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THE

HUDSON'S BAY TERRITORIES;

A SERIES OF LETTERS

ON THIS

IMPORTANT QUESTION.

BY

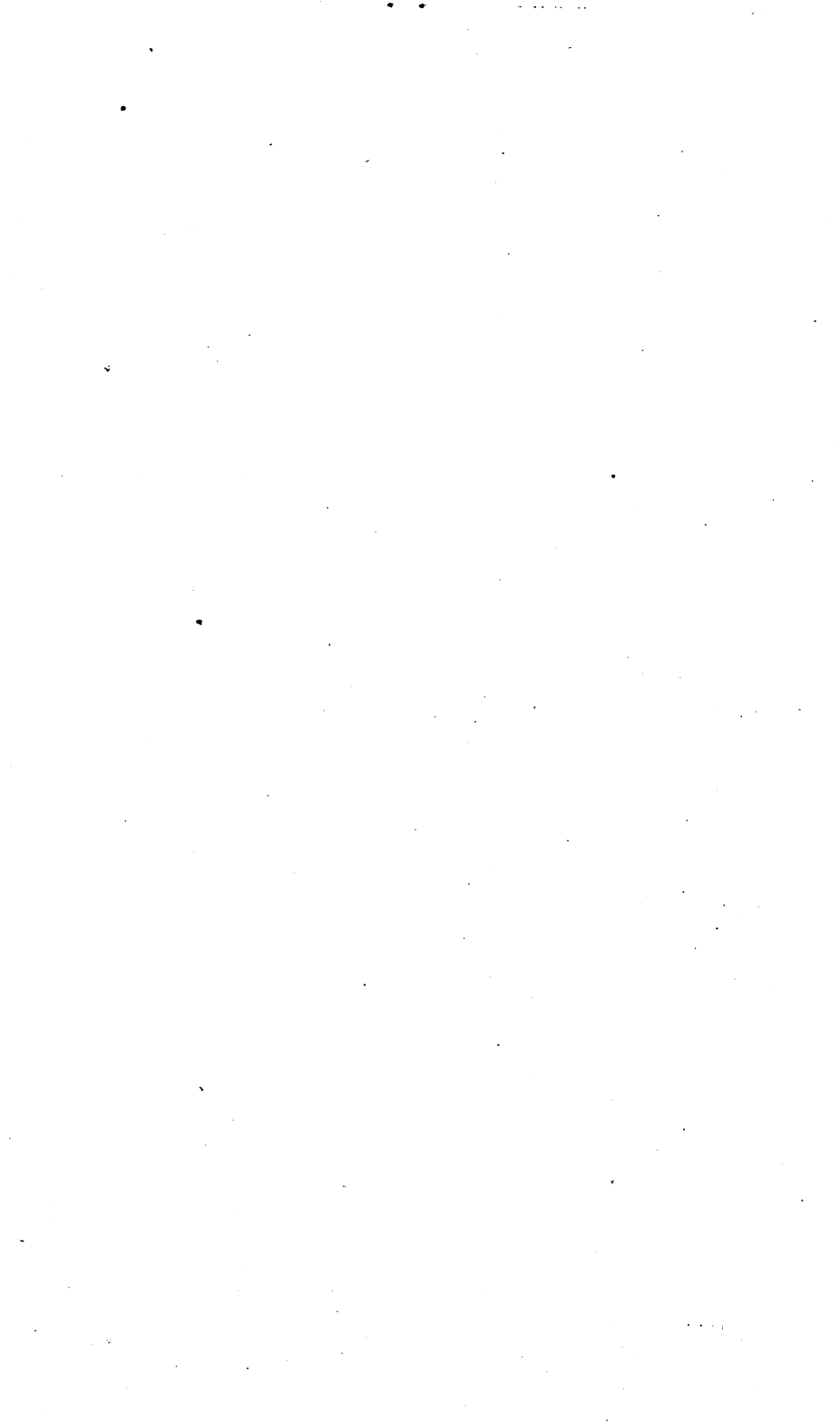
EDWARD ERMATINGER.



TORONTO:

MACLEAR, THOMAS & CO., PRINTERS, KING STREET.

1858.



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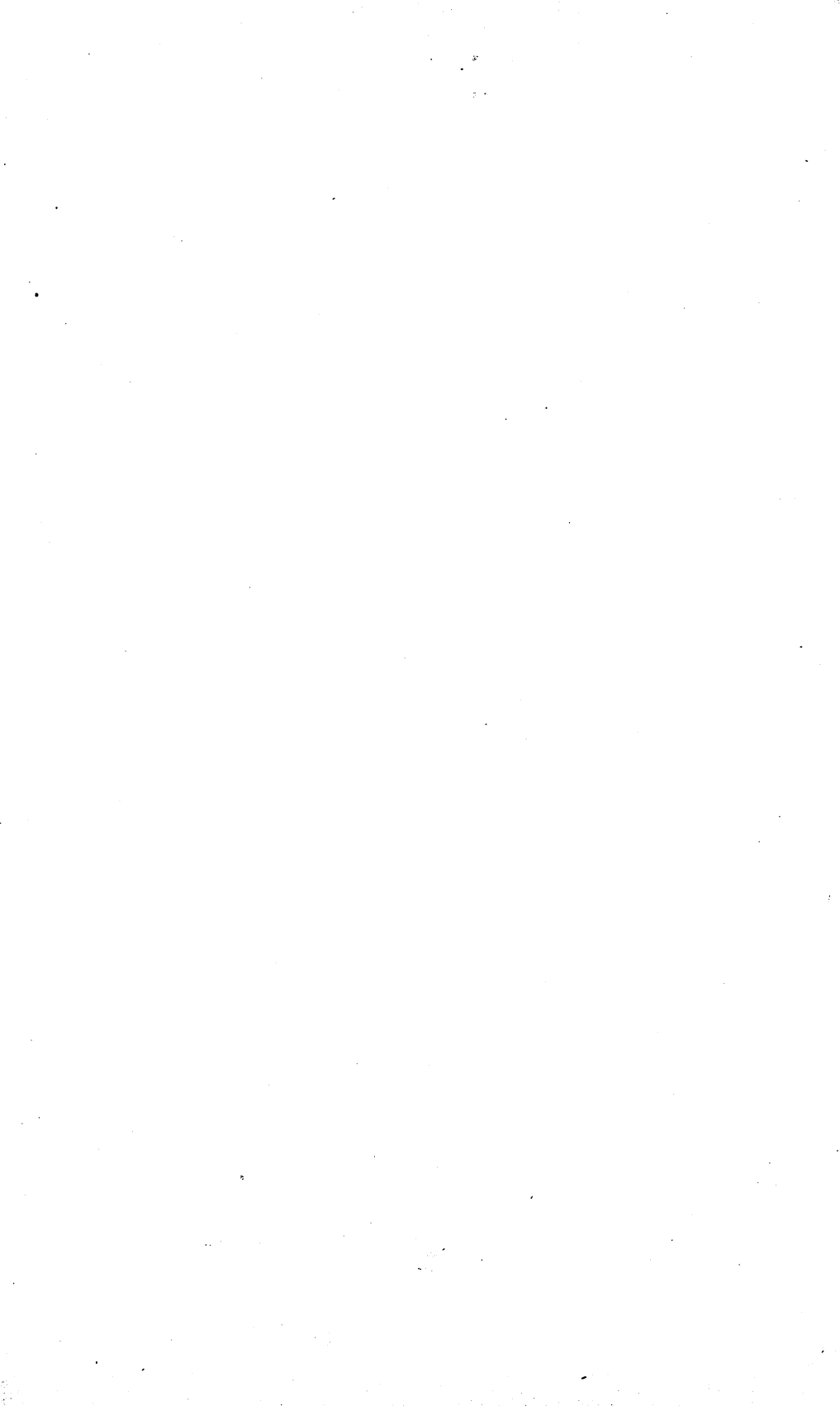
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## INTRODUCTORY REMARKS.

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I have considered it advisable to place these letters in a connected form before the public, that Members of the Legislature, and all who feel interested, may have an opportunity of judging of the real merits of the question, divested of all the prejudices which have been raised against the Hudson's Bay Company. A residence of ten years in various parts of the Territories, after voyaging from England to Hudson's Bay, thence travelling to the Red River and upper parts of the Asseneboine, afterwards through the Saskatchewan, to and from the mouth of the Columbia River, across the Rocky Mountains, and finally journeying from the Pacific to the Atlantic, and upwards and downwards from Hudson's Bay to Canada, enables me to speak with confidence of the difficulties, on every side, which beset the annexation of the whole of the territories to Canada.

If the rights and privileges of the Hudson's Bay Company were alone at stake, I need not have taken this trouble, because I am quite certain that the sacred principles of honor and justice, based on truth, which must ever influence the acts of the Imperial Government, will afford them sufficient protection.

The Liverpool Financial Reform Association have been eminently lavish of their abuse of the Hudson's Bay Company, and have shown by their pamphlet how grossly intelligent men may be imposed upon, by interested parties. This, I trust, I have fully shown in my letters on this subject.

I have avoided entering on the questions of the validity of the Company's Charter, and the boundaries between Canada and the territories, because I am quite satisfied that Canada need have nothing to contend about on this score. The Imperial Government will concede all that Canada may require, on fair and equitable terms. Some of the writers, who advocate the immediate acquisition of the whole of the Hudson's Bay Territory by Canada, argue as if the Hudson's Bay Company were a foreign nation, which had usurped a large portion of our territory. This is surely an unfair view of the question.

I shall only add, that I can offer all the proofs that can reasonably be required for all that I have asserted, and have had no motive for entering on this discussion but the welfare of Canada and a sincere regard for truth.

Persons who have not received copies of this publication, may obtain them at the publishers, MACLEAR & Co., where a limited number of copies have been left to be disposed of.

TORONTO, 20th May, 1858.

# LETTERS.

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No. 1.—*To the Editor of the Hamilton Spectator.*

ST. THOMAS, 8th July, 1857.

In my letter to the *British Colonist*, which you published with so much alacrity, when I said, "I have thrown these remarks hastily together," I did not mean to convey that my opinions were hastily formed; but this is what the *Leader* insinuates. I wrote because I thought, and do think, that Mr. Chief Justice Draper took a sensible and very proper view of the interests of Canada in his evidence on the Hudson's Bay Territory question; and because I considered that the leading Toronto journals were taking a directly opposite course—a course which if hastily followed by the Canadian Government will involve Canada in a large, if not profitless, expenditure of the public money.

The *Leader* does not seem willing to admit that the Hudson's Bay Company "are the custodians of the whole of that vast territory for the British Empire." Now, I consider that the point for which he contends is embraced in the sentence which he quotes from my letter. All the rights of Great Britain and Canada to that vast territory are now exercised under the control of the Hudson's Bay Company, and it is not contended that Great Britain may not resume those rights whenever she thinks proper. In proof of this we need only remark, that the British Government has sent troops into the very heart of that vast territory to protect her subjects in the enjoyment of their rights, and to prevent the encroachment of our neighbors of the United States, which the *Leader* desires to guard against. Is Canada more able to maintain "the whole of the British possessions north of the parallel of forty-nine degrees" than Great Britain? or will it be contended that the Imperial Government has sent troops to the Red River merely to protect the rights of the Hudson's Bay Company? Certainly not.

A great deal of unmerited abuse has been poured out against the Hudson's Bay Company. They have been held up to the gaze of the Canadian public in the same catalogue with the Southern Railway swindlers, Gen. Walker and his band of filibusters, squatters, and every class of land pirates, and that, too, by the leading organs of the Toronto press. And for what? Because they had acquired rights and privileges, some two hundred years ago, and have not been willing to give them up to those who have less claim to them. It is time that the Canadian public should ask themselves, when they have succeeded in dispossessing the Hudson's Bay Company of the territories they now occupy, shall we be in a better position to hold them? Are we prepared to extend and maintain an efficient Government over the millions of acres of arable land of which the *Leader* speaks? Are the revenues of Canada to be lavished in endeavoring to accomplish what the Imperial Government with the co-operation of the Hudson's Bay Company are more effectually doing? To attempt it would be to imitate the frog in the fable. The Imperial Government is doing for us at a cheaper rate, much more than we can do for ourselves.

