

Now, men said to themselves, will come the burst of poetical language about sun and moon and flowing rivers, a speech, perhaps, with the wonderful combination of dignity and freedom that there is in an old forest.

It did not matter to them what bearing his words had on the bill; nothing new could be expected; but they were curious to hear an Indian speak in the white man's great council-house.

When Aniatariio began to speak he made no display of rhetoric, natural or acquired; in so far his hearers were disappointed. But his voice had the deep musical tones and dignified calm of an Indian orator, and he was in himself a striking picture for appreciative eyes. Still, what he said seemed common-place enough.

That was in the beginning.

Soon his grave face and speech and glowing eyes took irresistible hold of the house. Here, after all, was oratory in the deep resonant voice, in the soul speaking through those persuading eyes; above all, in the simple, convincing speech that dwelt on the sanctity of the home and the responsibility of parental ties. By the time he had left ordinary grounds of argument and taken his stand as an Indian representative, every man and woman in the great chamber was listening eagerly to his every word.

"I am alone here tonight to speak in the name of my people," he was saying. "They are ignorant of what is passing in this legislative hall. They have never before had any voice in its government. But in their most sacred interests I protest tonight against the passage of this bill. For years you have preached the doctrine of morality to the Christianized Indian; here we find the inconsistency of another doctrine being preached to your own people. More than ever will the thoughtful Indian be puzzled by the sublimity of Christianity in precept and the weakness of its interpretation in the lives of many who profess it.