



Volume VIII.

JULY 1st 1885.

Number 4

### The Northwest Rebellion.

#### AND THE INDIAN CHILDREN'S HOMES.

The ruin that event have taken in this outbreak among the Indians and halfbreeds in the North West must be a source of grief and disappointment to many. Many precious lives have been lost, and many more may be lost before the insurrection is entirely quelled, and it will doubtless deter the incoming of settlers for some time to come. What is the meaning of it all? Why this retrogression? How is it that these Indian chiefs, Poundmaker, White Cap, Big Bear and others, decked in their war paint and feathers, have been leading on their braves to butcher and massacre the poor white settlers, and rob them of all their goods? Why the raising of the war whoop and uncovering of the tomahawk and scalping knife which we hoped were buried? Of the halfbreed grievances we are not prepared to speak. Our work here is among the Indians, and it is with them only that we have now to do. With them the trouble appears to be simply this. The white people have deprived them of their means of existence, and they see nothing but starvation starving them in the face. In the plains where only 20 years ago five million of buffaloes were roaming, there were killed this last season, if we may believe the newspaper reports, but half a dozen animals: the moose and other large game are becoming extinct; a few herds of antelopes, some foxes and other small animals are all that remain: fish in the lakes and river, are also becoming scarce. And what has been done to make up to the Indians for their losses? These roaming Indians have had reserved lands set apart for them, and have been told that if they will confine themselves to those reserved lands and learn farming, that they shall have seed, cattle, farm implements &c. all supplied to them free,—and a farm instructor placed over them to teach them the art of agriculture,—also, that so long as they remain on their reserved lands they shall not be allowed to want, food being freely supplied to them in bad times, and an annual grant of about \$20 to each family being made in cash. All this has been very kind and liberal, and has doubtless been to a great extent faithfully carried out. But the question still remains,—was this a wise step? Was it the best step that could be taken? Would it not have been better to have been less eager about the immediate possession of those vast hunting grounds, and to

have limited for a score of years or so the progress of the surveyor with his chain? Would it not have been better gradually to have drawn those 50,000 roaming Indians within the coils of civilization, instead of shutting them up so suddenly in reserved lands like prison houses, and compelling them to farm or die? We believe that the only really satisfactory way to deal with the Indians is to take their children while still young, and train them up in the paths of christianity and civilization. It is with this end in view that our Homes for Indian children have been established at Sault Ste. Marie, and we have every reason to feel satisfied with the results that have been attained during the 8 or 10 years that they have been in existence. Just as Dr. Barnardo is trying to reclaim the waifs and street arabs of London and train them to a higher and nobler life, so is it our endeavour to take the children of the poor despised Indians, and train them in the paths of Christianity and civilization. It has been up hill work, and we have had difficulties to face, and discouragement to encounter, still we may rejoice that some progress has been made. Four boys and one girl have gone out from our Institution as teachers, and obtained situations on various Indian Reserves. Others whom we have taught are now gaining their livelihood by trades. At the present time, we have three boys studying to be teachers, 4 learning carpentering, 3 shoe making, 2 blacksmithing. We have 40 Indian boys in residence, and 20 girls. That the children are happy and contented is sufficiently proved by the fact, that when asked if some of them would volunteer to remain at the Homes during vacation time to assist in the summer work, 12 boys and 8 girls at once offered to do so. Such is the work which we are endeavouring to carry on at our Indian Homes at Sault Ste. Marie, and we believe that this crisis in the North West is a fit opportunity for pressing home the necessity of doing more than has yet been done for the Christian education of Indian children. We believe that a work of this kind is the true solution for all the troubles into which we have been so suddenly and unexpectedly brought. We would like to make our homes here a great central Institution for the training of Indian children, and to see other Institutions set on foot at different points in the North West, which might be affiliated with us. If the way should be open, we would like this summer to make an expedition to the North West and visit those Indians who, imagining in their ignorance that they can stay the tide of immigration