

£3), the value of the skins paid representing £40; still he can, if he chooses, buy the same article by paying for it in muskrat, yellow fox, or other furs of inferior worth. The Company very generally issue to the Indians such goods as they need up to a certain amount, when the summer supplies arrive at the posts—these advances to be paid for at the conclusion of the hunting season. In hiring Indians east of the Cascade Mountains, while occupied in marking the boundary line, our agreement was always to pay them in beaver skins, say, two or three per day, in accordance with the duty required; but this agreement did not mean actual payment in real skins—a matter that to us would have been impossible—but that we were to give the Indian an order on the nearest trading post of the Hudson's Bay Company, to supply him with any goods he might select up to the value of the beaver skins specified on the order.

The trading posts of the Company are strange, quaint-looking places, built according to a general type. A trading fort is invariably a square inclosed by immense trees or pickets, one end sunk deeply in the ground, and placed close together; a platform, about the height of an ordinary man, is carried along the sides of the square, so as to enable any one to peep over without being in danger from arrow or bullet; the entrance is closed by two massive gates, an inner and an outer; and all the houses of the chief traders and employes, the trading house, fur room, and stores, are within the square. In many of the posts the trade room is cleverly contrived, so as to prevent a sudden rush of Indians; the approach from outside the pickets being through a long narrow passage, only of sufficient width to admit one Indian at a time, and bent at an acute angle near the window, where the trader stands. This precaution is rendered necessary, inasmuch as were the passage straight they might easily shoot him. At the four angles are bastions, octagonal in shape, pierced with embrasures, to lead the Indians to believe in the existence of cannon, and intended to strike terror in any red-skinned rebel daring to dispute the supremacy of the Company.

The total worth of the furs that have been collected by this Company alone,

at a rough estimate, represents a money value equal to £20,000,000 sterling. It will be interesting to give a brief history of the various furs traded by the Hudson's Bay and other companies, how and where caught, together with a statement of the average number of each species annually imported from the Company's territories and other fur-yielding countries.

Foremost in the list is the Hudson's Bay Sable (*Mustela Americana*). The pine martin, or sable of Northwest America, is not esteemed so valuable as the sable from Russia, known to naturalists as *Mustela Zibillina*; but there is no doubt that the two species are in reality one and the same, the difference of temperature, and other local modifying causes, readily accounting for the better quality of the Russian fur. About one hundred and twenty thousand skins are brought on an average into this country every year by the Hudson's Bay Company, and to these we may add quite as many, if not more, from Russia and Tartary. The lighter-colored skins are usually dyed, and frequently sold as Russian sable. Martin trapping requires great skill and experience. The favorite haunts of the little robber are the pine forests, especially where dead or burnt timber abounds. Its food consists of anything it can catch by craft or cunning, young birds and eggs, squirrels, the lesser rodents, marmots, and rabbits. The trap most frequently used is a fall trap (although sometimes steel traps are employed; in other words, the ordinary rat gin). The fall trap is of Indian invention, and a very ingenious contrivance. A half circle is first built of large stones to the height of about three feet; then a heavy tree is laid across the entrance, one end being raised and supported on a contrivance very like the figure-of-four trap, used by boys for catching small birds; a dainty bit of rabbit, or a ruffed grouse skinned, is hung on a projecting stick, built into the back of the semicircle of stones. The little poacher can only get at the bait by creeping under the tree; then seizing it, and finding himself unable to pull it down, he backs out, tugging the string to which the bait is attached along the stick, on which rests the figure of four, supporting the tree. Just as the centre