

without yielding to the most formidable temptation which assails a man in such circumstances—the temptation of alcoholic liquor.

In his struggling youth as in his prosperous age, he was abstemious to a degree. This part of his life was lived with factors and trappers, Indians and Eskimos. Cut off from the world, with a mail only twice a year, Donald Smith utilized his solitary leisure for self-culture. He studied books, and he also closely studied men and nature, with results seen in after years, when he was not only able to handle intricate social and political questions, but also to force to a conclusion the execution of a great railway project, whose geographical and financial difficulties appalled other men.

Donald Smith had an abundant endowment of grit. Stories are told of his marvellous fortitude in those early days. Once his sight was endangered by snow blindness, and to see a doctor meant travelling hundreds of miles. Two half-breeds accompanied him as guides. Young Smith reached the doctor, and was cured; the guides succumbed to the hardships of the return journey. Another story tells of the wonderful way in which he carried relief to a distant outpost, travelling on snow-shoes. If Lord Strathcona could have been induced to write his autobiography, he might have told an absorbing tale of those years in Labrador, but he preserved a singular reticence. No even in conversation did he allow himself to be tempted to say much.

Ten years were spent by Donald Smith on the shores of Hudson's Bay, and he rose steadily in the estimation of his employers. His industry, ingenuity, and adaptability were found invaluable. So far were they recognized that in 1868, when he had reached his forty-eighth year, he was appointed chief executive officer of the company in North America, being stationed at Montreal. By this time his personal influence was very great. The period was one of exceptional difficulty and anxiety, and Donald Smith was the man for it. By a great transfer of territory to the Government of Canada, the Hud-