

THE LEAST KNOWN WILDERNESS OF AMERICA

THE EVERGLADES OF FLORIDA

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Why should the American go to the land of the Vikings or to "darkest Africa" for themes? We have the Everglades! -- Grey, misty, water-covered, a region with a background that teems with romance, yet wrecks in tragedy.

This land of the Southern Peninsula of Florida with its islets, lagoons, its cutting saw grass prairies and tropic jungle is an unexplored treasure house for the man of research, a virgin field for the adventurer -- in short, a tropic mimosa with its secrets closely held against the disturbing exploiter, yet awaiting the intrepid spirit who would dare to explore this "Least Known Wilderness of America."

The Everglades, while at the very door of civilization -- almost in sight, as it were, of the gilded palaces of Palm Beach and Miami, yet during the last half century only six expeditions have ventured within the boundaries of this interminable morass. These so-called expeditions consisted only of "crossing the 'Glades as a ship crosses the ocean." As to scientific research, in the heart of this mysterious region, there has been none; there have been no well defined lines made, -- no flag staffs mark the trail of the adventurous explorer.

APPEARANCE OF THE INTERIOR GLADES.

The appearance of the remote interior of the Everglades is unlike that of any other region on the globe, and is certainly the most

bewildering and remarkable on this continent.

A view from an aeroplane would show a vast lake of fresh water, spreading out in the shape of an artist's palette; hundreds of miles of tall saw grass, shooting up in slender stems, would break into view. Imagine this vast area of more than 5,000 square miles, studded with thousands of islands covered with thickets of shrubbery and vines; here and there would be seen an island of lofty pines, but oftener the view would reveal only small islets upon which were emplaced a solitary majestic palmetto -- a sentinel or a place of signal for the wanderer or the denizen of this "grass water" country. Gorgeous aquatic flowers, brilliant butterflies, and the flutter of bird life add color and animation to the scene.

Let the captain of this air ship rest his craft in mid air and through his glasses gaze down upon this aquatic jungle.

The wild animals find a refuge in these secluded boundaries; the gentle doe with her fawn slips through the shadows; the red fox cautiously watches for his prey; the black bear with her chubby cubs scents the custard apple and the palmetto bud,--the racoon skulks through the tangled underbrush, and the cunning otter darts through the fish laden streams in quest of his midnight meal.

The eagle and the bittern, the heron and the snowy egret, with countless migratory birds from the North American Continent, find in this wild solitude a winter refuge.

THE AMERICAN RED MAN ADDS TO THE PICTURE.

The man with the glasses looks again and he sees the American red man adding a picturesque embellishment to the picture; he sees men and women and children, brown skinned, brightly garbed and picturesque, yet strangely self contained; for the solemn silence

is only broken by the splash of a paddle of the canoe as it glides through the Seminole's secret channels of the great swamp.

What a back ground of romance and tragedy do these aboriginal people give to this Venice of America. Stories weird and strange fill the unwritten life book of these descendants of Aboriginal America.

This vast aquatic domain, that has ever remained terra incognita to the white man, opens quickly enough to whomsoever carries the key. In ages past, long before Columbus planted his silken banner in the damp sands of Cat Island, the haughty Carib Cacique ruled his tribe, with justice, yet with power. Down through fantastic pages of time, tribe after tribe occupied the territory until the proud and liberty-loving Seminole entered these swamp fastnesses, and here he has remained. Resisting armed forces of the American Government, fleeing from bullets and blood hounds, this small band of Seminoles obstinately clung to the land of their fathers, until a humane policy of the Federal Government resulted in a peace compact and here in this mystic land the Seminole Indian lingers,--timid and shy, still practicing the traditional teachings of his fathers and worshipping the Great Spirit.

However fast the door of the swamp may be locked, the Seminole is the true key bearer and known every foot of the interminable swamps. The stars are his compass, the fantastic tracery of canals, cut by his ancient ancestors through this chaotic tangle of the great "grass water" country are his highways.

Less is known, and it can be said without fear of contradiction, less is told to the reading world of inquirers in this 20th century than was given to history four hundred years ago.

