the wilds of the tangled Everglade wilderness and were for years lost to the historian.

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 a few expeditions have ventured across these cutting saw-grass prairies and tropic jungles. This land of the southern peninsula of Florida is as yet 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." Scientists have crossed these "weird drowned prairies" as a ship crosses the ocean, yet no well-defined lines have been made and no flagstaffs mark the trail of the adventurous explorer.

The Caucasian has battered at the gates of this land of mystery for nearly a century, but some impregnable force has kept the gates secure.

It is the Land of the Seminole!

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

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. According to America's best engineering corps, 800 square miles of this tropic jungle still remain *terra incognita*—unsurveyed.

Then why should the American go to the Land of the Vikings or to "Darkest Africa" for themes? "Under the Linden" and the "Black Forests" of the Teutons are

"interned"; the way to the "Midnight Sun" is sealed by war zone nets and lurking sea monsters watch for their prey; the glittering crescents beaming from the minarets of Constantinople look down upon an enthralled people, while they say, "Beware, Americans!" Let the patriotic traveler see "America first."

CHO-FEE-HATCH-EE, A SEMINOLE INDIAN, IN HIS PICTURESQUE COSTUME, STANDING BY A COCOANUT TREE

Early Seminole History

There is something intensely sad in the history of the Indians who were left in Florida at the close of the "Seven Years' War." Keeping faith with the United States Government Peace Compact, "To abstain from all aggressions upon their white neighbors and to confine themselves to certain areas in the southern peninsula of Florida," they retired to the cypress jungles of the Everglades. Here, by the winding waterways, they believed themselves safe from the intrusion of the Caucasian. Here, around the camp fires, the tragic life story of this race was told to the youths; here, the story of the capture of their beloved Osceola under a flag of truce was burned into the hearts of this stoic red race, and resolving to forever live in this domain of their ancestors, the Seminole for a time grew contented and satisfied.

With a treaty emblazoned with the broad seal of the United States Government, acknowledging the Seminole's title to these 'Glade lands as far back as 1842, why should even suspicion be felt for the safety of their wigwam homes and well-cultivated fields? Alas, for the honor of the vampire speculator and a dishonest State Government; soon the eternal cry of "move on, move on" began to ring in the ears of the conquered Seminole and like sheep before the rout of grey timber wolves, these people were driven on into the more desolate regions of the great morass. On these wet sponge lands, with here and there a hammock or an island rising high enough for habitation, these first American citizens have lived—a people without a country, too honest to steal, too proud to beg, eking out a pitiful existence in the land of their nativity.

Defenders of Liberty

What was it that led the daring war chieftain, Osceola, to go forth to battle? Why is America unfurling her star-spangled banner and calling to arms the noblest

and best of her young blood? We hear the tread of a million youths of America, marching to the colors of liberty. We, today, feel the sobbing clutch in our throats as we think of the love, the valor, the patriotism our own America is giving to the stricken, war-mad world—and of our khaki-clad soldier boys, what home has not been touched because of our belief in liberty and freedom, and then can we review past history without reflecting that in our treatment of the innocent Seminole we have violated sacred treaties, and we have, be it said to our shame, been decidedly "Belgic." Graft, avarice and speculation have stained Florida's escutcheon; and may we not pause long enough to reflect that in our treatment of the Indian, America may today be suffering a retribution, for the judgment of humanity is sure and as stern as that delivered on Mount Sinai more than 6,000 years ago, for "the sins of the fathers are visited upon the children even unto the third and fourth generation."

An Awakened Conscience

The past is forever gone and it is to a new reincarnated America we are looking today. A decade of years ago a conscience began to wake in the white man. A 20th century spirit prevailed over America and a growing interest in Chief Osceola's long-neglected people brought a pressure upon the inhumanity of Florida's State officials. Effort after effort was made to secure homes for the vanquished Seminoles of the Everglades, and it is not surprising that the country from Maine to California felt a thrill of pride when the wires flashed the news of the passage of the Seminole Land Bill. "Hats off" and attention, as it were, to the humanity of the men and women in control of the destiny of the Flower State, echoed from hearthstone to pulpit, and from humanity workers to the great newspapers and magazine powers of the country.

Seminole History Reviewed

To review briefly some points in Florida history. In the year 1899 the Florida legislature passed a bill granting the Seminoles a reservation of 835,000 acres. This act was approved by the Governor, but 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 public domain and went into private ownership. Like the eagle, as he swoops down upon the lamb feeding at its mother's side, so the speculator with "land grabbers" outfit swept down upon the inheritance of the red children of Florida and, violating the sanctity of Florida's citizenship as well as every humane and brotherly law of a commonwealth, even gathered the crumbs that fell from Florida's bounteous table.

