

**INDIAN SLAVERY IN COLONIAL TIMES WITHIN  
THE PRESENT LIMITS OF THE UNITED STATES**

**BY**

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## PREFACE

IT is the purpose of this study to bring to light a hitherto neglected phase of early American history: the enslavement of the Indians. The extensiveness of negro slavery in comparison with Indian slavery has so emphasized the former that, in the study of the institution in general, the existence of Indian slavery during the colonial period has almost entirely been lost sight of. In this discussion it is shown that the enslavement of the natives was practiced by the Indians themselves, the Spanish, the French and the English; yet in the case of no one of the European nations did it exist as a system separate and distinct from negro slavery. Though the holding of Indians as slaves by three of the European nations has been considered, it is the author's intention to lay emphasis chiefly upon the institution as practiced by the English.

The fact that hitherto no special attention has been given to the subject of Indian slavery has made the gathering of material difficult. Many of the important sources treating of the subject have never been published and are widely scattered. Much of even this material is vague in nature and consequently more or less unsatisfactory. The rapid increase in the number of negro slaves during the colonial period resulted in the general use of such terms as "slaves," "negroes and other slaves" and "negroes," without specification of Indian slaves as such. This is true particularly of the colonial laws, even in the case of those colonies where Indian slavery existed to the greatest extent.

## CHAPTER I

### ENSLAVEMENT BY THE INDIANS THEMSELVES

THE discussion of the use of Indians as slaves by the aborigines within the present limits of the United States, both before and after the coming of the Europeans, may be prefaced by the statement that the institution of slavery in some form was practically universal. Certain tribes held slaves more generally than others, and various tribes were more subject to enslavement than others, according to their relative strength and weakness.<sup>1</sup> Yet nowhere in the territory under discussion did slavery exist on such an extensive scale that some tribes held others in a state of subjection and demanded servile labor from them.

Slavery among the tribes of the Great Plains and the Atlantic Slope was different in nature from that in the northwest. Frequent mention of such slavery is found, but it has been shown that the term "slave" was often used by the early Spanish and French writers in an erroneous sense as synonymous with "prisoner."<sup>2</sup> The institution of adoption so largely used by the American Indians, and incident to intertribal warfare and the consequent depletion of the tribal numbers, has also been confused by the writers with the institution of slavery.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> In Mexico, a certain community of Indians was named "Esclavos" by the Spaniards, because the Aztec rulers had drawn so largely upon them for slaves. Gage, *A New Survey of the West Indies*, third edition, ii, p. 414.

<sup>2</sup> Hodge, *Handbook of American Indians north of Mexico*, Bureau of American Ethnology, Bulletin 30, pt. ii, p. 599.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

Though slavery, in the strictest sense, was not general in the territory above mentioned, yet some form of the institution is recorded as having existed among the leading tribes. In the discussion which follows, the term "slave" must, then, be considered in its broadest sense. A prisoner held by his captor as an inferior and forced to labor for him, or sold into servitude or freedom for the financial benefit of his captor, will be considered a slave when thus treated by the Indians, as he will be so considered in a later discussion when thus treated by the whites.

Among the Aztec Indians of Mexico outcasts and criminals of the tribe were enslaved,<sup>1</sup> and the usage appears to have been followed, to a very slight extent, by Indians in the area of the French and English colonies to the northward.<sup>2</sup>

Individual instances of slavery proceeded from other causes. The Indians were inveterate gamblers, and when nothing else was left, both men and women not infrequently staked themselves to serve as slaves in case of loss. Such slavery was sometimes for life, and sometimes for such short periods of time as a year or two.<sup>3</sup> In case of famine, the Indians even sold their children to obtain food.<sup>4</sup>

The slaves possessed by a given Indian tribe were oftener

<sup>1</sup> Fiske, *The Discovery of America*, i, p. 121; Prescott, *History of the Conquest of Mexico*, twenty-second edition, i, pp. 35, 41. See also Clavigero, *The History of Mexico* (translated by Cullen), i, p. 157, ii, p. 154; Prescott, *op. cit.*, i, pp. 63, 68, 147, 155, 168, 285; ii, pp. 82, 137.

<sup>2</sup> See Neill, *History of Minnesota*, p. 85, for the case of an Indian who wanted to enslave his daughter's murderer. Brickell, *The Natural History of North Carolina*, etc., p. 355, tells of Indians enslaving one another for theft until reparation was made.

<sup>3</sup> *The Jesuit Relations and Allied Documents*, edited by Reuben Gold Thwaites, xvi, pp. 199, 201. The same custom was followed by the Indians in later periods. See Parker, *A Journey Beyond the Rocky Mountains* (1835). P. 53.

<sup>4</sup> *Jesuit Relations*, xv, p. 157.

obtained through barter with other tribes. This intertribal traffic, though probably not common, was evidently far-reaching.<sup>1</sup> Owing to the wandering habits of the Indians and their custom of bartering goods with other tribes, articles of copper became distributed throughout the North west, especially in Wisconsin. The Illinois Indians possessed slaves who came from the sea coast, probably Florida.<sup>2</sup> The Illinois also bartered their slaves with the Ottawa for guns, powder, kettles and knives,<sup>3</sup> and with the Iroquois to obtain peace.<sup>4</sup> Marquette found (1673) among the Arkansas Indians, knives, beads and hatchets which had been obtained partly from the Illinois and partly from the Indians farther to the east.<sup>5</sup> The Jesuit, Grelon, relates that in Chinese Tartary he met a Huron woman whom he had known in America.<sup>6</sup>

The transition from the method of obtaining slaves by actual warfare and barter to that of mere slave raids was an easy one. The desire to gain the reputation of a skillful hunter, and, still more, of a brave warrior, and thus to win the esteem and regard of his tribesmen, was inherent among the natives. To be a brave warrior was to be truly a man. So eager was the Indian to acquire the name of "brave" that he unhesitatingly underwent any hardships

<sup>1</sup> Margry, *Decouvertes. etc.*, i, p. 470; *Michigan Pioneer and Historical Society Collections*, xxiv, p. 182.

