

Hood. Among the Company of Adventurers to whom King Charles granted a charter was the fiery Prince Rupert, who is acknowledged as "our dear and entirely beloved cousin, Count Palatine of the Rhine," &c., and to him, already noted for his buccaneering life in the West Indies, and for exploits of a more patriotic kind against the Dutch, was given the honour of naming a territory which only five years ago lost the title of "Rupert's Land." His old friend, the Duke of Albemarle, familiar to the reader of English history as the brave and reticent restorer of Charles II., General Monk, died in the year of the granting of the charter; and his son Christopher stands second on the list of those to whom was given the monopoly of the country lying within the "entrance of the Straits commonly known as Hudson's Straits, together with all the lands, countries and territories upon the coasts and confines of the seas, straits, bays, lakes, rivers, creeks, and sounds." It is not at all strange to read of "old George, the King-maker," who had filled almost every office, military and civil, leaving his heir with instructions to prosecute, even so wild and adventurous an enterprise as the trade with Hudson's Bay; nor does it surprise us to see the ruling spirit of King Charles' reign, Dryden's Achitophel, Lord Ashley, the unworthy ancestor of our good Earl of Shaftesbury, taking part in this quest of the "Golden Fleece," bearing, as he did, the character:

"A man so various that he seemed to be
Not one, but all mankind's epitome."

Lord Arlington, another of the members of the celebrated Cabal, is found among the traders, and with fourteen others—knights, baronets, esquires and citizens—completed the corporation organized under Prince Rupert, the first Governor. The pleasure-loving king deserves well of us, when we look at his wise and generous policy of encouraging the trader and the voyageur, giving up to them the fisheries of "whales,

sturgeons and all other royal fishes," and even the "gold, silver, gems and precious stones," requiring only yearly to himself and successors, as often as they should enter the territories, the payment of "two elks and two black beavers." The love of sea-adventure, which was then strengthening in the bosom of the Englishman, was but the revival of the old Norse instinct which the struggles of the barons and the Wars of the Roses had very much deadened. It was this same spirit that led Drake and Raleigh and Frobisher to make their flying visits to almost every part of the unknown world, and the explorers of the inhospitable quarters of Hudson's Bay had to incite them the additional charm of whales and icebergs and fierce wild beasts. For a hundred years the Company sent out its ships to escape, with battered keels and sometimes dismasted vessels, the dangers of a channel open only two months in the year; but, besides having their love of adventure gratified, they had the consolation of securing a very profitable cargo of the peltries of the frozen land. Not long after their establishment, it is true, their rudely built forts on the border of Hudson's Bay were visited and captured by French expeditions. The great Massacre of St. Bartholomew, 100 years before, had turned on edge the teeth of all the Protestant nations against the foes of the reformed doctrines, and war was being waged at this time between "Le Grand Monarque" and the English, who sympathized with the struggling and devoted inhabitants of the Low Countries. In these struggles the young Company received its share of trials; its forts were occupied, its trade interrupted and its energies weakened time after time until the Peace of Ryswick in 1697 put an end to the difficulties that beset the traders; yet during all this period, taking full account of losses, the proprietors comforted themselves every few years with a dividend of 50 per cent. To one who has never experienced the peculiar cold of Rupert's Land it seems intoler-