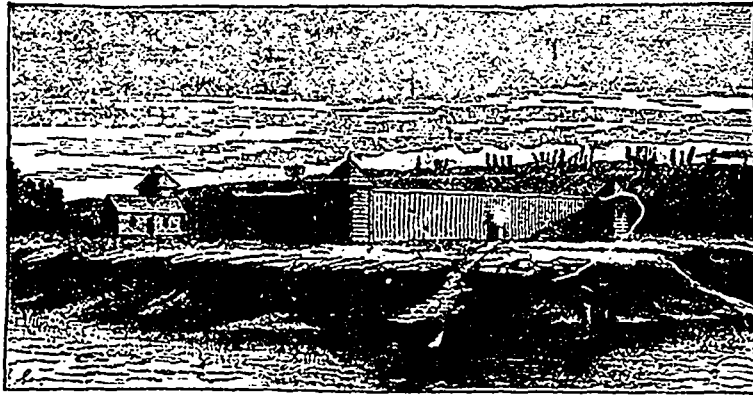


Young People's Department.



A HUDSON'S BAY POST.

THE HUDSON'S BAY COMPANY.

HAR up in the frozen north and all through the great North-West, for over two hundred years the Hudson's Bay Company carried on its remarkable trade. Its headquarters for the transaction of business were at York Factory, situated on the Hudson Bay itself. Here, every year, about the end of August, there arrived a great ship from England, laden with all kinds of things that might be needed by traders or Indians—all kinds of goods to stock the store, materials also, sometimes for building and repairing forts. These ships have been used by missionaries, and others interested from time to time in the Gospel message, the Company itself always being ready to help in good works. The Diocese of Rupert's Land was established largely through the liberality of one of the leading men or "chief factors" as they are called, of the Company.

The goods and materials brought out by the ships are despatched to the various forts throughout the North-West by means of hundreds of canoes, or by ox-teams, patiently tugging their loads across the prairies. No time is to be lost for the summer is very short. The ship can only remain a couple of weeks. It is not safe for her to remain in the bay long after September begins, for fear of being caught by the ice. Snow falls thick and fast sometimes in the region of York Factory, and pathways have to be cut through it, leaving walls of snow many feet in height.

At long intervals from one another, forts or "trading posts" are established where the trade of the Company is carried on. And this trade in itself is very simple. It is a trade in furs. Trappers are busy catching fur-bearing animals, whose glossy coats are to be taken to Europe to

gladden the eyes of those who like to secure expensive clothing; hunters are on the track for a similar purpose. The animals are skinned and the skins are taken to the nearest fort.

This fort usually consists of a large stone building, three stories high, called the "trading store," and adjoining it a succession of warehouses containing stores and supplies, the largest of which is near the gateway, and contains the packages destined for inland posts. In the centre of these buildings is the flag-staff bearing the Company's design and motto, which is "*Pro pelle cutem*"—"skin for skin," and surrounding all is a wall, presenting a stronger appearance than it really possesses, the idea being to over-awe the Indians and so deter them from making hostile attacks. The approach from outside the wall is through a long narrow passage, wide enough only to admit a single Indian at a time, and bent at an acute angle where the trader stands.

The dealings of this Company with the Indians have always been strictly honorable. They have never taken advantage of their ignorance to procure anything from them at a price out of reasonable proportion to its value, and the things given them in exchange were always of the very best materials—sent out from the old country in strong boxes lined with zinc and bound with iron.

It was a great pleasure to the Indians to trade out the value of their skins and furs at these trading post. Crowds of them would appear, but only a limited number could be served at a time. Here they could get blankets, shawls (for the squaws), gaily colored cloths of all kinds, hatchets, knives, beads, fish-hooks, guns, powder, tobacco—everything, indeed, that the Indian heart could wish for—except intoxicating liquor, and this, to the great honour of the Company, they steadily refused to deal in. Twice