

the different parts of Canada then occupied. It is by no mere chance that the beaver finds its place on our Canadian escutcheon. Cartier, almost exactly three centuries and a half ago, came with his commission authorizing him to open up this trade with the natives. Captain Chauvin, in 1600, built his trading house at Tadousac to cultivate the fur trade. Champlain returned on his first voyage home in a ship laden down with furs; and the Huguenot, de Monts, hastening, under the protection of the monopoly granted him, to take the virgin catch of Nova Scotia, found, in the first harbour which he entered on the Acadian shore, that he was forestalled by a fur-trading vessel, whose cargo of furs, however, he promptly seized for his own advantage. Within fifty years from the time of Champlain's arrival in Canada the shores of straits and bays by scores, to the extremities of the great lakes, were occupied by the posts of the fur-trader. Michillimackinac, Sault Ste. Marie and Nipigon, on Lake Superior, were already centres of trade. It was about the end of that century that Lahontan wrote his amusing and extravagant account of the castor. Indeed, to such an extent had the trade grown that in 1700, in Montreal, three-fourths of the furs were burnt to obtain a market for those that remained. The *raison d'être* of the settlement of New France was the fur trade.

While France, with all the force and glory of her more prosperous days, was pushing her explorations and trade to the far West, England sought a share of the treasures of the wilderness, and in 1670 laid within Hudson Strait the foundation of her great fur company. Free-handed Charles II gave over with lavish thoughtlessness a vast extent of country to the fur-traders represented by the brave Prince Rupert, General Monk, the king-maker, and the versatile Lord Ashley. The fur trade was the sole department of trade of the Hudson's Bay Company for a hundred years. On the borders of the Bay, shut up in their forts, the company treated with wandering tribes coming 600 and 800 miles from the interior, justifying, in the keenness of their trade, their motto, "*Pro pelle cutem.*" There is a picturesque interest in these Argonauts of this century of Hudson Bay adventure, as they returned with the Golden Fleece and engaged in the somewhat unromantic, but nevertheless consoling, work of paying large dividends to the shareholders. It is true that their retreat was invaded by the dashing sailor, d'Iberville, and their forts were taken to be restored by the Treaty of Ryswick; but this was only an episode in a hundred years of successful trade.

One hundred years of the company's life had not passed before the covetous eyes of rival traders fell upon their operations. It was stated that the company was avaricious, tyrannical, selfish, and revengeful; and repeated efforts at length obtained a parliamentary investigation in 1749. The company defended itself with vigor, and its antagonists, though not silenced, were overborne.

Another movement in the opening up of the interior by way of Canada took place at the same time as this fierce onslaught on the Hudson's Bay Company, though entirely independent of it. The French explorers had reached the limits of Lake Superior, and heard from Indian sources of vast regions beyond. In the stockade of Michillimackinac was laid the plan for exploring the districts further west. Verandrye, a French officer, who had distinguished himself at Malplaquet, with the advice of a Jesuit priest named Father Gonor, undertook the task. In 1731 Verandrye left the shores of Lake Superior; he and his sons were the first to thread the Red, Assiniboine, and Souris rivers, to cross by a portage to the Missouri, and after ascending it to reach the Rocky Mountains. The same