THE WEST SHORE.

THIRTEENTH YEAR. JANUARY, 1887. NUMBER 1.

THE INDIAN SCHOOL AT CHEMAWA.

FOR nearly a century the government of the United States has pursued a policy in regard to the aboriginal inhabitants of this country so unphilosophical in principle and so unjust in practice that this period has been very aptly characterized, by a gifted writer, as "a century of dishonor." While it has considered them as mentally unable to take care of themselves and unfitted for citizenship, the government has, on the other hand, dealt with them as responsible business men, and has not scrupled to take advantage of that very ignorance which it recognizes as a reason for according them special governmental tutelage. The official position in this respect is an anomalous one, and has resulted in the expenditure of much treasure and the loss of many precious lives.

As a fundamental principle the government has recognized the tribal ownership of lands, and, in pursuance of this, has negotiated with the various tribes, from time to time, for the acquisition of their titles. Commissioners representing the government have made treaties with numerous tribes, by which the Indian title to the lands over which those tribes have roamed for generations has been "extinguished," with the exception, usually, of a large tract which has been reserved for their occupancy in common. In these negotiations the Indians have been outrageously cheated. Millions of acres have been purchased for a consideration so ridiculously inadequate as to amount to almost no consideration. Promises have been made that have not been, and could not be, fulfilled, and there is scarcely a tribe that does not feel it has been most egregiously cheated. The Indians have been educated to the belief that they owned the country, and, as a natural consequence, they look upon the sharp practice by which they were inveigled into parting with their birthright, as little less than robbery. This, and the reservation system, has brought them into the same frame of mind toward the government that the tramp and anarchist possess toward the world—that it "owes them a living." In this it is impossible to say they are not, in a measure, justified. It is the logical result of our policy in deal-

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ing with them, and until this policy is changed we can hope for nothing better, and may certainly look for much that is worse.

The principle of tribal ownership is a wrong one, and is unique in the history of nations. The Anglo-Saxon race occupies this continent by the long-recognized right of conquest. This is as much a fact as though we had first landed on these shores with an army of invasion. We have taken the land and converted it to our own use, because we are the stronger in numbers, in intellectual power, and in all those forces which enable one race to dominate another. That we have made treaties with these people and have purchased their title for a consideration ridiculously small in comparison with the value of the land conveyed, does not lessen the force of this fact. We have displaced them because they could not help themselves, as has been time and again demonstrated by the subjugation of several powerful combinations of warlike tribes, confederated for the purpose of resisting our encroachments. Our purchase of title has been more for the purpose of throwing a sop to our consciences, in the form of a legal technicality, than for any other reason.

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and must, support them. The reservation system is devoid of a single virtue to which it can appeal for support, but on the contrary, it stands, like a granite wall, across the pathway leading to the elevation of the Indian race.

The first step to be taken is the severance of tribal relations and the weakening of tribal influences, by the assignment of specific tracts of land to each individual, and the throwing open to settlement of all lands now included within the limits of reservations, not thus apportioned to the Indians. As the tribal title has been recognized so long, it is now too late to assume that it does not exist, and the Indians must be compensated for the land thus taken. The purchase money should be applied —honestly and intelligently—to the settlement of the individuals upon their respective tracts, and the supplying of them with necessary facilities and instruction for gaining a livelihood. This also includes their protection from the rapacity of soulless men, who would, if permitted, soon become the possessors of every acre of land allotted to the Indians, leaving them with nothing whatever to depend upon. The next step is the education of the children in the common branches taught in our public schools, and their instruction in the ordinary trades and in agriculture. It is of the utmost importance to instill into the Indian mind the idea that labor is honorable, that industry is commendable, and that to be a property owner and self-supporting is to occupy a much higher position than his present one—a roving and improvident idler. To do this, time will be required, for the natural impulses, rooted and grounded in a race for generations, are not easily supplanted. Much effort has been made in this direction, but the reservation system has almost completely nullified it. It is of little use to undertake to inculcate principles of industry in the minds of the young, when they see them constantly ignored and scorned by their elders. Even when children are removed to a distance, and given instruction in such schools as those at Chemawa, Carlisle, Lawrence, and other places, the effects of their training are quickly overcome by their contact with, and almost necessary participation in, the demoralizing methods of the reservation. Precept makes but slight headway when opposed by example. The matter of education on the reservation has been very

