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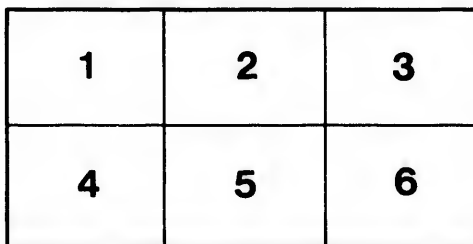
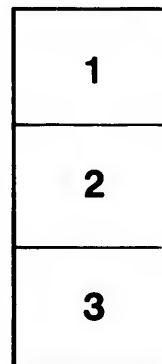
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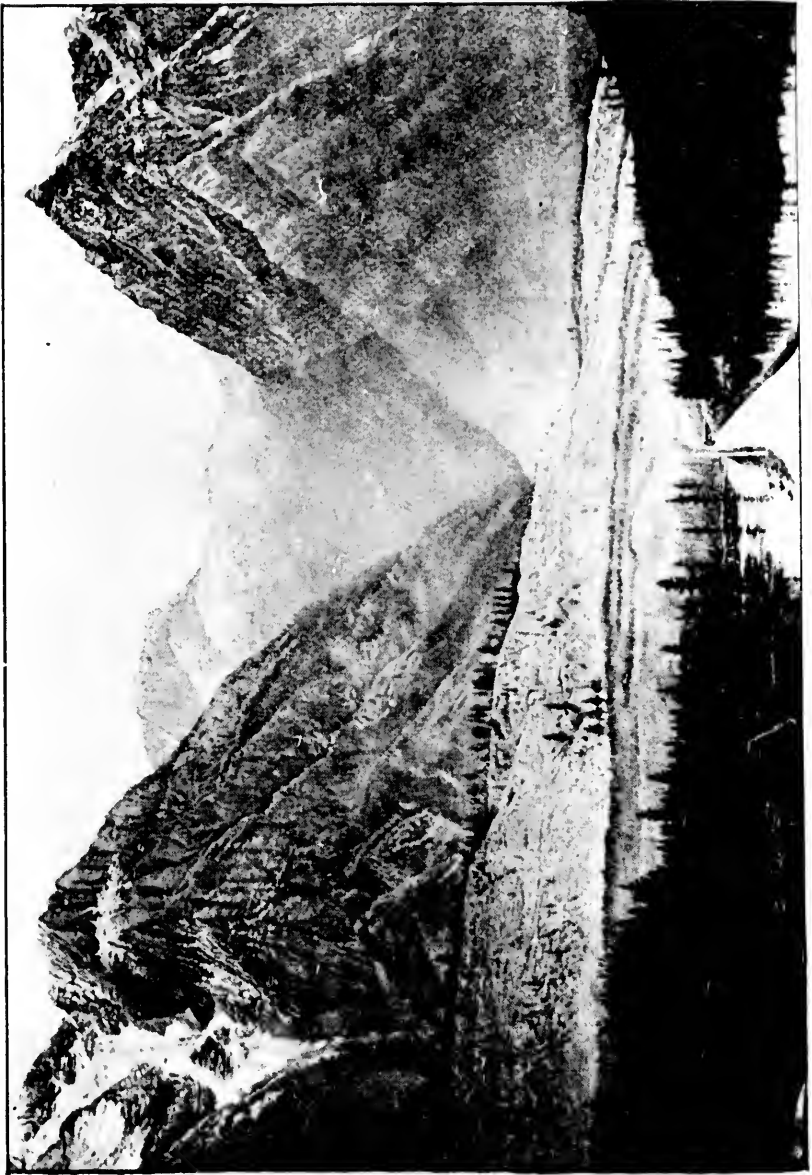
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THE
ROMANCE OF COMMERCE

BY

J. MACDONALD OXLEY, LL.B., B.A.

AUTHOR OF

'ARCHIE MACKENZIE;' 'BERT LLOYD'S BOYHOOD;' 'DIAMOND ROCK;'
'FERGUS M'TAVISH;' ETC.

W. & R. CHAMBERS, LIMITED
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1896

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P R E F A C E.

THERE has been a romance of commerce no less than a romance of war. Men have shown an equal enterprise and daring in the pursuit of wealth as in extending the bounds of empire, and gold has run close rivalry with glory in adding brilliant pages to the world's history.

It has been the aim of the author to make some attempt towards recalling the more interesting of these pages for the benefit of the young people to whom this little volume is especially addressed, but before beginning his recital he wishes to make due acknowledgment to Messrs Harper & Bros., and the publisher of the *Cosmopolitan* magazine of New York, for the privilege of reprinting those of the following chapters which first appeared in their periodicals.

J. M. O.

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THE ROMANCE OF COMMERCE.

CHAPTER I.

THE HUDSON BAY TRADING COMPANY.

UNQUESTIONABLY, the most striking chapters in the romance of commerce relate to two remarkable corporations, which, though having much in common in their constitution and powers, were singularly dissimilar in the nature of their domain and character of their product. They both had their birth in England in the seventeenth century. They both were nominally mere trading associations, having nothing more ambitious in view than the securing of large dividends for their shareholders, but in reality held almost imperial sway over unaccounted leagues of territory. They were both

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the subject of fierce attacks that at times put their very existence in jeopardy, and in the end they had both to succumb to the resistless march of civilisation, which in these latter days, when the ends of the earth are drawing nearer together, could not tolerate the idea of commercial corporations keeping to themselves vast landed possessions fit to be the homes of nations.

So much had these two mighty corporations alike; but while the one bargained, intrigued, fought, and waxed opulent under the burning rays of an Oriental sun, the other pursued a quieter though hardly less prosperous career amidst the snowy wilderness of the Canadian North-west. It is the story of the latter with which I shall begin my narrative.

It was in the merry days of the Restoration when the second Charles might well be lavish toward those who had faithfully served his father 'of sacred memory,' that to a hero of many battles retired upon his laurels to spend a well-earned furlough in fascinating if not particularly fruitful chemical experiments, appeared one Des Groseliers, an enterprising Frenchman who had travelled much in North America, and made acquaintance with the Indian tribes inhabiting the southern part of the

Hudson Bay region. Monsieur Des Groseliers' story was calculated to fire the heart of a less adventurous being than Prince Rupert, whose attention had, indeed, been already drawn to that *terra incognita*, by reading in Marco Polo how the renowned Venetian traveller found in the tent of the Grand Khan of Tartary furs and sables brought from the North, the land of darkness, and had thereby stirred within him the thought of what a splendid scheme it would be to put forth an organised effort to tap this treasury of precious peltries. The Frenchman found an interested listener; and the sequel was that after an experimental trip had been made in 1668, with encouraging results, a joint-stock company of noblemen and gentry, with 'our dear and entirely beloved cousin, Prince Rupert, Count Palatine of the Rhine,' as its leading spirit, was formed under the imposing title of 'The Honourable Governor and Company of Merchant Adventurers Trading into Hudson Bay,' and having for its motto the words *Pro pelle cutem*. This corporation in the year 1670 obtained from the free-handed king a charter investing it with the monopoly of the furs and lands of all the borders of all the streams flowing into Hudson Bay, not occupied by the subject

of any Christian prince; and furthermore, the privilege to make war and peace with the people not subjects of any Christian prince. The nominal consideration for this royal bounty was the annual payment of two elks and two black beavers, which, however, were only to be exacted when the sovereign should happen to be within the territories granted. It is immensely to the credit of the Hudson Bay Company that these practically unlimited powers were from the first wielded with marked moderation, humanity, and equity; so that, without in anywise intending it, the corporation undoubtedly became a factor of inestimable value in the subsequent peaceable occupation of the North-west by the white settlers.

The first post established by the company was Moose Factory, at the mouth of the river running into the extreme south of James Bay: Forts Albany, York, and Churchill, commanding the whole western shore of Hudson Bay, followed in due time, and each succeeding year found the company waxing more prosperous and powerful. They were not, however, to have it all their own way, remote as the field of their operations might seem to be from centres of human interest. The value of the Hudson Bay territories was by no

means unknown to the French, who were then masters of Canada; and long before Prince Rupert acted as the promoter of the English company, a charter had been conferred by Louis XIII. upon a number of his subjects, containing terms almost identical with those granted by his 'dear cousin' Charles. Thus was the Company of New France founded on the 27th of April 1627.

Nor were the pretensions of the French without foundation. Fourteen years before the date of the Hudson Bay Company's charter, Jean Bourdon, some time chief engineer and Procureur of New France, claimed to have penetrated overland as far as the shore of the bay, and to have taken possession of the neighbouring territories in the name of Louis XIV.; and six years later the Des Groseliers already mentioned did, without doubt, reach the bay by sea, and establish a trading-post there; while the following year Depres Couture, who is to be relied upon, made his way overland to the bay, and buried, at the foot of a big tree, a French flag, a sword, and a plate of copper having engraved upon it the arms of the French king, in token of the occupation of the country in his majesty's name. If these interesting relics could only be discovered now, how precious they would

be! Under these circumstances the French could hardly be blamed for contesting the occupation of the country by the English company, and in 1680 the renowned Sieur d'Iberville, supported by two of his hardly less famous brothers, headed a hostile expedition into the bay, which captured three out of the five forts established by the company, and several of its vessels into the bargain.

This was the beginning of a warfare which was waged intermittently between the two powers with varying success for more than a century, and seriously interfered with the operations of the company, whose forts were occupied, trade interrupted, and energies weakened from time to time. Nevertheless, although the records show that between 1682 and 1688 its losses amounted to one hundred and twenty thousand pounds, so enormous were the profits upon its operations that its annual dividends averaged from twenty-five to fifty per cent.; and the stock soon became the most 'gilt-edged' investment of the day, the shares being practically never in the market, but jealously retained as heirlooms, and handed down from father to son, after the fashion of entailed estates.

The last and most notable act in the drama of war of which Hudson Bay formed the theatre was

French could the capture of Fort Prince of Wales, in 1782, by
occupation of the famous French admiral, La Perouse. This
and in 1686 splendid structure, which took twenty-five years
ed by two of to build, was intended to guard the entrance to
led a hostile Churchill Harbour. It was about four hundred
ed three out feet square, with masonry walls six feet thick
company, and and twenty feet high, and the black muzzles of
re which was forty-two cannon thrust themselves threateningly
powers with it in a seventy-four, accompanied by two frigates,
century, and and summoned it to yield, Governor Hearne,
ions of the evidently deeming discretion the better part of
trade inter- valour, lowered the British flag that had been
ime to time. floating proudly in the breeze, and replaced it
show that with a table-cloth in token of complete surrender.
unted to one The conqueror spiked the cannon, partially destroyed
so enormous the walls, and sailed away with the garrison as
at its annual prisoners of war. The damage done by him was
to fifty per never repaired, and the old fort stands to-day,
most 'gilt- probably the most imposing ruin of the kind on the
shares being continent, with the guns that were never fired
ut jealously still rusting upon the ramparts, and cannon-
down from balls, balked of their mission, strewing the
ed estates. interior.

One would naturally expect that, so soon as
they had obtained a firm foothold on the shore

of Hudson Bay, the officials of the company would seek to penetrate into the vast regions stretching out indefinitely to the west and south from which the Indians, with whom they dealt, drew their supplies of precious peltries. But such was not the case; on the contrary, they were very slow to venture away from the sight of the sea, although the managers in England were most anxious for them to push inland, offering special rewards to those who should take part in such expeditions, and pensions to the widows of all whose lives might pay forfeit for their enterprises. The men themselves were not so much to blame for this inaction as the organisation of the company. It was, as Father Drummond shrewdly indicates, too wooden, too much on the London counting-house plan. There was no spontaneity, no adjusting of means to an altered environment, nothing of what Parkman calls 'that pliant and plastic temper which, in the French, forms so marked a contrast to the stubborn spirit of the Englishman.' With a view to isolating their officials, the company forbade them to enter an Indian lodge. At least one man was flogged for lighting his pipe at an Indian's tent. The factors feared the interior as a land of unknown danger. Terrible stories were

circulated, to keep up a dread of the Indians and the French. Minute instructions were given to the men to protect themselves, especially in the winter. Scouts were to reconnoitre every day, and did they not return by nightfall, everything was to be got ready for a siege. At all times the cannon were to be in order, and all obstructions that might impede the view from the fort were to be cleared away.

Hampered by these restrictions, which were as unnecessary as they were burdensome, the officials naturally enough preferred the comfortable if commonplace life at the forts, to the discomforts, difficulties, and dangers inseparable from expeditions into the interior. Thus it came about that more than a century elapsed before they first made their way into the Red River region, which subsequently became the centre of their operations. But in the meantime the French Canadians were showing a far different spirit. Knowing nothing about the exclusive privileges of the company, or caring less if they did happen to be informed, their *coureurs du bois*, following in the track of La Verandrye, year by year in increasing numbers set out from Montreal, ascended the Ottawa, made their way by portage, lake, and stream to Lake Nipissing;

thence into the greater Lake Huron, across that inland ocean, Lake Superior, to its farthest shore. Then the Kaministiquia was entered, and the voyage continued through Lac la Pluie (Rainy Lake) and river, over Lac du Bois (Lake of the Woods), and down the River Ouinipique (Winnipeg) into the lake of the same name, thus reaching the borders of the fertile prairies, where the buffalo took the place of the deer, and which rolled away in billows of verdure, until they broke at the base of the Rocky Mountains, where the terrible grizzly met the trappers with fearless front.

These *coureurs du bois* were perfectly adapted for their business. They always maintained the best of terms with the Indians. They treated them as their equals. 'With that light-hearted bravery and cheerful fortitude so common among the descendants of the French,' writes one of their eulogists, 'they sought out the savage in his wigwam. They often spent the whole winter with him, bearing with all his rudeness and caprices, and winning their way to his heart before they asked for his furs. Quick to learn the Indian languages and the tricks of Indian life, fertile in expedients, they were loyal and warm-hearted to the core. They were not mere

calculating-machines or animated money-bags. Instead of waiting for the savage, they met him on his own ground, and began by making him presents of trinkets and tobacco; and not until they had him in good-humor did they broach the question of trade.'

Naturally enough, the Indian very much preferred dealing with these fascinating fellows, who came right to his wigwam, to travelling away up to the Hudson Bay fort, where he would be stiffly received by an official who spoke to him through a barred window, and whose manner seemed to say: 'Be off with you as soon as you are fleeced;' and the consequence was that the pick of the peltry found its way into the stores of the French, and went by the overland route to Montreal, while only the beaver and otter skins got up to Hudson Bay. It was not long before the managers of the company realised that this state of things must not be permitted to continue, and again and again we find the General Court writing to the factors, and urging upon them the necessity of securing other furs than beaver and otter. In response to these repeated demands, the factors sought to extend the sphere of their operations by establishing

forts farther inland. As year by year they thus made their way to the south and west, it could only be a question of time when they must encounter the ever-increasing stream of expeditions which had their source in Montreal, and the first meeting did take place in the year 1774 at Fort Cumberland, on the Saskatchewan River. 'In that year,' says Professor Bryce, 'the two rival currents of trade, Canadian and English, met in the far north-west, and the struggle between them began, which for well-nigh fifty years went unceasingly on, now in dangerous eddy, then in boiling whirlpool, till at length as one stream they flowed on together in one course.'

The struggle thus referred to forms the most exciting portion of the history of the Hudson Bay Company, and at the same time the portion concerning which, owing to the bewildering variety of contradictory evidence, it is most difficult to arrive at clear and satisfactory conclusions. The company, of course, looked upon the Canadian traders as unauthorised invaders of its territory, for the bulk of the furs they secured were undoubtedly obtained from Indians whose hunting-grounds came within the terms of the company's charter. Not only so, but these intruders were

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ar they thus guilty of intercepting Indians on their way to
 est, it could the forts; and what made the matter worse, the
 ey must en- furs the red man bore were already pledged to
 e expeditions the company for advances made them. Now the
 and the first Hudson Bay officials were not the men to endure
 774 at Fort this sort of thing in silence. For the most part
 er. 'In that they were Scotsmen of the sturdiest type, and
 rival currents the aggressions of the Canadians, Scotch though
 in the far many of them also were, also aroused in them an
 them began, angry spirit which could lead but in one direction.
 unceasingly Sooner or later the matter must resolve itself into
 boiling whirl- a question of force, and in the meantime they were
 y flowed on ready to say with Wordsworth that

. . . the good old rule
 Sufficeth them, the simple plan,
 That they should take who have the power,
 And they should keep who can.

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It would appear that the Canadians disputed
 the right of the company to exercise any monopoly
 in the north-west, and in proportion to the weakness
 of their position were strong in its reiteration. It
 seems equally clear that from the first they did
 not hesitate to resort to violence and intimidation
 in order to gain their ends. But the worst feature
 of all was their introduction of fire-water into
 these territories, which hitherto had known nothing

of humanity's chief curse. Owing to the advantages of its position, the company was able to offer higher prices to the Indians than its rivals could; and, in order the better to obtain and retain control of the poor red man, the Canadians resorted to the importation of spirits, for which he at once manifested the frantic passion that was lying dormant, awaiting the advent of the tempter. It had been from the first a leading principle of the company that no spirits should on any account be sold to the Indians; and it is one of the brightest leaves in their laurels that their officials so long adhered to this in spite of many temptations.

Close upon the introduction of the accursed fire-water into their dealings, the elements of violence and bloodshed, hitherto happily unknown, began to manifest themselves between the red man and his white brother. The most daring and turbulent spirits were now attracted to the Canadian fur trade, and if we follow Professor Bryce, the chief qualities sought in those sent out from Montreal were a love of violence and a thorough hatred of the Hudson Bay Company.

They were not long, however, in finding out their folly in resorting to strong drink as a means of increasing their trade: for while it did undoubtedly

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Trappers on the Great Churchill River.—P. 14.

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give them a temporary advantage over the company, retribution followed fast. In the year 1780, at Eagle Hills on the Saskatchewan, the rendezvous of the Montreal traders, a liberal allowance of grog was bestowed upon a large band of Indians, and one of the traders, who had had some trouble with a chief, put a big dose of laudanum into his glass by way of subduing his aggressiveness. The experiment proved a complete success in that regard, for the Indian never awakened from the drunken stupor into which he immediately fell. But his friends and followers, not appreciating the situation, arose in their wrath, attacked the camp, killed the offending trader as well as several of the men, and sent the survivors flying for their lives, leaving a fine collection of valuable furs behind. A little later, two posts on the Assiniboine River were attacked, 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 became utterly disorganised, and the traders bankrupt in purse and morals alike.

In the meantime the company had not been slow in defending its interests. It was not according to human nature that its sturdy Scots-

men should remain indifferent spectators of the scrupulous endeavours to cut the ground under their feet. They had already shown the 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 Bay on a trading expedition, pleading in extenuation that the vessels were lost through stress of weather. And now they all bent their energies to the task of opposing, hindering, and ruining the rivals who had the presumption to encroach upon their domain. The latter soon realised the necessity of combination if they would not be driven out.

So powerful and well-intrenched was the company, that only an organisation of corresponding magnitude and resources could hope to successfully cope with it. From this necessity sprang in the year 1783, the famous North-west Fur Company of Montreal, which, beginning with a mere partnership of the principal merchants engaged in the fur trade, developed with astonishing

ctators of the growth until it positively overshadowed its elder
 ground from rival. The method of the Hudson Bay Company
 ly shown that was to pay its employees simply by salary; but
 by more than the new company introduced a better system.
 ions and an Every officer had before him the immense in-
 in the interior ducement of a probable partnership—for thus were
 gerous for an the faithful and energetic ones by due process of
 them. The promotion rewarded. This masterly policy kept
 occasion as t every man up to the high-water mark of his
 at had venture abilities, and the result was that in a few years
 edition, pleading from the inception of this enterprise the annual
 re lost through profits had reached the splendid figure of
 all bent the £40,000, while ten years later they were
 hindering, ar three times that amount. The conservative Hud-
 presumption son Bay Company was astonished at the magnifi-
 ne latter soc cence of the new-comers, and old traders yet talk
 if they wou of the lordly 'North-wester.' Washington Irving,
 who was a guest of the company in the height
 was the con of its prosperity, has given us a characteristically
 corresponding graphic record of his impressions.

pe to success The principal partners, who resided in Montreal
 cessity sprang and Quebec, formed a kind of commercial aris-
 orth-west Eurocracy, living in luxurious and hospitable style.
 eginning with Their early associations were as clerks at the
 merchants en remote trading-posts; and the pleasures, dangers,
 ith astonishing adventures, and mishaps which they had shared

together in their wild-wood life had linked them heartily to each other, so that they formed a convivial fraternity. Few travellers that have visited Canada in the days of the M'Tavishes, the M'Gillivrays, the M'Kenzies, the Frobishers, and the other magnates of the north-west, when the company was in all its glory, but must remember the round of feasting and revelry kept up among these hyperborean nabobs.

Sometimes one or two partners, recently from the interior posts, would make their appearance in New York, in the course of a tour of pleasure and curiosity. On these occasions there was always a degree of magnificence of the pursuit about them, and a peculiar propensity to expenditure at the goldsmiths and jewellers for rings, chains, brooches, watches, and other rich trinkets, a gorgeous prodigality, such as was often to be noticed in former times in southern planters and West Indian creoles, when flush with the profits of their plantations.

To behold the North-west Company in all its state and grandeur, however, it was necessary to witness an annual gathering at the great interior place of conference established at Fort William near what is called the Grand Portage of Lake

Superior. Here two or three of the leading partners from Montreal proceeded once a year to meet the partners from the various trading-posts of the wilderness, to discuss the affairs of the company during the preceding year, and to arrange plans for the future.

On these occasions might be seen the change since the unceremonious times of the old French traders and the *coureurs du bois*, for now the aristocratic character of the Briton shone forth magnificently, or rather the feudal spirit of the Highlander. Every partner who had charge of an interior post, and a score of retainers at his command, felt like the chieftain of a Highland clan, and was almost as important in the eyes of his dependents as of himself. To him a visit to the grand conference at Fort William was a most important event, and he repaired thither as to a meeting of parliament.

The partners from Montreal, however, were the lords of the ascendant. Coming from the midst of luxurious and ostentatious life, they quite eclipsed their compeers from the woods, whose forms and faces had been battered and hardened by hard living and hard service. Indeed, the partners from below considered the whole dignity

of the company as represented in their persons and conducted themselves in suitable style. They ascended the river in great state, like sovereigns making a progress. They were wrapped in rich furs, their huge canoes freighted with every convenience and luxury, and manned by Canadian voyageurs as obedient as Highland clansmen. They carried with them their cooks and barbers, together with delicacies of every kind, and abundance of choice wines for the banquets which attended this convocation. Happy they were, too, if they could have some distinguished strangers, above all, some member of the British nobility, to grace their high solemnities.

Fort William, the scene of this important annual meeting, was a considerable village on the farther shore of Lake Superior.

As already pointed out, the Hudson Bay Company was slow in extending its operations beyond the region directly tributary to the bay, and its officials seemed to prefer that the Indians should come to them instead of their going out to seek the Indians. But now the Nor'-westers pushed away north and west until they not only touched the feet of the Rocky Mountains, but fearlessly scaled that mighty barrier, and floated upon the

their persons waters of the Peace River. At the first they met
 e style. They with no active opposition from their older rivals,
 like sovereigns and it is possible that the two organisations might
 rapped in rich never have come into active conflict but for a
 ith every con-series of events, not directly connected with the
 by Canadian fur trade, which precipitated the struggle.

and clansmen. Lord Selkirk was a philanthropic Scotch noble-
 s and barbers, man, whose kind heart was stirred to its depths by
 nd, and abund, the woes of his fellow-countrymen at the time of
 anquets which the 'Highland clearances,' and he determined to
 they were, too, devote his resources to finding, for some of them
 shed strangers, at least, the opportunity in the New World across
 ish nobility, to the Atlantic 'to redress the balance of the old.'
 He had heard of the wonderful prairies of the
 important annua North-west, waiting only to be tickled with the
 on the farther hoe to make them laugh into abundant harvests;
 and after planting a successful colony in Prince
 son Bay Com-Edward Island, he forwarded another instalment
 rations beyond of emigrants, *via* Hudson Bay, to the plains of
 e bay, and its the Red River, establishing a colony there which
 Indians should in later years became the nucleus of a new province.
 g out to seek The North-west Company at once took alarm.
 yesters pushed It wanted those fertile plains preserved as hunting-
 t only touched grounds, and did not relish the idea of their being
 but fearlessly populated by the overflowing thousands of Great
 ated upon the Britain. Every possible obstacle was placed in the

way of the colonists. Intimidation and even violence were resorted to, and the lives of the poor emigrants filled with terror. This conduct strongly incensed the good earl against the new company; and to enable him the better to punish them, he bought all the Hudson Bay Company's stock he could obtain, until, holding some £40,000 worth out of a capital of £105,000, he had the controlling interest. At once he began to exert himself against the obnoxious Nor'-westers. Rousing up the Hudson Bay shareholders from their lethargy, he instituted a vigorous competition. Wherever the former established a fort, the latter built another near by. Every method which artifice, fraud, or even violence could suggest was adopted to outwit each other and to obtain the furs of the Indians, who did not care what company got their furs so long as they were well paid for them. R. M. Ballantyne relates some amusing stories of the ruses resorted to by the rivals.