<sup>2</sup> Thwaites, *Father Marquette*, p. 85. The spelling of the Indian names in this dissertation is that used by Hodge in *Handbook of American Indians north of Mexico*.

<sup>3</sup> Hennepin, *A New Discovery of a Vast Country in America*, edited by Reuben Gold Thwaites, p. 631.

<sup>4</sup> French, *Historical Collections of Louisiana*, pt. i, p. 56; Margry, *op. cit.*, i, p. 527.

<sup>5</sup> Shea, *Discovery and Exploration of the Mississippi Valley, etc.*, pp. lvi, 32; Thwaites, *Father Marquette*, p. 81.

<sup>6</sup> *Jesuit Relations*, lix, p. 309.

to obtain slaves or scalps as a proof of his qualifications for the title.<sup>1</sup> This means of obtaining slaves was used by the stronger tribes like the Illinois and the Iroquois.<sup>2</sup>

The slaves bartered by the Illinois were generally taken in the territory beyond the Mississippi.<sup>3</sup> This the Illinois were better able to do after the coming of the whites, as they were provided with guns, while the Indians to the westward had no weapons of the sort. One of the chief sources from which these slaves was obtained was the Pawnee nation. In 1719, Du Tisne wrote to Bienville, the commandant at New Orleans, that the Pawnee were afraid of him when he arrived among them, as their neighbors, the Osage, had made them believe that his intention was to entrap and enslave them.<sup>4</sup>

The same practice was followed by the other northern tribes. La Jeune, in 1632, found slaves among the Algonquin. The Indians of the Great Lakes region had a young Esquimaux as a slave in 1646.<sup>5</sup> Tonti found Iroquois slaves among the Huron and Ottawa.<sup>6</sup> The Dutch navigator,

<sup>1</sup> *Jesuit Relations*, lxvii, p. 171. In the south, the term "slave" was used by the Indians, not only in the sense in which it is commonly used, but as applied to dogs, cats, tame and domestic animals, and to captive birds. "So when an Indian tells you that he has a slave for you, it may, in general terms as they use, be a young eagle, a dog, or any other thing of that nature, which is obsequiously to depend upon the master for its substance." Lawson, *The History of North Carolina, containing the exact description and natural history of that country*, p. 327.

<sup>2</sup> In 1694, the Illinois informed Tonti that during the preceding seven years they had killed and taken prisoners 334 men and boys and 111 women and girls. Margry, *op. cit.*, iv, p. 5.

<sup>3</sup> Hennepin, *A New Discovery*, etc., ii, p. 631; Margry, *op. cit.*, ii, p. 98; *Jesuit Relations*, liv, p. 191; lix, p. 127.

<sup>4</sup> Chappell, *A History of the Missouri River*, p. 25.

<sup>5</sup> *Jesuit Relations*, xxx, p. 133.

<sup>6</sup> French, *Historical Collections of Louisiana*, pt. i, p. 69.

Hendrickson, in 1616, found the Indians of the Schuylkill River country holding Indian slaves.<sup>1</sup>

Of all the northern Indians, the Iroquois were by far the most powerful. They were the enemies, in the time of the early French explorations and settlements, of the Huron and the Illinois, and from these tribes they took many captives whom they enslaved. The statement has been made that no personal slavery ever existed among the Iroquois—that their captives were either killed or adopted as a part of the nation.<sup>2</sup> Quite the contrary is true. They held both Indians and whites in personal slavery. They brought back from the Ohio country bands of captives, sometimes numbering three or four hundred.<sup>3</sup> They preyed upon the Shawnee and carried them off into slavery.<sup>4</sup> They captured and enslaved the Miami for whose redemption they were presented with quantities of beaver skin. These they received but failed to free the slaves.<sup>5</sup> They brought home slaves from Maryland and the south,<sup>6</sup> and from the land of the "Chat"<sup>7</sup> (the Erie). It was the Iroquois (the Seneca), called by an early writer "Sonnagars," who enslaved captives taken from the tribes of Carolina and Florida.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Hazard, *Annals of Pennsylvania*, p. 7.

<sup>2</sup> Discourse delivered before The New York Historical Association at the anniversary meeting, December 6, 1811, by the Honorable DeWitt Clin'on; La Hontan, *New Voyages to North America*, edited by Reuben Gold Thwaites, ii, p. 504.

<sup>3</sup> Margry, *op. cit.*, ii, pp. 141, 272; iv, p. 5.

<sup>4</sup> Hennepin, *op. cit.*, ii, p. 659.

<sup>5</sup> Margry, *op. cit.*, i, p. 527; ii, p. 141.

<sup>6</sup> *Jesuit Relations*. Ixii, p. 67.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, lxi, p. 195.

<sup>8</sup> Catesby, *The Natural History of Carolina, Florida, and the Bahama Islands*, etc., ii, p. xiii; Hodge, *op. cit.*, pt. i, p. 532.

