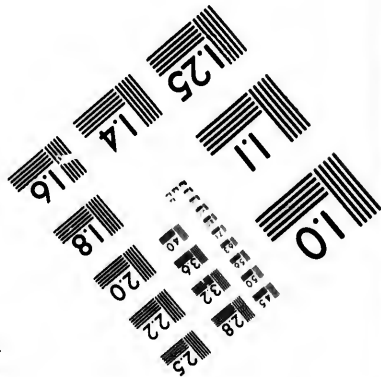
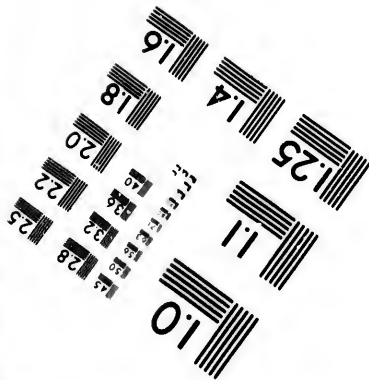
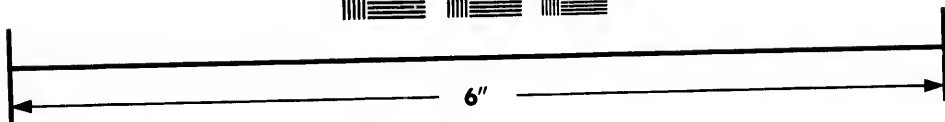
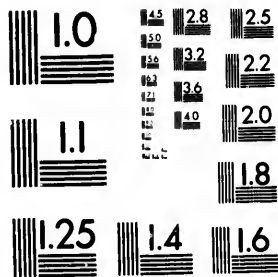


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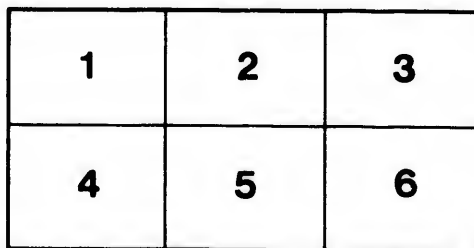
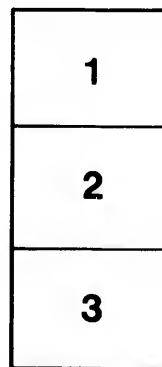
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THE ATONEMENT.

bour of Esquimaux, sufficiently commodious to shelter the largest navy, easy of access, and capable of being rendered impregnable. This last advantage may be better appreciated when it is remembered that the Americans have possession of the country opposite Vancouver Island, and South of British Columbia, and regard our settlement on the shores of the Pacific with unconcealed irritation and jealousy.

Between Victoria and Esquimaux, the relative position of which places I could scarcely hope to explain without the aid of a map, lie the Indian village of the tribe of Songhees, and the tents of the native visitors to Victoria, who come down in their canoes in large numbers from the northern parts of the island and mainland to sell their furs and skins, and see the white men of whom they have heard so much. These Indians are not very agreeable neighbours to Victoria. They are altogether much inferior to the red man of North America in physical strength, intellect, and habits. As a rule, they too readily contract the vices of the Europeans with whom they are brought into contact. Their villages present generally a picture of the most squalid filth and misery imaginable. Except when he is fishing, hunting, or fighting, the Indian rarely works, leaving the women of his tribe to labour for him, and spending his time in sleeping, drinking when he can obtain the means, and gambling.

Steamers run now regularly from Victoria to the Fraser, a distance of some 85 miles across the Gulf of Georgia; but the time was, a few years back, when the miners made the passage as they best could, crossing in old boats and crazy canoes, and often losing their lives in the venture. The way lies among many islands, between which the waters of the Strait race at great speed, making it a most dangerous and treacherous current for any but the experienced mariner to navigate. There is not much to be said of these islands, among which is San Juan, which, it may be remembered, the Americans took forcible possession of a few years back while the boundary dispute between them and our government were pending, and which is still held by an equal force of men belonging to either country. There are two other islands, Orcas and Lopez, equal in size to San Juan; the rest are mere rocky islets, thickly clothed with pine trees to the water's edge. The shores of British Columbia are, like them, densely wooded, and the lofty impenetrable timber appears from the sea to stretch in a line so unbroken that the entrance to the Fraser is quite undistinguishable. Indeed, the navigator Vancouver, who sailed along them, looking out keenly for any inland waters, which he had especial instructions to explore, passed along this coast in perfect ignorance that he had gone by a river's mouth at all.

