

and lumbering were almost brought to a standstill. It was even a more serious consideration that the settlements around the cities were left exposed to the attacks of the Indians. The Government was driven to severe measures, yet arbitrary legislation only made matters worse. Moreover, other causes were simultaneously at work. The Catholic Church has generally been supposed to encourage gaiety and innocent dissipation. But it is a curious fact that at that time the rule of the priests in Quebec and Montreal was almost as austere as that of the Puritans in Boston and Philadelphia. Chiefly, and not without very good reason, the Church set its face against the drinking habits, which were universal among men suffering habitually from cold and hardships. Licence was only tolerated, and involuntarily tolerated, in Montreal at the great annual fur fair, when all the townsfolk with their savage guests had been in the habit of getting drunk from time immemorial. But neither the trappers when they came home to squander their gains in holiday-making, nor the loafers of the cities to whom they willingly stood treat, could suffer these intolerable restrictions. Consequently, and in spite of edicts and penalties, there was a general stampede of the male population to the woods. It was then, as we are inclined to believe, that for the first time the French trappers, hunters, and canoe-men got the name of *coureurs de bois*, which they retained ever after when in the service of the companies. In fact, the woods and the back-waters began to swarm with bands of lawless vagabonds who were literally bushrangers, and who dare not show their faces in the settlements under pain of arrest and punishment. Outlawed and desperate,

they infested the precincts of the frontier posts, uniting the worst vices of civilisation to the savagery of their Indian allies. So it was that French Canada had been rather embarrassed than helped by her best manhood when Montcalm succumbed to Wolfe, and England effected the conquest. Then began the embittered rivalry of two great fur companies, when free-fighting went on far beyond reach of the law, and crimes could be perpetrated with practical impunity.

When the settlers of La France Nouvelle were developing their fur trade under official encouragement, the Hudson Bay Company had been established. Charles II. had granted a charter to his cousin Prince Rupert, giving away a vast territory which was not his to bestow. In 1670, when the Company was founded, Charles had no legal rights in America. By the treaty of St Germain-en-Laye in 1632 the English had conceded to the French all their claims on New France. So late as 1697, by the treaty of Ryswick, the cession of these claims was confirmed. It is true that "spheres of influence" beyond the Atlantic were little respected in those days, for France herself had encroached on the rights of Spain, though solemnly sanctioned by papal bull. Virtually, nevertheless, the Hudson adventurers were trespassers. Yet for a time the Government of the Canadas did not move in the matter. With limitless territories of their own to *exploiter*, with a European population of scarcely 60,000 souls, it could hardly have seemed worth while. The cold of the Canadian winter is intense, but it is little to that on the inhospitable shores of Hudson Bay, enveloped in fogs and darkness for three-fourths of the year. The very name was of sinister omen, for Hudson had