

Saskatchewan I know of none so touching as that which is to be found in an assemblage of some 20 little orphan children gathered together beneath the roof of the Sisters of charity at the Settlement of St. Albert. These children are of all races, and even in some instances the sole survivors of what was lately a numerous family. They are fed, clothed, and taught at the expense of the Mission; and when we consider that the war which is at present raging in France has dried up the sources of charity from whence the Missions of the North West derived their chief support, and that the present winter is one of unusual scarcity and distress along the North Saskatchewan, then it will be perceived what a fitting object for the assistance of other communities is now existing in this distant orphanage of the North.

I cannot close this notice of the epidemic without alluding to the danger which will arise in the spring of introducing the infection into Manitoba. As soon as the prairie route becomes practicable there will be much traffic to and from the Saskatchewan—furs and robes will be introduced into the Settlement despite the law which prohibits their importation. The present quarantine establishment at Rat Creek is situated too near to the Settlement to admit of a strict enforcement of the sanitary regulations. It was only in the month of October last year that a man coming direct from Carlton died at this Rat Creek, while his companions, who were also from the same place, and from whom he caught the infection, passed on into the Province. If I might suggest the course which appears to me to be the most efficacious I would say that a constable stationed at Fort Ellice during the spring and summer months, who would examine freighters, and others, giving them Bills of Health to enable them to enter the Province, would effectually meet the requirements of the situation. All persons coming from the West are obliged to pass close to the neighborhood of Fort Ellice. This station is situated about 170 miles West of the Provincial boundary, and about 300 miles South East of the South Saskatchewan—forming the only post of call upon the road between Carlton and Portage La Prairie. I have only to add that unless vaccination is made compulsory among the half-breed inhabitants they will, I fear, be slow to avail themselves of it. It must not be forgotten that with the disappearance of the snow from the plains a quantity of infected matter—clothing, robes, and portions of skeletons will again become exposed to the atmosphere, and also, that the skins of wolves, etc., collected during the present winter, will be very liable to contain infection of the most virulent description.

The portion of Your Excellency's Instructions which has reference to the Indian tribes of the Assiniboine and Saskatchewan regions now claim my attention.

The aboriginal inhabitants of the country lying between Red River and the Rocky Mountains are divided into tribes of Saulteaux, Swampies, Crees, Assiniboines, or Stonies of the Plains, Blackfeet and Assiniboines of the Mountains. A simpler classification, and one which will be found more useful when estimating the relative habits of these tribes, is to divide them into two great classes of Prairie Indians and Thickwood Indians—the first comprising the Blackfeet with their kindred tribes of Bloods, Lurcees, and Peagins, as also the Crees of the Saskatchewan, and the Assiniboines of the Qu'Appelle; and the last being composed of the Rocky Mountain Stonies, the Swampy Crees, and the Saulteaux of the country lying between Manitoba and Fort Ellice. This classification marks in reality the distinctive characteristics of the Western Indians. On the one hand we find the Prairie Tribes subsisting almost entirely upon the buffalo, assembling together in large camps, acknowledging the leadership and authority of men conspicuous by their abilities in war or in the chase, and carrying on a perpetual state of warfare with the other Indians of the plains.

On the other hand we find the Indians of the Woods subsisting by fishing and by the pursuit of moose and deer, living together in small parties, admitting only a very nominal authority on the part of one man professing to entertain hostile feelings towards certain races, but rarely developing such feelings into positive hostilities—altogether a much more peacefully disposed people, because less exposed to the dangerous influence of large assemblies.

Commencing with the Saulteaux, I find that they extend Westward