On one occasion the Hudson Bay scouts reported the approach of a band of Indians returning from a hunting expedition. No sooner was this heard than a grand ball was given to the Nor'-westers. Great preparations were made for it, and they had a royal time. But while the revellers

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Indian Hunters of the North-West.—P. 22

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were tripping the light fantastic toe to the music of Scotch reels and strathspeys, a score of earnest men were busily at work in a secluded spot, packing sledges with goods, and preparing for a journey. Soon they start off: silently, no tinkling of bells, no cracking of whips, no shouts to the dogs, as they disappear into the darkness, while the ball goes merrily on. The following day the Nor'-west scouts report the same party of Indians, and as quickly as possible a set of sleighs depart from their fort with loudly ringing bells. After a long march of forty miles they reach the encampment, only to find all the Indians gloriously drunk, and not a single skin, not even the tail of a musquash, to repay them for their trouble. Then it was that they perceived the true inwardness of the ball, and vowed to have their revenge.

Opportunity was not long wanting. Soon after this, one of their parties encountered a Hudson Bay train on its way to trade with the same Indians of whom they were in search. They exchanged compliments with each other, and as the day was very cold, proposed lighting a fire and having something to drink together. A huge fire was soon roaring in their midst, the canteens

were produced, and they each tried who could tell the biggest yarns while good liquor mounted to their brains. The Nor'-westers, after a little time, spilled their grog on the snow, unperceived by the others, so that they kept fairly sober although their rivals were becoming very much elevated. At last they began boasting of their superior prowess in drinking, and in proof thereof each of them swallowed a big bumper. The Hudson Bays, not to be outdone, followed their example, and almost instantly fell over upon the snow, helplessly drunk. In ten minutes more they were tied firmly upon their sledges, and the dogs being turned homewards, away they went straight for the Hudson Bay fort, where in due time they safely arrived with the men still sound asleep while the Nor'-westers made haste for the Indian camp, and this time had the furs all to themselves.

But such convivial and friendly devices to outwit each other soon gave way to more reprehensible proceedings. As the competition grew keener, the temper of the rivals waxed hotter, and ere long forts were attacked, taken, and burnt, the officials and their adherents imprisoned and harshly treated, the furs on their way to the rendezvous intercepted

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and appropriated by main strength, if necessary, and the whole trade turned into a furious conflict. The Governor-general of Canada sent out warrants and proclamations in vain. These were alike treated with sovereign contempt in that distant land, where 'the king's writ runneth not;' for both sides well knew that he had no means of putting his high-sounding words into action. So matters went from bad to worse until, in the year 1816, they reached a climax in a battle royal, which took place before the gates of Fort Garry, the Hudson Bays' principal post in the Red River region. In this lamentable affair seventeen men and three officers of the company, including Governor Semple, fell, pierced with bullets.

Yet even this dreadful occurrence did not at once abate the conflict. All parley was now at an end, and the password was 'war to the knife.' Officers and men were engaged by the companies, principally with a view to their fighting qualities, and more interest was taken in a successful encounter than in a profitable barter. Such a state of affairs could not long continue. The whole trade was being ruined, the Indians were becoming demoralised with fire-water, and the prices paid for the peltries were out of all proportion to the

value. The cooler heads of the concern then saw their opportunity. Negotiations were entered into which in 1821 resulted in their giving up conflict for coalition, and being united, with the approval of parliament, under the name of the older company. Some additional privileges were granted at the same time.

Soon after the coalition, a shrewd young Scotsman who had been sent out from London to examine the condition of things, showed such aptitude for business and such fertility of resource, that he was put at the head of affairs in North America, with the title of Governor-in-chief of Rupert's Land. 'It was a great responsibility,' writes Professor Bryce, 'for young and inexperienced George Simpson to undertake the management of so great a concern, to reconcile men who had been in arms against each other, and to bring their trade from the brink of ruin to a successful time. Yet for forty years he remained at the helm, and with such marked success, as to have the honour of knighthood conferred upon him in token of his services. He was the virtual ruler of about half of North America, and, though an autocrat, held the reins of power to the last with unslackening grasp. Small in stature, he

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was of indomitable perseverance, albeit somewhat impatient in temper. It is told of him that, on one occasion, while passing through the Lake of the Woods and urging his crew overmuch, a powerful French voyageur, his right-hand man, became so incensed at his unreasoning demands, that he seized him by the neck, lifted him over the gunwale, plunged him into the water, and then drew him dripping in again, to be, for the remainder of that voyage, a more considerate master.

Under Sir George Simpson's sway the story of the company was one of peace, prosperity, and progress. The infusion of North-west blood and capital gave it most vigorous life, and each year witnessed extending operations, until, in 1860, its ledger showed one hundred and fifty-five establishments, in charge of twenty-five chief factors, twenty-eight chief traders, one hundred and fifty-two clerks, one thousand two hundred other servants, and a legion of subject natives. The trading districts were divided into four departments, covering the country from ocean to ocean, from Ungava on the bleak Labrador coast, to Fort Victoria on the fiord-pierced shores of British Columbia—an empire hardly smaller than the whole of Europe, though

but thinly populated by some one hundred and sixty thousand Indians, half-breeds, and Esquimaux.

Hardly was the Dominion of Canada well born than its statesmen began to look with longing eyes upon the boundless prairies of the north-west, and to demand in no uncertain language from the mother country the abrogation of the charter giving the Hudson Bay Company a monopoly of that promised land. But of course the company could hardly be expected to yield up so splendid a property without adequate compensation. Negotiations resulted in the year 1869 in a bargain being effected. The company surrendered its proprietary rights, and in return therefor received the tidy sum of three hundred thousand pounds sterling, and one-twentieth of the land within the fertile belt, as well as fifty thousand acres in immediate proximity to its posts.

As a monopoly the Hudson Bay Company then ceased to exist. As a commercial corporation trading upon just the same basis as other corporations, and still practically free from troublesome competition in the more northern territories, holding vast landed estates ever increasing in value as the country opens up, and able to pay a decent dividend on a capital now swollen to two millions of pounds

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the 'Honourable Company of Merchant Adventurers Trading into Hudson Bay' has still, no doubt, in store for it a prolonged if uneventful future.

The headquarters of the company continue to be in Fenchurch Street, London, but the recent election to the chief-governorship of Sir Donald Smith of Montreal, whose life for the past half-century has been part of the company's history, has brought the control of affairs into closer touch with the country, and made it seem more than ever in the past a national enterprise.

I have thus sketched in scanty outline the romantic history of the great corporation, and it now remains for me to give some picture of its internal workings, of its method of dealing with the Indians, and of life at the hundred or more forts scattered throughout so many thousand miles of varied territory.

Regarded strictly as a fur-trading enterprise, the Hudson Bay Company reached its zenith about the year 1868, just before the surrender of its proprietary privileges to the Dominion of Canada; and as the methods and manners in vogue then remain practically unchanged to-day at the more distant forts, whither settlement and civilisation have not yet made their way, I will ask my

readers to imagine themselves transported to a typical post of that period, and interested spectators of its picturesque, unconventional life.

If on approaching a Hudson Bay post for the first time you had the high-sounding word 'fort,' suggestive of rampart, bastion, embrasure, and battlement, much upon your mind, and were accordingly full of appropriate expectation, you would be doomed to disappointment. Excepting Fort Garry, which, before the city of Winnipeg swallowed it up, was really a fortress with substantial stone walls and towers, the forts are quite unimposing affairs. Fancy a parallelogram of greater or less extent according to the importance of the post, enclosed by a picket twenty-four feet in height, composed of upright trunks and fastened along the top by a strong rail. At each corner stands a stout bastion built of squared logs, and pierced for guns commanding both sides of the angle. Inside the picket is a gallery running right around the enclosure, just high enough for a man's head to be level with the top of the fence. At intervals along the side of the picket are loopholes for rifles, and over the gateway from another bastion, from which anybody attempting to storm the gate may be warmly peppered.

the centre of the space enclosed are the houses of the factor or trader in charge and his chief subordinates, while ranged around the sides, close to the stockade, are the trading store, the fur-room, the warehouses, servants' quarters, &c. Beside the factor's residence rises a lofty flagstaff, from which floats the flag of the company, bearing its motto, *Pro pelle cutem*, and near by stands a bell tower which sounds out the important hours of the day.

In the earlier days one of the garrison would watch by watch pace round the gallery, crying out at intervals the hours and the state of the weather; partly as a precaution against Indian invasion, and partly as a fire patrol; but the establishment of the Mounted Police by the Dominion Government has rendered the former duty unnecessary, and the practice is now almost obsolete.

The advent of a band of Indians burdened with the result of a season's hunting arouses the fort from its humdrum routine, and it becomes a scene of picturesque animation and bustle. If the band be an important one, its coming has been announced by a couple of braves sent on ahead as advance agents, and everything is in readiness. This means not only that the company's goods are ready for

the barter, but that every precaution has been taken to guard against a sudden reconnaissance in force on the part of the red men, whose feelings are apt to be powerfully operated upon by the knowledge that what seems to them illimitable wealth, is kept out of their grasp by only some rough wooden walls, and a handful of white men.

The manner in which the business of bartering goods for peltries is then conducted has been graphically described for us by a writer familiar with the proceedings. The Indian with his bundle of furs proceeds in the first instance to the trading-room, where the trader separates the furs into lots, puts a valuation upon them according to their kind and quality, and after adding up the amount, returns to the Indian a number of little pieces of wood indicating the number of 'made-beavers' to which his 'hunt' amounts. Bearing his bundle of sticks, the happy hunter then proceeds to the store-room, where he finds himself surrounded by bales of blankets, slop-coats, guns, scalping-knives, tomahawks, powder-horns, axes, &c., and is thereby made to feel very much like a hungry boy let loose in a pastry-cook's, and would, without doubt, behave in a much similar fashion if he dared. Each article has a recognised value in 'made-

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beaver.' A slop-coat, for example, may be worth five 'made-beavers,' and the aborigine pays for his civilised finery with twelve of his sticks; for a gun he gives twenty; for a knife two; and so on until his stock of wooden 'legal tender' is exhausted, when, with profound regret and longing eyes, he retires to make room for the next comer, and to proudly exhibit his purchases to his friends and family.

At every post, or at least in every district, there is a tariff established which varies little from year to year. The mind of the Indian, untutored to the rise and fall of the markets and knowing nothing of what it means for furs to be 'firm' or 'unsteady,' is not tolerant of varying prices; accordingly, to facilitate matters, the company takes the risk of changes, and unless the fall in price is of long continuance, gives the same price for fur as formerly when it was high, or *vice versâ*; thus on some peltries the company loses, but compensates itself by making a large profit upon others. This system has one advantage. The Indian never attempts to raise the price of furs, or beat down the price of the merchandise. The tariff is unchangeable. If he is not pleased with it, he is at perfect liberty to go to the next shop, and this, combined

with the fact that the company sells nothing which is not of the best quality of its kind, has given it an advantage over all competitors that it will be long in losing.

Before the establishment of the mounted police, the posts in the plain country, at which the wily, unscrupulous Blackfeet and Crees were the principal customers, had to take many precautions when a large band of redskins came to trade. Guns were loaded and placed in the loopholes commanding the Indian and trade rooms, and the gates of the stockade securely fastened. All communication between the Indians and trader was cut off, and there remained for the customers only the narrow passage leading from the outer gate of the stockade to the Indian room, the Indian room itself, and the narrow hall-way between it and the trade-room. This latter was furnished with two heavy doors, with a space between them which would hold from two to four Indians. Only two Indians were admitted at a time into the trade-room. This was divided by a stout partition reaching from floor to ceiling, in the centre of which an aperture about a yard square was cut, and divided by a grating into squares sufficiently large to admit of the easy passage of goods, but not

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of the red man in person. As a still further precaution the passage leading to the window was in some instances made crooked—for the very good reason that experience had taught the trader that the Indian was apt to bring heated bargaining to a dramatic climax by shooting him from behind.

There has been a wonderful change in values since the good old days in the early part of this century. When Fort Dunvegan was established on the Peace River near the Rockies, the regular price of a trade musket was Rocky Mountain sables piled up on each side until they were level with its muzzle when held upright. Now these sables were worth in England about three pounds apiece, while the cost of the musket did not exceed one pound. The price of a six-shilling blanket was, in like manner, thirteen beavers of the best quality, beaver then being worth thirty-two shillings a pound, and a good skin weighing a pound or more.

But in the course of time the Indians began to know better the relative value of the muskets and their furs, and to object most decidedly to the one being piled along the barrel of the other (which report says was lengthened year by year until it

attained colossal dimensions), so that the trade gradually became to be more fairly conducted.

The company has shown no less farsightedness than humanity in its dealings with the ignorant Indians, to so large an extent in its power. Its laudable position with regard to the use of spirits in trade has been already mentioned, and although, during the disastrous rivalry with the Nor'-westers, the Hudson Bay did, for a time, fall away from grace, and fight fire-water with fire-water, so soon as the struggle ended in coalition, prohibition once more prevailed. Then every care has been taken to prevent the extermination of the fur-bearing animals, and whole districts have been 'laid over' from hunting for years at a time. Another sagacious principle was to pay a proportionately higher price for inferior furs, such as musk-rats, lest the Indians should confine their exertions to the more valuable creatures, and thereby kill the goose of the golden eggs. Furthermore, the company has always exercised a sort of paternal care over the people who might, in some sense, be regarded as its wards. Liberal advances are never refused to trusty trappers in case of need; and to the credit of the red men be it recorded that rarely are these obligations evaded, the company's ex-

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perience being that in this respect the redskin can set an example well worthy of imitation by his pale-faced brother. And finally, when the Indian grows too old to trap and hunt as of yore, he is allowed to become a pensioner upon the company's bounty, and there is hardly a fort that has not a number of such hangers-on.

The best possible reply that can be given to those who have made it their business to abuse the company for alleged ill-treatment of the Indians, is to be found in the fact that to this day the company is looked upon with the utmost affection and veneration by them. The writer already quoted relates that often when he complained that the Indians charged him for any services rendered much more than they would have charged the company, he was met with the conclusive answer, 'Yes, I know we do; but if you took care of us in our old age, and treated us as well as they have treated us, when we would do this for you at the same price.'

Lieutenant Gordon, who was in command of the three expeditions despatched by the Marine Department of Canada into Hudson Bay for the purpose of determining the possibilities of that inland ocean as a highway of commerce, was much struck by the fact that the officials at all the posts he

visited with singular unanimity told the same story—viz., that there was no profit being made upon their transactions, but that the posts were maintained simply for the benefit of the Indians and Esquimaux. The shrewd sailor did not feel bound to accept the statement unreservedly, but no doubt it had enough truth to ballast it, for the profits of fur-trading have wofully fallen off within the past quarter of a century, and there is little hope of their ever regaining their former figures.

But so far I have said little or nothing about the officials, and they certainly deserve a good part of an article to themselves. As already indicated, the majority of those at the posts have, from the first, been Scotsmen, although of recent years many from England and Canada have entered into the service of the company.

The grades of rank are very distinctly marked, and an effective if not martial discipline is still maintained. The various officials of the company are classed as follows, beginning at the top and working downward: Highest of all are the governor, deputy-governor, and board of directors, who reside in London, and form the court of last resort as regards the direction of their affairs.

The staff of officials in Canada is made up as

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follows: There are two commissioners, one in charge of the land sales and one of the fur-trade, and known as the land and trade commissioners respectively. Then comes the inspecting chief factor, having three shares in the stock of the company to his credit, as a reward for long and faithful service; then the chief traders, ruling over districts or departments, and holding two and a half shares; next, the factors, who are in charge of important posts, and have two shares; below them the chief traders, with one and a half shares; and below them again the junior chief traders, who, having put in at least fourteen years of satisfactory service, are promoted from the rank of clerks, and given an interest in the company to the extent of a single share. The apprenticed clerks, the largest body of all, bring up the rear. They are sturdy young men, ranging in age from fifteen to thirty, and upon them falls the hardest and most important work. Next below the apprenticed clerks comes the post-master, usually a promoted labourer, who, for good behaviour or valuable service, has been put on a footing with the gentlemen of the service, in the same manner that a private soldier in the army is sometimes raised to the rank of commissioned officer. Still lower are

the interpreters, who for the most part are intelligent labourers of long standing that have taken the trouble to familiarise themselves with the various Indian dialects, and thereby become indispensable in conducting negotiations with the natives. Finally, at the bottom of all are the voyageurs, hunters, and labourers, whose duties are as multifarious as they are laborious, cutting firewood and shovelling snow in winter, rowing, paddling, and portaging boats and canoes with their heavy cargoes in summer, and otherwise making themselves generally useful.

Life at a Hudson 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

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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-muffle, tremulous and opaque as a vegetable conserve; beaver tail, unctuous and satisfying; venison haunch and savoury duck; crimson salmon and snow-white fish—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 during 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 single 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 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 the 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

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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 attractions not so evident in the glorious days of midsummer. Then are the men thrown upon their own resources for entertainment; and whether the hours pass lightly or heavily will depend upon themselves. There is very little work to be done. The furs have to be sorted, looked to frequently, and packed in readiness for the coming of spring; and visits may be exchanged with the nearest fort. Those who like to dabble in ink have now a fine opportunity to write up their diaries. It was in this way that R. M. Ballantyne, then a clerk, discovered his writing talent. Those with a taste for natural history can amuse themselves in mounting and preserving specimens; while the studiously inclined can follow their favourite lines of study.

The northern mail starts out early in December. It consists of two or more toboggans drawn by dogs, and laden with strong wooden boxes in which is placed an astonishing amount of mail matter.

Proceeding as far as possible along the frozen bosoms of the lakes and rivers, the train pushes northward at the rate of forty miles a day, the drivers on snow-shoes easily keeping pace with the well-broken dogs, of which four are harnessed to each toboggan, until Fort Carlton, in the Saskatchewan valley, is reached. Here the entire mail is overhauled and repacked, branch packets being sent off east and west, while the main packet continues ever northward over the snow-billowed plains, across the deep-drifted valleys, through the sighing, shadowy forests, diminishing steadily in bulk as fort after fort is visited, until at last, reduced to a mere handful, that a man might put in his pocket, it reaches the end of its journey at Fort Yukon, upon the far frontier of Alaska.

When the young clerk first went out to Rupert's Land, a wife, as a *compagnon de voyage*, was not to be considered; and then when the time came that he might indulge in matrimony, he was far away from the women of his own race, few of whom, indeed, would be willing to stake their future upon the uncertainty of finding such domestic happiness in the wilds of North America as would compensate them for the loss of all the delights of civilisation. The natural consequence was that,

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looking about him for a companion, he found his choice limited to the dusky belles of the Indians. Sons and daughters were born, and grew up to win the love that was rarely bestowed upon the patient, faithful drudge of a mother. The natural affection of the father proved stronger than the artificial laws of society, and the connection thus strongly cemented continued unbroken to the end. The company made a point of encouraging this mating of the Indian races with their officers and men. It insured the good-will of the one, and bound the other to the country by ties not readily broken. So the children came in quiversful to the Macs and Pierres, and the blood of redskin warriors mingling with that of 'Hieland lairds' and French bourgeois went flowing forth in a steady stream all through the mighty possessions of the company.

It seems as though I had but scratched the surface of the story of this great corporation which for more than two centuries has wielded so profound an influence throughout the northern half of this continent. It may endure for many decades, or even for centuries yet, but its career must be less romantic than that of the Canadian Pacific Railroad. The returns from sales of land already

far overshadow the profits from the fur-trade, and the latter must inevitably in time shrink into insignificance. However that may be, the 'Honourable Company of Merchant Adventurers of England trading into Hudson Bay,' looking back upon its records may, with substantial reason, congratulate itself upon having contributed one of the most interesting chapters to the romance of commerce.



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CHAPTER II.

THE RISE AND FALL OF JOHN COMPANY.

THERE is perhaps more of the poet's fancy than actual fact about some of the lines in our familiar missionary hymn which makes 'India's coral strand' rhyme with 'Afric's golden sand,' but the reference to the spicy breezes that 'blow soft o'er Ceylon's isle' is correct enough; and it was probably the pleasant scent of those very breezes which first called attention to the great and wonderful land of India.

Portugal was the first European nation to open up trade with India on her own account, her intrepid navigator, Vasco da Gama, having in 1497 found an all-sea route thither round that formidable and stormy promontory which Diaz had eleven years before called the Cape of Storms, but henceforward to be known as the Cape of Good Hope.

For some time the Portuguese navy rode triumphant in every part of the Indian Ocean, while

the treasury of the court at Lisbon was enriched by the tribute of many Indian princes and the monopoly of a most profitable commerce. During this period the history of the Portuguese presents a series of events without a parallel in the annals of fact, and scarcely surpassed by the wildest fiction. All the talents and virtues which ennoble the discoverer—courage, coolness, patience, and loyalty—were displayed in the winning of their empire; all the vices of conquerors inflamed by avarice and fanaticism disgraced them after its establishment.

But they were not left very long alone in this lucrative field. In 1594 the Dutch sent their vessels round the Cape of Good Hope to secure a share of the profitable traffic in Asiatic luxuries, and with such good success that before many years not only was the bulk of the business in their hands, but also territorial possessions more extensive than those held by their rivals, who, after a hard fight to keep them out, gave up the struggle as hopeless, and resigned themselves to the situation.

The next claimant for the right to make money out of India was Great Britain, or rather, an association of British merchants. They got the

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idea from the renowned Sir Francis Drake, who visited the East Indies in the course of his remarkable voyage round the world, and brought back such glowing accounts of these little-known regions, that in the year 1600 'good Queen Bess' was moved to grant a charter of corporation to 'The Governor and Company of Merchants of London trading to the East Indies.' This charter, like others of that time, was exclusive, prohibiting all other Englishmen from trading within the space included between the Cape of Good Hope and Cape Horn—*i.e.* the whole of the Indian and Pacific oceans, a monopoly that the company continued to enjoy until 1813, when the Indian trade was thrown open to all. Thus began the famous East India Company, popularly known as 'John Company,' which, starting with a small settlement in Surat, obtained by the grace of a native ruler, grew and prospered through two centuries and a half of varied and romantic experiences, during which it decided the fate of rajahs, kings, and emperors, putting down one and setting up another, and drew under its direct rule no less than 100,000,000 of people, with 70,000,000 more under allied sovereigns more or less subservient to its influence.

To make clear how all this was accomplished would, of course, require a big book. Only a mere outline can be given in our pages. The first expedition sent out by the company consisted of five small ships under command of Captain James Lancaster. They were laden with cloth, glass, cutlery, lead, and tin, and the profits of the undertaking were so satisfactory that other and larger fleets followed in quick succession. Some idea of these profits may be gained from the fact that a cargo of cloves, which cost the company only £3000 in Amboyna, realised in London the magnificent sum of £36,000.

Not all the transactions, to be sure, proved quite such bonanzas as this one, nor was the English company permitted to have its own way without let or hindrance. The Portuguese did not at all like the idea of a fresh rival in the field of which they had once been sole masters, to their great profit, and they were disposed to be very troublesome, until the company's fleet, under Captain Best, gave a decisive beating to a much superior Portuguese force off the port of Swally in 1615. This victory served a double purpose. It disposed of the Portuguese, and it produced a profound impression upon the natives, who had hitherto

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believed them to be invincible, and thereby made matters much easier for the Englishmen in future.

The Dutch had next to be reckoned with. They too were strongly opposed to British competition, and did everything in their power to thwart the company's designs, even going so far as to massacre the members of the settlement at Amboyna in the year 1622. But in spite of all opposition from either European competitors or hostile natives the British persevered, and bit by bit their power and possessions grew.

Their plan was first to obtain permission to plant a trading station, or 'factory' as it was called. Presently the factory developed into a fort, the fort into a fortified town, and so on until it became the capital of an extensive district. In this way Madras, Calcutta, and other cities of renown had their beginning.

Some of the incidents of those early days are worth noting. Thus the demand for ships was so great that the shipbuilding yard at Deptford was unable to meet it, and another yard had to be obtained at Blackwall, in which was built the *Royal George*, of 1200 tons, the largest vessel hitherto constructed in England. In the year

1645 the Emperor Shah Jehan showed his gratitude for the services Surgeon Boughton of the *Hopewell* rendered the beauties of his zenana by granting important concessions to the company; and in 1668 King Charles II., for an annual rent of ten pounds, transferred to them Bombay, which had come to the British crown as part of the dower of Catharine of Braganza.

With the Portuguese and the Dutch out of the way, the company for a time had plain sailing, until their rapidly growing wealth attracted the attention of the native rulers, and they found that in order to resist their increasing extortions they must needs set up a regular army and naval establishment—in fact, that while continuing to be traders they must also be chiefs and conquerors.

Then began a new era in the company's history. During the following century and a half there were few years free from wars or rumours of wars. Brilliant successes and disheartening reverses alternately rejoiced and saddened the hearts of the shareholders, and stirred the pulses of the English people. The period is illumined by the fame of great commanders, wise statesmen, and admirable administrators. The names of Warren Hastings, Robert Clive, and Sir Eyre Cook; of

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the Marquises of Cornwallis, Wellesley, and Hastings; of Generals Holt, Napier, and Pollock—with others hardly less noteworthy—form a roll of heroes scarce to be equalled in the history of any other land.

Above them all the names of Clive and Hastings stand pre-eminent for the romance of their careers. That of the former, indeed, was no less pathetic than romantic. The son of a small landowner in England, Clive seemed to be such an idle scapegrace of a boy that his friends were glad to get rid of him by despatching him to Madras as a clerk in the service of John Company. Poor of pocket and shy of disposition, detesting the dry drudgery of the desk and haunted by homesickness, he twice attempted suicide, and it was only on the second failure that he flung down the defective pistol with a conviction that destiny had better things in store for him. His opportunity came a few years later, when, having resigned his clerkship for a commission in the company's army, he came forward with a daring scheme for the relief of Trichinopoly, then besieged by the French and their Indian allies. His scheme was accepted, and proved a brilliant success. He twice defeated the French and the Hindus in league with them, foiled

every effort of the dashing Dupleix, and razed to the ground a pompous pillar that the too sanguine French governor had set up in honour of his earlier victories.

