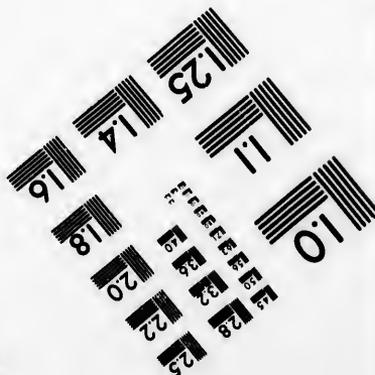
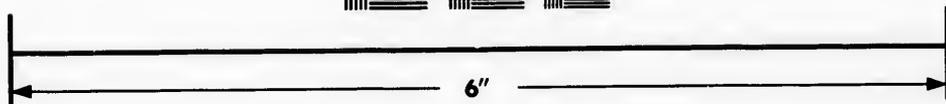
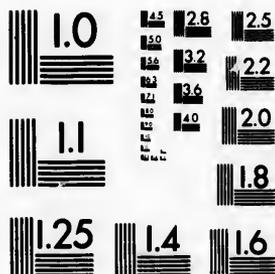


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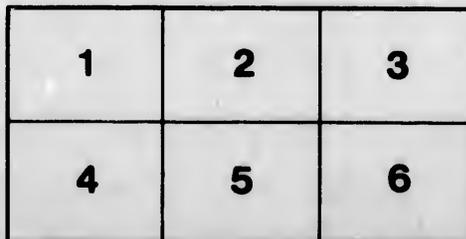
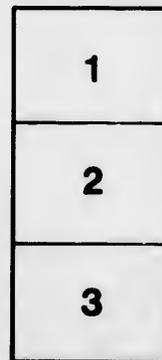
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of Mr. Greenhow, we did so, because the argumentative structure of his narrative involved us in the necessity of logical examination: Mr. Dunn spares us the consideration of deductions, and writes with the rough confidence of a man satisfied with his own conclusions and determined in them. His mode of argument seems fair enough, but his adduction of historic support is rather too unhesitating; he summarily decides, and evidently to his own satisfaction, in one brief chapter, a question on which Mr. Greenhow has expended a volume, and two great nations much fruitless diplomacy. One pleasant result is, that the reader is not perplexed by the subtleties of ingenious argument. Mr. Dunn is a man of facts; he states them with a bold, unhesitating front, having so strong a faith in their reality, that he never stops to examine them. There is, too, an entire absence of that excited selfishness which dwells on every trivial occurrence with visible anxiety, and trembles to omit a point lest a cause might be endangered. But we strongly dislike the bitter spirit of national antipathy in which the writer so injudiciously indulges, and which will, with many persons, affect the fidelity of his statements. Bad conduct is never improved by the application of hard names, and taunting censure is the worst medicine for evil practice. The unconcealed hostility of Mr. Dunn injures the cause he advocates, and will give offence in America without affording satisfaction here. The work, however, contains much, and of interest, about which there need be no discussion: a rapid sketch of the History of the Oregon Settlement of the Hudson's Bay and other fur trading companies, an interesting account of the fur trade, and of those engaged in it, with characteristic anecdotes and illustrations of the habits and manners of the native Indians—and with these alone we shall concern ourselves.

Here is a sketch to the life of the "trappers, or beaver hunters":—

"In the old times of the Canadian fur trade when the trade in furs was chiefly pursued about the lakes and rivers, the expeditions were, in a great degree, carried on in batteaux and canoes. But a totally different class now sprung up—the 'mountaineers'—the traders and trappers that scale the vast mountain chains, and pursue their hazardous vocation amidst their wild recesses—moving from place to place on horseback—exposed not alone to the perils of the wilderness, but to the perils of attack from fierce Indians, to whom it has become as favorite an exploit to harass and waylay a band of trappers with their pack-horses, as it is to the Arabs of the desert to plunder a caravan. The equestrian exercises in which they are constantly engaged—the nature of the country they traverse—vast plains and mountains pure and exhilarating in their atmospheric qualities—seem to make them, physically and mentally, a more lively, vigorous, daring and enduring race than the fur traders and trappers of former days, who generally had huts or tents to shelter them from the inclemency of the season—were seldom

From the Athenæum.