There is a dangerous bank of shifting sands at the Fraser's mouth, which renders it somewhat difficult of access. It is very common for ships to ground on entering; but, fortunately, it is protected from heavy seas by the adjacent shore of Vancouver Island, and serious consequences seldom happen. The Fraser is a wide, swift river, in the summer much swollen by the snow, which melts among the hills. At its entrance the banks are flat; but the mountains soon close in upon it, and for many miles it winds between them, increasing in rapidity, until at one spot it takes the steamer eight hours to struggle fifteen miles against the fierce current. It is too shallow at this spot, and for some way below, for the steamers which cross from Victoria to navigate it, and their cargoes are transferred into flat-bottomed steamers, drawing no more than twenty or twenty-four inches of water, and propelled by a great ungainly wheel, project-

BRITISH COLUMBIA.

A FEW years ago Victoria, now the capital of Vancouver Island, and the seat of government for that settlement and British Columbia, consisted of a few huts gathered about the stockade of an old fort of the Hudson Bay Company, erected on the shore of the harbour. In 1858, however, when the mineral wealth of the banks of the Fraser was discovered, a stream of immigrants poured into the place from Australia, California, and Europe; so that it became in the course of a few months a large and populous town of canvas, the tents of the new comers stretching for some miles along the shore. In time the canvas town gave way to one of wooden huts, which, in their turn, are being replaced by good stone houses; and before long Victoria will be as striking an instance of the magical power of gold to cause a city to spring up where a little while back the savage and the wild beast were uninterrupted, as Melbourne and San Francisco have been before it. Victoria, however, cannot be said to possess perfectly those natural advantages which would fit it alone to become a prosperous city. Among other drawbacks, its harbour is shallow, and the entrance intricate, while without there is little if any shelter for ships exposed to heavy winds. But a little distance from Victoria by sea, and separated from it by a neck of land but three miles wide, lies the noble har-

* It is generally believed that the passage in question was omitted after the first edition of the "Moral Sentiments;" but we have before us the third edition, London, 1787; and from that third edition the above extract has been made.

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ing over the vessel's stern. These steamers have the greatest difficulty in forcing their way up the rapids, and sometimes fail altogether to stem them. It is not at all uncommon for the current to catch the vessel's bow and spin her round, so that she flies down the stream at headlong speed, until she is brought up against a snag, or run into the bank, while steam is got up for a fresh effort. Sometimes, after repeated failures, crew and passengers land, and tow her past some obstacle that has baffled the power of steam to master.

The banks of the river at these parts are highly arduous, but are almost deserted now for the richer diggings up the country. At Fort Hope, one hundred miles distant from the Fraser's mouth, the steamer ceases to navigate, although canoes can reach Fort Yale, sixteen miles higher. At this point the river races through the mountains that hem it in so closely, that it becomes comparatively a thread of water forcing its way between and over the rocks that impede its course, with headlong speed; and the trail for those who ascend it lies now over the boulders by the river side, now high above by a dizzy, insecure path round the face of the mountains.

To move round to the Cariboo diggings, the way lies by what is known familiarly in the colony as the Harrison-Lillooet route. Of this way I may have more to say hereafter, and need only mention now that it leaves the Fraser some sixty miles from its mouth, meeting it again more than a hundred miles above, thus avoiding the difficulties of the rocky pass I have just described. Travelling by this route (a chain of small lakes, connected by fair roads) is perfectly easy, although, of course, expensive and rough. Yet welcome inns will be found at intervals along it. The emigrant, however, will do well to take his own provisions in the pack which he carries, and which, if he be wise, will contain all the impedimenta he will travel with in British Columbia.

The shores of this country are, as I have said, not inviting. Rocky, and clothed with dense, in some places almost impenetrable timber, they offer few, if any, inducements to the settler. Inland, however, there is a much clearer and fertile country. The natural resources of British Columbia are many and rich indeed. To say nothing of its immense mineral wealth, its inlets abound in salmon of extraordinary size, and many other varieties of fish; native hemp, equal to Russian, is found growing wild on the banks of the Fraser and other rivers, and the timber is magnificent and inexhaustible. There is plenty of wild fowl on the shores; but inland animal life is scarce—a few deer, a chance bear or so, and some foxes being the only attractions to the sportsman. The Indians cultivate the potato largely, which does not seem to be indigenous to the country, but was, no doubt, introduced by the earliest settlers, or visitors there, and gather from the mountain sides quantities of canna, a root resembling the onion, berries and moss, which, with salmon and shell fish, they prepare and store for their winter food. They are found generally very friendly to the white man, and show no disposition to molest him, or interfere with his settling in their neighbourhood.

