

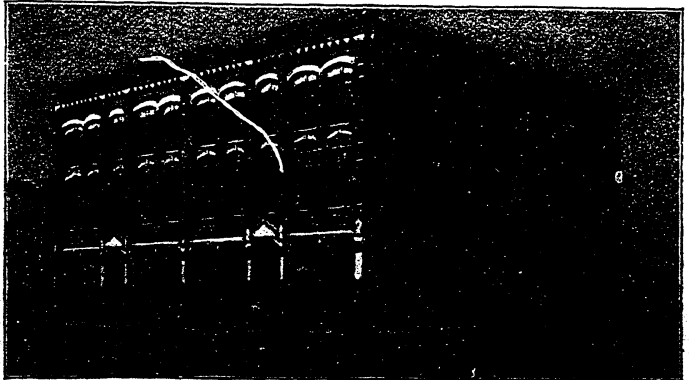
heavy cargoes in summer, and otherwise making themselves generally useful.

Life at a Hudson's Bay post nowadays is at best a rather dull and humdrum affair. The Indians are entirely under control, and no more a source of danger than the negroes in the South; and time is apt to hang heavily upon the hands of the garrison, which may consist of from two to half a hundred men—according to whether the post is a central depot of supplies, a permanent fort, or merely an isolated stockade for the accumulation of provisions and peltries for the use of larger forts. But whatever may be the character of the establishment, a certain amount of discipline is carefully maintained, and an observer could hardly fail to be struck with the prompt obedience shown to some mere stripling of a clerk by the grizzled, weather-beaten voyageurs and laborers under his control.

The day begins with breakfast, which is usually at six o'clock in winter, and an hour earlier in summer, although the higher officials may prolong their morning nap a little, if they feel inclined. There is an officers' mess and a servants' mess, the latter drawing rations at regular intervals, and having them cooked by one of their number set apart for the purpose. The officers by no means regard lightly the pleasures of the table, and great care is taken to keep the larder well stocked. Their fare is, of course, confined largely to such wild game and fish as the country round about affords, but the supply is abundant, and the variety extensive. Buffalo hump—now, alas, little more than a tender, juicy memory—moose-muffie—tremulous and opaque as a vegetable conserve—beaver tail, unctuous and satisfying, venison haunch and savory duck, crimson salmon and snowy whitefish—one does not soon tire of such viands as these, especially when they are prepared by French cooks. The hours of business at the forts dur-

ing the summer season are from nine to six, with a break at noonday for dinner; and if the post be an important one, there is plenty of animation and bustle, but no undue haste, a careful attention to details being never forgotten. The Indians, in bands upon horseback, or singly upon foot, present themselves with furs to trade. The voyageurs are hard at work loading with bales of costly furs the boats lying in the river, or unloading them of the goods they have brought. Brigades of boats destined for more distant points pause for a few days or hours to exchange the news, and take a little breathing-spell; while now and then the arrival of the district inspector, or some other important official, with his train of servants, creates a sensation that only subsides with his departure for another station.

All summer long a Hudson's Bay officer's lot is rather a happy one, which many a cribbed, cabined, and confined city dweller might envy; for in the intervals of work there are hunting, fishing, boating, swimming, and other athletic pursuits to be enjoyed in the finest climate in the world. It is when the long winter comes, and the whole world around is buried beneath a fall of snow from three to thirty feet deep, that the utmost ingenuity is needed to drive dull *ennui* away. The cold is intense yet not unbearable, owing to the dryness of the atmosphere. Not a step can be taken except on snow-shoes. A silence as of death has fallen upon nature; not a bird sings in the leafless trees, not a creature stirs within the range of vision; "the waters are hid as with a stone, and the face of the deep is frozen;" and the warm, cozy mess-room of the fort possesses



WAREHOUSE OF HUDSON'S BAY TRADING COMPANY.