THE LAND OF THE SEMINOLES.

The Caucasian has battered at the gates of this land of mystery for nearly a century, but some impregnable force, directed by a Higher Power than commercialized graft or the greed of selfish men, has kept the gates secure.

IT IS THE LAND OF THE SEMINOLE!! It is the gift of the Great Spirit to his red children of Florida. Did the red man of the Everglades who in ages past cut his own channels, make these water highways as well?

For accounts touching the interior of the Everglades, we must have recourse to historical documents. To French delineations upon old maps, as well as from Spanish and English authorities, we learn that more than three hundred years ago, Florida's Everglade country was cut up by large rivers, extensive ponds, lagoons and lakes which communicated with each other.

That the drainage of the Everglades was "contemplated by the authorities of the Spanish Government" is an established historical fact, and as late as 1840 during the Seminole War a canal was found of considerable size -- "large enough to float a large craft"; this piece of engineering work is credited to the Spaniards, but owing to the treacherous straits of Florida's coast, interior navigation was abandoned and the Spaniard and the Frenchman left the country to the intrepid and enterprising Indians whose knowledge of the water world of the Everglades was then, and is now, superior to his white engineering brother, for the Indian travels through these uncharted waters in his "dug out" canoe, with no compass but the stars overhead, as he is guided by the whispering winds brought him from the voice of the Great Spirit.

"EVERGLADE GEYSER."

Near the centre of the 'Glades, according to public documents filed in Washington, is an "immense spring rising from the earth, covering an extent of several acres, and throwing up large quantities of water with great force."

With the sun's rays glinting on this "Everglade Geyser," with the evaporation caused by the intense heat of this tropical land, as it meets the cooling waters of some underground cavern, a grey mist is *formed* and hangs over the area.

As the white wandering clouds from the fathomless cavern meet the starry skies, the Seminole sees in this phenomenon of nature,-- the "Breath of the Great Spirit."

The Everglades, christened with the red man's name -- Pay-hay-o-kee, or "Grass Water Country," comprises more than 5000 square miles, and while considered a swamp, it is more of a shallow sea or lake. While this sea of water, slowly, silently courses its way over the rock-bound bottom, it apparently has no source, but finds its supply from under-currents.

When the torrential rains, a characteristic of this 'Glade country, come, flooding the entire area, the Queen of the Water Kingdom picks up the rippling waters and like an elfish sprite hurls them into the lakes and rivers, where they dash relentlessly on until they reach some subterranean passage to the sea; and thus with undercurrents, subterranean lakes, as well as subterranean outlets, the sanity of "practical drainage" in this *Grass water* country does not appeal to the honest engineer.

During the past decade more than one American engineering expedition has entered this region to make surveys for drainage and reclamation purposes, and each surveying corps has wisely and guardedly barricaded against criticism of failure by publishing to the critical world the statement that "upon 800 square miles of this unexplored country no white man has ever placed foot."

In 1913, after 20,000 purchasers of lands in the Everglades had demanded their lands or the return of their good American dollars, the Federal Government exploited the "crooked deals", with the result that another survey was ordered and Florida put sixty men into the Everglade district, at an expense of \$40,000. The citizens paid for the survey and "800 square miles still remain terra incognita",-- unsurveyed!! Wherefore, white man?

THE "HOODED COBRA" OF THE EVERGLADES

For more than a quartette of centuries the "Great Snake" has appeared at intervals to warn the red rulers of the Everglade country against the invasion of the pale face.

Possibly no legend of American history holds a greater interest in folk lore literature than does the dramatic story of the Big Snake of the Everglades. This monster reptile, according to Indian traditions, has never ceased to champion the rights of the sovereign inhabitants. When the Spainards invaded the sacred homes of the 'Glade dwellers the monstrous snake, with relentless fury "unsheathed his armored sword" and, with the lashing of his great tail caused a mighty tempest and the Aborigines took refuge in the secret morasses until the white invader passed on seeking other and less tempestous areas. With the coming of the French and the English

the Snake again warned the Indians, and the red men once more hastened to the trackless waters until the white invasion had withdrawn.

