

The Story of a Real American



PLENTY COUPS AT THE TOMB OF THE UNKNOWN SOLDIER

By ELMO SCOTT WATSON
 NOVEMBER 11, 1922,
 when the Unknown Soldier
 was enshrined at Arlington
 cemetery, among the high
 officials and other digni-
 taries who took part in
 that impressive ceremony,
 was the figure of an Indian
 chief, resplendent in buckskin, scalp
 shirt, fringed leggings, beaded mocca-
 sins and a magnificent war bonnet
 that swept to the ground. As he
 stepped forward to place on the white
 marble tomb a war bonnet and a coup
 stick, he said in his native tongue, "I
 feel it an honor to the red man that
 he has taken part in this great event
 today because it shows that the thou-
 sands of Indian soldiers who fought
 in the great war are appreciated by
 the white man. I am glad to repre-
 sent the Indians of the United States
 in placing on the grave of this noble
 and unknown warrior this coup stick
 and war bonnet, every eagle feather
 of which represents a deed of valor
 by my race. I hope that the Great Spirit
 will grant that these noble warriors
 have not given up their lives in vain
 and that there will be peace to all
 men hereafter. This is the Indian's
 hope and prayer."

This chief who was chosen as the
 representative of all the Indian tribes
 to place the red man's tribute upon
 the grave of the Unknown Soldier is
 known among his people, the Ab-
 sarakoes, as Aleek-chea-aboosh, mean-
 ing "Many Achievements." But the
 white men who call the Absarakoes
 Chief Plenty Coups, perhaps the
 best known Indian in the United
 States today. For that reason one of
 the outstanding biographies of the
 year is the book "American," pub-
 lished recently by the John Day com-
 pany, for it is "The Life Story of a
 Great Indian, Plenty Coups, Chief of
 the Crows," as he told it to Frank
 E. Linderman through the medium of
 an interpreter and the sign language
 in which both Plenty Coups and Lin-
 derman are adepts.

"American" is not the first Indian
 autobiography but it is outstanding
 because it is the story of a genuinely
 primitive Indian. When Plenty Coups
 was born in Montana in the late '40s
 his people were still living their
 normal nomadic life in the days before
 the buffalo herds were swept away,
 and these wild horsemen of the plains
 were almost untouched by any contact
 with the whites. His early life was
 lived under tribal conditions, but lit-
 tle changed over a period of hundreds
 of years; in his early manhood he
 witnessed the first conflict between the
 two races with their inevitable climax
 of the subjugation of the red and the
 domination of the white and his de-
 clining years are being passed in an
 era which is seeing a century of his-
 tory concentrated in a decade. So in
 a sense the life story of this Indian
 chief is an epitome of 300 years of
 American history, from savagery to
 civilization, from a wilderness to the
 industrial age.

Plenty Coups has remained a boy
 all his life and the naturalness of
 childhood is reflected throughout his
 story "What are your earliest remem-
 brances?" Mr. Linderman asked him
 and the old man smiled, "Play," he
 said happily. "All boys are much
 alike. Their hearts are young and
 they let them sing." And in his tell-
 ing of the events of his boyhood and
 his training at the hands of the eld-
 ers of the tribe, there is food for
 thought by the white man who be-
 lieves that men of his color are su-
 perior in any way to men whose skins
 are red.

No doubt it will be a shock to most
 white men to realize that in the eyes
 of the Indians white children are so
 disgustingly ill bred.



