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THE NAVAHO EXILE AT BOSQUE REDONDO

By CHARLES AMSDEN

JANUS, the two-faced god of ancient Rome, would have been an appropriate deity for the Navaho of the early 19th century. The tribal countenance of this time has two markedly different aspects, and in the accounts of contemporary observers we find high praise and scathing blame strangely intermingled. Weaving was in its most brilliant stage, the bayeta period, and the fame of the Navaho blanket grew like young corn in summer. That was the smiling aspect of Janus, and for it we may thank the women of the tribe. His sinister side is seen when the activities of the men are probed, and we find that while the women sat peacefully at home plying spindle and batten to the ever-growing glory of their craft, the warriors were no less intent upon a reputation in their own right. They were out pillaging the communal lands and herds of the Pueblos and the isolated farmsteads and small villages throughout Spain's remote province of New Mexico.

Thus did it come about that the native resident shuddered at the very name which to the visitor from the United States called up a pleasing image of pastoral bliss and honest industry; and if one asked a chance acquaintance for an opinion of the Navaho, the tone of the reply would depend greatly upon whether that person had just bought a blanket or lost a band of sheep. But the men managed to ravel the tribal repute much faster than the women could spin it, and it was generally agreed throughout the Spanish settlements of the Rio Grande valley, from Taos on the north down to sun-baked Socorro, that the Navaho were the foremost scourge of a land that knew its scourging well. Scarcely a chronicler of the period, from Zebulon Pike in 1807 to "El Gringo" Davis in 1857, neglects to pause a moment in his narrative and curse the raiding Navaho, ac-

tive on a front extending from the Hopi villages of Arizona to the Comanche country in Texas.

And just as the weavers of the period were encouraged and stimulated by the warm reception given their vivid and durable blankets by Mexican settler and American visitor alike, so were the raiders favored by the political fortunes of the time. Of the growing tension between Spanish and Anglo-Saxon America they knew and cared little. Free as wild antelope and simple as children, they had yet to learn that the world is a large place, filled with tribes of white men who fight among themselves like tribes of Indians. So slowly did this lesson penetrate the Navaho mind that the new tribe known as Americans had them crushed and utterly beaten almost before they had convinced themselves that any serious harm lay in these handfuls of ruddy-faced soldiers who were continually riding into their country, alternately to intimidate them with threats of extermination and to wheedle them with promises of gifts and protection—always in the name of a chief known variously as “President” and “Washington.” The Navaho heard much of this chief in the parleys his fighting men were always so willing to hold. A great believer in talk he seemed to be: treaties were his solution for every trouble, with much big talk about peace and friendship. That was probably because his soldiers obviously did not know much about the country or about Indian fighting, or because Big Chief Washington was afraid to lead his own war parties against the powerful, swift-riding Navaho. These boastful, talkative Americans were no more to be feared than the Mexicans who had been living on the borders of the Navaho country for so many years now, or than the faint-hearts known as Pueblos—a tribe of farmers at heart who were no match for fighting men. None of the three was a real menace to Navaho freedom, being rather a welcome annoyance, adding a fine thrill to the roving, marauding life; and what a great life it was, raiding the Pueblos and the Mexicans for livestock and women, and parleying with the Americans for presents!

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Boom times were these for the Navaho, ending—as such times do—with a crash that set their world to ringing.

EXIT SPAIN

New Mexico fell just short of three centuries under Spanish rule. Francisco Vasquez Coronado, the explorer, claimed the territory for Spain in 1540 and his priests at once set about its Christianizing; Juan de Oñate, the colonizer, began its settlement in 1598, and Diego de Vargas, the conqueror, definitely established Spanish sovereignty after the bloody events of the Revolt of 1680. With the 19th century revolt charged the air again: in 1810 Mexico declared its independence of Spain, and remote New Mexico had another master before it fully realized that such great changes were even in the air. But the first regime of independence in Mexico was not a successful affair, and it was not until 1824 that our distant northern province began to notice a sensible change in its fortunes. In that year it rose to the dignity of statehood in a territorial merger which included Chihuahua and Durango, with Chihuahua City the capital of this splendid political creation. Durango, jealous of Chihuahua, objected to the arrangement; so New Mexico was cast adrift as a territory later in the same year. In 1836 came a new constitution for the Republic of Mexico, and New Mexico was made a department in a sweeping political gesture which fixed neither eastern nor western limits to its extent; and as such it continued until the American occupation of 1846 came as the forecast of a permanent change of sovereignty which was to offer the erstwhile forgotten province the honor of figuring again as a territory, then as a state once more. New Mexico is the original "football of politics;" it has been everything, some things twice.