From a correspondent we have received the following plan for Rupert's Land, as the best high-road to British Columbia:—

West of Lake Superior, a line commencing at the 48th parallel of latitude, rising at the west end of the Lake of the Woods to the 49th, and running to the Rocky Mountains, forms the boundary between the United States and British Central America, or Rupert's Land. A very small portion of this vast territory belongs to Canada; over the rest, extending for about 1200 miles

from east to west, and 700 or 800 from north to south, watered by rivers which, after courses of many hundred miles, find their outlet chiefly in Hudson's Bay, the Hudson's Bay Fur-trading Company, by virtue of a charter granted in 1670 by Charles II, claims to be Lord-paramount, and to have the exclusive right of trading, and of selling or leasing land. The legality of this charter is contested. This territory is inhabited by about 40,000 Red Indians, 6000 half-castes, descendants of white fathers, and by about 3000 white men, the greater number of the last two residing in a district stretching for thirty miles along the banks of the Red and Assiniboine rivers, known as the Red River or Selkirk settlements, and which are some 600 miles south of Hudson's Bay.

The Company has about seventy trading posts in Rupert's Land. At the principal, Fort Garry on the Red River, a governor resides, ruling a district of fifty miles on either side, called Assiniboia. The vast remainder is utterly without law.

Great ignorance has prevailed respecting Rupert's Land. It was supposed to be useless, except as producing the fur-bearing animals, and that the Rocky Mountains were almost impassable. The Canadian Government, however, in 1857-58, sent out two exploring expeditions under Professor Hind, and at the same time the British Government despatched Captain Palliser, Dr. Hector, and others, who remained till 1860.

They explored the whole of the territory, and report that certain passes of the Rocky Mountains are practicable at all seasons; that one exists through which a wagon-road can be formed with slight labour, and that through another a railway may be formed; that a fertile belt of land, from 50 to 100 miles wide, extends for 900 miles, from near the Lake of the Woods to the base of the Rocky Mountains, having a thickly-wooded country, full of lakes and streams abounding in fish, to the north, and a broad arid expanse to the south, reaching many hundred miles into the United States.

This fertile belt is amply watered, and is almost encircled by rivers and lakes in great part navigable, by which timber can be brought to it either from the east or west. An ample supply is to be found in the belt itself, on ranges of mountains, on the banks of the rivers and streams, and in separate forests.

A uniformity of climate, soil, and productions, exists over the fertile belt, though improving towards the west, even in a higher latitude, and at a greater elevation. The soil consists of clay, loam, and marl, in various proportions, with but little sand, and overlaid with a rich vegetable mould of from two to five feet thick. The climate is healthy, and perfectly suited to British constitutions. The winter lasts five months, spring one, autumn one, and summer five. Although the winter is very cold, the heat of summer is great, and rapidly brings all cereals and most fruits to perfection.

It is an admirable grazing country, and there is a large amount of winter pasturage. Cattle and horses remain out all the winter. In some districts it is necessary to cut hay, which the natural grasses supply in profusion. Sheep thrive and multiply. Pigs, where there are oak woods, if turned out, require no looking after. Agricultural operations have been carried on for many years at the Red River, and round the trading posts and mission stations, with great success. Wheat is the staple produce. The ordinary yield is thirty bushels to the acre, and oftentimes forty bushels. It is cut three months from the date of sowing. Indian corn is very fine, and never fails on the dry lands. Root crops, especially potatoes, turnips, and beet, yield very

abundantly, and attain large dimensions. The potato disease has never been known. Garden vegetables grow luxuriantly, and equal those of Canada. Barley and oats, when cultivated with care, yield as abundantly as wheat. Of hay the quantity is unlimited, and quality excellent, from native grasses. Tobacco is successfully cultivated. Hops grow wild in great luxuriance. Ale is brewed from them at Red River. Flax and hemp have been cultivated with the greatest success. A variety of fruits grow wild, such as strawberries, raspberries, currants, gooseberries, wild rice, etc. Melons are very fine, growing in the open air. Sugar is manufactured from the maple tree. The numerous lakes and rivers abound with delicious fish, and game is abundant. Coal and lignite are found in various directions, and salt springs yielding abundantly, also exist. Late and early frosts, wolves and locusts, are the farmer's chief enemies. Exclusive of the fur-trade, with which it is not desired to interfere, the exports, on which settlers may at once depend, are cattle, horses, wool, hides, tallow, flax, hemp.