Years passed, when Everglade lands again began to attract the attention of the public, and the rights of the Seminoles came before the people. The legislative body of 1913 passed a bill, unanimously providing 235,000 acres for the Seminoles, but on the very last day of the session Governor Park Trammell vetoed the bill and the Indians, these distinctive Floridian natives, were again the victims of a political intrigue.

At the succeeding legislature another Indian bill was introduced, but certain active land speculators, known to be strongly opposed to the Seminoles having any land in Florida, arrived in time at the State capitol and the bill, as per Seminole dialect, went into a "big sleep," camouflaged, as it were.

In the words of President Woodrow Wilson, "No battle for justice was ever lost and the way to succeed in America today is to show that you are not afraid of anybody but God and His judgment," and when the 1917 Florida legislature convened, one "big act" of the session, to quote from Tallahassee records, was the passing of the

"Seminole Land Bill" without a dissenting vote, giving the Florida Indians approximately 100,000 acres. Most fitting was this legislative victory because it marked the centennial anniversary of the United States' first treaty with the Seminole nation. While possibly only 5 per cent of the tract is tillable, it is the best available land, and with this simple justice done the records of the Florida legislature for the calendar year of 1917 will go down, down, into the long ages as being the most humane act ever done by a Tallahassee legislature.

Here, when their present homes are occupied by the whites, the Seminole may find a refuge, and with an industrial training from their educated Oklahoma kinsmen they will, in time, become citizens worthy of the blood of their patriotic ancestry.

To see to it that this stranded people have protection and that these island homes are never molested by the covetous whites should be the duty of the State of Florida. The highest duty of a State or Government is to make good citizens, and if Florida will do her part and will deal fairly, justly and humanely with these, the original owners of all these fair acres, the Indian will in time gain confidence in himself and, with the help of the U. S. Department of Indian Affairs, they may be led out of the darkness of a conquered people into the light of progress and civilization.

With the granting of this reservation by the State of Florida, the patient, long-neglected native red people of the Everglades have had a new chapter written in their tragic life-story book.

Can you not see the Seminole silhouetted against the burnished horizon waiting for Opportunity to open her Pandora box and give him a chance with the people of America in a better civilization and Christianity? Can you not hear the heart of the big forests throb a tribute of praise and the glittering waters ripple a melody of love for

this touch of humanity, "for inasmuch as ye have done it unto the least of these ye have done it unto Me."

The Seminole a Patriot

The Florida Seminole stands today on the last sandy strip of his once vast domain, still loyal to the best traditions of his fathers, an honorably hyphenated Indian-American. While never forgetting the obligations to his race, he is the Indian of today, silently pleading for the future. The Seminole is no "slacker"—he is a patriot and with the horrors of war as told to him, his instincts of freedom and liberty assert themselves, and while he has endured for more than a century all the scornful cruelties and injustices that the ignominious white man could press upon him, yet the brave spirits of his ancestral race come back to him through a tragic veil of conflict and memories of living brute force, and he is ready to help defend his native America in this great war struggle. "Yes, Indian help white man. Indian shoot good. Me want two maxims"—the Seminole's idea of doing double service for peace and liberty.

Read the story of valiant France. Read the story of Belgium—Ah, Belgium! Three years ago it was a smiling land of happy people. Today it is a land of sorrow, yet undaunted and undismayed as the day her valiant men stood the ground at Liege and along the Yser—an orphan among Nations, crucified that liberty and democracy might be saved for the whole world; and so, as Belgium stands by the colors today at every hearthstone in the land, so the Seminole, through a century-long invasion of his wigwam and his camp fire by the pale face, has come through the crucible, still true to the colors of the plumed knight of his race—the martyred Osceola—yet ready to follow the bugles of the Battle Hymn, daring, fearless—a patriot, and an American.

Would you know that in this day when the wounded cry of the world is "Peace, Peace," that it was by the blue

waters of Ontario that Hiawatha, the Indian, nearly four centuries ago, formulated the first peace compact?

Would you know, too, that it was Cadet Long Lance, the American Indian of our own Southland, a Cherokee of the Carolinas, who, as first Lieutenant of the Princess Pat regiment, stood his ground at the terrific assault of Vimy Ridge—bringing back the standard bearer—the only officer of his rank left in the company?

Who Are the Seminoles?

The continuous demand from an interested public for more information concerning the Seminole Indians is most gratifying. To give the history, traditions, the romance and the folk-lore literature of this people, whose unwritten story is older than American civilization, would require volumes; and then you ask, "Who are the Seminoles?" They are Americans! Two branches occupy the deep morasses of the Florida Everglades. One line, descendants of the mighty Aztecs, may trace its achievements across a continent and can boast of battles with Cortez in Mexico; the other branch are the lineal descendants of the great war Chieftain Vi-ta-chu-co, who held sway over a large territory of Florida long before Columbus planted his silken banner in the damp sands of Cat Island.