The present Seminole Indian, as he tells of this monster snake and its history, says "long time ago, Big Snake come with Indians to show them the *"Grass Water"* country by the big salt water. My grandfather, old, old man, tell me; me tell my boys." And so the tradition has been handed down from generation to generation.

As the Chieftain describes the snake he says, "So big, no man can tell, -- head, big eyes, with horns like the great owl, and eyes look like flames of fire."

During the past decade, while the pale face with ax and compass, has invaded the sacred home of the Seminole, the Great Snake has been active, appearing always at the zenith of the white man's seeming victory, and as he raises his dreadful head, and the red flames of fire shoot from his eyes, with his powerful tail lashing the waters of the under-currents, whipping up a whirlpool of debris, he upsets the white man's crude instruments and flooding the Everglade country with the leeting loose of cavernous water ways, retires again to his subterranean home and waits for the pale face engineer to devise other means of drainage; and so until the white speculator and spoils-taker find ways and means to control subterranean flood gates, to control water forces whose source lies hundred of miles away, or to toss away lightly the very God of nature's balance wheel, Everglade drainage entirely must fail.

While the Seminole is being pushed on and on, while he is pauperized, homeless, and even hungry, he still has the faith of a little child and looks to the day when the Big Snake will win the

final battle of supremacy and the white man will retire in utter defeat as did the people of olden days when American history was young. Then with his children and his squaw, free from the driving brute force of the land speculator, he will live as in days of old upon the rich islands and hammocks, happy and prosperous. The channels his forefathers cut through the watery saw grass prairies will be his cypress canoe "car line"; his gleaming camp fires will cast only holy shadows; in the mystic solitude of Nature he will see God in the skies and hear Him in the winds; the wild game will return to its lair; the eagle, the flamingo, and the horned owl will nest in his domain, and silvery fish will glide through the Seminole canals of crystal water; the stars will lift the lids of their twinkling eyes to smile down upon the toddling pappeoses, *and* the mystic religion of this ancient people, mingled with the creed of the Christian, will make the Seminole an Acadian type, burnished by the fires of century-long affliction, still worshiping the Great Spirit who has given this Pay-hay-o-kee country to his red children, and over the seven colored "rainbow" of the heavens -- the "Highway of the Great Spirit" -- he will make the Last Journey to the Happy Hunting Grounds of his fathers.

EVERGLADE SCENARIO

Were we to unroll the *reel* of a photo drama of the Everglades we would go back thousands of years, when the great billows of the ocean rolled over the space now occupied by this territory, we would see the millions of busy builders of that age, the tiny coral polyps, working on the reefs and shoals; we would look again and see the tempestuous storms and hear the thunder of the circling winds; and

behold the "breaking up of the great fountain of the deep", forcing the sand from its depths, until a giant dam was built, and the great ocean was excluded. Then it was that Okechobee, "the place of the Big Water" in Seminole dialect, became an inland sea.

We may turn the slide and see the animals of prehistoric days basking in the sunshine or bathing in the limpid waters. The fame of Florida as a health resort was not unknown to the animals of those ancient days, for the remains of these monsters are exhibited today in National museums, with labels stating that they "belonged to animals -- probably mammoths, that lived 10,000 to 50,000 years ago."

RED SONS AND RED DAUGHTERS.

The screen makes a quick change and thousands of years have elapsed and we see the "Grass Water" country of Florida peopled by a race who were happy, contented and prosperous. They were the sovereign owners of all the vast continent.

In true Venetian style they glided through the canals in their cypress "dugouts", trading with each other, --bartering their wares for the produce of other sections.

Agriculture was carried on in the rich islands and hammocks, the raising of stock was profitable, and their traffic in skins, pelts, and ambergris made them prosperous. To the unfortunate Caucasian who was wrecked upon the treacherous coast of Florida, the Indian obeyed the dictates of humanity and hospitality.

FLORIDA'S DRAMA SILENCED BY CENTURIES.

