

at Wallula, Washington territory, on April 23, 1877, and as a result of the council then held these non-treaty tribes, although insisting as strongly as ever on their right to live undisturbed in their own country, yet refrained from taking part in the war which broke out a few weeks later.

It is foreign to our purpose to recount the history of the Nez Percé war of 1877. As is generally the case with Indian wars, it originated in the unauthorized intrusion of lawless whites on lands which the Indians claimed as theirs by virtue of occupancy from time immemorial. The Nez Percés, whom all authorities agree in representing as a superior tribe of Indians, originally inhabited the valleys of Clearwater and Salmon rivers in Idaho, with the country extending west of Snake river into Washington and Oregon as far as the Blue mountains. They are first officially noticed in the report of the Indian Commissioner for 1843, where they are described as "noble, industrious, sensible," and well disposed toward the whites, while "though brave as Cæsar, the whites have nothing to dread at their hands in case of their dealing out to them what they conceive to be right and equitable." (*Comr.*, 18.) It being deemed advisable to bring them into more direct relations with the United States, the agent who made the report called the chiefs together in this year and "assured them of the kind intentions of our government, and of the sad consequences that would ensue to any white man, from this time, who should invade their rights." (*Comr.*, 19.) On the strength of these fair promises a portion of the tribe, in 1855, entered into a treaty by which they ceded a large part of their territory, and were guaranteed possession of the rest. In 1860, however, gold was discovered in the country, and the usual result followed. "In defiance of law, and despite the protestations of the Indian agent, a townsite was laid off in October, 1861, on the reservation, and Lewiston, with a population of 1,200, sprung into existence." (*Comr.*, 20.) A new treaty was then made in 1863, by which the intruders were secured in possession of what they had thus seized, and the Nez Percés were restricted within much narrower limits. By this treaty the Wallowa valley, in northeastern Oregon, the ancestral home of that part of the tribe under the leadership of Chief Joseph, was taken from the Indians. This portion of the tribe, however, had refused to have part in the negotiations, and "Chief Joseph and his band, utterly ignoring the treaty of 1863, continued to claim the Wallowa valley, where he was tacitly permitted to roam without restraint, until the encroachments of white settlers induced the government to take some definite action respecting this band of non-treaty Nez Percés." (*Comr.*, 21.) At this time the tribe numbered about 2,800, of whom about 500 acknowledged Joseph as their chief.

Collisions between the whites and Indians in the valley became more frequent, and one of Joseph's band had been killed, when a commission was appointed in 1876 to induce the Indians to give up the Wallowa valley and remove to Lapwai reservation in Idaho. Joseph still refus-