The defence of Arcot for fifty days with 320 men all told against a besieging force numbering no less than 7500, which finally retired in disorder; the marvellous victory of Plassey, when, to wreak vengeance upon Surajah Dowlah for the awful crime of the Black Hole of Calcutta, he attacked him with only 3000 infantry against 50,000 foot and 14,000 horse, and sent the whole vast army in headlong rout before him, losing only twenty-three killed in the action—these and similar astonishing exploits raised him to the highest pinnacle of fame, and proved that Pitt had not spoken too strongly in calling him a ‘heaven-born general.’

But alas! the clouds that had shadowed his early days reappeared in the very zenith of his career. Returning to England broken in health by his mighty exertions, he was met by false and cruel charges of abuse of power and extortion. He personally refuted these accusations, but took them so keenly to heart that in a fit of deep melancholy he died by his own hands in November 1774, when he had just completed his forty-ninth year.

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Warren Hastings, whose name and fame are inseparably associated with Robert Clive's, had an equally unpromising start in life. His chance came when he obtained a seat in the Calcutta Council in the year 1761. If Clive was the ideal commander for those troublous times, Hastings was the ideal statesman and administrator. What the one gained by astounding daring and strategy, the other retained by strong and sagacious statecraft; and as if to complete the parallel, Hastings on his return to England was assailed, as Clive had been, with a startling array of charges based upon his administration of affairs in India. Burke and Sheridan exhausted the resources of their oratory in denouncing his conduct.

The House of Commons sustained the charges. He was consequently impeached before the House of Lords. But after a memorable trial that lasted more than seven years he was honourably acquitted by that august tribunal, and retired to a life of well-earned ease and dignity for nearly a quarter of a century in Daylesford, the original home of his family, which, when a boy, he vowed he would recover before he died.

The work of conquest and consolidation so well begun by Clive and Hastings was steadfastly

carried on in the face of difficulties and setbacks by their successors in council and in the field, some of whose names were a little while ago mentioned. The Mysore wars, the Mahratta campaign, the great battle of Assaye, when General Wellesley (who afterwards became the Duke of Wellington), with only 4500 men defeated a Mahratta force of 30,000 foot and 20,000 horse, the capture of the imperial city of Delhi by General Lake, the conquest of the warlike Goorkhas, the bringing to terms of the fierce Afghans, the crushing of the Sikhs—what wonderful feats of arms these were!

And all this was done by the servants of a corporation, not of a king or emperor. Again and again, in spite of strong opposition, was the charter of the company renewed. The last renewal would have carried it on until 1873. But in 1857 broke out the sepoy rebellion with all its appalling consequences. The company was unequal to the task of coping with it. The limit of its power had been reached. To save India to the British crown it was necessary that the British government should assume the charge of this vast empire. Accordingly, in the following year this was effected, and the long and romantic career of John Company came to an end.

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For more than two centuries this remarkable organisation had filled a place in human history no other company ever approached. For a whole century it had ruled an empire of its own worthy to be ranked among the great empires of the world. And besides paying fine dividends to its shareholders, what had it done for its subjects ?

Among many benefits conferred upon them were these ; the security of person and property from the cruelty and rapacity of tyrannous rulers, and the establishment of civil and religious liberty ; the abolition of slavery, widow-burning, thuggism, and infanticide ; the building of roads and bridges, connecting the different parts of the country ; the introduction of the steamboat and the railroad, and of those twin agencies in promoting civilisation and uplifting mankind, the printing-press and the Bible.

A glorious record truly ; and if there be some spots upon the sun, let it not be forgotten that but for the East India Company, the great Empire of India might be to-day no higher in the scale of civilisation than Persia or Afghanistan. Taking it all in all, John Company deserves to be considered the saviour of India.



CHAPTER III.

HOW MERCHANTS OPENED UP THE WORLD.

WE have grown so used, during the last century or so, to give scientific or journalistic enterprise the credit for the great things done in the way of exploration and discovery, that we are apt to forget the great debt we owe to commerce for even greater things accomplished in the days when there were no British Associations or Smithsonian Institutions for the advancement of Science, and when newspapers like the *London Daily Telegraph* and *New York Herald* did not exist, to undertake the sending forth of expeditions into the burning wilds of Africa or the ice-bound regions of the mysterious North.

Neither scientific nor religious ardour nor greed for a growing empire inspired the discoverers of the fifteenth century to voyage so bravely forth into unknown seas. Trade was the grand object.

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The merchant went ahead, and opened up the path for the soldier and the priest. But for his enterprise, it is quite possible that the sword of the one had not waved, and the cross of the other had not been planted up to the present day in one-half of the Christianised world.

The voyage of Columbus was no exception. True, he was not himself a merchant. His aspirations soared high above the mercenary ideas of mere matter-of-fact business. But the expedition which he conducted to so glorious an issue had for its foundation the desire to rival the Venetians in the trade of that wonderful Cathay which poured such a flood of wealth into the lap of the City of the Isles.

It would be quite impossible here to tell the whole story of any one of the expeditions which revealed to wondering Europe the hitherto unimagined extent of Africa, and the ocean pathway to India around the Cape of Good Hope. At most I can but select some of the most striking features of the chief expeditions.

Little Portugal is the country, and Dom Henry, son of John I., the man entitled to the honour of beginning the good work. The young prince's imagination was excited by the glowing Moorish

accounts of the countries south of the great African desert, and he determined to do all that lay in his power to solve the mystery then existing as to the shape and size of the southern continent.

Hitherto no European ship had got beyond Cape Bojador, which marks the northern end of the Sahara Desert, the strong currents which set around that celebrated cape having scared the mariners of that time, who regarded it as a divine warning to go no farther. But Dom Henry despatched one expedition after another to make the attempt, until at last, in the year 1432, the much-dreaded obstacle was successfully surmounted by Gilianes in a single vessel, a feat then regarded as fully equal to any of the labours of Hercules. It being thus made clear that Providence had no objection to such an enterprise, the pope was good enough, by way of showing his approval of Dom Henry, to confer upon him a grant of all the lands that might be discovered beyond Cape Bojador to the East Indies, together with full absolution for the souls of all who should lose their lives while in the discovery of them.

Thus doubly fortified, Gilianes returned to the charge in 1434 with two vessels, and passed a hundred miles beyond the cape, where, on landing,

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tracks of men and cattle were found. The next year he made further progress, and had an encounter with some natives, who issued from a cave holding javelins in their hands. Several of these and one of the Portuguese were wounded, this being the beginning of that blood-shedding which unhappily stained the whole course of Portuguese discovery and colonisation.

Each succeeding year the vessels worked farther south, their owners fighting, trading, cheating, and lying their way towards the great discovery they were destined yet to achieve. Gold, ostrich feathers, ivory, and slaves were the principal objects of trade; and if business was not brisk, the Portuguese never hesitated to resort to fraud or force to improve matters for themselves.

Cape Blanco and Cape Verd were passed in turn; the Senegal and Rio Grande rivers discovered, as well as the Azores and the Cape Verd Islands; the equator crossed without a mishap; the Grain Coast (so called from cochineal, known in the Italian market as *grana del paradiso*, being obtained there), the Ivory Coast, Gold Coast, and Slave Coast were reached in succession, and likewise the shores of Loango, Congo, and Angola. The king of Portugal now took the title of Lord

of Guinea, the donation of all lands was confirmed by the pope, and nothing remained but to push on to the farthest point, get round it, and see what there was on the other side, and thus solve the great mystery.

The success of Columbus had much to do with stirring up the Portuguese to accomplish this. They were no less satisfied than he that the New World he had discovered was but an outlying portion of India, and they were determined to find out if it was not possible to reach the same goal by going round the southern extremity of Africa.

Bartholomew Diaz got as far as the point six years before Columbus sighted America, and encountering a fierce storm there, called it *Tormentosa* and turned back. But on his return, the king, in proof of his faith in the future, changed the title to *Cabo de Buena Esperanza* ('Cape of Good Hope'), which it bears to this day. The same foolish superstition prevailed concerning it that had frightened mariners away from Cape Bojador. It was believed that the storms which drove Diaz back were perpetual, and that it was an impious tempting of Providence to persist in proceeding. King Emmanuel, however, was superior to this

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folly, and selecting Vasco da Gama, 'a gentleman of quality, ability, and courage,' he sent him off in the year 1497 with three small ships and one hundred and sixty men, and bearing letters of introduction to the King of Calicut and to Prester John, the legendary potentate whose dominions were supposed to be somewhere in the vast regions of Asia.

The little fleet had a rough passage to the Cape, but when they reached it fortune favoured them with fair weather; and on November 18th they successfully doubled it, their crews shouting and sounding trumpets in token of their triumph. Their progress northward along the coast was full of novelty and excitement, for they were sailing in seas no European keels had ever cloven before. At San Blas they saw three thousand sea-wolves on a rock in the harbour. On Christmas Day 1498 they touched at a place which, in honour of the day, they called Tierra de Natal, a name that still remains. A fortnight later they saw on the shore a large company of very tall people, and on landing were well received by them. Da Gama made the negro prince a present of a red jacket, stockings, and cap, which vastly pleased his sable majesty, and excited the enthusiastic admiration of his subjects.

Sailing along in a leisurely cautious fashion, they passed through the strait which separates Madagascar from the mainland, and began to meet with signs of the presence of the Arabs, as the natives understood something of the language, and were less astonished than others had been at the sight of strangers. At Mozambique Da Gama was rejoiced at being assured that he was on the right track for the renowned city of Calicut in India. At Mombassa the Moors, jealous of intruders upon the field of which they had hitherto enjoyed a monopoly, began to give trouble, but were easily driven off, and their plots for the destruction of the fleet frustrated.

Continuing coastward as far as the town of Melinda, a large and flourishing place with regular streets and houses several storeys high, to their great surprise, they met with Christians, who hailed from India. The three vessels, on April 22d, sailed off dauntlessly into that immense and unknown tract of ocean which stretched between the continent of Africa and the peninsula of India, that was the grand and crowning object of the voyage. Hitherto Vasco da Gama had simply been feeling his way along shore, so to speak, but now he was to dare the

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dangers of the uncharted waters, two thousand miles in breadth, that lay between him and Calicut. Well was it for the little expedition that its leader had both a sound head and a strong heart!

The good fortune which had favoured the fleet thus far still continued; and at the end of a month's pleasant sailing, the high hills near Calicut came in sight. Anchoring some distance from the city, Da Gama sent on shore to reconnoitre one of the criminals he had brought with him for the purpose. The man was conducted to the house of a Moor who could speak Spanish, and who at once roughly demanded what he had come for. After some conversation, however, he grew more courteous, and accompanied his visitor back to the ship, where he accosted Da Gama in Spanish with the words: 'Good luck! good luck! many rubies, many emeralds. Thou art bound to give God thanks, for he has brought you where there are all sorts of spices, and precious stones, with all the riches of the world.' The admiral and his companions were so much delighted at hearing this good news in a Christian tongue when so far from home that they wept for joy. The Moor promised to do all the service he could for them, and returned to land, leaving them in high spirits.

Very soon an invitation came from the Samorin, as the King of Calicut was called, to pay him a visit. Taking twelve of his companions, Da Gama accepted it, although his brother officers feared treachery on the part of the Moors, who were very numerous and influential. They were received with much pomp, and borne in splendid litters through crowded streets to the palace, where the Samorin welcomed them with every mark of respect. He was found reclining in a large room, the floors and walls of which were covered with rich velvets and silks, while he himself was clothed in fine linen, stiff with gold embroidery and pearls, his turban gleaming with precious stones, and his fingers and toes being laden with diamond rings. His attendants all held their left hands before their mouths, lest their breaths should reach the royal being.

The visitors having been duly seated, refreshments in the form of fruits were introduced, followed by water in a curious vessel, having a long golden spout. Being informed that it was a gross breach of etiquette to let the spout touch their lips, the Portuguese were fain to hold the vessel off at some distance and try to pour the water into their gaping mouths as the natives did. But,

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being unused to the proceedings, they made a poor business of it, and spilled a good deal, whereupon the courtiers showed that they could be as guilty of bad manners, as they subsequently proved of bad faith, by laughing outright at their guests' awkwardness.

At the outset the Samorin evinced every desire to be friendly, and to gratify Da Gama's desire to open up trade. But no sooner was this apparent than the Moors, who for a long time had had a monopoly of the commerce of India, which they carried on by way of the Red Sea and Alexandria, began to plot against their European rivals, and by bribing the Samorin's courtiers succeeded in filling his mind with suspicions about the newcomers. The negotiations which had opened so prosperously were interrupted, and finally the admiral and some of his companions were seized and confined, not being released until Da Gama's brother had sent a quantity of goods as ransom.

On regaining his liberty, Da Gama was so disgusted at this treachery that he resolved to set out for home. Two days after he sailed he was attacked during a calm by sixty large boats full of soldiers. Happily a wind sprang up in time to save the Portuguese fleet from falling

into the hands of these treacherous rascals, and the homeward voyage was begun without further mishap. They had, however, by no means so easy a time of getting back to the African coast as they had in making India. For four months the little squadron struggled with bad weather and head-winds. Scurvy in its worst form broke out; and both officers and crew began to give themselves up to despair, in spite of their brave leader's earnest exhortation to trust in Providence. At length a fair wind dispelled their fears, and soon they reached Melinda, where they were well received. Thenceforward the ships made steady if somewhat slow progress, until in September 1499 they cast anchor in the Tagus, having been absent two years and two months.

Next to that of Columbus, this brilliant and eventful voyage made by Vasco da Gama was fraught with more important consequences than any other in the world's history. By thus opening up a new route to the far East, the Portuguese admiral, without knowing it, had prepared the way for the commercial downfall of the maritime states of Italy, Egypt, Turkey, Arabia, and all those countries between the Red Sea and the Caspian, which throve upon the overland commerce

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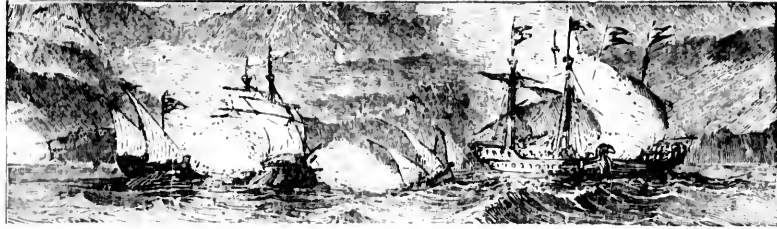
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between Europe and India. What was stranger still, it was according to the decrees of destiny that this lucrative traffic, after being for only a brief while in the hands of Portugal, should be taken hold of by the British, and prove chiefly instrumental in the building up of their colossal empire.

As soon as it became known in England that there was money to be made by trading to the African coast, merchants and mariners began to compete there with the Portuguese; and many profitable voyages were made by Lok Toursen, Rutter, Baker, and others, despite the angry opposition of the Portuguese. Details of these expeditions have been preserved in the Hakluyt collection, and make wonderfully interesting reading.

In this way the world was opened up, commerce not conquest being the chief motive of the pioneers in the discovery of new countries and nations, and of new routes to marts which had hitherto been reached only by long and costly overland journeying. True it is that civilisation and Christianity owe a larger debt to the practical men 'prone to value none but paying facts' than is generally conceded.



CHAPTER IV.

THE CHASE OF THE SPANISH CALLEONS.

WHAT a thrill of romantic interest these two words 'Spanish galleons' excite! The moment we see them they bring up before us visions of bright bars of silver and glistening ingots of gold, with diamonds and pearls as big as walnuts, and emeralds larger than pigeons' eggs in heaped handfuls, such as gladdened the eyes and enriched the pockets of Sir Francis Drake and the other freebooters whose exploits have been so brilliantly celebrated by Charles Kingsley in his *Westward Ho!* They remind us, too, of daring deeds at sea, when in vessels smaller than a first-class fishing schooner of to-day, and not half so seaworthy or so easily handled, the British mariners flung themselves upon the huge Spanish ships, whose poops towered high above their decks, and captured them by the sheer impetuosity of their attack.



SIR FRANCIS DRAKE.

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And it must not be forgotten that it was in the quest of these very galleons along the coast of South America, and in the fighting of them in the English Channel, when the Great Armada bore down so menacingly upon poor little England, that the English sea-dogs learned the secret of the mastery of the seas, a lesson that did more than any other to build up and maintain their country's glory and strength at home and abroad.

Now what were the Spanish galleons, and how came they to have such precious cargoes? The term 'galleon' was, in the first instance, applied only to ships of war having three or four gun-decks; but later on its use became more general, and all large merchant vessels went by that name. They must have been very imposing-looking affairs when under full sail, although hardly less clumsy than a canal barge. They were blunt of bow and round of stern, very low in the waist, but exceedingly high at either end. In fact some of them must have resembled two wooden towers joined by a bulwarked raft, and having masts sticking out of their tops, to which sails were attached by means of many cross-yards and a maze of rigging.

It was in a small galleon that Columbus dis-

covered another world, and took possession of the island of San Domingo. By their aid Cortez and his steel-clad soldiers made their way to Mexico, and crushed the Aztec empire with appalling cruelty, and Pizarro, at the head of his daring adventurers, accomplished the conquest of Peru. In fact these galleons were the keys by which the plucky if pitiless Spaniards unlocked the treasure-houses of the New World, whose marvellous contents were poured into the coffers of King Charles V. and Philip II., thereby enabling those monarchs to lift Spain to the proud position of first of European powers.

Between 1492 and 1568 Spain had the field practically all to herself. From Florida to the River Plate on the eastern side of the continent, and from Panama to Patagonia on the western, her sway was supreme. To the right of conquest was added the authority of the Church, for by a papal grant the whole of America was conveyed to the Spanish crown; and this vast trust the bigoted Philip was as anxious to guard from the taint of heresy as he was from commercial competition. Terrible threats were proclaimed, particularly against the British 'sea-dogs,' who had already given his galleons trouble along the

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European coasts. For a time these measures prevailed, but as the sixteenth century drew towards its fourth quarter, they ceased to be sufficient to restrain the national hatred of Spain and the national craving for a wider commercial field, even though it had to be won at the point of the pike.

The renowned John Hawkins was the first to dare the dungeons of the Inquisition by violating the Spanish monopoly of the New World, and so successful was his venture that he soon had many imitators. Among them was one whose fame soon eclipsed that of all others, growing into such proportions and gathering about its kernel of fact such an amazing mass of fiction that his latest biographer says of him: 'He was not dead before his life became a fairy-tale, and he himself as indistinct as Sir Guy of Warwick or Croquemitaine. His exploits loomed in mythical extravagance through the mists in which, for high reasons of state, they long remained enveloped, and to the people he seemed some boisterous hero of a folk-tale, outwitting and belabouring a clumsy ogre.' This was the hero of the chase of the Spanish galleons, the true founder of Britain's naval supremacy, Sir Francis Drake.

Looking back over his astonishing career, and considering the overwhelming odds that as a rule he had to meet, and the absolute completeness of his victories over them, it is not so very hard for us to understand the superstitious Spaniards giving him credit for being in league with his Satanic Majesty, and winning his way by diabolical means. For a quarter of a century the name 'El Draque' was full of terror to them.

It was not by any means mere greed for gold that spurred Drake on to his extraordinary exploits. As an Englishman and a Puritan, he hated the would-be monopolists of the American continent; in the first place, because they were Spaniards, and in the second, because they were Catholics. Moreover, to this national and religious hostility was added a deep personal grudge for the treachery which wrecked the first two of his ventures into the Spanish Main. At La Hacha, and again at Vera Cruz, by violating their solemn covenant, the Spaniards gained a temporary advantage. But it was dearly bought, for not only did it win for King Philip and his perjured Viceroy the mortal enmity of both John Hawkins and Francis Drake, but it showed the latter the road to his revenge.

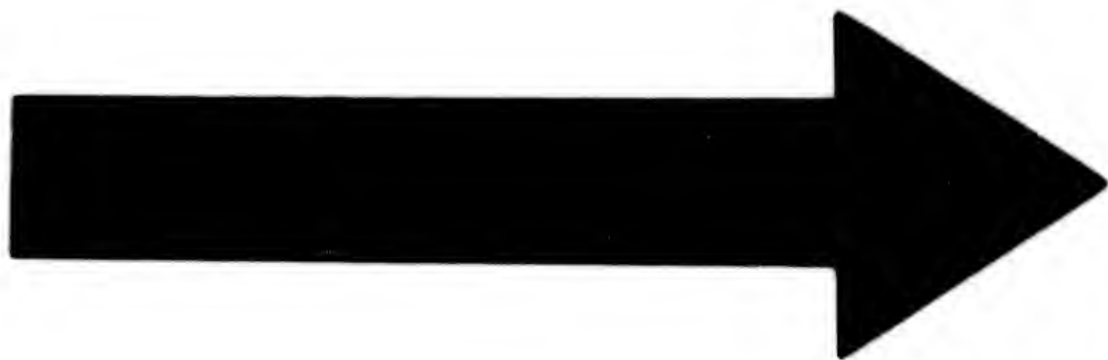
Having found the road, Drake wasted little time

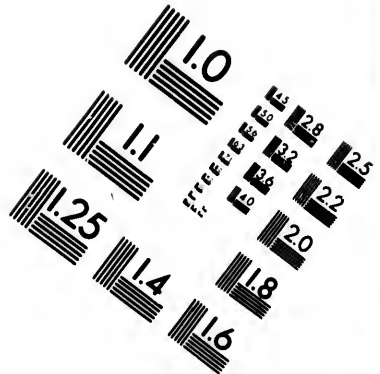
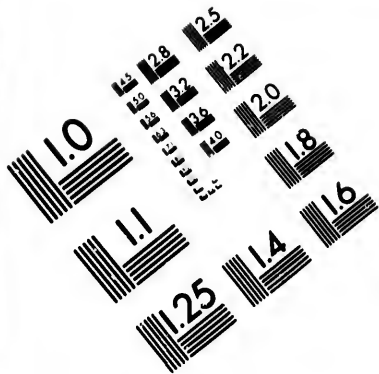
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ere venturing upon it. In the merry month of May 1572 there sailed out of Plymouth Sound two small ships that were destined to mark an epoch in the world's history. These were the *Pasha*, of seventy tons, commanded by Drake himself, and in her wake the little *Swan*, of twenty-five tons, in charge of his brother John. In view of what was before this little expedition, the project certainly looked more like a school-boy's escapade than a serious enterprise. The crews, all told, men and boys, numbered about seventy-three souls. There was only one of them who had reached the age of thirty. And yet their modest scheme was nothing less than to seize the port of Nombre-de-Dios in the Panama Isthmus, and the Treasure-House of the World!

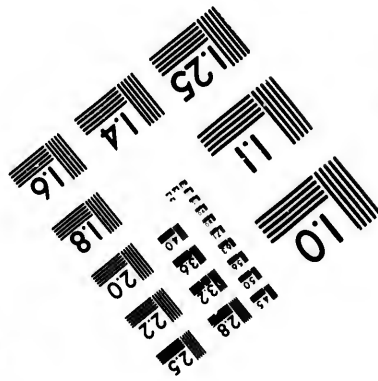
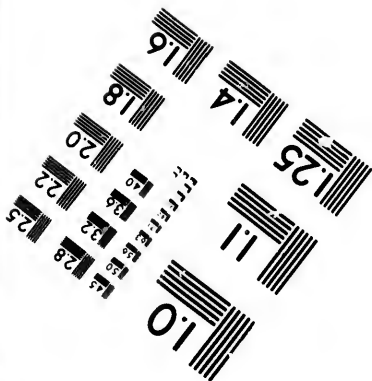
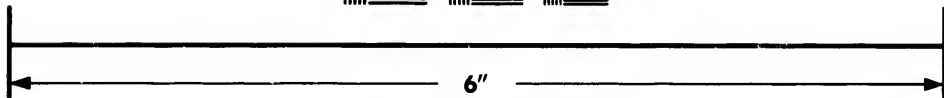
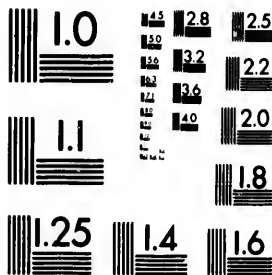
The wildest kind of a design, truly. Nevertheless, they came within an ace of accomplishing it. As it was, they stormed the town, held possession of it for some hours, and made their way into the treasury, where their astonished eyes met a sight such as exceeded their most fevered expectations, to wit, the gray shimmer of a pile of silver bars ten feet in breadth, twelve feet in height, and seventy feet in length.