But there is another question I would ask the Toronto leaders of the press. Do they deign to consider, while they vituperate the Hudson's Bay Company, that they have rights which must be recognized as well as our own? Why a mere squatter, such as gentlemen of the Toronto press designate the Hudson's Bay Company, if he be allowed to occupy another man's land for a number of years, with consent of the owner, and to improve it solely for his own benefit, would in equity be allowed a reasonable time to quit, and be paid for his improvements—or would another man with no better claim than the first one had, be allowed to turn the occupant out and



take the benefit of the other's labors? The Hudson's Bay Company, it must be borne in mind, are a company of merchant traders, who have pushed their operations through a vast territory, many thousand miles in various directions, from the Atlantic to the Pacific and Polar Seas, and they have many partners both in and out of the Indian territories, who have spent the greater portion of their lives encountering privations and dangers, such as people in civilized life have no conception of; and besides these there are many clerks who are undergoing these hardships for the sake of the reward which their seniors are enjoying, and many men and families whose sole dependence is the Fur Trade under the Hudson's Bay Company. Are all these to be routed out and their interests sacrificed to make room for a disorganized mob, and a set of men who respect no rights because they have acquired none.

The first question then to settle is, is Canada prepared to buy out the Hudson's Bay Company, and pay for all their establishments, their ships, wares, and merchandise; and compensate all parties engaged in or having an interest in their trade. This will cost from one to two millions, at least; which might be better expended in Canada proper. Then the work of exploration, surveying, estimating the cost of canals or railways, and constructing them from Lake Superior to Lake Winepeg should be considered; and when a few millions have been expended in this work, we shall have to decide what portion of our population, or of the emigrants who may arrive on our shores, we would induce to leave Canada and proceed to the prairies in the far distant West.

Great pains have been taken to prove that the Hudson's Bay Company have no valid claims to the territory they occupy, but to little purpose; for the very fact that they are seeking to have their lease renewed is sufficient to shew that they do not consider their exclusive claim valid, and that it may be at any time revoked by the Imperial Government. But this does not establish that they are usurpers, and mere squatters, and have no more right in that vast territory than others of Her Majesty's Canadian subjects. I would warn my fellow subjects of Canada against any such delusion. By the coalition of the Hudson's Bay Company with the North West Company, the former acquired all the rights possessed by the latter in the Fur Trade carried on through Canada, and if this route has been abandoned by the Company, it is because of those *difficulties*, which I consider it would involve Canada in a vast amount of, to us, useless expenditure, to surmount, in travelling from Lake Superior to Red River or to the Saskatchewan. In spite of all our efforts, the tide of emigration will flow into these distant regions through Minnesota and steadily spread itself till it reaches the confines of the Territory now occupied by the Hudson's Bay Company, and the Red River Settlement.

I repeat the assertion, that to Canada the territory is of little value, although with Sir George Simpson I might say, that it is capable of being rendered the happy homes of millions of inhabitants, *when facilities of communication* shall be offered which can lead to it."

But let us not be deceived by the evidence of witnesses who tell us that to afford these facilities a small sum is only required. We know something of tramways, and corduroy roads and bridges in Canada, and what it has cost to obviate and replace these by Canals and Railways. Mr. Gladman tells us "the whole length of this canoe track, including lakes, rivers and portages, does not exceed 150 miles." He admits there would be some difficulty in clearing portages and improving the navigation of *small shallow streams*, but considers that the difficulties are not insurmountable, and I agree with him so far—but let the people of Canada inquire what it cost them to construct the St. Lawrence Canals from Montreal to Prescott, not through a route where there are "small shallow streams," but where the mighty St. Lawrence pushes her accumulated waters on to the ocean. Let it

be borne in mind that the Waters from Lake Winepeg do not descend to Lake Superior, but mount upwards a part of the route—their natural course is to Hudson's Bay. This has something to do with the question, as to the eligibility of the different routes, for the transport of heavy baggage and stores; and much more for the transport of wheat and corn and all the heavy products, which are so abundantly raised in Canada.

We are told of the vast amount of traffic which Canada in losing—that 5000 carts are about to be employed in the trade between St. Paul and Red River—let us not become inflated with the prospect of acquiring this vast trade, for we are further told that the aggregate amount of it is only \$100,000. Every person who has seen carts in Lower Canada can imagine what they can carry. Yet this is the best route and the best means by which the magnificent country, which the Toronto journals so much covet, and about which they seem bent upon startling the people of Canada out of their propriety, can be approached for any useful purpose. I therefore repeat that Mr. Justice Draper has asked for all that Canada can reasonably desire, and for far more than at the present time we can avail ourselves of. I am quite satisfied that the British Government will not overlook our interests in this great question, or the interests of the Empire at large. I have heretofore through your columns many years ago indicated what I conceived might become the grand political influence overruling the continent of North America—the prevalence of monarchial principles and British institutions over the debasing and levelling principles of republicanism—but the destinies of Canada in the great future will not be improved by our acting in the spirit of the dog in the manger towards the Hudson's Bay Company.

EDW. ERMATINGER.

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No. 2.—*To the Editor of the Hamilton Spectator.*

ST. THOMAS, 15th July, 1857.

The great interest which has been manifested by certain parties in Toronto, relative to the Hudson's Bay Territories, must have had its origin in disappointment with the Hudson's Bay Company, or in a desire to gain government employment; for it is not to be imagined that any disinterested party, who knows the territory, and all the difficulties which must attend upon its settlement from Canada, would advise the government of this Province to interfere beyond Lake Superior. I have read the petition of the Red River settlers, desiring the Canadian Government to assume jurisdiction of that Settlement, and detailing the hardships they labor under. I am acquainted with many of the signers to that petition, having been engaged in the same service with them before they settled at Red River. They have, I have no doubt, grievances to complain of, and they feel the want or good government, and of a better market for their produce; but I contend that Canada cannot afford them relief in these respects, without sacrificing a large amount of money, with only a very distant prospect of benefit to ourselves.

As many of your readers may be desirous of learning something of the nature of the country, which is said to contain so many millions of acres of arable land and of the difficulties to be encountered before reaching it, I will endeavour to furnish them with a true picture of both. In a work published in Montreal, in the French language, by G. Franchere, in the year 1820, which is now before me, I find the following description of the Saskatchewan River, and the route from thence to Lake Superior:—"The Saskatchewan river runs over a bed of gravel and clay, which tends in no

small degree to diminish the purity and transparency of its waters which, like the waters of the Missouri, are thick and of a whitish colour. Nevertheless, it is one of the prettiest rivers in the world. The banks of the Saskatchewan are quite charming, and in many places present scenes the most lovely, beautiful, and diversified, that can be either seen or imagined; hills or hillocks of various forms, crowned with superb tufts of poplars, valleys agreeably shaded morning and evening by the trees on the hills which surround them; cabris and buffalo, these pressing down the verdure with their heavy tread, the others bounding and skipping over the plain close by; all these beautiful objects of nature and rural scenery, doubly reflected, if I may so express myself, in the waters of the river; the melodious chants of a thousand different kinds of birds, perched in the branches of the trees; the refreshing breeze, the serenity of the sky, the pure and salubrious air; all in a word impart a spirit of contentment to the mind of the enchanted beholder."

Mons. Franchere, having indulged his fancy over this delightful picture of the Saskatchewan, then goes on to enquire why so many millions of acres of apparently rich and fertile lands, lying waste, the hunting grounds of roving savages and wild beasts, might not be made the happy abodes of the millions of poor and industrious of Europe, and of England in particular, who possess not a foot of land, and with difficulty eke out a scanty living—because he says, they have not the means of transporting themselves to these distant regions. On the other hand, Franchere remarks, "We must not deceive ourselves; this country, at times so delightful, does not enjoy a perpetual spring; the winter is severe; a piercing cold spreads through the atmosphere, thick snow covers the face of the earth, the ice-covered river serves only for the fishes; the trees are stripped of their foliage; the verdure of the plain has disappeared; the hills and the valleys are covered with snow; nature has lost all its beauty, and man has enough to do to shelter himself from the inclemency of the weather.

Having passed four times through the country thus described by Mr. Franchere, I can vouch for the general correctness of his description; and as the Red River and the Saskatchewan (the latter through a succession of small lakes) at no great distance apart, discharge their waters into Lake Winepeg, I believe I am safe in saying the vast country through which these rivers pass, is the same in every respect. Before reaching Lake Winepeg from the Saskatchewan, the navigation is interrupted by the grand Rapid, four or five miles long where the voyageurs have great difficulty in passing with their goods and boats, but are regaled with a plentiful supply of delicious sturgeon.

Of Lake Winepeg, Mr. Franchere says, in size it is not much inferior to Lake Superior (this is a mistake; Lake Winepeg is not near so large, but Franchere did not see much of Lake Winepeg.) and Great Slave Lake, and has many islands interspersed through it, on which the voyageurs are glad to take shelter with their craft, to escape the fury of the winds.

Before leaving the shores of Lake Winepeg, we may be said to have taken a long farewell of the magnificent prairies, apparently boundless as the ocean, which no doubt in process of time will become the abode of civilized men and women, instead of Indians, buffalo and deer of various kinds—but here all the difficulties of the navigation surround us. As for approaching Lake Winepeg by land, from Canada, is out of the question, and as for railroads or canals in the same direction, none but unemployed engineers and visionaries, can ever dream of seeing them. There are, however, a class of gentlemen who will be supported by the government of the country, whether employed or not. These persons will endeavour to precipitate the Government into some ill-advised act respecting the Hudson's Bay territories, but all such persons may be supported at a much cheaper rate and at much less expense to the country, than by employing them to build castles in the air.

I will now contrast the difficulties to be overcome before reaching Lake Winepeg, with the benefits to Canada which may be anticipated, after the expenditure of millions. Ascending the Winepeg river from the Lake of the same name, in the route for Lake Superior, Mr. Franchere says, this river is called also White River, (Riviere Blanche) from the white foam and froth arising from a great number of almost continuous cascades or rapids which obstruct the navigation. This day, says Mr. Franchere, we passed over 27 short portages, on the two following days 9, and on the fourth day arrived at the Lake of the Woods. On the 6th day we arrived at Lac la Pluie and reached the Lac la Pluie Fort on the evening of the 7th day. After leaving Lac la Pluie the travellers crossed a small Lake and narrows where there was scarcely water enough to float their canoes. Thence they journeyed to the Dog Portage, which is long and mountainous. They were now travelling down stream, having passed the Mountain Portage about noon of the same day. Finally after having passed over 36 more portages they arrived at Fort William, Lake Superior, about 9 o'clock p. m. That is 12 days actual travelling from Lake Winepeg to Lake Superior, and having to pass over more than 70 portages, long and short, in some places carrying over their canoes and generally their lading and baggage.

The foregoing, I believe, is a tolerably correct statement of the difficulties of the navigation, or route between Lakes Superior and Winepeg, which will have to be removed before we can even attempt to derive any advantages from the settlement of the Saskatchewan or to confer any material benefit on the Red River settlers. Other parties have essayed to make light of the obstructions to the navigation, and I should rejoice for the sake of old friends at Red River, if these obstructions could be overcome without a vast amount of labour and expense; and then after all this, the Americans in the direction of St. Paul's and Minnesota will be ahead of us. The opponents of the Hudson's Bay Company have greatly exaggerated the benefits to be derived to Canada from the settlement and trade of the Hudson's Bay Territory; while they have to as great an extent underrated the difficulties first to be surmounted; Mr. Gladman, it is true, and he has had long experience in that country, and is a gentleman whose word may be relied upon—says that he does not admit that these difficulties are *insurmountable* or *the route impracticable except for north canoes*. But let any person read the whole of Mr. Gladman's evidence attentively, and he will see that all I am contending for is admitted—*i. e.*, the difficulties can only be surmounted by the route being rendered practicable for the transport of the products of these distant regions at an incalculable expense; and when all this has been accomplished, we may succeed in bringing *coals to Newcastle*.

