

# THE CHEMAWA AMERICAN

H. E. WADSWORTH, Superintendent

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VOLUME 16

MAY, 1914

NUMBER 8

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## MUTUAL UNDERSTANDING

BY DR. JOHN CARL PARISH



THE following splendid article appeared in the last number of *The Quarterly Journal of the Society of the American Indians*:

From the time when the ships of the white man first sailed into the view of the Indians down to the present time there has been a constant wall of misunderstanding between the two races. It was an unfortunate thing, but a very natural thing. Let us consider the situation for a moment. There was the Atlantic Ocean dividing, with several thousand miles, two continents on which there had been developing for hundreds or thousands of years two distinct, diametrically different, civilizations, each with its own system of industry and its own system of religion, ideals and customs of life. Neither race knew anything about the other or even knew of the other's existence, and then, when these three little ships sailed across the sea, the meeting of the two races was precipitated, and there upon was involved this necessary combination or contact between two races which has opened the problem which has resulted and has continued down to the present time.

Now, this lack of understanding, as I say, is the most natural thing in the world. These men came over to this country with their preconceived notions and prejudices, whether good or bad, and they were obliged to put themselves in touch with people who were already here. It was almost an impossibility. And in the same way, the people who were already here—the American Indians—endowed with their racial peculiarities and ideals, customs and religion, were unable, for the same reason, to put themselves in the minds of the people who were arriving.

There were certain additional difficulties in the case of the English colonists. The people of the French nation were different from the people of the English nation. There was a certain imaginative type of mind that was needed in the contact of the two races. They needed to