But the Spaniards presently rallied from their





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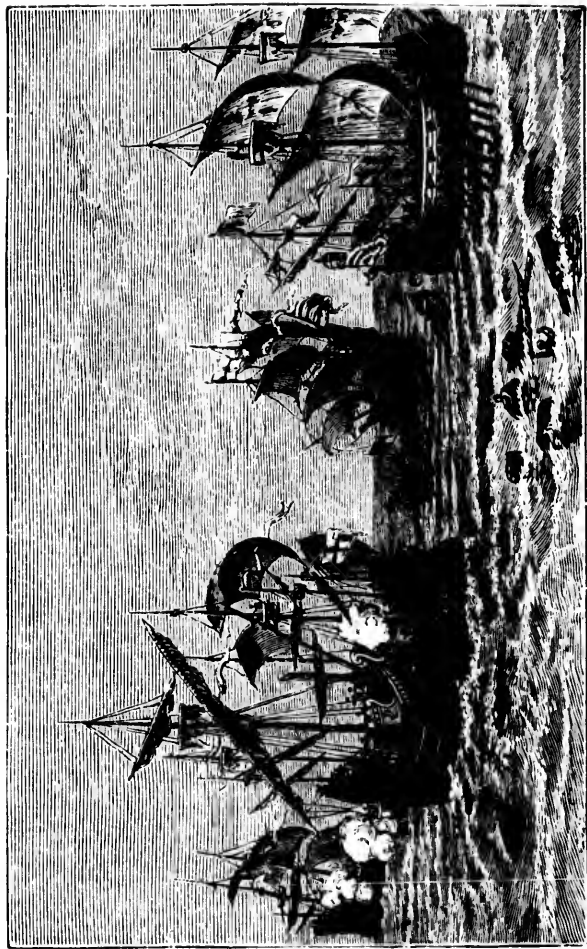
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affright. Drake was severely wounded, and very reluctantly the daring invaders had to return to their boats leaving the vast booty untouched. In retreating to cover they took with them, however, a well-filled galleon that lay in port, and after a fortnight of rest on an island, they swooped down upon Cartagena, cut out a large ship that was at the quay, and once more vanished.

But they soon reappeared, and after making a dashing though fruitless attempt upon the Panama gold-train, sacking Vera Cruz, capturing thirty tons of silver almost at the very gates of Nombre-de-Dios, and securing other booty, they at length decided to call a halt and go back to England for a rest. The return voyage was safely accomplished, and on a fine Sunday in August 1573 the good folk of Plymouth scandalised the preacher by running out of church as the triumphant young freebooter's guns thundered out a salute to the batteries.

Some idea of the wonderful daring and energy shown by this handful of men during their twelve-month in the Spanish Main may be gathered from the statement that of two hundred vessels of all kinds which then navigated the Caribbean Sea, they calculated that there was not one they had not overhauled once at least, and some of them



Sir Francis Drake and the Spanish Galleons.—P. 76.

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had suffered this unpleasant treatment three times. Whatever may be thought of the propriety of such proceedings, this must not be forgotten, that Drake never maltreated a prisoner, and was as renowned for his mercy to the vanquished as he was for his courage in the face of foes.

After four years' inaction at home, Drake, with some difficulty, succeeded in organising another expedition into the same rich field. It was not much more imposing than the other, comprising as it did only five ships, of which his own, the *Pelican*, measured but one hundred tons, and the smallest was a mere pinnace of fifteen tons, yet the results were to be the most momentous, without question, in the whole naval history of England.

The little squadron set sail from Plymouth in November 1577, and took nearly three months to reach the Strait of Magellan, and three weeks more to get through that perilous passage. Then the fates, which had hitherto been very unpropitious, seemed to do their utmost to wreck the enterprise. Two vessels had been left on the other side of the strait, and of the remaining three, one went down with all hands, and the other fled back home, leaving Drake alone in the *Pelican* to go on in a strange sea—for he was

the first Englishman to navigate the Pacific—and along a strange coast held in force by the deadliest foes of England.

But his great spirit was equal to the emergency. Dauntlessly he pressed northward, and splendidly was he rewarded. In the harbour of Valparaiso he found one of the great galleons from Peru, having on board 'a certain quantity of fine gold of Bolivia, and a great crosse of gold, beset with emeralds, on which was nailed a God, of the same metal.' This 'certaine quantity' amounted to about £24,000, and was only the beginning!

From December to April, the story of the voyage reads like a fairy-tale. The saucy little *Pelican* ran in and out of the harbours, hardly ever losing a man or failing to add to her store of booty. The Spaniards, who no more thought to see an Englishman on these coasts than the pope himself, seemed to have attempted no resistance, preferring to be plundered rather than to fight.

At Tarapaca the Englishmen found a lot of silver bars ready piled on the pier for shipment, and the Spaniard in charge sleeping comfortably by their side. 'Whereon,' writes the chaplain, in a humorous strain, 'we freed him of his charge, which otherwise, perhaps, would have kept him

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waking, and so left him to take out the other part of his sleepe in more security.'

At the next landing they 'met a Spaniard driving eight Peruvian sheep (llamas); each sheep bearing one hundred weight of refined silver. Now, we could not endure to see a gentleman Spaniard turned carrier so, and therefore, without entreatie, we offered our services and became drovers, onely his directions were not so perfect that we could keep the way which he intended, for almost as hee was parted from us, we with our new kinds of carriages, were come into our boats.'

At Arica 'some forty and odde barres of silver of the bigness and fashen of a brick batte' were annexed, and at Lima their eyes were rejoiced by the sight of a fleet of ships ready freighted for sea, 'aboard whom we made somewhat bold to bid ourselves welcome,' with the result of the addition of one thousand five hundred bars of silver, a chest full of gold reals, and some bales of costly silk to their valuable cargo.

The greatest prize, however, was still ahead. This was the huge galleon *Cacafuego*, 'the great glory of the South Seas,' full to the brim of gold and silver. Sailing two miles to her one, the *Pelican* overtook her off Quito, and made her

an easy capture. 'We found in her,' records the chaplain, in his quaint way, 'some fruits and other victuals, and (that which was the especial cause of her heavy and slow sailing) a certain quantity of jewels and precious stones, thirteen chests of ryals of plate, eighty pound weight in gold, twenty-six tonne of uncoyned silver, two very fair gilt drinking boules valued at about 360,000 pexols,' more than £400,000.

Enough had now been done both for glory and profit, and Drake decided to hurry home, which he did, not by going back through the Strait of Magellan, but by continuing right on round the world, which feat, hitherto unperformed by a British mariner, was safely accomplished, and after nearly three years' absence he returned to Plymouth, the richest man in the kingdom.

Of course there were others besides Francis Drake who made prey of the Peruvian treasure-ships, but none who succeeded so splendidly; and he may be accepted as their representative in so far as to render unnecessary the following out of their chequered careers.

Moreover, there was another phase of this chase of the Spanish galleons which still needs to be touched upon. I have already pointed out that

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of galleons there were two kinds, freight carriers and ships of war. It was with the latter kind that Drake and his associates had to contend when, in the summer of 1588, the prematurely styled 'invincible' Armada, consisting of no less than two hundred and thirty galleons, galeasses, carracks, and other craft, bore down upon England in its imposing crescent formation.

There is no need to rehearse the story of that famous fight, which continued through days and nights of thrilling anxiety, until at last the elements came to the aid of the Englishman, just when they were well-nigh spent with their almost superhuman exertions, and completed the demoralisation of the mightiest naval force that ever the world had seen.

Throughout this tremendous struggle Drake bore the leading part. To him more than to any other was due the glorious result whereby the sceptre of the seas fell from the hand of Spain into the hands of England, where it has ever since remained, for in the chase and conquest of the Spanish galleons, little as Queen Elizabeth or her 'sturdy little pirate,' Sir Francis Drake, imagined it, England laid broad and deep the foundations of her maritime supremacy.



CHAPTER V.

THE QUEST FOR A NORTH-WEST PASSAGE.

THE story of accidental discoveries of great importance, made by persons who had other objects in view, would be one of the most interesting chapters in the history of human progress. While prosecuting fruitless search for the imaginary philosopher's stone, the alchemists of the middle ages chanced upon many valuable processes and compounds in chemistry; and in equally vain endeavours to solve the problem of perpetual motion, ingenious inventors have worked out no small number of practicable mechanical devices. It was when sailing westward to find a shorter route to that marvellous Zipangu of which Marco Polo had heard at the court of Kublai-Khan, that Christopher Columbus found the continent of America barring his way, and was fain to discover it instead.

Control of trade with the Orient has from the

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remotest antiquity been coveted by western nations as a prime source of wealth. Mercantile communities engaged in carrying Eastern freight invariably prospered, and the greatest cities of ancient time owed much of their splendour to the rich traffic. Alexander the Great, Tamerlane, Mohammed, Caliph Omar, and other great military rulers had keen eyes for the commerce of the golden East; and when Mecca, the Holy City, was at the height of its glory, the bright chintzes and snowy muslins of Bengal, the brilliant shawls of Cashmere, the savoury spices of Malabar, the flashing diamonds of Golconda, the iridescent pearls of Ceylon, and the gauzy silks of China made the merchants' booths places of sore temptation for the pious pilgrims.

Then the discovery of a path to India by the Cape of Good Hope changed the course of trade between Europe and Asia. The golden tide now swept the shores of Spain and Portugal, and those kingdoms suddenly rose out of their obscurity into commercial importance, vying in opulence, political weight, and maritime enterprise with the proudest nations of the day.

But the navigators of those times had little liking for the stormy passage round the Cape

whose pacific name was so inconsistent with the treatment usually meted out to them there, and they came to the conviction that across the untracked waters of the Atlantic lay the shortest and best way to the riches of the East.

All the earlier expeditions of discovery from Europe to the shores of the western continent had their origin in this idea. It was while hunting for an all-sea route to China that John Cabot discovered the coast of Newfoundland and the mouth of the St Lawrence, in the reign of Henry VII.; and from his day down to the year 1854, when Captain M'Clure, while achieving the feat, also proved beyond a peradventure the utter uselessness of the passage for commercial purposes, the belief in such a highway and the determination to discover it led to the loss of many precious lives, and the expenditure on the part of Great Britain alone of over one million pounds sterling.

The list of those who, under the banner of England, imitated the example of John Cabot is a long and inspiring one. Sebastian, his son, followed in 1498. Then came Robert Thorne, of Bristol (1527); Master Hore (1536); and Master Michael Lok (1545) of London—men who knew 'cosmographie' and the 'weighty and sub-

stantial reasons for a discovery even to the north pole.' Next we have some more familiar names: Frobisher (1576); Sir Humphrey Gilbert (1583); James Davis (1585); the ill-fated Henry Hudson (1607); Sir Thomas Button (1612); Baffin and Bylot (1615); Fox and James (1631), and so on, a glorious muster-roll of heroes of the quarter-deck, whose memories have been perpetuated by their names being given to the bays they entered, the straits they passed through, or the capes they sighted.

Bearing in mind how miserable were the craft they sailed in compared with the modern specimens of marine architecture, and how imperfect was their equipment, the achievements of these dauntless searchers into the mystery of the sullen North call for our warmest admiration. Now breaking through the icy fetters which fain would bind them fast, then being chained by them in seemingly hopeless captivity; at one time big with hope of having hit upon the passage, only to be beaten back by the terrific storms and irresistible berg-laden currents that held guard over it—these men never faltered in their faith, never despaired of final success.

Among those who won high places in the honour

list of arctic explorers by their daring and persistence in striving to penetrate the fastnesses of the Frost King were Sir John Ross, Sir Edward Parry, Captain Buchan, and Sir George Back. But the hero above all others, without question, was Sir John Franklin, one of the noblest navigators that ever faced the terrors of the deep.

Born in 1786, with an innate longing for the sea, Franklin, whose parents wanted him to be a clergyman, was sent to Lisbon on a small merchant ship when a mere boy, in the hope of curing him of his romantic notions. But the experience had precisely the contrary effect. He returned home more than ever charmed with a sailor's life, and nothing else would satisfy him than an appointment in the navy. Yielding to his earnest entreaties, his friends procured this for him, and at the age of fourteen he had the pleasure of pacing the quarter-deck of the fine sixty-four gun *Polyphemus*.

His life on board ship had no lack of exciting incident from the start, as he was one of those who helped Lord Nelson to win the great naval battle of Copenhagen; he had a sharp taste of shipwreck in the southern Pacific; and assisted Commodore Dance to put to inglorious rout

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Admiral Linois's fleet in the Strait of Malacca. He was mentioned in the despatches as 'evincing very conspicuous zeal and activity' at the battle of Trafalgar; he was wounded in the gunboat attack on New Orleans in December 1814, and again honorably mentioned in the despatches; and finally, when peace was proclaimed, and there were no more foes to fight, his adventurous, energetic spirit loathing inactivity, he went off as second in command of an expedition despatched to find the north pole.

Although he did not find the north pole, Franklin acquitted himself so well that he was shortly after his return put in chief command of an expedition which made a marvellous journey overland from Hudson Bay to the mouth of the Coppermine River, and thence in frail bark canoes eastward along the dreadful coast, where beetling cliffs alternated with glistening glaciers for hundreds of miles—a journey, it has been said, which must always take rank as one of the most daring and hazardous exploits ever accomplished in the interest of geographical research.

The sufferings endured by the explorer and his party were beyond all description; yet so firm was his belief in the North Passage, and

so intense his ardour for its discovery, that in 1825 he took command of a similar expedition. This time, however, there were no hardships to speak of, and the possibility of the passage was proved so far as it could be from the shore.

All that now remained was to prove it by sea, and in the year 1845 the great explorer was given the opportunity. With two specially prepared ships, the *Erebus* and *Terror*, provisioned for three years, equipped in the most complete manner possible, and manned and officered by carefully selected men to the number of 134 in all, Sir John Franklin sailed from England on 19th May, in the full confidence that, entering the arctic regions through Baffin Bay, he would emerge at Behring Strait, with the secret so long and jealously guarded wrested from the ice king's mighty grasp.

On the 26th of July following the two ships were seen, made fast to the ice in Melville Bay, by the captain of a whaler from Hull, who had a visit from some of the officers. So far as is known, they were never sighted again. Although traces of them were discovered many years afterwards, there is little more than mere conjecture as to the subsequent history of the entire ex-

pedition. Despite its leader's unwavering faith, dauntless courage, and well-nigh superhuman endurance of hardships that would have appalled a thousand other men, victory remained with the ruthless North, and the passage still continued untraversed.

If the conjectured course of the ill-fated expedition at all approach the truth, there is nothing more pathetic in the whole record of human enterprise. It would seem that good progress was made during the summer of 1845, the winter passed as pleasantly as could be expected, and the succeeding summer put to such good purpose in achieving further advance, that they had got almost within sight of success when the pitiless grip of winter fastened upon them, never again to relax.

'To winter in the pack,' says Captain Markham, 'is known happily only to a few. To pass two successive winters in the ice is an experience that has fortunately been vouchsafed to fewer still; yet the brave explorers of the *Erebus* and *Terror* were destined to pass, not only one, but two long, weary, successive winters helplessly beset and firmly frozen up in their icy bondage.

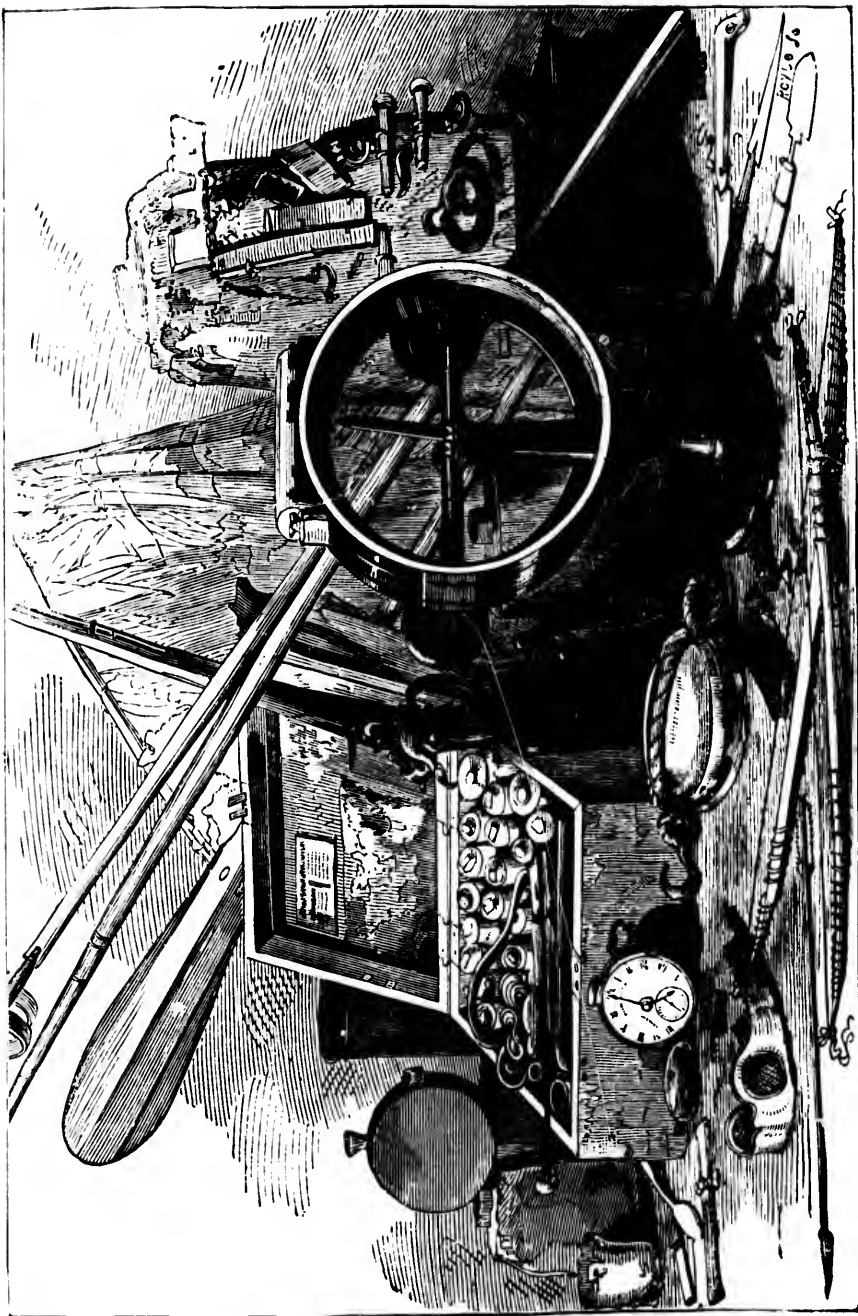
In May of 1847 a sledge party under Lieutenant Gore left the ships, and made their way to King

William Island, whence they were able to see in the distance the North American continent, and to realise that only a comparatively short channel blocked with ice lay between them and the success for which they had suffered so much. Depositing a record, which was found by the M'Clintock expedition twelve years later, they hastened back to the ships with the joyful tidings, only to find their beloved leader, who had so often before been face to face with death and come off scatheless, now fighting his last battle with the relentless foe. He had scarce time to be assured that the supreme ambition of his life had been achieved, that what old Thomas Purchas pronounced 'the only thing whereby a notable mind might be made famous' was practically accomplished before, on the 11th of June 1847, he passed peacefully away.

As to the rest of the unfortunate expedition, it would appear that in the following April they abandoned their ships, and set out for the Great Fish River on foot, hoping there to meet with Indians who would help them, but they all drooped and died by the way, leaving little or no trace of their course.

Everything that human forethought and exertion could devise or accomplish was done to discover





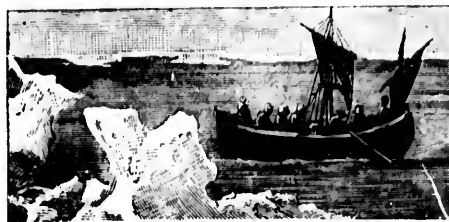
Relics of the Franklin Expedition.—P. 90.

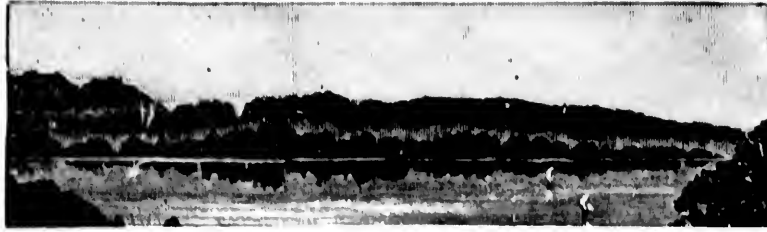
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and rescue the missing expedition, but the various searching parties sent out returned but little wiser than they went.

Six years after Sir John Franklin's death, Sir Robert M'Clure succeeded in making his way from the Pacific Ocean to the Atlantic, partly by vessel, partly by sledge, and in so doing, settled for ever in the negative the feasibility of a north-west passage for vessels.

Seeing that to England rightfully belongs the first place among the nations that have expended life and treasure in seeking a short route to the Orient through the 'thrilling region of thick-ribbed ice,' how poetically just it seems that she should, after all her cruel disappointments, find a far better highway for her commerce right through her own territory, and that so long as the rails of the Canadian Pacific gleam brightly across the continent, there is no need for any other north-west passage.





CHAPTER VI.

JOHN LAW AND THE MISSISSIPPI BUBBLE.

I CAN calculate,' said the great astronomer, Sir Isaac Newton, 'the motions of wandering stars, but not the madness of the multitude.' It would indeed take not an astronomer but a prophet to predict to what heights of folly the crowd will go if they only have a leader who makes them big enough promises. What has passed into history as the 'Mississippi Bubble' is a remarkable instance of this.

When the long and splendid reign of Louis XIV. at last came to an end, it left France in a very bad way, in fact, with almost no money on hand. The whole public service reeked with corruption. The frauds of men in office, and of their allies in the trading community, had crippled the resources of the country, and brought its commerce almost to a standstill. The tillers of the soil were taxed to the utmost limits of human endurance, and

the regent, the Duke of Orleans, was at his wits' end as to how to carry on the affairs of state with an empty treasury and no visible means of filling it.

In this emergency there came to him a middle-aged man with a strange history, and a still stranger scheme. The son of a wealthy Edinburgh goldsmith, John Law, in the heyday of his youth, went up to London, where he took high rank among the fops and gallants, squandered all his fortune, killed a man in a duel, was put in prison for the offence, and contrived to effect his escape. For the next twenty years he scoured the Continent, seeking in a clever and systematic course of gambling to retrieve his fortunes, and to prepare the foundation for the great enterprise he was planning in his singularly inventive and daring mind. Firmly convinced of the soundness of the financial theories he had conceived, he expounded them to all the princes of Europe in turn. But he met with slight encouragement from any of them. 'I am not powerful enough to ruin myself!' was the chilling reply of the king of Sicily. Louis XIV., although his exchequer was nearing exhaustion, took no stock in the Scotch adventure. At length in the regent he found a sympathetic listener, through whose influence he was allowed,

in May 1716, to establish a circulating and discount bank with a capital of 6,000,000 livres.

This bank at once had very great success, and was of such real service, that in the course of a year its notes were actually worth more than gold and silver money, which was liable to depreciation at the whim of the crown. The favour Law thus won with statesmen, courtiers, and common folk made easy the adoption of a greater project, the Mississippi scheme, which he promptly proceeded to set on foot.

It got its name from the noble river which ran through the richest part of the French colony of Louisiana, extending from the Great Lakes to the Gulf of Mexico. France was by this time beginning to grow somewhat tired of her American colonies. They were costing her a mint of money and making little return. Law now revived the old idea that under the prolific soil of the vast vague territory of Louisiana there was boundless wealth in gold, silver, copper, and other valuable metals. He proposed that a company should be formed to develop this wealth, that miners and traders should be sent out, and that with the proceeds of their toil the French exchequer, so woefully depleted, should be replenished. His proposal

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was eagerly accepted, and in 1717 the *Compagnie d'Occident* was formed, with a capital of 100,000,000 livres. Soon afterwards this company was united with the bank, which then blossomed out into the Royal Bank of France.

By means which it would take too long to describe, the shares of this company were put upon the market in such a way as to awaken a spirit of the wildest speculation among the French people from peer to peasant. In the year 1719 the company was reorganised, and granted the exclusive right of trading to the East Indies, China, and the South Seas, the name being changed to the *Compagnie des Indes*. So great became the demand for its shares that Law created fifty thousand fresh ones, and then three hundred thousand more, promising annual dividends thereon of 120 per cent. They were all taken up within a few weeks. The country people crowded up to Paris to invest their hard-earned savings, while every second citizen joined in the insane rush. Mr Fox Bourne tells us that Law's house in the Rue de Quincampoix was besieged from morning to night by an excited rabble of dukes, duchesses, merchants, milkmaids, and all other representatives of the *noblesse* and *bourgeoisie*. So many were

there crushed to death or maimed for life that Law had to remove to the Place Vendome, and at length to take the great Hotel de Soissons, the garden of which, covering several acres, scarcely sufficed to accommodate the frantic speculators.

All day long were the antechambers of the financial hero of the hour crowded with persons of all ranks, who waited for their turn to obtain the coveted shares.

'My son was looking for a Duchess to escort my grand-daughter to Genoa,' writes Madame, the regent's mother. 'Send and choose one at Madame Law's,' said I. 'You will find them all sitting in her drawing-room.'

So as soon as shares were obtained they were taken into the great market in the garden, there to be traded with among the thousands who were ready to pay any price that was asked for them, and who generally sold them again at yet higher rates. This turmoil of speculation, which lasted for a whole year, has hardly a parallel in the history of financial follies.

Curious and entertaining stories have been preserved of what happened during the height of the mania. A lucky cobbler, whose stall stood near Law's headquarters, gained 200 livres a

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day by providing desk accommodation for the speculators; and a hunchback, whose deformity was his only stock-in-trade, made a small fortune by turning himself into a movable writing-desk. A lady, who had long in vain sought access to Law's counting-house, devised an original plan for meeting him. Ordering her coachman to run up against a post as soon as he could meet the great financier in the streets, she drove about persistently for three days before Law came in sight. At last she caught sight of him approaching. 'Upset me now!' she cried. 'Upset me!' The coachman obeyed, and his mistress was tumbled out on the pavement. Law at once ran gallantly to her assistance, and then learned that the lady suffered from nothing but want of Mississippi shares, and so he was induced to allot her a number.