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much abused. The reservations have been apportioned among the leading religious denominations, and, as a consequence, more attention has been paid to making Methodists, Presbyterians, Baptists and Catholics out of the Indians, than in rendering them self-respecting and self-dependent citizens. Schools should be undenominational, and industrial, rather than religious, in character. There is no question about the beneficial effects upon the education of the young the breaking up of the tribal and reservation system would have. With those great breeders of laziness and dependence abolished, the leaven of industry and personal independence brought home from the schools would have an opportunity to do its work. Undoubtedly, the schools which have done the most good, are those which the government has established at various places remote from tribal and reservation influences. There the pupil has both precept and example constantly before him, and thus he makes vastly greater progress than when surrounded by all the conflicting influences of aboriginal life on the reservation. He returns to his home better educated and more thoroughly impregnated with ideas of industry and manly independence than is possible to any graduate of a reservation school. The crying shame is that he is at once subjected to those demoralizing influences, and degenerating mode of life. With these influences removed, with the Indians located on separate tracts of land, and with good industrial schools, such as is described below, the Indian question may be considered settled, so far as placing the race on the true highway of progress is concerned. The question of giving them the elective franchise and admitting them to the full privileges and responsibilities of citizenship, is one to which no definite answer is now required.

The Indian Industrial School at Chemawa, Oregon, is an institution supported entirely by the government, and, although a large sum of money has been expended, the results accomplished are so highly gratifying and have such a noticeable effect upon the tribes throughout which its influence extends, that it would be difficult to find an individual at all acquainted with them who would not say the money has been well expended. Such was not the opinion when the institution had its inception seven years ago. At that time it experienced much bitter opposition, but its work has effectually silenced the tongue of every opponent. On the twenty-fifth day of February, 1880, Capt. M. C. Wilkinson, an enthusiast on the subject, who had been detailed from the army for the purpose, established a school under the auspices of the government, at Forest Grove, in the Willamette valley, twenty-five miles from Portland. He began with fourteen boys and four girls, all from the Puyallup reservation. To this number has been added from time to time, until now there is an average attendance of two hundred, representing tribes from California to Alaska and from Oregon to Montana.

For six years the school flourished and grew in size and influence, until the old structures at Forest Grove were destroyed by fire in 1885. It was then decided to place it on a better foundation and better equip it for the work it had proved itself capable of performing. A tract of land was purchased five miles north of Salem, on the shores of Lake LaBish, a favorite resort of the valley Indians in days gone by. This locality was known as "Chemawa," meaning "old home," and this name, pleasing in both sound and sentiment, was bestowed upon the collection of small, rude shake houses built and occupied while the new buildings were in progress of erection.

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In November, 1885, school was opened at Chemawa, with the new superintendent, Col. John Lee, in charge. The grounds were a wilderness of forest and brush, but the boys went bravely to work upon them, clearing a site for the buildings and for a campus, as well as a field for cultivation. By the expenditure of more labor than one not familiar with such work can appreciate, they have succeeded in clearing about forty of the one hundred and seventy-one acres constituting the plat. More than this they have accomplished. By labor for others, chiefly in the hop fields, they have earned considerable money, which has been placed to the credit of the school as a whole. Out of this fund they have purchased an adjoining tract of eighty-five acres, at a cost of $1,500, and presented it to the government in trust for the school.