Similar practices are related of the southern Indians. The Virginia tribes possessed "people of a rank inferior to the commons, a sort of servants . . . called black boys, attendant upon the gentry."<sup>1</sup> When Menendez founded St. Augustine in 1565, he discovered in a native village the descendants of a band of Cuban Indians who had come to the mainland, been taken prisoners by the Florida Indians, and reduced to slavery.<sup>2</sup>

In the south the strongest tribes were the Choctaw and Chickasaw. These two tribes were not only at war with each other from time to time, but each preyed upon the weaker tribes of the surrounding country. In 1717, a Cadodaquiou chief informed La Harpe, on his journey to the Nassoni northwest from Natchitoches, that the Chickasaw had killed and enslaved their nation until it was then very small, and that the remnant had been forced to take refuge among the Natchitoch and Nassoni.<sup>3</sup>

The Choctaw enslaved the Choccoma, a small tribe lying between them and the Cherokee,<sup>4</sup> and about 1770 captured and burned their village. The chief and his warriors were slain, and the women and children became the slaves of the conquerors.<sup>5</sup> The Pima of the present southern Arizona took their slaves chiefly from the ranks of the Apache and their allies, and in some degree from the Yuma. These

<sup>1</sup> Beverly, *The History of Virginia in Four Parts*, second edition, p. 179; Smith, *The General Historie of Virginia, New England, and the Summer Isles*, in Arber's edition of Captain John Smith's Works, ii, p. 570.

<sup>2</sup> *Memoir of Hernando de Esca'ante Fontanedo on the Country and Ancient Indian Tribes of Florida*, in French, *Historical Collections of Louisiana and Florida*, series ii, p. 253.

<sup>3</sup> French, *op. cit.*, pt. iii, p. 68.

<sup>4</sup> Bulletin 43 of the *Bureau of American Ethnology*, p. 296.

<sup>5</sup> *Publications of the Mississippi Historical Society*, v, p. 305.

captives were largely children. When not killed they were enslaved. Some of them were kept within the tribe, and were even permitted to marry members of the tribe. But their origin was never forgotten, and the innate superstition of the natives found expression in the declaration of the medicine men that disasters and misfortunes came to the tribe through the presence of these aliens.<sup>1</sup>

In 1540, Mendoza stated that the Pueblo Indians kept their captives for food and for slaves.<sup>2</sup> In the same year. Coronado, on his journey to Cibola, found among the Indians he met an Indian slave who was a native of the country that Soto traversed.<sup>3</sup>

When Du Tisne, in 1719, made his journey west of the Mississippi River, he found the Osage at peace with the Pawnee and at war with the Kansas, Padouca, Aricara and other tribes, who in turn preyed on the Pawnee.<sup>4</sup> The Pawnee were common prey to the tribes on both sides of the Mississippi River. Their nation was not especially small in numbers,<sup>5</sup> but they appear to have been lacking in certain warlike qualities with which some other nations, as the Illinois and Iroquois, were more generously endowed. On this account they were so generally enslaved by their enemies that the term "Pawnee" became synonymous with

<sup>1</sup> *Twenty-sixth Annual Report of the Bureau of American Ethnology*, 1004-1005, p. 197.

<sup>2</sup> *Bureau of American Ethnology Publications*, xiv, pt. i, p. 548.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid*, p. 449; Lowery, *The Spanish Settlements within the Present Limits of the United States*. 1513-1561, p. 314.

<sup>4</sup> French, *op. cit.*, pt. iii, p. 74. Du Tisne meditated making peace between the Pawnee and Padouca, and thought it could be done by giving presents to each tribe, and by getting each to return the slaves which it held of the other nation. Chappell, *op. cit.*, p. 26.

<sup>5</sup> Iberville, in 1702, found them to number 2,000 men. Margry, *op. cit.*, iv, pp. 597-599-

Indian slave.<sup>1</sup> In 1724, de Bourgmont found the Kansas Indians employing Padouca slaves.<sup>2</sup> De Boucherville, also, on his journey from the Illinois country to Canada, 1728-1729, took with him a little slave for the governor-general of Canada, and was offered other slaves as gifts by the Indians whom he encountered.<sup>3</sup>

In a letter written at Quebec, October 1, 1740, the Marquis de Beauharnois speaks of the Huron bringing slaves from the Flathead and delivering them up to the Outaouac (Ottawa).<sup>4</sup> La Verendrye, in 1741, was told by the Horse Indians that the Snake Indians had destroyed seventeen of their villages, killed the warriors and women, and carried off the girls and children as slaves.<sup>5</sup>

Of the Wisconsin tribes, the Ottawa and Sauk, at least, were in the habit of making captives of the Pawnee,<sup>6</sup> Osage, Missouri, and even of the distant Mandan, whom they consigned to servitude. The Menominee did not usually engage in these distant wars, but they, and probably other tribes, had Pawnee slaves whom they purchased of the Ottawa, Sauk and others who had captured them. For the sake of convenience, they were called "Pawnees," though

<sup>1</sup> Thwaites, *Early Western Travels*, vi, p. 61; *Jesuit Relations*, lxi, p. 301.

<sup>2</sup> Margry, *op. cit.*, vi, p. 416.

<sup>3</sup> *Narrative of De Boucherville*, in *Wisconsin Historical Society Collections*, xvii, pp. 42, 55, 89.

<sup>4</sup> *Michigan Pioneer and Historical Society Collections*, xxxiv, p. 182.

<sup>5</sup> Parkman, *A Half Century of Conflict*, ii, p. 46.