These changes of political stature and complexion meant nothing to the free and belligerent little nation living in the rugged, barren country lying between the San Juan and the Rio Grande rivers, on the northern borders of Spanish America. The Navaho may have noticed that

raiding was more profitable and less risky than it used to be, with their Mexican neighbors deep in politics and the Americans creeping in over the Santa Fe Trail to add a new element of uncertainty to the complexion of the times. At any rate they were at their raiding best during this time of political change. Bancroft the historian records a treaty of peace with them in 1823, with trouble again in 1825 (comment enough on the durability of treaties!), and "continued hostility" in 1840-41. L. Bradford Prince, another chronicler of these turbulent years, tells us that Juan Bautista Vigil (later the last of the Mexican governors of New Mexico) made campaigns against the Navaho in 1823, 1833, 1836, and 1838, and summarizes the situation with the words: "All through this period, down to the final overthrow of the Navajoes long after the American occupation, there existed an almost constant condition of warfare with that powerful tribe." The Navaho had boasted that they let the Mexicans live on, only because of their usefulness as shepherds to the tribe, and the taunt seems scarcely to have been an exaggeration of their power. New Mexico was under their thumb, and they bore down where and when it pleased them. But events were shaping themselves to relieve the pressure.

THE UNITED STATES STEPS IN

General Stephen W. Kearny occupied Santa Fé with American troops in August, 1846, as one of the strategic moves of the Mexican War. He learned quickly enough that his problems of conquest and pacification included an enemy within an enemy, for later in the same year he instructed Colonel Alexander W. Doniphan, already on his way to occupy Chihuahua, to give some attention to the Navaho situation. Major William Gilpin of Doniphan's command accordingly led two hundred men marching up the Chama valley, down the San Juan river and up the Little Colorado, cautiously circling the Navaho territory in a maneuver

that must have proved surprising to its occupants. Doniphan with his main force went meanwhile to Albuquerque, down the Rio Grande to the mouth of the Rio Puerco, and up that stream to Ojo del Oso, where New Fort Wingate later stood. There the two forces joined and a treaty was signed with a number of Navaho who had been gathered in for the occasion. The treaty did little beyond forming an acquaintance between American and Navaho which was destined never to ripen into a beautiful friendship, but one incident of the negotiations is worthy of record. The Navaho were being gently rebuked for making war on the Mexicans, and one of their number replied that he could not understand why they should not do what the Americans themselves were doing! And Doniphan had to explain rather lamely that he was fighting the Mexicans with one hand and protecting them with the other. As a cowboy would say, it was a private scrap, not a free-for-all; but such fine points were beyond the simple Indian.

Doniphan's treaty of 1846 aged rapidly and to little purpose, with Navaho raids more frequent than ever; so in 1848 Colonel E. W. B. Newby replaced it with another, after an "expedition" under his lead had plunged madly into the Navaho deserts and come out almost without firing a shot. In 1849 came Major John M. Washington who marched from Jemez to Cañon de Chelly, where a "lasting peace" was concluded with the Navaho thereabout. The latter turned over some stolen property and captives, and agreed to make a larger delivery at Jemez thirty days later. Washington jogged on happily to Zuñi, and upon his return to civilization he learned that the Navaho, instead of going in repentance to Jemez, had raided Santa Fé!

