

many of them, and cleared little farms. They raised wheat, buckwheat, potatoes and other vegetables. They felt that they had located to stay and were full of hope. But the trader eagerly trusted them to the amount of their annuities and when the money came his bills were paid first and generally the Indians got little or nothing. He charged them \$5 a pint for death-shot whiskey and five prices for everything they bought. For a time the mill ground their grain, but soon the miller managed to be away when needed, the grain was not ground and the Indians were forced to buy "feed" from the trader. They saw it was useless to raise grain and quit. Whites worked in among them and swindled them out of their teams and gradually many of them fell back into their old ways of living. The good intention of the government was forgotten, the agent, teachers and other employes simply drew salaries and let the Indians go as they pleased. In twenty-five years only two Indians learned to write and six to read in those government schools.

When the war came there was a boom in pine lands. Then Saginaw lumbermen became anxious to get hold of the Isabella Reservation. Church members "laid in" with the Agent to get it. The Indians were taught that the reason they did not get rich "like white man" was because the government treated him "like child." The Indians were induced to petition government to get their land in fee simple so that they could use it like white man. The whites sent affidavits setting forth that they knew the Indians to be educated Christians capable of taking care of their property.

The government yielded. In 1864 the treaty was amended so as to give the Indians their land in fee, but said they should first be classified into those "competent" and those "not so competent." The first should get their patents without restriction. The second could not alienate their property. The classification could have been made in a week, but it was not made for several years.

Why? Because the white Christian (?) lumbermen were not ready. They sent agents among the Indians and an agreement was signed whereby the Indians bound themselves to sell to these whites all the land they had selected or might select as well as the pine. They bound themselves not to chop over three acres a year for making farms and not to remove a log or burn a brush pile without the consent of the whites who were 60 miles away and no road between but the trail. Before the classification was made those whites had become the ostensible owners of the reservation. Then the Indians were classified and out of 1,700 who were to receive patents 1,652 were "competent" and 48 "not so competent." Then the list of selections of land, was made out and sent to Washington. The Saginaw whites got a copy of it although the government

required that it should be kept secret. A white man on the reservation, knowing what the Saginaw men had done, sent to Washington and bribed somebody to give him a copy of the list. He made six copies and sold them to other whites at \$50 each. Thus there were seven gangs besides the Saginaw fellows in the forests of the reservation before a patent was issued striving to get the Indians bound to sell to them. Government discovered the fraud, cancelled the selections and ordered a new list to be made in secret. The work was finished on a Saturday. The government agent had to travel 18 miles to reach a train. Three men, thieves, went on the stage and bribed the driver to arrive too late for the train. The agent had to remain over Sunday. The thieves stole his list and copied it. They went back to the reservation and before the patents issued they had "clouds" or bogus claims on more than half of the reservation. Government discovered this fraud also and arrested the thieves. They were carried to Detroit for trial, but got clear on the technicality that they had only "copied a public document." Government was too indifferent to follow it up and they escaped the penitentiary. Two of those three men have been bounding me for years because I exposed their crime against the Indians.

In 1871—2 patents were issued to 1700 Indians on the reservation, 1652 being "competent." Inside of two years there were only two of those Indians who owned a foot of land. Of the 48 "not so competent" a white man now living told me that he paid the agent, a Methodist priest, \$10 each to get 23 of them changed to "competent" in Washington, and that he then bought them from the Indians. Such was the end of a great experiment to civilize the Indians. The government wasted a quarter of a million dollars, permitted white thieves to get it and the Indians were driven from their homes worse than before the experiment began. The government was a party to the shameful wrong.

Of the methods by which the thieves obtained the Indians' land I will give you some account in another article. Here I can only say that history can hardly show a more cruel robbery and crime than the despoiling of the Isabella Chipenaa.

In 1883 I went to the reservation knowing what government had done and expecting to find a high degree of civilization among the Indians. I found that there were only about 300 of them and only three or four families that were not in a state of beggary. They had died of hunger and cold, or wandered away. I at once began an exposure of the maltreatment of the Indians. An investigation was ordered by President Arthur, but the thieves were all republicans. They broke it down by assuring the authorities that if it were allowed to go on it would throw the State into the hands of the democrats in 1884. In the fall of 1884 I went to the res-

ervation determined to carry my work through under Cleveland. I intended to remain three months, and gave Sunday lectures to cover my design, which was to get a complete history of the frauds. When it was discovered what I was doing the thieves bought an outfit for a paper and hired a blackguard who would have been a bonanza for the Salt Lake Tribune to fight me. They also employed a Methodist priest who had been convicted of stealing from a child. I remained on the reservation eleven months. Twice I was attacked by hired roughs. The thieves went to Washington and had me shut out of the Indian office. I appealed to Cleveland. He ordered Lamar to investigate. A special agent was sent. He and the Indian agent for the State spent three months and sent in a report that corroborated my exposure of the frauds, and the agent was instructed to obtain evidence and prosecute as fast as possible. Had the work been done years before when government knew of the wrongs and the Republican party was in its zenith of power those men would have been sent to the penitentiary. When I finally compelled Washington to look at the case the limit of criminal prosecution had long passed. But a dozen men were convicted in civil suits, all Christians, and some of them worth millions, and the frauds were thoroughly broken up. The remnant of the Indians are better off today than for many years, but they have lost their property forever. But I have shown you only part of my work. The real friends of the Indians in the East were working hard to have government recognize "the manhood" of the Indian and give him his lands in fee. In the West thieves were urging the same thing, knowing that once the Indian got his patent a bottle of whisky, a gun, a pony, or a few dollars would soon relieve him of it. Some of the thieves whom I had exposed were urging it. I at once sounded an alarm. I showed what had resulted from the fee simple plan on the Isabella reservation. I warned the friends of the Indian that they were only preparing a way for his destruction, and urged that all allotted lands should be held in trust. A copy of the Dawes bill was sent to me in 1886 for an opinion. I urged that the Indians be allowed to select and that their lands be held in trust for a generation, at least, and better, if for fifty years. When the bill became a law there was a proviso creating a trusteeship for 25 years and giving the President power to extend it if the Indian was shown to be then incompetent to take care of his property and protect himself.

It is my satisfaction to know that I helped to secure that provision. It is all the protection over 300,000 Indians have today against the white thieves who would rob them and destroy them without hesitation if they once became the owners in fee of the last claim they have on earth. For doing this work I have been persecuted by those Michigan