The Toronto *Leader* says, on what authority I do not know, "From the extremity of the Lake of the Woods to Rainy Lake there is an uninterrupted navigation of 150 miles on which a steamboat may be employed;—above the falls which interrupt the navigation, there is a further reach of 70 miles, also navigable for steamboats. Thence to Lake Superior, in a direct line the distance does not exceed 150 miles, in which there are also many unimpeded navigable lakes and streams, with only a land carriage of from 25 to 30 miles—over portages, &c." And these statistics he gives in contradiction to my statement, "that to surmount these difficulties the Province would have to incur a responsibility not much if anything short of the vast amount already incurred on account of the Grand Trunk Railway Company." As a question of such magnitude requires full discussion, I shall, with your permission, endeavour to place it in a different light from that in which the Toronto press has placed it.

EDW. ERMATINGER.

No. 3.—*To the Editor of the Spectator.*

ST. THOMAS, 22nd July, 1857.

In my last letter I gave some account of the great country bordering on the Saskatchewan and Red River; and in quoting from Franchere's journal, have laid before your readers a faithful delineation of the beauties of those magnificent prairies through which these rivers flow. To those who are disposed to indulge in the sublime and beautiful, this great country, no doubt, will prove highly attractive. To the Fur Trader, who has been buried in snow, separated from all the luxuries and amenities of civilized society, during a long and dreary winter, the view of the Saskatchewan is such as Mons. Franchere has portrayed it. The scene is indeed enchanting, but if we reflect a little, and contrast those boundless prairie lands with the rich and fertile country divided by the St. Lawrence and the chain of magnificent lakes by which it is fed and beautified, we shall discover at once how meagre is the picture of the Saskatchewan compared with the St. Lawrence or the Columbia. The one may be compared to those meretricious objects which expose all their charms at one view; the beauties of the other unfold themselves, the more you become acquainted with them. As some proof of the poverty of the prairie lands, compared with the heavy timbered lands of Canada and the Columbia, I may here introduce the view taken of the Columbian and Saskatchewan by a celebrated botanist many years ago.

Mr. David Douglas, a most enthusiastic botanist, had been sent to the Columbia by the Horticultural Society of London, and wintered at Fort Vancouver 30 years ago. I travelled in company with him on more than one occasion, and never saw a person more arduous in the pursuit of his profession. Wherever the boat stopped, he sprang on shore and soon returned in extacy with the discovery of some new specimens of plants, and many of them to this day bear his name or the names he gave them, in the scientific records of the Society. Traversing the Rocky Mountains the same indefatigable spirit characterised his labors; but on descending the Saskatchewan his spirit flagged. The sameness of scenery for hundreds of miles, and absence of variety in the vegetable kingdom damped his energies, and he floated down the stream apparently as unconscious of the magnificent scenery which Franchere describes, as the boat in which he rode. Mr. Douglas afterwards visited the Sandwich Islands in search of exotics, and was unfortunately killed by falling into a bear pit. His indifference while travelling on the Saskatchewan has strengthened my own opinion that the soil of the immense plains which border on it, is not rich or well adapted for agricultural purposes. Along the banks of the river, and in other places far apart, where there is water and clumps of trees the soil is better, and the country fit for settlement; but it is obvious that in the plains, where the view is only bounded by the horizon, and where the traveller for many miles can neither discover wood nor water, the skill and labour of the agriculturist cannot accomplish much.

It is a great mistake to be tempted by lovely appearances and pleasing scenery, and to fancy that because land may be easily cultivated it will always prove productive. In the plains of the Saskatchewan, the farmer may plough up his land and sow his seed the moment he arrives, and he may look forward to the time of harvest, but where is he to look for rail timber, or the means of preserving himself and his crops from the cruelties of roving bands of blood-thirsty Indians, who take as much pleasure in scalping a white man or woman, as they do in tomahawking one another; and from the depredations of wild beasts, who prey upon one another. Any person who has heard the howling or yelling of a pack of wolves in the distance, or the war-hoop of a band of Assinipottucks nearer hand, can imagine the horror-stricken feelings which would overwhelm any number of settlers scattered along the banks of the Saskatchewan. The Hudson Bay Company's servants, at the two or three

posts, the Company holds on the Saskatchewan, have to be always on their guard from Blackfeet, Sioux, Gros, Ventres, and other tribes of Indians, who would cut any party of settlers off in detail, unless they were constantly on the alert, and well supplied with arms and ammunition.

Although the banks of the Saskatchewan and Red Rivers have many pleasing views, and the lands bordering on these in many places shallow rivers would in process of time afford the means of subsistence and support to millions of the poor of Europe, when fitted to lead a pastoral life, and all causes of danger being removed, yet to the people of Canada they offer advantages not worth contending for. Here, in the midst of, and surrounded by millions of acres of the finest land in the world, diversified by magnificent lakes and watered by beautiful rivers, and capable of affording employment and support to millions upon millions of our fellow subjects, what good reason can we have to tempt them into the arid plains of the Saskatchewan. After all that has been said, or can be said, of these boundless prairies, there is no part of them that can bear comparison, in point of magnificence and utility combined with the country we now inhabit. We look in vain for such monarchs of the forest and such splendid varieties of tinted foliage as drop to enrich the soil of Canada. The eye is not relieved, as in Canada, by a variety of landscape, rich in soil and timber; but, after leaving the banks of the river, on the plains of the Saskatchewan in Summer, the view is confined between the parched ground and the hot sun; in Winter a sheet of snow covers the face of the earth,—without the shelter of woods or fuel to burn—as to the Fur Trade, in a national point of view, it is not worth contending for.

In opposition to what I have stated, the evidence of the Red River settlers may be adduced as published in their resolutions to be forwarded to Canada by Capt. Kennedy, in which they challenge the world for fertility of soil, and the ease with which it is cultivated. And adding, “what we can say of Red River as fit for colonization, many of us from long residence there, can say also of the entire valley of the Saskatchewan, and of much of the country beyond it.” This I do not intend to dispute, but I will give you an extract from the letter of a gentleman resident there, dated 13th of May last, and which is now in my possession. “The Canadians I see are calling out loudly for the annexation of this territory to Canada; should it be ceded to them, I think they would be something like the man who won the elephant at the raffle, and did not know what to do with it, when he got it”—and of the majority of the settlers he says “they are fully aware that the Canadian duty on imports is rather more than 4 per cent—which is all they have to pay at present, besides being entirely free from all taxation.” Again this gentleman says, after describing the Winter as severe and the Spring backward, the farmers were not prepared for anything of the kind, they have expended everything in the shape of fodder long ago, and as the cattle could not procure a mouthful of food in the plains, between 400 to 500 have died from starvation, and the majority of those that escaped so far, are now dying off daily; a great number of horses have also died in the course of the winter from some kind of disease or other; apart from this, the heavy rains and a severe snow storm a few days ago have so soddened the fields that little or nothing has been done in the way of farming—the few farmers who have put any (wheat) down, have lost it all with very few exceptions, by the rising of the rivers, which has flooded the lands.” This, I believe, to be a faithful picture of the Red River in the month of May, and to some extent similar causes operated in Canada; but from its first settlement, Red River has been severely tried and afflicted in one way or other from natural causes, and many of its best settlers have been glad to seek relief either in Canada or in the United States, from the hardships and miseries they had to encounter there. Of these I may mention Angus McKay, Angus Gunny, McPherson, and several other worthy and prosperous settlers, in and near Aldborough.

But the malcontents, stimulated by Captain Kennedy and others, would attribute all the evils the Red River settlers have had to endure to the fur monopoly, *that has been fruitful only of poverty and degradation*. This is a most unfair and ungenerous statement, for many of the settlers have derived all they possess or are worth from the fur monopoly, and had it not been for the Hudson's Bay Company, the colony of Red River would not now be in existence. This I am as convinced of as that I hold a pen in my hand. Let the Company be blamed for whatever misdeeds they may have committed, but let not Canada be deceived by the rash assertions and unfair statements of discontented individuals, whose ill-directed ambition will lead them to enter into any utopian enterprise at whatever cost to themselves or others. It is now about fifty years since the Red River Colony was commenced by Lord Selkirk, under the auspices of the Hudson's Bay Company, and during the whole of that period it has only been kept alive through the accession and means of their retired officers and servants with their families, under the protection of the Company. In the resolutions adopted at a meeting in Red River, on the 8th June last, and published in the Toronto Journals, there is much that is not only grossly exaggerated, but that is positively untrue. This may be also said of much of the evidence of witnesses as published in the newspapers. Speaking of the use of spirituous liquors for instance, one of the Red River resolutions says: "The entire valley of the Saskatchewan is so flooded with this fruitful source of mischief to the red man, that it is almost the exclusive commodity with which the Hudson's Bay Company procures the large stock of provisions obtained from the Saskatchewan." The testimony of any person who can deliberately make such assertions as these ought to be received with extreme caution. Justice to the Hudson's Bay Company, and to the Canadian public, requires that the falsity of such reckless assertions should be fully exposed.

EDW. ERMATINGER.

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No. 4.—*To the Editor of the Spectator.*

ST. THOMAS, 30th July, 1857.

While Great Britain is putting forth all her energies to quell the mutinous spirit which has led the Sepoys to imbrue their hands in the blood of many of our countrymen in the East, some of our Canadian politicians are pursuing a course well calculated to involve her in troubles of a similar nature, in the Western portion of this continent. We can all remember when we considered ourselves on the eve of a war with the United States on the Oregon question; and most assuredly, if our Canadian agitators were allowed to go on sowing the seeds of dissension in the Red River Colony, the result would be dangerous to the peace of two great nations, and destructive of the lives and property of the well disposed portion of the Red River settlers. In one of the resolutions adopted at the Red River meeting, to be submitted to the Imperial and Canadian governments, it is said "the disorder predicted by Sir George Simpson and his colleagues, as likely to spring up from the opening of the (fur) trade will inevitably follow, unless, indeed, the government can have troops in the country to support a monopoly." In other words, if free trade in furs is not granted to them, they will set at defiance the authority of the Hudson's Bay Company, and, as a consequence, must act in opposition to the will of the Imperial government. The result of such a conflict with constituted authority can readily be imagined. To maintain their rights and privileges, the Company would have to resort to rigorous measures, and Her Majesty's troops would have to enforce sub-

mission to the laws by which the Colony is governed. The roving Americans on the frontier would mix themselves up in the dispute, and carry off the trade. The Indians, too, ever ready to encourage an illicit trade, which would raise the prices of their skins, would cheat both parties of traders, and cut off all the defenceless settlers who might lie within their reach. If it be said that free traders now traffic in the territory on the American side of the line, it must be borne in mind that the American traders have always a nation of enterprising, energetic men at their heels, ready and never failing to inflict a fearful retribution on the savages who may commit murders or outrages on any of their people; so that while the Indians on our side profess to love their great Mother the Queen, those on the American side really fear their great Uncle, Kitche-Mokoman, the Big Knife. Still the Americans do not always escape pillage and murder.