Hardly less ingenious, though not so successful, was another lady, who, failing to secure an invitation to a house where Law was dining, drove past the door with her coachman and footman shouting out 'Fire! fire!' at the top of their voices. Of course all the guests, and Law among them, rushed to the windows to see where the fire was. The moment the lady saw Law she

sprang out of her carriage and tried to speak to him, but he, seeing through her ruse, at once vanished.

Of course, in the midst of this furious speculation, there were those who, by quick and daring action, suddenly sprang from poverty to great wealth. The list of *Mississippians*, as those were called who thus distinguished themselves, contained the names of more than one hundred persons, who, during the continuance of the mania, acquired fortunes exceeding 20,000,000 livres. André, the son of a Montelimart skinner, overwhelmed by debt in the year 1718, and so utterly worthless that one of his creditors offered notes of hand signed by him to the amount of 10,000 livres for a breakfast, in 1720 found himself possessor of 70,000,000 livres. Dupin, a servant of the banker Tourton, retired with 50,000,000 livres. A Savoyard named Chambery, a porter and furniture-polisher, amassed 40,000,000 livres; and a bar-tender, named Gabriel Bourdon, realised 30,000,000 livres, went over to England, and returned after the excitement had subsided, to play in Paris the *rôle* of milord, with a carriage and servants.

One of the best stories is told in connection

with Law himself. One day his coachman appeared before him, accompanied by two capable-looking men. 'I am going to leave, monsieur,' said he, 'and you will need some one in my place. Here are two men whom I know, and can recommend. Take your choice. *I will engage the other for myself.*'

All ordinary occupations were neglected during this period of frenzy, save those by which the shrewdest of the people grew wealthy in catering for the extravagant ways of living that prevailed. The most lavish of luxury was indulged in. Paris was flooded with pictures, jewellery, and the like, which were sold for fabulous sums.

But of course this state of things could not endure long. It was inevitable that Law's scheme would soon reach the end of its tether. It never had any substantial foundation, and presently it became necessary to bolster it up, first with expedients to sustain the public interest, and later on with edicts forbidding the holding of gold and silver in large quantities, in order that the bank might have control of the specie in the country.

One of the expedients resorted to was to bring from the banks of the Mississippi eleven Indians as specimens of the inhabitants, the chief of the

party being a woman who was reputed to be a queen of a renowned tribe called the People of the Sun. They created quite a *furor* by their appearance, and among other things hunted down before the eyes of the king and court a stag which was let loose in the Bois de Boulogne. They also gave exhibitions of their native dances in the Theatre Italien.

Now, while the public were amusing themselves with these trifles, some farseeing men were arranging a marriage for her dusky Majesty which would prove a bond of union between the two countries. She was youthful and attractive, and had but one drawback—viz., that as the daughter of the Sun she enjoyed the privilege of killing her husband whenever she wearied of him. Notwithstanding this, there were many suitors for the fascinating Indian's hand, and from among them she chose a handsome sergeant of the guards named Dubois. The marriage was duly solemnised, and the happy pair set sail for their domains. But, alas for poor Dubois the First, King of Missouri! He had hardly landed when his faithless spouse had him killed; and probably he was eaten by her tribe.

In spite of expedients and edicts, however, Law's

mighty fabric began to totter, and wilder panic to take the place of wild speculation. The following lines, which were sung by a mob, expressed the experience of the majority who had yielded themselves to the gambling fever :

Lundi, j'achetai des actions ;
 Mardi, je gagnai des millions ;
 Mercredi, j'ornai mon menage ;
 Jeudi, je pris un equipage ;
 Vendredi, je m'en fus en bal ;
 Et Samedi a l'hopital.

The English being somewhat like this :

On Monday I bought share on share ;
 On Tuesday I was a millionaire ;
 On Wednesday I took a grand abode ;
 On Thursday in my carriage I rode ;
 On Friday drove to the opera ball ;
 On Saturday went to the pauper's hall.

Of course Law himself, no less than his mischievous system, came in for a great deal of hard feeling ; and one day his carriage, which fortunately for him had no occupant, was set upon by an angry mob and broken to pieces right in front of the Palais de Justice, where parliament was then holding a morning session. The President, having left the chamber for a moment, was told what had happened. Hastening back, he struck a

dramatic attitude, and recited the following impromptu verse :

‘Messieurs, messieurs, bonne nouvelle !
Le carrosse de Law est reduit en cannelle.’

It has been well translated thus :

‘Sirs, sirs, great news ! What is it ? It’s—
They’ve smashed Law’s carriage into bits.’

But the collapse of the great Mississippi bubble was no subject for joking. In proportion as the elation and extravagance produced by its growth were great beyond precedent, in like manner were the depression and ruin wrought by its explosion woful beyond description. ‘It is inconceivable,’ writes a contemporary historian, ‘to those who were witness of the horrors of those times, and who look back upon them now as on a dream, that a sudden revolution did not break out ; that Law and the regent did not perish by a tragical death.’

As it was, utterly ruined and disgraced, Law fled the country, and died a pauper’s death at Venice, leaving poor, over-credulous France burdened with a debt of more than three billion livres, and with her trade and capital so disorganised that the mischief could never be adequately repaired. Such was the lamentable result of the famous and unfortunate Mississippi Bubble.



CHAPTER VII.

THE DARIEN EXPEDITION.

THE Isthmus of Panama, or Darien, is beyond a doubt one of the most interesting, as it is one of the most important, bits of *terra firma* on this round globe. The connecting link between the continents of North and South America, it is also the barrier that divides the Atlantic from the Pacific Ocean, and in fact, one side of the world from the other. From the time of its discovery and occupation by the Spaniards, it has been a matter of general belief that whoever had command of this narrow neck of land held the key of the commerce of the world. Here would naturally be concentrated the trade between the Atlantic and the Pacific coasts of America. Moreover, it would necessarily be an important stage in the shortest route between Europe and the Indies, as well as the mighty islands lying far to the south of the equator.

Little wonder, then, that the Spaniards wanted to keep the isthmus to themselves, and always did their very best, cowards though they were except when greatly in the majority, to make it eminently unpleasant for anybody who sought to share its advantages with them: and in fine and striking contrast to their miserable dog-in-the-manger policy—for they really put their splendid opportunities to little use—was the spirit in which William Paterson conceived the famous Darien project that played so prominent a part in the history of Scotland, at the close of the seventeenth century.

This William Paterson was a very different type of man from that notorious speculator, John Law, whose doings have been already told in this book, and yet his vast project proved hardly less disastrous in its outcome than his. He is generally credited with being the founder of the Bank of England, and this is in large measure true. He certainly deserves the entire honour for laying down the only true basis for a bank-note currency—viz., that the bank issuing notes should always have on hand a sufficient supply of gold to enable it to redeem in gold all the notes that the daily operation of business might bring to its counter.

He was one of the twenty-four directors at the opening of the bank; but appears to have sold out not long after, and with his money in hand, to have looked about him for some way of investing it that would be for the public good.

Now those were the days of vexatious monopolies and irritating restrictions in commerce. The trade of England with the distant regions of the globe was in the jealous grasp of two great corporations—the East India Company and the African Company—which, although they were at deadly enmity with each other, heartily agreed in crushing every free-trader who dared to intrude within the limits of their territory. Paterson was an ardent free-trader. He believed his mission to be the emancipation of commerce from the hurtful restraints laid upon it by miscalculating selfishness, and it was by the creation of a great free port at the Isthmus of Darien, open to the trade of the world, that he hoped to accomplish his benevolent purpose.

Accordingly, in the year 1695, he obtained the passage through the Scottish parliament of an act for the incorporation of 'The Company of Scotland trading to Africa and the Indies,' called, for short, 'The African Company,' but popularly known as

the 'Darien Company.' This company was granted very extensive powers, and had a capital of £600,000, one-half of which, it was stipulated, must ever be held by Scotsmen residing in their own country, thus insuring the permanently national character of the undertaking.

As it turned out, however, there was no need of this provision, for when the subscription-books were opened in London, there came such a rush of applicants for shares that the stock was soon all taken up, and this so aroused the hostility of the English companies that they called upon the House of Commons to assist them in crushing their Scottish rival. The House of Commons yielded to the clamour, and by threats of proceedings so alarmed the London subscribers that they all backed out and forfeited their holdings.

This hostile action roused the national spirit of Scotland. The English had withdrawn—well, what of that? Scotland would go on, and keep to herself the glory and all the other rewards of the great national undertaking. In proof of their earnestness, the Scots thereupon subscribed for another £100,000 of stock, making £400,000 in all. Subsequently, an attempt was made to place the balance of the stock in Holland, but

again the machinations of the English companies interfered, and the whole burden was left to be borne by Scotland.

Harassed and delayed by this hostility and other causes, it was not until 1698 that the company proceeded to carry out the main purpose of its formation. In the month of July a little fleet of three vessels, having on board over a thousand picked men, set sail from Leith, amid bright sunshine and the cheers and prayers of a vast assemblage gathered on the wharves to bid them 'God speed.'

William Paterson's heart was full of joy and hope as he now saw before him the prospect of the early realisation of his long-cherished design. Hitherto the selfish Spaniards and the hardly less selfish British had sought to monopolise the commerce of the New World. He had in view nothing less than the complete reversal of such a policy. The ships of all nations were to be perfectly free to the new port he would found at Darien. At that favoured spot, the merchandise from all countries might concentrate, and Scotland calmly take her seat as the great queen of commerce, showering the blessings of abundance around her.

Such was his dream—a noble one in every way. Alas! that it should have failed so pitifully of fulfilment! After an uneventful voyage, the vessels reached the isthmus in November, and landed their passengers at a projecting point of the Gulf of Darien, which had previously been selected as the site of the fort and settlement.

The spot was in many respects well chosen. It was a long peninsula edged with rock, stretching southwards nearly half way across the gulf, and united to the mainland at the north by a narrow neck of land easily fortified. At the western point a strong fort was built to command the gulf, which the buccaneers commended as 'a very crabbed hold.'

The peninsula was occupied as a fortified centre, not for settlement, it being arid and barren. An indefinite district stretching inland was to form the colony, and to bear the name of New Caledonia. Two sites for towns were selected—the one to be called New Edinburgh, the other New St Andrews. At the time of the adventurers' arrival the weather was genial and healthy, the vegetation luxuriant and beautiful, the natives kind and hospitable, and everything seemed to smile upon the enterprise and promise complete success.

But the seeds of failure were present from the

start. Whatever little the English knew about planting colonies, the Scots knew nothing at all; and there was a pitiful lack of the right kind of organisation about the expedition. There was no arrangement for government and the preservation of order. All had apparently been left to chance. In the same haphazard fashion had the goods for barter been selected, and they were a marvellously mixed and upon the whole highly unsuitable collection of commodities, such as axes, iron wedges, knives; smiths', carpenters', and coopers' tools; barrels, guns, pistols, combs, shoes, hats, paper, pipes, &c.—one vessel carrying over £4000 worth of these articles.

Hardly had the colonists established themselves on dry land, when dissensions within and dangers without made their appearance. The party was composed of very various elements. Along with political enthusiasts and men of rigid piety and virtue, were men of quite another stamp—hardy sailors with consciences as tough and weather-beaten as their bodies, and who had learned their seamanship among the buccaneers; in plain words, pirates who were ready for any deed of blood or rapine. These 'tarpaulins,' as Paterson called them, soon gained that ascendancy which the bold

and reckless are apt to have, and their influence, aided by the fascination of a wild, lawless life, had a very demoralising effect, especially upon the young men of the expedition.

The leaders had hard work keeping order, and every day the task became more difficult; while, to add to their trouble, they presently came into collision with the Spaniards, who regarded them as unauthorised intruders upon their private property, for so they then considered the whole of South America. These Spaniards had considerable cities to the north, south, and east of the Scots settlement; and they did not propose to submit tamely to such an invasion. Moreover, despite the efforts of Paterson and his associates to justify their coming, and to make clear how entirely honourable were their intentions, the Dons persisted in classing them with Morgan, Sharp, Ringrose, and the other dare-devil freebooters who had not so long before stormed and sacked their treasure cities, and inflicted appalling loss of blood and bullion.

Consequently, when early in March 1699 a small vessel belonging to the company ran into the port of Cartagena for repairs, the commander and crew were immediately seized by the Spaniards, put in irons, and without much delay condemned

to death as pirates. Happily through the intervention of the British government, the sentence was not executed, but it showed plainly the temper of the real masters of the situation. The Scottish intruders could hope for no mercy at their hands, once they had a good excuse for making war upon them.

But worse even than internal dissensions and external foes were the attacks of pestilence and famine. With the approach of the hot season, the evil influences of the country and climate began to work. All that is deadly in the pestilential elements of tropical America would seem to be concentrated on the Isthmus of Darien, as the toilers on the ill-fated Panama Canal have learned to their cost. Up to the present it has defied permanent settlement by Europeans. Narrow as it is, its forests are pathless, and its dense shroud of matted and rotting vegetation, with all its animate and inanimate horrors, sullenly opposes the operations of man.

The unhappy Scotsmen, who had hoped, after finishing their fortifications, to sally forth in search of gold, found that the sad task of burying their dead, and of seeking for some addition to their rapidly diminishing store of food, demanded all

their energies. When June came without bringing any news of the expected reinforcements from Scotland, the wretched colonists decided to desert the settlement, and to set forth in three ships with no more definite object than to reach the first port whither Providence should guide them.

One of the ships got over to Jamaica. The other two made their way up to New York, where they arrived in a pitiful condition, and their crews and passengers became objects of charity to the kindly disposed people of the place.

Now just when the famine-stricken remnant of the colonists was giving up the undertaking in despair, the company at home was fitting out a second expedition. Two vessels were despatched in May 1699, four others followed in August, and a third fleet in September. Imagine the disappointment and depression of this second expedition when, on its arrival at Darien, instead of being received with true Scottish hospitality by a prosperous, happy community, there was nothing to be seen save a deserted and dismantled fort, the ruins of a village, and a graveyard sown thick with memorials of the dead! Yet they had the courage and resolution to stay, and take the chance of a happier fate than their predecessors.

But the fates, untouched by their sturdy spirit, were not disposed to deal any more kindly with them than with the others. The same causes of failure were present and no less potent. In addition thereto, the sluggish Spaniards were at last bestirring themselves, and with characteristic deliberation preparing an armament on the other side of the isthmus, which in due time was to close around and destroy the little settlement, as a huge bear might crush a terrier in its mighty embrace.

Each day the gloom deepened, and although the Scots, learning of the projected attack, sought to ward it off by striking the first blow, and did distinguish themselves by putting to flight a much superior force at Tubacanti on the river Santa Maria, yet when the victors returned laden with spoils, it was to find the poor little colony blockaded by a number of men-of-war.

There was no alternative but surrender; and the Spaniards, only too glad to be rid of their unwelcome captives, willingly allowed them to get away as expeditiously as they could manage. This capitulation was the virtual destruction of the great Indian and African Company, as well as the colony it had attempted to plant, and of the

grand scheme for a world's free port. There was fierce indignation felt in Scotland at the loss both of money and of national honour the lamentable failure of the enterprise involved; but there seemed no way of redeeming either, and so the Darien Expedition went to join the catalogue of famous though futile undertakings.



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CHAPTER VIII.

THE SOUTH SEA BUBBLE.

THAT volatile, sanguine France should lose her head over the Mississippi Bubble, even to the extent she did, is far easier to understand than that sober, stolid England should be tempted into any similar folly. And yet the Rue de Quincampoix in the very vortex of the Mississippi madness did not present a scene of wilder speculation than 'Change Alley in London, when the South Sea mania was at its height. Oddly enough, also, the two bubbles expanded within a few years of each other, and burst not far apart. Happily, however, the consequences did not prove quite so disastrous in England as they did in France.

The beginning of the English bubble was in the year 1711, when good Queen Anne was persuaded to grant a royal charter to the 'Governor and Company of Merchants of Great Britain trading

to the South Seas.' The formation of this company was the direct result of the extravagant stories told by the buccancers and freebooters who had followed in the path of Drake, of the fortunes that were to be made by shrewd ventures to the coasts of South America. All the world knew of the immense wealth derived by Spain from her South American dominions, and there was no lack of bold and restless spirits eager to engage in any enterprise thither which promised rich reward, and so when the Earl of Oxford, then Lord High Treasurer, lent his powerful influence to the support of a scheme for the incorporation of the proprietors of a portion of the national debt for the purpose of carrying on a trade to the South Seas, not only was a very comprehensive charter secured without difficulty, but the stock of the new company at once took a high place in the confidence of the community.

The rights and privileges conferred upon the company were simply preposterous. No ships but their own were suffered to trade within the vast territories assigned them on penalty of forfeiture of both ship and merchandise, together with double their value; and they had the power to take by force of arms and treat as a prize any vessel

infringing upon their monopoly. Moreover, all the commercial rights and extraordinary powers with which they were vested were declared to be perpetual.

The capital of the company was at first nearly ten millions of pounds sterling. A few years later it was increased to twelve millions; and as the interest paid upon the stock by the government amounted to more than six hundred thousand pounds per annum, there was a certainty of decent dividends, even though the results of the few trading ventures that were made to the South Seas were utterly insignificant in comparison with the expectations which had been excited in the public mind.

For some time the affairs of the company were prudently and economically managed, and the stock advanced steadily until it was worth 114 per cent. Then there appeared upon the scene a remarkable man who has good claims to be considered the father of modern stock-jobbing, and whose statue ought certainly to be placed in some prominent position commanding a view of the Stock Exchange, or of Wall Street. This was John Blount or Blunt, bred to the obscure position of scrivener, but endowed by nature with many notable quali-

ties. His manners were graceful and insinuating, and his air and address peculiarly calculated to win the confidence of the people he met. Possessing great boldness of character combined with striking originality of thought, and a readiness of conception rarely equalled, he was just the man to originate and execute some daring scheme that would set the world wondering.

His opportunity came when King George I. asked the House of Commons to consider some means of reducing the national debt of Great Britain, which had grown so large as to become burdensome to the people. Blunt at once appeared with a plan that the South Sea Company should purchase the debt from the persons by whom it was held, giving in exchange therefor their own stock, which was to be issued by authority of parliament.

He submitted his project to the Chancellor of the Exchequer, who fell in with it at once, and supported it so strongly that the ministry of the day had it adopted, in spite of strong protests from several leading members of the House of Lords, who, with true insight, contended that the measure was certain to impoverish thousands, although it might enrich a few. Accordingly, in the year 1720, an act was passed authorising the company

to take over by purchase or subscription the entire national debt, then exceeding £30,000,000 sterling.

Having succeeded in this step, Blunt's next proceeding was to boom the South Sea stock, which he did by having secret agents circulate the most rose-coloured reports concerning the commercial privileges and opportunities of the company. So successful were these and other similar devices employed, that the most frantic eagerness was shown by the public to obtain the stock; and its price rose by leaps and bounds to 300 per cent., then 400, then 500, and so on day after day as the mania grew wilder, until the incredible figure of 1000 per cent. was reached, at which price it was eagerly bought and reluctantly sold, except by the very few who had kept their heads in the midst of the general infatuation, and perceived the inevitable sequel of such folly.

John Blunt, the whilom scrivener, was now the hero of the hour. His low birth was conveniently overlooked, and the title of baronet conferred upon him, the more effectually to conceal it. The highest members of the aristocracy vied with one another in showering attention upon the fortunate fellow, and the populace received him everywhere with a favour that was little short of adoration.

A frenzy for speculation more furious than that which but a few months before had done so much damage in the French capital took possession of London, and 'Change Alley became the vortex of a human whirlpool, the like of which England had never witnessed before, and is not likely ever to see again.

From morning till night this narrow street was thronged with an excited crowd of men and women of all ages and rank, who forgot their differences of opinion and station, and joined together in the fierce pursuit of fortune. Statesmen deserted their chambers, and clergymen their studies, to throw themselves into the arena of stock-gambling. Whigs and Tories buried the political hatchet for the nonce and mingled in friendly intercourse, exulting together when their stocks advanced, or groaning in unison if they fell. Merchants forsook their offices and tradesmen their counters, the doctors neglected their patients, and the lawyers allowed their clients to wait, while all were whirled giddily along with the rushing stream of speculation that was to bear so many out, to be for ever engulfed in the ocean of bankruptcy.

A street ballad of the day thus graphically hits off the situation :

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The South Sea Bubble.—P. 120.

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Then stars and garters did appear
Among the meaner rabble,
To buy and sell, to see and hear
The Jews and Gentiles squabble.

The greatest ladies thither came,
And plied in chariots daily ;
Or pawned their jewels for a sum
To venture in the Alley.

The South Sea Bubble was only the greatest among a crowd of great bubbles. There is extant a list of nearly two hundred bubble companies started in this year of bubbles, their nominal capital varying from one million to ten million pounds apiece, and the total of the whole exceeding three hundred million pounds.

'Any impudent impostor,' says a contemporary historian, 'whilst the delusion was at its height, needed only to hire a room at some coffee-house near Exchange Alley, and open a subscription-book for somewhat relative to commerce, manufacture, plantation, or some supposed invention either hatched out of his own brain or else stolen from somebody else, having first advertised it in the newspapers of the preceding day, and he might in a few hours find subscribers for one or two millions of imaginary stock. Many of the sub-

scribers were far from believing these projects feasible. It was enough for their purpose that there would soon be a premium on the receipts for those subscriptions, when they generally got rid of them in the crowded alleys to others more credulous than themselves.'

Some of the companies thus promoted were for objects so ridiculous that it is not easy for us at this present day to understand how any sane persons could entertain their proposals for a moment, let alone invest money in them. One company, with a capital of £3,000,000, was 'for insuring to all masters and mistresses the losses they may sustain by servants;' another was 'for furnishing merchants and others with watches;' a third, with a capital of £1,000,000, was 'for a wheel of perpetual motion;' a fourth was for making salt water fresh; a fifth was launched by a clergyman for the extraordinary object of importing a number of large jackasses from Spain, in order to improve the breed of mules in England—'as if,' Mr Fox Bourne grimly adds, 'there were not already jackasses enough in London.'

So wildly absurd were many of these undertakings that, according to Mr Fox Bourne, it is hard to say whether it was in jest or in earnest

that an advertisement was issued, announcing that 'at a certain place on Tuesday next, books will be opened for a subscription of £2,000,000 for the invention of melting sawdust and chips, and casting them into clean deal boards without cracks or knots.'

For eight months the mania raged. Wealth changed hands with bewildering rapidity, and was steadily concentrated by the handful of knaves to whom the thousands of fools were willing dupes.

The great parent of all these preposterous and delusive stocks at last grew envious of their success; and supposing that their destruction would clear the field for the South Sea stock, resolved upon their annihilation. Influence was accordingly brought to bear upon the government for the institution of legal proceedings against them as being contrary to the royal proclamation of June 1720, which had hitherto been disregarded openly and with impunity.

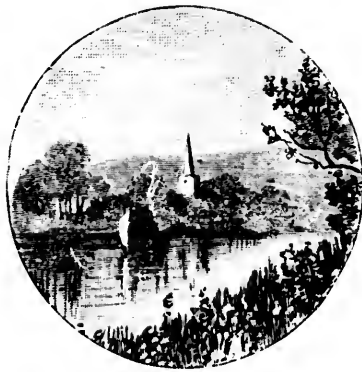
The prosecutions were duly commenced, and at once every bubble company against which they were directed collapsed and vanished like a soap-bubble at the prick of a pin. 'Change Alley quickly became deserted, and the myriads of fatuous speculators which had thronged it found themselves suddenly brought face to face with bankruptcy and

beggary. Hundreds of families were for ever ruined, and gloom and misery everywhere prevailed.

By the irony of fate it chanced that the very means which the South Sea Company had taken to crush their rivals brought about their own downfall. Only by basely fraudulent methods had the stock been maintained at its unnatural height, and when men, after the mania had somewhat subsided, began to examine more carefully into the company's affairs, these frauds were revealed, with the result that in a short time the stock fell from 1000 per cent. to 150.

A fresh wave of ruin now swept over unfortunate England. The whole nation was affected by the mighty shock to public credit. From being the idols of the populace, Blunt and his associates became objects of the most intense popular hatred and obloquy. King George was hurriedly summoned back from a holiday in Germany, as there seemed actual danger of a revolution. On the assembling of parliament the directors of the South Sea Company were arraigned, and a thorough inquiry made into their affairs. As the fruits of the inquiry, they were stripped of all their ill-gotten gains, and punished in other ways for their misdeeds. Blunt disappeared into ignominious obscurity; and

although England was rich enough and strong enough to recover in due time from the injury he had done her, still there is no doubt but that her financial position would be stronger to-day had she never heard of him nor of the South Sea Bubble.





CHAPTER IX.

THE TULIP MANIA IN HOLLAND.

REGARDING ribbons, Charles Dickens sagely remarks in the *Christmas Carol* that they are so cheap you can make a brave show with them for sixpence. The same thing may be said nowadays of tulips. So easily may they be procured, and with such little difficulty cultivated in our gardens, that one can hardly understand how the bulb from which these gorgeous flowers spring could ever have commanded the price of precious stones. Yet such was the case in the land of the Dutch in the first third of the seventeenth century. Could Conrad Gesner have been able to forecast the future, and get a prophetic glimpse of the woes his praises of the flower he saw for the first time in the garden of Counsellor Herwart were fated to bring upon his countrymen, he would no doubt have kept his discovery to himself.