CHIEF PLENTY COUPS WITH HIS LIFE STORY

So profiting by the example and the
 instructions of his elders, Plenty
 Coups' boyhood was spent in the kind
 of play which was the beginning of
 his education in physical development,
 in plains and wood craft and in strict
 self-discipline of body and mind. He
 and the other boys played at making
 war, and with great eagerness he
 looked forward to the day when he
 might go out on the first war party
 and have the chance for that distinc-
 tion so much desired by all prospec-
 tive warriors—counting coups. This
 might be accomplished in one of sev-
 eral ways. He might strike an enemy
 with his coup stick, bow or quirt, be-
 fore otherwise attacking him, or take
 his weapon while he was still alive.
 He might count coups by striking sim-
 ilarly the first of the enemy's dead or
 his breastworks under fire or by steal-
 ing horses from the village of an en-
 emy. Unlike the white man's idea it
 was not so much an honor to be
 wounded in action. When a warrior
 who had been wounded donned an
 eagle feather to commemorate the
 event, he must stain it red, and such
 a feather was esteemed less highly
 than one which bore the distinctive
 markings showing how a coup was
 counted.

Plenty Coups' young manhood was
 filled with innumerable skirmishes be-
 tween the Crows and their traditional
 enemies, the Sioux, the Cheyennes, the
 Arapahoes and the Blackfeet. His
 first real contact with the white men
 came when he enlisted as a scout with
 General Crook and served valiantly
 with that officer in the great battle
 with the Sioux on the Rosebud. For
 Americans with their traditional love
 of "good sportsmanship" there is an
 interesting example in Plenty Coups'
 attitude towards his enemies. In nearly
 every case in which he tells of a
 foe whom he fought and killed, he
 ends the story by adding gravely,
 "He was a good man, that Sioux, and
 a brave warrior."

But the opinions of the white man
 expressed by this old warrior is not
 such comfortable reading for those
 who fondly believe that the white race
 is superior to all others. But is good,
 perhaps, for the exaggerated self-es-
 teem of the "conquering white" to
 read these words of Plenty Coups and
 reflect upon them with an honest
 mind: "They spoke very loudly when
 they said their laws were made for
 everybody; but we soon learned that
 although they expected us to keep
 them, they thought nothing of break-
 ing them themselves. . . . (Their
 priests) said we might have their re-
 ligion, but when we tried to under-
 stand it, we found that there were too
 many kinds. . . . This bothered us
 a good deal until we saw that the white
 man did not take his religion any

more seriously than he did his laws,
 and that he kept both of them just
 behind him. . . . to use when they
 might do him good in his dealings with
 strangers. These were not our ways.
 We kept the laws we made and lived
 our religion. We have never been
 able to understand the white man, who
 fools nobody but himself. . . .
 Now, too late, we know that the white
 man is not wise. He is smart, not
 wise, and fools only himself."

To read Plenty Coups' story is to
 realize that he deserves the character-
 ization of a "great American" by what-
 ever standards, either white or red,
 he may be judged. A part of his
 greatness lies in the adjustment he
 made between his people and ours, in
 his patience, his diplomacy and his
 firmness which saved the Crows from
 the tragic fate which overtook other
 Indian tribes. Of them he says: "We
 saw that those who made war against
 the white man always failed in the
 end and lost their lands. Look at
 the Striped-Feathered-Arrows (Chey-
 ennes). Most of them are living
 where they hate the ground that
 holds their lodges. They cannot look
 at the mountains as I can, or drink
 good water as I do, every day. In-
 stead of making a treaty with the
 white man and by it holding their
 country which they loved, they fought.
 Ah! how those warriors fought! And
 lost all, taking whatever the white
 man would give. And when the hearts
 of the givers are filled with hate their
 gifts are small."

"The Cheyennes and the Sioux, who
 fared a little better, have always been
 our enemies, but I am sorry for them
 today. I have fought hard against
 them in war, with the white men more
 than once, and often with my own
 tribe before the white men came. But
 when I fought with the white man
 against them it was not because I
 loved him or because I hated the
 Sioux or Cheyennes, but because I
 saw this was the only way we could
 keep our land—and it was my dream
 that taught us the way."

