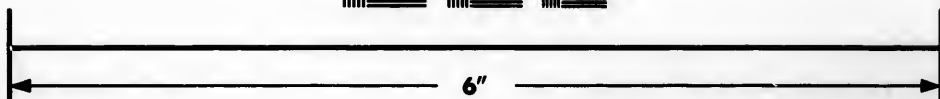
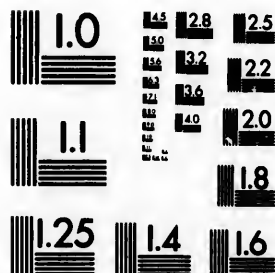


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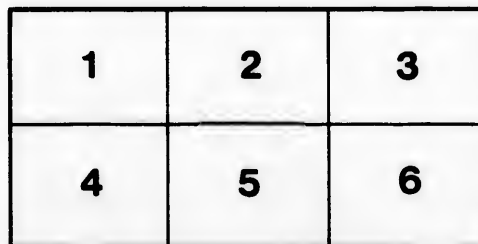
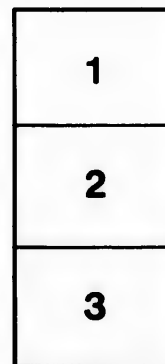
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And every one as soon as not  
Will take the road although it rains,  
And when you whack 'em they will trot,  
Whether on mountain-paths or plains.

About the payment:—you will find,  
Fair maids, with us no cause to cavil,  
So much, before,—so much, behind,  
According as the brutes may travel.  
In every country we're at home,  
And have squired ladies—bless their faces!  
To Venice, Bruggia and to Rome,  
And have been at their country places.

If any of you are country dames,  
And want good teamsters on your farms,  
Here are we to give in our names,  
And serve you as becomes your charms,  
Olives we'll team, and figs and pears,  
And grapes, and paise, and corn in ear,—  
So, as we're moderate in our fares,  
Give a chance to the muleteer!

Not long afterwards Lorenzo, on his death-bed, refused to be shrived by the half charlatan, half reformer, and wholly fanatic monk Savonarola, inasmuch as to the absolution was attached, as a condition, a guarantee of liberty to Florence. Evil days were drawing nigh. Ere long Savonarola's prophetic words found a meaning: "Woe unto thee, O Mother of the Arts,—woe unto thee, beautiful Italy!"

HUNTER DUVAR.

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## OUR NORTH-WEST.

BY REV. G. M. GRANT, HALIFAX.

FORT GARRY, in the centre of the continent, is a convenient starting point. Our still unknown North-west may be said to begin there, because the Department of Public Works now offers to send emigrants from Toronto to Fort Garry at the rate of \$15 each, and a place that it costs so little to reach, cannot be considered *terra incognita*. Nothing shows more clearly than this one little fact, how rapidly the different members of the Dominion are being brought together. Five or six years ago, in ordinary society, you might have described Fort Garry as near

Timbuctoo, without much risk of being contradicted. The standpoint that a British American occupies to-day, and his ordinary outlook, are as different from what they were then, as with a German inhabitant of Weimar or Pampornickel before Sadowa and now. Then, practical Know-nothingism reigned supreme among us. Nova Scotia was for the Nova Scotians, and "the" Island was for Prince Edward Islanders. Parish politics, with all their littleness and all their bitterness, were the only politics known. Now, we look beyond our own little principality. We breathe freely. We look from Province to Province, from Ocean to Ocean. "No pent up Utica confines our powers," as Joseph Howe loved to quote when we were pent up and confined. The pulses of a larger life are beating in our veins. "The elements of Empire here are plastic yet and warm," and to us is given the task of moulding them. Then, annexation was a subject for discussion. Now, even to hint it, is a crime, and worse—a blunder.

We paid the Hudson Bay Company £300,000 sterling, plus "perquisites," with a good deal more for the North-west. The country was well worth the money, whether the Company was entitled to it or not. For the North-west is our back-land, and every prudent farmer knows the value of that in a farm. It is empty now, but when filled up is sure to be the back-bone of our Dominion. Here our surplus population can stream,—those restless spirits that feel "crowded" in the thronged and ancient settlements that their grandfathers cleared. Thither shall flow the mighty currents of human life that have done so much in the last quarter of a century to enrich the Great Republic.

