

THE
GREAT LONE LAND.

CHAPTER I.

PEACE—RUMOURS OF WAR—RETRENCHMENT—A CLOUD IN THE
FAR WEST—A DISTANT SETTLEMENT—PERSONAL—THE PURCHASE
SYSTEM—A CABLE-GRAM—AWAY TO THE WEST.

It was a period of universal peace over the wide world. There was not a shadow of war in the North, the South, the East, or the West. There was not even a Bashote in South Africa, a Beloochee in Scinde, a Bhoottea, a Burmese, or any other of the many "eses" or "eas" forming the great colonial empire of Britain who seemed capable of kicking up the semblance of a row. Newspapers had never been so dull; illustrated journals had to content themselves with pictorial representations of prize pigs, foundation stones, and provincial civic magnates. Some of the great powers were bent upon disarming; several influential persons of both sexes had decided, at a meeting held for the suppression of vice, to abolish standing armies. But, to be more precise as to the date of this epoch, it will be necessary to state that the time was the close of the year