

CHAPTER XIV.

Indian Women

The Indian Women of Canada, their Industries, Education and Religion.

In speaking of the Indian women of Canada, it must be remembered that reference is made to those tribes only which have from time to time been taken into "treaty" by the Dominion Government. The land, which had originally belonged to the Indians, was absorbed by the white races in their advance north and west. Therefore, with such Indians as were willing, the Government made treaties to the following effect: that in return for their promise to surrender for all-time any claim to the land, certain grants of money (and in some cases of food), schools, and other benefits would be made over to them; they were then allowed to choose "reserves," on which they have ever since lived as "Wards of the Government."

Of the many nomadic tribes of Indians and Esquimaux in the far north no authentic statistical information can be had.

Industries.

From the earliest time of which there is any record, an important work among the women of all the tribes has been the making of Wampum, that is, strings of beads put together in various shapes and of various substances,—originally little painted sticks, but usually bone or shell. These strings, made up into belts two feet or more long, are used by the less civilized tribes in the place of money, and nothing of importance is done by them without Wampum; nor is anything regarded as binding, or deserving of