The present Seminoles, living among the cypress islets and silent lagoons of Florida's aquatic jungle, are tied to their native land with an intense affection. Of the 300,000 Americans found when Columbus landed on these wild and unexplored shores, the Florida Seminoles are the only remnant left who live the old, primitive life and practice the ceremonies of their ancient ancestors. They live the free life of the forest with a moral purity (and it may be said without fear of contradiction) that has no equal on the globe, for the stern death penalty would follow any breach of virtue.

Were a white man to insult a Seminole woman by

THEIR HOMELESS CONDITION IS PATHETIC. SOON THEY MAY HEAR THE WHITE MAN'S CRY: "MOVE ON, MOVE ON"

word or look, it would be well for that man to never appear in the presence of the tribe again. The women are as chaste and modest as perhaps are the women of no other race today.

Clustered together in their camps, half alarmed, half curious, the side glances from their dark-brown eyes seem to utter a protest against any intrusion from the Caucasian. *Not a drop of the white man's blood courses through the veins of an Everglade Seminole!*

A Visit to a Seminole Camp

Would you visit a Seminole village in the heart of America's Least Known Wilderness? Then let us draw the curtain, and turning the slides look upon a vision of aboriginal life, with its flame-encircled background.

We see the palmetto-thatched wigwams glistening in the red lights from the camp fire; tall trees are silhouetted against the sky and we see the little Indian children playing backward and forward, their little brown legs twinkling through the shadows cast by the lurid flames. We hear the century-old lullabies, softly crooned by the mothers as they watch with careful eyes the toddling pappooses.

Let us look again on this moving picture scene from aboriginal life and see the stoical braves as they rearrange the red-wheel camp fire and cautiously add to the ever-ready sof-ka kettle—the Seminole's tribal dish—some new ingredient, possibly fresh from the chase.

The hunting dogs sniff the savory odor while the alert and watchful squaws glide in and out amid the shadows of the royal palms that stand like sentinel warriors, crowned with feathery head dresses that rustle in the breeze.

We look again, and the slide shows the cypress canoe "car lines"; these are the secret channels cut through the watery saw-grass prairies by the ancestors of the present Seminole.

Silently, slowly, a canoe cleaves the dark waters, with the chief of the camp standing in the stern. Truly, the scene is worthy the pencil of a Dore. A moonless sky, a wild expanse of black water, a canoe propelled by a savage, splendid in his unconscious grace and as silent as the Sphinx.

Tying up among the lily pads of the channel, the canoe is hidden from view and the huntsman with his game approaches the camp. This red pilot and huntsman of the 'Glades had treed the Seminole's favorite game—the black bear. Happiness pervades the village, for in their communal life each family receives a share of the chase; and then more cooking—even into the midnight hour is the feast continued. The view of this wilderness Everglades as it meets the eye has not changed since Spanish and English invasion four centuries ago.

Afar off, the frightened scream of the heron tells that the alligator has missed his prey; the eagle, the flamingo, and the horned owl still nest in this domain; the silvery fish glide through the Seminole's secret canals of crystal water and as the shadows grow dimmer and dimmer upon our moving picture screen, we look up to see the stars lift the lids of their twinkling eyes to smile down upon the sleeping pappooses; the braves and the squaws with the faith of little children keep afresh the mystic religion of their fathers, while they worship before the Great Spirit who has given this Pay-hay-o-kee country to his red children.

The smoke-wreathed film blots this aboriginal picture from our view, but as we listen, we hear the dirge-like music of the Indians echoing through the solemn stillness of the night.

With a solitude, which only nature reveals, this brown-skinned people live, doing no harm, seeing God in the skies and hearing him in the winds.

In this solemn silence the wild animals find a refuge; the gentle doe with her fawn slips through the shadows;

the red fox cautiously watches for his prey; the bear, with her chubby cub, scents the custard apple and the palmetto bud; the raccoon skulls through the tangled underbrush and the cunning otter darts through the fish-laden streams in quest of his midnight meal; the snowy egret, the heron, the eagle and the bittern, with countless migratory birds from the North American continent, find in this wild solitude a winter refuge. Gorgeously colored butterflies infest the flowers of the Everglade prairies, and in their flights, ascending and descending over their island home, form clouds shimmering with color and animation.

As we close our eyes to this picture, with the thought of war, and famine, and killing, which is touching the heart strings of every American today, question marks (? ? ? ?) flaunt themselves before us as they seem to ask, "Who are the barbarians of the 20th century—the Caucasian or the red man of the primeval forests?"

You ask, "How long did it take to educate and civilize the Anglo-Saxon race?" According to authentic history, the work of civilizing Europe and bringing the mass of the barbarians under the subjection of the law was the work of fully one thousand years.

Is Europe civilized today?

