

NOTE.

It is possible that a Note on the country portrayed in these stories may be in keeping. Until 1870, the Hudson's Bay Company—first granted its charter by King Charles II.—practically ruled that vast region stretching from the fiftieth parallel of latitude to the Arctic Ocean ;—a handful of adventurous men entrenched in Forts and Posts, yet trading with, and mostly peacefully conquering, many savage tribes. Once the sole master of the North, the H. B. C. (as it is familiarly called) is revered by the Indians and half-breeds as much as, if not more than, the Government established at Ottawa. It has had its Forts within the Arctic Circle ; it has successfully exploited a country larger than the United States. The Red River Valley, the Saskatchewan Valley, and British Columbia, are now belted by a great railway, and given to the plough ; but in the far north, life is much the same as it was a hundred years ago. There the trapper, clerk, trader, and factor, are cast in the mold of another century, though possessing the acuter energies of this. The