

Where there is competition with the Americans or Canadians the Indians obtain better value for the spoils of the chase, and are in a far less degraded condition than where the Company bears absolute sway.

The standard of barter is the skin of a full grown beaver, which is equivalent to four mink skins, three marten skins, two fox skins, and twelve musquash skins. According to the tariff in force in the Licensed Territory, east of the Rocky Mountains, of which a copy is inserted in Parliamentary Paper, 277, Session 1849, p. 95,—an ordinary gun, of which the prime cost is 22s. is bartered for 20 bear skins, worth £32 10s., or 60 marten skins, worth £46 10s., or five silver fox skins, worth £50, or 20 lynx skins, worth £20, or 20 otter skins, worth £23 10s.! Half a dozen clay tobacco pipes, costing a penny wholesale, are bartered for skins varying in value from £1 3s. 6d. to £2 10s.; a pint of watered rum, worth 4d., is disposed of at the same rates; and with regard to all other articles, the same dishonest system is practised on the poor Indian by the Honourable “Company of Merchant Adventurers trading to Hudson’s Bay.”

As to the light in which Indians are regarded by the Company’s servants, the Rev. Mr. Beaver, once the Company’s Chaplain on the Columbia River, makes this declaration,—“God knows that I speak the conviction of my mind, and may He forgive me if I speak unadvisedly, when I state my belief that the life of an Indian was never yet by a trapper put in competition with a beaver skin.” (*Parliamentary Paper*, 227, Sess. 1849, p. 14.) The Company itself seems to have held Indian life in pretty much the same estimation, and the trapper may but be putting his own savage interpretation on its motto “Pro pelle cutem,”—skin for skin. It has never, in any one of the many cases of murder which have occurred, adopted means to bring the criminals to justice, or even discharged them from its employment when the murderers happened to be bold and successful hunters. Here is a specimen of atrocity not exceeded in the annals of the most savage of buccaneers—Spanish or English:—

“In that winter (1836-7) a party of men, led by two clerks, was sent to look for some horses that were grazing at a considera-