

found, as is the case in the prairie region and parts of the Oregon territory, are limited to ammunition and a few articles of iron and tin; and their *desires*, to the possession of a few trinkets. There are extensive tracts, however, in which the means of subsistence are scanty in the extreme; and in the greater part of the territories now under review—namely, the wooded districts, where, under a constant persecution for more than a century, the larger animals which supply the food of man have nearly become extinct (the preservation of the fur-bearing animals is provided for by strict regulations laid down by the Company) the wretched natives, during winter, can with difficulty collect enough food to support life. In this part of the country, fish is at all times scarce and difficult to be obtained in the winter season; and during that period, nearly the sole dependence of the natives for subsistence is placed upon rabbits. When these fail, the most frightful tragedies at times take place. The too frequent resort in such cases is to cannibalism. 'Parents have been known to lengthen out a miserable existence by killing and devouring their own children.' The climate and soil of these tracts are in many parts adapted for cultivation; but from the short-sighted and selfish policy of the traders, no attempts have been anywhere made to develop the agricultural capabilities of the country. Their dread is, that, by abandoning their wandering habits, and setting themselves down to agricultural pursuits, even for a small portion of the year, the Indians might become less valuable as hunters. The fatal results of this policy are every year becoming apparent in the depopulation of the country, from which the native tribes are rapidly disappearing. Giving every credit to the Company for the energy and enterprise of their operations, it cannot be denied that the results of the system under which the Hudson's Bay territories are at present placed, are, as regards the development of the resources of the country, and the progress and enlightenment of the native races, disastrous in the extreme. No doubt, many of the Company's servants are generous and humane, as well as enterprising and intelligent; but, on the other hand, it is equally undeniable that the profits—the very existence of the Company, as at present constituted—depend on keeping the whole territory under their rule a vast hunting-ground, an enormous preserve—upon keeping whole nations of Indians as hunters and trappers, and discouraging anything like civilisation and agricultural settlement; above all, upon keeping the territory shut up, preventing its ever becoming a highway, sticking up a great 'No thoroughfare board' at every entrance, and thus avoiding the risk of any competition in the fur-traffic. Amidst the vast and various sources of our national wealth, and the manifold directions in which it is employed, it is scarcely to be wondered at that the comparatively insignificant commercial operations of the Company should have escaped much public notice. Nor is it more surprising that, invested with such powers, and in the possession