Counsellor Herwart lived in Augsburg, and

was famous for his collection of rare exotics. Among them were some brilliant flowers grown from the bulbs sent him by a friend in Constantinople, where their beauties had long been appreciated.

Gesner on his return home spread the praises of this plant so effectually, that in the course of the next few years tulips were much sought after by the wealthy, especially in Germany and Holland. Rich folk at Amsterdam did not begrudge sending direct to Constantinople for bulbs, and were quite willing to pay big prices for them.

As years went by the tulip continued to increase in reputation, until it was as incumbent upon persons of fortune to have a collection of them as to keep a carriage.

Nor was the interest in them confined to the wealthy. The rage for their possession soon spread to the middle classes of society, and merchants and shopkeepers, even of moderate means, began to vie with each other in the size and strangeness of their collection, and in the preposterous prices paid for bulbs. A trader at Haarlem was known to pay one-half of his fortune for a single root, not with the design of selling it at a profit, but simply to cultivate it in his own conservatory for the admiration of his friends.

In explanation of this extraordinary interest in a single variety of plant, the following lines of Cowley may be quoted :

The tulip next appeared, all over gray,
But wanton, full of pride, and full of play ;
The world can't show a dye but here has place ;
Nay, by new mixtures, she can change her face ;
Purple and gold are both beneath her care,
The richest needlework she loves to wear ;
Her only study is to please the eye,
And to outshine the rest in finery.

But, poetic as the portrait is, the prose of Beckmann probably gets nearer the mark. 'There are few plants,' he says, 'which acquire through accident, weakness, or disease, so many variegations as the tulip. When uncultivated and in its natural state, it is almost of one colour, has large leaves and an extraordinarily long stem. When it has been weakened by cultivation it becomes more agreeable in the eyes of the florist. The petals are then paler, smaller, and more diversified in hue ; and the leaves acquire a softer green colour. Thus, this masterpiece of culture, the more beautiful it turns, grows so much the weaker, so that with the greatest skill and most careful attention it can scarcely be transplanted, or even kept alive.'

Any one familiar with the modern mania for orchid growing and collecting must at once see the secret of the old-time craze for tulips, although it is not easy to understand a whole people being infected with it at once.

Yet true it is that in 1623 the rage among the Dutch for the possession of rare varieties was so great that the ordinary industries of the country fell into neglect; and the population, from the highest to the lowest ranks, embarked in the tulip trade.

Charles Mackay, to whom I am indebted for much of my information, states that prices rose rapidly, until in the year 1635 persons were known to invest a fortune of 100,000 florins on the purchase of forty roots! It became necessary to appraise the bulbs by their weight in perits—a perit being less than a grain—just as if they were as precious as diamonds, where weight is told in tiny carats.

When the mania was at its height, a tulip of the species called 'Admiral Liefken,' weighing 400 perits, was worth 4400 florins; an 'Admiral Van der Eyck' of 446 perits was worth 1260 florins. For a 'Viceroy' of 400 perits 3000 florins had to be paid; while, most precious of all, a 'Semper Augustus,' weighing but 200 perits, was thought to be very cheap at 5500 florins!

Of this last variety it is related that early in 1636 there were only two roots to be had in all Holland, and so eager were speculators to obtain them that the fee simple of twelve acres of choice building ground in Haarlem was offered for the one; and the other sold for 4600 florins, a new carriage, two fine gray horses, and a complete set of harness.

An even more remarkable case of bartering, although the values involved were not so large, is recorded by Munting, a contemporary author, who wrote a folio volume of over one thousand pages upon the tulip mania. For one single root of the rare species called the 'Viceroy,' an eager collector, who would seem to have been a country gentleman, exchanged the following articles: two lasts of wheat and four of rye, four fat oxen, eight fat swine and twelve fat sheep, two hogsheads of wine and four tuns of beer, two tons of butter and 1000 lb. of cheese, a complete bed, a suit of clothes, and a drinking cup, the total value being 2500 florins.

It is to be hoped that this worthy enthusiast did not, like the man in the Master's parable, sell quite all that he had, but retained at least sufficient to be clothed upon, and to eat, drink, and be merry

withal, and then to lie down and sleep in triumphant possession of his prize.

As is always the case with popular manias, there were some amusing incidents of which the records have been preserved. Thus in the *Travels of Blainville* it is told how a wealthy merchant, who took no little pride in his rare tulips, upon one occasion received a very valuable consignment of merchandise from the Levant. The news of its safe arrival in port was brought him by a sailor, and the merchant, in reward for the welcome message, gave its bearer a fine red herring for his breakfast.

Now this same Jack-tar, it seems, was particularly fond of onions, and noticing a bulb very like his favourite vegetable lying on the desk, he slyly seized the opportunity to slip it into his pocket, thinking it would be a very nice relish for his herring.

He got clear off with his prize, and hastened to the harbour to enjoy his breakfast, but hardly had he disappeared before the merchant missed his precious 'Semper Augustus' bulb, worth at least three thousand florins.

Great then was the commotion. Vigorous search was at once instituted. Presently a bright clerk suggested the sailor. In hot pursuit went the

merchant, followed by his employees; and lo! seated on a coil of rope at the head of the quay, they found poor, innocent Jack masticating the onion with apparent appreciation, little dreaming that the value of his breakfast would have provisioned the whole ship's crew for a twelvemonth!

As Charles Mackay puts it: Antony caused pearls to be mixed in wine to drink the health of Cleopatra, Sir Richard Whittington was as foolishly magnificent in honour of King Henry V., and Sir Thomas Gresham toasted good Queen Bess, when she opened the Royal Exchange, with a bumper of Burgundy in which a pearl had been dissolved; but the breakfast of the thieving sailor was as lavish of cost as any of them. He had an advantage, too, over his wasteful predecessors: their gems did not improve their wine, while the tulip went very well with his herring. But, alas! he had to expiate his offence by spending some months in prison.

Another good story is that related of an English traveller who was a bit of an amateur botanist. He had come to Holland knowing little or nothing of the tulip mania, and while going through the conservatories of a wealthy Dutchman he chanced upon a bulb the like of which he had never seen before.

Moved by scientific ardour, he took out his pen-

knife and peeled off the coats of the bulb until he had reduced it to half the size, and then he cut it through the middle.

At that moment the owner, whose attention had been temporarily elsewhere, pounced upon him, crying out if he knew what he was doing? 'Peeling a most extraordinary onion,' was the calm reply. 'Donder en bliksem!' roared the Dutchman. 'It's an "Admiral Van der Eyck!"' 'Oh, really!' responded the Englishman courteously. 'I must make a note of it;' and out came note-book and pencil. Enraged beyond measure, the merchant seized the astonished botanist by the collar, shouting, 'Come before the magistrate with me,' and in spite of all remonstrances, dragged him into court, where, to his profound dismay, he learned that the 'most extraordinary onion' was worth four thousand florins, and he was lodged in prison until he gave security for the payment of this amount. It need hardly be said that henceforth botany ceased to have the attraction for him it once possessed.

Tulip mania reached its zenith in the year 1636, when the belief seemed to have seized upon the Dutch that the passion for the bulb would last for ever, and that the wealthy from all parts of the world would send to Holland for them, and pay

whatever prices were asked. Nobles, citizens, farmers, mechanics, seamen, footmen, maid-servants, and even chimney-sweeps and old clothesmen all dabbled in tulips. People of all grades converted their property into cash to invest in flowers. Houses and land were a drug in the market, adjoining countries caught the infection, and money poured into Holland from all directions. The operations of the trade became so extensive and involved that it was necessary to draw up a code of laws for the direction of the dealers. Notaries were appointed who devoted themselves exclusively to the interests of the trade.

At last, however, the more prudent began to see that this state of affairs could not go on indefinitely. Rich people no longer bought the flowers for their collections, but to sell them again at a cent.-per-cent. profit. It was perceived that somebody must lose fearfully in the long run. As this conviction spread, the prices fell never to rise again; confidence was destroyed, and a universal panic as wild as the original mania set in. The consequences were appalling. Every day made large additions to the list of bankrupts and defaulters. Hundreds who had imagined themselves established for life suddenly realised that all they had was a

handful of bulbs that nobody would buy, and which would hardly procure the necessaries of existence. The cry of genuine distress rang through the land, and the government was appealed to that measures might be taken to restore public credit. But after months of weary waiting, the authorities practically admitted their powerlessness, and the people were fain to struggle out of the financial slough into which their infatuation had plunged them as best they could. In due time, of course, matters did readjust themselves, but the commerce of the country suffered a severe shock, from which it was many years in recovering.






CHAPTER X.

THE CANADIAN PACIFIC RAILWAY.

THERE is only one railway in the world which, running clear across a continent, is from ocean to ocean owned and operated by a single company, and that is the Canadian Pacific, whose tidewater terminals, Halifax in the east and Vancouver in the west, are joined by a twin band of shining steel three thousand six hundred and sixty miles in length.

Somebody has very well said that this railway was a national enterprise, is a national highway, and will be a national heirloom ; and yet there were many times during the various stages of its promotion and prosecution when, judged by all ordinary human standards, the chances seemed about ten to one that the vast undertaking would work as much injury to the young Dominion of Canada as the Mississippi Bubble did to France, or the Tulip Mania to Holland.



It certainly seemed a very daring, if not unduly rash, enterprise for a British colony by no means abounding in cash, and having less than six millions of people, to commit itself to the construction of a line of railway whose total cost would exceed a levy of twenty dollars a head upon every man, woman, and child in the country. Yet that was what Canada did in 1871 in order to bring British Columbia into the Confederation of Provinces; and in spite of the rise and fall of the Governments, and the occurrence of political crises into the details of which it would be tiresome to enter, she honourably fulfilled her contract by June 1886, when the first through train left Montreal for the Pacific coast, and safely accomplished one of the most memorable and momentous 'runs' in the history of railroading.

It must not be supposed that the whole of the fifteen years referred to above were occupied in the laying of the road, although so gigantic an undertaking might well have required that space of time. Between 1871 and 1881 only some widely separated sections, one in Ontario, another in Manitoba, a third in British Columbia, and so forth, were constructed by the Canadian Government, and when in the latter year the task was gladly handed over to the

powerful combination of capitalists who had agreed to assume it on certain conditions, there still remained nearly two thousand miles of the main line to build.

By the terms of their contract with the Government the syndicate, as this combination was popularly called, had ten years to complete their work and earn their subsidy of 25,000,000 dollars, and the same number of acres of land ; but with such extraordinary and unexampled energy did they press forward the construction that in less than five years the road was open for traffic from end to end.

A big book of intense interest might be written describing the difficulties encountered, and the splendid skill and the courage with which they were overcome. It was tremendous work, for instance, getting round the north shore of the Georgian Bay and Lake Superior, through a dreary wilderness traversed only by the Indian fur-hunter, the adventurous lumberman, or the hardy miner. A way for the steel rails had to be blasted through rock of the hardest description known to engineers, and the oldest known to geologists—namely, syenite and trap. More than two and a half million tons of this stubborn stuff had to be displaced, besides large quantities of loose rock and hard-pan. What costly

work this was may be judged by the fact that for fifteen months one hundred tons a month of dynamite were used. This dangerous material, whose explosive power is twelve times that of ordinary gunpowder, was manufactured on the spot as required. The total cost of the dynamite alone exceeded one and a half millions of pounds sterling. Yet that was but one item in the expenditure. The work went on without intermission day and night, winter and summer; an army, whose numbers reached twelve thousand men, toiling like ants, relay succeeding relay, until at last the utmost resistance of 'nature stern and wild' had been overcome.

An interesting feature was the employment in the winter of dog teams, drawing toboggans which bore heavy loads of provisions or material over the deep snow that rendered the use of any other kind of conveyance quite out of the question.

Nor were the grim rock barriers of that northern shore the most perplexing obstacles the builders had to overcome. Even more difficult to reckon with were the morasses across whose sullen, treacherous surface an enduring road-bed had to be laid. Some of these proved veritable bottomless pits, and after months of toil and the laborious dumping

of thousands of tons of stone and earth which were swallowed down without any perceptible effect, the attempt to cross them had to be abandoned, and a more circuitous route adopted.

Others pretended to be gorged for a time, but ere long opened their maws for road-bed and rails, and the filling in had to be repeated. Quite lately the writer remembers being delayed several hours by the sinking of the track at one of these morasses, which necessitated the cars being carefully towed across the weak spot, one by one, and the train made up again on the other side; and he was informed that into this very morass thousands of car-loads of gravel had been dumped, yet it required constant watching.

A pleasant contrast to this tedious and costly construction was the building of the road from Winnipeg west to the Rocky Mountains. Here there were no rugged ramparts of rock, no deep, deceitful morasses; but instead of them, a good, honest turf, covering the finest wheat soil in all the world.

Now, any one who conceives of the prairies as a vast, level expanse of verdure is greatly mistaken. The prairie is not level in any part. It undulates like the ocean, rising and falling

in great swales and rounded hollows, to which the railway must needs accommodate itself as best it might.

The builders of the Canadian Pacific could not therefore simply lay down a road of ties, and spike the rails to them. To secure a level road-bed, and one that would stand plenty of hard wear and be above the winter snow, no small amount of grading and ballasting was necessary, all of which was thoroughly done. Yet for rapidity of construction, the records of railroad building present nothing to surpass what was accomplished on that section of the line. A few figures and dates will help to make this clear.

A beginning was made at Winnipeg in the month of May 1881, and by the close of the year trains were able to run 165 miles westward over a finished track. The following season saw 419 miles more completed, and in 1883 the remaining 376 miles of the prairie section were put in running order, making the wonderful total of 962 miles of well-built road as the result of three seasons' work.

How this was accomplished, the details of the work revealed. In 42 days of the year 1882, 134 miles of main rail were laid, being an average of 3.19 miles per day, exclusive of sidings! The

next year even this wonderful achievement was surpassed, as in 48 days 166 miles were laid, while in one record-breaking day the almost incredible figure of 6.38 miles was attained, no less than 640 tons of steel rails being required to 'iron' the road-bed.

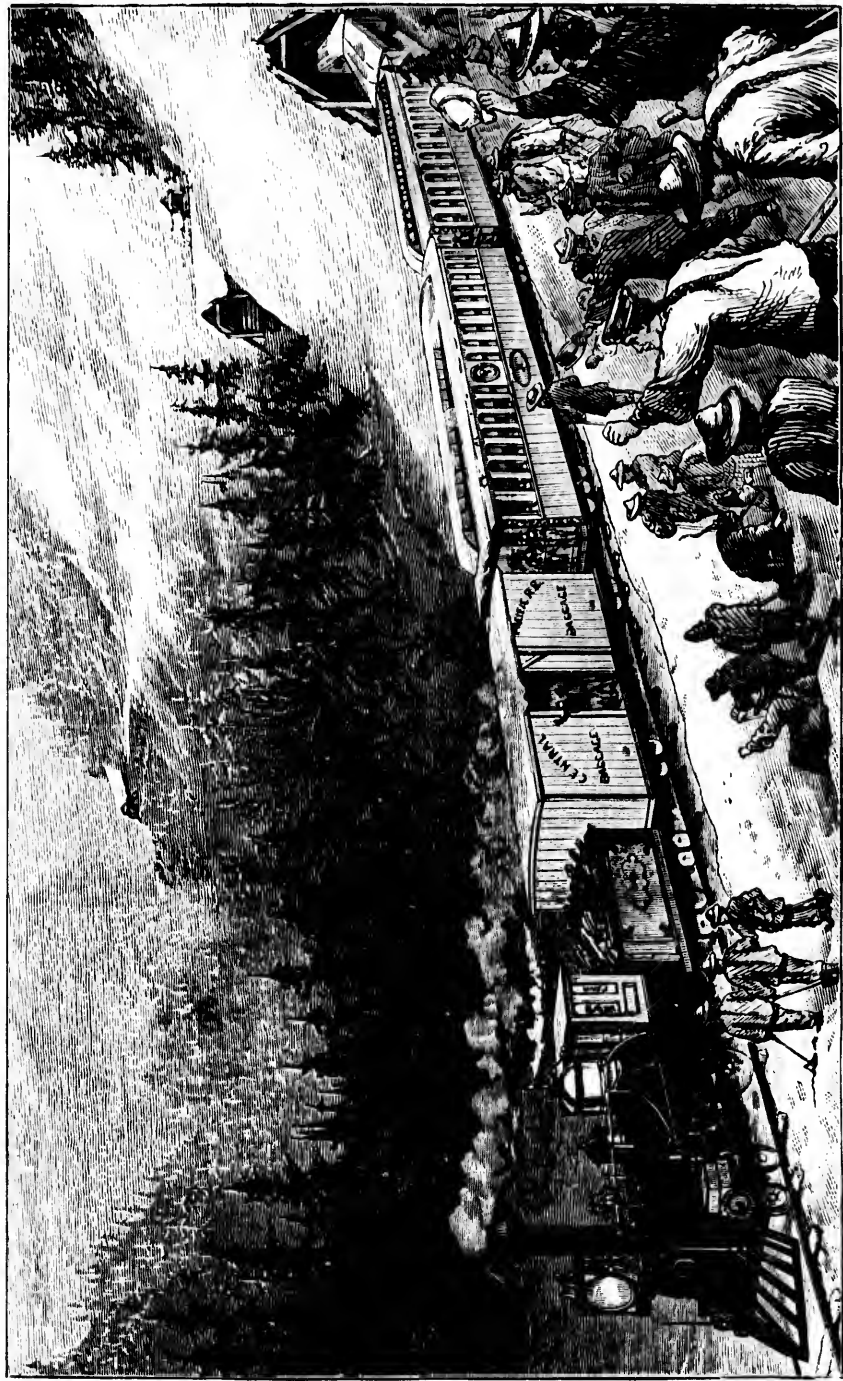
Of course no such brilliant rate of progress was possible when the mountain ranges were reached, and the Rockies, the Selkirks, and the Gold Range had to be reckoned with. It cost nearly a million pounds sterling to seek out and survey a practicable route through those gigantic, glacier-crowned barriers, and many more millions to construct the iron road. Intrepid engineers had to be swung from the edges of dizzy cliffs, and to cut their way, foot by foot, through abysmal valleys, choked with the debris of a thousand avalanches, before the line could be laid out.

When the work was at length completed, every mile had its marvel of natural scenery or of human ingenuity. The line, now climbing high to the snowy summit, now descending far into the shadowy cañon, opened ever-varying vistas which made it easy for the traveller, lounging luxuriously on velvet cushions in the Pullman car, to imagine himself transported to the legendary land of Asgard,

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Snow Sheds on the Canadian Pacific Railway.—P. 143.

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the home of Thor, and Woden, and Balder the Beautiful.

In wonderful ways had the difficulties of the route been surmounted. Tremendous trestles, some of them hundreds of feet in height, or steel bridges, as light seemingly as a spider's web, bore the train over the gloomy gorges; huge snow-sheds built of mighty timbers and ponderous boulders made mockery of the avalanches that otherwise would have gleefully swept the track from the mountain-side; lofty tunnels bored through the solid rock solved many a problem in grade and progression. And thus a safe and speedy way through the mountains was triumphantly established.

Not only is this way safe and speedy—it is also one of the most richly endowed with scenic splendour in all the world. From the time the traveller enters the Gap just beyond Calgary until he is almost within sight of the Pacific coast he is passing through a sea of mountains, whose serrated peaks and vast pyramids of rock, curiously contorted and folded strata, are followed by gigantic castellated masses, down whose gleaming sides the snow-white glaciers, like the waterfalls of Tennyson's 'Lotus-land,' 'to fall, and pause, and fall do seem,' or the cascades, 'like a downward smoke,

slow dropping veils of thinnest lawn do go ;' while others yet again :

Through wavering lights and shadows break
Rolling a troubled sheet of foam below.

Amidst such sublime scenery as this Coleridge might have caught inspiration for a hymn like that which he penned of the Vale of Chamouni :

Ye ice-falls ! Ye that from the mountain's brow
Adown enormous ravines slope amain—
Torrents, methinks, that heard a mighty voice,
And stopped at once amidst the maddest plunge !
Motionless torrents ! Silent cataracts !
Who made you glorious as the gates of Heaven !

But after all, railroads are chiefly instruments of commerce, and the most beautiful and sublime of scenery will not in itself content stock-holders eager for dividends.

It is therefore of much more practical moment that the Canadian Pacific should offer to the Old World the shortest road to the marvellous, mysterious Far East, toward which the eyes of the world were not long since turned with peculiar interest while sturdy, skilful, alert little Japan dealt effective blow upon blow at huge but unwieldy China.

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Scene on the Canadian Pacific Railway—Great Glacier, showing Hotel.—P. 145.

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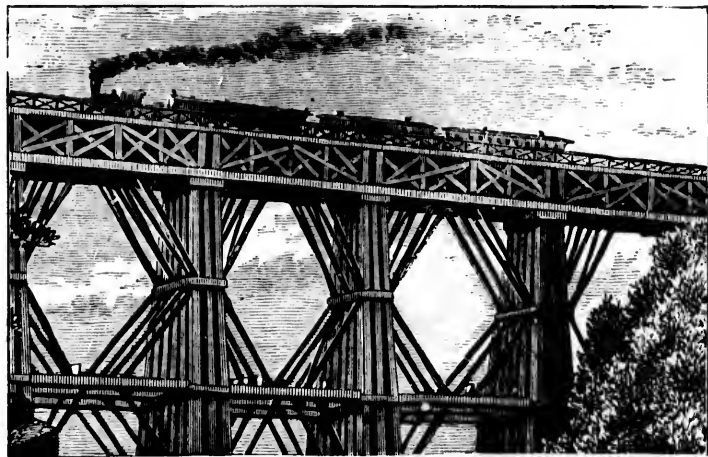
by this new route that it is now possible to go from Liverpool to Yokohama in little more than double the time required to cross the Atlantic but a few years ago.

The Canadian Pacific has its own steamers plying between the Far West and the Far East—splendid steamships of six thousand tons burthen, that plough their way through the waves of the broad Pacific at the rate of eighteen knots an hour. It was by means of these ocean greyhounds that the company was enabled to accomplish what was thus recorded in the *London Times*: ‘The delivery of the mails in London within twenty-one days of their leaving Yokohama is a feat never before accomplished, sufficiently remarkable in itself, and pregnant with untold issues for the future of the British Empire.’

Here is an outline of that unique performance, before which Jules Verne’s *Round the World in Eighty Days* sinks into insignificance. The steamer *Empress of Japan* left Yokohama on the morning of 19th August 1891, and reached Vancouver in British Columbia by noon of the 29th. An hour later the mails started eastward on a special train that whirled them to Brockville, Ontario, in seventy-seven hours! Having been

ferried across the St Lawrence, they were caught up by a New York Central train which seven hours later delivered them in New York City, where they were hurried on board the steamship *City of New York*, which sailed at once for Liverpool, and arrived within six days.

Such an achievement is a veritable romance of commerce, a triumph of enterprise and invention over conditions of space and time that may remain unchallenged until the air-ships, upon the verge of whose practical adaptation we seem now to be trembling, shall have made us gloriously independent of all barriers and bounds, and brought us as near as we ever shall get to the ability of being in two places at the same time.





CHAPTER XI.

AN OCEAN GRAVEYARD.

IT is little more than a mere dot of dry land in an immensity of ocean space, the restlessness of whose hissing surges is so incessant that here might Jeremiah have stood when he said, 'There is sorrow on the sea ; it cannot be quiet.' Sorrow there is, too, right often, and sorrow there has been ever since Sable Island first figured in human history. No other island on this globe can show so appalling a record of shipwreck and disaster.

Now parched beneath the burning rays of an unshaded summer sun, now swathed in chilling robes of mist or snow, oftentimes deluged with torrents of rain, and at all seasons blown upon by the tireless winds, Sable Island, remarkable as regards its position, its shape, its structure, and still more as regards its history, has somehow strangely escaped the notice of those who travel,

and remains to this day shrouded in an obscurity no less remarkable. It does not, however, lack for mention in history, and we might well linger a while over the references made to it by various writers during the past three centuries and a half.

For the very first appearance of Sable Island in history, we must go back through many centuries to that misty mediæval period when the hardy Danes delighted to voyage forth upon daring quests whose *Iliad* is the Icelandic saga. According to this trustworthy chronicle, wherein such wondrous adventures by field and flood find record, one Biorn Heriulfson, in the year 986, purposing no more ambitious adventure than a slant across from Greenland to Iceland, was taken possession of by adverse winds, and driven far to the south and west, thereby unwillingly and unwittingly becoming the first European to set eyes upon the New World. Having passed Helluland (now Newfoundland) and Markland (Nova Scotia), he came in sight of a barren sandy region, which, from the account he gives of it, could have been no other than Sable Island. Unfortunately for his future fame, he either lacked the courage, or could not spare the time, to proceed a little farther westward, for had he done so, to him, and not to Christopher

Columbus, would have fallen the imperishable glory of discovering America. Even as it is, Professor Rafn has shown—and his conclusions are generally accepted—that what is now called Massachusetts and Rhode Island, was settled by the Scandinavians at the very end of the tenth century; so that the opportunity Heriulfson thus neglected must have been improved within twenty years by some kinsman of hardier spirit.

