

PRESENT CRISIS IN THE CONDITION

OF THE

AMERICAN INDIANS.

No. I.

Contents of this Number.—Information needed—Great interests at stake—The character of our country involved—The world will judge in the case—Value of national character—Apprehensions of the divine displeasure—Statement of the controversy.

EVERY careful observer of public affairs must have seen, that a crisis has been rapidly approaching, for several years past, in reference to the condition, relations, and prospects, of the Indian tribes, in the southwestern parts of the United States. The attention of many of our most intelligent citizens has been fixed upon the subject with great interest. Many others are beginning to inquire. Several public documents, which have recently appeared in the newspapers, serve to awaken curiosity, and to provoke investigation.

Still, however, the mass of the community possess but very little information on the subject; and, even among the best informed, scarcely a man can be found, who is thoroughly acquainted with the questions at issue. Vague and inconsistent opinions are abroad; and however desirous the people may be of coming at the truth, the sources of knowledge are not generally accessible. Some persons think, that the Indians have a perfect right to the lands which they occupy, except so far as their original right has been modified by treaties fairly made, and fully understood at the time of signing. But how far such a modification may have taken place, or whether it has taken place at all, these persons admit themselves to be ignorant. Others pretend, that Indians have no other right to their lands, than that of a *tenant at will*; that is, the right of remaining where they are, till the *owners of the land* shall require them to remove. It is needless to say, that, in the estimation of such persons, the white neighbors of the Indians are the real owners of the land. Some people are puzzled by what is supposed to be a collision between the powers of the general government and the claims of particular States. Others do not see that