Music Among the Seminoles

Music is not a genius with the Seminoles, and to be complete needs its aboriginal setting. Indian music is full of a wild, weird melody that harmonizes with the forests and the wigwam and the shadowy flicker of the camp fire. With such surroundings you may hear the melancholy waters whisper a pensive good night and the drowsy birds flutter in their boughs. You may hear the camp songs and the lullabies like voices trained in the woodland, with a strain of heartbreak, where life and love steal forth in fanciful ecstasy, only to die away into a

symphony of sorrow, as it echoes across the dark wilderness.

An incident linking past Seminole history with the present is full of interest because so old and yet so new. Just eighty years ago, at the time the great Chieftain Osceola was betrayed near St. Augustine, with him was another chieftain, by name John Jumper. History has not failed to record the life and death of Osceola, but of John Jumper little has been written outside of Government records. Jumper was taken prisoner to the Indian territory. Many years after he was converted by a missionary and being a musical leader among his tribe, naturally grasped the white man's melodies. Later, he composed a religious hymn. During the last visit of the Everglade Seminoles to Kissimmee, as is the custom, they attended the church services. The minister, at the close of the service, gave a little talk to the Indians and sang a hymn in the Seminole tongue, which was very beautiful and so rhythmical that when once lodged in the brain the tune refuses to be dislodged. The minister, Dr. A. J. Holt, now editor of the *Baptist Witness,* explained to the congregation and the Seminoles that he had learned the hymn more than forty years ago from Col. John Jumper in the Western territory. This chieftain had enlisted in the Civil War, where he was promoted to the office of Colonel under the Confederate colors.

Returning from the church services, we were eager to know from the Indians if they had understood the Seminole song. One Indian, very musical, said, "Yes, me sing it good," which he did to perfection. It was an interesting moment. How did the young Seminole learn the words and tune so quickly? He explained, "Me learn it in Everglades." Certainly a remarkable incident. An educated Oklahoma Indian missionary visiting the Everglades the year previous had taught the song to these Seminoles.

Billee Bowlegs and the Music Box

A few years ago when the East Coast towns of Florida were still primitive, a storekeeper had purchased in New York an old-fashioned organette that played five tunes.

Billee Bowlegs, progressive and musical, listened to the "box of music" as it played in the little trading store and was entranced with the melodies. Soon after, the organette refused to "go," and the trader told his friends that unless he could "stick" it on Billee Bowlegs he would be out $35.00. A few days later Billee, with another Indian, came back to the store, bringing produce to sell. The storekeeper wanted the Indian's goods and suggested that Billee trade for the music box by telling the innocent Seminole that "music no more play—wake up by and by and play good—him tired now." Billee, with mechanical knowledge, looked the organette over and making the trade, proudly left with the "tired out" music box under his arm. The next day the Indians returned, bringing with them the music box to show to the storekeeper. "That box, him no more tired," and winding up the machine which the ingenious Seminole had put into working order, played the whole five tunes, to the astonishment and chagrin of the trader. "Him play good at Green Corn Dance, down Okeechobee."

Several years after the organette was still doing service, and as the picture recurs one sees a savage tribe—a weird camp scene, with its storm-beaten wigwams in the background; the owner of the music box sits in the center of the group; brown-skinned people move hither and thither in the dim shadows of the camp fire, while the melodies of "Home, Sweet Home," "Nearer, My God to Thee," "My Country 'Tis of Thee," float out upon the stillness of the night.

Billee Bowlegs and Stem-o-la-kee

Home and Religion

It is a long journey from the savagery of the jungle to the doors of civilization, where, when the confidence and faith of the Seminole has once been won, he becomes as trustful and confiding as a little child.

Many are the questions put to these forest people when they visit their white friends at Kissimmee.

The Seminole is proverbially truthful. Pertinent was the reply to the white hunter when he asked if it were safe to leave his gun in the wigwam. "Yes," replied the chieftain, "there are no white men within fifty miles of the camp."

Anxiously and carefully have we studied their form of government, knowing that they leave their money, their trinkets and their garments in the open wigwam. With carefully framed questions we asked of Billee Bowlegs, "Billee, your money, you leave it in your wigwam. You go back to Okeechobee, money hi-e-pus (all gone). Indian steal it. Then what you do?" He answered, "Me don't know." "Yes, but Billee, white man come to my house, my money steal 'em, by and by, in jail, big sheriff put him. Indian all the same, bad Indian steal. What does Indian do?" Making the points clearer, illustrating by the theft of his gun, showing that a bad Indian from one of the other settlements might come in his absence and steal his Winchester, with a perfect understanding of our meaning the reply came as before, "Indian no take 'em—Indian no steal!"

In such a community of Golden Rule principles, where there is no crime, there can be no punishment.