Film makers delight in taxing the flights of the mind, and may we not bring before you a vision of aboriginal life, forming

as it did such a tragical, flame-encircled background to American history.

Rushing before the imaginary camera of 1539 we see thousands of Castilians as they followed their haughty leader, Hernando De Soto. We see a flower bedecked country; we see the cavalry, fleet grey hounds and furious blood hounds. We see hand cuffs, chains and collars to secure and bind fast the innocent natives.

The reel makes another turn and the picture becomes enthralling. De Soto, ever pressing on in quest of gold and conquest, has travelled 300 miles Northward and enters the province of Co-fa -qui -- the kingdom of the mightiest chieftain of this new land. The splendor of the reception is amazing. It is a stage setting drama of 16th Century renaissance in hospitality. The mighty chieftain of the Floridians sits upon his throne surrounded by his subjects. Entertainment has been provided for the "strange white ~~gods~~ from heaven." The chieftain has given up his village for the Spanish quarters, and with his tribe moved to another settlement. The arrogant Castilian, however, with eagerness to press on in search of gold, soon informs the generous Indian Chieftain that he must move onward. The Chief, with that hospitality of the original American, sent the Spaniards on, with provision of maize, dried fruits and meats for the journey, with an escort of 4000 armed Indians to act as defenders, and 4000 men as burden bearers to conduct the men of Castile through a dangerous wilderness of several days journey. Such were the proud and generous people the Caucasian found in Florida.

The adventurous Spaniard, however, in his quest for gold and the fabled store house of pearls, moved on; the Frenchman, with his luxury loving nature remained but a short time; later the flag

of England was planted, only to be torn down by another Spanish expedition; and so years rolled on and the aboriginal people, the red rulers of the land, held sway, immovable, entrenched in the land given to them by the Great Spirit.

The Spanish religionists entered this 'Glade country and several churches were erected by them.

Look -- quickly!! the film makers of this moving picture places another slide and you are transported to the Library of Harvard University. You see the shores of the shimmering waters of Lake Okeechobee, and on this replica of the red man's map, you see the designation of a church, surmounted by a cross.

As late as the 19th Century, the American troops discovered a large, artificial mound, supposed to have been the foundation of a church. We dare not challenge United States statistical documents, and as late as 1848, upon one of the islands of Okeechobee, quoting from the document, "a cannon was found which had been carried there by the Spaniards, and that a large bell and other indications of a church having once been erected can be seen."

PRESENT DAY HISTORY.

With nervous haste the film maker skips two centuries, showing a scene connecting ancient history with that of the modern day.

A band of red Americans, proud and invincible, the Seminoles of Florida,-- enter the Spanish territory of Florida; subjects only of the Spanish crown, these people, in 1750 were permitted to become a nation to themselves, living and practicing the inalienable rights of independence, honor, and kindness. For three quarters of a century these dusky patriots lived and prospered, owning cattle,

slaves and plantations. We may hear the tinkling bells of their little ponies as they travelled, caravan style, carrying their wares from village to village; but alas! the film maker delights in climax, and we see a mocking travesty of our cherished ideals. We see the hoisting of the Stars and Stripes, and Florida ceases to be a Spanish province, and becomes, with its Indian population, the coveted possession of the United States. With the sealing of the compact with Spain in 1821, we read the death sentence of Seminole independence -- a very Iliad of tragedy in American history.

Years of war and broken treaties followed until the American nation, with its unhallowed spoils, drenched with the blood of this distracted, primitive people of the Everglades, became the conquerors. Florida was strewn with the mangled bodies of innocent red patriots, where shattered hammocks and stricken camp fires blackened the once powerful Indian country.

Thousands of Seminoles were forced by the mighty power of the American government to give up homes, lands -- life itself, -- and be exiled to a cold and unknown western land.

Today, the heart of every civilized nation on the globe turns to brave little Belgium. The patriot of America, the real American, whose soul and heart shriek from the tainted and corrupt dealings of the vampire and land grafters must not close his eyes, but let him look -- yes, with horror -- at other screens on this Everglade Moving Picture, -- for we have within the bounds of this American continent, -- "A LITTLE BELGIUM OF OUR OWN."

