

NAME OF BOOK

FEAR NOTHING.

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CHAPTER SEVEN

PAGE ONE

The closing of the first month of school taught me more than it did the pupils. I learned for one thing that I would have to learn to talk Choctaw if I succeeded with the Indian children. I had already noticed that they rather enjoyed to hear their native tongue spoken and those who talked to them in their own language were more popular than those who did not. I began in earnest to learn the language and in a short time could name most any household word like bread, butter, milk and meat. There was one peculiarity that I noticed at once. The adjectives often followed the nouns instead of preceding them. The other whites called this putting the words together. As soon as the Indian children noticed that I was interested in learning to talk to them in Choctaw they seemed to be pleased and tried to help me. I soon learned that they were not allowed to talk their own language in the tribal schools. Some of the older boys told me that they had been punished (mildly) for talking Choctaw at Jones Academy. I have never forgiven the authorities this even if it was done in an effort to teach English. It does appear to be a crime to forbid anyone to speak their native tongue. It seemed bad enough to destroy customs and manners, politics and religion, without going so far as to forbid the children their best means of communication. Imagine, if you can, you forced to speak Choctaw and not allowed to speak English. We would consider that one of the greatest outrages that was ever perpetrated against our superior race.

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It was at this time that I remembered what one of my old teachers had taught me about learning from others. There is no one ^{so} ~~too~~ insignificant or ^{so} ~~too~~ ignorant that can not teach you something, if you will only let them. I thought over this advice many times and the more I tried it the better I understood it. I would often, with great patience, listen to the explanations of these young Indians and in the end would learn more than they. But this was not the only thing about this homemade philosophy. You encourage the others and they soon learn that you respect their ideas. This is a great asset and was used to great advantage in teaching the full-bloods to speak English. We would get a picture book and have them tell the name of the picture in Choctaw and pronounce it in English. This worked both ways. While they were learning our language, I learned theirs. If I ~~was~~ ^{were} to succeed, I needed them just as much as they needed me. After the first month I found that the Indian children excelled and took great pride in writing, singing and athletics. A happy thought came to me. Since our song books were all in English, why not have them sing more and in this way learn English. I noticed on the playground that the smaller children enjoyed playing church. They would sing the songs that I had taught them. They were learning more during the play time than I could possibly teach them while they were in-doors. I decided to capitalize on this and in the afternoons would hear their lessons first and send them out to play.

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My fifth week found me again with the Antubbi family and when I arrived I was asked to leave off school for one week to allow the boys to help with the roundup. I found that this was an old custom, to quit all other business when the time came to gather the salable cattle for the market. I had often heard of this, but disliked to see my school discontinued just after we had built up a little interest and indeed some enthusiasm. There is little wonder that country schools are so ineffective.

Well, at least, I could continue to learn the language of the Indians and make myself more proficient in my undertaking. Antubbi assured me that I was welcome to stay with him and offered to pay me to help him. I was of little value as a cow-hand and told him that I would do what I could. He had put some confidence in me and was eager to employ me as a clerk. It was fashionable to have some one keep an accurate account of the sale; so I was employed for the sale of his cattle. Everyone got busy and in a few days we had some eighty steers in the stalk field. However, I see no reason why Antubbi needed my services to keep tab on the cattle. He had a system of his own that served his purpose to perfection. In a few days the cattle buyers were coming around and offering to pay different prices for the steers. They were all four years old or better and averaged around one thousand pounds. I remember one man came and readily agreed on thirty dollars around for the eighty head.

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This was just right and there was no trouble in finding out that the amount would be \$2400.00. The buyer pulled out his check book and wrote out, (or began to), the check. Antubbi told him that he did not take checks from any one except Uncle Sam. This took the buyer by surprise and after due deliberation he told Antubbi that his check was absolutely good and offered to have it certified by the cashier of the bank. Antubbi told him it would still be a check and he did not take checks, but wanted the money cash on the barrel head. Furthermore, he wanted it to be in gold. This irritated the buyer so much that he said he would be back in a few days with the gold. I found out later that Antubbi did not want to sell his cattle to him anyway. The following day one of Antubbi's old friends came and all was ready for the sale. This man knew how to deal with him and was ready. They readily agreed upon a price of \$30.00 and the deal was closed. Antubbi told me to stand at the gate and count the cattle carefully as they passed out one at a time. Then, too, to be sure that the letter "A" was branded on the right side. This was my job clerking. I thought I would have to do some calculating, but this was wholly unnecessary. Antubbi had his own way of keeping count. He and the Mr. Johnson stood just behind me and at the passing out of each steer, Johnson would pass thirty dollars to Antubbi who placed it in his hat. Each time it was a twenty and a ten. All this had to be in gold. After the sale had been completed Antubbi had me to report the number of steers that had passed out and count the money to see that it

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was just right. He seemed to be quite proud of his money and we were soon at the dinner table enjoying plenty of good fresh meat of several kinds. It was a poor dinner unless we had at least three kinds of meat. I am not prepared to say just what became of that money as it seemed ~~to~~ not only go out of circulation but to cease to exist. I suppose that he buried it somewhere. He told me afterwards that he had had some trouble taking checks and he did not like paper money for two reasons. One time he got hold of some money that they called Confederate and nobody would take it; then, too, paper money might rot when buried in the ground.

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