

#109

1782, 03

AN INDEPENDENT INVESTIGATION OF THE RECENT DISTURBANCES ON THE SIOUX RESERVA*
TION, OCCUPYING THREE MONTHS, AND MADE BY THE REV. WILLIAM J. CLEVELAND FOR
THE INDIAN RIGHTS ASSOCIATION.

1890

The most striking fact which meets one on investigating our recent troubles with the Sioux is, that in reality there has been no "outbreak." Rather the Indians were broken in upon, yet probably non too soon to prevent more serious trouble in the near future, for undoubtedly a fraction of the Indians on all agencies (except Crow Creek), under the leadership of Sitting Bull, Big Foot, Red Cloud, Crow Dog and others, were preparing to break away from their reservations and all treaty obligations in the spring. Nevertheless, the necessity for breaking in upon this turbulent element with armed soldiers was more the consequence of our own mismanagement than of their unwillingness to be controlled; it was the fault of the Government more directly and to a greater extent than it was the fault of the dissatisfied element at each of the Sioux agencies, who had determined to strike out for themselves and no longer await the tardy and seemingly hap-hazard justice done them by the Great Father. As a matter of fact, however, they did not, either before or during the war, leave their own country to disturb settlers outside, though they had abundant opportunity and provocation to do so. Not one instance can be given of the property or lives of white settlers, even on the recently ceded lands, having been destroyed, except that some cattle were killed, and these the owners of them declare the Indians were obliged to take to keep from starving.

The whole subject is extremely complex, the causes leading up to the troubles are numerous, and the blame for what has occurred cannot be laid entirely upon the shoulders of any one person or set of persons, cause or set of causes. The officials at Washington, Congress, the army, the Indian agents and employees at the agencies, some missionaries and teachers, equally