AMERICAN RECORDS PICTURED.

The flame lit reel now makes a daring turn and we now see pictured by the imperishable magic of the camera the pitiful story

of American injustice -- a Silent Drama of Florida history -- recorded among the archives of Government statistics.

A few extracts from the records at Washington must stir the emotions and stimulate pity for the vanquished red dwellers of the 'Glade country.

After hundreds of weeping women and sad visaged men had been loaded on ships to be transported to the land of the setting sun, a hunt was kept up through the wilderness territory for the small bands that had escaped capture by blood hounds and bullets. These refugees had taken shelter in the recesses of the tropical jungle. The screen shows:

Record 1, taken from files of the navy in the Florida expedition of 1841 -- 1842, reads as follows: "We found fields and villages, hitherto thought to be inaccessible to the white man. We explored these haunts and burnt their villages."

Record 2. "Finding two Indians in a boat, the Indians were killed.

Record 3. "Fully 600 Indians had lived here, near Pine Island, but had escaped leaving large fields of pumpkins, beans, and corn. All these we destroyed."

Record 4. "The towns of Chi-ki-ka's people were visited and were found to be tenanted only by the skeletons of the Indians upon whom justice had been executed by Col. Harvey."

Record 5. "With 200 men we ascended Shark River into the Everglades. Here we met Capt. Burke of Artillery, with 67 men. x x x x. Joining forces, we proceeded to Te-at-ka-hatch-ees, and discovered two Indians in a canoe.

"The Indians escaped, but we secured their ~~the~~ packs, cooking

utensils, provisions and their canoes. We followed them three days until the trail was lost. After destroying the growth of their fields consisting of 50 to 60 acres of pumpkins, beans and peas, etc., we continued to the sea."

Respectfully submitted,

John T. McLaughlin,
Lieutenant Commanding Expedition.

And so the tragedy runs; the pages of American history are stained with the blood wounds of an innocent people, whose greatest crime (?) was love of country, kindred and reverence for the graves of their fathers.

A People Without a Country

Expedition after expedition failed to corral the little band of Indians left in the 'Glade country in 1841. Today, the 600 Seminoles of the Everglades are the descendants of this heroic band -- a people without a country!! Too honest to steal, too proud to beg, asking out but a pitiful existence in the land of his nativity. Why? Because the same monster greed that has driven the American Indian across a continent has entered the sacred homes of Florida's Indian population.

Are we treating these patriots, these people who cling so desperately and so devotedly to the homes of their fathers, any better than did our officers seventy-five years ago?

Today, the American flag is standing for right, justice, "peace with honor" and upholding the dignity of the greatest nation on the globe. Nation after nation has had its wounds bound up, has been fed and clothed and helped. America has been eyes to the blind, an almoner to the poor, a protection to the widow and orphan; and yet in 1843, under the sacred emblem of this same starry banner,

Sub. Head.

the Seminole made a peace compact with the U. S. Government, under the direction of our President. The Seminole was "to occupy certain areas and to forever abstain from all acts of aggression upon his white neighbor." THE SEMINOLE HAS NEVER BROKEN THAT TREATY!!

He believes and knows that the land of Okeechobee is his by right of treaty, and he cannot understand the merciless driving force of the white man.

Will the audience look upon the screen again? You may see a true un-hyphenated American picture of 1898. Justice and honor in behalf of the vanquished Seminole had been aroused all over America, and under the beneficent ruling of the martyred McKinley an expedition from the United States Government was sent into the trackless Everglades to select and survey lands for homes for the long persecuted native inhabitants.

300,000 acres was not considered too large a grant as compared with the gift of 15,000,000 acres -- the gift of the United States, without money and without price, to her favorite daughter, Florida. Let the moving picture camera make for us a picture of this expedition. We see the surveyors, the ax men, and the inspectors as they follow the instructions of the head of the nation. The old homes of the Seminoles were selected as belonging to the Indians by "prior right of occupancy," for this red race, happy and prosperous, had lived on these rich islands and hammocks for more than fifty years.