The "lasting peace" lasted almost two years: 1851 found Colonel E. V. Sumner leading the American army's almost "annual" tour of the Navaho territory and giving his followers an extra thrill by marching ten miles into Cañon de Chelly, greatest of Navaho strongholds. As usual no serious accidents marred the perfect enjoyment of the out-

ing, and Sumner reported the Navaho "completely over-awed." The Americans did gain an important tactical advantage from this junket, by establishing Fort Defiance—first military post in the Navaho country—in 1851-52. This bold gesture of a "great power" toward a petty handful of half-savages rather belied its terrifying name until in 1854 a soldier of the garrison was killed (apparently by a Navaho) and the tribe was induced to apprehend and hang the culprit in solemn assembly of the troops. It was later learned that they had substituted a Mexican captive in the role of honor of the occasion; yet people will say that the Indian has no sense of humor!

Fort Defiance had its dampening effect upon Navaho activities for a time (aided by a judicious distribution of goods to the spoiled tribe), but in 1857 a negro servant was killed and warfare resumed its desultory round. In 1860 the Navaho attacked Fort Defiance but were repulsed, and a retaliatory sortie rather carried off the honors of the affair by killing many of their horses and sheep. Again the Americans had scored a point—one that was to prove very useful in later actions of the same sort. The Navaho, as usually they did when they found themselves in a tight place, sued for peace; diplomacy had become almost a recognized profession among them, and they understood its uses. It was the year 1861, and Indian affairs were giving way to graver matters in the military mind. So the small war was concluded with a treaty while the larger one got under way on the distant Potomac.

CARLETON AND CARSON

Fifteen years the American army had occupied New Mexico, and the mythical Swiss navy could hardly have been less effective. The Indians ran riot: Navaho on the northern frontier, Comanche and Kiowa on the eastern, Apache to the south and west. Now came another menace: the Confederate invasion under General Sibley swept north through the Rio Grande valley, captured Albuquerque and Santa Fé,

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and drove on toward Fort Union, nerve center of Federal military strength for the whole Southwest. The hour was at its darkest, the proverbial hour "just before the dawn." The lowering skies cleared when the Confederates were routed at Apache Cañon; but day really broke for troubled New Mexico when Brigadier General James H. Carleton was appointed department commander. His first report to the War Department shows him a man of action:

Headquarters Department of New Mexico,
Santa Fe, N. M., September 30, 1862.

GENERAL: I have the honor to inform you that I relieved General Canby in command of this department on the 18th instant, and he left this city for Washington, D. C., four days afterwards. I find that during the raid which was made into this Territory by some armed men from Texas, under Brigadier General Sibley, of the army of the so-called Confederate States, the Indians, aware that the attention of our troops could not, for the time, be turned toward them, commenced robbing the inhabitants of their stock, and killed, in various places, a great number of people; the Navajoes on the western side, and the Mescalero Apaches on the eastern side of the settlements, both committing these outrages at the same time, and during the last year that has passed have left the people greatly impoverished. Many farms and settlements near Fort Stanton have been entirely abandoned.

To punish and control the Mescaleros, I have ordered Fort Stanton to be reoccupied. That post is in the heart of their country, and hitherto when troops occupied it those Indians were at peace. I have sent Colonel Christopher Carson [Kit Carson] with five companies of his regiment of New Mexican volunteers, to Fort Stanton. One of these companies, on foot, will hold the post and guard the stores, while four companies mounted, under Carson, will operate against the Indians until they have been punished for their recent aggressions. The lieutenant colonel, with four companies of the same regiment, will move into the Navajo country and establish and garrison a post on the Gallo, which was selected by General Canby; it is called Fort Wingate. I shall endeavor to have this force, assisted by some militia which have been called out by the governor of the

Territory, perform such service among the Navajoes as will bring them to feel that they have been doing wrong.

I am, general, very respectfully, your obedient servant,

JAMES H. CARLETON,

Brigadier General, Commanding.

Brigadier General Lorenzo Thomas,

Adjutant General, U. S. A., Washington, D. C.

