficient. Even reservations that were still unallotted by 1904 lost land, however. Even with the addition of new reservations after 1887, statistics for 47 unallotted reservations, agencies and tribal units shows that more than 37 percent of their land was alienated between 1887 and 1904.

In other words, the Dawes Act was not the only source of pressure on Indian lands. Struck by the irony of disaster arising out of a notable "reform," we may have overemphasized its importance. What was most significant about Indian policy after the Dawes Act was not that it forced more Indians to become assimilated nor that Indian agriculture went into decline in certain circumstances. Perhaps what was most significant was what precisely what had been most significant during the four centuries before the Dawes Act: the continuing loss of Indian lands.

An [1891 amendment](http://www.csusm.edu/nadp/a1891.htm%22%20%5Ct%20%22right) modified the amount of land to be allotted and set conditions for leasing allotments. Then, in 1906, another amendment, usually called the [Burke Act](http://www.csusm.edu/nadp/a1906.htm%22%20%5Ct%20%22right) gave the secretary of the interior the power to remove allotments from trust before the time set by the Dawes Act, by declaring that the holders had "adopted the habits of civilized life." The Burke Act also changed the point at which the government would award citizenship from the granting of the allotment to the granting of the title. The 1910 [Act to Provide for Determining the Heirs of Deceased Indians](http://www.csusm.edu/nadp/a1910.htm%22%20%5Ct%20%22right) ("and other purposes") deals with inheritance and leasing of allotments and with the allotment of land that could be used for irrigated farming, among many other things.

**NOTES**

1. United States, Interior Department, *Report of the Secretary of the Interior*, v. 1 (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1886), 692.
2. See *United States Statutes at Large* 24:388-91, or United States, Interior Department, *Report of the Secretary of the Interior,* v. 2 (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1887), 356-59.
3. Francis Paul Prucha, *Indian Policy in the United States* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1981), 39.
4. Wilcomb E. Washburn, *The Assault on Tribalism: The General Allotment Law (Dawes Act) of 1887* (Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott Company, 1975), 3.
5. Leonard A. Carlson, *Indians, Bureaucrats, and Land: The Dawes Act and the Decline of Indian Farming* (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1981), 3.
6. Francis Paul Prucha, *The Indians in American Society* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985), 48.
7. Brian W. Dippie, *The Vanishing American: White Attitudes and U.S. Indian Policy* (Middletown, Connecticut: Wesleyan University Press, 1982), 308.
8. Carlson, *Indians, Bureaucrats, and Land*, 133.
9. Carlson, *Indians, Bureaucrats, and Land*, 127.
10. Carlson, *Indians, Bureaucrats, and Land*, 92-102.
11. Carlson, *Indians, Bureaucrats, and Land*, 136.
12. Lewis Meriam, *The Problem of Indian Administration* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1928).
13. Carlson, *Indians, Bureaucrats, and Land*, 159.
14. Interior Department, *Report* (1887), 460.
15. United. States, Interior Department, *Annual Reports of the Interior Department for the Fiscal Year Ended June 30, 1904: Indian Affairs, Part I* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1905), 630.
16. United States, Interior Department, *Report of the Commissioner of Indians Affairs to the Secretary of the Interior for the Fiscal Year Ended June 30, 1920* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1920), 118.
17. Interior Department, *Report* (1887), 446, 466, 474-75.
18. Interior Department, *Annual Reports 1904*, 614, 630.
19. Interior Department, *Report* (1887), 460.
20. Interior Department, *Annual Reports 1904*, 82, 118, 123.
21. Prucha, Francis Paul, *The Great Father* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1984), 669.
22. Hoxie, Frederick E., *A Final Promise: The Campaign to Assimilate the Indians, 1880-1920* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1984) 44

**Selections from
WITH THE NEZ PERCES
TEXT: E. Jane Gay, With the Nez Perces (University of Nebraska Press, 1981)**

Briggs tells us that the white people generally are greatly excited over the "opening of the Reservation," as they call it. The newspapers are swelling the excitement with fabulous accounts of the riches "locked up" in the Indian land, and men are actually, at this early date, flocking into the nearby towns, so as to be ready to "go in" when the rush comes. But the people who show the most interest in us are the cattlemen of the vicinity.