Belated justice seemed at last assured, and the patient Seminole about to stand upon the threshold of his home, and, secure from molestation was ready to receive civilization, Christianity, and all the splendid influences of a humane government.

And now behold, another picture slowly evolves from the darkening shadows. Figures and numbers on a screen are not interesting to the drama lover, and yet in ancient days numbers played a great role in the destiny of man and nations. And significant are such numbers on the map of Florida as Townships 54 and 55, South of Range 30 East. Townships 43 - 49- 50- 51 - 52 - 53 South of Range 34 East. Etc, etc. Hieroglyphics, yes, but easily deciphered with the surveyor's key as used in 1898 by the envoys of the nation's Chief, the Great White Father at Washington!

Will you remember these numbers? The screen will show them again.

UNITED STATES PURCHASE OF FLORIDA FROM SPAIN.

The camera man now turns his reel and shows a historical record almost a century old, taken from the archives of Spanish and American documents, "America's Purchase of Florida from Spain", which stands out in clear type and startling is the reading on the screen, "THE PRESERVATION OF THE RIGHTS OF THE SEMINOLES TO LANDS IN FLORIDA WAS MADE A PART OF THE STIPULATION OF TRANSFER BY THE SPANISH GOVERNMENT TO THE UNITED STATES IN 1821."

The State accepted the gifts of the "Swamp and Overflowed" lands of Florida from the National Government, with the Indian population as a part of that transfer; therefore the obligation passed to Florida.

Has she kept a single letter of this Spanish-American compact in her treatment of the Seminole Indians and their rights and titles to homes in the Everglades?

The legendary lore connected with a part of Florida's Everglade country -- these townships, islands and hammocks selected by the National Government officials makes this "silent drama" of numbers a singularly pathetic one to the childlike Seminole, for here it was, according to the Indian tradition, that the Son of God "stopped", at which place He was met by three Indians, who carried Him around on their shoulders, while he sowed ^{the} "Koontie" root, which was God's gift to the red men. Here, Christ continued to live with the Indians, "to make them good Indians and to prepare them for the land of the Great Spirit."

*President McKinley's Humane Policy "Marked Crossed",
A Seminole Land Bill.*

In the quickly shifting screen of this silent photo play of Florida's history, the magic lenses of the camera bar censorship, and the daring film maker from the safety of a periscope, as it were, shows records that jibe rather badly with honorable State laws.

The Swamp Land Grant of 1850 gave to Florida the "over-flowed lands", but did not include the islands and hammocks within the 'Glade boundary, because they were not over-flowed land, -- therefore would the title to these "old homes of the Indians", now recorded in the names of certain corporation and private individuals stand the 'acid test' of a legal investigation?

But wait, the photo play has now reached a gripping climax. The lights are growing dim; dark shadows weave themselves on the screen -- an oppressive silence hovers over us as we watch, as if some sinister thing impended. Ah! a cog has slipped!! It is the year 1899. The Florida Legislature is in busy session. A "Seminole

Marked Crossed

"Land Bill" comes before Florida citizenship. It is passed and signed by the Governor. The land tallied almost to the acre with the survey as selected by the U. S. Government for the Seminoles!

Alas! for the tragedy of this chapter! Alas, for the wiles of the politician and the unholy, unpardonable graft of the speculator! The bill, so inspiring to humanity, contained a clause -- in these days of Everglade jests called a "Joker", which reads, "Providing that nothing in this act shall be construed to make the State of Florida or the Board of Trustees of the Internal Improvement Fund of Florida liable to make good the title to any lands embraced in this act, that have heretofore been conveyed or certified to any person, persons, or corporation."

The film maker, with merciless honesty, leaves nothing to conjecture.

Townships 54 and 55, 48, 49, 50, etc., etc., had been "acquired" by a person, persons or corporation, and the Seminole again became the victim of infamous politics.

