

whole force, about four whites, the permanent staff (the rest composed of hired Indians), begin to pack all the skins in bales of from eighty pounds to one hundred pounds in weight. The outer covering is buffalo skin; loops are made to each package, so as to sling them over the pack-saddles; the pack-saddles are repaired, and raw-hide strips cut to fasten the bales on to the horses. The Company's horses, about one hundred in number, that have been wintered in some sheltered valley, under the care of the Indians, are now brought to the Fort. This is called fitting out the brigade. Their destination is Fort Hope, situated at the head of navigation on the Frazer, there to meet the steamer bringing the yearly supplies. This is the annual grand event in the chief traders' and *employés'* lives, and is looked forward to as a schoolboy anticipates his holidays. All being ready, the bales of fur are crossed over the Columbia in *batacaux* (flat-bottomed boats), and the horses swim a distance of four hundred yards. Safely across, they are packed and started. The trip to and from Fort Hope occupies from two and a half to three months. On arriving at the Fort the furs are handed over to the steamer, and the various goods to supply the trade at Fort Colville, until a similar exchange next year, are handed over to the chief trader, who generally goes in charge of the brigade. I was present at Fort Hope in early days, at a meeting of the brigades from Thompson's river, Camiloops, Fort Colville, and elsewhere, and it was truly a quaint and singular sight. The wild look, long unkempt hair, sunburnt faces, and leather costumes of the traders, were only exceeded by the still wilder appearance and absence of almost any clothing among their Indian attendants. The scene while the brigades remained was one continuous orgie; still no harm came of it, and obedience was always readily observed towards the traders when disputes, and sometimes blows, demanded their interference. When the brigades depart for their several destinations, the steamer leaves for Victoria, where the furs are all sorted and repacked, being pressed into bales by an enormous lever; and rum and tobacco are placed betwixt the layers of skins to keep out insects and

the larvæ of moths. They are shipped on board the "Princess Royal," that annually brings out the stores from England to Vancouver Island, and are eventually sold at public auction in London.

Such is a brief outline of the fur trade as carried on by the Hudson's Bay and other American companies.

Chambers's Journal.

THE MYSTERY OF SLEEP.

TWELVE hundred millions of dreams make a net-work of wild fancies nightly about our planet. To go, if it were possible, through this world of sleep would be a stranger process than that of exploring the whole waking world; for in sleep every living being is a poet, from the baby that clings in its dreams to the breasts of goddesses, to the centenarian who, with staff and spectacles, hobbles about paradise at the heels of seraphs. Sleeping and waking are the two great phenomena of our existence. What is done and thought in the every-day working world, where the ordinary business of life is carried on, no living creature has ever fully revealed to another. There are reticences in the confessions of the most frank, things which cannot, and therefore which never will be spoken—thoughts which transcend the limits of language—hopes which the power of no fairy could satisfy—fears which even Lucifer himself would fail to exaggerate. If this portion of our life, which is at least subjected to our own observation, cannot be faithfully and fully described, still less can that other portion which defies even our own scrutiny, converts us into mere spectators of ourselves, sets free our actions from the control of our will, and transforms us into so many passive spokes in the great wheel of destiny. Whatever may be the laws by which it is regulated, sleep presents the counterpart of the waking world—distorted, mutilated, thrown into irremediable confusion by the force of the imagination.

How sleep comes over him, every man may observe, if he will be at the pains—and it requires pains—since the drowsy state which precedes the complete ab-