

## THE WEEK.

WE SHALL ANSWER some questions next week, and invite other subscribers who have questions they would like answered, to contribute to our question and answer column. This department must be made of interest to every reader and to do so we shall have to reject such questions as are not interesting reading for all.

## WAR WITH REBELS.

The butchery at Frog Lake by Cree Indians has been confirmed and denied several times, but it is now thought a certainty. Riel holds his position as a prophet well. He goes about with a small cross and proclaims himself Antichrist, trying to convince the half-breeds that he is superhuman and is going to be their deliverer. He proclaimed that the sun would be darkened by him on the 15th of this month, when he knew the partial eclipse of the sun would take place and told his followers not to believe in him if the sun were not darkened. John Kerry, one of the prisoners who escaped from Riel's clutches, says that Riel personally superintended the pillage of his shop. So far as he could tell, half the rebels were armed with shot guns, and the other half had rifles. Two brothers named Kerr, who are half-breeds, were arrested for telling a telegraph operator that he had better make his escape. Riel held a council of his twelve ministers and advised that the men should be released as he had always found them good fellows. Their lives were accordingly spared. They returned to Batoche's Crossing but left again on being warned by a friendly Indian that their lives were not safe. The most reliable accounts of the numbers of Riel's forces say that he has not as many as a thousand followers, although there are many Indians ready to join him should he prove at all successful. The number of half-breeds under him who are properly armed do not amount to two hundred men. A telegram from Fargo in Dakota territory says that a hundred and fifty Montana Indians have gone north to join Riel, and that if the troubles continue much longer many warriors from Wyoming, Montana and Black Hills will also join the rebels in the North-West. On the 21st instant, a report, which afterwards proved true, was received here. It stated that Fort Pitt had been captured five days previously and that two policemen had been killed. The attack was made by Big Bear and his band of Indians, and Little Poplar and his band, amounting to over three hundred Indians in all. The fort on the other hand was held by twenty-one policemen. Inspector F. J. Dickens, who is a son of the great novelist, commanded the force in the fort and in his description of the fight he gives the following details:—On the 15th April, Chief Big Bear and his band of Indians approached the fort and sending a messenger demanded that arms and ammunition be given him by the police. Inspector Dickens answered that they would never be given. Scouts returning from Frog Lake were at this time passing the fort and were fired upon by the Indians, who were enraged at the refusal of the police to give them the arms they demanded. An exciting fight followed, one policeman named Cowan being killed, and another named Loosby wounded. The latter seeing that he would be unable to fight the Indians single handed, ran for the fort for safety. Loosby was hotly pursued but reached the fort without further injury. The redskins were brought to a stop by the police opening fire on them from the barracks. Four Indians

were killed and several wounded, and the rest driven back. The Indians numbered about 250, but notwithstanding their superior numbers, they did not stand before the fire of the police. Just before firing commenced chief factor McLean, of the Hudson's Bay Company, had a parley with Big Bear, who told him that he intended to kill only the police, and if the civilians would leave the fort they would be safe. Believing that the Indians so much out-numbered the garrison that they would be able to take the fort, and anxious for the safety of the women and children, of whom there was a large number, McLean determined to accept Big Bear's terms. He then left the fort with all the civilians, and they are now with the Indians. The police, then reduced to 22 men, left in a scow for Battleford, bringing with them all the arms and ammunition in the barracks. Before leaving Fort Pitt the police received word from McLean that the Indians had coal oil and fire arrows prepared, and were ready to fire the fort if the police remained. The conduct of the police was gallant in every respect. On their arrival at Battleford Col. Morris sent the police band to meet them, and they marched into the barracks amid the cheers of the whole population. It may be stated that Fort Pitt is no more than an ordinary log house. Battleford has been attacked by a number of Indians and half-breeds but without any serious results. Quite a sensation was caused in the Fort by the death of Frank Smart, who was killed while out scouting, and who had three bullets through his body when found three miles distant from Battleford. The garrison of the place was again greatly excited on the arrival of five of the police who had fought at Fort Pitt and who told the story of their encounter with the rebels. The Battleford garrison were continually fearing an attack by a large force of rebel Indians, but the arrival of Col. Otter and his column of volunteers on the 24th inst. relieved them from any fears concerning their safety. The Indians left on the approach of the troops and all is now quiet at Battleford. The houses in that part of the village of Battleford, which the people in the fort had not been able to go to before the arrival of the troops, were found untouched. Instructor Payne's store was visited. Flour was spilt all over the floors, the furniture was smashed and the body of Payne himself was found in a pig-stye with three gashes on the head. Nothing has so far been heard in Battleford concerning the civilians who left Fort Pitt and accepted Big Bear's protection. There is much fear concerning them, as Big Bear cannot be trusted. Col. Otter will likely make an attack on some of the hostile Indians north of Battleford and especially on Poundmaker.

The great event of the campaign so far has been a fight between General Middleton's forces and the rebels, fifteen miles south of Batoche's Crossing. At nine o'clock on the morning of Friday the 24th inst., the following troops under Gen. Middleton were advancing from Clarke's to Batoche's Crossing:—Infantry—90th Battalion, 204; C Company, Toronto School of Infantry, 40; Royal Grenadiers, 250. Artillery—A Battery, Quebec, 120; Winnipeg Field Battery, 52; and, Cavalry—Capt French's command, 25, and Col. Boulton's volunteers, 60. Each of the batteries had two 9-pounder muzzle-loading rifled guns with fuse and shrapnell and precision shells and case shot. Scouts, commanded by Major Boulton, were a short distance ahead of the main forces. Suddenly the rebels advanced from the side of the Saskatchewan river through a deep gully, and almost before the scouts were aware of it they

received a volley of bullets. The rebels had come out of the ravine mounted on horses, and, after having fired on the scouts, retired again and poured a second heavy fire on the volunteers. The Indians, according to their custom, got behind trees or small unevenness in the ground and fired from behind shelter. The volunteers were ordered to fire only when they got a good sight of the enemy and then to fire in volleys. All the time the Indians kept up a terrible howling and their war-whoops could be heard through all the noise of battle. At one time the opposing forces were within thirty yards of each other. Though often driven back into the ravine, the Indians rallied time and again, but about one o'clock, after four hours of very hard fighting, they were driven back down the ravine, the volunteers pursuing. The enemy disappeared among the bluffs and the retreat was sounded by Major Buchan.

