

had room, for many years to come, to extend itself over the regions of the Far West; while, more northward, the inhospitable character of the sources of the Missouri had diverted its tide. The Canadian settler saw before him millions of unoccupied acres throughout the Valley of the Ottawa and the shores of the Great Lakes; nor did the slow, and, at times, deplorable course of Red River settlement hold out any inducement to him to attempt more inland and isolated occupation. Settlement along the shores of the Pacific was slow in the extreme; up to the great discoveries of gold there, a few monastic farmers and fur trappers were all that could be induced to visit its shores. What nobody seemed to want, the Company was turning to most profitable and benevolent uses. Thrice it had trebled its capital, and, for more than a century, had continued to pay over to its shareholders 'profits on the originally subscribed capital stock, actually paid up, of between 60 and 70 per cent. per annum.'

Nor can it be fairly said that its management of the immense responsibilities entrusted to it contrast less favourably with its success as a commercial speculation. South of the International Boundary Line, the soil was deluged with streams of Indian blood; but north of that line the Company had succeeded in establishing the most peaceful and even friendly relations between themselves and the aborigines of the whole of their wide-spread territories. While to the Indian a 'Long-knife,' or United States citizen, continues to the present moment to be the most abhorred of all God's creatures, the hardy North Briton of the Company's service was certain of a welcome in every wigwam from Labrador to Vancouver Island, from the Sioux of the Border to the Esquimaux of the Coppermine. The peculiar traffic of the Company enabled it to offer to the savage the only employment which was consistent with his dignity; and although it undoubtedly drove a very hard bargain with him, yet the arrival of a 'brigade' of its traders in an Indian village was invariably the occasion of public rejoicing. The aborigines of half a continent came to look to the Company for clothing, the instruments of the chase, and, not infrequently, for food; and for these they gave in exchange (a fact we believe unprecedented in history) their voluntary and unintermittent service. If it was desirable that England should hold so large a portion of the American continent: if it was desirable that she should have some ostensible use to which she could turn it: if it was desirable that this unhelped-for progress of the savage in habits of continued industry should not be suffered to fall into disuse,—then, certainly,