Between Biorn Heriulfson and the next recorded visitor there is a long hiatus, during which the island probably slumbered in undisturbed solitude, until the early part of the sixteenth century, when the Portuguese, who were then vigorously pursuing the Newfoundland fisheries, which had been discovered for them by John Cabot, must have found it out anew, as on a chart prepared by Pedro Reinal, dated 1505, the island is laid down as 'Santa Crus.' They were shrewd fellows those Portuguese, for observing the abundance of coarse, succulent grass flourishing throughout the centre of the island and the wealth of water supplied by the lake, they conceived the admirable plan of stocking the place with cattle, and thus providing a fresh-meat market conveniently near their fishing-grounds. The scheme succeeded to per-

fection, and ere long herds of cattle and droves of swine gave life and noise to this hitherto dead and silent region. These laudable efforts, moreover, were involuntarily supplemented some years later by the Baron de Lery, who, being fired with enterprise by the accounts which reached the French court of the Eldorado beyond the western ocean, exhausted his entire resources in the equipment of an expedition designed to plant a colony there that should be the germ of a new nation. Accordingly in 1538 he fitted out a fleet of small vessels, loaded them deep with men, cattle, grain, and other essentials, and set sail for America. But the fates were not propitious. One storm followed closely upon another, and the expedition was thereby so delayed that it did not reach its destination until late in the autumn. There was no time to prepare for the winter, and no other alternative but to return. But before so doing, the baron lightened his vessel by depositing the cattle upon Sable Island. Among them, no doubt, were several horses, from which have sprung the herds of shaggy, sharp-boned ponies which still scamper wild over the sand-dunes, and whose origin is otherwise inexplicable.

The next recorded event opens out for us the

ever-lengthening roll of maritime disaster, whose dread total can never be estimated until the sea gives up its dead. Hundreds of ships and thousands of lives are *known* to have found an untimely grave at Sable Island. But how shall be reckoned up the number of those who

Unknelled, uncoffined, and unknown,

have there passed into oblivion ?

In the year 1583 Sir Humphrey Gilbert, 'the pious and accomplished gallant' of good Queen Bess, and half-brother to Sir Walter Raleigh, who founded Virginia and introduced the luxury of smoking into England, went out upon a voyage of exploration with five ships, equipped in the best manner of those days, and guided by experienced pilots. Associated with him in this enterprise were a savant of high renown, name unknown, but stated to have been 'a Saxon refiner and discoverer of inestimable riches,' a Hungarian poet, Stephanus Parmenius, who 'for piety and zeal for good attempts adventured in this action, minding to record in the Latin tongue the things worthy of remembrance, to the honour of our nation, the same being adorned with the eloquent style of this orator and rare poet of our time;' and also

Captain Richard Brown, one of the most renowned mariners of the time, 'a virtuous, honest, and discreet gentleman, and never unprepared for death, as by his last act of this tragedy appeared;' for refusing to leave his ship, 'he mounted upon the highest deck, where he attended imminent danger, and unavoidable, how long I leave to God, who withdraweth not His comfort from His servants at such times.'

Sir Humphrey had a prosperous voyage to Newfoundland, of which country he took possession in the name of his queen, and having remained there some time, bethought himself of visiting Sable Island, and restocking his depleted larder, before taking up the long voyage back across the Atlantic. The story of what followed was told by Edward Hays, captain of the sole surviving vessel, and I cannot do better than transcribe it as it has been preserved for us by Hakluyt in his voyages, my quotations, with those already given, being taken from a bewildering black-letter edition, bearing date in 1583;

'Sable lieth to the seaward of Cape Breton, about 45", whither we were determined to go, upon intelligence we had of a Portingall during our abode in St Johns, who was also himself present

when the Portingalls, about thirty years past, did put into the same Island, both neat [cattle] and swine to breed, which were since exceedingly multiplied. The distance between Cape Race and Cape Breton is a hundred leagues, in which navigation we spent eight days. Having the wind many times indifferent good, but could never obtain sight of any land all that time, seeing we were hindered by the current. At last we fell into such flats and dangers that hardly any of us escaped. Where, nevertheless, we lost our *Admiral* [the name of one of the ships], with all the men and provisions.'

'Contrary to the mind of expert Master Cox, on Wednesday, 27th August, we bore up toward the land, those in the doomed ship continually sounding trumpets and guns, while strange voices from the deep scared the helmsman from his post on board the Frigate.'

'Thursday the 28th, the wind arose and blew vehemently from the south and east, bringing withal rain and thick mist, that we could not see a cable length before us. And betimes we were run and fouled amongst flats and sands, amongst which we found flats and deeps every three or four ships lengths. Immediately tokens were given to the *Admiral* to cast about to

seaward, which being the greater ship was foremost upon the beach. Keeping so ill a watch they knew not the danger before they felt the same too late to recover, for presently the *Admiral* struck aground, and had soon her stern and hinder parts beaten in pieces. The remaining two vessels escaped by casting about ESE., bearing to the south for their lives, even in the wind's eye. Sounding one while seven fathoms, then five, then four fathoms and less, again deeper, then immediately four, then three fathoms, the sea going mightily and high'—as accurate a description of beating over the north-east bar as if it had been done only yesterday.

Thus the disaster-darkened record begins with a holocaust of one hundred men, with whom went down the man of science, the man of letters, and the most 'rare poet of our times,' and the man of honour, daring death rather than desert his post, and all told, as Dr Bernard Gilpin remarks in his entertaining little pamphlet, in that racy style only an eye-witness could use, and with an unaffected strain of old-fashioned piety that comes back to us over the wide interval of years like the flavour of some rare old wine.

As for Sir Humphrey himself he did but escape one danger to fall straightway into another, for a

few days after he was caught in a fearful gale on the Grand Banks, and his sole remaining consort carried home the sorrowful news that the heroic admiral hailed them during the raging storm, 'that Heaven was as near by sea as by land,' and shortly after, standing at the helm, sorely wounded in his foot, and Bible in hand, went down beneath the relentless waves.

Fifteen years elapse in barrenness of incident, and then comes one of those stories which, though sober fact, surpass in strangeness the wildest flights of the romancer. Champlain, Les-carbot, Père Le Clerc, and Charlevoix have each preserved an independent account of the matter, and they tally so closely as to leave not the narrowest cranny into which 'destructive criticism' may fasten its insidious tendrils. In January 1598 Henry IV. of France by letters patent granted to the Marquis de la Roche almost absolute powers over 'the islands and countries of Canada, Sable Island, Newfoundland, and the adjacent regions,' to the end that the poor benighted savages inhabiting those lands might be brought to a knowledge of the true God, all selfish ideas of national aggrandisement being, of course, piously absent from the royal mind. This Marquis de la Roche was no ordinary personage. He

had been governor of Morlaix, and president of the Estates at Nantes, and in his youth had served as page to Catharine de Medici. Yet this expedition was so modest, not to say cheap, in its proportion and equipment as to seem quite unworthy its ambitious mission or the viceregal rank of its commander.

One vessel constituted the fleet, and it so small that, according to a contemporary chronicle, you could wash your hands in the water without leaving the deck, while forty out of sixty men comprising the Marquis's army of occupation and evangelisation were convicts from the royal prisons. It is just around this quarantine of convicts that the whole interest gathers, for as the little vessel drew near the New World, the Marquis, foreseeing danger in landing his flock of jail-birds, without first having made some provision for their safe-keeping, bethought himself of leaving them upon Sable Island until he had selected the site of his colony, and brought things somewhat into shape. Accordingly, to quote *Les-carbot*, '*ayant la deschargé ses gens et bagage,*' he proceeded composedly on his way. But alas for the vanity of human planning! The gray hummocks of Les Sablons had scarce sunk below the horizon ere a tempest burst upon his ship

which rested not until it had blown the marquis clear back to France again, where no sooner had he landed than an enraged creditor cast him into prison; and there he languished in utter inability to do anything for the men he had so undesignedly deserted.

And how fared it with them during the five long years they were left to themselves upon this isle of desolation? At first it would seem as if on being thus released from all restraint they fought with one another like entrapped rats, for Les-carbot tells that '*ces gens se mutinerent, et se couperent la gorge l'un et l'autre.*' Then, as the horror of their situation fully dawned upon them, and they realised that only by harmonious co-operation could any life be preserved, better counsels prevailed, and systematic efforts were put forth to secure a maintenance. From the wreck of a Spanish ship they built themselves huts, the ocean furnished them with firewood, the wild cattle with meat, the seals with clothing, and with some seeds and farming implements happily included among the '*bagage*' mentioned by Les-carbot, they carried on agricultural operations in a sheltered valley by the lake-side, still known as the French Gardens. Moreover, the chase of the black fox, which then

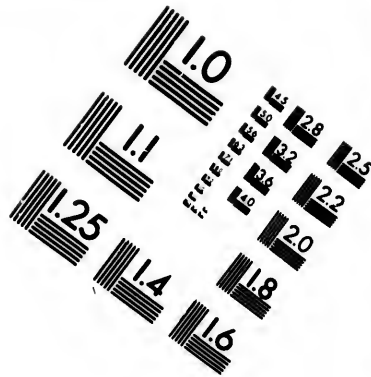
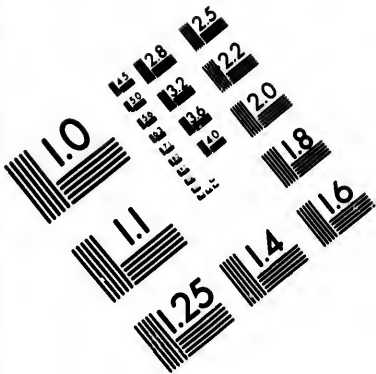
abounded, and of the great morse or walrus, enabled them to lay up goodly stores of precious pelts and ivory against the ever-hoped-for day of their redemption.

Despite these alleviations in the rigour of their fate, however, the utter absence of the most necessary comforts, and their own evil deeds, so reduced their numbers that when in 1603 the king sent a vessel to bring them back, only eleven out of the original forty were found alive. Clad in their self-made sealskin garments, broken, haggard, and unkempt, they were presented before Henry IV., and their harrowing tale so touched the royal heart that they each received a full pardon for their crimes, and a solatium of fifty golden crowns. The strangest part of the story remains yet to be told. Undeterred by an experience that was surely sufficient to appal the stoutest heart, these Rip Van Winkles of the sea, whose names may still be found on record in the *Registres d'Audience du Parlement de Rouen*, returned to their place of exile, and drove a thriving trade in furs and ivory with their mother-country for many years, until one by one they passed away.

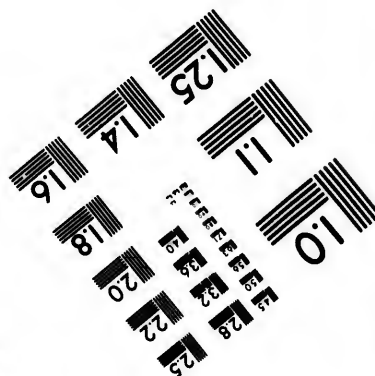
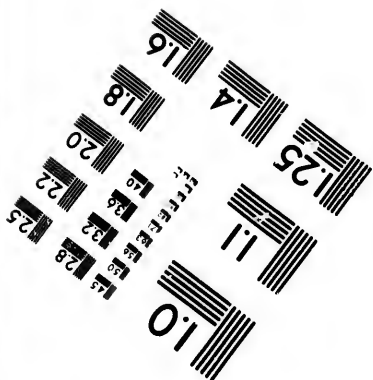
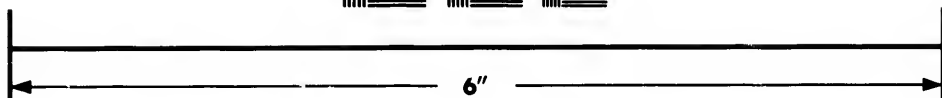
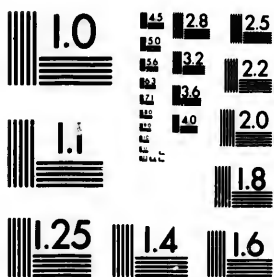
About a twelvemonth after the convicts' rescue, the expedition of the *Sieur de Monte*, which had

in view the founding of Port Royal (now Annapolis, Nova Scotia), narrowly escaped a disastrous ending among the sands of Sable Island, and we read in Champlain's *Voyages* that on the first of May they had knowledge of 'l'Ile de Sable,' and ran great risk of being cast ashore there. That, however, was only a might-have-been. Worthy Master John Rose, of Boston, whose experience may be found recorded in *Winthrop's Journal*, did not fare by any means so well thirty years later, inasmuch as he had knowledge of Sable Island at the cost of his good ship the *Mary Ann Jane*. He did not remain long in exile, for being a handy man with tools, he built himself a pinnace out of the debris of his vessel, and thereby succeeded in making his escape. On his return to Boston he gave such glowing accounts of the island's animal wealth, special emphasis being laid upon 'more than eight hundred wild cattle and a great many foxes, many of which were black,' that public enterprise was stimulated to the extent of a company being formed to put his discovery to good account. This company went to work so energetically that the Acadian authorities, to whom the island now belonged, had to issue a proclamation against any more cattle being killed. But the proclamation





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being unaccompanied by any show of force proved no more effectual than estimable Dame Partington's endeavours to push back the Atlantic Ocean, and not long after its issue, the cattle totally disappeared, leaving the wild horses in undisputed possession of the pastures.

To Winthrop, whose *Journal* has been already quoted, we are indebted for another item of the island's history not elsewhere recorded. He has an entry to the effect that in 1635, the English having returned thither to pursue the chase of the walrus and fox, were much surprised and no less chagrined to find already in possession some sixteen Frenchmen, who had evidently been there all winter and had built a little fort. These men were probably employees of the De Razilly brothers, to whom Sable Island had been granted in that offhand manner which distinguished the French monarchs of that time, and they had made good use of their opportunities, as their accumulations of hides and pelts betokened. On the death of Commander de Razilly, which took place in 1637, the French must have abandoned the place, for Winthrop further notes that the New Englanders had the field all to themselves from 1639 to 1642; and we may form some idea of the value of this monopoly from

his statement that their last expedition yielded over £1500, or more than 7000 dollars.

From that time until the beginning of the nineteenth century, very little is known concerning Sable Island, save that each year added a darker tinge to its sombre reputation as a naval cemetery. More dreadful, however, than the unconscious fury of the storm was the deliberate wickedness of the demons in human form who now made this peculiarly favourable spot their haunt and hunting ground. Wreckers, pirates, and vagabonds of like infamous stamp were attracted thither by the unceasing succession of wrecks and the absence of all restraint, and they plied their infernal trade so vigorously that the terror of their name spread far and wide. The discretion of dead men to tell no tales can always be trusted, and so when some rich wreck rejoiced the hearts of these wretches, they made it their care to despatch all those ill-starred castaways whom even the raging surf had spared. For a time all went merrily with them, and many an adventurer who left his home 'under sealed orders' returned in a suspiciously short time with well-lined pockets. Rare jewels, costly silks, and other articles of what Magwitch would professionally designate as 'portable property,' not guiltes.} of a

sinister connection with Sable Island, found their way surreptitiously into the shops of Halifax and Boston, while blood-chilling tales of horrid deeds done where there was no heart to pity and no hand to save became current on the mainland.

But the most successful of scoundrels eventually reach the end of their tether, however supinely their atrocities may be endured for a season. The Nova Scotian government, too long culpably indifferent, was at length goaded into action by the loss of the transport *Princess Amelia*, and the gunbrig *Harriet* in quick succession. At the suggestion of Sir John Wentworth, an appropriation was made in 1803 for the settlement of guardians upon the island. Then a proclamation was issued that all persons found residing there without a government license would be removed and punished with at least six years' imprisonment; and this proclamation, unlike the one about the cattle, being backed up by a show of force, the wreckers deemed it expedient to remove themselves without standing upon the order of their going.

With their departure the romance of Sable Island's history ends. From the year 1803 the Imperial and Nova Scotian authorities have maintained a settlement there called the Humane

Establishment, and under its regime the only breaks in the peaceful monotony of the insular existence have been the never-failing wrecks, whereof nearly two hundred are already noted in the superintendent's register.

A visit to Sable Island can be made only under certain conditions, and these conditions so infrequently occur that it is no unusual thing for the passage there to be taken in vain. It lies due east from Nova Scotia, at a distance of about eighty-five miles, between the 43d and 44th degrees of N. lat., and the 59th and 60th of W. long. To one approaching from the north, the island appears to be a succession of low sandhills, thinly patched with straggling vegetation, having at the west end an elevation of some twenty feet, then gradually rising as you go eastward until they attain the height of eighty feet near the east end light, beyond which they slope away again till they merge into the north-east bar. Its general shape is that of a long, narrow crescent, measuring twenty-two miles from tip to tip, and one mile in breadth at its best. The time was, as will be presently shown, when the measurements would have been stated in figures twice as large, but now each succeeding year finds the area of the island surely, steadily decreasing.

Perplexing as are the currents, and bewildering the fogs that beset the island, they are not by any means its worst feature. Far more fruitful of harm are the entangling shallows, spread out so wide that for many a mile beyond the point where sea and sand meet and mingle there is not water enough to float a small schooner. Thus at the north-east end on a windy day there may be seen some nine miles of roaring breakers before a depth of six fathoms is reached, and then four miles more of heavy cross-seas, leading out from a depth of from ten to thirteen fathoms. At the north-west end the bar extends seaward nearly seventeen miles after the same fashion before the water is really deep. So that taking the length of the island and its bars together, the scene presented in stormy weather is magnificent and awe-inspiring beyond all possible powers of description, when in continuous line for over fifty miles the raging waves of the sea, rolling in unchecked from vast ocean spaces, foam out their fury upon the sandbanks, which seem to quake and quiver beneath their overwhelming onset.

The conditions which have been hinted at as prerequisite to effecting a landing upon Sable Island are that the day be fine, and the wind securely

settled in the south. The only good landing-place is on the north side; and even there the government steamer, which forms the sole connecting-link between the island and the outside world, can come no closer than a mile, and must keep a vigilant lookout, so that on the first sign of a change in the wind, she may weigh anchor, and make an offing without delay.

Let us suppose that the halcyon days of July have come, and that we have obtained permission to accompany the *Newfield* upon one of her regular supply trips. The midsummer night passes quickly. Our ninety miles of open sea are soon accomplished, and as the morning sun climbs grandly upward from his bed among the eastern waves, his rich red rays crimson the creamy froth that fringes all the shore. We are in luck to-day, for old ocean is at peace with himself, and the south wind blows softly. How rare this is may be imagined from two entries in the superintendent's journal—one to the effect that there had not been five fine days in four months; the other, that the steamer was eight days in trying to effect a landing. Fine though the day may be, however, to get safely ashore is no easy matter, for the long ocean-rollers are tumbling in upon the beach

with tireless energy, and no ordinary boat may brave them with impunity. But there is due provision made for this. Hardly has the steamer come to anchor when the beach is dotted with men and horses, one of the broad-beamed, high-stemmed surf-boats peculiar to the island is rapidly drawn on its wide-wheeled cart to the water's edge, and after gallantly breasting the breakers, comes swiftly toward us. Soon it is alongside, and the crew grasp eagerly at the mail-bags, whose contents will tell them what their friends and the rest of the world have been doing since the steamer's last visit.

We are to return with them; and it will be a wise precaution to don our waterproofs and wear our closest-fitting caps, for there are some marine gymnastics before us, which may not improbably result in our undergoing an involuntary baptism that would content the most thorough immersionist ere reaching the land. Seated in the stern sheets, we look forward to the nearing surf with an anxiety which even the encouragement given by sleek, shining seals bobbing up serenely all about our boat, as if in cheery welcome, does not altogether allay. The crew bend lustily to their oars, and the helmsman,

standing high in the pointed stern, with loud command and brawny arm keeps the great boat true in her proper course, let the billows buffet her never so roughly, until, riding triumphantly upon the back of a huge comber, she is carried far up the beach, and stranded amid a mass of seething waters. To spring from their seats and hold hard the boat, lest it be swept back by the receding wave, is the work of a moment for the dripping oarsmen, and then another foaming breaker, supplemented by a vigorous shove from their stalwart arms, sends their unwieldy craft up high and dry, and the spray-splashed passengers can step out upon terra firma.

The yielding sands do not make easy walking, and we plod slowly up the slight ascent until, going through a short pass between two hummocks, we suddenly emerge upon a scene so utterly different from what has hitherto met our gaze, that we are fain to wonder for a moment if it may not possibly be a mirage or ocular delusion of some sort. Before us lies a broad valley, completely shut in from the sea by hills, which rise to right and left, and wave with a wealth of vegetation that is inexpressibly refreshing to eyes already wearied with the monotony of sand and sea. Ranged

in an irregular square, stand the buildings of the main station—the superintendent's spacious dwelling, where a warm welcome always awaits the newcomer, be he casual visitor or castaway, flanked by quarters for the staff, boat-houses, stores, and other out-buildings, while well-filled barns and well-stocked barn-yards lend an air of substantial comfort to the whole picture.

After exchanging greetings with the superintendent and his staff, who, delighted with this pleasant break in the monotony of their lives, crowd about us, eager for the latest news, our first thought is to climb the big flag-staff and view the landscape from the crow's nest, perched perilously on high. The ascent accomplished, a wonderful panorama lies outspread before us. To adapt the picturesque language of Dr Gilpin, whose brochure has already been drawn upon: From beneath our feet the narrow island stretches east and west its bow-like form, holding a shallow lagoon, some eight miles long, in its centre, and presenting many an effective contrast of sandy upland and grassy meadow, bare, bleak beach, and richly flowered nook, where fairies might hold their midnight revels. From the foreground with its group of buildings the eye roams over to the

west end lighthouse, whence the men are now hurrying on pony-back at the summons of the flag announcing the steamer's arrival. Every sandy peak or verdurous knoll bears some sad tradition. Baker's Hill, Trot's Cove, Scotchman's Head, French Gardens—so many silent records of human suffering. Then turning eastward, we see the little burying-ground, nestling in the deep, rich grass, and consecrated to the last sleep of many a victim to the ocean's wrath. Nine miles farther down, a telescope makes plain the flag-staff at the foot of the lake, and five miles beyond that the east end light, with its attendant buildings. Herds of wild ponies, jealously guarded by shaggy stallions, graze upon the hillsides, black duck and sheldrake in tempting flocks paddle about the innumerable ponds, while sea-birds fill the air with their harsh clatter, and whole regiments of seals bask in snug content along the sunny beach. Here and there the bleaching ribs of naval skeletons protrude, half-buried in the sand, and the whole picture is set in a silver-frosted frame of seething surf.

It does not take many hours to exhaust the sights of Sable Island, but many long nights might be spent around the superintendent's fireside ere

the stories and legends he and his men delight in telling would be one-half exhausted. For every foot of the island is haunted ground; and the station dwellings are rich in relics, each one having its own connection with a shadowy and sorrowful past. The supernatural, of course, plays a leading part in these relations, and if one be but credulous enough, they may have their faith in ghosts revisiting the glimpses of the moon greatly strengthened by the legends of De Lery's heroic friar, or King Charles' remorseful regicide, of the Pale Lady with the Bloody Finger, and a score of others, which cast an eerie halo round this weird spot.

Since the founding of the Humane Establishment in 1802, a wreck register has been carefully kept, and on its pages may be read to-day the names of nearly two hundred vessels that have come to their undoing on these fatal sands. Once entangled amid the shallows, once stranded upon the bars, and it was all over with the hapless craft, whether she were stately frigate, speedy steamer, clipper ship, or humble fisher's boat. Mr Simon D. Macdonald, F.G.S., of Halifax, N.S., some time ago prepared with great skill and care a most interesting chart of Sable Island, indicating so far as possible the exact locality and date of each

disaster, as well as the character of the vessel wrecked; and looking at this chart, one sees the island to be completely encircled by these grim proofs of its destructive powers.

A hasty glance at some of the more recent wrecks will lend emphasis to the story told by the chart. In the year 1863 the fine steamer *Georgia* ended her career on the western bar, fortunately however without loss of life; and three years later the steamship *Ephesus* met with a like experience near the same spot, there being little or no salvage in either case. At the wreck of the schooner *Ocean Traveller*, in 1870, all the nine men composing her crew were lost. So it was with the *Zephyr* in 1873; and when the Portuguese *Farto* went to pieces, in 1875, the captain and two sailors perished. Then in 1876 the American schooner *Reeves* found a grave not only for herself but for every one on board; and in 1879 nine passengers were carried away by the billows at the stranding of the *State of Virginia*.

The year 1882 was marked by the destruction of two Norwegian barks, with a loss of life in each case; 1883, by the wreck of the bark *Britannia*, and the loss of thirteen lives; and 1884, by that of the splendid steamship *Amsterdam*,

when three of the passengers paid the forfeit. This last disaster attracted a good deal of attention throughout the United States, because of some grossly exaggerated reports which were put in circulation as to the brutal treatment alleged to have been received by the unfortunate castaways at the hands of the staff, the simple truth being that a couple of the boat's crew got intoxicated with wine which had been saved from the wreck, and conducted themselves in such a manner as to frighten some of the women and children, for which offence they were severely punished by the superintendent.

