

lates some amusing stories of the ruses resorted to by the rivals.

On one occasion, the Hudson's Bay scouts reported the approach of a band of Indians returning from a hunting expedition. No sooner was this heard than a grand ball was given to the Nor-Westers. Great preparations were made for it, and a royal time was had. But while the revelers were tripping the light fantastic toe to the music of Scotch reels and strathspeys, a score of earnest men were busily at work in a secluded spot, packing sledges with goods and preparing for a journey. Soon they start off silently, no tinkling of bells, no cracking of whips, no shouts to the dogs, as they disappear into the darkness, while the ball goes merrily on. The following day the Nor-West scouts report the same party of Indians, and as quickly as possible a set of sleighs depart from *their* fort with loudly ringing bells. After a long march of forty miles they reach the encampment, only to find all the Indians gloriously drunk, and not a single skin, not even the tail of a musquash, to repay them for their trouble. Then it was that they perceived the true inwardness of the ball, and vowed to have their revenge.

Opportunity was not long wanting. Soon after this, one of their parties encountered a Hudson's Bay train on its way to trade with the same Indians of whom they were in search. They exchanged compliments with each other, and as the day was very cold, proposed lighting a fire, and having something to drink together. A huge fire was soon roaring in their midst, the canteens were produced, and they each tried who could tell the biggest yarns while the good liquor mounted to their brains. The Nor-Westers, after a little time, spilled their grog on the snow, unperceived by the others, so that they kept fairly sober, although their rivals were becoming very much elevated. At last they began boasting of their superior prowess in drinking, and in proof thereof each of them swallowed a big bumper. The Hudson Bays, not to be outdone, followed their example, and almost instantly fell over upon the snow helplessly drunk. In ten minutes more they were tied firmly upon their sledges, and the dogs being turned homewards, away they went straight for the Hudson's

Bay fort, where in due time they safely arrived with the men still sound asleep, while the Nor-Westers made haste for the Indian camp, and this time had the furs all to themselves.

But such convivial and friendly devices to outwit each other soon gave way to more reprehensible proceedings. As the competition grew keener the temper of the rivals waxed hotter, and, ere long, forts were attacked, taken, and burnt, the officials and their adherents imprisoned and harshly treated, the furs, on their way to the rendezvous, intercepted, and appropriated by main strength, if necessary, and the whole trade turned into a furious conflict. The Governor-General of Canada sent out warrants and proclamations, in vain. These were alike treated with sovereign contempt in that distant land, where "the king's writ runneth not;" for both sides well knew that he had no means of putting his high-sounding words into action. So matters went from bad to worse until, in the year 1816, they reached a climax in a battle royal, which took place before the gates of Fort Garry, the Hudson Bays' principal post in the Red River region, and in which lamentable affair seventeen men and three officers of the company, including Governor Semple, fell, pierced with bullets.

Yet even this dreadful occurrence did not at once abate the conflict. All parley was now at an end, and the password was "war to the knife." Officers and men were engaged by the companies, principally with a view to their fighting qualities, and more interest was taken in a successful encounter than in a profitable barter. Such a state of affairs could not long continue. The whole trade was being ruined, the Indians were becoming demoralized with fire-water, the prices paid for the peltries were out of all proportion to the value. The cooler heads of the concern then saw their opportunity, and negotiations were entered into, which, in 1821, resulted in their giving up conflict for coalition, and being united, with the approval of Parliament, under the name of the older company, some additional privileges being granted at the same time. Soon after the coalition, a shrewd young Scotchman, who had been sent out from London to examine the condition of things, showed such aptitude for business