Our neighbours have now a clearer idea of the value of the North-west than we. The promoters of the Northern Pacific railroad know its value in contrast with the barren wastes that must be traversed by their road. The most glowing descriptions of the Red River and Saskatchewan country are in Carleton's "Seat of Empire." Indeed, the only fault about his book is, that speaking merely from hearsay and reading, he exaggerates. That is, he tells the truth, but not the whole truth. He dilates on the resources of the great virgin country, without speaking of its disadvantages. Archbishop Tache's sketch of the North-west gives the other side of the shield. But Carleton is an enthusiast, and, even had he known, would probably have scorned to mention

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"the dirty facts" of scarcity of wood, and severity of winter, that the Archbishop dwells on almost as if he loved them.

Fortunately for us, our neighbours have only recently become acquainted with the value of the North-west. Had they known sooner who can doubt that it would have been theirs before to-day? They had just as much right to it as to Oregon, and to Washington Territory. But by the merest accident they got correct information from Methodist missionaries concerning the fertility and resources of the Pacific slope, in time to prove to the British Government that it had always been, was, and of course must be, theirs. How much easier to have had the boundary line moved up from Pembina to the southern extremity of Lake Winnipeg! And then the door to the whole of our North-west would have been in their hands, and they could have bided their time. No wonder that Carleton is regretfully "set to thinking of the Saskatchewan valley, a region to which the United States once held claim, and which *might now have been* a part of our domain if it had not been for the pusillanimity of President Polk."

"Of all sad words of tongue or pen,  
The saddest are these, it might have been."

There are still very vague notions in our minds about the extent of the good land in the North-west. The *London Times* published last autumn several capital letters from "An Occasional Correspondent" in Minnesota, whose estimate is very low, but as he frankly tells only what was told him in Minnesota, no one need be deceived. He informs the people of England that 1873 "will certainly see the railway track at Fort Garry, and that thus will be opened up the rich Canadian territory of Manitoba, and the fertile Valley of the Saskatchewan, once part of the territory of the late Hudson's Bay Company. Many persons," he goes on to say, "will probably be as surprised as myself to learn that among the possessions of that Company were 20,000 square miles of the finest wheat-producing land in America." Considering that the little Province of Manitoba contains 15,000 square miles, most of it excellent land, and that there is room for a dozen Manitobas in our North-west, the estimate is certainly a sober one. But we know too little about the real dimensions of "the fertile belt," or the local causes that render sections of it unfit for the production of cereals, to be able to pronounce, except in very



large and loose language, upon the number of acres or square miles it contains. Roughly speaking, the "belt" is the strip or curve of fertile land between the frozen regions to the North and the great American desert to the South. The Red River valley is the eastern segment of this bright "Rainbow." Thence it proceeds along the Assineboine, sweeping north as it goes west, the chief part of the whole belt consisting of the valley of the North Saskatchewan. And the western segment of the curve is a beautiful strip along the bases of the Rocky Mountains as far south as the boundary line corresponding on the west to the Red River valley on the east. No one can have any idea of the beauty of this great extent of country, nine hundred miles long from east to west, without actually seeing it. But what we saw of it was only the line we rode along, and a line is 'length without breadth.' The breadth varies at different points. About Lake Winnipeg the breadth cannot be very great, because the intense cold of winter solidifies, to a depth of several feet, immense sheets of water, and the thawing of so much ice delays the Spring. Farther west, we come on the outlying portion of the American desert, which thrusts itself up as far as, and even beyond the South Saskatchewan, but how much of this deserves the name of desert I do not know. Professor Hind says that its humidity is greater than that of the plains south of the Missouri in consequence of its high northern latitude. It is reported to be a vast treeless plain, the favourite home of countless herds of buffaloes, and what feeds the buffalo it is scarcely fair to call desert. Still farther west, the belt runs to the north, and along the flanks of the Rocky Mountains, it extends in a rich strip of varying depth, from the boundary line for six or seven hundred miles to the north.

It is impossible to summarize about this great North-west without making mistakes or occasioning misapprehensions. A country that people do not know from personal observation or careful study, they are sure to have only a single, and therefore an erroneous conception of; they bring the whole of it before themselves in one mental act, just as people in the Old World speak of "America," as if it were a district that they know all about, because their brother or cousin has written them about his farm in Iowa or Illinois. The fertile belt is not a quadrilateral, nor a parallelogram, nor an arc. It varies in shape as much as a coast

line indented by the sea. It is not uniform in its soil, though it would be a fair enough general description to say that the soil ranges from the richest black peat, to a light sandy loam. Its flora is not the same throughout, though in this, too, there is a wonderful uniformity, the same species being found scattered across a breadth of a thousand miles. It is not a monotonous prairie or continuous series of Dutch flats, but embraces every variety of scenery, well wooded and well watered districts, and others without a tree, and without water on the surface, except saline lakes; great level expanses, broken by rolling or round hills; soft, undulating slopes, and bold, broken hills and romantic dales; the whole seamed unequally with great rivers and their tributary creeks, and dotted with a profusion of beautiful lakes and lakelets, every one of them, whether fresh water or salt, the home of a flock or flocks of wild-fowl.