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It is wonderful what progress the Indian children make in the five years they are permitted to remain in the institution. It must be borne in mind, that, as a rule, they can not speak English when they first enter the school. In this way they are at a disadvantage, equivalent to at least a year's time, as compared with white pupils. Nothing but English is spoken at the institution, and conversation in Indian tongues and the ubiquitous Chinook jargon is interdicted. The pupils are given English names upon entering the school. These regulations naturally render the first few months far from pleasant, and if such violent homesickness as shall lead to desertion ensues, the children can scarcely be blamed. The result in the end, however, is good, as the children more quickly learn to speak the English tongue, and thus the sooner become reconciled to their altered mode of life and in a condition of mind fitting them for the reception of instruction, and for rapid progress in their studies and industrial pursuits. The school is divided into two grades and four classes, the pupils ranging in age between five and twenty-five years. Half of each grade is in the school room in the forenoon, and the other half in the afternoon. The half not attending school is employed in the shops, laundry, kitchen and on the farm. There is thus a daily division of labor and study, with ample time given to all for recreation. Four teachers are employed, two for each grade.

In assigning places in the shops much is left to the inclination of the pupil, and if, after he has worked some time at a trade, it becomes evident that he is not fitted for it, he is changed to some other. Owing to the fact that only such things are manufactured as are used in the institution, there is not, as yet, an opportunity to teach every pupil a special trade. In consequence, the majority of the boys are given employment on the farm and about the grounds. Agriculture is, in the main, the most serviceable thing they can learn, and it is to be regretted that a more extensive farm is not provided for their cultivation. The pupils make all the shoes and boots worn by the two hundred children, do all the blacksmithing and iron work, all the carpenter work needed about the place—except, of course, the buildings, which are erected by contract—make all the clothing for both boys and girls, as well as the bed clothing, do all the laundry work and cooking, make all the improvements about the grounds and farms. The girls are taught laundrying, cooking, sewing and housework in rotation, being changed from one class of employment to another every six months. When they graduate they are fully competent to preside over a house of their own. As a sample of what they accomplish it will be interesting to learn that in eleven months eight girls, working half a day, equal to the daily work of four girls, made two thousand and ninety-six pieces of clothing and bedding. Some of them are capable of doing all kinds of cutting and fitting.

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The Indian children of both sexes display a natural aptitude for music. The girls are given instruction on both the piano and organ, as well as in vocal music, and many of them become quite skillful performers and pleasing singers. The music furnished by them at their graduating exercises, last June, was not inferior to that given by the scholars of an average white school upon similar occasions. The boys have a band of sixteen pieces, and execute a large number of selections in a very creditable manner. Love of music is one of the most elevating influences that can be brought to bear upon the human soul, and there can be no doubt that the culture of this humanizing instinct will do much to sustain these avant-couriers of Indian civilization, in the hard struggle against the degenerating influences by which they will be environed after leaving the protecting care of their friends at Chemawa.

ent time, seventy girls and one hundred and eleven boys, representing twenty-nine tribes. There are twenty-nine Nez Perce Indians, from Idaho; eight Umatilla and twenty Wasco, from Eastern Oregon; twenty-six Yakima, from Eastern Washington; fifteen Puyallup and eleven Snohomish, from Western Washington; three Sitka and five Stickeen, from Alaska; five Clatsop, from near the mouth of the Columbia river; three Santiam and two Calipooia, from the Willamette valley; nine Klamath, seven Rogue river and one Modoc, from Southern Oregon; eight Piute, from Nevada, Idaho and Oregon; two Crow, from Montana, and from one to four of the widely-scattered Warm Springs, Spokane, Clallam, Skokomish, Neah Bay, Tootoonia, Chehalis, Shasta Costa, Tenino, Snake and Chippeway tribes. A class of nineteen graduated last June, and a much larger one will complete the course at the end of the present school year. The influence these graduates must exert upon their friends and relatives on their return to their former homes, can not but be highly beneficial in its effect upon the relations between the two races. Were the way paved for the better working of this influence, by the dispersion of the tribal congregations and location of the various families upon separate tracts of land, then those engaged in the noble work of bringing this race into the light of civilization, would feel that their labors were not in vain.

H. L. Wells.