Although Plenty Coups talked freely
 about his early life, even to the in-
 timate details of his dreams and all
 the other elements which make up the
 mysticism of the Indian—a rare oc-
 currence for the red man to bare his
 soul to the white man—his book tells
 little of his life after the passing of
 the buffalo. The descent into poverty
 and dependence upon the white man's
 bounty broke his spirit. "When the
 buffalo went away the hearts of my
 people fell to the ground and they
 could not lift them up again," he says.
 "After this nothing happened. There
 was little singing anywhere." And
 those mournful words are a fitting
 requiem for the whole race of red
 men.

Community Building

Realtors See Benefit in Longer City Blocks

Radical lengthening of present typ-
 ical city blocks is strongly advised as
 a measure for cutting down the costs
 of home ownership in a resolution
 which was adopted by the board of
 directors of the National Association
 of Real Estate Boards at their quar-
 terly meeting held in Chicago.

The resolution puts the realtors of
 the country on record as favoring res-
 idential blocks 1,000 feet or more in
 length. The general use of the motor
 car now permits a radical lengthening
 of blocks in residential areas in keep-
 ing with present-day convenience and
 economy, the resolution points out,
 and goes on to give the following rea-
 sons which make advisable this in-
 creased length in laying out blocks in
 residential districts:

Substantial economies in the use of
 the land can be obtained. Longer
 blocks mean reduced street area in
 relation to total area.

Frequent crossings invite personal
 accidents, delay traffic and increase
 the problem of traffic and pedestrian
 supervision.

Longer blocks not only aid in speed-
 ing up traffic movement but also con-
 tribute a semisuburban effect of
 beauty.

Comfort and Safety in Properly Built House

Twenty years ago fire-safe construction
 was considered an expensive lux-
 ury. Today inflammable construction
 is as out of date as whip sockets—
 yet the average builder of houses goes
 blithely on, designing and building
 houses that will burn. John Smith,
 1930, knows that fire safety is inex-
 pensive, but he gets little encourage-
 ment.

The really modern 1930 house con-
 tains no waste space, but it is not
 cramped. It welcomes sunlight and
 insists on ventilation at all seasons
 and cleanliness under all circum-
 stances. It incorporates room for a
 garage and does it without fire haz-
 ard. It is architecturally simple
 (neither "quaint" nor bizarre in ex-
 treme "modern" style). And in spite
 of speculators, it is meant to last.

Such a home can be built today.
 Prospective builders can reasonably
 insist on it. And it is proved that
 1930 folks need not put up with 1910
 homes, home building will be on the
 road to revival.—Exchange.

Beautiful Cities and Towns

Our cities should be kept in the
 best condition possible. Streets make
 or mar a city or town. Holes should
 be filled in when they appear in the
 streets. Good drainage is very im-
 portant. Weeds should be kept cut
 and grass should be planted along the
 sidewalks.

Roads leading into the cities should
 have advertisements about various
 business houses. Bridges should be
 kept up to prevent detours. A petty,
 clean road leading into the city at-
 tracts tourists. A beautiful park with
 flowers, trees, and recreation oppor-
 tunities attracts a crowd.

A city should have a good water
 system. Cans for trash and paper
 should be conveniently placed, and
 should be used. Telephone lines and
 poles should be kept in good condi-
 tion, and old posters should be torn
 off and destroyed as soon as useless.
 Glaring advertisements do not add to
 a city's attractiveness.—Grit.

Charm in Colored Mortar

Many world-famous brick buildings
 owe the charm of their exteriors to
 the color harmony between brick and
 mortar. This same harmony can be
 had in the smallest residential build-
 ings.

With the older buildings this was
 sometimes due to the sand used, and
 in other cases to the misleading influ-
 ence of age. However, either effect
 may be produced today through the
 coloring matter in the mortar. Mortar
 colors cost but little, yet they often
 contribute as much to the fine appear-
 ance of a brick home as any other
 single item. They are available in a
 wide range of colors.