History of the Oregon Territory and British North American Fur Trade, with an Account of the Habits and Customs of the Principal Native Tribes on the Northern Continent. By JOHN DUNN, late of the Hudson's Bay Company. Edwards & Hughes.

ANOTHER book upon the Oregon! But now it is an Englishman that writes, and an English public must needs admire the patriotism that secures them a voluntary advocate. Brother Jonathan commanded the talent of a Greenhow, but John Bull has found a *volunteer*, if not as subtle, even more resolute in the assertion of his particular claims. Fortunately, it comes not within the limits of our duty to give arbitrament on political contest, nor to act the umpire while nations hold dispute. If we remarked on the forced inferences

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exposed to the hostility of the natives, and generally were within reach of supplies from the settlements. There is, perhaps, no class of men on the earth who lead a life of more continued exertion, danger and excitement; and who are more enamored of their occupations, than the free trappers of the wild regions of the west. No toil, no danger, no privation, can turn the trapper aside from his pursuit. If his meal is not ready in time, he takes his rifle—lies to the forest—shoots his game—lights his fire, and cooks his repast. With his horse and his rifle he is independent of the world, and spurs its restraints. In vain may the most vigilant and cruel savages beset his path—in vain may rocks, and precipices, and wintry torrents oppose his progress; let but a single track of a beaver meet his eye, and he forgets all danger, and defies all difficulties. At times he may be seen, with his traps on his shoulder, buffeting his way across rapid streams amidst floating blocks of ice: at other times may he be seen, with his traps slung on his back, clambering the most rugged mountains—scaling or descending the most frightful precipices—searching, by routes inaccessible to horse, and never before trodden by white man, for springs and lakes unknown to his comrades, where he may meet with his favorite game. This class of hunters are generally Canadians by birth, and of French descent; who, after being bound to serve the traders for a certain number of years and receive wages, or hunt on shares, then continued to hunt and trap on their own account, trading with the Company like the Indians; hence they are called *free men*. Having passed their youth in the wilderness, in constant intercourse with the Indians, and removed from civilized society, they lapse with natural facility into the habits of *savage life*."

The "voyageurs" resemble the "arrieros" in Spain, with this difference, that instead of traveling by land with mules, the voyageurs go by water with "batteaux or boats, and canoes." They are the most indispensable class of functionaries in carrying on the fur trade:—

"Their dress is generally half civilized, half savage. They wear a capot, or outside coat, made of a blanket—a striped cotton shirt—cloth trousers, or leather leggins—mocassins, or deer-skin shoes, without a sole, and ornamented on the upper; and a belt of variegated worsted, from which are suspended a knife, tobacco-pouch, and other implements. Their language is of the same piebald character, being a French patois, embroidered with Indian and English words and phrases."

Steam, it appears, is making encroachments on the "vocation" of the voyageurs as well as on everything else. Having described the settlement at Red River, and the manner of buffalo hunting, the author gives us a clear and interesting account of the Company's principles of dealing, and the mode of traffic with the Northern Indians:—

"The principle universally acted on throughout the Company's territories, which have been now reduced, considering their vast extent, and the many difficulties to be encountered, to a state of astonishing quiet, peace, and good government, is, that the true interests of the native Indian and the white resident are indissolubly united; and that no immediate advantage, or prospect of

it, is to stand in the way of improving the condition of the natives. The following extract from the standing orders of the Company will convey an idea—though a faint one—of the wise, humane, and liberal spirit by which it is actuated:—"That the Indians be treated with kindness and indulgence; and mild and conciliatory means resorted to, in order to encourage industry, repress vice, and inculcate morality—that the use of spirituous liquors be gradually discontinued in the few districts in which it is yet indispensable; and that the Indians be liberally supplied with requisite necessaries—particularly with articles of ammunition, whether they have the means of paying for them, or not." Since these general orders were issued, the Company, finding the success of this humane and judicious policy gradually answering the proposed aim, has at last adopted the bold and decisive course of abolishing *altogether* the use of *spirituous liquors* as articles of trade with the natives. They have not only done this in the territories within their own jurisdiction; but have, by a new article introduced into the treaty of commerce, entered into with the Russians by Sir George Simpson, stipulated that the Russians should act, in their trading with the natives, on the same principle. So that henceforward one source of demoralization will be dried up. * *