But I have good reason to believe that the majority of the Red River settlers do not entertain the sentiments and assertions so recklessly interwoven in the resolutions to be submitted to the Canadian and Imperial governments by the delegates entrusted with them. The most respectable portion of the settlers have spent the greater part of their lives in the service of the Hudson's Bay and North-West Companies, and know better than their traducers, that, as a general rule, their conduct to the Indians has been humane and considerate, and that the exceptional cases were when the cupidity of free traders tempted the natives to defraud and cheat the Company. It has always been an object with the Company to restrict the sale of ardent spirits; and without giving them credit for more than they deserve, I may say that the safety of their people and their own interests, require them to do so. As for spirituous liquors being such a fruitful source of mischief to the red man, as the Red River resolutionists state, this is a gratuitous assertion, like many others in their resolutions, not susceptible of proof. That Indians do sometimes indulge in the use of spirituous liquors, supplied by the Company as well as others, I do not deny; but not to such an extent as to afflict them with any of the evils which so lamentably degrade and impoverish their white brethren in civilized society. The fact is, the Indians generally do not visit the Company's establishments more than three or four times a year, and have only the opportunity of indulging for a few days, so that our sympathy for the Red man, in this respect, is not at all required. In most parts of the Hudson's Bay Territories the natives would have to be accustomed to the use of spirituous liquors, before the virtue of temperance can be inculcated. But the liquor, fox skin, and cranberry stories interwoven with the chain of evidence against the Hudson's Bay Company by designing men, should have little weight with the people of Canada, for in nine cases out of ten it will be found, on proper investigation, that the parties for whom it is attempted to excite our sympathies were acting dishonourably, if not dishonestly, towards the Hudson's Bay Company.

But in discussing the question of the Hudson's Bay Company's Territories, I would respectfully recommend the leaders of the Toronto press not to mix it up with our Canadian politics. Our Canadian Ministry, according to their showing, are already sunk to the chin in political corruption, and have more sins laid at their door than they can either answer or compound for. Then, why worry and harass them to desperation at the instigation of a few disappointed men, who, having failed to gain a living or to raise themselves to distinction by more honourable means, have raised a hue and cry against the Hudson's Bay Company, very much in the spirit of the wolves, to whom I have already made allusion. These hungry animals, singly, are mere yelping curs, but in packs they dog the noblest animals in the prairies, assailing them by snapping and biting their limbs, and other parts of the body, till they become too much disabled to make further resistance, and fall prostrate before their voracious enemies—the opponents of the Ministry act, as if



like Achilles, they were vulnerable only in the heel, and therefore they attack them on this outside, Hudson's Bay Territory question. Instead of treating this question, which has been magnified into one of such vast importance by the leaders of the Press in Toronto, in a calm dispassionate manner, they have attempted to influence the public mind by invoking it in tirades of abuse and vilification, alike regardless of decency and truth. Having only continually the victim before their eyes whom they have doomed to destruction, no matter what public morality requires right or wrong, they do not stop to enquire. Something wrong, they say, has been done by the Ministry, or something right has not been done, and they undertake to decide the question before they know right or wrong about it; and condemn the government—like the connoisseur in the lecture on Heads, did the painter—"the dog has spoiled a fine piece of canvas, he's worse than a Harp alley sign post dauber; there's no keeping, no perspective, no foreground; why there now the fawner has attempted to paint a fly on that rose-bud; why it's no more like a fly, than I am like a-a-;" but as the connoisseur approached his finger to the picture, the fly flew away. So will the case of the man Coutts, whom the Toronto press has twice murdered somewhere between the Sault St. Mary's and Hudson's Bay, turn out on investigation.

A question involving such important considerations ought not to be smeared with the venom of party spirit or political animosity. The first consideration is, whether it is advisable for Canada to assume the government of the vast territories now occupied by the Hudson's Bay Company; and the second is, how we would compensate that Company for the sacrifice of all their interests in the Fur Trade. This must be done by either England or Canada, notwithstanding the profligacy of Charles the Second. Canada is young, healthy and waxing strong, and particularly chivalrous, when seated in the editorial chair, but neither her wealth nor her strength will be adequate to the task of turning out the Hudson's Bay Company without full compensation. Whether the Charter of the Company be valid or not, under it they have held possession for two centuries, and possession under these circumstances, is certainly *nine points* of the law. Mr. Ellice in his evidence before the committee of the House of Commons in England, intimated the course the Company would be obliged to resort to, if deprived of their rights and privileges; and certainly they will be justified in using all the means within their power to protect their interest against the aggressions of free traders in furs. But the consideration is, will Canada be benefited by the acquisition of the vast territories in dispute, when the leaders of the Toronto press have kicked out the Hudson's Bay Company, or had them all hung for murder.

In Lake Superior, the mines have presented new elements of trade and commerce which may benefit Canada, but beyond these nothing has been discovered in the Hudson's Bay territories, which Canada has not the means of providing to much more advantage. It is a question whether fall wheat can be raised in these territories. Indeed the climate generally being as severe as in Lower Canada, would lead us to consider that fall wheat would not thrive there. Now this is unquestionably the great staple feeder of Western commerce in Canada. In nothing do these vast territories, as far as is known, excel or even equal Canada. They present nothing that we do not possess, except fur bearing animals and the objects of the chase, and these are thinned out as civilization advances. Every kind of grain and fruit we can produce in a superior degree. Apples, which will be dropping all round us in a month or two, have not yet been produced at Red River. Then, I would ask, and press upon the consideration of the people of Canada, what is there to tempt them to open up a communication of more than a thousand miles at a vast expense, to annex a colony not more populous than one of our own townships, and where every article of produce that can be raised may be produced or found at our

own doors in much greater abundance. Whatever may be the discoveries of the expedition of Mr. Gladman to Red River or Lake Winepeg, this consideration must still press upon us.

For many, many years to come the trade of Red River will be a mere bagatelle and such as can be most profitably carried on in carts from St. Paul's in Minnesota, until the Americans construct a railroad, and in this respect we cannot compete with them; therefore we shall go to seek the golden fleece in the prairies of the West at a great disadvantage, and be much more likely to lose than to find it.

I conclude, therefore, as I began, that Mr. Chief Justice Draper has asked for all that Canada can reasonably desire, in the face of all the difficulties which present themselves; and I agree with him in opinion that for the purpose of protecting the Indians, it is of great importance, for some time to come at all events, that the Hudson's Bay Company should maintain those stations and that trade which they have hitherto carried on. Those who advise otherwise, do not foresee the consequences of throwing open a trade, limited in amount and not susceptible of increase to a set of wild adventurers, who would have to roam over half the continent of North America, and scramble for a few skins at a cost of much privation and danger to themselves, and of destruction to the Indians.

EDWARD ERMATINGER.

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No. 5.—*To the Editor of the Spectator.*

ST. THOMAS, 15th August, 1857.

The people of Canada are naturally inclined to venerate everything which emanates from any respectable body of their fellow subjects in England. To the people of England as to the authors of whatever is noble and praiseworthy in themselves, they look with cherished regard. The feelings of loyal attachment to the mother country so strongly permeate the breast of Canada, that the first consideration is bestowed on everything that appears expressive of the sentiments of any considerable body of people in England. With such a passport, the statements and opinions contained in the pamphlet issued by the Liverpool Financial Reform Association and re-published by the Toronto Press, will be extensively read in Canada. A more mendacious and calumniating publication has seldom appeared. This poisonous compound of crimes and villainies, alleged against the Hudson's Bay Company, contains just enough of truth to render it palatable, to the depraved tastes of the enemies of social order, and the minds of ambitious panderers to popular prejudices. To give color to its assertions, distorted facts are brought forward, and the evidence of men with respectable names, is intermingled, to add weight to the most monstrous fabrication of falsehood and exaggeration, ever attempted to be palmed off on the people of Canada.

If the Liverpool Financial Association had limited their discussion to *Free Trade v. Monopoly*, or *Envy v. Wealth*, they would have been acting within the sphere of their knowledge and experience, but when they venture into the hallowed paths of christian morality, they exhibit that moral obliquity, of which the publication under review is a lamentable proof. But the Association must have been imposed upon by some wolf in sheep's clothing, or by some discarded aspirant from the Hudson's Bay Territory. We have heretofore been taught to look to our fellow-subjects in England for examples of every virtue, of everything that is great and glorious; but the authors of this flagitious pamphlet have shewn us how far they can

excel our Canadian agitators in the vices of detraction and falsehood. While we read the epitome of enormities, classically arranged under the different heads of crime contained in this pamphlet, charging the Hudson's Bay Co. with robbery, murder and cannibalism, we may do well to consider that the authors and abettors of so many imputed atrocities and crimes perpetrated in the darkness of the forest, and in the territory of heathenism, are men like ourselves, early trained in the paths of Christianity, and enlightened by the instructions of civilized society. The proprietors and servants of the Hudson's Bay Company are our fellow-countrymen, governed by the dictates of humanity as well as the Liverpool Association, and are not transformed into demons of cruelty and avarice in their dealings with the Indian tribes. They are neither more cruel nor more mercenary than other men, rather the reverse, for their isolated position renders them more temperate, more sociable, and circumspect in their conduct towards the natives and in their intercourse with one another. They are not so continually exposed to the temptations of avarice and the allurements of vice, as the members of civilized society, the consequence is as we all know, when a North-wester has acquired a moderate fortune, after a long life of privations and hardships, and comes down to Canada to spend it, he becomes the centre of attraction to a host of speculators, genteel loafers and refined swindlers, who too frequently transform him into a plucked goose. The Hudson's Bay Company's service is not a school to cultivate polished manners and fashionable vices, neither is it a service in which men become brutalized and callous to the dictates of Christian charity. The members of the Hudson's Bay Company will contrast favorably with those of the Liverpool Financial Reform Association, and this will become more apparent as we investigate the charge under various heads contained in their libellous pamphlet.

The question of Monopolies we need not here discuss ; public opinion is generally against them ; but there are cases where they are necessary to the successful carrying on of trade ; and the Hudson's Bay Company's is one of these cases ; that is, the association of a number of individuals into a body corporate to afford strength and co-operation in all the ramifications of their trade. Whether we should create or abolish monopolies are very different questions ; and when it can be shown that the Hudson's Bay Company's exclusive charter stands in the way of advancing civilization, it ought to be abolished ; but the opponents of the Company have not succeeded in establishing one fact to prove this.

The Liverpool Association, like many scientific men in Canada, have taken much pains to prove in various ways that the Company's charter is invalid, and that they are mere usurpers ; but as the decision on this head must be made in England, it is unnecessary to investigate the subject here. I may, however, remark that while they prove to their own satisfaction the invalidity of the charter, they charge the Company with the non-fulfilment of its conditions ! and that too, by means of fallacious reasoning and distorted facts.

I shall now proceed to analyze the statements of the Liverpool Association premising by the way, that the evidence of C. A. Crofton and Major Griffith, two officers successively in command of Her Majesty's troops at Red River, having no interest in the Hudson's Bay Company's affairs, is set down by the Liverpool Association as *mere assertion*, because they did not, like Mr. Isbister, an inveterate hater of the Hudson's Bay Company, think proper to vilify them, and sully their reputation as gentlemen and officers in Her Majesty's service by detailing the slanders and false accusations of interested parties. The first clause which I will notice is, "What the Company has done for commerce?" In this clause it is admitted that the Company do possess exclusive privileges, but it is contended that they have not developed the resources of the country, and that they have prevented others from doing so—resources says the pamphlet "which might have been developed more than half a

century ago. The prairies of the Red River and Saskatchewan are covered with immense herds of buffaloes, red deer, and wild horses; and admirably adapted for the growth of hemp and flax, &c.,—and all these resources might have been developed, *but for the deadly Upas of its (the Company's) monopoly!*" In contradiction I may say, that the Company have made all the use of the immense herds of buffaloes, red deer and wild horses that it was in their power to do. They have made provisions of their flesh, traded for their robes, cured and eat their tongues, and used the wild horses whenever they could catch them; but they have not yet been able to catch and kill off the upwards of 50 powerful races of Indians inhabiting their own vast hunting grounds, say half a million of savages; this would have to be done before settlers could peaceably set themselves to the raising of hemp and flax.

Many years ago Colonel Talbot went to great trouble and expense to grow hemp here in Canada, a country quite as well adapted to the growth of hemp and flax as the *barren grounds\** of the Saskatchewan; but he had to abandon the project. Why has not the territory, which reaches up to the Red River—free to all the world—developed these resources? Simply because the inhabitants have something else to do than to labour like the serfs in Russia. The culture of hemp and flax requires much capital, which in all new countries must be devoted to other purposes.

