

good or evil, according as he might be well or ill-disposed towards them, unscrupulous in his dealings with others, and consequently a person to be flattered, feared and shunned, and even injured, whenever this could be done with impunity. I am not now describing the Blackfeet of the present day, but those of fifteen years ago, when I first saw them. They were then a proud, haughty, numerous people (perhaps ten thousand on the British side of the line), having a regular politico-religious organization by which their thirst for blood and their other barbarous passions were constantly fired to the highest pitch of frenzy. Since that time their number has decreased to less than one half, and their systematic organizations have fallen into decay; in fact they have been utterly demoralized as a people. This sudden decadence was brought on by two causes: 1. About ten years ago the Americans crossed the line and established themselves on Pelly River, where they carried on to an extraordinary extent the illicit traffic in intoxicating liquor to the Blackfeet. The fiery water flowed as freely, if I may use the metaphor, as the streams running from the Rocky Mountains, and hundreds of the poor Indians fell victims to the white man's craving for money, some poisoned, some frozen to death whilst in a state of intoxication, and many shot down by American bullets. 2. Then in 1870 came that disease so fatal to Indians, the small-pox, which told upon the Blackfeet with terrible effect, destroying between six hundred and eight hundred of them. Surviving relatives went more and more for the use of alcohol; they endeavoured to drown their grief in the poisonous beverage. They sold their robes and their horses by the hundred for it, and now they began killing one another, so that in a short time they were divided into several small parties, afraid to meet. Fortunately for them the Government were aware of the state of affairs in the country and did not remain indifferent to it; and, as I have heard yourself explain to the Indians, Her Gracious Majesty has at heart the welfare of even the most obscure of her subjects. In the summer of 1874, I was travelling amongst the Blackfeet. It was painful to me to see the state of poverty to which they had been reduced. Formerly they had been the most opulent Indians in the country, and now they were clothed in rags, without horses and without guns. But this was the year of their salvation; that very summer the Mounted Police were struggling against the difficulties of a long journey across the barren plains in order to bring them help. This noble corps reached their destination that same fall, and with magic effect put an entire stop to the abominable traffic of whiskey with the Indians. Since that time the Blackfeet Indians are becoming more and more prosperous. They are now well clothed and well furnished with horses and guns. During the last two years I have calculated that they have bought two thousand horses to replace those they had given for whiskey. They are forced to acknowledge that the arrival of the Red Coats has been to them the greatest boon. But, although they are externally so friendly to the Police and other strangers who now inhabit their country, yet underneath this friendship remains hidden some of that dread which they have