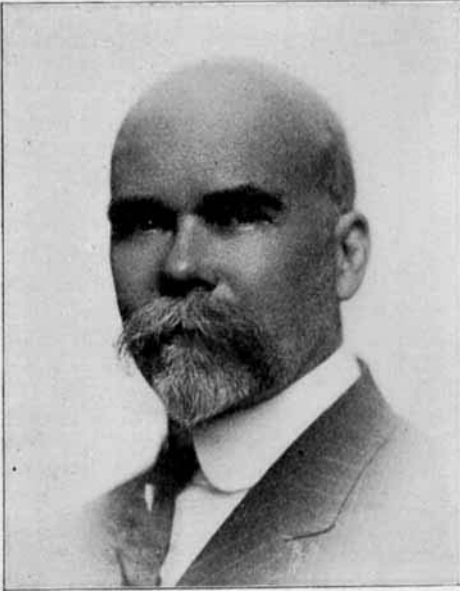


IN AND OUT OF THE INDIAN TOOLHOUSE.

By Clark McAdams.



DR. H. M. WHELPLEY.

I went down into Albion place a few nights ago to see Dr. H. M. Whelpley's collection of Indian relics. It had been some months since I had seen it. I found it growing, as always, and the house stuffed with it until the walls are beginning to bulge. The doctor's father, who was a physician over in Union County, Illinois, where the Indians at Cahokia quarried the flint for their farm implements, laid the foundation of this tremendous collection years ago. He drove about the country in professional quest of ague and measles, and always brought home a relic or so in the back of the buggy. The son began where the father left off, and he has by this time become the foremost private collector in the United States. The only way to keep him from getting anything that strikes his fancy is to nail it down, exactly as Europe did when the late Mr. Morgan went over collecting art and antiques. Collecting is a disease, the germ of which will be discovered in time. It begins mildly, like whooping cough and housemaid's knee, and reduces the patient in its extreme form to a feverish desire to collect something.

Dr. Whelpley brought out his tray of banner stones, and we all began palming them down and caressing them in the way a lover of fine Indian relics will do. I have seen Indian relics take on a fine luster from the affection

borne them by connoisseurs. Banner stones are as a rule made of rose quartz. They are very rare and very beautiful. The butterfly type is as highly prized as anything the aborigines of this valley made. A banner stone had no more practical use than to serve as an ornament, or a ceremonial. It was art, which requires no explanation of what it is for.

When we had seen the banner stones—some \$2000 worth of them—the doctor brought out his cannel coal relics. Cannel coal is bituminous fuel with something of the hardness and brittleness of anthracite. It takes a very fine polish, and in former times all jet ornaments were made of it. The Indians sometimes made something more than a fire of cannel coal. Such relics are rare, but Dr. Whelpley has them. The rarer all relics are, the more he has of them, as a rule. For instance, there was a man in Mississippi County, Arkansas, in prior times, who made a specialty of effigy pottery. He made bowls shaped like a human head with a hole in the top. Some of these heads were elaborately colored. Of the eighteen known in the country, Dr. Whelpley has two. One of these effigy pots is a very striking thing. It looks like an Indian, and was probably a very faithful portrait of the artist's brother.

We were by this time in a rhapsody of appreciation, and the doctor brought out his big hematite ax. This ax came from Calhoun County, Illinois. It is not only big, but perfect. One loving Indian relic, could fondle it as a woman fondles a baby. It is made of native iron unsmelted, and has a groove in it, indicating that the Indian who made it did so with some thought of how he was to get up his winter's wood. Hematite axes are not uncommon in this vicinity. The Indians made many of them in the iron region of Missouri, and they are fairly abundant in all local collections. They are nevertheless prized, and a good one is as likely to start a general war among collectors of Indian relics as one of the Balkan states is to precipitate an all-around fight in Europe.

Some years ago Dr. W. F. Parks, a local collector, was in California. He asked everybody he met for two or three months if he knew where there were any Indian relics, and learned in that way of two osidian ceremonials up in the mountains of the north end of the State. Osidian is the glass made by the heat of volcanoes. It is found in all volcanic countries more or less. Anyway, Dr. Parks was told that these great osidians, which had served as ceremonials in a California tribe for generations, were in the hands of an old Indian woman, who would sell them. Descending down the line, they were in danger of falling into the hands of her nephew, whom she considered a bad Indian. (He was probably a baseball pitcher.) Dr. Parks bought these blades for Dr. Whelpley. A man went up into the mountains and brought them out, and they are in the collection in Albion place. There is nothing like them in any other collection in the world. They are, moreover, undamaged, despite their long and hazardous journey. Ten thousand Indians have made them lustrous with caresses. They glow like the blarney stone.

And to think that the "Seeing St. Louis" automobile does not even pass the house!