Christianity

The endeavor to show the Seminole what Christianity stands for has been one of the most complex problems encountered. Their simple form of tribal government, "not to lie, not to steal, not to cheat, and to think with

God," is practiced with precision and from his oral lexicon the Seminole has crystallized his verdict of the pale face into one forcible, single expression, "Es-tee-had-kee, ho-lo-wa-gus, lox-ee-o-jus." (White man, no good, lie too much.)

The Seminole's religion, and we may justly call it so, is sacred to him. His idea of the Bible is vague because he regards it as the work of the white man. "White man got book, him good one day, he steal, cheat next day; book no good. Injun no make book—me think good Injun find Happy Hunting Ground all right; me think me find it. White man, big sleep come, me think he hunt, hunt, and no find Great Spirit easy."

The Seminole, with most reverent attitude, listens to the returning of thanks at the white man's table, and with the question put, "Billee, do Seminoles talk to God and ask Him to help them and give them food and homes?" "Munks-chay" (no), replied the Indian, "no ask Him." Then as if a light dawned as to the nature of the question he told of a hunting experience when the chase had been successful. "Yes, me know, me tell Great Spirit, me thank Him." The Seminole, like his ancient ancestors, thanks the Great Spirit for blessings received, but does not beseech favors.

The Rainbow of the Heavens, The Highway of the Great Spirit

The Seminole language contains no oath, nor any word to express disrespect to the Giver of Life and for this reason a missionary will receive most respectful attention, for their reverence to God will not permit them to laugh at His messenger. The Florida Indian not only believes in the Great Spirit (God), but he believes in God's Son, who came on earth and lived with the Indians long ago, to make them good Indians and to prepare them for the "big sleep" when E-shock-ee-tom-e-see (the Supreme Being) calls him hence, and with his poetic nature,

born of the forests and the wigwam, and the song of the birds, he believes that his spirit will make its last journey to the Happy Hunting Grounds of his fathers, winging its way over the seven-colored rainbow of the heavens—the "Highway of the Great Spirit."

Can you not imagine the startled emotion experienced when, after trying to tell a stalwart, honest Seminole something of civilization and Christianity, he, with all the deference of a chieftain, answered, "Me no think me want to be civilized. Me think me get civilized, me lie, steal, cheat. Some day, big sleep come, me want to go to Happy Hunting Grounds, me want to see Great Spirit. Me want to see my grandfather. Me no think white man go to Heaven."

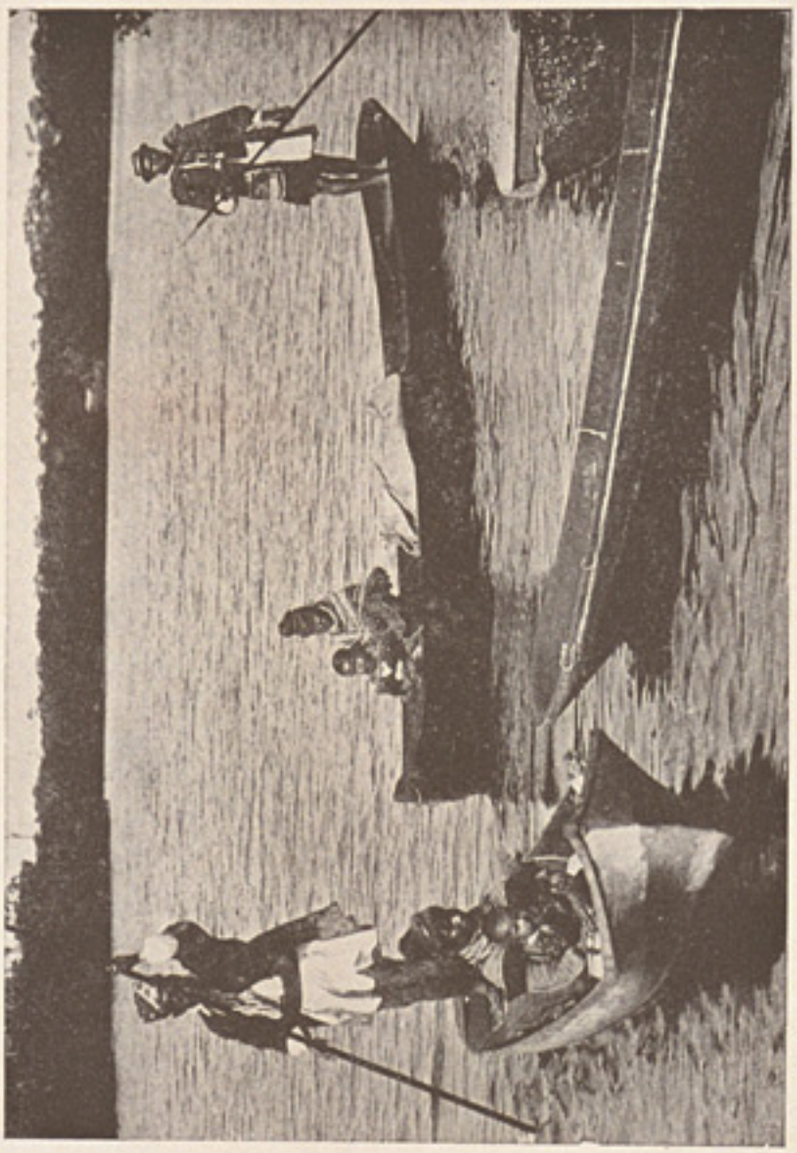
How would you answer such philosophy?

