

## INTRODUCTION

While writing principally autobiographically, I have sought to describe that great general movement westward—that irresistible wave of emigration which, arrested for a time by the Alleghenies, rose until at last it broke over and spread away across mountain, stream and plain, leaving States in its wake, until stopped by the shores of the Pacific.

The evolution of government and of civilization, and the adaptation of one to the other, are interesting to the student of history; but particularly fascinating is the story of the reclamation of the Great West and the supplanting of the wild savages that from primeval days were lords of the country but are now become wards of the Government, whose guardianship they were forced to recognize. This story is one well calculated to inspire a feeling of pride even in the breasts of those whose sentimentality impels to commiserate the hard lot of the poor Indian; for, rising above the formerly neglected prairies of the West are innumerable monuments of thrift, industry, intelligence, and all the contributory comforts and luxuries of a peaceful and God-fearing civilization; those evidences that proclaim to a wondering world the march of the Anglo-Saxon race towards the attainment of perfect citizenship and liberal, free and stable government.

For the small part I have taken in redeeming the West from savagery, I am indebted to circumstances rather than to a natural, inborn inclination for the strifes inseparable from the life I was almost forced to choose. But to especially good fortune must I make my acknowledgments, which protected me or preserved my life a hundred times when the very hand of vengeful fate appeared to lower its grasp above my head, and hope seemed a mockery that I had turned my back upon. Good fortune has also stood ever respon-

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sive to my call since I first came before the public, and to the generous American and English peoples, as well as to kind fortune, I here pour out a full measure of profound thanks and hearty appreciation, and shall hold them gratefully in my memory as a remembrance of old friends, until the drum taps "lights out" at the close of the evening of my eventful life.

*Sincerely, Yours*  
*W. G. Hardy*  
*Buffalo Bill*