Carleton's method of bringing the marauding Indians to feel that they had been "doing wrong" is stated with his characteristic simple vigor in his instructions to his right-hand man, Kit Carson, dated at Santa Fé, October 12, 1862:

All Indian men of that tribe [Mescalero] are to be killed wherever and whenever you can find them. The women and children will not be harmed, but you will take them prisoners, and feed them at Fort Stanton until you receive other instructions about them. If the Indians send in a flag and desire to treat for peace, say to the bearer that when the people of New Mexico were attacked by the Texans, the Mescaleros broke their treaty of peace, and murdered innocent people, and ran off their stock; that now our hands are untied, and you have been sent to punish them for their treachery and their crimes; that you have no power to make peace; that you are there to kill them wherever you can find them; that if they beg for peace, their chiefs and twenty of their principal men must come to Santa Fé to have a talk here; but tell them fairly and frankly that you will keep after their people and slay them until you receive orders to desist from these headquarters; that this making of treaties for them to break whenever they have an interest in breaking them will not be done any more; that that time has passed by; that we have no faith in their promises; that we believe if we kill some of their men in fair, open war, they will be apt to remember that it will be better for them to remain at peace than to be at war. I trust that this severity, in the long run, will be the most humane course that could be pursued toward these Indians.

There were rumors of another Texas raid, and it was no time for half measures. Treaties, moreover, had lost

their novelty—and the new department commander was no treaty-maker in any event. Twenty-five years of service as an army officer on the western frontiers had taught him a number of things about Indians. He knew that the Navaho in particular had been spoiled by too many treaties, too much empty talk and hollow threatening. They had a lesson coming—a lesson long delayed by the timidity or the ignorance of Carleton's predecessors in office—and he (with Kit Carson's expert help) would see that they learned it well. There was no thought of revenge, no impulse of cruelty, in either mind. These two men had the hard commonsense to draw the inevitable conclusions of their long experience with Indians. They fully understood the evil, they knew the only remedy; and with the cold precision of surgeons they went to work.

Carleton's view of the situation is well stated in his letter of September 6, 1863, to the adjutant general at Washington:

The purpose now is never to relax the application of force with a people that can no more be trusted than you can trust the wolves that run through their mountains; to gather them together, little by little, on to a reservation, away from the haunts, and hills, and hiding places of their country; and then to be kind to them; there teach their children how to read and write; teach them the arts of peace; teach them the truths of Christianity.

And then? This frontier Indian fighter who has been accused of ruthless cruelty in the handling of his difficult problem, continues in a vein of surprising idealism:

Soon they will acquire new habits, new ideas, new modes of life; the old Indians will die off, and carry with them all latent longings for murdering and robbing; the young ones will take their places without these longings; and thus, little by little, they will become a happy and contented people, and Navajo wars will be remembered only as something that belongs entirely to the past.

THE NAVAHO ROUND-UP

The outcome of an expedition led by a Carson and directed by a Carleton could never for a moment have been in doubt. By February 1, 1863, the general was able to report to Washington that the Mescaleros were completely subdued: "I have now three hundred and fifty of that tribe at Fort Sumner and *en route* thither. These comprise all that are left of those Indians, except a few who have either run off into Mexico or joined the Gila Apaches. I shall try to settle what have come in on a reservation near Fort Stanton, and have them plant fields for their subsistence the coming year."

The reduction of the Mescaleros was but one phase of the task Carleton had set himself and chosen the famous scout to conduct in person. The Navaho offered a harder problem, for their territory was larger and more difficult to invade, while the tribe was well provided with livestock for food, clothing, and transport, and could make a long resistance.

Elaborate preparations were made for the Navaho campaign, scheduled to begin July 1, 1863. Fort Stanton was reoccupied, Fort Craig strengthened, Fort Wingate and Fort Sumner established. Fort Wingate was garrisoned by four companies (some 300 men) of the First California Infantry Volunteers, who were to have "at least two companies in the field all the time." Carson was ordered into the Navaho country with his regiment of First New Mexico Volunteers, his total force being twenty-seven officers and 709 men, of whom 206 were unmounted according to Sabin. A new military post, Fort Canby (near present-day Ganado, Arizona) was to be his headquarters, and there large stores of military supplies were gathered.