To prove the anti-commercial spirit of the Hudson's Bay Company, the case of Mr. James Sinclair is brought forward. Mr. Sinclair, it is said, made a venture of a small quantity of tallow to London via Hudson's Bay, from Red River, and succeeded beyond his hopes; but in making a second attempt with a larger quantity, the Company refused to ship it, because Mr. Sinclair instigated no doubt by Mr. Isbister and others *sui generis*, attempted to annihilate the power by which he was privileged to carry on his trade. But the Company purchased his tallow, and it remained a burden on their hands, as their ship could not carry it home. He subsequently entered the service of the Company, and was more than a year ago murdered by some of these ruthless barbarians, for whom the Liverpool Association attempts to excite our sympathy, at the expense of their Christian brethren.

Then it is alleged against the Company that they impose duties and restrictions on the importations of settlers at Red River, and I would ask under what system of enlightened government are the people exempt from duties? It is admitted that the Company is a monopoly, and can it be expected that they will raise up rivals in trade at their own expense, and to their own prejudice? What commercial body would do this? Would the Liverpool Financial Reform Association do it? Most assuredly not. Can it be possible that this Association do not understand what constitutes commerce, that they propound such a question as "what has the Company done for commerce? Commerce, generally speaking, can only be carried on and extended between producing nations, possessed of a creative power. It is not a system of barter such as is carried on between the Hudson's Bay Company and the Indians. The Indians as well as the fur bearing animals are continually diminishing, therefore it must be obvious that the Company cannot do more for the general interests of commerce than they are doing. But I come to the second proposition.

"What the Company has done for Colonization?" To this it may be answered, they Established the Red River Colony, where there are now seven thousand inhabitants, while the Americans, under much more favourable circumstances, with the exception of a trading post and a few houses, have not a settlement for three or four hundred miles of the territory of Minnesota. Even this attempt at Colonization on

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\* This appellation was generally applied to the distant prairies.

the part of Lord Selkirk has not been attended with sufficient success to encourage the Hudson's Bay Company in proceeding further, not from mismanagement on their part, but from natural causes. Bond, in his work on the resources of Minnesota, who visited the Selkirk settlement in 1851, and who was enraptured with all he saw at the Colony, tells us that no farming whatever was done for three years past, the waters having risen to the height of 31 and 33 feet above low water mark, flooding all the country, inundating the houses at this place (Pembina), to the depth of two and three feet. The rivers he describes as being very muddy and deep, and the waters very disagreeable until you get accustomed to them. To vary the scene, when the lands are not flooded, they are visited by armies of a species of locusts, which frequently destroy the crops.

Here I must break off, trusting that I shall be able to show as I proceed, that the language I have used in the fore part of this letter is not too strong to apply to the venomous publication of the Liverpool Financial Reform Association.

EDWD. ERMATINGER.

No. 6.—*To the Editor of the Spectator.*

ST. THOMAS, August 24, 1857.

DEAR SIR,—The Liverpool Financial Reform Association is obliged reluctantly to admit that the Hudson's Bay Company did found a colony at Red River, but with the disingenuousness characteristic of dishonest minds, they detract from this unwilling testimony in favor of the Company, adding—"But the main purpose of the settlement was to place a barrier in the way of the operations of the North West Company, not colonization." It so happened, however, that after the Coalition of the Hudson's Bay and North West Companies, the former not only maintained the colony, but in 1821 brought out a considerable number of Swiss settlers of a respectable class, to augment its population, and has since in various ways endeavoured to promote the prosperity of the settlement. But the natural causes, to which I have before adverted, and its distance from any market has and must retard its advancement. It is needless to expose all the slanders of this Association, else I might shew that the Company has not acted unreasonably with the settlers, as to the price of freight and otherwise, but it cannot be charged against the Company as a crime, that they have prevented them from trading with the Indians for furs. The Company was constituted a monopoly mainly for the purpose of trading in furs, and it would be strange indeed if they allowed private individuals to interfere with that trade.

"The settlement has been in existence nearly half a century. During this period mere villages—nay the location of single squatters—in the United States have sprung up into important cities and districts; but the R. R. settlement has lingered and pined under an incubus opposed to all progress, numbering at this day a population of from five to seven thousand souls only." I make this quotation from the pamphlet to shew how the Association has made use of distorted facts, and fallacious reasoning, to prejudice the public mind against the Hudson's Bay Company. It is true important cities and districts have sprung up in the United States within the last half century, but where! how near to the Hudson's Bay territories? The nearest approach of anything like a village is 500 miles from Pembina, in Minnesota, a tract of country quite as eligible and more accessible than either the Red River

settlement or the Saskatchewan and through which I contend all the commerce of these distant regions must ultimately pass. Under these circumstances what could the Hudson's Bay Company have done more for colonization?

At this time it is highly important for the people of Canada to estimate the real value of the vast territories about to be offered to them for colonization; because, if these vast regions are as valuable and desirable as some people imagine, then the young settler in Canada may suspend his axe, and with all the able bodied emigrants who may arrive on our shores make tracks for the Western prairies.—There they will require no axes to chop down the forests—Nature has cleared the land already for them. And the Toronto gentlemen may prepare to set out their tubs to catch some of the vast trade, which is to swell the tide of commerce through Canada, from Chicago, and the Red River settlement. But the people had better first inquire, what's to pay.

So far the *Hudson's Bay Company v. Magna Charta and the British people* has not appeared to be a very grave matter for the display of the Liverpool Financial Reform Association's malevolence, but in what follows under the head of "What the Company has done for the United States and Russia," their malignity, blinded by gross ignorance of the subject on which they write, has led them to expose themselves to the severest castigation which can be inflicted on men having any regard for honor and truth. "But whilst discouraging and repressing their fellow subjects in every possible way, the conduct of the Company and its officers towards Americans has been very different. By its connivance, if not by its influence and positive agency American citizens obtained that footing in Oregon, which constituted the claim of the United States to a most valuable territory, which unquestionably belonged to England—if there was one jot of validity in the Company's charter." The Liverpool Association ought to have known that the Company's Charter does not extend to Oregon, and so far from desiring to surrender their establishments south of the line 49 to the Americans, in 1828, when the United States rejected the offer of the British Government which yielded up these establishments, the Company had prepared to remove them within the line. Subsequently the American Government accepted the existing treaty which stipulated that they should compensate the Company for such of their posts as they may take possession of by virtue of the Oregon treaty. There is no truth whatever in the assumption that the Company desired to get rid of these posts; but of course, if they were deprived of them, they desired compensation.

It is well known that the United States never relinquished their claim to the Oregon territory, founded on the discoveries of Captain Gray in the Columbia, of Lewis and Clarke's overland journey to Columbia, and the establishment of Astoria by the enterprise of John Jacob Astor. The question was only held in abeyance by the ten years treaties, till finally settled by the existing treaty.

As to Russia being under obligations to the Company *for its indifference to British interests*—this is one of those gratuitous assertions with which the pamphlet is replete—the Company had no right or power to interfere with their settlements. They established a trade with them which was all they could do. Whale fishing was no part of the Company's business, and how can they be charged with neglecting the whale fisheries near Behring's Straits is a mystery. The Liverpool Association were certainly at sea without a compass when they trumped up such ridiculous charges against the Hudson's Bay Company.

They accuse the Company with *subordinating all other considerations* to that of "*some trade in fur*," and they say "with this sole view it has endeavored, so far as in it lay, to retain nearly half the continent of America in a state of wild barren waste, keeping out men in order that beasts might breed and multiply. As regards subjects of the British Crown, this execrable policy has to a great extent

succeeded,—not as regards American citizens.” A little enquiry into this *execrable policy* will shew us whether the Liverpool Association are justified in using such harsh language towards the Hudson’s Bay Company. We have already been told by them that the Red River settlement, although in existence more than half a century has *lingered and pined*, and does not yet contain more than 5 to 7000 souls; and we know that neither the United States, nor Canada till very recently, have attempted to help the Red River settlers out of this sickly condition; while in the Oregon territory, where, according to the Liverpool Association’s statement, the same *deadly Upas*, the fur trade monopoly, has repressed and choked everything opposed to its interest, the Americans have not failed to seize the rich booty prepared for them by the anti-national policy of the Hudson’s Bay Company. Why, we may ask, has not the same cause produced the same effect in Red River as in Oregon? Simply because the two countries are very different in point of climate and accessibility. The same elements of greatness do not exist in both countries. The Hudson’s Bay Company has acted in both cases precisely as any other commercial body would have acted under similar circumstances; but the Columbia or Oregon territory presented a better field for agricultural and commercial pursuits than Red River; and the Company improved it.

Dr. McLoughlin, whose name has been associated with savages and murderers in the disgraceful publication of the Liverpool Association, is deservedly esteemed the father of Oregon City. He was the partner in charge of the whole Columbia department, to which is attached that of New Caledonia and Fraser’s River, for more than a quarter of a century. A more indefatigable and enterprising man it would have been difficult to find. With an energetic and indomitable spirit, his capacious mind conceived and pushed forward every kind of improvement for the advancement of commerce and the benefit of civilization. With only seven head of horned cattle, and others which he imported from California, by good management and perseverance he stocked the whole of the Oregon territory until they had increased to thousands. He built saw mills, and cultivated an extensive farm on the beautiful prairie of Fort Vancouver. Subsequently he laid the foundation of Oregon City, where he built a splendid grist mill. The machinery for this mill he imported from Scotland, and from the same country a good practical miller,—which does not look much like Americanism. By every means in his power he promoted trade and commerce with other countries. To Sitka, the principal Russian establishment, the company exported produce—chiefly wheat, to the Sandwich Islands lumber and salmon, and to California hides and tallow. In short, under Dr. McLoughlin’s management, everything was done to develop the resources of the country; the trade was not restricted to “some trade in fur,” as the Liverpool Association meanly assert. It is true, two military officers, Warr and Vevascur, who visited Oregon, on the part of the British Government, reported that the Dr. favored the Americans, which probably gave rise to the slander of the Association; but the fact is, the Dr.’s mind is of that liberal cast, that he favored everybody who could be useful to the country without paying too much heed to supercilious gentlemen, who may fancy that the fate of the British Empire depended on the carrying out of their views. It would be unreasonable to expect that the Hudson’s Bay Company could colonise the Oregon territory by transporting British subjects through a navigation nearly circling the globe. They colonised it with retired servants—freemen,—and such others as could find their way there, without reference to their place of nativity, politics, or creed.

I have dwelt at the Oregon territory, and the Company’s rule there, to show that the *execrable policy* which the Liverpool Association renders *treason*, has been the same East and West of the Rocky Mountains, at Red River and at Oregon; yet the former country is fast peopling with active American citizens; while the latter still lingers and pines under the miasma of stagnation. The cause is that Red

River, by nature, is in a great measure shut up in the middle of the continent without markets; while the Columbia, a magnificent stream, little inferior to the mighty St. Lawrence, running through the whole of the Oregon territory, affords facilities for commerce with every part of the world.

The Liverpool Financial Reform Association in the remainder of their publication which I have to notice, have proved themselves masters in the trade of slander, whatever may be their qualifications as financiers.

EDW. ERMATINGER.

No. 7.—*To the Editor of the Spectator.*

St. THOMAS, 29th Aug, 1857.

