

### CHAPTER III.

#### Life in the Wilderness for Thirty Years.

In the service of this great company, Donald Smith spent 30 years of his life. When he appeared upon the scene, Sir George Simpson was Governor. So absolute was his authority, and so autocratic his manners, that he was called "King of the Fur Trade," or "Emperor of the Plains." Beneath his forbidding exterior, however, he was a man of great ability, and had acquitted himself with credit in critical times, and was recognized as a power in all the vast region. By his orders the youthful newcomer was sent to Labrador, where a new department had been established. Perhaps there is no bleaker place on the earth. There he spent 13 years of his life.

We have very little detailed account of how he spent his time. We may be sure that in those dreary solitudes—where the winter is eight months long, and the thermometer often 50 below zero—where his only companions were the Indians with whom he traded, and the few comrades at the store—his mind must have turned wistfully to the home in the old Scottish town and the friends he had left behind. The reality of his experience