As to the quality of the soil, all seemed good, but the best appeared to be that of the Red River valley. Our fellow-travellers who went from Fort Edmonton northwards to Peace River, and southwards through the country of the Blackfeet, say that the land in those quarters is as good as that of Red River, and the climate much superior. Better land than the average of the whole Province of Manitoba, either for cereals, root crops, or grazing, there is not in the world. It is much superior to Minnesota, the great wheat State immediately to the south. It combines the advantages of the best loamy and calcareous soils, whereas when you go up the river into Minnesota, the limestone disappears, and away from the trough of the river there is but a shallow coating of loam. The Minnesotians are finding this out, and though most of them are new settlers, hardy emigrants from Wales and Scandinavia, under bonds to Railway Companies for their farms, they are turning longing eyes to the north.

I have now before me a copy of "The Manitoban" of date September 30, 1871, in which an account is given of a visit paid by Governor Archibald to the west of the Province, one or two sentences of which may be quoted, as I can testify to the general truthfulness of the descriptions. The district visited by His Honor is known as Pine Creek and White Mud River, names that are almost as great favourites over the North-west as the names of members of the Royal Family for new settlements. "Along the margin of the White Mud River," writes the correspondent, "the

wood is very fine. Forests of oak, and maple, and poplar, stretch away from the banks on either side to a considerable distance from the river. The open prairie beyond is studded with groves and clumps of every variety of shape and form. \* \* \* \*

The house of Mr. Doggett, a Nova Scotian, is built on the north bank of the river, a beautiful stream flows in front, the house itself nestles at the foot of a maple wood which towers majestically behind it, and sweeping with the curvature of the river, partly encloses it, forming a beautiful background to the silver stream that meanders in the front. \* \* \* \*

“At Poplar Point, a settler was threshing his wheat. A ponderous machine driven by horses was at work; at one end men were pitching the unthreshed grain into the machine; as the straw emerged at the other end, parties were removing it a few feet and burning it as fast as delivered from the machine. In the evening all that remained of the stacks was the grain in one heap and ashes in another. In the east this would be considered a wanton waste; here it is looked upon as labour saved. The limitless prairie yields all the food the cattle require, while the richness and fertility of the soil are such, that the people consider the making or saving of manure as labour lost. \* \* \*

“At High Bluff, a farmer had dug a lime-kiln, and the section showed a solid bed of over two feet of the richest mould. \* \* \* With ground like this, attempts to make or save manure are looked upon with derision. The main difficulty seems to be, how to get rid of the manure. \* \* \* \* Meanwhile, the Legislature have passed a law to prevent it being thrown into the river. \* \* \* \* The manure heaps of this settlement, if in Ontario, would sell for more than the cost here of the ‘fee simple’ of the farms on which they lie and rot.”

The only sentences in the foregoing description that might give a false impression of the whole country to the ordinary reader are those that speak of the wood. Over great part of the fertile belt there is a decided scarcity of wood. Aspens are almost the only trees to be seen, after leaving the Lower Assiniboine, for the next six or seven hundred miles, going west. This, of course, is one of the drawbacks of the country, but by no means so irremediable an evil as Archbishop Tache thinks. There is timber to the east, north, and west of the timberless district, and surely ways and means for transporting it can be found. Besides, trees

formerly grew on the prairie, and will grow again if prairie fires are checked.