Since the date of my last letter, I have read the proceedings of a large meeting held in Toronto, at which were assembled the enemies of the Hudson's Bay Company, the friends of progress, the opponents of the present Canadian Ministry and the assailants of Mr. Draper. The proceedings were just such as might have been anticipated from an assemblage generally ill-informed on the subject which they met to discuss. I have too good an opinion of the intelligence and good sense of the citizens of Toronto, to suppose for a moment that the majority of them concur in those proceedings. To use a simile, the meeting showed merely the surface water, the clear cool springs are deeper seated. The province is interested in hearing both sides of the question. With this view I continue to expose the fallacies of the Liverpool Financial Reform Association's Pamphlet. Under the heading—"How the Company has sought to deter settlers," it is stated "It has ever been, and still is the cue of the Company to represent its dominions as unfit for the habitation of civilized men." This is not true. To support their assertion, they adduce the discrepancy between Sir Geo. Simpson's oral testimony, and the glowing description he gave of a portion of the vast territory he traversed many years ago, in a book which he published at the time. Sir George may have availed himself of a traveller's license, for aught I know; but that he has ever asserted that the Red River district is unfit for the dwelling of man, or agricultural occupation, is too glaring a falsehood to deserve further notice. What I have already written about the Oregon territory corroborates the statement of Sir J. H. Pelly in his letter to Lord Glenelg, wherein he says of the country on the northern banks of the Columbia River: "In the neighborhood they have large pasture and grain farms, &c., these have been gradually established, and it is the intention of the Company still further, not only to augment and increase them, to establish an export trade in wool, tallow, hides, and other agricultural produce, but to encourage the settlement of their retired servants, and other emigrants, under their protection." Thus we have seen the Company actually did as much as they could. But we now come to graver matters—"What has the Company done for the Indians?"

If we take the Liverpool Financial Reform Association's word for it,—they have taught them cannibalism, have deprived them of the means of subsistence, and have paid missionaries to confirm them in heathenism. Such charges are too monstrous to gain credence; but why are they made by the Liverpool Association? They do not say that the Company practised cannibalism; but they say it was unknown among them (the Indians) until they made the white man's acquaintance! Need I say more to prove the recklessness of their assertions? But the Association, horrified at the picture of their own imagination, pause to apostrophise. "This state of things in a country possessed and ruled by people who pretend to be Christians, seems too horrible for belief, but the fact is stated on unquestionable authority." So to strengthen their faith they bring forward the evidence of Dr.



King, which, like the testimony of the Rev. Mr. Beaver and others, is more than questionable. Dr. King says "when they (the Indians) become advanced in life, and no longer able to hunt, they are refused a supply of ammunition, which has become essential to their very existence, and they die consequently from absolute starvation—they have become cannibals by necessity; and scarcely a month passes but some horrible tale of cannibalism is brought to the different establishments."—The testimony of such witnesses only weakens the cause it is brought forward to support, for it carries its own refutation. What would be the use of ammunition to an Indian, *no longer able to hunt!* The Indians themselves do sometimes abandon their old and infirm, and of this we have an instance recorded in Washington Irving's interesting and admirably written work "Astoria." Mr. R. Stuart and a small party were travelling somewhere between Oregon and the Missouri, and had very opportunely fallen in with a band of buffaloes to relieve their wants, when they came to a place where "the country seemed deserted. The only human being they met with were three Pawnee squaws, in a hut in the midst of a deserted camp. Their people had all gone south in pursuit of the buffalo, and had left these poor women behind, being too sick and infirm to travel." Irving continues,—"It is a common practice with the Pawnees, and probably with other roving tribes, when departing on a distant expedition, which will not admit of incumbrance or delay, to leave their aged and infirm with a supply of provisions sufficient for temporary subsistence. When this is exhausted they must perish, though sometimes their sufferings are abridged by hostile prowlers who may visit the deserted camp. The poor squaws in question expected some such fate at the hands of the white strangers, and though the latter accosted them in the kindest manner, and made them presents of dried buffalo meat, it was impossible to soothe their alarm, or get any information from them."

Such is the manner in which Indians sometimes deal with their own kindred. During my residence of ten years, I do not remember to have heard of a case of cannibalism occurring either among whites or Indians, and the only instance in which a suspicion of the kind was entertained, was of some of Captain Franklin's party after the return of the first overland expedition. This arose from the mysterious manner in which Lieut. Hood had disappeared.

But to form a just opinion of Dr. King's evidence, it is necessary to understand that he quarrelled with the Hudson's Bay Company, and I believe the Government too, because they would not employ him to head an expedition to discover the North-west passage. He had accompanied Captain Back, I think it was, and on his return volunteered to do what others had failed to accomplish; but neither the Government nor the Company would gratify him, and hence he set to work to vilify and slander them. The association must be badly off for materials when they make use of such infamous falsehoods as Dr. King has told in the extract given.

But the disingenuousness of the Association's publication is only exceeded by the amount of untruths it contains. The Company are blamed first for total neglect of duty, and when they attempt to do it, their motives are impugned. It is admitted that Lord Selkirk colonized Red River, but then it is added, they only did it to place a barrier in the way of the operations of the North West Company, not colonization. So they colonised the Oregon Territory, but then they did it that they might set the country at a better price to the Americans. They opened up a commerce with the Russians, but this was only to shew the way through Nootka Sound to seize the trade of the South Pacific. They contributed towards the support of missions among the Indians, but we are gravely told the object was to render them, the Missionaries, more subservient, to close their eyes on much that they see going on about them—that is, these reverend men, it is to be presumed, not having seen or heard all the *atrocities* and horrid tales fabricated by Dr. King and others,

had not the will or capacity to invent them. It is thus evident that whatever the Hudson's Bay Company might have undertaken or done, either in the lawful pursuit of their trade, for colonization, or for the conversion and civilization of the natives, they must have failed to satisfy the Liverpool Financial Reform Association.

The assertion that the Hudson's Bay Company expends nothing in the missions, is contradicted in the same paragraph, which says "But it subsidizes missionaries with sums of from £50 to £100 a year, in addition to what they receive from the Associations to which they belong." Then follows the slander which I have quoted above. It is also stated that the Church Missionary Society has expended over £50,000, to which the Company did not contribute one farthing; but the Association omit to state that one of the *ratcatchers*, James Leith, Esq., dying, left £10,000 for the maintenance of the church at Cumberland House. But it would be an useless employment of time to attempt to refute all the slanders of the Liverpool Financial Reform Association, or to convince them of their errors, while they so shamefully violate the first principles of morality—"How the Company cheats the natives." To substantiate this charge, we have the evidence again of the veracious Dr. King, and two of those Rev. Missionary gentlemen, whom it is said the Company only subsidizes to render them more subservient. Of the Rev. C. G. Nicols I know nothing, only that he has an eye to profit, for he says "a four-penny comb will barter for a bear's skin worth £2." He does not tell us what it costs the Company to maintain a post and govern a tract of country, infested with predatory tribes of Indians, from 4 to 500 miles square, to supply these comparatively worthless articles. However, it is admitted that the Company's trade is very profitable. The Rev. Mr. Beaver's evidence I mean particularly to refer to, and to shew how even a clergyman of the Church of England can degrade himself, when beyond the precincts of the sacred edifice, and unprotected by the sanctity of the pulpit. This reverend blasphemer has the audacity to declare, "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." Comment on such villanous evidence as this is superfluous, yet such is the testimony the Liverpool Association relies upon, and which the Toronto press has passed current through the Province, to blacken the character of the Hudson's Bay Company. This is one of the reverend men, whom the Company unfortunately sent to the Columbia to spread the light of the Gospel, who was only a bill of expense to them, and who proved that his affections were more set on things beneath than on those above. The Company were under the disagreeable necessity of taking him back at cost and charges, and so improper was his conduct on his way home, as I am informed at the Sandwich Islands, that Captain Humphrey refused to carry him further unless he retracted the offensive expressions he had made use of towards Dr. McLaughlin. But there were two Beavers—male and female—well matched, the latter a lady of Amazonian spirit, who heroically sustained her reverend husband when his ill behavior brought him into angry conflict with the chief officer of the Company. Some anecdotes of this valorous lady's ebullitions of temper would be very amusing were they not subjects of too grave a nature; regard, too, for the general amiability of her sex forbids unnecessary exposure. Nevertheless, those who fancy a lady's influence, for good or evil, in missionary labours is not very great, are very much mistaken.

It must be evident that the Company could not maintain Ministers and Doctors at all their establishments hundreds of miles apart, where the average number of white people were not more than ten or a dozen. As to preaching to Indians before they are civilized and taught to labour, is throwing away both money and time. On this head we may read a valuable lesson from the state of affairs in India.

No. 8.—*To the Editor of the Spectator.*

St. THOMAS, 5th September, 1857.

Two questions present themselves while discussing the conduct of the Hudson's Bay Company, and enquiring into the aspersions of their defamers, the Liverpool Financial Reform Association, and they are these:—Will Canada consent to assume the responsibility of governing the whole of the vast Territories, now occupied by the Hudson's Bay Company? I believe she will not, when the question is fully understood. Next, will she entertain the proposition of the British Government, and be content with as much of these territories as it may be for her interests to acquire, acquiescing at the same time in an arrangement, which will allow the Hudson's Bay Company to hold for a number of years as much of the unsettled territories as may be required for their trade? Before deciding on this latter question, it is proper to enquire whether the character and conduct of the Company have been such as to entitle them to this privilege; leaving out of view the question of right; for I will add, if the charges preferred against them were true, they ought to be ejected from every part of the territories. But I have undertaken to shew that these charges are not true.

Pursuing their catalogue of diabolical charges against the Company, the Liverpool Financial Reform Association proceed. "Here is a specimen of atrocity not exceeded in the annals of the most savage buccaneers—Spanish or English:—"

"In that winter (1836) a party of men, led by two clerks, was sent to look for some horses, that were grazing at a considerable distance from the post. As they approached the spot they perceived a band of Assineboine Indians, eight in number (if I remember rightly), on an adjacent hill, who immediately joined them, and delivering up their arms, encamped with them for the night. Next morning a court-martial was held by the two clerks, and some of the men, to determine the punishment due to the Indians for having been found near the Company's horses, with the supposed intention of carrying them off. What was the decision of the mock court-martial? I shudder to relate that the whole band after having given up their arms and partaken of their hospitality were condemned to death, and the sentence carried into execution on the spot; all were butchered in cold blood."\*

The author of this horrid tale (Mr. McLean) has resided for some years, I believe, in Guelph, and is known in Hamilton, I have no doubt. I have met him in Canada, and always considered him a respectable man, incapable of imposing on the credulity of the public with a story so monstrous; but until I see from his own hand more particulars—the names of the butchers employed in this cruel and bloody transaction—I shall consider it one of those cases where distorted facts have been employed to traduce the character of the Hudson's Bay Company.†

The Assineboine Indians, like some other predatory tribes of the North Western prairies, are well known to be great horse thieves, of whom, if the Rev. Mr. Beaver had said, the life of a trapper was never yet put in competition with a horse, instead of *the life of an Indian was never yet put in competition with a beaver skin*, we might have believed him to have spoken conscientiously. But we come now to another of these foul charges of crime, the actors in which I have some knowledge of: "Conformably with a rule by which nominal christians reduced themselves to the level of savages, in August, 1840, near the mouth of the Columbia River. one Indian was hung, several others were shot, and their village was set on fire by a party in the employ of the Company, under the command of Chief Factor McLau-

\* This horrid tale appears to have originated in the gasconade of some men who had been sent in pursuit of horse thieves. There is not particle of truth in the story.

† Mr. McLean has not thought fit to confirm the above statement, in fact he cannot.

ghlin, who led them from Fort Vancouver, there to revenge the death of a man who had lost his life in an affray with the Indians." The affray, as it is called, was that a man named McKay, employed by the Company to cure salmon at a small port at the mouth of the Columbia was barbarously murdered for the sake of pillage, by the Indian who was hung for the offence, having been first delivered up to justice by the other Indians of the tribe. His execution was concurred in as an act of retributive justice by the Missionaries and other gentlemen at the establishment.

I had the honour of serving immediately under the orders of Chief Factor McLaughlin for 3 years, more than 30 years ago, and had intimate intercourse with him during that period. I know him to be incapable of any such deliberate act of cruelty. He was, indeed, a noble specimen of human nature. Dr. McLaughlin is a native of Quebec, I believe, Irish by descent on the father's side, and French on the mother's. His name will stand conspicuous in the annals of Oregon, when those of his defamers are mingled with the records of infamy.

