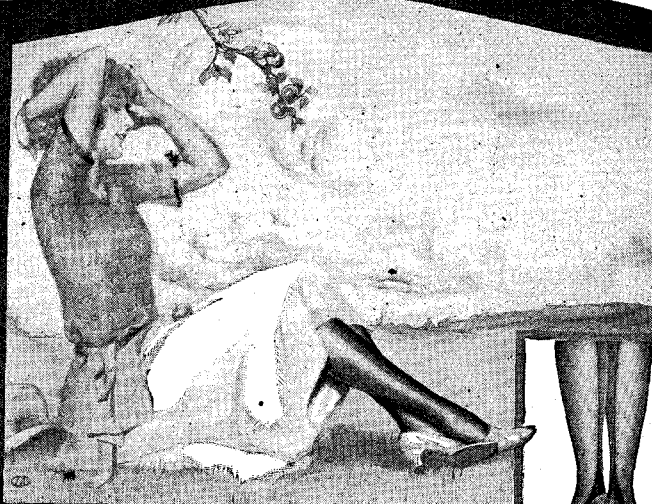


THE PLIGHT OF THE MOJAVE-APACHE INDIANS

BY NATALIE CURTIS

IT was during Theodore Roosevelt's first Administration that Mr. Frank Mead, an architect who has disinterestedly devoted much time to the Indian question, visited the President at Oyster Bay to lay before him the plight of a homeless band of Mojave-Apache Indians. At the time when the Apaches, like the Belgians, had resented the invasion of their land by white conquerors, a group of Mojave sympathizers were taken with the Apaches as war prisoners to San Carlos, Arizona. The Mojaves, a peaceful agricultural people, were promised by the Government that if they would become civilized they would be allowed to return to their fertile lands in the Verde Valley, where from time immemorial they had farmed.

Years passed. A younger generation of Mojaves grew up at San Carlos. The Indians were civilized. They sent word to Washington: "We have fulfilled our part of the promise. Let us go back to our homes." But Washington was silent. Again and again the Indians appealed, but no answer came. Finally, without permission and without funds other than what they could raise through the selling of their own little belongings, they set out on foot and by wagon to find their home. From the mountains that overlooked the Verde Valley they gazed down on what had once been their own. It was now all white people's farms. Despairingly they camped in the mountains, living on fruit and berries, sending appeal after appeal to Washington. Threatened with starvation and with winter coming on, Frank Mead found them. He smuggled their chief out of the country—for the settlers were suspicious—and brought him straight to Mr. Roosevelt at Oyster Bay. There was not five minutes' hesitation on the President's part. "The settlers must be honorably bought off and paid for the improvements which they have put upon the land," said he; "homes must be found for these Indians." As the President's special representative, Mr. Mead secured land in the Verde Valley for the Mojave-Apaches—a tract adjoining that which had been their original home. Fertile land it was, with water rights which mean everything to the farmer in Arizona. But it was not long before white men began to agitate a movement to dispossess these Indians. The Government is now threatening to force allotments upon the Mojave-Apaches entirely contrary to the wishes of the Indians themselves, who have been offered the alternative of five acres apiece of "flat" land on a canal in the open country or else allotments which are only grazing land for cattle. Their home has always been in the mountains, and they wish to stay on the land which Theodore Roosevelt procured for them. On the "flat" there is little but wind and sand and cactus. A recent letter from Arizona advises me that the Indians have been told that if they do not do as "Washington" wishes the



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reservation will be thrown open and they will have no redress. A few far-seeing and just-minded Americans have observed that, while we set aside thousands of acres as pleasure-grounds for our own race—National parks and monuments—we are not willing to leave intact a small Indian reservation which is not a pleasure-ground but a "home-land where people must work, live, and die." Theodore Roosevelt and Frank Mead saw to it that the Mojave-Apaches had water rights from the Verde River. This is of course what makes their lands so coveted. But is there not enough irrigable land in all great unpeopled Arizona for white men? Why should not the Mojave-Apaches who still rightfully own their patch of fertile farming land be left in peace?

An Indian once said to me: "The whole country is now yours. Why do you still invade our tiny holdings? The Belgians across the Great Water bravely resented invasion, and the whole world wept for them. We sent our soldiers to help them; but those same soldiers were sent *against* us when we fought for our homes, and we were sent to prison. And now, when our last bit of land is taken, the world is silent and no voice is raised in protest."

As I myself brought Frank Mead and the Mojave-Apache chief to Theodore Roosevelt, I know that this story is true.

A teacher in the Indian School Service, looking at the wreckage we had wrought on Indian reserves, said: "We cannot plead for justice. The time has forever gone for that. To-day we can only plead for mercy!"

Reader, will you write to your Congressman?

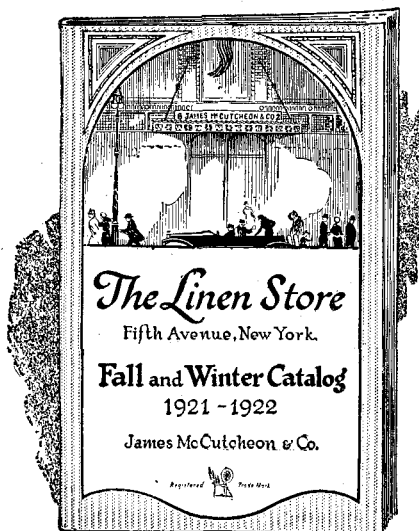
WHAT IS A SEA PUP?

I WAS much interested in Dr. Morton's account of the curious animal which he himself saw moving rapidly through the water. Probably, if the truth were known, the thing was only little B. M. Adams taking a bath away from his usual habitat.

Be 'Em, if you remember, styled himself a "sea pup," and now he gives his length as six feet three inches, weight 200 pounds. Somebody for a *pup*, *n'est-ce pas?* More fitting to be called a horse—a sea horse—judging from the part of him that shows above the water—and an old one at that, for his language is that of the classics. "Port Some Day" thunders and surges with Homer's "gray sea water," and the waves left their forelegs in the most approved manner of Neptune's horses. "Cotton wool in the ears is good." "Is good" is right. He never would have thought of it—the old sea horse—if he had not been swimming close to the ship of the wise Ulysses and overheard the mighty hero order his crew to stuff their ears with melted wax as they went past the sweet-voiced Sirens.

What I want to know, however, is this: If a sea horse of that age has the right to call himself a *pup*, what would you style the rest of us who have only lived, say, threescore years and ten?

Helena, Montana. NATIE THEO SLOAN.



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