A good many of them have come in person to announce their wishes and to "sound" the Special Agent as to her purpose. What they want to know is: Are they to be defrauded of their rights to free grazing on the Reservation; is the cutting up of the Indian's land into homes for the people to cut also into the ranges of these cattlemen, or will Her Majesty kindly locate the Nez Perces down in the canyons where they belong? They are embarrassed, these "bold highwaymen," as the Cook calls them, not knowing how to "approach" a lady.

It is a study to watch Her Majesty as she listens so respectfully to their intimations; the way she persistently misunderstands them, taking it for granted that they desire above all things the welfare of the Indians; the obtuseness of her to the hints of what might be "to her interest" which are quietly let fall, and are as innocuous as rain drops upon a placid lake. The men hang about day after day, with profuse expectoration, and finally go away. Her Majesty bidding them a cheerful adieu with an encouraging word about the better times coming, when there will be a reign of law and order in the country, which does not always call up a pleasing prospect in the mind of the cattlemen. One of them lost his self-control in the enforced contemplation of such an innovation.

"Law!" said he, with what the Cook calls "border emphasis," "Law! \_\_\_\_ it; what do we want with law? We don't want no law. Never had no law; we've got along so far taking care of ourselves; we done as we wanted to and ain't got no use for law in this country."

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I suppose I am expected to tell you something about our special work; what progress we are making in the allotting of the Indian's land.

We started from Washington with instructions which read easy. "Anybody can allot Indians," said a callow clerk to me one day.

I did not argue with him. I only said, "I suppose you first catch your Indians." He stared at me and I saw that he expected them to be found, all in a row at the Agency, waiting in immovable patience to be labeled in consecutive order and numbered upon the nicely photographed plates furnished by the department. He was dumb when I spoke of "catching" his Indians.

We have now been on the Reservation long enough to have gained an inside view of the peculiar workings of the Agency System, and have learned, as well, the difficulties in the way of our just dealing with the Indians in the matter of their allotments.

We were told that the Nez Perce tribe numbered from eight hundred to two thousand souls and we were to convince them, man, woman and child, of the desirableness of breaking their tribal relations, giving up their tribal rights under U. S. treaty, for American citizenship and a very moderately sized farm cut out of their tribal inheritance.

There might be a little time consumed in this simple preliminary work, but that accomplished, things would move quickly.

"It is not going to be a long job," said the callow clerk, "The Indians are all ready for allotment."

A good many other people said pretty much the same to us. Some, who did not live in Washington, seemed to believe that the wards of the Nation under its paternal care had been led quite out of barbarism up to the very gate of citizenship, that we had but to open the gate and they would tumble over each other in their haste to come in.

Well, my dear J., here we are and it is lonesome, it is queer, and the longer we stay the queerer it grows. Our energies are worn out in trying to get a start. There is no fulcrum whereon to rest a lever, no reliable data to be found. We are in an irresponsible world, where everything hangs in the air -- and the air is full of ominous rumors.

It is a significant fact that we have had to go off the Reservation to find the first man who knows anything about the Nez Perce tribe. He is a little wiry Scotchman "of meek demeanor and strong sense," who served in the Joseph war, fought the Indians with all his might, became interested in them, and ended by becoming their fast friend. We found him in Lewiston, working for the most important merchant of the place.

"Yes," said he, "I know the Nez Perces and they know me." He expressed a grave concern for the condition of things on the Reservation, saying that "the Nez Perces are men and not to be trifled with, but easily managed by fair play. I am fond of them as of my own children."

Mr. McConville offered every assistance in his power to give Her Majesty. He advised me to have great patience as it would take time to win the confidence of the Indians, without which the proper accomplishment of her work would be impossible.

"And the soldiers might have to be sent for," suggested the Cook. "God forbid," said the Scotchman, himself an old soldier.

