

THE FILE HILLS RESERVATIONS

lie 40 miles to the north of the C. P. R., and are reached by starting from Qu'Appelle station, which is 312 miles west of Winnipeg. The reserves are four in number, and form a block made-up of four parallelograms. The Indians here are plain Crees, who are being domesticated slowly, and though they are learning much seem rather wild and intractable. During the Riel rebellion these Indians were a source of great anxiety to the Government and were probably very near revolt, though along the very line of march of the troops from Qu'Appelle to Eatoche. The four reserves bear the name of their chiefs—Peepseekesi's, Star Blanket, Little Black Bear, and Okanese—the last named being absent at Turtle Mountain at the time of our visit. The condition of the crops and of the herds of cattle and the number of the horses were much the same as those in the other reserves. Next morning after arrival we were soon abroad to the school, which had an earlier session than usual that we might see it. Nine scholars appeared and were put through their exercises by Mr. Toms, the teacher. Our stay was too hurried to ascertain the ordinary condition of the school. Mr. Toms seemed doing his best under rather discouraging circumstances. The bands are widely scattered, and to a large number of the children it is an impossibility to reach the day school. It is understood that the church intends erecting buildings and organizing a more complete school on these reserves next year. On our return to the agency we saw

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in full operation. Here, as in most of the reserves of the Plain Crees and Blackfeet, the Indians gather at the agency twice a week or so and receive supplies as regularly as a regiment of soldiers. On this occasion an ox was being slaughtered, and the hungry crew, men, women and children, were all present to observe the whole operation. Squatted on the ground, or sitting on the gathered logs near the agency in their crouching posture, swathed closely round with their blankets, they suggested the idea of a flock of hungry and patient crows waiting their time to fall upon the prey. The gusto with which the offal was seized and set aside by the spectators for further use would somewhat disgust the aesthetic soul. No sooner had the animal been slaughtered than the carcass was divided up