

and Shetland Isles; yet, since its early occupation, all additions by independent immigration have been very inconsiderable; while it has lost most of its original occupiers and their families, much of its present population (some 6,000 souls) being composed of Indian 'half breeds.' We say 'independent immigration,' for many servants of the Great Fur Companies, habituated to a life in the wilderness, and inured to Arctic rigours, have selected it for their residence when retiring from the service.

It would be an intolerable evil if so small and comparatively insignificant a portion of British soil as this 'fertile belt' were to involve us in complications with our neighbours. With our examination of the whole midland region, much of this danger, it will be granted, disappears; for no one is likely to invade 'strong woods' or a desert; while the existence of a large unaffected population, or, in fact, of any large population at all, becomes highly improbable. It must, however, be borne in mind, that a class of desperadoes has been for many years hanging on the skirts of the great Union. Indeed, curiously enough, in writing of these very scenes in 'Astoria' Washington Irving foresaw their approach:—'Here may spring up new and mongrel races—like new formations in geology—the amalgamation of the "debris" and abrasions from former races, civilised and savage; the remains of broken and almost extinguished tribes; the descendants of wandering hunters and trappers; of fugitives from the Spanish and American frontiers; of adventurers and desperadoes of every class and country, yearly ejected from the bosom of society into the wilderness.' The earlier days of California gold-mining afford us a fair specimen of the chaos in which these men can involve a country; and now, for the first time, the discovery of gold on British soil has invited them across the international boundary line. For these, however, the more industrious and progressive settlements possess little congeniality; and to such a position the districts on the west of the Rocky Mountains seem fast attaining. We cannot yet say what prospects there are of large gold discoveries on the eastern slope of the Rocky Mountains. Gold has been discovered in the Saskatchewan, but hitherto in very inconsiderable quantities. But, in any case, it is desirable that all persons entering the district should have full facilities for settling on the soil and developing its resources. The industrious farmer and prosperous trader are far more likely to strengthen our hands than to involve us in difficulties. In this manner, we have come to enjoy such perfect security in Canada; and we have no stronger guarantee