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LAPWAI,
June 29th, 1889

When I last wrote, we were expecting the Indians to meet us in council the coming Monday. We were told that the prospect of a council always "brought them in," but we had so universally found them out on our various expeditions to their nominal homes and had met with so slight a trace of human occupancy anywhere, that but for the one fact of having seen a church full at the Agency on Sundays, we might have come to the conclusion that the Nez Perce tribe was a myth. There are so many things in the conduct of Indian affairs that have nothing more tangible than a name to live; so many opinions concerning the red man not warranted by facts; so many orchid ideas growing in the air; so many parasitical beliefs hanging on to inherited prejudices, that it would not have greatly surprised us if, on going over to that council room, we should have found it filled with nothing more substantial than U. S. Indian treaties.

But the Nez Perces were there, a handful of them; enough to fill the small room and overflow about the doorway.

It does not seem as if there could be anything in that room to impress very deeply an allotting agent... There is tangible silence within; dark forms are ranged against the walls, some on wooden benches, others standing, and some prone upon the floor. The attitude of all is simply that of waiting -- waiting to know what is wanted of them.

You catch no inspiration from their faces as you are introduced by the agent in charge, but you make a little speech as graciously as you are able. There is no halfway meeting of your overtures; only the silence which can be felt.

You read the Severalty Act and explain its provisions. You think you make it plain but the rows of old red sandstone sphinxes make no sign. Their eyes are fixed in stony dumbness. They never heard of the "Dawes' Bill"; they cannot take it in.

Imagine yourself, some bright May morning, sitting out upon the horse block in your back yard, waiting for breakfast in that calm state of mind induced by early rising and the prospect of a savory meal. Before you lie broad acres, your own well tilled fields, that were your fathers' before you. They have been in the family for many generations; so long that it has never come into your mind that they could ever be any where else. In retrospect you behold the bent forms of your aged grandparents, standing amid the heavy topped wheat, ripened like themselves; and glancing down the future, you see the children of your boy Tom playing out there upon that sunny knoll among the buttercups and daisies, when you are awakened by the slam of the front gate and the lightning-rod man or a book agent comes round the house and tells you that the Empress of all the Indies, or some other potentate with whom you have treaty relations, has sent him to divide your lands according to act of Parliament, in the year of our Lord, February 8th, 1887.

You stare wildly while the lightning-rod man proceeds to explain, that, as head of the family, you are to have 160 acres of your own land; your boy Tom, being over eighteen, will have 80 acres; and the little girl, the pet, the black-eyed darling, she will have 40 acres.

Mechanically you repeat, "160,80,40, -- 280 acres." That is just the size of your meadow where the cows and horses pasture; but what of the rest?

The lightning-rod man goes on: "The remainder of your land will stay just as it is, unless you want to sell it." Ah! It looks queer, does it?

Little by little you begin to think. Your suspicions are aroused and -- you look exactly as those North Americans looked in that Council room.

But now, as Allotting Agent, you stand before them, and, with reddened cheeks and stammering tongue you try to impress them with the advantages of the proposed arrangement. You had prearranged your arguments and expected to convince this docile people as easily as you had convinced yourself, but somehow you weaken. Your arguments give way before the logic of voiceless helplessness.

Your arteries throb so loudly in the silence that you can think of nothing to say. You ask the Interpreter to tell the Indians that you will be glad to answer any questions, and you sit down. Your cravat is tight and you loosen it. There is a stricture about the cardiac region. You unbutton your coat and look along the line of dark faces. They do not light up as they meet your gaze and it is your own eyes that first seek the ground. But at last an old man rises, with a dignity which renders invisible his poor garments and his low estate and makes you do him reverence.

"How is it," he says, "that we have not been consulted about this matter? Who made this law? We do not understand what you say. This is our land by long possession and by treaty. We are content to be as we are." And a groan of assent runs along the dark line of Sphinxes as the old man draws his blanket about him, as if for evermore to shut out the subject.

The action rouses you and gather your forces, while the next man in less quiet tones asks if you are not "afraid to come among them on such an errand"! "Our people are scattered," says another. "We must come together and decide whether we will have this law."