It may well be asked, How was this great fertile country kept locked and sealed till recently? Why was it not opened up long ago, and formed into one or more Colonies? One reason, certainly, was its inaccessibility, but the chief reason was that the interests of the Hudson Bay Company demanded its being kept as a preserve. The Company did what all Corporations do,—looked to its own interests solely. What had it to do with the welfare of the masses, or Imperial interests! Hence it came to pass that little was known about the real resources and capabilities of the North-west. Whose business was it to write about them, or urge the subject on the Imperial Government? Agents of the Company could not be expected to undertake such a work, for it would have amounted to a crusade against their masters and themselves. Missionaries to the Indian tribes received protection and assistance from the Company on the understanding that they were to “mind their own business.” A few tourists or travellers told what they had seen of the beauty and fertility of the land, but their accounts were set down as “travellers’ tales,” and disposed of by counter-statements about locusts, hailstones, eight months winter, early frosts, Indians, want of wood and water, rocks, bogs, and such like amenities. He who thinks that I am exaggerating may refer to an article in the *Edinburgh Review* for 1859, in which the proposal to form the Red River and Saskatchewan country into a Crown Colony is conclusively proved to be a wild and monstrous notion, or to the evidence that Sir George Simpson gave before a Committee of the House of Commons,—evidence that should be read in connection with his own previously published descriptions. Any one who visits the North-west is sure to hear corroborative evidence in abundance from individual missionaries, traders, and others. But it is not needed; *litera scripta manet*.

Only a very decided patriot, however, has the right to find fault with the Company for its action—or inaction. And if “patriotism is the best refuge of a scoundrel,” a man should be very sure that he comes into court with clean hands when he draws up an indictment against the great Company. It did what all mercantile bodies, all joint-stock companies, all monopolies, and most men and women do. It looked to itself, to its own objects and

gains, primarily. Its day has gone by as a monopoly, but in considering its past, the wisdom of its management, the high *esprit de corps* among its servants, its old-fashioned hospitality, and its honourable dealings with the Indians, we gladly pay it a tribute of respect rather than cast dirt on its memory.

I need not describe here how our party travelled last August from Fort Garry to Edmonton, as my diary will be published in book form probably before these pages are in the hands of the readers of the MARITIME MONTHLY. The memory of those successive days so bright and breezy, and nights that were always cool, with soft showers, or dew so heavy that it amounted to the same thing, will abide long with us. This feature of an exceedingly moist summer is the most striking fact about the meteorology of the North-west, and in our experience it fortunately happened that most of the moisture fell in the nights, while the days were sunny:

Nocte pluit totâ, redeunt spectacula mane.

Up in the morning early, the cry of "lève, lève," rousing every one from sleep; a glance from the tent door at the deep wet grass, and the embers of last night's fire, across level or rolling prairie to a misty horizon, and up at a grey or cloudy sky that threatens a comfortless morning ride; a hurried packing of blankets and striking of tents, while the men bring in the horses and yoke them to the carts; a cup of tea, hot, fragrant, delicious, which the cook has prepared in the meanwhile; each man then picks out his horse from the drove, saddles and bridles him, mounts, and is away westward before the night is over. The air is cool, actually chilly at first, but the rapid motion stirs the warm blood, and soon the rosy finger of morning is succeeded by the pale light spread over the sky, and if you turn round now you can see the sun rising from his grassy bed, full-orbed as he rises from the sea. On you ride deeper into the unknown land. The air is now sweet and flower-scented. It is warm enough to permit you to throw off your jacket, and a few hours after you may dispense with waistcoat too; but almost every day is breezy, and the heat is seldom oppressive. After three or four hours' ride, the first halt is called, and as the carts come up, "the kitchen" is unpacked, and a breakfast of fried pork or hot pemmican is prepared. Two or three hours are spent in resting, bathing, if a lake or stream

is at hand, sketching or taking notes, breakfasting, or perhaps in a few extra winks under a cart or in the shade of a clump of trees, and then you mount into the saddle again. The delight, the purely animal happiness of those days, it is impossible to exaggerate. No sense of monotony was experienced, though there is a general sameness in the character of the country. One hour we rode through avenues of whispering trees; the next through park-like scenery; soon after across open expanses, or by a succession of sparkling lakelets. One part of the day we would jog slowly behind the carts, or lag far in the rear; then gallop up and scamper like boys among the herd of horses that were driven along to relieve the others when they had enough of the shafts or the saddle for the time; off the herd would go like a drove of wild horses, their long manes and tails floating like Turkish banners in the wind. The contagion would seize on the half-breeds driving the carts, and then commenced a race of horses, horsemen, carts, and buckboards. Along the trail and across the open prairie, up and down long slopes, over deep ruts and badger-holes, through sloughs and marshes, we dashed pell-mell, and then no one thought of drawing rein till a good halting place was reached.

The only rivers of importance that we had to cross between Fort Garry and Fort Edmonton were the Assiniboine, the South and the North Saskatchewan. The first is fordable, and on each of the other two the Hudson Bay Company have a large scow for carts, and the horses swim across.

In another paper I shall speak of the only inhabitants that this "great lone land" has had hitherto. In the meantime, a closing word may be permitted as to the duty that lies nearest us with regard to it.

