

THE NEZ PERCES

THEIR LAST STAND UNDER CHIEF JOSEPH



IN the Oregonian of July the 31, this year, there is editorial mention and review of a splendid article in the Washington Historical Quarterly. The Oregonian most ably sets forth the historical facts regarding the crime against the Nez Perces, as follows:

In the current number of the Washington Historical Quarterly, Nelson C. Titus gives an account of "The Last Stand of the Nez Perces" under their heroic Chief Joseph. The final battle of the inglorious war in which the Nez Perce nation was ruined and all but exterminated was fought on the western slope of the Bears Paw Mountains, whither the starving Indians had fled before the armies of the white man in the hope of curing buffalo meat for their Winter's food. Here they were surprised by the United States troops under Colonel Nelson A. Miles, and, after a surprisingly prolonged resistance, were obliged to surrender. The trouble with the Nez Perce began, as most troubles began between the Indians and the white men, through the treachery and dishonesty of the "superior race." Chief Joseph's tribe had played an honorable part in the history of the West from the time of the Lewis and Clarke expedition. They befriended these bold explorers and were so deeply impressed by their manly virtues that some twenty-five years later they sent to St. Louis asking for teachers of the white man's religion to come and live among them.

Marcus Whitman set up his mission in response to this pathetic plea. At that time the vigorous and thriving tribe of the Nez Perces possessed a wide stretch of territory bounded on the east by the Bitter Root Mountains and extending into Oregon and Washington through Idaho. But the greedy eye of the goldseeker and stockman was already fastened upon their land and by the year 1855 the Nez Perces had been worked up to the point of submitting to one of those "treaties" by which our Indian wards have been systematically swindled. This treaty deprived them of all their territory but the Wallowa Valley, a romantic and fruitful region in the northern part of Oregon. Here they dwelt happily for many years and might have developed a unique civilization in the Swiss-like liberty of the friendly mountains had it not been for the inveterate greed of the miners and cattlemen. Envious of the scant possessions of the Nez Perces, these adventurers egged the Government on to require another renunciation of the Indians.

This time they must forsake their lovely homes in the Wallowa