

Appendix two

Preface to the original edition of the *Slaveholding Indians* (1914) by Annie Heloise Abel

PREFACE

This volume is the first of a series of three dealing with the slaveholding Indians as secessionists, as participants in the Civil War, and as victims under reconstruction. The series deals with a phase of American Civil War history which has heretofore been almost entirely neglected or, where dealt with, either misunderstood or misinterpreted. Perhaps the third and last volume will to many people be the most interesting because it will show, in great detail, the enormous price that the unfortunate Indian had to pay for having allowed himself to become a secessionist and a soldier. Yet the suggestiveness of this first volume is considerably larger than would appear at first glance. It has been purposely given a sub-title, in order that the peculiar position of the Indian, in 1861, may be brought out in strong relief. He was enough inside the American Union to have something to say about secession and enough outside of it to be approached diplomatically. It is well to note, indeed, that Albert Pike, negotiated the several Indian treaties that bound the Indian nations in an alliance with the seceded states, under the authority of the Confederate State Department, which was a decided advance upon United States practice—an innovation, in fact, that marked the tremendous importance that the Confederate government attached to the Indian friendship. It was something that stood out in marked contrast to the indifference manifested at the moment by the authorities at Washington; for, while

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they were neglecting the Indian even to an extent that amounted to actual dishonor, the Confederacy was offering him political integrity and political equality and was establishing over his country, not simply an empty wardship, but a bona fide protectorate.

Granting then that the negotiations of 1861 with the Indian nations constitute a phase of southern diplomatic history, it may be well to consider to what Indian participation in the Civil War amounted. It was a circumstance that was interesting rather than significant; and the majority will have to admit that it was a circumstance that could not possibly have materially affected the ultimate situation. It was the Indian country, rather than the Indian owner, that the Confederacy wanted to be sure of possessing; for Indian Territory occupied a position of strategic importance, from both the economic and the military point of view. The possession of it was absolutely necessary for the political and the institutional consolidation of the South. Texas might well think of going her own way and of forming an independent republic once again, when between her and Arkansas lay the immense reservations of the great tribes. They were slaveholding tribes, too, yet were supposed by the United States government to have no interest whatsoever in a sectional conflict that involved the very existence of the "peculiar institution." Thus the federal government left them to themselves at the critical moment and left them, moreover, at the mercy of the South, and then was indignant that they betrayed a sectional affiliation.

The author deems it of no slight advantage, in undertaking a work of this sort, that she is of British birth and antecedents and that her educational training, so largely American as it is, has been gained without re-

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spect to a particular locality. She belongs to no section of the Union, has lived, for longer or shorter periods in all sections, and has developed no local bias. It is her sincere wish that no charge of prejudice can, in ever so small a degree, be substantiated by the evidence, presented here or elsewhere.

ANNIE HELOISE ABEL.
Baltimore, September, 1914