The orders for the Navaho campaign were identical with those guiding the Mescalero operations which precluded it, except that the Navaho were given until July 20, to surrender themselves and join the captive Mescaleros at Fort Sumner. After that date all men capable of bearing arms

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were to be killed, all women and children held as captives; crops were to be destroyed, livestock either taken for military use or killed. A bounty of one dollar for each sheep and twenty dollars for every sound horse and mule stimulated Carson's volunteers to look sharp and sweep clean. Garrison commanders throughout the department of New Mexico were ordered to scour their respective territories for Navaho and Apache bands, for it was soon seen that the round-up was scattering the Indians far and wide. The commander at Fort Wingate was instructed to destroy all crops within a radius of seventy miles of his post. And so throughout the summer and fall of 1863 the whole military resources of New Mexico were bent to the task of making either a corpse or a prisoner of every Navaho then living. The Utes joined the hunt for their own personal reasons and profit; and so many citizens of New Mexico went Navaho-hunting that the governor had to call them off by proclamation in May, 1864.

Carson marched his command directly to the Pueblo Colorado, where Carleton had ordered him to establish Fort Canby. The post established, he left it with a garrison force and himself took the field. His reports tell of a series of "scouts" throughout the late summer and fall of 1863. Wherever Navaho might be, there rode Carson and his men, covering the whole broad sweep of desert country lying between the Little Colorado and Cañon de Chelly. Zuñi and the Hopi villages lay within the area and Carson visited them both. Each had been suspected of aiding the Navaho, so the colonel deliberately made them take the role of enemies of that tribe by sending out warriors with his scouting parties. He gave them fair warning that aid to the foe would bring destruction of their villages; this Carleton had solemnly promised the Zuñi, "as sure as the sun shines." The Ute had declared themselves long since, and were happily applying the Carleton policy to their traditional enemies. A very good policy they found it, except that Carson (on orders from Carleton, and against his own judgment)

would not let them keep captives they took, for use as slaves or for sale to the Mexicans. They might keep livestock, however, and Carson noticed that their interest in the campaign languished when they had accumulated all the animals they could well manage. Like the Navaho, they were accustomed to fight only for plunder; but they made efficient scouts and spies, and Carson complimented them highly in his returns from the field.

Chasing small parties of fugitives, capturing livestock, destroying crops, Carson rode up and down the western frontier of the Navaho. He fought no pitched battles, stormed no fortresses, and the work seemed a costly effort from which little good was coming. Carleton encouraged him: "As winter approaches you will have better luck." He could be patient as well as fiery; and small bands of Navaho were already coming in voluntarily, destitute and half-starved.

Winter came, with heavy falls of snow to drive the fugitives down from their mountain retreats, and the general back in Santa Fé urged a move long planned—the invasion of Cañon de Chelly, where the Navaho had always felt themselves secure. So on January 6, 1864, Carson with fourteen officers and 375 men moved upon this tremendous fissure of red sandstone, into which previous expeditions against the Navaho had glanced timorously and then retreated in haste, lest its sheer walls prove a death trap. He did not enter it at once (Carson had learned years ago that he who takes fewest chances lives longest, in frontier warfare) but divided his forces into two parties and sent one along each rim of the chasm to reconnoiter the depths below. The plan was to join a third detachment, Company H of the First Cavalry, New Mexico Volunteers, under Capt. Albert H. Pfeiffer, which had been sent direct from Canby to reconnoiter the eastern opening of the eastern branch (now called Cañon del Muerto) of the cañon. The parties on either rim advanced to within sight of the eastern mouth, but no sign of Pfeiffer's party was seen. Puzzled, Carson turned back

to his camp, and there was the missing contingent! They had traversed Cañon del Muerto from east to west, a distance of some thirty miles, with Indians harrying them constantly from above, and ice on the stream in the Cañon bottom making progress painfully slow. Not a man was lost, however, for the very height of the cañon walls—more than a thousand feet for much of the distance—kept the enemy from doing any severe damage. It was a bold move, nevertheless, for the Navaho might have hemmed them in or laid a successful ambush in the little-known depths of the great chasm. Pfeiffer knew neither their strength nor the character of their stronghold when he plunged into it and staked all on his ability to win through.

Company H had found few Indians on its march—but might there not be more fugitives in the south branch? Captain Asa B. Carey took the company and marched through Cañon de Chelly from the west, while Carson and the command waited shivering in the base camp. Carey had less trouble and better fortune than Pfeiffer, for a large group of Navaho surrendered to him without a struggle, and “that night I counted 150 full-grown Indians in my camp, besides many children,” he says in his report.