Like the eagle, as he swoops down upon the lamb feeding at its mother's side, so commercialized graft with "land grabbers" outfit, swept down upon the inheritance of the red children of Florida, and violating every moral, humane and brotherly law of a commonwealth, even gathered the crumbs that fell from Florida's bounteous table.

Between the time when President McKinley's Special government Commission carefully selected these lands in 1898 -- an interval of less than a year, this particular tract disappeared from the list of the public domain and went into private ownership.

Was this high treason? Did Florida violate the sanctity of her voting citizenship by permitting this "land grabbing" act? Would you know who shuffled the cards? If we allow a "political grab bag"

to disregard the will of of the people; if we, as a State, will permit the overturning of honesty and justice, then we must not weep over the failure of Everglade Drainage, which is today hors de combat. ^{so far as the general public is concerned} With the word "Failure" punctuating each million dollars spent on attempted drainage, a mocking echo resounds throughout the United States of America, while an inquisitive public still waits for the answer to the riddle of the Okeechobee sphynx, who alone holds fast the key to this Egypt of America.

Florida, in her Everglade disasters, has learned the bitterness of the prophets rebuke, when he said, "THOU SHOULDEST NOT HAVE ENTERED THE GATE OF MY PEOPLE IN THE DAY OF THEIR CALAMITY, NOR HAVE LAID HANDS ON THEIR SUBSTANCE IN THE DAYS OF THEIR DISTRESS."

SEMINOLE DEATH SONG.

And now in the interval before the last scene, the dirge, like music of the Indians softly breathes through the stillness of the ~~audience~~. Sobbing out the pathos of the drama, the orchestra plays on until, like echoes from an anguished soul, the death song, the Recessional of the Seminole, dies away in the hearts of the listeners.

Slowly, as if breaking through a *mist* of gloom, the last screen breaks into vivid view. It is the climax of Florida's pitiful Indian Drama. We see the patient heroes of the dark wilderness huddled together in hopeless misery. Dusky red mothers weep as they press their little ones to their throbbing breasts.

The wigwags are deserted,--the embers of the dying camp fires are turning a dull, ashen grey. The last meal has been eaten.

Histon! and you will hear the merciless cry of the white spoils taker, "Move on, Move on," -- like a death knell it echoes through the dark forests. The little group of original Americans, so true to their friends, so pitifully child-like, are now standing upon the brink of oblivion. With heavy hearts and eyes of grief they turn their faces toward the land of the Southern Cross. Slowly and silently the bewildered little band moves onward.

Like animals, sorely stricken, creeping to their lair, these red mothers and little children follow the slow tread of the stoical braves.

The reel makes its final turn. The smoke-wreathed film grows clearer and clearer. Out throbbing hearts await the climax.

The solemn Indian procession halts and we see a new made grave --
ONLY AN INDIAN BABY'S GRAVE !!

Must they leave the Chieftain's child, the still form of the pet of the wigwam village? Clustering around the sepulchre with bowed heads and throbbing hearts the struggle ends and the sad decision is made. The orchestra, with tones as soft as a zephyr's breath, croons the stricken mother's last lullaby, and we hear, "Sleep on, little babe, in thy lonely grave" --and the little band of Florida exiles passes on.

Then, as if with one impulse, the mourners halt, and form the "death circle." With locked hands and eyes raised to the God of the Skies, the Seminoles cry -- "Great Spirit, Hear My Prayer" -- goes forth in one long agonized wail, into the solemn silence of the dark wilderness, to be echoed and re-echoed, until transmuted into a very symphony of sorrow, the mournful echoes -- the moans of

a stricken race -- return to girdle the conscience of their oppressors and to purify Humanity in the name of the innocent and vanquished red Americans of Florida.

AND SO THE CURTAIN FALLS!!

X X X X X X X X X X X X X X

CAN WE, DARE WE, AS MEN AND WOMEN OF FLORIDA AND AMERICA WITH-
HOLD THE HELP WE CAN GIVE TO THIS STRICKEN AND OPPRESSED PEOPLE OF
THE FLORIDA EVERGLADES -- THE LONG PERSECUTED REMNANT OF THE ONCE
POWERFUL SEMINOLE NATION?