

above its mouth, on the marshy peninsula which separates the Hayes and Nelson rivers. The surrounding country is flat and swampy, and covered with willows, poplars, larch, spruce, and birch trees, but the requisition for fuel has expended all the wood in the vicinity of the fort, and the residents have now to send a considerable distance for this necessary material. The soil is alluvial clay and contains imbedded rolled stones. Though the bank of the river is elevated about twenty feet, it is frequently overflowed by the spring floods, and large portions of it are annually carried away by the disruption of the ice; by these portions grounding in the stream, several muddy islands have been formed. These interruptions, together with the various collections of stones that are hid at high water, render the navigation of the river difficult; but vessels of two hundred tons burthen may be brought through the proper channels as high as the Factory.

The principal buildings are placed in the form of a square, having an octagonal court in the centre; they are two stories in height, and have flat roofs covered with lead. The officers dwell in one portion of this square, and in the other parts the articles of merchandize are kept: the workshops, storehouses for the furs, and the servants' houses, are ranged on the outside of the square, and the whole is surrounded by a stockade twenty feet high. A platform is laid from the house to the pier on the bank for the convenience of transporting the stones and furs, which is the only promenade the residents have on this marshy spot during the summer season. The few Indians, who now frequent this establishment, belong to the *Swampy Crees*. There were several of them encamped on the outside of the stockade. Their tents were rudely constructed by tying twenty or thirty poles together at the top, and spreading them out at the base so as to form a cone; these were covered with dressed moose-skins. The fire is placed in the centre, and a hole is left for the escape of the smoke. The inmates had a squalid look, and were suffering under the combined afflictions of hooping-cough and measles; but even these miseries did not keep them from an excessive indulgence in the use of spirits, which they unhappily can procure