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Ladies' Nightdresses from 94c ea. Chemises trimmed embroidery, 56c ea. Combinations, \$1.08 each. Bridal Trousseau, \$32.04. Layettes, \$1.00. Irish Lace goods direct from workers at very moderate prices.

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THE BLACKWOODS LTD.
WINNIPEG.

From Great Slave Lake to the Atlantic.

Past and Present Water Routes into the Mackenzie. By Isaac Cowie, Winnipeg.

Introduction.

THIRTY years ago I was in charge of the Hudson's Bay Company's northern transport across the 12 mile Portage La Loche, which is the height of land between the utilized waterways flowing on the one side down the Churchill to Hudson's Bay and on the other side those going down the Athabasca and the Mackenzie to the Arctic Ocean.

The transport was conducted by "York" boats, rowed or towed by crews of eight men and carrying from 3 to 3½ tons of cargo. This cargo was made up in packages of from 90 to 100 lbs., two of which were carried at a time by each of the crew over the numerous portages. Often the boats, too, had to be dragged across these by the main strength of the crews. Had the magnificently spirited and muscular voyageurs not gloried in their strength and power of enduring every toil and priva-

perative to introduce steamboats on the secluded waterways of the north. But this step was delayed for several years by the opposition, in Council, of the Chief Factors of southern districts, already provided with more or less modern means of transport, who deprecated any demonstration of the splendid capacity for steam navigation provided by the mighty rivers of the last refuge of the monopoly of the fur trade in Athabasca and Mackenzie River districts.

Until steamboats were at length placed on the northern waters, we were obliged to resort to every device to meet the constantly increasing difficulties of handling bigger outfits with a diminishing supply of men and means. In these circumstances I urged upon the Chief Factors at Athabasca and Mackenzie River districts, Messrs. MacFarlane and Campbell, the examination of what appeared to be, on some maps, a possible fur traders' boat and portage route from Great Slave Lake to the head of the Chesterfield Inlet of Hudson's Bay. The suggestion was



Deer Trails at Fort Reliance, May 8th.

tion of the wilderness, men could never have submitted to the terrible toil of towing the boats upstream and carrying at a trot, meanwhile vying with each other, their big burdens across the portages, of which the twelve miles across La Loche was the longest.

Originally the boat route started at York Factory, on Hudson's Bay, crossed Lake Winnipeg, ascended the Saskatchewan to Cumberland, crossed thence to the Upper Churchill, and continued by Ile a la Crosse to Portage La Loche. There were about eighty portages on this route, thirty being below Lake Winnipeg. In the seventies advantage was taken of the increased facilities between Fort Garry and St. Paul, Minnesota, and later of the steamboats on the Saskatchewan, York Factory having ceased to be the terminal. The goods landed at Carlton by the steamers were carted over to Green Lake, a feeder of the Upper Churchill, and thence by boat to Ile a la Crosse and on to the La Loche. Finally, in 1881, machinery for the construction of a steamboat—"Grahame"—on the lower Athabasca was brought via Edmonton down the Athabasca, and in 1887 the Portage La Loche route was abandoned for that by Edmonton.

While these very greatly increased facilities were coming into use south of "the Long Portage"—La Loche—increasing difficulties in manning the boats north of the divide, in Athabasca and Mackenzie River, became so great that in spite of the traditional policy of the Company to adhere to the crudest means of carriage, it became im-

not acted upon, just as that made by Mr. MacFarlane many years before, while he was a junior officer, to bring the MacKenzie River outfit to the mouth of that river on ocean vessels via Bering Straits.

So it came about that the Hudson's Bay Company lost the honor and credit of discovering—perhaps rediscovering—the route explored by Mr. Hanbury, and found by him to be "absurdly easy," which is described in this article. Naturally I read of his achievement, and that of Mr. J. W. Tyrrell which followed, with the greatest interest. While the general reader cannot feel the same personal—I might say professional—interest as I do in the good fur traders' route offered by their explorations, all who love sport and travel in hitherto unknown regions will read with pleasure the modest narratives of these two courageous and adventurous travellers.

Moreover the recent announcement of the early extension of the boundaries of Manitoba northwards has created unusual interest in the regions beyond, and this, together with the perennial public attention directed to any advantage to be derived from the utilization of the Hudson's Bay route may render the descriptions herein published acceptable to a wider circle of readers.

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From Hudson's Bay to the Mackenzie Basin.

The importance to the prairie pro-