

**WHAT THE WHITE  
RACE MAY LEARN  
FROM THE INDIAN**

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What the white race may learn from the Indian by George Wharton James

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GROUP OF HOPI MAIDENS AND AN OLD MAN AT MASHONGANAVI.

# What the White Race May Learn from the Indian

BY

GEORGE WHARTON JAMES

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TO MAKE INDIAN AND OTHER BASKETS," "PRACTICAL BASKET MAKING,"  
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"THE WONDERS OF THE COLORADO DESERT," "THROUGH  
RAMONA'S COUNTRY," "LIVING THE RADIANT  
LIFE," "THE BEACON LIGHT," ETC.



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#### FOREWORD

I WOULD not have it thought that I commend indiscriminately everything that the Indian does and is. There are scores of things about the Indian that are reprehensible and to be avoided. Most Indians smoke, and to me the habit is a vile and nauseating one. Indians often wear filthy clothes. They are often coarse in their acts, words, and their humor. Some of their habits are repulsive. I have seen Indian boys and men maltreat helpless animals until my blood has boiled with an indignation I could not suppress, and



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I have taken the animals away from them. They are generally vindictive and relentless in pursuit of their enemies. They often content themselves with impure and filthy water when a little careful labor would give them a supply of fairly good water.

Indeed, in numerous things and ways I have personally seen the Indian is not to be commended, but condemned, and his methods of life avoided. But because of this, I do not close my eyes to the many good things of his life. My reason is useless to me unless it teaches me what to accept and what to reject, and he is kin to fool who refuses to accept good from a man or a race unless in everything that man or race is perfect. There is no perfection, in man at least, on earth, and all the good I have ever received from human beings has been from imperfect men and women. So I fully recognize the imperfections of the Indian while taking lessons from him in those things that go to make life fuller, richer, better.

Neither must it be thought that everything here said of the Indians with whom I have come in contact can be said of all Indians. Indians are not all alike any more than white men and women are all alike. One can find filthy, disgusting slovens among white women, yet we do not condemn all white women on the strength of this indisputable fact. So with Indians. Some are good, some indifferent, some bad. In dealing with them as a race, a people, therefore, I do as I would with my own race, I take what to me seem to be racial characteristics, or in other words, the things that are manifested in the lives of the best men and women, and which seem to represent their habitual aims, ambitions, and desires.

This book lays no claim to completeness or thorough-

## FOREWORD

ness. It is merely suggestive. The field is much larger than I have gleaned over. The chapters of which the book is composed were written when away from works of reference, and merely as transcripts of the remembrances that flashed through my mind at the time of writing. Yet I believe in everything I have said I have kept strictly within the bounds of truth, and have written only that which I personally know to be fact.

The original articles from which these pages have been made were written in various desultory places, — on the cars, while traveling between the Pacific and the Atlantic, on the elevated railways of the metropolis, standing at the desk of my New York friend in his office on Broadway, even in the woods of Michigan and in the depths of the Grand Canyon. Two of the new chapters were written at the home of my friend Bass, at Bass Camp, Grand Canyon, but the main enlargement and revision has occurred at Santa Clara College, the site of the Eighth Mission in the Alta California chain of Franciscan Missions. The bells of the Mission Church have hourly rung in my ears, and the Angelus and other calls to prayer have given me sweet memories of the good old padres who founded this and the other missions, as well as shown me pictures of the devoted priests of to-day engaged in their solemn services. I have heard the merry shouts of the boys of this college at their play, for the Jesuits are the educators of the boys of the Catholic Church. Here from the precincts of this old mission, I call upon the white race to incorporate into its civilization the good things of the Indian civilization; to forsake the injurious things of its pseudo-civilized, artificial, and over-refined life, and to return to the simple,

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healthful, and natural life which the Indians largely lived before and after they came under the dominion of the Spanish padres.

If all or anything of that which is here presented leads any of my readers to a kinder and more honest attitude of mind towards the Indians, then I shall be thankful, and the book will have amply accomplished its mission.

GEORGE WHARTON JAMES.

SANTA CLARA, CALIFORNIA, November 27, 1907.