Osceola—The Garibaldi of the Seminoles

Do we feel surprised that thousands of our Florida tourists make efforts to see the descendants of Osceola, the Garibaldi of the Seminoles?

That Osceola should be named Florida's most distinguished historical character is not to be disputed. History has never given to the world a more regal soldier—with his magnetic personality, royal in its wild, uncivilized way. He had a soul so big, so generous, so chivalrous that his command "to protect women and little children, for it is not on them we make war," was always obeyed by his warriors.

Has history ever given to the world a more dramatic scene than that of the savage Chieftain Osceola, as he stood with defiance in his face, and high uplifted head, exclaiming, "Rather than act the coward by signing away the Seminoles' inheritance and taking my people into a strange and cold Western land, I will fight till the last drop of blood moistens the Seminoles' hunting ground," and, drawing his long sheath knife, drove the blade through the treaty, pinning it to the table and exclaiming,



SEMINOLES ON THE MIAMI RIVER

"The land is ours. This is the way I will sign all such treaties."

Osceola was a brave and generous foe and his capture under the white flag of truce made a stain on our national honor that will last as long as history. During his "peace talk" with the American general, the ring of bayonets closed around him, and, seeing he was entrapped, he folded his arms scornfully and said nothing by way of protest from that moment to the day of his death. When Osceola was questioned as to why he did not make his escape, as did some of the other chiefs from Fort Marion, St. Augustine, he replied, "I have done nothing to be ashamed of; it is for those to feel ashamed who entrapped me."

Visitors to Florida make attempts many times to visit a Seminole village in the secluded cypress regions of the 'Glades, but alas! after dragging their canoes over the marshy, cutting saw-grass prairies, they find—what? A deserted camp, and little or no trace of the wily Seminole. Just prior to the convening of the 1917 Florida Legislature, the Congressional Indian Committee from Washington was sent by Congress to ascertain at first hand facts about the real condition of the Seminoles. On reaching some temporary camps near Miami, what did they find? The coals still burning in the camp fire—remains of meat was left, but the Indians hi-e-pus (all gone). In this particular instance, however, the news of the approaching visit of the committee had been told to the Indians by some white hunters and the Seminoles, believing that they were about to be corralled and taken West, fled to their secret haunts.

Still it is a common sight, particularly at Miami, to see a Seminole family as they pole the rude craft, a dugout cypress canoe, along the river. Dressed in a way bizarre and ludicrous, to our white man's way of thinking, still strikingly dignified. The man poles the boat while the squaws watch the family belongings. At the

other end of the boat a group of round-faced and exceedingly quiet little Seminoles, brightly garbed in red and blue calico, sit, much more interested in the shadows in the water than in the people on shore.

A Home-Loving People

To study the history of a secretive people, whose story is so closely woven into our own American history, is a research work full of difficulties, but full of happy surprises.

Away from the jungle home, in the white man's town, the Seminole is silent and stoical, answering to the questions put to him by the curious, "Me don't know." The Seminole discerns character quickly, and while seemingly indifferent, if he is with you but a few minutes his

A Seminole Camp Fire — the Indian Mode of Making a Fire

keen powers of observation will pierce you through and through, and he has, with a keenness born of centuries of "watchful waiting," made no underestimate of your honesty or your inner self.

It is around the wigwam camp fire and the sof-ka kettle that the Indian relaxes; here he is a big-souled host, with the same hospitality that welcomed the Europeans 400 years ago. Laughter and jokes abound; news of the outside world is recounted; the squaws bring the prize potato or the large pumpkin to be admired, and the rippling laughter of the children is beautiful in its soft cadenced melody.

One of the touching scenes, and an instance of parental affection is recalled, when the mother had recently died, leaving the father the care of the children. "One night," to quote the narrator, "I heard muffled moans from the little palmetto shelter, which were followed by the frightened cry of the little Indian boy, waking out of a bad dream and crying for the mother who could not answer. 'Its-ki, Its-ki' (Mother, Mother), begged the little fellow, struggling from under the covering. At once the chieftain grasped the child, hugged him to his breast and pressed the little head to his cheek, consoling him with caressing words until the calmed child was ready to be again rolled up beside his sleeping brothers." The picture of this scene always brings a clutching feeling to the throat, and convinces the most skeptical that in the fastnesses of the forest the heart of man answers to heart, as face to face in water.

