

ened, and had almost lost faith in the government which had brought them into this new country (as they said) to die. But all this has changed. Under the magic hand of toil the wilderness has given place to the abodes of men, and if not made to blossom as the rose, is at least in the bud, which will soon burst forth in all its beauty.

During the past year much has been said in the public press about the former and present condition of the Poncas; indeed, more scientific lying has been done upon the subject than upon any other which has lately been before the American people; according to the papers they have been mercilessly robbed and cruelties unparalleled practiced upon them. It has been stated upon the rostrum and circulated through the prominent journals of the country, by an attorney, who has in court represented the interests of certain renegade members of the tribe, that the Poncas were, against their will and by force of arms, removed from their old home in Dakota to the Indian Territory, and were compelled to abandon and leave behind them personal property of the value of \$200,000, for which they never have been remunerated. This statement is made either in ignorance of the facts or else purposely and maliciously fabricated to subserve personal ends, for certainly there is nothing in the facts to warrant such a statement.

The true history of the removal and the causes which led to the removal of the Poncas are simply these: For a great many years prior to their removal, the Poncas lived upon a reservation in Southeastern Dakota, between the Missouri and the Niobrara Rivers, and at the confluence of these rivers, while the whole region of country north and west of them was inhabited by the hostile Sioux. The Poncas were peaceful in disposition, and the Sioux fierce, treacherous, and cruel. They would not let the Poncas live in peace, but made frequent hostile incursions upon them, killing many of their people, destroying their property, and running off their stock. For many years they lived in constant dread of their savage neighbors; they never went to the field to work without being armed, and strong guards were constantly kept out to protect the workmen. This was so annoying to the Poncas that they petitioned the government to move them out of the reach of the Sioux.

By the terms of the treaty of 1859, the government agreed "to protect the Poncas in the possession of their land and their persons and property thereon" and when it failed to protect, the Poncas presented their claim for damages and the government had it to pay. By the terms of the supplemental treaty of 1865, the government paid to the Poncas as indemnity for spoliation committed upon them by the Sioux, \$16,000, and they still have a large unsettled claim against the government, upon the same account, for damages done them subsequent to that time.

By a treaty made by the government with the Sioux in 1868, the Ponca lands were ceded to them by mistake, so that both tribes claimed the land; the Poncas had the oldest and best title, but the Sioux being so much stronger, and regarding and treating the Poncas as trespassers, were fast sending them to the "happy hunting-grounds," and thus the question presented itself to the government, the duty of protecting the weak against the strong, of saving human lives; this was paramount to the question of title, because conceding as it did the Ponca title to be good, the government was unable to protect them in the peaceable enjoyment of it, and the only just and humane thing it could do was to move them out of the reach of their oppressors, the government could pay for the spoliation, but it could not restore the dead to life.

When the time came for the tribe to be moved to the Indian Territory, they were loath to leave the country in which they had passed their lives, and their ancestors and children were buried; they realized that they were breaking up old associations, sundering ties that were very dear to them, and were entering upon a new life, which would be entirely strange to them; and as these thoughts crowded upon their minds, it was perfectly natural that when the order was given to them to move, they should hesitate; they did not refuse, but, Indian-like, they wanted to parley and hold council over the matter. They fully appreciated the fact that it was necessary for their own protection that they should go away, and so they came, sad-hearted and regretful of the causes which made it necessary. They were not removed by force; no troops accompanied them. They were not compelled to leave behind them property of the value of \$200,000. All of their property worth moving was brought away; a few old bedsteads and cook-stoves were left behind, but all the property they left was not worth \$500, and would not sell in any place in the world for half that sum, and for that they have been remunerated a thousand-fold. They have been given a body of land here, greater in extent than their old reservation, and competent judges, who are well acquainted with the relative value of both bodies of land, say that one acre of the new reservation is worth more than five acres of the old.

The Poncas number at this time on the reservation, 630 people. Sixty-six persons ran off from the reservation during the year and are now scattered among the northern agencies. There have died during the year 20 persons; 16 births have occurred in the same period.