To dislodge the enemy from the bluffs where they had taken refuge, and from which they kept up a heavy fire on the volunteers, was the next care of Gen. Middleton, who while riding to the front on the first encounter with the enemy had a bullet put through his fur cap, narrowly escaping being killed. He caused the guns to be placed so that they might rain down their destructive fire on the rebels. They however, were so well hidden that the firing had little effect for some time.

The Indians' war-whoop was heard only at intervals and they and the half-breeds seemed to have spent most of their ammunition, for the firing from the bluffs had nearly ceased. A log house in the middle of the ravine had been occupied by rebels, and on the advance of the troops toward this they were received by a destructive fire. The log house was finally captured, and a lot of provisions, which it contained, secured.

Finally the troops retired from the battlefield to camp, having completely routed the enemy. They had not been long in camp before thirty mounted rebels suddenly made their appearance and began jeering at the volunteers from a distance. The artillery was ordered to be brought to bear on them and the men soon had to retire. It was not till six o'clock that all the rebels had left. The rebel numbers were estimated at 300 in all, half of whom were half-breeds. Their force was probably under this number, however. Twelve were taken prisoners and it is thought that at least fifteen were killed. The dead among the volunteers numbered nine, two of whom were killed in the first charge. The wounded numbered forty-two. Some of the most serious wounds were from buck-shot, and the use of this by the rebels shows how much in need they were of ammunition. The volunteers stood their baptism of fire well and were complimented on their behaviour by Gen. Middleton. It is probable that there will be more fighting within the next few days.

JEFFERSON DAVIS, the ex-President of the Confederate States, it will be remembered, was recently very ill, but he is still living on a very handsome estate bequeathed to him by a lady who admired his character as a politician. He is living, however, under sufferance as a rebel, his case having been allowed to drop. Charles O'Connor, the noted New York lawyer offered at one time to plead his case for him and get him off, but Mr. Davis thought it safer to let well alone. A few days ago, Col. Horn, editor of the *Mercury* of Meriden, forwarded an application to President Cleveland for the pardon of Mr. Jefferson Davis.

## GENERAL GRANT.

All hopes concerning Gen. Grant have been rudely broken by a telegram which announces that a new illuminating instrument has revealed dire disorders in the patient's throat, which show that eventual recovery is impossible. Death has been cheated of his prey once despite the doctors' wise saws and may not these be again deceived? All telegrams up to this one were hopeful. On the 21st instant he took a drive in New York Park and seemed no worse. The newspapers have men watching continually in a room near Grant's dwelling, for the announcement of the General's death. May they wait longer than for the death of Commodore Vanderbilt, which took seven months to accomplish and which the reporters watched for for that length of time? Flags were flying, last Monday, in the streets where General Grant lives, in commemoration of his birthday.

## RUSSIA'S ENCROACHMENTS AND STRENGTH.

The encroachments of Russia in the direction of India have been constant since the year 1659 which marked the accession of Peter the Great to the Czarom. India was then separated, on the west, from Russia by all the land between it and the Oural river, and on the north by all the land between it and a line drawn from the sources of the Oural to the Irish river just south of Omsk. At the end of the 18th century Russia's boundary north of India was represented by a line from Lake Balkash to the Aral Sea and thence to the north of the Caspian Sea. The surroundings of the Sea of Azof had also been acquired by Russia. Since then the march of Russia southward has been continuous. Since the Crimean War nearly the whole of Turkestan has become Russian territory and now the northern boundary of Afghanistan is the Russian limit. Russia has a large army whose strength can only be rudely computed. In wealth, which is the sinews of war, she is weak. Her debt is enormous and to some extent an unknown quantity. Her industries are stagnant, her commerce is not in the hands of her people. The only path of ambition is the army, so that all that is masculine in her is ever eager for war. The army is the nation. The Czar is idolized as its head, but is infinitely mightier as a promoter of war than as an advocate of peace. The Russian army is composed in round numbers of 650,000 infantry, 45,000 sharpshooters, 25,000 frontier battalions, 45,000 cavalry, 15,000 Cossacks, 80,000 artillerymen, and 20,000 engineers. This makes a total of 880,000 men presumably ready for war. Besides these there are the militia of which there are about 150,000.

The English army on the other hand is composed of 188,000 regular soldiers, 47,000 reserves, 125,000 militia, and 215,000 volunteers; in all 575,000 men. This of course is not counting the Indian army which numbers about 180,000 men, and the Afghan army numbering 60,000 men. The difference however is great and lies chiefly in this, that England can wield her mighty weapon with ease, while Russia's has comparatively little behind it.

THAT CHINA, the oldest nation in the world, has still a great deal of native genius, is shown by the fact that an immense stone bridge has been built by Chinese engineers over the arm of the Chinese Sea at Lugnag. The bridge is built entirely of stone, is five miles long and has three hundred arches, each seventy feet wide.