<sup>6</sup> The term "Pawnee" or "Panis" signifying an Indian slave was especially used in Canada. See J. C. Hamilton, *Slavery in Canada*, in *Transactions of the Canadian Institute*, 1890, pp. 102-108; "The Panis" in *Canadian Institute Proceedings*, 1899, pp. 19-27, Smith, *The Slave in Canada*, in *Nova Scotia Historical Society Reports*, x, pp. 3, 72.

some of them were certainly from the Missouri tribes. These captives were usually children.<sup>1</sup>

"Beginning with the Tlingit, slavery as an institution," using the term in its strictest sense, "existed among all the Northwest coast Indians as far as California. It practically ceased with southern Oregon, although the Hupa of Athapascan stock, and the Nozi (Yanan), both of northern California, practiced it to some extent."<sup>2</sup> Slavery in some form appears to have existed among both the Klamath and the Modoc, and in the Columbia River district as far as the Wallawalla River, where it existed among the Cayuse and the Nez Perces.<sup>3</sup> "The Northwest region, embracing the islands and coast occupied by the Tlingit and Haida, and the Chimmesyan, Chinookan, Wakashan, and Salishan tribes, formed the stronghold of the institution."<sup>4</sup> Toward the eastward the institution became modified, as has been shown.

According as an Indian nation proved friendly or unfriendly, the whites used it for their own advantage. Originally the slaves consisted almost entirely of captives taken in war, for there was but little trade among the different nations and tribes until articles of commerce were given by the whites in return for furs and slaves. How the traffic in slaves was affected is seen in the case of the Choctaw and

<sup>1</sup> Grignon, *Seventy-two Years' Recollections of Wisconsin*, in *Wisconsin Historical Society Collections*, iii, p. 256; Thwaites, *Early Western Travels*, i, pp. 304, 309. In the present state of Michigan, traces are found of Indians holding others as slaves, though the Ordinance of 1787 forbade slavery in the Northwest Territory. *Michigan Pioneer and Historical Society Collections*, xiv, p. 658.

<sup>2</sup> Hodge, *op. cit.*, pt. ii, p. 598.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, pt. ii, p. 598.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, pt. ii, p. 598.

the Chickasaw, the former friends of the French, the latter, of the English. The ill feeling of the two nations was nourished by the international rivalry of their white allies to whom the Indians disposed of many of their captive slaves.<sup>1</sup> The Spaniards of Mexico made slave raids and induced the Indians to do so. La Salle's expedition, found abundant evidence in 1687 of Spanish trade among the Ceniz Indians, in their possession of pieces of money, silver spoons, lace, clothes and a bull from Rome exempting the Spaniards in Mexico from fasting during the summer.<sup>2</sup> Some messengers of the Chouman among the Ceniz, and the Ceniz themselves, told the French of the slave raids and of the cruel treatment of the Indians by the Spaniards to the southward.<sup>3</sup>

Even the Jesuits were not averse to stirring up tribe against tribe. So strong was their interest in the Huron that, for the advancement of the Jesuit cause, it was felt advisable to break up the Iroquois power. Even La Salle advised such a course of action, and urged that the French strengthen the southern Indians by supplying them with firearms and in other ways, so that they might be enabled to defeat the Iroquois, destroy their organization, and carry off their women and children as slaves.<sup>4</sup>

On the other hand, since the Huron were the friends of

<sup>1</sup> Margry, *op. cit.*, v, p. 506; French, *Historical Collections of Louisiana*, pt. iii, pp. 33, 34, 68; Cramoisy, *Journal de la Guerre du Mississippi contre les Chicachas*, pp. 65, 67, 68, 89; La Harpe, *Historical Journal of the Establishment of the French in Louisiana*, in French, *op. cit.*, pt. iii, p. 27; Brickell, *op. cit.*, p. 324.

<sup>2</sup> Douay, *Narrative of La Salle's Expedition*, in Shea, *Discovery and Exploration of the Mississippi Valley*, p. 204; French, *op. cit.*, pt. iv, p. 204.

<sup>3</sup> Shea, *op. cit.*, pp. 205, 211, 216.

<sup>4</sup> French, *op. cit.*, pt. i, p. 42.

the French and had been largely converted by the French missionaries, the Jesuits sought to better the lot of the Huron slaves held by the Iroquois,<sup>1</sup> and sent an earnest appeal to the Christians in France to contribute funds for the redemption of the Christian captives.<sup>2</sup> Hennepin's *Narrative* tells of an attempt made by the Jesuits in 1681 to free some Ottawa Indians who were slaves among the Iroquois, by gifts of wampum belts, and by telling the Iroquois that these Ottawa were the children of the governor of the French, and that by holding them they were making war on the French.<sup>3</sup>

The employment to which the Indian slave was put by his Indian owner depended largely upon the section in which the tribe resided. Their use as domestic servants was probably common. Father Fremin tells of a young Iroquois woman who possessed more than twenty personal slaves, whose duty it was to get wood, draw water, cook, and do all other services which their mistress might direct. On the death of the owner who was a Christian, her mother desired that the missionary instruct a sick slave in his religion, so that after death the slave might attend her former mistress in Heaven and perform the same services for her as she had done on earth.<sup>4</sup> Among the Illinois, La Hontan found that two hours after sunset, the slaves covered the fires in the lodge before going to rest.<sup>5</sup> Bartram mentions a southern chief, who had attending him as slaves many

<sup>1</sup> *Jesuit Relations*, xliii, p. 299; xlv, pp. 47, 49; 1, p. 115.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, xliii, p. 293.

<sup>3</sup> Hennepin's *Narrative*, in Shea, *Discovery and Exploration of the Mississippi Valley*, p. 144.

<sup>4</sup> *Jesuit Relations*, liv, pp. 93, 95.

<sup>5</sup> La Hontan, *op. cit.* ii, p. 454. *A Memoir of La Salle to Frontenac*, November 9, 1680, declares that the Illinois forced their slaves to work. *The Historical Magazine*, v, p. 197.

