

THE WEST SHORE.

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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-