

But even missionaries are human and sometimes make mistakes, and they have many serious difficulties to contend with, for not only have they to overcome such as necessarily arise from the character of the Indians, and customs and circumstances of their former life, but they have also to fight the devil incarnate in the persons of evil and unscrupulous whites, who, for their own gain or gratification, do not hesitate to bring moral and physical ruin upon the Indian.

It is to me a matter of much regret that in the process of bringing the Indian into civilization there has been an effort to make him forget his past history and customs. Much of the history of some, at least, of the Indian nations is by no means a thing to be wiped out of memory, and, though some of their customs must necessarily be disused, as being inconsistent with both Christianity and civilization, the romantic and picturesque, which ever attended the life of the Indians, and surrounded them with a charm which has produced abundant material for writers of fiction and poetry, is surely worth preservation, and, in my judgment, should be no more a hindrance to their advancement than somewhat similar conditions have been in the case of the Highlanders of Scotland. I am convinced that an Indian who holds the memory of his forefathers in respect, and looks back with honest pride upon the antiquities of his nation, and is permitted to do so, will make a better citizen than one who is taught, as is evidently too often the case, to consider all such things as contemptible, and to be put aside and buried in the past. Among the Six Nations, those who are disposed to keep alive their traditions and such of their ancient customs as are not unsuited to their present manner of life, are subjected to a kind of mild social ostracism. I venture to believe that to be a great mistake, and for my part would regard an Indian who had the courage to appear in buckskin and feathers, without being paid for doing so, as excellent material from which a valuable citizen might be made if judiciously treated. The system which is followed, I believe, with all due deference to those who have more experience than I have, to be calculated to make such men and women useless members of society, and thus indirectly to lower the general social and moral tone of the people. A loyalist at heart, if injudiciously treated, may be made a rebel in act.