

LORD STRATHCONA

must have shattered his romantic visions. Ambition? Wealth? What chance of these in this God-forsaken and man-forsaken spot? It seemed as though he were buried alive—cut off from every chance and prospect of success, doomed, after a life of toil and obscurity, to end his days in this appalling wilderness. So he may have thought, but there is no record of such reflection. It was a hard school into which he was put, but not a bad one. It developed in him those qualities which afterwards stood him in such good stead — self-command, initiative, decision and courage. We may be certain that often in those years he was thrown upon his own resources; had to guard against danger; had to be mentally alert; had to adapt himself to different situations. No better training for his later years could be provided than the experiences of Labrador and Hudson's Bay.

As to how he occupied himself during this long period, we may venture to guess. There were the routine duties of the post. There was trading with the Indians and trappers—giving in exchange for their furs, the goods they had shipped from Europe. There was hunting and fishing, and long tramps on snow-shoes, driving the dog trains. Occasionally the monotony was broken by the arrival of the mail, bringing letters and papers from home. We must remember that the mail came at long intervals. This was an event to which they looked with anticipation and which occurred not more than twice a year. The post