

has still, no doubt, in store for it a prolonged if uneventful future.

The headquarters of the company continue to be in Fenchurch Street, London, but the recent election to the chief-governorship of Sir Donald Smith, of Montreal, whose life for the past half-century has been part of the company's history, has brought the control of affairs into closer touch with the country, and made it seem more than ever in the past a national enterprise.

I have thus sketched in scanty outline the romantic history of the great corporation, and it now remains for me to give some picture of its internal workings, of its method of dealing with the Indians, and of life at the hundred or more forts scattered throughout so many thousand miles of varied territory.

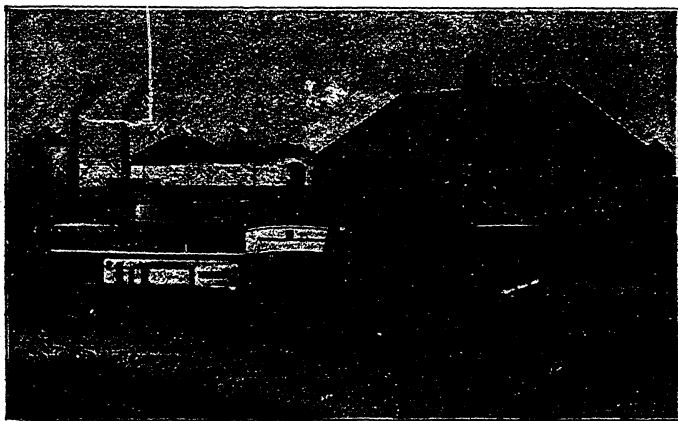
Regarded strictly as a fur-trading enterprise, the Hudson's Bay Company reached its zenith about the year 1868, just before the surrender of its proprietary privileges to the Dominion of Canada; and as the methods and manners in vogue then remain practically unchanged to-day at the more distant forts, whither settlement and civilization have not yet made their way, I will ask my readers to imagine themselves transported to a typical post of that period, and interested spectators of its picturesque, unconventional life.

If, on approaching a Hudson's Bay post for the first time, you had the high-sounding word "fort," suggestive of rampart, bastion, embrasure, and battlement, much upon your mind, and were accordingly full of appropriate expectation, you would be doomed to disappointment. Excepting Fort Garry, which, before the city of Winnipeg swallowed it up, was really a fortress with substantial stone walls and towers, the forts are quite unimposing affairs. Fancy a parallelogram of greater or less extent, according to the importance of the post, inclosed

by a picket twenty-four feet in height, composed of upright trunks, and fastened along the top by a strong rail. At each corner stands a stout bastion built of squared logs, and pierced for guns commanding both sides of the angle. Inside the picket is a gallery running right around the inclosure, just high enough for a man's head to be level with the top of the fence. At intervals along the side of the picket are loopholes for rifles, and over the gateway frowns another bastion, from which anybody attempting to storm the gate may be warmly peppered. In the center of the space inclosed are the houses of the factor, or trader in charge, and his chief subordinates, while ranged around the sides, close to the stockade, are the trading store, the fur-room, the warehouses, servants' quarters, etc. Beside the factor's residence rises a lofty flagstaff from which floats the flag of the company, bearing its motto: "Pro Pelle Cutem," and near by stands a bell tower which sounds out the important hours of the day.

In the earlier days one of the garrison would, watch by watch, pace round the gallery, crying out at intervals the hours and the state of the weather; partly as a precaution against Indian invasion, and partly as a fire patrol; but the establishment of the mounted police by the Dominion Government has rendered the former duty unnecessary, and the practice is now almost obsolete.

The advent of a band of Indians, burdened with the result of a season's hunting, arouses the fort from its humdrum



LANDING AT FORT GARRY.