

## A Theatre Scene—Indian Gallantry

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We are come upon a time of rejoicing. The Iowa Centennial year is in fact two years, 1945 and 1946. The battles for liberty are nearly won. The tumult and the shouting for the downfall of slavery might well be blended with the peans of praise for Iowa's century of peaceful home making. Whether with flags and banners, with stamps and medals, with poems and oratory, with stories of adventure and epics of heroism, Iowa people will heartily celebrate the one hundredth birthday of their great state.

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#### A THEATRE SCENE—INDIAN GALLANTRY\*

Washington, D. C., Sept. 30, 1837—I have just returned from the theatre, and before I turn in I will give you a sketch of one of the most interesting scenes I ever witnessed. Understanding that the various tribes of Indians now here were to be present there this evening, I wended thither with a double curiosity to see the fascinating Miss Nelson and the effect of her acting upon the minds of the savages.

In one of the stage boxes were seated a party of Iowas, who are small-featured and more richly dressed than any other tribe I ever saw, but less gaudy than the Sioux. In the adjoining box were the Foxes, who appeared to me more Indian-like than the rest. They wear red blankets, save one who had a black one. Probably he is the chaplain to the embassy. They wear no shirts, and their blankets being thrown open they show their forms in naked majesty. They wear no trinkets like the other tribes, about their heads, which they shave closely, leaving only the scalp, from which a mass of bristles runs back to their necks, like the crest of a horseman's helmet. This with the savage simplicity of the other parts of their bodies, gives them a peculiarly antique appearance, far

\*Clipping from the *Spirit of the Times*, New York, dated as above and printed Oct. 7, 1837; contributed by Gurney C. Gue, Merrick, N. Y.

more imposing than their beplumed and bedaubed rivals. After a while in marched the Sioux, decked out in new blankets, and some of the chiefs rigged in blue regimentals, with silver epaulets and hats with the bands around them. They appeared delighted with their military toggery, which I thought in abominable taste.

When the buxom form of Miss Nelson, arrayed as a knight, in the piece entitled "The Deep, Deep Sea," sprang on the stage, the Indians seemed absolutely amazed with the vision before them, when one of the Iowas suddenly arose and with an energetic exclamation, threw a dress of feathers upon the stage. At first the performer (Mrs. Slater) near him was frightened, until the interpreter rose and translated the Indian's exclamation, which was that he gave her that as a token of his delight in seeing her. Miss Nelson bowed and took the present, which was accompanied by applause which was almost deafening.

The play went on; Knight's long serpentine train could not keep the Indians from gloating on the radiant creature before them. A beautiful song from Miss Nelson brought another present from another Iowa brave, which she acknowledged with a bewitching smile. In the meantime the Sioux looked with undisguised contempt upon their gallant rivals. In the succeeding scene Miss Nelson had on the feathery headdress as wings. The tasteful design overcame completely the susceptible Iowas. One of them sprang forward and stripping off his splendid buffalo robe, tossed it at her feet with an impassioned burst of feeling. When the uproar caused by this was over, in which the Foxes yelled most hideously, the interpreter translated the sentiment in the following words: "I give this to the beauty of Washington to show my pleasure." I really thought these generous fellows would eventually strip themselves to show their gallantry.

Miss Nelson at this fresh proof of devotedness, in a graceful manner begged the interpreter to state that she regretted her inability to speak their native tongue, but

that she esteemed them as much as she did the sons of the King of her native England. She then took from her helmet and gave to each of her admirers a white ostrich plume, which soon decked their swarthy brows. The Indians retired to the front boxes, where they remained laughing with all their might until Miss Nelson again charmed them with "The Mountain Sylph." When she descended from the clouds another robe was thrown to her, by an Iowa, be it remembered.

At the conclusion, when she regains her immortality and ascends to her native skies, she placed on her head the votive Indian crown of feathers, which, gracefully spreading out as she arose, gave a peculiarly wild charm to her vanishing figure. If you could have heard the din and yells as she displayed this addition to her dress when she arose! Sioux, Foxes, pale-faces and all arose and gave one loud and commingling shout, while above all rose the wild, shrill cry of the savages. No one who was there will ever forget it.

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### THE WEST LOSES TO THE EAST

Removal of Rev. Henry Ward Beecher.—This gentleman, known to many of our readers as the editor of the *Indiana Farmer and Gardener*, we regret to learn, has dissolved his pastoral connection at Indianapolis, and is about to remove to Brooklyn, N. Y. His removal will be felt, not only in that city, but by the state, and more or less by the whole west. Mr. Beecher, since his connection with the *Farmer and Gardener* has made it apparent that could he devote his time to that paper it would have so far as his materials went, no superior in its line. The west needs such men. We do not learn what arrangements have been made by the publishers for the conduct of the paper.—*Prairie Farmer*, Chicago, Oct. 1847.

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