Our duty is to do something to open it up to a race of hardy immigrants. Usually this determination that "something must be done" is to be suspected, as it indicates lack of knowledge and lack of sense; but in this case any policy is better than that of the sluggard. Too long have we permitted ourselves to be eclipsed by the superior energy and business-like thoroughness of our neighbours in attracting population to their virgin lands. Their Railway Companies are their great immigration agents. These Companies organize colonization schemes, advertize their lands, construct homes for newly arrived emigrants, exhibit the

produce of their lands at agricultural exhibitions, because they know that the richest soil is worth nothing to themselves or the country until it is cultivated by man, and that the settler's tillage will not amount to much while there are no steamboats or railways to transport his grain to market. Their one aim, therefore, has been to attract the emigrant to land owned by them. To secure this every effort is steadily put forth. Every railway station is hung round with their boards and placards; every train is strewed with little maps and pamphlets thick as leaves in Vallambrosa, all going to prove that "Codlin is the friend, Thomas Codlin mind, and not Short." And what have we been doing? We have spent a little money on salaries to emigration agents who, in their day, tried to be useful to "the party."

Let an emigrant arrive from Europe in Montreal, and I select it as the chief town in the Dominion, and let us ascertain what information he is likely to find ready to his hand concerning that which he has come for,—cheap land or a free grant under some Homestead law that he has heard about. Arrived at the railway station, he reads the notices on the walls. One tells him of two millions of acres in Iowa and Nebraska for sale on ten years credit; no part of the principal due for two years; free passes on the railway and low prices; products will soon pay for land and improvements; for full particulars apply to &c. &c. Another placard advertizes in large letters "Homes in the West," and tells him that the Missouri, Kansas and Texas Railway Company now offer for sale the richest and most inviting lands in the world; nothing but rich bottoms, lots of wood, water, stone, minerals; prices from \$2 to \$10 per acre, one-tenth down, the rest when it suits you; for further information, apply to &c. The Kansas Pacific Railway next solicits his attention. Hard by, the Atlantic and Pacific Railway Company describe to him their earthly Paradise; immense deposits of all kinds of minerals all along the line; no long winters; healthiest climate in the world; great inducements offered to men who will organize colonies; beautiful village plats; long credits; apply to Amos Tuck, &c., and consult any of our agents. And near these alluring notices are time-tables giving the latest information, and each proving that its special line is the most direct, the cheapest, quickest, and most comfortable.

Our emigrant is bewildered at the successive Alnaschar's visions that rise before him as he reads. But perhaps he is a British

subject; or having been long enslaved in Europe, perhaps he has a weakness for our mace and monarchical institutions generally. So he asks, "Is there no cheap or free land in Ontario, in Manitoba, or hereabouts?" "Does the Dominion offer no homes to poor emigrants?" Seeing no placard on the subject, he addresses himself to an official, or to some kindly-looking bystander, and of course getting no satisfaction except an answer, more or less gruff, he concludes that he had better go where he is wanted. He takes train to Chicago. In the Railway Station of that recently burned city he finds a convenient saloon for emigrants, and officials who give him every information. He and his are soon settled in the far West, and their wealth, their strength and their sympathies, are lost to us forever.

Such is a fair illustration of the "how not to do it" policy. But if the Government would deserve well of the country, it must "do something." Whether the Government or a Company should build the Canadian Pacific Railway is a fit subject for debate, but of this there can be no doubt, that the best emigration and colonization policy is also the best Railway policy for the Dominion. And therefore, the proposal to build the Railway in ten years seems to me unwise, if not chimerical. It should not be built at all, if population does not flow in to our North-west. Population is certain to flow there, if the right means are taken to attract the current, but at what rate, who shall venture to predict? And the Railway should keep ahead of the current, only sufficiently far to attract and direct its enriching flow.

In considering this question of the development of the North-west, on which our future so much depends, and to which therefore, should be given the undivided strength of all political parties, one is struck with the fact that no provision is made in our Constitution as a Confederated Dominion for those inchoate territories that may consider themselves entitled to be ranked as full-fledged provinces, after the example of Manitoba, whenever they count a population of a few thousands of half-breeds or emigrants. To remedy this defect, some provision should be made for them, while in their formless condition, or the boundaries of the "Prairie Province" should be at once very widely extended. To have half a dozen Manitobas in the North-west in the course of the next ten years, each with its Governor, Chief Justice, local Legislature, and of course its yearly demand for "better terms," would be a satire on Confederation.