Yamasee captives who had been captured by him when young.<sup>1</sup>

Le Jeune found the Huron and Ottawa Indian slaves engaged in minor household duties.<sup>2</sup> In the northwest, enslaved women and children performed the same labor.<sup>3</sup> One other use to which the young women and girls were put, if they did not marry into the tribe, was to serve as the mistresses of their owners.<sup>4</sup>

All the tribes east of the Mississippi River and south of the St. Lawrence River and the Great Lakes practiced agriculture to some extent. They all raised corn, beans, squashes and melons.<sup>5</sup> Consequently the captive slaves worked in the fields with the members of the tribe, caring for the maize and vegetables. The Iroquois used their captives in tilling the fields.<sup>6</sup> Captain John Smith, in speaking of Powhatan's tribe, states that they made war, "not for lands and goods, but for women and children, whom they put not to death, but kept as captives, in which captivity they were made to do service."<sup>7</sup> A part of this service consisted in caring for the crops. The Indians of North Carolina kept their slaves at work in the fields.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Bartram, *Travels through North and South Carolina, Georgia, East and West Florida*, p. 185.

<sup>2</sup> *Jesuit Relations*, xvi, p. 199.

<sup>3</sup> Hodge, *op. cit.*, pt. ii, p. 598.

<sup>4</sup> *Jesuit Relations*, xliii, p. 293. It was the existence of this class of slaves among the Iroquois which the Jesuits deplored most of all.

<sup>5</sup> Carr, *The Mounds of the Mississippi Valley Historically Considered* p. 8; Lowery, *The Spanish Settlements within the Present Limits of the United States, 1513-1561*, p. 32.

<sup>6</sup> Carr, *op. cit.*, p. 18.

<sup>7</sup> *Purchas His Pilgrimes*, edition of 1908, iv, pp. 1699-1700.

<sup>8</sup> Brickell, *op. cit.*, p. 321; Lawson, *op. cit.*, p. 188.

Soto found that the Indians among whom he passed had many foreign slaves whom they employed in tilling the ground.<sup>1</sup> Among the Illinois, La Hontan found the women slaves employed in sowing and reaping.<sup>2</sup>

Slaves were also employed in mining, hunting, fishing, and whatever menial tasks needed to be done about the camp. But few of the tribes worked mines to any extent, yet Joutel, 1687, found the Cenis Indians working slaves in their mines.<sup>3</sup> Hunting and fishing were more important occupations, since they furnished food for the tribe. Among the Iroquois,<sup>4</sup> Huron,<sup>5</sup> Ottawa,<sup>6</sup> and Illinois,<sup>7</sup> such work was partly done by the slaves who often worked with their masters. In the northwest the slave assisted his master in paddling, fishing and hunting. He cut wood, carried water, aided in building houses, etc.<sup>8</sup>

The existence of barter or trade among the different tribes, and among individuals of the same or different tribes, as a means of obtaining slaves has been already noted. Hence it follows that slaves, along with wampum, furs, etc., served as a medium of exchange in trade. Furthermore, they served as gifts or objects of barter whereby captives belonging to the possessor's tribe might be obtained, and by which an unfriendly tribe or individual might be placated. They were given to the whites to win their favor and

<sup>1</sup>Lowery, *The Spanish Settlements within the Present Limits of the United States*, 1513-1561, p. 32.

<sup>2</sup>La Hontan, *op. cit.*, ii, p. 432.

<sup>3</sup>Margry, *op. cit.*, iii, p. 339.

<sup>4</sup>*Jesuit Relations*, lxi, p. 195; La Hontan, *op. cit.*, i, pp. 94, 106, 111, 113; Hennepin, *op. cit.*, ii, p. 509; Carr, *op. cit.*, p. 18.

<sup>5</sup>*Jesuit Relations*, xvi, p. 199.

<sup>6</sup>*Ibid.*, xvi, p. 199.

<sup>7</sup>La Hontan, *op. cit.*, ii, p. 432.

<sup>8</sup>Hodge, *op. cit.*, pt. ii, p. 598.

friendship.<sup>1</sup> This use of slaves to purchase peace with a stronger tribe was noted by Tonti in the case of the Illinois and Iroquois. The Illinois were too weak to cope with the Iroquois on a certain occasion owing to their young men being away at war, and so by the gift of beaver skins and slaves they were able to arrange a peace.<sup>2</sup> Dubuisson, the French commander in the war of 1712 between the French and allied Indians, and the Ottogami and Mascouten, records a similar use made of their slaves by the Indian allies of the French as a means of appeasing the Potawatami for an old quarrel.<sup>3</sup> From the area about Green Bay in the present State of Wisconsin, De Lignery wrote in 1724 of bringing the warring tribes to an amicable settlement through an interchange of slaves.<sup>4</sup> Other French commanders in the same section used the same means to regain peace. Not only to each other, but to whites as well, were slaves given in order to make reparation for losses in war. In 1684, the Indians offered Du Luth slaves to take the place of some assassinated Frenchmen.<sup>5</sup> In 1724, the Indians at Detroit offered the French commander, by way of truce, two slaves for the same purpose.<sup>6</sup> When slaves were desired for such use, if the tribe possessed none, a raid was often made upon an enemy in order to obtain them. At the time of certain disturbances around Detroit, the Indians in the peace arrangements promised the French that

<sup>1</sup> *Wisconsin Historical Society Collections*, xvi, p. 345. For the legend of the enslaving and freeing of the Indians of Payupki by the Tusayan, see the *Bureau of American Ethnology*, Report for 1886-1887, p. 40.

<sup>2</sup> French, *op. cit.*, pt. i, p. 56.