Messages From the Everglades

Requests come so often for more details regarding these silent children of the forests, and interesting, as well as unique, are the letters and messages that come from the Everglade homes. With the ox team and fleet-footed Indian messenger, together with Uncle Sam's quick mail service, communications reach the white man's town as

per the will of the Seminole. With the Indian's promise to keep us informed of their needs, births, marriages and ambitions (for the Seminole never breaks his word), a recent letter from the wigwam reads, "Me write to tell you, me have not forgotten you." Then comes the interesting part, "My sister, She-y-o-hee, got little pappoose, six days old. It is a boy." Added to this is another birth record, "Stem-o-la-kee, Billee Bowlegs' sister, has one too, ten days old; it is a girl." Certainly in the Everglades, among the first families of America, the birth register is kept intact. The letter continues: "Me sen you pumpkin seed" (these are the Indian pumpkin—a tree-climbing pumpkin, so well known to the American soldier eighty years ago during the Seminole war, and often used by the soldier in target practice, the idea being to hit the stem, thus severing the pumpkin from its high altitude in a forest tree).

In this day of food conservation, and scientific economy, it may be well to make a comparison. The seeds were received and distributed among friends and neighbors, some delicious pumpkins were raised, and enjoyed, but alas! for a future crop. Not a seed was saved! and to the wigwam seed bag must we go if more pumpkins are planted. It can hardly be disputed that the Seminole, in their migrations from Mexico, brought the seeds with them.

To Dr. Howard A. Kelly, widely known surgeon, traveler, lecturer and philanthropist, are we indebted for the intensely interesting bit of Aztec history, blending so well with Seminole traditions. In Dr. Kelly's travels in Mexico, among the carved relics of Aztec origin in museums was the pumpkin of Aztec days—centuries old. When a Seminole pumpkin was sent to the doctor, he wrote back, "The very thing I tried to buy in Mexico, carved in wood. I shall treasure this and preserve it in alcohol to be handed down as a link connecting the land

of the Montezumas with the present-day Everglade history."

For 300 years the Seminoles have never failed to have their crop of pumpkins and to save seed for the next planting.

Could not the Seminole teach us all conservation?

And of the koontie which grows luxuriantly in certain sections of the Everglades, what shall we say? The plant resembles the sago palm and has decided beauty as a plant, while it is edible. According to the legend the Indians were in a starving condition, but when God's Son came "to live with the Indians to make them good Indians," he "stopped" at the most southern point of Florida, at which place he was met by three medicine men, who carried Him around the southern peninsula while He sowed the seeds of the koontie root, which is God's gift to the red man. During the Seminole "Seven Years' War," when starvation threatened many times, the koontie saved the tribe. Little cakes made of the koontie flour are said to be very delicious.

Stem-O-La-Kee

Seldom, if ever, has a Seminole squaw stepped beyond the boundaries of her trackless Everglade home to visit in the home of the white man. An incident is recalled, when a young squaw in company with her brother, was making her first visit to civilization. The couple had traveled 300 miles by ox cart, canoe and railroad. Reaching their destination, they were escorted to a waiting automobile, where they were whirled away to the home of the pale face and enjoyed this first ride in the "fire wagon" with the same dignity and calmness that they would do in their cypress dugout canoes along the water courses of their saw-grass homes.

Stem-o-la-kee, with the natural feminine instinct, admired the belongings and furnishings of the white home, but when asked if she would like to live in such an

abode, her answer came quick and decisive, "Munks-chay (no), white man's home like litty bit, one week me think, my home Okeechobee." Significant was her summary of civilization—humble though her wigwam, with all its crude furnishings, she loves it with all the ardor of her savage heart.

This young woman, 300 miles from her forest home, showed inborn grace and dignity in her demeanor. Particularly was she interested in pictures on the wall—all Indians like pictures—"ojus" (much), she remarked. But on recognizing the portrait of Osceola, all her frontier nature was aroused and with vindictive spirit she exclaimed, "Indians' big chief, long time ago. White man kill 'im." She knew the perfidy of Osceola's capture under the white flag of truce as well as any American student.

She wore many strands of glittering beads, which, to the Seminole woman, means everything—usefulness, caste and the wealth of her husband or father. She never appears without this insignia of her position, because "plenty of beads, plenty good Indian woman," and in the particular instance of this 'Glade visitor, the doctor, whom she had come to consult, ordered the removal of the necklace on account of its great weight. Here medical authority and savage superstition clashed. Stem-o-la-kee obeyed the physician's order only in part, by removing a few strands, but when a visitor was announced, she would don her gay colored dress, add the discarded ropes of beads, give a twist to her raven hair, forming it into that unalterable Psyche knot and would appear at the parlor door, shy, but with eyes shining and with a pleasing smile stand ready to give the usual gracious hand grasp.