Attractive Highways

The rapid building of highways in
 America for several years was al-
 lowed to remain what seemed to be
 a virtual invitation to a kind of cheap
 commercialism to make these thorough-
 fares lanes of ugliness. Indifference
 and neglect of property owners along
 the highways contributed to the un-
 sightliness. But the tide, here and
 there if not generally, is turning in
 the other direction. Through organized
 and individual effort, through official
 and citizen enterprise, a movement for
 attractiveness is being pushed forward.

Lure of Modernizing

One of the most attractive features
 of home modernization is that owners
 can do as little or as much as they
 desire, never losing sight of the fact
 that modernizing on either a large or
 a small scale adds much to the com-
 fort, convenience and value of the
 house.

Beautifying Roadside

Prizes worth more than \$1,000 have
 been offered for the best five examples
 of roadside beautification in a contest
 conducted by the Missouri highway de-
 partment.

Unenviable Status of Jackaroo in Australia

The name "jackaroo" was given to
 a youth sent by his parents to an
 Australian sheep or cattle station to
 learn stock and bush work. As he re-
 sided and had his meals with the
 manager, overseer and storekeeper,
 but had to work with the station
 hands, he was generally looked upon
 as a useless nuisance until he learned
 things. Having no special job and no
 status, he was given any job of work,
 hence a "jack of all work."

The old joke was, he was expected
 to "jump" at the call of the manager
 or overseer like a kangaroo. Most
 jackaroos, if they showed character
 or pluck, etc., became popular and
 after four or five years became over-
 seers; or, if they or their relatives
 had money, they bought a sheep or
 cattle station or took up a section.
 —Lieut. Col. K. C. Brazier-Creagh,
 in the London Times.

Powder Lacquers Your Car

Few people know that the lacquer
 which gleams on the bodies of thou-
 sands of automobiles today may have
 once been on the point of hurting a
 shell many miles into space or blow-
 ing up a trench, says Popular Sci-
 ence Monthly.

The conversion of millions of
 pounds of powder left over from the
 war into industrial finishing products
 was the unusual story told recently
 to the American Chemical Society by
 R. G. Woodbridge of the Du Pont
 company. The new cellulose lac-
 quers, he said, bear so close a re-
 lation, chemically, to the nitrocellulose
 base of smokeless powder that
 changing the war product into a
 peace product is comparatively
 easy.

Timber Problem Solution?

It is recognized, says the Ameri-
 can Tree association, that the forest
 resources of tropical America may
 be a very important factor in our
 domestic timber problem. Some be-
 lieve that those forests will be called
 upon to bridge the hiatus that is
 bound to exist between the exhaus-
 tion of our wild timber crop, and the
 harvest time of our man-managed
 forests. Others believe that they
 will form a permanent source of
 timber to replace some of our own
 special purpose hardwoods.

All are agreed that, in any case,
 we cannot fully and completely out-
 line our own forestry problem with-
 out taking into consideration all the
 factors that may influence the out-
 come.

Largest Drydock

The largest drydocks in the world
 are the Boston navy dock and the
 Saint John (N. B.) drydock. The
 former is 1,170 feet long by 120 feet
 wide and the latter is 1,165 feet long
 and 125 feet wide. The Boston dock
 is longer, but the respective areas
 covered by the docks give Saint John
 a decided advantage with 145,025
 square feet, the dock at Boston cov-
 ering 130,400 square feet.

Concerning Happiness

No man is happy. Man strives all
 his life through for imaginary hap-
 piness, which he seldom attains, and
 if he does, it is only to be dis-
 lusioned.—Schopenhauer.

Feen-a-mint



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Job Was Done

A grammar school student was set
 a question in an examination paper
 —"If twenty men reap a field in
 eight hours, how long will it take
 fifteen men to reap the same field?"
 The student thought long and care-
 fully before writing the answer, and
 when he handed in his paper, this is
 what the examiner read: "The field
 having been reaped by the twenty
 men could not be reaped by the fifteen
 men!"—Toronto Globe.

To understand is to forgive.

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