But it will be said by these wretched philanthropists, who pretend to be better Christians than better men, the Indian should have been sent down to Canada to have been legally tried and convicted! Miserable jurists! Why did you not convict and execute the murderers of Corrigan? In the midst of civilized society, surrounded with all the appliances and paraphernalia of Courts of Justice, puling piety, and cheap patriotism can afford to be pitiful; but place such sorry philanthropists in the midst of danger, amongst hordes of lawless savages, to act on the immutable laws of God, their craven hearts would sink within them, and they would be able to fulfil no law human or divine. "Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed," is the law of God proclaimed upon the mountains of Ararat, antecedent to all human laws, and which law has never been abrogated or disannulled, except by those deluded philanthropists who pretend to be more merciful than their Creator! The Indian is no more absolved from the operation of this divine law than the white man, and when he violates it he shall be made to feel the consequence of his wicked transgression. Any body of men placed beyond the reach of civilization in the midst of lawless savages, are justified in protecting themselves from the murderous dispositions of barbarians, and in inflicting that punishment which their crime deserves. Chief Factor McLaughlin and the missionaries who assisted him in executing the murderer of McKay, are justified in the sight of God, as much as any body of Her Majesty's troops who may inflict deserved punishment on the mutineers of Delhi.

When I was at Fort Vancouver, in the "Columbia," one of my messmates, McKenzie, a fellow clerk, and four men, while on a trip were stealthily dogged by some of those merciless barbarians, for whom the mercenary members of the Liverpool Financial Reform Association have so much sympathy and were literally butchered in the dead of night while fast asleep; and no one left to tell the horrid tale, but a miserable squaw, who escaped their murderous brutality. Should such fiends as these be allowed to revel in their feasts of blood, until the tardy arm of justice is stretched across the Atlantic over the Continent of America to the shores of the Pacific, with solemn mockery to defeat the end of that sacred law, to which all human laws should be subservient? But it would be too much to expect such a body as the Liverpool Financial Reform Association, to distinguish between the exercise of natural rights in the midst of civilized society, and the same rights to be maintained in a barbarous country. These defamers have not yet learnt to distinguish between moral law and legal obligation. But enough has been said, I trust, to convince impartial minds, that this Financial Association are only adepts in the circulation of base coin and counterfeit morality; and that they have grossly violated the principles of honesty and truth in the scandalous pamphlet which they have published over the signature of Roberson Gladstone—a name which should have some affinity with respectability.

I will now make some observations on the second proposition contained in the fore part of this letter—that is, will Canada be satisfied with the acquisition of the vast extent of country embraced within the valleys of the Red River and Saskatchewan, leaving to the Hudson's Bay Company the exclusive privilege of trading for any given number of years, in those immense portions of the territories which they now occupy, and which are scarcely fit for the habitation of civilized man? Canada, I contend, will find ample room to expand within the territories about to be assigned to her. To extend the Government of Canada to the boundless prairies bordering on the Red River and the Saskatchewan, must be the work of this and future generations, and while this is going on, motives of prudence and economy dictate that the friendly protection and experience of a well organized and powerful body like the Hudson's Bay Company, will beneficially assist in checking and repressing the incursions of lawless savages and roving Americans, who would swarm around the habitations of peaceful settlers. None but those practically acquainted with the difficulties of living in the midst of such boundless wastes, infested with predatory tribes of Indians and wild beasts, can realize the privations and dangers to be encountered. Beyond the limits of the valleys of the Red River and the Saskatchewan, the climate is excessively severe, no grain of any kind can be raised, scarcely potatoes, and nothing of value has yet been discovered, which can repay the cost of transportation to any civilized market. What strength or wealth then can be added to Canada by the possession of such profitless wastes?

In early days, when Canada was comparatively a wilderness, the Fur Trade was of great value and the Northwest Company were the lords paramount, but henceforward it will be scarcely worth contending for, and can only be carried on by vagrant trappers, whose delight is to roam beyond the bounds and restraints of civilization. I am aware that the views I have expressed on the Hudson's Bay Territory question, are not the most attractive, because the bulk of mankind will not be content with sober realities—tell them where wealth and happiness can be acquired without labour, and they will listen to you with eager delight; but talk to them of hardships and miseries which they do not feel and they will turn a deaf ear, and say like Felix, *go thy way this time; when I have a convenient season I will call for thee*. Just ideas, however, on any subject are only acquired through a long process of reasoning with much patience and reflection, and if we desire to act for the future welfare of Canada, these faculties must be largely employed in discussing the question of annexing the Hudson's Bay territories to this already very extensive Province.

EDWARD ERMATINGER.

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No. 9.—*To the Editor of the Colonist, Toronto.*

ST. THOMAS, 24th March, 1858.

SIR,—Last year, while Judge Draper was in England, and various newspapers in Toronto were loud in condemnation of the course he was pursuing on the Hudson's Bay question, I addressed a letter to the *Colonist*, stating as my opinion that Mr. Draper took a very proper and sensible view of the whole question, and that he had asked "for all that Canada can reasonably desire, and for far more than at the present time we can avail ourselves of." And subsequently I went over the whole question, in replying, through the columns of the *Hamilton Spectator*, to the unfounded assertions and falsehoods of the Liverpool Financial Reform Association. I refer to that correspondence, because Judge Draper's report is now before the

country, and proves conclusively that the opinion I then advanced was correct, and founded on a just view of the whole subject.

As the question of the Hudson's Bay Territories will no doubt be prominently entertained during the present session of the Provincial Legislature, I beg to offer some observations, which I trust may have a tendency to disabuse the public mind, and cause our legislators to pause before they commit themselves on a subject with which they are only partially acquainted, and have been grossly misinformed through the public press.

I am not the apologist of the Hudson's Bay Company, neither am I a panderer to popular prejudice; but I claim to be an humble advocate of truth and fair dealing, the principles of which have been shamefully violated, by many of those who have advocated the annexation of the whole of the Hudson's Bay Territories to the Province of Canada.

In the letter referred to I stated "that while the Hudson's Bay Company carry on the trade for their own advantage, they are the custodians of the whole of that vast territory for the British Empire." This is an important consideration, and the concessions which the Imperial Government propose to make to Canada of the valleys of the Red River and the Saskatchewan are a sufficient guarantee that we may acquire the whole of the vast territories east of the Rocky Mountains, whenever we feel in a condition to accept them—that is, when Canada shall have more than trebled her present population! But it has been asserted that the Hudson's Bay Company have obstructed the progress of settlement, while the Americans have been pushing their settlements into the very heart of the territories. Half of this statement is true. The Americans have no doubt advanced civilization, in the direction of the Red River, much more rapidly than the Hudson's Bay Company have done; but this is owing to the nature of the country through which it is approached on either side of the lines.

It may with as much reason be said, that the progress of some American locations (Chicago for instance,) has been more rapid than the most flourishing localities in Canada. But the circumstances of different locations are so dissimilar that no comparison can be fairly instituted without stating them. If Red River had been at the head of the finest lake and river navigation in the world, improved by costly canals and lighthouses; if it had been in direct communication with the old settled portions of the United States and Canada, and even with Europe; if it had possessed a magnificent country around it; countless millions of acres, with a rich soil and warm climate, it is probable that no "incubus," as the L. F. R. Association styled the H. B. Company, would have been sufficient to have stayed its progress. Like Chicago, which possesses the advantages above enumerated, all of which are denied to Red River, it might have presented an instance of rapid improvement to astonish the world. Why, it may be asked, is Quebec almost stationary, while Toronto increases rapidly? and why should Montreal be more prosperous than Halifax? Simply, because the advantages those cities respectively possess are not equal. The real cause which has opposed progress at Red River, is its remote inland situation. It is the most central settlement in North America; equi-distant from the Atlantic and Pacific, the gulf of Mexico, and the Arctic Sea. It is surrounded on every side by an untamed wilderness of hundreds of miles in extent. With all their energy the Americans have no such remote and insulated location (except, perhaps, the Mormon settlement.) Even in Canada remote settlements pine and languish under a similar "incubus." The Sault Ste Marie though finely situated between the two great lakes, Huron and Superior, is merely a collection of poor hovels; while at the ancient city of Quebec, settlement has not extended twenty miles northward into the primeval forest.

For the greater portion of the foregoing remarks, contrasting different localities with each other and the Red River Settlement, I am indebted to a friend well acquainted with the whole territory, and the correctness of his view I can vouch for.

The Government of Canada has already expended \$20,000 granted by the Legislature, I have no doubt, in surveying and explorations, and this is a mere fraction of the sum that will be required to extend the empire of Canada to the Rocky Mountains! I ask you then, Mr. Editor, whether we should not pause before committing ourselves further to a scheme, which, to have any practical effect, must involve Canada in an immense expenditure of public money, to do only what the Imperial Government is now doing for us without cost—that is, preserving the whole of the territory from American freebooters, until Canada becomes of age to take possession of it.

With your permission I will offer some further observations on this subject in several letters, that both sides of the question may be better understood, before the Legislature acts on Judge Draper's Report.

EDWARD ERMATINGER.

St. Thomas, March 29, 1858.

No. 10.—*To the Editor of the Colonist.*

SIR,—From the documents published it appears the Imperial Government is willing to concede, "That the Province should be free to annex to her territory such portions of the land in her neighbourhood as may be available to her for the purposes of settlement; with which lands she is willing to open and maintain communication, and for which she will provide the means of local administration. The districts on the Red River and Saskatchewan are those particularly referred to." If we duly consider Imperial as well as Colonial interests, and the rights of the Hudson's Bay Company, I believe we shall admit that Her Majesty's Government could arrive at no other practical conclusion than the proposition above quoted, and that it embraces everything Canada can reasonably desire. This ought not to be treated as a political party question, and we may rest assured that the Imperial Government will not so regard it. Whatever the Palmerston Administration has adopted with regard to it, will be confirmed by the Derby Cabinet. Therefore it is only for Canada to say whether she will accept the boon, if it be a boon, and fulfil the conditions attached to it.

The conditions on which Canada may acquire the vast area of fertile prairies between the Red River and the Saskatchewan, said by Professor Hind to exceed 1,500,000 acres, is by opening and maintaining communication by means of roads or navigation, and by providing the means of local administration. Herein lies the almost insuperable difficulties to be encountered. Beyond the highest point of civilization reached by Canada, I am safe in saying there are 1000 miles of lake and river navigation to be gone over before arriving at the Red River Settlement, and part of this navigation so broken by falls and rapids, that even ordinary sized boats carrying from four to five tons merchandize cannot be used; and when you have reached this *El Dorado*, what do you behold? Magnificent prairies, certainly boundless as the ocean, with very little water and less wood; and neither Professor Hind nor any other person has been able to ascertain that those fertile prairies can produce either grain or esculent plants superior, if equal to those raised in Canada, where we have still millions of acres of land uncultivated, with plenty of water and fuel. With these simple facts before them, surely no Canadian Government would undertake to open up a route with a colony so distant as Red River, where no produce can be raised which will pay the expense of transport thence, even to Canada. There can be no doubt that the valley of the Red River and Saskatchewan are susceptible of being made the comfortable abode of millions of men and women, as they have been heretofore the hunting grounds of the red man and the pasture fields of innumerable herds of buffalo, deer, and cabris; but it may be pertinently asked, is Canada in a position at the

present time, to stock that vast territory with an industrious agricultural population, able not only to cultivate the ground, but at the same time to protect themselves against the Indians and marauders who infest the prairies. This leads me to consider the second condition of the proposed concession to Canada, namely, "that she will provide the means of local administration;" in other words, "that Canada shall establish an efficient government over the territory in question in place of that which at present exists."

