

and a number of traders and Indians slain in the struggle. These lamentable events were but the beginning of sorrows. Thenceforth, matters went from bad to worse, until at length the business be-

powerful and well-intrenched was the company that only an organization of corresponding magnitude and resources could hope to successfully cope with it. From this necessity sprang, in the year



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came utterly disorganized, and the traders bankrupt in purse and morals alike.

In the mean time the company had not been slow in defending its interests. It was not according to human nature that its sturdy Scotchmen should remain indifferent spectators of unscrupulous endeavors to cut the ground from under their feet. They had already shown their ability to protect their interests by more than one device. By fomenting divisions and animosities among the Indian tribes in the interior they had made it difficult and dangerous for any one but themselves to trade with them. They had even gone so far upon one occasion as to seize and drive ashore two ships that had ventured into Hudson's Bay on a trading expedition, pleading in extenuation that the vessels were lost through stress of weather. And now they bent all their energies to the task of opposing, hindering, and ruining the petty rivals who had the presumption to encroach upon their domain. The latter soon realized the necessity of combination if they would not be driven out. So

1783, the famous Northwest Fur Company of Montreal, which, beginning with a mere partnership of the principal merchants engaged in the fur trade, developed with astonishing growth until it positively overshadowed its elder rival. The method of the Hudson's Bay Company was to pay its employes simply by salary, but the new company introduced a better system—every officer had before him the immense inducement of a probable partnership, for thus were the faithful and energetic ones by due process of promotion rewarded. This masterly policy kept every man up to the high-water mark of his abilities, and the result was that in a few years from the inception of this enterprise the annual profits had reached the splendid figure of forty thousand pounds, while ten years later they were three times that amount. The conservative old H. B. Company was astonished at the magnificence of the new-comers, and old traders yet talk of the lordly "Northwester." Washington Irving, who was a guest of the company in the height of its prosper-