The cañon invasion determined the success of the round-up. Even the *ricos*, the wealthy stock owners of the tribe who thought they could retire with their herds to the lofty Chusca Mountains and escape American capture, saw that their enemy would go anywhere to get them, while the humbler tribesmen beheld their last refuge taken away. To all the dread truth came plainly home, that nowhere on earth could they hide themselves away from Kit Carson's men. “We have shown the Indians that in no place, however formidable or inaccessible in their opinion, are they safe from the pursuit of the troops of this command; and have convinced a large portion of them that the struggle on their part is a hopeless one,” Carson wrote to his commander on January 23, 1864. Death, capture, starvation, surrender: those were the alternatives. Most of the tribe

chose surrender, and all through the spring of 1864 Forts Canby, Defiance and Wingate, did a thriving business in Navaho prisoners en route, via Los Pinos on the Rio Grande, for the new home of the tribe at the Bosque Redondo, near Fort Sumner on the Pecos. A count made the next year showed a total of 8,491 Navaho assembled there in the distant Mescalero country.

Fort Canby was abandoned in August of 1864. The troops were sent into Arizona on an Apache campaign, Carson going to the Bosque Redondo for a time, later on a successful expedition against the allied Comanche and Kiowa on the western plains. Pressure on the Navaho was continued relentlessly, however, and in March of 1865 Carleton was informed by a "chief" who had been sent back from the Bosque to persuade others to surrender that only six small bands were left. Largest of these was that of Manuelito, sometimes called the "last great chief of the Navahos," comprising about one hundred persons in very poor shape. But these few die-hards caused little trouble; the Navaho as a free people had ceased to exist.

Carleton and Carson had performed a highly successful operation, removing the offending organ bodily and with scant loss of blood, for the casualties on either side were not high. But would the patient recover and return to normal health? That problem, unhappily, could not be solved by their special type of skill. In truth, their work was done. Carleton had charge of the Navaho throughout their captivity, it is true, but his military mind like his military machine proved utterly unadapted to the problem that now arose: a problem in psychology, in sociology, in economics, in government. It was doomed to failure; not only for being imperfectly understood and grossly mishandled, but for resting on the old false premise that the red man can be made like the white man. So the great human drama of Bosque Redondo moves into its second act, of which the scene is laid in a vast, barren valley which ten thousand unskilled and unwilling hands are expected, somehow, to transform into a farm.

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BOSQUE REDONDO

The Bosque Redondo—part of a reservation forty miles square, with Fort Sumner in its center—proved no Promised Land, and the “children” who were forcibly led forth from their wilderness to people it clamored unceasingly to be led back again. In its new home the transplanted tribe found itself sharing the bottom-lands of a broad bend in the Pecos river with some four hundred Mescalero Apache who were there first and considered the place rightfully their own. It was Carleton’s plan to develop farming in the irrigable portions (estimated at six thousand acres) of the locality and make both tribes self-supporting, contented and peaceful tillers of the soil. The Navaho were accordingly set to work at digging ditches and breaking ground for planting. The work did not please the formerly free-roving Indian; neither did its monotonous, unmilitary character appeal to the soldier in charge of this curiously socialistic experiment in civilization by fiat of military government. It required no Delphian oracle to foretell that matters would not run smoothly in the new colony, but only a daring imagination could have conjured up all the miseries and disappointments that actually came to pass.