So far has it been the wish or policy of the Company not to acquire an undue influence over the Indians by loading them with debts, that repeated attempts have been made to reduce the trade to simple barter; and they have often cancelled the debts of whole tribes—for instance, since the junction of the two companies in 1821, the debts of the Chippewyans have been twice cancelled. But from the peculiar disposition and customs of the Indians—especially the *northern* Indians—these good intentions have not yet produced all the hoped-for good, although they are gradually working out their object. The Chipewyans have a custom which, until eradicated, must operate as a check on their progressive prosperity. On the death of a relative, they destroy guns, ammunition, blankets, kettles; in short, everything they possess; and conclude the havoc by tearing their huts to pieces. When these transports of grief have subsided, they find themselves reduced to utter want, and are obliged to resort to the nearest establishments for a fresh supply of necessaries; and thus their debts are renewed, and their wants periodically kept alive. In some parts of the Indian territory, the hunting grounds descend by inheritance among the natives; and this right of property is rigidly enforced. But where no such salutary law prevails, their main source of wealth—the beaver—would soon be exhausted by the eager search of the hunters, if the Company had not adopted judicious regulations to prevent the havoc; for they have, for several years past, used every effort, through their officers, to exhort the natives to spare the *young* of that animal. * *

But the attempt will be easily understood to be one of extreme difficulty, in consequence of the passion for depriving the animal creation of life so strongly implanted in the breast of the North American Indian, that it costs him a pang to pass bird, beast, or fish, without an effort to destroy it, whether he stands in need of it or not. The tendency to destructiveness is a vehement instinct of their nature. Near York Factory, in 1831, this propensity, contrary to all the remonstrances of the Company's servants at that place, led to

the indiscriminate destruction of a countless herd of rein-deer, while crossing the broad stream of Haye's River, in the height of summer. The natives took some of the meat for present use, but thousands of carcasses were abandoned to the current, and infected the river's banks, or drifted down into Hudson's Bay, there to feed the sea fowls and polar bears. As if it were a judgment for this wanton slaughter, in which women and children participated, the deer have never since visited that part of the country in similar numbers. In short, the Indians, accustomed either to a feast or a fast, have little idea beyond the present gratification; and it is to this imprudence that deaths by starvation, and the occasional desertion of infants, and the helpless aged, must be ascribed. The quantity of provisions furnished by the Indians to the establishments throughout the northern districts is inconsiderable. In the winter season, it is limited to the rib pieces of the moose, red and rein-deer, half dried in the smoke of their huts or tents, (the bones being removed for lightness of carriage,) with an occasional addition of some tongues. In the course of the summer, when the animals are easily hunted, and there is great facility of water transport, the more industrious families usually bring to the fort a bale of dried meat, consisting of the fleshy parts of the deer, cut into large slices and dried in the sun, with a bladder or two containing fat, or a bag of pemican. When the residents of a fort find these supplies, and the produce of their fisheries, and of their cultivated plots of ground, (where the ground, from the nature of the soil and climate, is capable of cultivation,) insufficient to supply their wants, they engage two or more young Indians, without families, as 'fort hunters.' These are considered as regular servants; and their duty is confined to the killing of large animals for the use of the establishments. They are allowed to keep a portion of the meat, sufficient for their own consumption: the remainder is transported to the fort, with sledges and dogs, by the servants of the Company. To become a fort hunter is an object of ambition to the northern Indian, as it is an acknowledgment of his skill and fidelity, and ensures to him the gayest clothing."

The great American establishment of Astoria now belongs to the Company's head-quarters at "Vancouver," has changed its name to "Fort George," and retains no vestige of its former importance. There are four tribes of Indians about the lower parts of the Columbia. The author tells us of their distinguishing traits of character, and furnishes us with many curious anecdotes, but the presence of the "Ojibbeways and Ioways" among us, and the publications of Mr. Catlin have so familiarized the public with Indian life, that it is unnecessary to enter on this subject. Fort Vancouver, so called from the English navigator, is situated about ninety miles from the Pacific on the north-west of the Columbia. It was founded by Governor Simpson, in 1824, as being more convenient for trade than Fort George:—

