

depended; and who, from the ignorance of these nice distinctions of liberal-conservative and conservative-liberal, had imagined that the strength and power of the empire was not of secondary importance to the strength and power of a party. But the year 1869 did not pass altogether into the bygone without giving a faint echo of disturbance in one far-away region of the earth. It is true, that not the smallest breathing of that strife which was to make the succeeding year crimson through the centuries had yet sounded on the continent of Europe. No; all was as quiet there as befits the mighty hush which precedes colossal conflicts. But far away in the very farthest West, so far that not one man in fifty could tell its whereabouts, up somewhere between the Rocky Mountains, Hudson Bay, and Lake Superior, along a river called the Red River of the North, a people, of whom nobody could tell who or what they were, had risen in insurrection. Well-informed persons said these insurgents were only Indians, others, who had relations in America, averred that they were Scotchmen, and one journal, well-known for its clearness upon all subjects connected with the American Continent, asserted that they were Frenchmen. Amongst so much conflicting testimony, it was only natural that the average Englishman should possess no very decided opinions upon the matter; in fact, it came to pass that the average Englishman, having heard that somebody was rebelling against him somewhere or other, looked to his atlas and his journal for information on the subject, and having failed in obtaining any from either source, naturally concluded that the whole thing was something which no fellow could be expected to understand. As, however, they who follow the writer of these pages through such vicissitudes as he may encounter will have