You tell them that there is nothing for them to decide, they have no choice. The law must be obeyed, but you will wait until they can understand better all about it. And then, with rare discretion, the ad interim Agent adjourns the council.

As the people disperse amid low mutterings in cheerless tones, you clearly realize that you have not caught your Indian.

You shake hands with one or two as they pass out, but for the most part they avoid you. A few linger and you talk a little. You do not say "I am your friend." That phrase means nothing now to the Indian.You tell them that by and by, when you know each other better, perhaps you may trust each other. And they do not dispute you; it looks reasonable. At any rate, it postpones the issue and the Indian likes that. He cannot be hurried and you know better than to try to hurry him. He goes home to think over this allotment business or to forget all about it, according to the manner of man he is, but the Special Agent takes the outcome of this her first Council very much to heart. It does not seem to have altered any thing; she is just where she was before. But, while the Cook lays violent hands upon her inclination to resist the patient endurance of inaction, and the Photographer gracefully accepts his laissez-faire role, and the unfeeling Surveyor, who is not new to Reservation experiences, jokes incoherently, as it seems to us, about "tenderfeet" and "eye openers," the Allotting Agent betrays no waver of discouragement at the forbidding aspect of the situation. She studies the topography of the country with Mr. Briggs and opens up a peripatetic school of instruction to inform the "actual settler," who is in Egyptian darkness as to the provisions of the Severalty Act. She loses no opportunity of getting the Indians together in little groups for informal councils, she talks and reasons in the hope of making ever so slight an impression to work out from.

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The work of registering the Lapwai Indians drags its slow length along. They have not yet become reconciled to the allotment. The ground gained in Kamiah does not seem to help much here; it looks as if, in a sense, we had to begin all over again.

It requires all Her Majesty's tact to avoid open conflict, for she is constantly meeting decided opposition and in quarters where it would naturally be least looked for; from those Indians nearest the Agency, those most under the influence of the officials. It is not easy to understand some of the obstacles thrown in her way.

One can have unlimited patience with the unreasoning old men whose splendid obstinacy in invincible; who refuse to take their quota of land on principle, holding to their tribal right to roam at will all over the Reservation. It is of no use to explain to them that the world is so rapidly filling with people that no tribe can longer hold unused land against the clamor of a multitude of homeless men and women: that the earth, in a sense, belongs to all that are upon it and that no man can be allowed to claim more than he can use for his own benefit or for that of others; that no treaty could be enforced that sought to hold back the living tide that had set in upon this continent: that any tribe of Indians that stood out against that flood would be overwhelmed.

It would be a waste of words to say all this to these superb old colossals, who stand upon their treaty as their own hills upon their basaltic foundations. Nor is it worth while to try persuasion upon the chiefs who, Her Majesty says, "oppose because land in severalty breaks up completely their tribal power and substitutes civilization and law."

But one would expect that the younger men, who have for years been under the enlightening influence of the governing centre of the Reservation, would be able to see that treaties are abrogated by the logic of events.

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The other day, as I was strolling along Lapwai creek near its junction with the Clearwater, I stumbled upon a stone lying half hidden in the grass. It was round, with a square hole in the centre out of which a little plant was growing and I knew that it was a mill stone, but how came it there?. . . . .

The story of that stone I am going to tell you in a round-about way just as Old Billy and Miss Kate told it to me, with a preface to make it clear because, as your wise Aunt says, we must always go from the known to the unknown to get a right understanding of a subject.

Well, you know that there once lived in this country a man by the name of Thomas Jefferson. He was a man that ideas were apt to come to when they were ready to set the world off on a new track. The particular idea that came to Mr. Jefferson at the end of the eighteenth century (1792) was that the great unexplored land west of the Missouri River might be worth looking into.

Mr. Jefferson, being President of the United States, sent his own private Secretary, Captain Lewis, to command the expedition, and he was accompanied by Captain William Clark. We cannot follow the party very closely, but sometime you will read the Lewis and Clark journals which are very interesting. The men were fitted out by the Government with horses and everything they needed for the long journey, even with guns to kill game and Indians as they went along.