The Indians show a friendly disposition when properly treated. The Hudson's Bay Company keep them hunters, and prevent their settlement. Rival traders have appeared, who tempt them to trade, with ardent spirits. The Company's officers, to compete with these, everywhere sell spirits, bestow spirits as bribes, and advance spirits to get the hunters in their debt. The drinking of spirits, the hard life of a hunter, and scarcity of food consequent on the neglect of agriculture, are rapidly diminishing their numbers. When visiting the trading posts, intoxication indisposes them to listen. The Company's system therefore destroys the Indians and prevents their settling and becoming Christians.

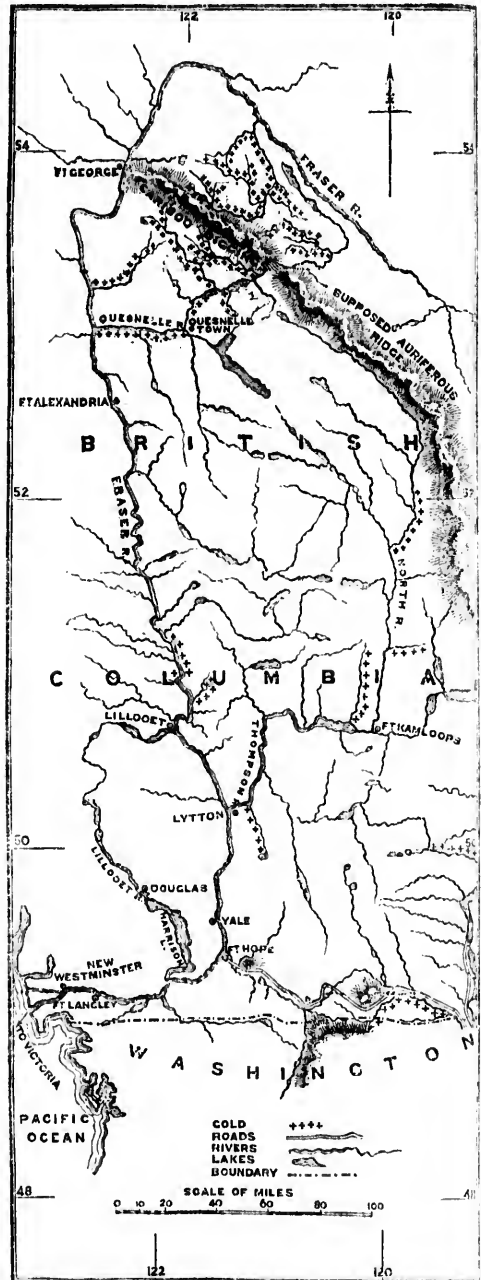
The Company demands one million and a half pounds for abandoning its claims over Rupert's Land. However, as the fertile belt it is proposed to colonize, furnishes but a small proportion of buffalo robes, and a very few other skins, they being found chiefly on the lakes and rivers to the north, and the buffalo to the south, it will be more than compensated, when the territory is colonized, by the cheaper rate at which its posts will obtain provisions, and the advantageous channels opened up for the employment of its capital, free from the grave objections urged against its fur-trading system.

The Red River, now navigated by a steamer, runs from the United States, and sixty miles from the boundary is the commencement of the Selkirk settlement; and commerce flowing naturally in that direction, England is losing all trade with the settlements.

The first step towards colonizing this territory is to open up a direct communication through Lake Superior with Canada. A steamer leaving Liverpool may, with a sea voyage of eleven days, and five days through rivers and lakes, reach Thunder Bay, the west side of Lake Superior. Hence there is a broken navigation, with forty miles of land, and three hundred and sixty of water, to the west side of the Lake of the Woods. This can, it is estimated, be opened up for traffic by roads, tramways, steamers and boats, for £50,000, so as to be traversed in three days by passengers, and with goods in six.

Westward, ninety miles to Red River, and onwards eight hundred miles to the Rocky Mountains, it is proposed to establish a series of posts, or small settlements, through the centre of the fertile belt (on a surveyed line suited ultimately for a railway), about twenty-five miles apart, at each of which about thirty people of different callings will at once be settled. The first care of these settlers will be to establish inns and post-houses, ferries or bridges, to level steep banks, and to throw plank or

corduroy roads over marshes. Regular roads and means of rapid transit will soon follow. Before, however, a first step can be taken, the territory must be erected into a crown colony; and to effect that object, all, both in England and Canada, who desire their country's welfare, who wish to benefit the long-neglected Indians, are urged to employ their united efforts. Ultimately a railway may be formed from the Atlantic to the Pacific.



THE GOLD-FIELDS OF BRITISH COLUMBIA.

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