

Indians, giving them for their furs such articles as were most likely to be serviceable to the rude and simple natives.

The company did not extend their operations to the Canadian regions until after a long period. But by degrees they came in contact with the "voyageurs" and "coureurs des bois," who had their grand dépôt at the head of Lake Superior; and then ensued much contest and rivalry between them. The company established several forts, such as Prince of Wales's Fort, Churchill Fort, Fort Nelson, and Fort Albany, most of which were on the southern and western shores of Hudson's Bay, and which were garrisoned by a sufficient number of men for ordinary purposes; but in May, 1782, the French Canadians took and destroyed these forts and settlements, which the company considered as a loss equal to half a million sterling. Notwithstanding this misfortune, a very steady and lucrative business was carried on; but still there continued to be an irregular trade effected by the Canadians, in the territory which (nominally at least) belonged to the company.

At length the "North-West Company" was established, by which the supremacy of the older company was seriously interfered with. We have in the former paper described the remarkable and energetic system followed by the infant company, and we may now state, that this system had the effect of driving the other company from many of their trading posts. The "North-Westers," as they were generally called, at first established posts adjacent to most of those owned by the rival company in the interior country, and afterwards secured some of these posts wholly to themselves by dint of superior energy and perseverance. By the year 1809, the North-Westers had numerous trading establishments at Athabasca, Peace River, the Slave Lake, New Caledonia, St. Columbia, &c., to none of which did the Hudson's Bay Company attempt to follow them. By these means the North-West Company became undisputed masters of the interior country, leaving to the Hudson's Bay Company the traffic with the natives nearer to Hudson's Bay.

Thus matters continued for a dozen years longer, that is, from about 1809 to 1821. The old company, from their long connexion with the country, and from the charter, which gave to their proceedings a certain appearance of legality, had many advantages over the younger association. But the latter more than made amends for the deficiency by their indefatigable industry. But this keen rivalry produced a multitude of evils, both to the companies and to the Indians. Each company had to keep an extra number of men in their employment, to collect the skins during winter; for everything depended upon who should get first among the Indians. The hunters, having obtained, either from the one or the other of these companies, a considerable payment in advance upon the success of their hunting exertions, were often strongly tempted to break through their engagements, by the statements and artifices of rival agents. The Indians, themselves often deceived, became deceivers in their turn; and not unfrequently, after having incurred a heavy debt at one trading post, they would move off to another, and pursue a similar plan. In some cases mutual agreements were entered into by both companies, to put a stop to these nefarious proceedings; but such treaties were no sooner made than they were indirectly violated by the zeal and cupidity of individual agents; so that they proved fertile subjects for disputes and differences, which were more than once decided by force of arms.

At length these matters extended to such a point, that the agents of the one company would attack and murder those of the rival firm, in the depths of the American wilderness; and these accumulated evils threatened ultimately to destroy both companies, and ruin the fur-trade altogether. Both parties, therefore, perceived that it would be for their interest to come to some amicable understanding. In 1821 they both combined and became one united company; and it has been stated as the result, that they have not only done more business than when separated, but have reaped larger gains. From that time to the present, the united company has possessed the most complete and undisputed monopoly of the fur-trade, in the regions northward and north-westward of the Canadian lakes.

In Captain Franklin's celebrated voyages to the Arctic Sea, through the northern regions of America, he was accompanied by some of the Canadian voyageurs who had been accustomed to these regions, and was greatly aided by the advice and assistance of the fur companies. At a later

period the Hudson's Bay Company (by which the united company is generally known) have taken still more decisive steps to advance our knowledge of the geography of these sterile regions. It will be remembered by those who have attended to the progress of Arctic discovery, that Franklin explored the northern coast of America from the mouth of the Mackenzie River, to a spot ("Franklin's farthest,") three or four hundred miles distant; and that at the very same time Beechey proceeded eastward from Behring's Strait, till he came within a distance of less than two hundred miles of the same spot. To explore this space of two hundred miles became a project of much interest; and it was successfully effected in 1837, by Messrs. Dease and Simpson, two enterprising individuals in the service of, and fitted out for this expedition by, the Hudson's Bay Company. In the summer of the following year, the same gentlemen made an endeavour to connect the discoveries of Franklin with those in a more eastern position; and succeeded in discovering a considerable extent of sea and sea-coast. In 1839, the same two enterprising men succeeded in effecting that which has been aimed at for three centuries, viz., showing that a passage exists from the Atlantic to the Pacific, northward of America. They were able to connect the discoveries of Franklin with those of Back, which had already rendered pretty certain the route eastward of Back's River. It is true that the existence of open sea from Back's River to the Atlantic has not been actually proved; but those who know the subject best have now no doubt on the matter; and Messrs. Simpson and Dease, following out the exploration of Beechey and Franklin, have clearly shown that there is open sea, (that is, an ocean, however much blocked up with ice) from Back's River to the Pacific.

It is right that these expeditions should be mentioned here; for they have been planned by, and executed at the expense of, the Hudson's Bay Company, by whom the results have been communicated to the Royal Geographical Society. It is pleasant to see a commercial body thus contributing to the advancement of science, a course which must win for the company a considerable share of respect.

SECTION II.

RISE OF THE FUR-TRADE IN THE PACIFIC.—COOK'S VOYAGES.—PRIVATE ADVENTURES.—RUSSIAN-AMERICAN FUR COMPANY.—OVERLAND JOURNEYS OF CAPTAIN CARVER AND SIR ALEXANDER MACKENZIE.—CAPTAIN GRAY DISCOVERS THE COLUMBIA RIVER.

We have now arrived at that part of our subject where it becomes necessary to direct our attention towards a somewhat different part of the North American continent. It will be remembered that in our former article we confined our attention to the "North-West Company," making that the groundwork for a general description of the mode of conducting the traffic between the Europeans and the native Indians. In the present paper we have detailed the more prominent points in the history of the Hudson's Bay Company. But we have next to state that several other companies have been at different times established, having for their scene of action a portion of America generally southward of that to which our notice has been hitherto directed. To understand some of the changes in these companies it will be desirable to bear in mind these two historical facts: that Canada, which formerly belonged to the French, was transferred to the English in 1763; and that the United States, which formerly belonged to England, became independent in 1776.

During Captain Cook's last voyage to the Pacific, he opened a new source of wealth to future navigators, by trading for valuable furs on the north-west coast of America. The first vessel which engaged in this new branch of trade was equipped by some gentlemen in China. It was a brig of 60 tons burden and navigated by 20 men, commanded by Captain James Hanna. She arrived at Nootka Sound, on the American coast, in August, 1785. Soon after her arrival, the natives, whom Captain Cook had left unacquainted with the use of fire-arms, tempted probably by the diminutive size of the vessel, and the small number of the crew, attempted to board her in open day; but they were repulsed. Captain Hanna's conduct on this occasion appears to have been very judicious; he cured such of the Indians as were wounded; an unreserved confidence took place; they traded fairly and peaceably; and after having procured a valuable cargo of furs, Captain Hanna departed homeward a month or two afterwards.

In the following year, 1786, Hanna sailed again to