<sup>3</sup> *Wisconsin Historical Society Collections*, xvi, p. 284.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, xvi, pp. 306, 429, 444, 447-451.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, xvi, p. 123.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, xvi, p. 276.

they would make raids on distant nations to obtain slaves whom they would deliver to the French allies to replace their dead.<sup>1</sup>

The treatment of slaves depended upon the individual owner, whose disposition and mood might vary from kindness to extreme cruelty according to circumstances or caprice, and, still more largely, upon custom. In the northwest slavery had existed for a sufficient length of time before the coming of the whites to modify materially the habits and institutions of the people. It doubtless produced the ideas of rank and caste so generally found among the Indians of that section, but so little known elsewhere among the American Indians.<sup>2</sup> Nevertheless the slaves among the Indians of the northwest were not, as a class, considered any more inferior to their owners than the slaves of the tribes farther east where adoption was more generally practiced. Consequently servitude in that section was of a rather mild type.<sup>3</sup> The same appears to have been true of servitude in general among the Indians. Slaves were probably not generally neglected or abused.<sup>4</sup> Yet there are many testimonials of cruel treatment. Travelers spoke of the slaves of the southern Indians serving and waiting on their masters with signs of the most abject fear, as tame, mild and tractable, without will or power to act but as directed by their masters.<sup>5</sup> The slave was expected to obey his master blindly and without disputing.<sup>6</sup> In this con-

<sup>1</sup> *Wisconsin Historical Society Collections*, v, p. 79.

<sup>2</sup> Hodge, *op. cit.*, pt. ii, p. 598.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>4</sup> This statement implies that the term "slave" does not include prisoners of war who were tortured by their captors.

<sup>5</sup> Bartram, *op. cit.*, p. 185.

<sup>6</sup> La Hontan, *op. cit.*, ii, p. 439.

nection it must be understood that enslavement of captives in war was in itself a kindly act on the part of the captors, determined partly by the need of laborers and additional members in the tribe, partly by the use which the victors could make of these captives in traffic with other tribes and with the whites, and partly by mere whim. Otherwise, the prisoners were tortured and killed as an expression of hatred, or as a means of obtaining revenge for injury. To instil fear into them, slaves were often compelled to observe the torture of their fellow captives who were condemned to death. La Salle relates an instance in which slaves were forced to eat one of their own nation, a victim of such torture.<sup>1</sup> Among the Cenis such a custom was followed, and it is quite possible that this method of producing subjection was consistent with the habitual cruelty of most tribes.

Precautions were taken to prevent the escape of slaves. The southern Indians were accustomed to mutilate the feet of their slaves either by cutting away a part of the foot, or by cutting the nerves and sinews just above the ankle or instep. The slave was thus prevented from running rapidly, and if he should escape, the tracks of his mutilated feet were easily recognizable.<sup>2</sup>

The life or death of Indian slaves depended upon either the council or the women.<sup>3</sup> The captives were apportioned by the council to different individuals of the tribe, usually at the request of the women, who often preferred to adopt captives into their families to replace lost husbands and

<sup>1</sup> French, *op. cit.*, pt. i, p. 160.

<sup>2</sup> Brickell, *The National History of North Carolina*, p. 321; Irving, *The Conquest of Florida under Hernando de Soto*, i, p. 280; Shipp, *The History of Hernando de Soto and Florida*, etc., p. 367; Pickett, *History of Alabama*, p. 64. The statements of Irving, Shipp and Pickett are based on the account by Garcilaso de la Vega.

<sup>3</sup> Margry, *op. cit.*, v, p. 95.

sons, rather than to revenge themselves for the loss of relatives by demanding the torture and death of the slaves.<sup>1</sup> After such distribution, the life or death of a slave depended entirely upon the will of the owner. Among a barbarous people, a slave's life naturally had but little value. Sick and useless slaves were often put to death,<sup>2</sup> and trivial faults might be punished in the same way. The Jesuit missionaries said of the Iroquois: "When a barbarian has split the head of his slave with a hatchet, he says, 'It is a dead dog—there is nothing to be done but to cast it upon the dung hill'."<sup>3</sup>

On the other hand, the Jesuits record certain instances of kindness shown to slaves by the Iroquois and other tribes.<sup>4</sup> One important difference existed between the Indian slavery as practiced by the Indians themselves, and that in existence among the whites. Among the Indians the question of social equality did not determine the relation of the slave to the master. The Indian slaves were always considered eligible for adoption into the tribes as actual members, in order to replete the numbers reduced by war, famine, disease or other cause.<sup>5</sup> Among the Iroquois certain chosen slaves married into the tribe and became heads of families after the death of their owners. They led a tolerably easy life, but were still considered as slaves, and had no voice, either active or passive, in the public

<sup>1</sup> Margry, *op. cit.*, v, p. 95; Marshall, *Historical Writings Relating to the Early History of the West*, p. 211; La Hontan, *op. cit.*, ii, pp. 420, 505.

<sup>2</sup> Marshall, *op. cit.*, p. 212; Hennepin, *op. cit.*, ii, p. 508; *Jesuit Relations*, xliii, p. 303.

<sup>3</sup> *Jesuit Relations*, xliii, p. 295.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, xliii, p. 299; Shea, *Discovery and Exploration of the Mississippi Valley*, p. 34.