The agency buildings consist of the agent's residence, a very comfortable and commodious frame house two stories high, containing eight rooms, besides pantry, closets,

and cellar. Six houses for employes, built of frame, and containing four rooms each; a commissary building, containing office, 21 by 70 feet; a good substantial frame school house, 28 by 60 feet; a carpenter shop, blacksmith shop, coal-house, tool-house, ice-house; a dining-hall for school children; a good steam saw-mill and shingle-machine. All of these buildings have been constructed during the last year, and the principal portion of the lumber has been produced here.

Besides the agency buildings enumerated above, I have built over 70 houses for the Indians to live in, a majority of which are of hewed logs, which were cut, hewed, and laid in place by the Indians, who were paid for their labor. Carpenters then completed the houses by putting in doors, windows, laying floors, and putting on roofs.

There were purchased and issued to the Indians during the year, in addition to their annuity goods and supplies, 150 cows with calves; 23 yoke of oxen; 40 wagons; 40 sets of double harness; 12 breaking-plows; 50 stirring-plows; 25 double-shovel plows; 12 dozen hoes; 6 dozen axes, shovels, spades, and mechanical tools.

FARMING.

We broke during the year about 350 acres of prairie and should have broken much more, but so little rain has fallen this season that it became so dry I was compelled to stop the breaking-teams.

I have as an agency farm over 100 acres, surrounded by a good post and wire fence. All but about 10 acres of this was planted in corn; the remaining 10 acres was broken with special care, and subsoiled; this I planted in potatoes, beans, pease, pumpkins, radishes, &c., expecting to raise seed for next year, but no rain of any consequence has fallen since planting, and the whole crop has therefore entirely failed.

The Indians planted in corn and vegetables all the land I was able to break for them, and were eager for more. They exhibited a great deal of interest in their crops, and after planting watched the growth with much solicitude for the fate of the luscious watermelon, the fragrant muskmelon, and the delicious roasting ears. But the rain which goeth around the just and the unjust, the red man as well as the white man, left their crops to dry up and wither. This, of course, has discouraged the Indians very much.

I have cut and stacked with the labor of the agency employes about 150 tons of excellent hay, and the Indians have put up nearly as much more.

The Indians take great interest in their cows and calves, and many of them are raising hogs and chickens. I having been strenuously urging them to sell their surplus ponies and invest the proceeds in cattle, but thus far with poor success, as an Indian values his pony above all his other possessions, and it is his only standard of wealth.

SCHOOL.

We have a day-school in successful operation, with an average attendance of about 60. Many more would attend, who are now prevented by reason of their living so remote from the agency. I have a dining-hall, where the children are given a plain substantial lunch at noon. Without this valuable adjunct to the school, I fear the daily attendance would be much smaller. With the children I find that the prospect of getting a good dinner is a wonderful incentive and stimulant to their desire for knowledge.

NEZ PERCÉS.

On the 14th day of June, 1879, Special Agent J. M. Haworth arrived here with Chief Joseph's band of Nez Percés, and turned them over to my charge.

The Nez Percé Reservation is northwest of the Poncas, and the greater portion of their land is west of the Shikaskia, and north of the Salt Fork River. It is a very good body of land, tolerably well supplied with timber and water, but in no respect is it equal to the Ponca Reservation.

The majority of the Indians are at present living on the west bank of the Shikaskia River, about two miles from where it empties into the Salt Fork. The location, I think, is a healthy one, and the Indians are as healthy as could be expected. There is this fact about the Nez Percés, which, perhaps, is hardly ever considered, viz, that most of the young able-bodied men and women were engaged in their late war with the government, and many of them were killed and wounded, and a large proportion of the Nez Percés brought to the Indian Territory were old people and children, which accounts in a great measure for the many deaths which have occurred among them. I have also observed both among the Nez Percés and Poncas, who came from northern climates, that lung diseases are very prevalent. I think that seven Indians out of every ten have their lungs diseased so badly that they could not live long in any climate, and while I do not desire to depreciate the fearful ravages made by malaria on northern Indians in the Indian Territory, yet I give it as my opinion, which I believe will be