Man and nature seemed in league from the outset to defeat Carleton’s solution of the Navaho problem. Man’s part was a feud of increasing bitterness between the civil and military authorities of the federal government—between Matthew Steck, superintendent of Indian affairs in New Mexico under the department of the interior, and General Carleton, military commander of the territory. Carleton, having by military tactics provided the hungry mouths to feed, expected Steck to help with the feeding. The military were fighters, not Indian guardians, was his attitude: he had carried his campaign to a successful end and spoiled the Navaho for war; now let the Indian service foster their career in the arts of peace. Steck, however, saw matters differently. He had never favored the removal of the Navaho from their homeland (although he did believe in

the reservation-and-concentration policy) and he had no appropriation, no provision of any sort, for assuming the sudden burden of eight thousand helpless, starving souls. Carleton had started this mess, let him clean it up. Steck, in short, sulked; and sulking, he campaigned so actively against the Bosque plan that a controversy arose involving the whole territory of New Mexico and the honor and glory of the departments of war and interior at Washington, until finally a special committee from congress journeyed to the scene of dispute and took reams of testimony on whether the Indian service should be under one or the other department, whether Indian tribes should be packed about the country like traveling minstrels or settled on reservations in their own territory. All of which helped mightily to feed and clothe the destitute Navaho.

Carleton made heroic efforts to meet the situation and his disgruntled soldiers worked like Trojans. Thirty miles of irrigation ditch was dug, two thousand acres of land ploughed and planted to wheat, corn, beans, by the season of 1865. But there can be no harvest with nature unfriendly: every crop planted in the years 1864 to 1867 was a failure. Sometimes it was insects, again drought; or again, a flood in the Pecos, or lashing winds or unseasonable cold. The land seemed cursed and all went wrong. The water (slightly alkaline, even the most ardent pro-Bosqueists admitted) sickened men, killed livestock (the Indian said), and poison weeds killed more. Starvation and want were never beyond sight, with rations habitually short and unpalatable; for the Navaho found it hard to accustom themselves to wheat flour, the staple of diet. Wood was difficult to find (fancy a Navaho grubbing up mesquite roots!), and the captives shivered through bleak winters in flimsy shelters of brush and canvas, while the Comanche and Kiowa raided their dwindling flocks and herds.

Mescalero and Navaho never realized Carleton's fond prophecy that the two, being racial cousins, would merge into one people. They fought and bickered continually, and

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when the entire Mescalero contingent of nearly four hundred souls silently left the reservation one night in November, 1865, the Navaho were too hopeless to rejoice. They got the Mescalero lands—but to what good, if nothing came to harvest? In the spring of 1868, utterly discouraged and demoralized, the Navaho planted almost nothing, determined at last to meet fate unresisting, (although their agent suspected they were preparing a secret desertion). At last, it was clear that the Bosque Redondo experiment had failed: the Navaho would not become farmers and the government would not maintain them in idleness.

The government gave in. Lieutenant General W. T. Sherman and Colonel S. F. Tappan came out from Washington in May, 1868, as peace commissioners to negotiate with the Navaho for their removal to a reservation in the old tribal territory. Both parties were in a tractable mood after so much suffering on the one side and so much costly experimentation on the other, as General Sherman indicated in the following letter to Senator John Sherman, his brother:

Fort Union, New Mexico, June 11, 1868.

Dear Brother: I have now been in New Mexico three weeks along with Colonel Tappan, peace commissioner, for the purpose of seeing the Navahos, and making some permanent disposition of them . . .

We found 7,200 Indians there, seemingly abject and disheartened. They have been there four years. The first year they were maintained by the army at the cost of about \$700,000, and made a small crop. The second year the cost was about \$500,000, and the crop was small. Last year the crop was an utter failure, though all the officers say they labored hard and faithfully. This year they would not work because they said it was useless. The cost has been diminished to about 12 cents per head a day, which for 7,000 Indians makes over \$300,000, and this is as low as possible, being only a pound of corn, and a pound of beef with a little salt per day.

Now this was the state of facts, and we could see no time in the future when this could be amended. The scarcity

of wood, the foul character of water, which is salty and full of alkali, and their utter despair, made it certain that we would have to move them or they would scatter and be a perfect nuisance. So of course we concluded to move them. After debating all the country at our option, we have chosen a small part of their old country, which is as far out of the way of the whites and of our future probable wants as possible, and have agreed to move them there forthwith, and have made a treaty which will save the heavy cost of maintenance and give as much probability of their resuming their habits of industry as the case admits of . . .