I think Lewis and Clark were wise men and not so fond of killing as many explorers are. They met many tribes of Indians and pretty generally avoided having any trouble with them. Indians gave them food and horses and in return received guns and knives and trinkets; often they divided their last morsel freely with the travellers who were often hungry, sometimes being obliged to kill and eat their horses.

On the 20th of September 1805, when the men had become weak and thin and many were ill, they "descended the last of the Rocky Mountains and reached the level country," a beautiful open plain with trees scattered over it. And there they saw three Indian boys who ran away and hid in the grass. They were Nez Perce boys and when they had carried the news of the arrival of the white men home, a man came out to meet Lewis and Clark and led the travellers to the Nez Perce village; and right here I must tell you what a mistake was made about the name of this tribe.

It is never easy to come at the name of an Indian or even of an Indian tribe. A tribe has always at least two names; one they call themselves by and one by which they are known to other tribes. All the tribes living west of the Rocky Mountains were called "Chupnit-pa-lu," which means people of the pierced noses; it also means emerging from the bushes or forest; the people from the woods.

The tribes on the Columbia river used to pierce the nose and wear in it some ornament as you have seen some old fashioned white ladies wear in their ears. Lewis and Clark had with them an interpreter whose wife was a Shoshone or Snake woman and so it came about that when it was asked "What Indians are these?" the answer was "They are 'Chupnit-pa-lu'" and it was written down in the journal; spelled rather queerly, for white people's ears do not always catch Indian tones and of course the Indians could not spell any word.

It was written "Chopunnish." Chopunnish is not much like Chupnit-pa-lu and it is not known in the Nez Perce tribe: the oldest man never heard of it. Old Billy says, "We have a name that does not belong to us. We are not pierced noses and never were. We are the 'Nemapo.' When Lewis and Clark came into our country they were very hungry and their horses were all bones."

"They were the first white men that many of the people had ever seen and the women thought them beautiful." Billy's grandfather shook hands with the strangers and talked with them in the sign language and all the chiefs were sent for to welcome the little company of white men and to find out what could be done to help them. The Journal says that the Nez Perces were kind to the tired and hungry party. They furnished fresh horses and dried meat and fish with wild potatoes and other roots which were good to eat, and the refreshed white men went further on, westward, leaving their bony, wornout horses for the Indians to take care of and have fat and strong when Lewis and Clark should come back on their way home.

It was in the early spring, in May, when they returned. The weather was cold, with snow on the high lands and mud in the villages, and they were again hungry and worn with hard travel and want of proper food. The Nez Perces went out to meet them and brought the whole party down into Kamiah (which Lewis and Clark spell Commearp) and there they set up a large leathern tent which the Chief said was for their home as long as they wished to stay among the Indians: and there they lived a whole month, like brothers with the Nez Perces. The people brought roots and dried salmon and the Journal says that "not being accustomed to live on roots alone, we feared that such food might make our men sick and therefore proposed to exchange one of our good horses, which was rather poor, for one that was fatter which we might kill.

"The hospitality of the Chiefs was offended at the idea of an exchange. He observed that his people had an abundance of young horses and that if we were disposed to use that food, we might have as many as we wanted."

It is very interesting to read what Lewis and Clark write about their friendly camping in the Kamiah valley, but it really does not belong to the story. These white men learned something of the Nez Perce language, enough to convey some new ideas to the Indians; not very clearly but sufficiently well to set them thinking. The new ideas were about God, a great Being that every race and tribe are always trying to know something about. The Nez Perces had been trying all their lives. Old Billy said no matter how hard they tried "it was all fog," and that after Lewis and Clark came they doubted more and more their old ways of worship.

Then the Hudson Bay traders came,- King George men, they were called,-and the people began to worship the Sun and he, Bill, remembered dancing around the sun pole which was set up near the present site of Walla Walla. But still the people were not satisfied and as year after year passed by, they held councils to talk about their trouble, always ending with "If we could only find the path of Lewis and Clark, and follow it, we would find the light."

