

Our Indians.

V.

THE SIOUX RESERVE ON BIRD-TAIL CREEK--- NOTES OF ADVANCEMENT.

THE INDIANS TAKING KINDLY TO THE CULTI- VATION OF THE SOIL---BEAUTIFUL BIRTLE.

Gentle reader, as the last century writers in their affectionate manner used to say, were you ever among the deep cut valleys and picturesque coulees of Northwestern Manitoba? These are the Manitoban highlands! Here you have reached the second great steppe. After you have travelled the length of the Manitoban & Northwestern railway and reached this point some 185 miles northwest of Winnipeg, you will find yourself discussing with your fellow-passenger the comparative merits of Minnedosa and Birtle valleys. Fourteen years ago the writer was shown a vertical section of this region by one of the early exploring engineers of the first Canada Pacific railway, and these deep valleys of the second prairie level gave it the appearance of a saw-edge. It was then said that it would take nine miles of a circuit to cross the Minnedosa valley; and this feature was given as a reason for diverting the C.P.R. railway to the present southern route. But what the Northwestern has lost in railway engineering it has certainly gained in beauty. The Bird-tail creek, which has been softened in the name of the town into Birtle is here narrow, but its banks give a good climb of 150 or two hundred feet. Having clambered to the eastern cliff let us turn and look at the picture before us. Up and down in the distance may be seen the heights of the winding banks. On yonder high hill is the pretentious residence of a former member of parliament of the district. It has a considerable tower and on the top a flag staff from which on festive occasions its master's banner floated. The house is somewhat falling to decay and is a picture of deserted greatness, "Sic transit gloria mundi." Further up to the right is railway hill, while the station and other buildings are half a