So on June 1, 1868, another Navaho treaty took its place in the long series. This one, however, thanks to the severity of Carleton and Carson, was to be more than a scrap of paper. It was drawn to encourage farming (for the men must be kept busy somehow), with free implements and seeds, a tract of land (not over 160 acres) to each head of a family wanting it, and a small clothing allowance yearly for ten years. It provided for schools as needed, one for every thirty prospective pupils. Fifteen thousand sheep and goats were to be bought for the tribe; and they were urgently needed, for the Navaho agent in 1868 estimated that the exiles upon returning to their old home had only 1,550 horses, 940 sheep, and 1,025 goats: less than half an animal for every person, if we take the agent's estimate of the population at 8,000 souls.

The conquered Navaho set forth from the Bosque on June 18, 1868, and on November 1 of that year Agent Dodd at New Fort Wingate formally assumed charge of "7,111 Navajo Indians, viz.: 2,157 under 12 years of age, 2,696 women, 2,060 men, and 201 age and sex unknown." The Navaho were home again, a sadder and a wiser tribe.

AFTER-EFFECTS

The effects of this violent and complete disruption of Navaho life are beyond calculation. As long as a Navaho remains upon the earth the epilogue of Bosque Redondo will be still in the playing, for this episode of five years duration

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turned the stream of tribal history into a new channel for all time to come.

Bosque Redondo was a military conquest, and very much more: it was the utter subjugation of as free a people as could be found anywhere within or upon the horizons of civilization. No mere change of political sovereignty was at stake as in the wars between western nations, no transfer of nominal allegiance from one state to another, with only a brief disruption of the accustomed routine of living. Bosque Redondo was a moral holocaust, as devastating to Navaho civilization as were the barbarian invasions of the Dark Ages to ours. It destroyed their material prosperity,—but that was soon recovered. It abolished their freedom,—but even that was of less consequence than its greatest result, which was a silent inner transformation: the destruction of this remarkable people's morale, of its audacious, unbounded confidence in itself. The transformation is epitomized in the spectacle of a nation of barbarian nomads accustomed to ride far and free, fearing nothing on earth and hearkening to no lesser voices than those of the tribal gods, meekly shouldering the hoe at the beck of an alien master. To most Indian tribes civilization has come in assimilable draft. To the Navaho it came as a rushing flood, tumbling their whole world topsy-turvy. From a freedom almost idyllic they were plunged into a perpetual semi-servitude, in just five years.

But we must not over-sentimentalize the effects of Bosque Redondo, for two strongly corrective facts are beyond question established. The first is that the Navaho merited heavy punishment for their cynical disregard of the lives and property of their neighbors, Pueblo and Spanish; and five years of bitter exile is not an inhuman retribution for two centuries of rapine and murder. The second is that the Navaho deliberately threw themselves in the pathway of a relentless force, the westward march of European civilization, and came off very well in the end. No longer free, they are a nation still: larger, wealthier, more secure, than

ever before. They have weathered a crisis that proved fatal to many a tribe—that of final adjustment to the conquering American. If that inevitable clash was a brutal shock, Navaho arrogance must be held equally responsible with American rigor. Both parties may with reason deplore the event and rejoice at the outcome; for here, as so often elsewhere, history is justifying at its leisure an act of seemingly intemperate haste and severity.

NOTE ON BIBLIOGRAPHY.—H. H. Bancroft; *Arizona and New Mexico*, L. Bradford Prince: *Historical Sketches of New Mexico*, and R. E. Twitchell: *Leading Facts of New Mexican History and Military Occupation of New Mexico*, were principally used for the Indian troubles of the first half of the 19th century.

For the campaign of conquest and conditions at the Bosque Redondo, the following official sources afforded most of the information: *Annual Reports of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs*, 1863-69; *Report of the Joint Special Committee on the Condition of the Indian Tribes*, 1867; and the field reports of Carson, Carey and Pfeiffer, as published in Edwin L. Sabin: *Kit Carson Days*.

Carleton's correspondence, of which excerpts are quoted, is published in the Joint Special Committee Report. The Sherman quotation is from Rachel Sherman Thorndike (editor): *The Sherman Letters*.

Good popular accounts of this episode in Navaho history are available in Sabin, above cited, and J. P. Dunn, Jr.: *Massacres of the Mountains*.

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