



PRINCE OF WALES SOUND.

drama of war of which Hudson's Bay formed the theater was the capture of Fort Prince of Wales, in 1782, by the famous French admiral, La Pérouse. This splendid structure, which took twenty-five years to build, was intended to guard the entrance to Churchill Harbor. It was about four hundred feet square, with masonry walls six feet thick and twenty feet high, and the black muzzles of forty-two cannon thrust themselves threateningly through its entrance. Yet, when La Pérouse appeared before it in a seventy-four, accompanied by two frigates, and summoned it to yield, Governor Hearne, evidently deeming discretion the better part of valor, lowered the British flag, that had been floating proudly in the breeze, and replaced it with a table-cloth in token of complete surrender. The conqueror spiked the cannon, partially destroyed the walls, and sailed away with the garrison as prisoners of war. The damage done by him was never repaired, and the old fort stands to-day, probably the most imposing ruin of the kind on the continent, with the guns that were never fired still rusting upon the ramparts, and cannon-balls, balked of their mission, strewing the interior.

One would naturally expect that, so soon as they had obtained a firm foothold on the shore of Hudson's Bay, the

officials of the company would seek to penetrate into the vast region stretching out indefinitely to the west and south, from which the Indians, with whom they dealt, drew their supplies of precious peltries. But such was not the case; on the contrary, they were very slow to venture away from the sight of the sea, although the managers in England were most anxious for them to push inland, offering special rewards to those who should take part in such expeditions, and pensions to the widows of all whose lives might pay forfeit for their enterprise. The men themselves were not so much to blame for this inaction as the organization of the company. It was, as Father Drummond shrewdly indicates, too wooden, too much on the London counting-house plan. There was no spontaneity, no adjusting of means to an altered environment, nothing of what Parkman calls "that pliant and plastic temper which, in the French, forms so marked a contrast to the stubborn spirit of the Englishman." With a view to isolating their officials, the company forbade them entering an Indian lodge. At least one man was flogged for lighting his pipe at an Indian's tent. The factors feared the interior as a land of unknown danger. Terrible stories were circulated, to keep up a dread of the Indians and the French. Minute instruc-