<sup>5</sup> Hodge, *op. cit.*, pt. ii, p. 599.

councils.<sup>1</sup> Still others, who had been the richest and most important in their own villages, received no reward from their masters except food and clothing.<sup>2</sup> A certain amount of liberty seems to have been accorded these slaves, for the Jesuits were allowed to work among them sometimes as openly as among the members of the tribe.<sup>8</sup> Bartram found that among the southern Indians the slaves were dressed better than their owners, and were allowed to marry among themselves; but they remained slaves for life.<sup>4</sup>

There were several ways by which Indian slaves could obtain their freedom. Among the Huron a young brave could marry his mother's slave, and his parents had no right to hinder him. By becoming his wife the slave became a free woman.<sup>5</sup> Among the southern Indians the children of slave parents were free and were considered in every respect equal to their parents' masters.<sup>6</sup> Among the western Indians, upon the death of a savage, his slaves intermarried with others of their kind and lived in a separate hut as a sign that they were free since they had no master to serve. The children of such marriages were adopted into the tribe and became the children of the nation, since they were born in the country and village of the tribe. The Indians believed that the children should not be held as slaves since they "contributed nothing to their creation."<sup>7</sup> In the northwest, the distinction between slave and free

<sup>1</sup> *Jesuit Relations*, xliii, p. 293.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, xliii, p. 293.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 1, p. 115.

<sup>4</sup> Bartram, *op. cit.*, p. 186.

<sup>5</sup> La Hontan, *op. cit.*, ii, p. 613.

<sup>6</sup> Bartram, *op. cit.*, p. 186.

<sup>7</sup> La Hontan, *op. cit.*, ii, p. 474. These freed slaves were accustomed to go each day to visit their former masters' graves to offer pipes and tobacco in acknowledgment of their freedom.

man was generally sharply drawn with regard to marriage, for the slave usually could not marry the free man or woman, though the Makah men frequently married slave women. The children of such marriages appear to have held "an equivocal position between free men and slaves."<sup>1</sup>

The most common mode of acquiring freedom was through adoption into the tribes. Among the tribes of the Great Plains and the Atlantic Slope, adoption seems to have been universally practiced. The slaves adopted usually consisted of war captives,<sup>2</sup> who in some instances were adopted wholesale, or who, after a period of servitude in the tribe, had proved themselves possessed of certain desirable qualities, such as bravery and strength in war or the chase. The adopted person became in every respect the peer of his fellow-tribesmen. If he showed his ability he might become of high rank in the tribe. If he were a poor hunter, a poor provider, or, above all, if he turned out to be a coward, he was despised and treated according to his demerits, probably worse than if he had been born a member of the tribe. Still, he was a member of the tribe and remained a free man, though he was deposed from man's estate and "made a woman." Adopted persons who showed little ability, were sometimes made to serve in the families of the influential and prominent men of the tribe; but such persons were free, even though they performed menial labor.<sup>3</sup>

In some sections, a captive could not become a member

<sup>1</sup> Hodge, *op. cit.*, pt. ii, p. 598.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, pt. ii, p. 599.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* For the Iroquois, see Carr, *op. cit.*, p. 18; Margry, *op. cit.*, v, p. 8; *Jesuit Relations*, lxii, p. 63. For the western Indians, see Hennepin, *op. cit.*, p. 509; *Jesuit Relations*, lxix, p. 59. For the northern Indians, see Catesby, *op. cit.*, ii. p. xiii (editor's note).

of a tribe without a relationship of some sort; and to obtain this, he had to be adopted by a woman as her child.<sup>1</sup> The captive took the kinship name under the fiction that he was "younger" to every living person of the tribe at the time, and that all persons subsequently born were "younger" to him. If the captive belonged to a tribe of hereditary enemies who had from time immemorial been designated by opprobrious terms, such as cannibals, liars, snakes, etc., it might be that the captive was doomed to perpetual "younger brotherhood," and could never exercise authority over any person within the tribe, though such person might have been born after the adoption of the captive. Usually, though not invariably, the captives adopted were children. They might ultimately become useful members of the tribe, and by their virtues even win rank in kinship. A captive might thus pass from slavery to freedom.<sup>2</sup>

Occasionally the settlement of intertribal difficulties resulted in the freeing of the captives by the victors, with permission to return to their former homes. Such freedom might be given to a whole tribe that had been conquered,<sup>3</sup> or to single individuals. In either case the stigma of disgrace attached to the condition of slavery still remained, and leaders of the tribe were preferably chosen from those who had never been slaves.<sup>4</sup> Exchange or ransom was common. If a tribe declared war against another formally, which happened but rarely, slaves were sent with the notification of such fact to the enemy, and were given their freedom if they promised not to take up arms against their

<sup>1</sup> Hennepin, *op. cit.*, ii, p. 508.

<sup>2</sup> *Fifteenth Annual Report of the Bureau of American Ethnology*, 1893-1894, p. cxii.

<sup>3</sup> Brickell, *op. cit.*, p. 321; Lawson, *op. cit.*, p. 323; Catesby, *op. cit.*, ii, p. xiii.

<sup>4</sup> *Jesuit Relations*, liv, p. 237.

former masters.<sup>1</sup> Freedom was given for performing certain services against their masters' enemies, such as influencing their own tribe against such enemies.<sup>2</sup>

In concluding this account of the institution of slavery among the Indians of the present United States it should be stated that no attempt has been made to treat the subject in detail. The purpose of the chapter is to show the existence of slavery and something of its nature, so as to obtain an historical setting for the discussion of the enslavement of the Indians by the whites which is to follow. Relatively few of the Indian tribes have been mentioned, but these covered sufficient territory to show that the custom of slave-holding was practically universal.<sup>3</sup> The familiarity

<sup>1</sup> La Hontan, *op. cit.*, ii, p. 508.

<sup>2</sup> *Wisconsin Historical Society Collections*, xvi, p. 46.

<sup>3</sup> The holding of slaves by the Indians continued long after colonial times. It naturally died out first in the east, with the growth in power of the whites and the consequent decrease in the numbers and strength of the Indians.