"Fort Vancouver is then the grand mart, and rendezvous for the Company's trade and servants on the Pacific. Thither all the furs and other articles of trade collected west of the Rocky moun-

tains from California to the Russian territories, are brought from the several other forts and stations; and from thence they are shipped to England. Thither too all the goods brought from England for traffic—the various articles in woollens and cottons—in grocery—in hardware—ready-made clothes—oils and paints—ship stores, &c., are landed; and from thence they are distributed to the various posts of the interior, and along the northern shores by sailing vessels, or by boat, or pack-horses, as the several routes permit; for distribution and traffic among the natives, or for the supply of the Company's servants. In a word, Fort Vancouver is the grand emporium of the company's trade, west of the Rocky mountains; as well within the Oregon territory, as beyond it, from California to Kamschatka."

The fort is a parallelogram 250 yards long, and 150 broad, inclosed by a wooden wall 20 feet high, at each angle of which there is a bastion furnished with two twelve-pounders. The area within is divided into courts, around which are the offices, warehouses, workshops, with a chapel, a school-house, and a powder magazine. The governor's house stands in the centre; in it there is a public dining-hall and "smoking room," where the author tells us "there is a great deal of amusement." The clerks are promoted, according to their skill and integrity, to be chief traders, chief factors, until finally they may become shareholders, and governors of forts. The mechanics, and servants of the Company, reside on the bank of a river some distance from the fort. The officers often marry half-breed women, who, it seems, make admirable housewives; they are the daughters of persons high in the Company's service, by Indian women of good descent, and are considered of a superior class. The lower servants of the Company marry native women, who make fond and careful wives. The male half-breeds are distinguished for their horsemanship, and are very dexterous in catching the wild horse, which they do by means of the lasso. A farm of 3000 acres is attached to the fort, which is in a high state of cultivation.

The Oregon territory, according to Mr. Dunn, extends from latitude 42° to 54° north, and is about four times the area of Great Britain. It is remarkable that all the rivers which flow through the country take their rise and are emptied within its limits. The scenery is beautiful; but though there are many fertile districts along the Pacific, as a whole the country is not favorable for agriculture; it is chiefly valuable for trade, and the advantages of its maritime stations. Mr. Dunn divides the country into three sections, the Western, between the Pacific Ocean and the Cascade mountains; the Middle, lying between the Cascade mountains on the west, and the Blue mountains on the east; the Eastern, extending from the Blue to the Rocky mountains. The Cascade range of mountains bounding the western section is the most interesting; the numerous peaks of this range have been named by the Americans after their presidents, which seems to excite much indignation

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in Mr. Dunn. The chief river is the Columbia, which rises in the Rocky mountains, in latitude of 50° north; it receives a vast number of tributary streams, Colville river, the Spokan, the O'Kanagan, the Wallawalla, the Snake river, the Wallamette, and the Cowlitz. After the Columbia, Frazer's river is of next importance; there are also numerous lakes, so that the country is well watered.

The climate of the Western section is mild throughout the year. The Middle section is subject to droughts, and the extremes of heat and cold are great and frequent; the climate of the Eastern division is very variable. The soil of the Western district is a deep black vegetable loam, varying to a light brown. The hills are of basalt, stone, and slate. The soil of the Eastern section is so impregnated with salts, that it is incapable of cultivation. On the northern coast there are many islands which belong to the territory; Vancouver island, containing 15,000 square miles, Queen Charlotte island, containing 4,000 square miles, are the two largest; their climate is mild, and their soil well adapted to agriculture. Coal is found close to the surface, and there are numerous veins of valuable minerals; the rivers abound in fish, particularly salmon; elk, deer, bears, wolves, martins, and musk rats, are in great abundance, and large herds of buffaloes are found near the Rocky Mountains. Mr. Dunn speaks thus hopefully of the future prospects of Oregon:—

“From the advantages this country possesses, it bids fair to have an extensive commerce, on advantageous terms, with most parts of the Pacific. It is well calculated to produce the following staple commodities—furs, salted beef and pork, fish, grain, flour, wool, hides, tallow, timber, and coals; and, in return for these, sugars, coffee, and other tropical productions, may be obtained at the Sandwich Islands. Advantages that, in time, must become of immense extent.”

On the whole, this book is interesting as furnishing a clear and rapid history of the British fur trade, and a minute and familiar account of the habits and the social doings of the remote remnants of a people who are fast perishing.

