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**WHO ARE THE AMERICAN INDIANS?\***

BY HENRY WETHERBEE HENSHAW.

When Columbus discovered America he discovered not only a new continent but a new people—the American Indians. From one end to the other of its broad expanse the continent was occupied by Indian tribes that had held the land from time immemorial—so far at least as their own traditions aver—knowing nothing of any country but their own. The commonly presented picture of the Indians as they appeared at the time of the discovery is that of a horde of wandering savages, half or wholly naked, living on roots and herbs, or existing by the capture of wild animals scarcely more savage than themselves, and the chief objects of whose existence was to enslave, to torture, and to kill each other. Those who hold such opinions have ever taken a hopeless view of the Indian's present and a still more hopeless view of his future. Such a picture conveys a totally false impression of the Indian and of the state of culture to which he had attained at the era of the discovery. Though still living in savagery, he was in the upper confines of that estate and was fast pressing upon the second stage of progress, that of barbarism—that is to say, he had progressed far beyond and above the lowest states in which man is known to live, to say nothing of the still lower conditions from which he must have emerged, and had traveled many steps along the long and difficult road to civilization.

Already he had become skillful in the practice of many arts. Though the skins of beasts furnished a large part of his clothing, he

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