

# THE CANADIAN INDIAN.

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VOL. I.

MARCH, 1891.

No. 6.

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## THE FUTURE OF OUR INDIANS.

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**T**HIS is a problem which has long agitated the minds of thinking people, and one for which the writer of this article is by no means prepared to offer a solution. But it seems to him that the pages of the CANADIAN INDIAN can scarcely perhaps be put to a better purpose than that of ventilating so important and far-reaching a subject; and he proposes now, in a series of short papers, to throw out a few ideas and suggestions, which, however crude and impracticable they may appear to persons of more profound thought and of riper judgment, may yet perhaps do some good, if only as a means of drawing attention to the subject and inviting criticism on the thoughts suggested. The writer would wish it to be understood from the outset that he takes the side of the Indians, and wishes to speak altogether from the Indian's standpoint. There are plenty of persons ready enough to deal with the Indian question from the white man's point of view. All the actions of our Government, of our Indian Department, of our educational institutions, even the organization and carrying on of our Christian missions, are from the white man's stand-point. The Indian is not asked whether he prefers living on an Indian reserve to roaming the country; whether he likes his children to be educated or to lead a wild life; whether he prefers Government beef or buffalo flesh; whether he is to retain the language and the customs of his forefathers, or to give them up; whether in his worship he is to follow the ancient ritual of his ancestors, address the sun as his god, and the rivers, mountains, rocks and other elements of nature as minor deities, or to accept the Christian teaching of the white man, and become thereby a Methodist, Episcopalian, a Presbyterian or a Roman Catholic. He is not asked these things. There is no yea or nay about it. They are simply one after another forced upon him. Not only is he expected to accept them without a word, but he is expected also to be grateful, to coin words for which there is no equivalent in his simple, primitive language, to express his gratitude—otherwise he may be dubbed an "ungrateful savage," or even something worse, by his white neighbors.

That the Indians—even the most civilized of them—are not altogether