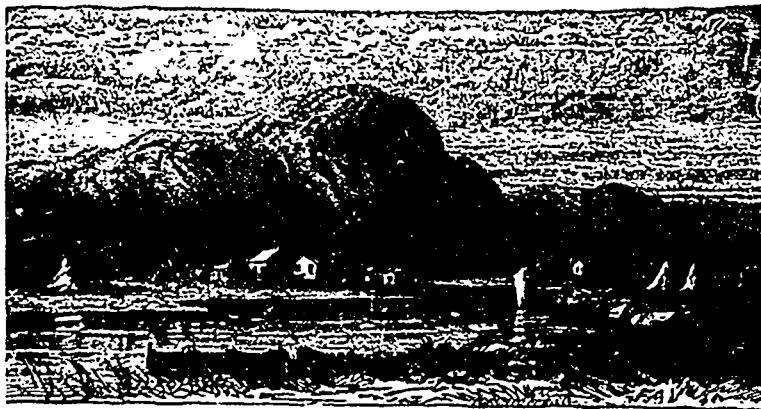




OLD H.B. FACTORY, FORT WILLIAM, LAKE SUPERIOR.

a year (at Christmas and on the Queen's Birthday) a small amount of liquor was measured out to their own employees, a pint only to each head of a family, and this only upon an order countersigned by the governor and attending physician. They were well aware of its evil influence and kept it away. How different is this from the unscrupulous conduct of many traders of the present day, on the coasts of Africa, and other savage lands! There the fire water is made to do its deadly work upon the unfortunate savages, and so the labours of the missionary are often undone.

When a young man entered the Hudson's Bay Company, he was sent for the first five or ten years of his apprenticeship to the extreme north, to Athabasca or Mackenzie River. His first duties were those of salesman in the store, with an occasional trip along with half-breed traders attached to the fort, to Indian camps in order to learn the mysteries of trading. After a few years he was promoted to the accountant's office, where he would receive £100 a year instead of £20. At the end of fourteen years of service he became eligible to be a chief-trader, which meant a partnership in the company. He then got a share of the profits of the trade, and was put in command of a post, where he must remain till some death or retirement occur among the chief factors—the highest class of officials known to the service. This placed him in command of a district, sometimes as large as a European kingdom, with headquarters at one of the largest forts.

By this time he usually managed to save quite a large sum of money, for there were very few means of spending it in that inhospitable region, and perhaps would retire on half-pay, either to return to the mother land, or to settle in some part of the strange, wild country in which his early days were spent.

At any time these men might marry with the consent of the governor. In some cases they chose their bride from among the Indian girls, who were by no means incapable of making

good and useful wives, and in other cases (usually among those of more advanced years), wives were sent to them by order from England!

Since Confederation the Hudson's Bay Company (having sold out many of its rights to the Dominion Government) has carried on its trade simply as a private corporation, retaining many of their old forts and trading posts together with the lands attached to them, which some day will doubtless become valuable.

THE PATIENCE OF HILLEL.

HILLEL was the chief of the Sanhedrim, or Jewish council, at the time our Lord was born. He was then an extremely aged man. He was descended, it is said, from King David, but he was so poor that he lived and supported his family upon little more than two pence a day. His desire for knowledge of the law was intense. His memory was compared to a well-cemented cistern, which never allows a leak of water to escape which once drops in.

Here is an interesting illustration of it. It is quoted by Archdeacon Farrer from one of the books written in rabbinical Hebrew:

"Now or never," said a man to his friend; "four hundred zuzins" (coins with the head of Jupiter on them) "to the man who can make Hillel angry."

"Done!" exclaimed the other.

It was Friday afternoon, and Hillel was washing and combing his hair for the Sabbath.

"Is Hillel there?" rudely and bluntly asked the man, as he knocked at the door.

"My son," he exclaimed, hastily putting on his mantle, "what dost thou want?"

"I have a question to ask."

"Ask on, my son."

"Why have the Babylonians such round heads?"

Now Hillel himself was a Babylonian Jew by birth, and this question was pointedly rude.

"An important question, my son," said Hillel.

"It is because they have clever nurses."

The man turned his back, went off, and returned in an hour. The same rude interruption was repeated, and this time the man asked:

"Why have the people of Palmyra such narrow eye-slits?"

"An important question, my son. It is because they live in the middle of a sandy desert."

A third time the man returned, and asked:

"Why have the Africans such broad soles to their feet?"