So the little imperfect idea grew and grew until, twenty-five years after the Jefferson exploring party had gone away from the "Choupnit people," these Indians, groping in the dark, determined to send a delegation to find Lewis and Clark and learn the truth: they could not live in the dark any longer. The idea had grown so imperative that it must be satisfied with knowledge.

Four men were chosen. Billy gave their names as

Tip-ya-lah-na-jek-nin, (Black or Speaking Eagle), a chief, was Kip's grandfather. He had seen Lewis and Clark and received a medal from them.

Ka-on-pu, (Man of the Morning or Daylight), an old man. His mother was a Flathead, his father a Nez Perce.

Hi-youts-tihan (Rabbits Skin Legging) was Black Eagle's mother's son, a young man of the same band of Yellow Bull, whom we know.

Tawis-sis-sin-nin (Little Horns or No Horns). He was Billy's father's sister's son, a young man about twenty years of age.

Billy was about ten years old when these four men started. They went out on the Lolo trail, the same that Lewis and Clark had come on.

They did not know where to go and they had no pillar of cloud to lead them by day or a star to follow by night.

They were led only by their hopes and urged on by their longing. Billy described the hopeful starting when all the people went out to see them well on the way and "stood watching till they were out of sight, and not any more dust rose against the sky"-then the patient waiting for the long delayed return and, at last,-the woe and despair of the stricken people.

There had been many councils of the old men of the tribe about this journey. Some way, no one knew how, word had come to the Nez Perces that Captain Clark was in St. Louis and the delegation of four were bidden to find their way to that city. They were to see Captain Clark and ask him to tell them about the truth, the light. Some people have said that they went in search of a book, the Bible, but when I asked Billy about this, he said no, they went to find Lewis and Clark and learn about the better way to worship God. The people were poor and miserable and often hungry and they knew not where to look for help in their trouble and they were sure that Lewis and Clark could tell them. There was nothing so definite in their minds as a book, and that makes this wonderful journey more wonderful still.

The Nez Perce were just children crying in the night and reaching out to touch the Mother, who was close beside them though they knew it not.

Old Billy could tell me nothing of the four men after they went out of sight over the Kamian hills, but we learn something of them from other sources. They arrived in St. Louis sometime in May or June, 1831, four travel stained red men asking for Lewis and Clark. Clark was then Superintendent of Indian affairs for the Northwest, and the Indians met him and explained, as best as they could, their mission.

It does not appear that they received much comfort: there was the barrier of language and the indefiniteness of their object: the crying in the night could not be translated. The men hung around the office of the Indian Agent day after day, silent and sad.

"Who are they?" the people would ask. "Where do they come from?" A fur trader, a Frenchman, seeing them, said, "I know who they are. They come from West of the Rocky Mountains. They are Chup-nit-pa-lu." only he translated the word into his own language- "They are the Nez Perce," said he.

"To make a long story short, the two oldest Indians sickened and died in St. Louis, and the two younger started back upon a steamboat, on the Yellowstone River. Near the mouth of the river Old Billy's cousin died and Hi-youts-tihan, the last of the four, never came back to his people. He could not see their faces when they knew how it had fared with their messengers. Some Nez Perces met and talked with him in Montana and learned that the white people had promised to send a teacher to the Nez Perces, and so they waited and waited until at last, in 1838, the teacher came. His name was Henry Spalding and he brought his wife with him over the mountains and they were father and mother to their Indian children.

I saw Mr. Spalding in Washington, after he had grown old, and he gave me his photograph. He spent thirty years with the Nez Perces and taught them many things which are still remembered in the tribe.

And this brings me to that old mill stone, lying in the grass. The Indians made gardens under the instruction of Mr. and Mrs. Spalding and cultivated wheat and barley and raised vegetables and fruit and they found a "proper stone" and hammered it into shape and Mr. Spalding showed them how to make a mill to grind their grain and this is the very same old stone.

The mill has gone to pieces and Mr. Spalding's house is now used by an Agency Indian, Jim Moses, to keep his horses in, for the Government sends Agents instead of Missionaries now, to teach the Indians.