In order to shew the difficulties which may be expected to arise in fulfilling this condition, it may be well to consider the kind of people for whom it is sought to establish responsible government; particularly that class of the population of Red River who are loud in their complaints of the Hudson's Bay Company. A friend well acquainted with them informs me "they deny the rights of the crown as much as those of the company; they claim the country as their own birth-right, where they may do as they please, without interference by the Company, Crown or Parliament. At one time they claim the protection of British laws against the Company; at another time when those laws are held up, they deny their allegiance, on the ground that they are natives. They have also curious ways of showing their high regard for the laws, such as threatening the life of a judge, surrounding the court house, in arms, refusing to pay duties imposed by their own municipality; smuggling spirits, distilling illicitly, &c., &c." So that, to provide the means of local administration, the first step should be, when properly drilled and organized, to station the 100th, or Prince of Wales' Own, somewhere between the Saskatchewan and Red River, ready to support the Canadian Rifles in any emergency which might arise. The inhabitants of the Red River are, many of them, natives, decendants of the aborigines, as well as of French and English parents, independent in their feelings, and not at all disposed to submit to the restraints of civilization; consequently it is very doubtful whether the same system of government which we enjoy would be suitable to them. The government of the Hudson's Bay Company may not be the best adapted to suit the wants of the settlers, or to promote their happiness; but the question is, will Canada be able to improve it without incurring a very heavy, and, in my humble opinion, a very profitless expenditure; and then, it may be further asked, will it be improved?

In discussing a subject of the magnitude of the Hudson's Bay Territory, the interests of all parties should be considered, and, I am quite certain, Canada will lose nothing by discussing the question in all its bearings.

EDW. ERMATINGER.

St. Thomas, 27th March, 1858.

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No. 11.—*To the Editor of the Colonist.*

ST. THOMAS, March 29th, 1858.

When the popular tide sets all one way, without reflux, prudence and calm investigation are generally thrown overboard, and the real merits of the question are lost sight of. So it proves with the Hudson's Bay territory question. Indeed we have no un mistakeable evidence of this, for not a year ago the proceedings of Chief Justice Draper were characterised as traitorous to the interests of Canada and the Government which appointed him were traduced on all hands. Now, men are beginning to look calmly at the question, and we have reason to believe, that through his judicious management of the question in England, Canada will be placed in a position to extend her dominion as far as to the North-West on the continent of America, as she can possibly desire. The mere abstract question of the validity of the Hudson's Bay Company's Charter, or the boundaries between Rupert's Land and



Canada proper, are of little importance in the present state of the question, for all of those vast territories, which are fit either for settlement or civilization, are offered to Canada on the conditions stated in Mr. Draper's report and accompanying documents—and surely on no other conditions can we ever expect to take possession of those territories.

We have not yet seen the report of the gentleman, Mr. Gladman, who conducted the expedition to Red River last Summer on behalf of the Canadian Government; but when it does make its appearance it cannot remove the difficulties which must attend the settlement of Red River or the Saskatchewan, although it may smooth them over. No gentleman, however high his scientific attainments, can by a (this remark does not apply to Mr. Gladman, who is a native of the Hudson's Bay territory) hurried tour of a few weeks, during the choicest season of the whole year form so correct an opinion of all the difficulties which must attend the occupation and settlement of the Hudson's Bay territories as persons who have travelled through them and resided in them for years. It is seldom that the red River is free from inundations in the spring to retard farming operations, or locusts, or some destructive kind of Grasshoppers to destroy the crops in summer; and the reason for farming operations is so short, that it is more than questionable whether that country, under any change of circumstances, can ever compete with Canada or the United States. It must be admitted that the Red River settlement can produce nothing which Canada does not produce, except, perhaps, cattle in a larger degree, or the produce of cattle; and this trade must be carried on through the United States; unless we improve the navigation by canals, like the St. Lawrence canals, or build a railroad equal to the Grand Trunk. This leads me to advert to the first condition on which it is proposed to cede the valleys of the Red River and the Saskatchewan to Canada, namely: "That the Province should be free to annex to her territory such portions of the land in her neighborhood as may be available to her for the purposes of settlement—with which lands she is willing to open and maintain communication"—that is, a distance of 624 miles above the head of Lake Superior, according to Professor Hind's calculation. Starting from Windsor or any point on Lake Huron, we may assume the distance from Lake Huron to Red River to be 1,000 miles in round numbers

Now to open and maintain communication with the Red River Settlement, to benefit either the Province or the colonists, during all season of the year, nothing short of a railroad can answer, and at a moderate calculation such a railroad would cost £10,000 per mile or equal to £10,000,000 or the whole line! These figures may startle some of the gentlemen who advocate the annexation of the Hudson's Bay Company's territory to Canada; but those who know the country through which such a road would have to pass, will bear me out in this statement, making every allowance for Professor Hind's short cuts—and then after the expenditure of \$40,000,000 the communication between Lake Huron and Red River would not be in every respect equal to the communication from Quebec to Lake Huron. We should want uninterrupted navigation still.

The Red River Colony, commenced by Lord Selkirk nearly fifty years ago, numbers at this time, according to the most authentic information, seven thousand souls, and to my certain knowledge this slow growth has been going on, under every encouragement which the Hudson's Bay Company could offer. I was in the country forty years ago, when a large imporation of settlers took place from Switzerland in the Company's ships. I witnessed the hardships these poor people had to undergo, notwithstanding all the attention that was paid to them by the servants of the Company. I subsequently wintered near the head waters of the Assineboine, with one of the noble stock of Highlanders, the McDonalds of Glengarry. I sojourned for some time at the Red River Colony, and I had ample opportunity of noticing the progress of the settlement and the conduct of the Hudson's Bay Company towards

the settlers; but the natural causes which I have already referred to have retarded its progress, and will continue to obstruct its growth and prosperity until the continent of America becomes much more densely populated than it is likely to be during the present century.

Those persons who attribute the stagnation of the country to the Hudson's Bay Company, are either ignorant of the facts, or falsify them to serve a purpose. The Company have offered premiums for the growth of flax, and the manufacture of linen and woollen cloths; they have imported improved breeds of sheep, horses, cattle and swine; they have striven to excite the Red River settlers to produce tallow, wool, hides, &c., &c., for market; they have removed all restrictions, so that the trade is as free as air; but those efforts have been of no avail. The settlers are not so much to blame for their apathy in neglecting those branches of trade. It was feared, and perhaps justly, that the cost in transporting such bulky produce to market would render trade in them unremunerative. Yet, what can be said for a people, who according to Prof. Hind's showing, have not yet learned to make their own soap; an article so essential to cleanliness that civilization can make no progress until people have learned to make it. I recollect an instance when I was in that country where the want of this domestic article was so great that some French Canadians killed a fine dog to obtain fat to make some; but after eating the flesh of the dog, the fat was so tempting that they licked it all up and had to do without the soap! There is more truth in this anecdote than in half the stories which have been written about the Hudson's Bay Company's territories, and the cause why tallow was then so scarce I will explain in my next, as it has some relation to the whole question.

EDWARD ERMATINGER.

No. 12.—*To the Editor of the Colonist.*

ST. THOMAS, March 31, 1858.

SIR.—Like other migratory animals, the buffalo seeks a warmer climate in winter than the prairies bordering on the Red River and the Saskatchewan, impelled, no doubt, to travel in search of pasture. During winter therefore, only such as are worn out with age or other infirmities are to be found in those localities. These, generally, are the only game the hunter can overtake, and their flesh, it may be easily imagined, is neither very tender nor very fat,—hence the scarcity of tallow, where there are no domestic animals, for culinary purposes and soap-making. This, of course, is not the case now at Red River. I allude to the circumstance of the scarcity of tallow in some parts of the prairie country, to draw attention to the fact of the climate not being so favorable to agriculture as might be imagined. The winters are both long and severe, and this fact is corroborated by the absence of the wild animals during that season, when they are obliged to seek a climate more congenial to their habits, and where they may find pasturage. This gloomy perspective is omitted by tourists in their highly-colored pictures of the Red River and Saskatchewan plains; and I have no doubt the Turkish ambassador, and his suite, on their projected excursion, will learn as little of the miseries of a winter in the Hudson's Bay Territory as the happy inmates of his harem. But when Canada is invited to take possession of these magnificent pairies, (magnificent only as long as they remain in a state of nature,) at a cost of many millions of dollars, to gratify either the vanity of national greatness, or to provide offices for a few pretended philanthropists, it becomes our duty to understand fully the bargain we are called upon to make.

To provide the means of local administration may appear no very difficult matter, nor is it, when the territory to be governed is sufficiently near to feel the influence of the central governing power, and when the governed are men accustomed to exercise all the rights and privileges of British subjects; but place merely the machinery of government in a colony like Red River, where, probably, a majority of the inhabitants have no higher idea of law or order than that which force imposes, and leave the administrators of the law to perform the functions of government, supported only by such a population, and they will be able to preserve law and order just so long as the majority are indulged in their indolent habits, and are allowed to consider that government is established for their special protection, without exacting from them any corresponding duties.

Even the Hudson's Bay Company, who possess an amount of experience, and an organization not easily acquired or maintained in so vast a territory, have felt it necessary to have troops stationed at the Red River colony, not merely for the protection of their fur trade monopoly, for this my experience teaches me they could do with their own resources but as a protection against the discontented and lawless portion of the inhabitants, incited, through the encouragement extended to them by parties in Canada as well as in England, to acts of insubordination, dangerous to the peace and welfare of the colony. Undoubtedly the prescriptive rights which the Company have acquired through their charter, valid or not valid, have enabled them to acquire and to exercise a power and influence, which no other body can obtain with the same amount of means.

We have only to imagine the population of one of the smallest of our counties, half converted into half-breeds, transplanted into Red River to work out a system of government with municipal institutions such as we have in Canada, surrounded with everything that is wild in nature, and cut off from all external aid,—such a state of political existence would continue just so long as Canada furnished the means of propitiating the restless spirits both within and without the colony, or of paying troops to keep them in order. I need not tell you that no government can sustain itself, no matter how good the laws, unless the people subject to those laws, acquiesce in them, and are morally convinced that it is their duty to support them—and what support, I would ask, could the government expect from such a population as would continue at Red River, after the Hudson's Bay Company and all their adherents had withdrawn? For it is not to be supposed that they will remain merely to support a government established for their destruction, and which would have no other effect than to destroy, not only the fur trade, but to extirpate every British feeling, except so much as might be preserved among the paid officers of the Government. Such an expectation would be preposterous.

I have no desire to discuss this question with persons who have less consideration for the Hudson's Bay Co. than they have for mere squatters; for reason is lost on such persons. But I would address myself to those who have really the welfare of Canada at heart, and who are not willing to jeopardize her best interests by any premature attempts to achieve national greatness. This is certainly not the age for monopolies, nor is it exactly the age of reason; but it is decidedly an utilitarian age, and in this view I consider the Hudson's Bay monopoly, ought to be tolerated, not for the benefit of the Company but for the benefit of Canada, and for the benefit of the empire at large; for most assuredly if you drive out the Hudson's Bay Company, you will implant evils tenfold greater in their stead. The marauders and renegades from both sides of the lines will ruin the fur trade, and extirpate the Indians, keeping the isolated colony of Red River in a constant state of alarm and licentiousness, while the communication with Great Britain by sea will be totally abandoned. No other Company or body of individuals with sufficient means will fit out ships to penetrate through fields of ice once a year—for what? when the fur

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trade has been scattered through the territory of Minnesota, and of what advantage would a diminishing trade of a few hundred thousand dollars be to Canada, at the cost of maintaining a demoralized population in a state little better than that of vagrant Arabs!

Let not, then, the good sense of Canada be overborne by a mere spirit of opposition to the Hudson's Bay Company. There is too much of this spirit manifested in Prof. Hind's report—although it is by no means so virulent as much that had appeared. Let the whole question, however, be discussed in a spirit of fairness devoid of party spirit; and I am convinced we shall arrive at a proper conclusion.

EDWARD ERMATINGER.