The Indians of the Columbia River country held slaves till well into the nineteenth century. These they procured by trading beads and furs with the interior tribes. Franchere's *Narrative*, in Thwaites, *Early Western Travels*, vi, p. 324; xxix, p. 242; xxx, p. 111. The Blackfeet, Cayuse, Crows, and Ute were accustomed to keep the women taken in war as slaves, (*Ibid.*, xxiii, p. 118); and other neighboring tribes did the same. Travelers in Oregon in 1846 found that the Oregon Indians enslaved their war captives, and that they made war for the purpose of obtaining slaves. *Ibid.*, xxix, p. 124. The Tougletat, who inhabited Vancouver Island, at the same time had Indian slaves, captives in war. *Ibid.*, xxix, p. 149. The tribes of the section south of the Columbia River country were given over to the same custom. Both here, and in the Columbia River country, the Indians were heavy gamblers, and not infrequently staked their own freedom in their games. *Ibid.*, xxx, p. 161; xxvii, p. 171; Parker, *Journey Beyond the Rocky Mountains*, p. 53. The Indians of the extreme north-west held slaves in 1840. Considerable numbers were owned by the chiefs. These were worth thirty blankets each, and were generally purchased from the natives of Queen Charlotte Island, the great slave

of the Europeans who came to America with the institution of slavery, and the finding of the same custom among the Indians themselves, make their carrying on of the practice quite natural.<sup>1</sup>

part of the northwest coast. Bancroft, *History of the Northwest Coast*, ii, pp. 647-649.

The slaves of the Columbia River country were well treated as long as they were able to work. The district was a commercial one, and the slaves, as an article of commerce, were valuable. But when a slave grew old and was unable to work, he was neglected. The women of the tribe had several slaves who were dependent entirely upon their will. Slaves could be purchased by the male members of the tribes for wives. The Oackinacke Indians, at this time, possessed but few slaves, and these were adopted as children and as members of the family. *Ibid.*, vii, pp. 103, 107, 303.

Until 1850, the Thompson Indians of British Columbia enslaved captive Indians. Teit, *The Thompson Indians of British Columbia*, in *Memoirs of the American Museum of Natural History*, pp. 269, 290. In 1836, the Chinook Indians possessed Indian slaves. In 1855, the Ute sacrificed four slaves, and buried them with one of their chiefs. One of these slaves was buried alive. Thomas, *Indians of North America in Historic Times*, p. 369. In 1863, the Cherokee abolished slavery by law. This was amended in 1866, so as to permit it as a punishment for crime. Thwaites, *Early Western Travels*, xx, p. 303.

<sup>1</sup> Enslavement of the whites by the Indians was not uncommon. Cabeza de Vaca and other survivors of Narvaez's expedition were made slaves by the Indians among whom they wandered. *Narrative of Cabeza de Vaca*, in *Narratives of Early American History*, i, pp. 64, 69. Soto found one of these survivors, Juan Ortiz by name, who had taken on Indian customs, and nearly forgotten his native language. "Relation of Biedma," in Bourne, *Narratives of the Career of De Soto*, ii, p. 3.

Strachey, *The Historie of Travaile into Virginia*, speaks of a story that he had heard from the Indians, concerning an Indian chief, Eyanoco by name, liv'ng somewhere to the south of Virginia, who had seven white slaves who had escaped from the massacre at Roanoke. These slaves the Indians employed in beating copper. *Hakluyt Society Publication*, vi, p. 26. Whether the story is wholly or partly true has never been determined. That the Indians of the locality did enslave the whites captured in war or shipwrecked off the coast is shown by the preamble of an act of Carolina in 1707. *North Carolina Colonial Records*, i, p. 674. In the war of 1711, the Indians spared some of the

women and children captured on the plantations so that they might serve as slaves. *Ibid.*, i, p. 182.

Captain Hendrickson, in 1616, found three persons belonging to the Dutch West India Company, who were slaves of the Mohawk and Minquae, and who were traded to him for merchandise. Hazard, *Annals of Pennsylvania*, p. 7.

Father Bressani was captured in 1644 by the Iroquois, and given to a woman as a slave. She sent him to Fort Orange, where he was ransomed by the Dutch and returned to France. *Jesuit Relations*, xxvi, p. 49. Other Jesuits were enslaved by the Iroquois. Basqueville de la Potherie, *Histoire de l'Amérique Septentrionale*, iv, pp. 125-163. French men, women and children had a similar fate. *Jesuit Relations*, xl, p. 137; xlvi, p. 207. Some of them were ransomed and freed by the Dutch. Margry, *op. cit.*, vi, pp. 123, 125. Joutel, in 1687, feared that he would be enslaved by the Cenis, and put to work in their mines along with their Indian slaves. Margry, *op. cit.*, iii, p. 339. After the death of La Salle, and the massacre of most of his followers in 1687, the children who were spared were taken captive by the Spanish Indians, and sent to Mexico as slaves. Margry, *op. cit.*, iii, p. 339. Saint Denis, in 1721, certified that he had been eleven months a slave among the savages of the west Mississippi country. Robinson, *Account of Discoveries in the West*, etc., p. 215. As late as 1754, the Indians of Virginia had French prisoners as slaves. *Virginia Historical Society Collections*, iii, p. 267.

In the time of King Philip's War, Mrs. Rowlandson of Lancaster was taken prisoner by the Indians and sold to a Narraganset chief whose slave she became. Clark, *History of King Philip*, p. 290. During the various colonial wars, many Englishmen were taken by the Indians as slaves and sold to the French in Canada. *Massachusetts Archives*, lxxiv, p. 57.