

Streights commonly called Hudson's, together with all the Lands, Countries, and Territories upon the coasts and confines of the Seas, etc., . . . not already actually possessed by or granted to any of our subjects, or possessed by the subjects of any other Christian Prince or State, with the fishing of all sorts of Fish, Whales, Sturgeons, and all other Royal Fishes . . . together with the Royalty of the Sea upon the Coasts within the limits aforesaid, and all Mines Royal, as well discovered as not discovered, of Gold, Silver, Gems, and Precious Stones, and that the said lands be henceforth reckoned and reputed as one of Our Plantations or Colonies in America called Rupert's Land." For this gift of an empire the corporation was to pay yearly to the King, his heirs and successors, two elks, and two black beavers whenever and as often as he, his heirs, or his successors "shall happen to enter into the said countries." The company was empowered to man ships of war, to create an armed force for security and defence, to make peace or war with any people that were not Christians, and to seize any British or other subject who traded in their territory. The King named his cousin, Prince Rupert, Duke of Cumberland, to be first Governor, and it was in his honour that the new territory got its name of Rupert's Land.

In the company were the Duke of Albermarle, Earl Craven, Lords Arlington and Ashley, and several knights and baronets, Sir Philip Carteret among them. There were also five esquires, or gentlemen, and John Portman, "citizen and goldsmith." They adopted the witty sentence, "*Pro pelle cutem*" (a skin for a skin) as their motto, and established as their coat of arms a fox sejant as the crest, and a shield showing four beavers in the quarters, and the cross of St. George, the whole upheld by two stags.

The "adventurers" quickly established forts on the shores of Hudson Bay, and began trading with the Indians, with such success that it was rumoured that they made from twenty-five to fifty per cent. profit every year. But they exhibited all of that timidity which capital is ever said to possess. They were nothing like as enterprising as the French *courriers du bois*. In a hundred years they were no deeper in the country than at first, excepting as they extended their little system of forts or "factories" up and down and on either side of Hudson and James Bays. In view of their profits, perhaps this lack of enterprise is not to be wondered at. On the other hand, their charter was given as a reward of the efforts they had made, and were to make, to find "the North-West passage to the Southern seas," and in this quest they made less of a trial than in the getting of furs; how much less we shall see. But the company had no lack of brave and hardy followers. At first the officers and men at the factories were nearly all from the Orkney Islands, and those islands remained until recent times the recruiting source of this service. This was because the Orkney men were inured to a rigorous climate, and to a diet largely composed of fish. They were subject to less of a change in the company's service than must have been endured by men from almost any part of England.

The attitude of the company toward discovery suggests a Dogberry at its head, bidding his servants to "comprehend" the North-West passage, but, should they fail, to thank God they were rid of a villain. In truth, they were traders pure and simple, and were making great profits with little trouble and expense.

They brought from England about £4,000 worth of powder, shot, fire-steels, flints, gun-worms, powder-horns, pistols, hatchets, sword-blades,