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One's first sight of an Indian policeman was likely to be disappointing. Indians brought up to wear moccasins and bucksins never felt at home in the white man's clothes. Uniforms issued to policemen never fitted, although liberally supplied with gold buttons and a nickel police badge. Sometimes the policeman wore moccasins, but often he tottered about on runover cowboy boot heels. Besides his uniform, he carried a huge six shooter, a cartridge belt, and a large uncrushed black felt hat. The dominant impression was of heavy armament and a poker face. Visitors on the reservation were likely to become nervous when they found one of these silent policemen following them about, but the policeman was expected to keep track of strangers and expel intruders as well as keep order. Most of the trouble on reservations was caused by white men, and such surveillance was a part of the policeman's duty.

The Indian policeman was literal minded, and obeyed order to the letter. He could not be corrupted and he never weakened. Clark Whistler tells the story of an agent, new to the West, who had a striking illustration of strict obedience to his orders. News was brought that a certain white man with an Indian wife was on a drunk, threatening to kill his family. The agent sent a policeman to arrest the offender, giving emphatic orders, "Bring him dead or alive. Do not come back without him." By the time the lone policeman arrived at the scene of the trouble, the woman's brother had killed the drunk in self defense, and the family was busy laying out the corpse. The policeman astonished them all by insisting that he would take the body to the agency. The Indians argued and threatened to no avail. The policeman merely said "Agent's orders," borrowed a wagon, and drove off through the night. At