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### The Hudson's Bay Company.

In the year 1670, at the solicitation of Prince Rupert and the Duke of Albemarle, King Charles II. created by royal charter the "Company of Merchant Adventurers trading to Hudson's Bay." With characteristic lavishness the King granted to this company the sole trade and commerce of the vast and vaguely-defined regions to which access may be had through Hudson's Straits. Forty years before this, Louis XIII. had made a similar grant to the "Company of New France," and, for nearly a hundred years, there was a keen and eager rivalry between these hostile corporations. In order to control the lucrative fur-trade, the Hudson's Bay Company planted forts and factories at the mouths of the Moose, Albany, Nelson, Churchill, and other rivers flowing into Hudson's Bay. Again and again, adventurous bands of Frenchmen, like D'Iberville and his companions, made bloody raids upon these posts, murdering their occupants, burning the stockades, and carrying off the rich stores of peltries.

Growing bolder with success, the French penetrated the vast interior as far as the headwaters of the Mississippi, the Missouri, and the Saskatchewan, and reached the Rocky Mountains long before any other white men had visited these regions. They planted trading-

posts and small palisaded forts at important river junctions and on far-off lonely lakes, and wrote their names all over this great continent, in the designation of cape and lake and stream, and other great features of nature. The *voyageurs* and *coureurs de bois*, to whom this wild, adventurous life was full of fascination, roamed through the forests and navigated the countless arrowy streams; and Montreal and Quebec snatched much of the spoil of this profitable trade from the hands of the English company. Every little far-off trading-post and stockaded fort felt the reverberations of the English guns which won the victory of the Plains of Abraham, whereby the sovereignty of those vast regions passed away forever from the possession of France.

After the conquest, numerous independent fur-traders engaged in this profitable traffic. In 1783, these formed a junction of interests and organized the North-West Company. For forty years this was one of the strongest combinations in Canada. Its energetic agents explored the vast North-West regions. Sir Alexander Mackenzie, in 1789, traced the great river which bears his name, and first reached the North Pacific across the Rocky Mountains. In 1808, Simon Frazer descended the gold-bearing stream which perpetuates his memory; and, shortly after, Thompson explored and named another branch of the same great river.

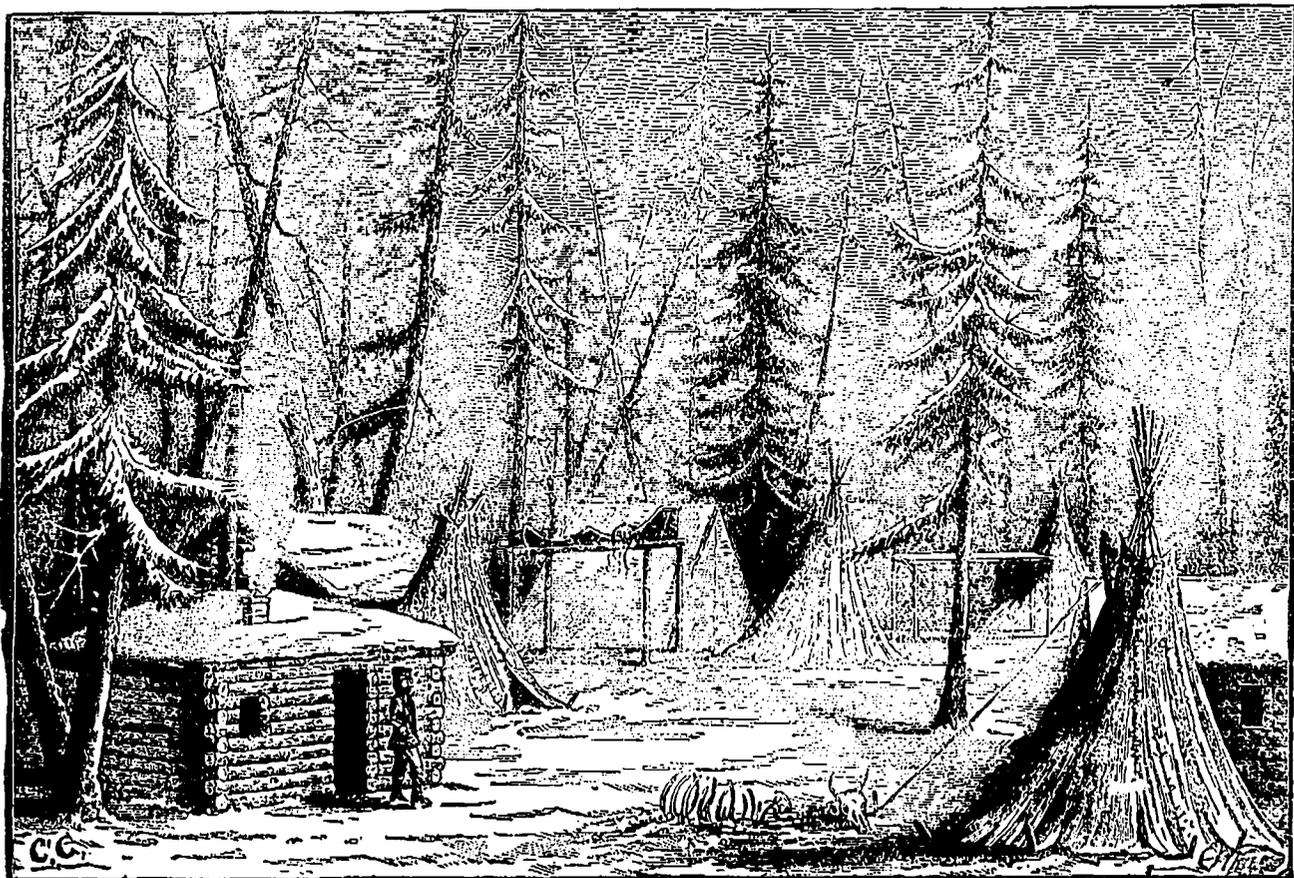
Keen was the rivalry with the old Hudson's

Bay Company, and long and bitter was the feud between the two great corporations, each of which coveted a broad continent as a hunting-ground and preserve for game.

In the early years of the present century, the feud between the rival companies was at its height. With the skill of an experienced general Thomas Douglas, Earl of Selkirk, then Governor of the Hudson's Bay Company, resolved to establish a colony of his countrymen at the junction of the Red River with the Assiniboine, the key of the mid-continent.

In the year 1812, the first brigade of colonists reached Red River, by way of Hudson's Bay. A stern welcome awaited them. Hardly had they arrived at the site of the proposed settlement, when an armed band of Nor' Westers, plumed and painted in Indian fashion appeared, and commanded the colonists to depart. They were compelled to submit, and took refuge at the Hudson's Bay Post at Pembina, Undaunted by this failure they returned in the spring, built log-houses and planted their wheat. Again they were driven away and their homes burnt. With dogged perseverance they returned, and after eight years of failures, the first harvest was reaped. The colony now struck its roots deep into the soil, and flourished year by year, and by 1868 had increased to a population of about 12,000.

After forty years of rivalry, in 1821, the Hudson's Bay and North-West Companies com-



BLOCK HOUSE AND INDIAN TEEpees, HUDSON'S BAY.