Another visit of a Seminole family is still fresh in memory. The visit had been planned in the wigwam village for many, many moons. With the exception of one Indian, who was escort and friendly interpreter, none of these Seminoles had ever been in the white man's home, and yet they accepted the change from the wigwam of the

weird morasses with the simplest dignity. Only once was there any apparent curiosity evinced and this was within an hour after their arrival when the hostess had been called to the telephone. Looking back, she saw the two children peering into the room through the French window, no doubt wondering what foolish thing the mistress of the house could be doing. At another time old Martha Tiger, the aged grandmother, came close to the 'phone with a quizzical look, when I explained that I was "talking to the storeman down town." In American history old Martha and her contemporaries antedate the telephone, for with smoke signals and their warriors' quickness in getting news of the enemy, they puzzled many an American officer.

Pictures from the Geographical Magazine and letters from the old "Blue-back spelling book" interested all these "Everglade people, except old Martha Tiger, who said she "old too much." Who shall say there is no hope for these forest people?

As this visit drew to a close and that feeling of homiletic friendliness was apparent, when some humor might be indulged in, we suggested that Show-lod-ka, the good looking ten-year-old boy, should remain and learn to drive the automobile and "make letters," and that Mop-o-hatchee, a wee tot of seven years, could stay with him. These two motherless children are the direct descendants of the old Chieftain Tallahassee, whose grim and determined patriotism eighty years ago wrenched his tribe from the white man's bullets. A few minutes later the boy had vanished and little Mop-o-hatchee sat on a chair, her feet swinging and rubbing her eyes to stay the tears. The cause was soon learned. She had been told in her own language what had been said. "She 'fraid you keep her," the older Indian explained, and the boy, with the same fear, had slipped off to his sleeping quarters. Love for their Everglade home, the gift of the Great Spirit to His red children, has been instilled into every Seminole.

When the time came for these visitors to leave, with a silent dignity, Billee calmly announced, "tomorrow morning tod-ka-bith-lo (steamboat) hie-pus (go)."

The dazzling sunshine of a Florida morning found these Everglade guests up with the birds, chattering and happy as they packed their purchases and many gifts from white friends—ready for the long, tortuous, beautiful steamboat ride down the Kissimmee Valley through canals and lakes, to the mystic land of Okee-cho-bee. In retrospect we see upon the deck of the little steamer a man and woman and little children, brown skinned and picturesque, garbed in brilliant colors, leaving the ancestral shores of their old hunting ground, where naught remains of the Seminole save the melodious names of the rivers, lakes and towns they have left as a heritage to their white conquerors.

The Colors of Liberty

The sons of America are today marching to the waiting ships, carrying the colors of liberty, whose radiant vision has always beckoned the American, and as our heavily-laden transports daily take on their precious human freight, with characteristic spirit our boys call back to the vanishing shores of the Atlantic, "Good-bye, America—Hello, France," and echoing in the hearts of the departing troops—like a plaintive obligato, they catch the murmur of the American mothers' call—"Good-bye—good luck—God bless you."

Across the seas, on a foreign soil, these khaki-clad soldiers are already singing the "Battle Cry of the Republic" and marching to the blowing of the bugle that will *never* sound retreat—not for conquest but for the love of mankind.

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As the panorama of Indian history passes before us we see in the unwritten life story of the Seminole, whose

devotion to his country was as noble and heroic, a very Iliad of tragedy, Florida's pitiful drama.

We, in Florida, may do not "our bit" but "our best" at home as well as across the seas, and add a new chapter to history and romance, where love of liberty, patriotism and justice may unite in a "charity that begins at home," and to deal more kindly with the little remnant of vanquished aborigines in the heart of the big Everglades, into whose gates the Caucasian has forced himself with bayonet and bullet, and upon whose substance we have

Courtesy Wilder's Studio, Kissimmee, Fla.

OLD MARTHA TIGER, ONE OF THE OLDEST OF THE EVERGLADE SEMINOLES, WITH HER GRANDCHILDREN, WHO ARE DIRECT DESCENDANTS OF THE OLD CHIEFTAIN TALLAHASSEE, WHO LED HIS PEOPLE INTO THE WILDERNESS AND EVADED CAPTURE BY BLOODHOUNDS EMPLOYED BY THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT, AND ESCAPED UNCLE SAM'S BULLETS

prospered and grown into a happy, prosperous State—a land of flowers and sunshine and singing birds.

As America's mankind fights upon a foreign soil to make the world safe for peace and democracy, let American justice, with an approving face, look down upon a citizenship that will help to make of the Seminoles of Florida citizens worthy the proud and honored name of —Americans—patriots that we know would spend their last drop of blood freely and gladly in defense of their native land and sacred soil they have loved so long.

PRINTED BY THE RECORD CO., ST. AUGUSTINE