It need hardly be said that even the tremendous total of known wrecks falls short of representing the whole truth. On the contrary, for every wreck that is recorded, at least one other never to be known may be safely added. After many a storm do the waves cast up at the patrolman's feet the evidence of some fresh disaster—a shattered spar, an empty hen-coop, a fragment of cabin furniture, or perchance a bruised and battered corpse. And then, alas! there must be added the dread work done by the distant bars, from which not even such pathetic tokens as these find their way ashore. The following brief account of a disaster

that occurred in December 1884 will serve to convey some idea of what it means to be wrecked on Sable Island :

‘The *A. S. H.* was a French brigantine, *en route* from St Pierre to Boston, with a cargo of fish. Towards evening of December 19th she was caught in a violent snow-storm and hurled upon the west end bar, beginning to break up almost immediately. She had a crew of seven men on board. The thermometer stood at twelve degrees below zero, and the sufferings of the unhappy men were so terrible that death assumed the guise of a welcome relief. Three were washed overboard when the ship struck, and although the water was strewn with floating debris, they made no effort to prolong their lives. The steward, frenzied with fright and pain, ran to his berth, seized a razor, cut his throat from ear to ear, and then leaped into the boiling surf. The captain, the mate, and the remaining sailors succeeded in reaching the shore on a spar ; but they only escaped the terrors of the deep to encounter the still more fearful terror of the frost-killing. They could just discern through the blinding snow a faint glimmer from the lighthouse, three long miles away, and they set out toward it. The sand was being driven with tremendous force before

the gale, and the grains dashed against the faces of the half-frozen men like tiny hailstones. At length the captain could hold out no longer, and lying down, was speedily frozen to death. A little farther on the sailor too succumbed. Left alone in the struggle with death, the mate, fortunately a man of unusual strength, pushed desperately forward. Becoming too weak to stand upright, he took to his hands and knees, and in this fashion, after six hours' of suffering such as human beings rarely endure, reached the lighthouse at two o'clock in the morning, so bruised, bleeding, and frost-bitten that for a time his life hung trembling in the balance.'

Another and much earlier wreck deserves attention because of its bearing upon a problem now deeply interesting to seafarers the world over. It happened in 1846, and Superintendent Darby is our authority. A wild gale had suddenly sprung up, and he and his men were patrolling the beach, when they descried a large schooner running right down before the storm dead on to the lee-shore. The sea was breaking everywhere as far as the eye could reach, and it seemed impossible for any vessel to live in it for a moment; yet on the schooner came, passing breaker after breaker un-

injured, the extraordinary thing being that, although the huge waves raised their curled heads almost to the tops of her masts, and the fall of any of them upon her deck would have crushed her like an egg-shell, not one seemed permitted to touch her. On the contrary, as if by miracle, the sea became smooth ere it reached her, and she left a shining track behind. After some minutes of thrilling suspense she was hurled high and dry upon the beach, and every one of her crew rescued uninjured.

Then came the explanation of the strange phenomenon which had so mystified Superintendent Darby. Two large casks filled with fish oil had been lashed in the fore-rigging, and securely lashed beside them, two of the strongest sailors in the crew, with long wooden ladles in hand, had been throwing the oil high up in the air, where it was caught by the wind and carried far to leeward in advance of the vessel, spreading over the sea with such effect that, while it was raging, pitching, and breaking all about her, not a drop of water fell upon the *Arno's* deck. I believe this may with safety be claimed as one of the earliest recorded instances of the practical application of oil to the troubled waters.

In order to give succour to the shipwrecked, and

save such of their property as might not be destroyed, as well as to prevent as far as possible the occurrence of losses, the Canadian government maintains two fine lighthouses and a fully equipped life-saving station at Sable Island. The first step in this direction was taken by the province of Nova Scotia as far back as 1802 voting 2000 dollars a year for the purpose. Little of course could be done on so small a sum; but in 1827 the Imperial government came to its aid with a like annual amount, which is regularly paid to the present day. Upon the confederation of the Provinces in 1867, the care of the island fell into the hands of the Federal Government, and since then hundreds of thousands of dollars have been spent upon it. A staff of from eighteen to twenty men is steadily maintained there; two life-boats built after the most approved fashion of the Royal National Life-boat Institution, and a large despatch-boat, have been lately added, the men are drilled regularly in the management of the life-boats and of the rocket apparatus, and complete telephone connection between the lighthouses and the different stations has been established, while a telegraph-cable to the mainland is contemplated in the near future. So that Sable Island is now a life-saving

station whose equipments and capabilities cannot be excelled along the entire Atlantic coast.

A very remarkable feature of Sable Island, and one which surpasses all others in interest and importance in the eyes of navigators, yet awaits notice, to wit, the startling and significant changes which have taken place in its size and position since first it became the subject of surveys and of regular observations. Mr Macdonald, to whose wreck chart I have already referred, has made a very thorough study of this subject, and I am indebted to him for many of the following facts. On the earliest charts of the island, which were compiled from French sources, it was laid down as being forty miles in length, and two and one-fourth in breadth. In 1776 a special survey was made under Admiralty instructions, and the length found to be only thirty-one miles and the breadth two miles, while the west end was placed twenty miles farther east. Forty-two years later a second survey was made by Lieutenant Burton, and his report took a mile away from the length and left the breadth the same. Another interval of forty-two years passed, and the Admiralty authorities having had their attention called to the evident inaccuracy of their charts had another survey made,

which resulted in a still further reduction of the island's area, while the west end was placed two miles more to the eastward. Little more than thirty years have elapsed since then, and yet, according to the latest Admiralty survey executed some years ago, the total length is, as we have already seen, only twenty-two miles at best, while the breadth has shrunk to a single mile.

Surprising in fact, almost incredible as these changes may appear, they are fully proved by the evidence of those whose right to speak is based upon personal observation. A well-sheltered position for the main station was chosen in 1802, among the sandhills five miles distant from the west end. Yet in 1814 the superintendent was compelled to move three miles farther east, as within the four preceding years no less than four miles have gone entirely from the west end, while on the north side an area equal to forty feet wide and three miles long had been carried away during a single gale. In 1820 another move, this time four more miles eastward, was necessitated. Still the sea steadily advanced, as if determined not to be balked of its prey. The two following winters brought with them frequent storms, which wrought fearful havoc along the

western shore, toppling great sandhills into the surf, as well as altering the surface in the interior, thousands of tons of sand being carried from the beach and strewn over the inland valleys, smothering vegetation, so that hundreds of ponies died for want of food. In 1833 the old stations were abandoned, and new buildings erected on the broadest and most sheltered portion of the island, where they still stand in comparative safety.

The old dwelling of the superintendent was then carried yet another four miles towards the east, and subsequently two miles more, where, strange to say, it escaped the insatiable maw of the sea only to fall a victim to the sand. Gradually the gales stole away the hummocks under whose lee it nestled in seeming safety. Left to the rake of the winds, sand-laden eddies swirled wickedly about it. Slowly, yet surely, a mound arose, creeping up from threshold to lintel, from floor to peak, until at length the house wholly disappeared, and the surface levelled out innocently above it, leaving no mark to indicate the spot of its sepulture.

For some years Sable Island enjoyed comparative repose, and then the work of destruction began anew with a vigour that soon made amends for the lost time. The winter of 1881 did tremendous

damage. In addition to the gradual work of erosion, great areas were removed at once. During one gale seventy feet by one-fourth of a mile departed bodily. A month later, thirty feet of the whole breadth of the island at the west vanished in a few hours. The winter of 1882 was even worse, and was distinguished by the destruction wrought among the buildings, including the west end lighthouse, a splendid structure nearly one hundred feet high, originally erected a whole mile within the grass hills, on what was thought a perfectly secure site. There was scarcely time to take it hurriedly to pieces ere the foundation upon which it stood, hopelessly undermined, toppled over into the sea.

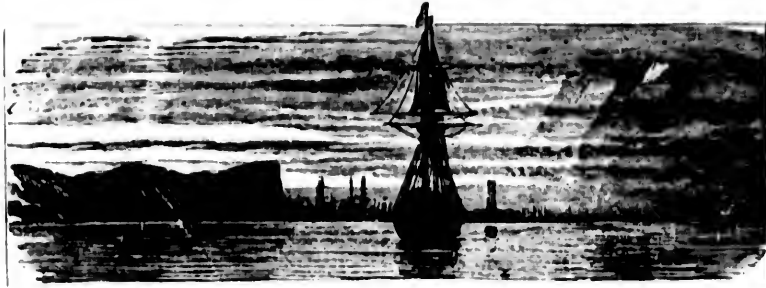
The history of the lake, which has been mentioned as occupying a part of the centre of the island, furnishes equally striking evidence of the vicissitudes this much-enduring spot has undergone. When first known, this lake had an opening on the north side, which was afterwards closed. A few years later, during a terrific storm, the sea forced a channel through the lake's margin, rendering it a convenient harbour for small vessels. But in 1836 a similar tempest closed it again, at the same time imprisoning two American schooners that had run

in there for shelter. Gradually it became very shallow from the washing down of the surrounding cliffs. Then, during the winter of 1881; a gale opened a gulch toward the east end, which so drained the lake that it shrunk to some eight miles in length, where it remains. The lake margin forming the south shore was at one time half a mile broad and fifty feet high. To-day it is merely a narrow ridge, forming a precarious seawall, over which the waves break in stormy weather. Should this barrier be removed, the demolition of the island will proceed with such increased rapidity that the end may be approximately predicted.

During storms, in addition to the action of waves and currents, the winds ravage the island's surface on their own account. Finding a raw spot, that is, where there is no protecting skin of sod, the eddying swirls scoop out the loose sand, and carry it off with them, so that around the stations the utmost vigilance is ever exercised to discover the first break in the sod and patch it carefully before headway has been gained; otherwise, the substantial buildings would soon totter from their foundations.

To sum up the whole matter in a sentence, Sable

Island is being submerged, and is travelling eastward at such a rate that any chart of it to be accurate would need to be corrected every few years. It is safe to say that the latest chart obtainable by mariners is some miles at least out of position. Since the beginning of the present century the island has decreased in length from forty miles to twenty-two; in breadth from two and one-fourth to something less than one; in height from two hundred feet to eighty, while there has been a variation in the position of the west end of not less than twenty-five miles. With such startling figures as these before us, it is not difficult to forecast its future. Slowly, perhaps, yet none the less surely, and defying all attempts or devices of feeble man to stay its advance, the time is coming when the victorious waves will fling their triumphant spray high over the last vestige of dry land, and the lights of Sable Island will no longer send their warning gleams across the fatal sands, that will then, far more than ever, merit the sorrow-laden title of 'An Ocean Graveyard.'



CHAPTER XII.

FROM FOREST TO FLOOR.

AMONG all the materials wherewith men erect unto themselves splendid edifices to dwell in, stately ships to voyage by, or far-spreading iron roads to travel upon, none have a fairer, brighter history than wood. Stone is blasted from hideous debris-strewn chasms, in and out whose craggy recesses quarrymen labour like ants in some gigantic ant-heap: metal is torn from the bowels of the earth, where, steeped in gloom and oppression scarce endurable, the grimy miners pursue their unlovely toil: but wood, from the time the first stroke of the lumberman's fatal axe sends a shiver through all its shapely form as it rears its head aloft amidst the forest, until, when sundered into yellow planks, it awaits the joiner's will, is hardly for an hour away from the glow of sunshine, the ripple of water, or the virgin purity of the snow. As bright and clean as the

fresh-sawn boards themselves is the record that lies behind them, and in following them from forest to floor, we have before us one of the most romantic, fascinating, and manly occupations in which the children of men can engage.

The chief centre of the lumbering interest in Canada is the city of Ottawa, which, as it happens, is also the political capital, a conjunction that gave Goldwin Smith a chance for the exercise of his brilliant wit too tempting to be withstood; and so we have his clever, but cruelly unjust epigram about Ottawa being 'an Arctic lumber village turned into a political cock-pit.' To this we trust it may be deemed but a venial offence to add, that, viewed in either light, there certainly does seem to be a considerable amount of 'log-rolling' done there.

It will accordingly serve our purpose very well if, selecting the Canadian capital as our coign of vantage, we proceed from thence to make as full a survey of the whole business of lumbering as may be managed within the limits of a single article.

In the matter of facilities for the carrying on of this important industry, Ottawa would be unique upon the continent were it not for Minneapolis.

As it is, she has in the tremendous torrent that pours tumultuously over the roaring Chaudière, an even mightier power than the falls of St Anthony: while, as far as communication with the timber limits by rail and water is concerned, honours are easy at all events. But at the falls of the Chaudière we reach almost the final stage in the passage of a plank from forest to floor; and so, in order to begin at the beginning, we must betake ourselves one, two, or even three hundred miles away up into the bosky recesses of the forest primeval, where the mighty trees are whispering together in blissful ignorance of the fate awaiting them.

The first thing to be done by one who proposes to engage in the business of lumbering is to secure a 'berth' or 'limit'—that is, an area of natural standing timber. This he does directly from the Government, in whom the fee of almost of all the timber-producing districts still remains, or indirectly from some person who has taken up limits simply for speculative purposes, and without any design of cutting over them himself. Theoretically, a limit is ten miles square; but, owing to the topographical features of the country, they are in reality of all sizes, from twenty-four

square miles and upward. It is not often that one worthy of the name is less than fifty square miles in extent. The amount of territory held under lease by some of the 'lumber kings' of the Ottawa district is so immense that in respect of area an ordinary German principality would sink into insignificance beside these vast landed possessions.

Limits having been secured, the next step is to despatch a party of experienced scouts, often Indians or half-breeds, to examine the country, and seek out the best groves of timber. The skill of these self-taught surveyors is sometimes very remarkable. They will explore the length and breadth of the *terra incognita*, and report upon the kind and value of its timber, the situations and capabilities of its streams for floating out the logs (an all-important point), and the facilities for hauling and transportation. They often sketch the surface of the country, showing the positions of its streams and lakes, its groves of timber, and its mountainous or level appearance, with a skill and accuracy little short of marvellous.

The scene of operations having with the aid of these scouts been finally decided upon, the limit holder, early in the month of September, sends his gangs of men into the woods, the usual

number in a gang being from thirty to forty, including foreman, clerk, carpenter, cook, and chore-boy. This number is about doubled, however, later on, when the teams come in to haul the logs that have been cut, so that sixty to eighty men may sometimes be found at one shanty. The foremen rule the gangs, and are in their turn subordinate to the 'bush-superintendents,' who drive in all weathers from gang to gang supervising their work and checking the results. On arriving at their destination, the gang proceed immediately to build their shanty.

Nothing could be more primitive than the architecture, or better adapted to its purpose than the construction of this edifice, which is placed as nearly as possible in the midst of the 'bunch' of timber to be cut, so that no time may be lost in going to and coming from work. With all hands helping, a shanty twenty-eight feet by forty can be put up in five days, the men in the meantime living in tents. The method of construction is as follows: Huge logs, cleared only of their branches, are piled one upon another to the height of eight feet. Great wooden girders are then stretched across, supported in the middle by four massive pillars called 'scoop-bearers,' and upon

these girders hewn timbers resembling elongated railway tiers, hollowed out on one side and designated 'scoops,' are placed with convex and concave sides up alternately, and overlapping each other. Thus arranged, they constitute the roof, and afford perfect protection from the heaviest falls of rain. The floor consists of a single layer of flattened timbers, and then all that remains is to fill in every chink with moss and mud, and throw up a bank all round the outside, and your shanty is—no, not complete, after all, for lo! a most important part of it has been overlooked, to wit, the 'caboose,' or fireplace. This occupies the place of honour in the centre of the room, and is about as simple an affair as could well be. A thick bank of sand and stones is laid upon the floor to hold the fire, while up above a large square hole is cut in the roof and topped with a rude chimney, the whole arrangement affording perfect draft and ventilation, and a fine view of the stars at night to the men lying on their bunks, but demanding the constant maintenance of a huge fire in order to secure comfort. At two corners of the hearth are fixed strong wooden cranes, which the cook can adjust to any required position for his various pots and boilers.

Along three sides of the room run sloping platforms called 'bunks,' on which the tired toilers roll in their blankets and rest after the day's exertion, with their heads turned to the wall and feet to the central fire, which is kept well supplied with fuel all night.

This description applies to a shanty of the 'good, old-fashioned sort.' In recent years the march of improvement has reached even the backwoods; and such luxuries as stoves, windows, tables, &c. have found their way into the lumberman's abode, where, it need hardly be said, they are cordially welcomed.

Shanties for men and stables for horses satisfactorily completed, the campaign against the forest giants begins forthwith. The thirty-five men are divided up into sets, according to the nature of their work. In a gang of that size there will probably be three pairs of choppers, and twice as many cutters, who, together with the teamsters, sawyers, chainers, and the home guard of clerk, cook, and so forth, make up the number. The work of the road-cutters is to prepare a main road from the bunch of timber attacked to the nearest available water, be it lake or stream, also smaller roads branching out from this, according

as the choppers extend their operations. Over these roads, which are sometimes made very hard and smooth by the use of a sprinkler, the teamsters transport the logs from the roll-ways upon which they have been piled, and drop them beside the borders of the stream upon the icy bosom of the lake, there to await the coming of the spring.

No part of the work is more interesting than that which devolves upon the choppers. The foreman having gone ahead and marked with a 'blaze' the trees he wishes felled, they set to work in pairs (and occasionally in trios) at opposite sides of the trunk, and handling their heavy, keen-edged axes as though they were mere toys, chop swiftly into the heart of their helpless victim. The white chips fly fast and thick as the axes swing steadily to and fro, and presently the tree begins to tremble: a few more skilful strokes, a warning crack, and then with a sudden sweep, the huge mass comes crashing down to earth, making a wide swath in the smaller trees standing unsuspectingly around.

Having felled their tree, the choppers next trim off the branches, and then with cross-cut saws divide it into lengths of thirteen and a half or sixteen and a half feet, according to its quality.

Two, three, four, or even five logs may be got out of a single tree, and with such rapidity do experienced choppers work that on new limits, where the timber is thick and heavy, eighty logs is not an out-of-the-way day's work for a pair; while, when 'striving' is begun, that is, one pair pitting themselves against another pair, it is not an uncommon thing for six hundred logs to be unexpectedly turned in as the handsome result of a single week's work. The foreman has no difficulty in checking the work, as the logs are daily piled on roll-ways where they await their turn to be hauled to the waterside.

The lumberman's is a fine, healthy, hearty life. From dawn to dark he works in the open air, exercising both lungs and muscles to the utmost extent that is good for them. Once the autumn rains are over, and the snow has come, he breathes for four long months the clear, cold air of the Canadian winter, made fragrant with the health-giving aroma of the pine and cedar. No matter how bibulous may be his tendencies, not one drop can he have from the cup that inebriates, although he may and does drink potations long, deep, and unlimited from the cup that cheers. His food is not very varied in character nor in style of cooking, pork and beans, beef, bread, and tea being

almost the invariable items of his *menu*, with a bit of game now and then as a rare treat. But there is plenty of it; the bread, baked in pots buried deep in heated sand, cannot be beaten in the whole country; while of that sauce which surpasses the most cunning concoction of Lazenby or Lea & Perrins, to wit (if I may adapt a Falstaffian expression), 'a divine hunger,' who has a more unfailing supply than the Canadian lumberman?

His forest life is not by any means all work either. With the early dusk of winter his toil ceases for the day, and after tools are put away, ablutions performed, and due justice done to the tea, and bread, and bacon, there is a long evening to be spent in song, and dance, and story, when, aided by a simple but effective orchestra of fiddle, concertina, jew's-harp, and flute, the lumberman can make the low-roofed shanty ring with whole-souled merriment.

Twenty-five thousand logs will be a good winter's work for such a shanty as the one I have been describing, and when the warm spring sunshine comes, unlocking the bars and bolts of winter, the labour of the lumberman enters upon its most exciting and perilous stage—that is the 'drive.' The winter's cut of logs having been piled in heaps

beside the river bank, or lake margin, or better still, upon the ice itself, when in mid-April the Frost King's rigid grasp is finally relaxed, they go tumbling pell-mell into the water to begin their long journey millward. And now it is the business of our hardy, fearless toilers to follow this great fleet of cumbrous tree-trunks in their devious and varied course by brawling mountain torrent, swift-running stream, and placid lake, as they go leaping headlong over roaring waterfalls, or shooting like arrows through the slippery 'slides,' dislodging those that fain would tarry by the way, and lifting stranded ones into the current again until the broad bosom of the Ottawa is reached, and the logs, now gathered into 'booms,' can be towed by powerful steamers to their destination.

Each 'river-driver,' as the men are now called, is armed with either a long pike-pole, a 'cant-dog,' or a hand-spike; and in flat-bottomed boats, yeapt 'bonnes,' or tramping along shore, they keep the mighty mass in movement, having constantly before them the danger of a jam—that is, the logs catching in mid-stream against some projecting rock, and piling one upon another until a barrier is formed that puts a veto upon all farther progress. Then comes the most thrilling experience in all the

lumberman's career. The jam must be broken at all hazards, and without a moment's delay, for the longer it is left the worse it becomes. To accomplish this the 'key-piece,' the log which was the first to stick, and has caused all the trouble, must be found and disengaged—if necessary, chopped to pieces.

The precision with which an experienced river-driver will ascertain the key-piece of a jam is only less remarkable than the skill with which he will escape the rush of the suddenly liberated logs. Maintaining his balance almost miraculously upon some slippery cylinder, he will with strenuous strokes chop the offending log in two, or drive it back into deep water, and then, as the whole mass thus set free charges madly down upon him, he will leap from log to log with the sure-footedness of a chamois, until safe out of harm's reach, or perhaps dive headlong into mid-stream, and thus avoid the danger. Dexterous as these men are, however, not a season passes that lives are not lost in these perilous ventures; and there is hardly any announcement more unwelcome to the lumberman's ears than that one of the dreaded jams is forming.

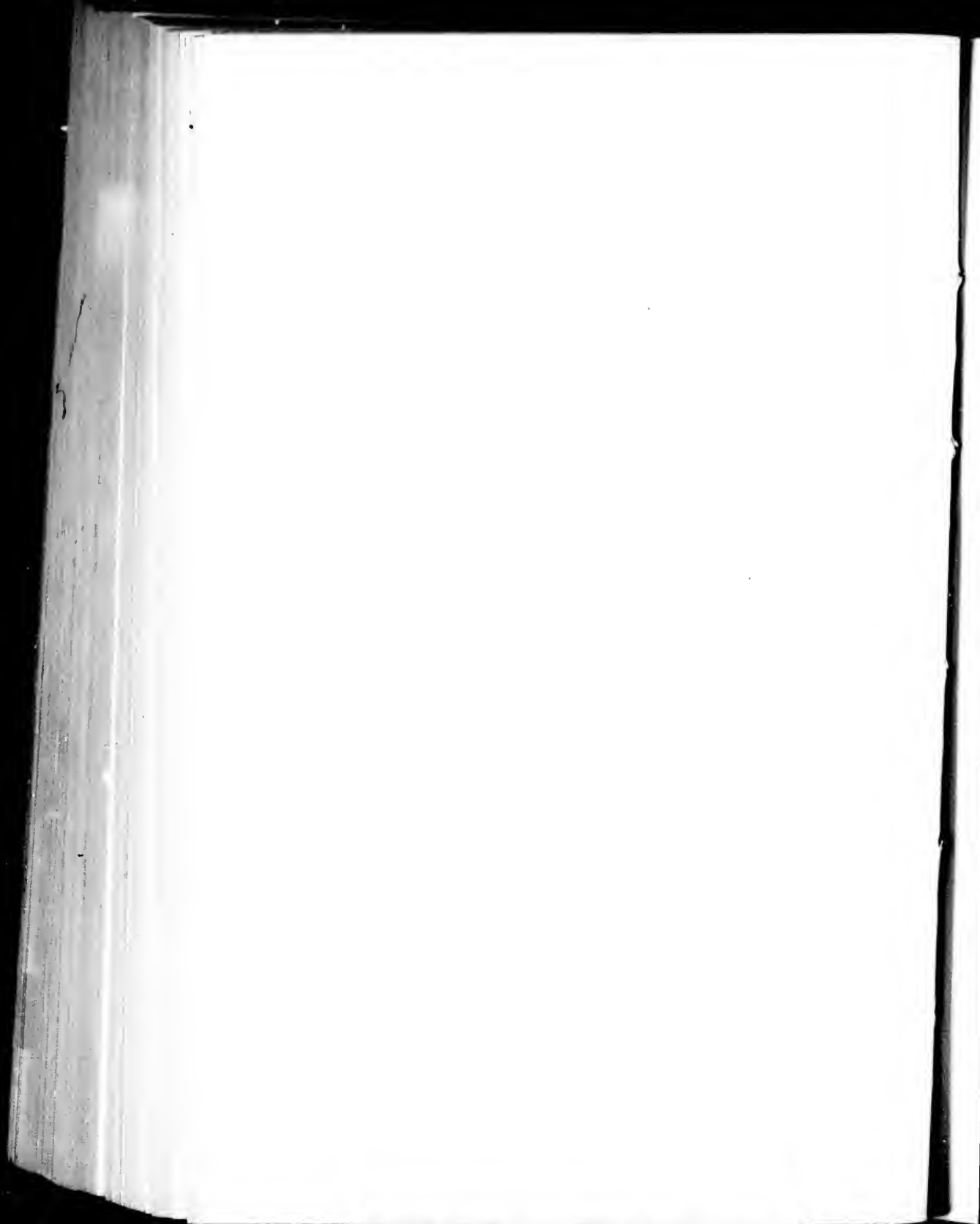
Once the logs are fairly afloat in the deep waters of the Grand River, as the lumberman loves to call

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Timber Jam on the St Francis River.—P. 194.



the Ottawa, the river-driver's work is at an end, and he either finds employment at the mills, or idles away his time at home, until the approach of fall again bids him make ready for the winter's work.

Having been gathered together at the booms, and sorted according to the marks of ownership they bear, the logs are then sent forward to the mills in tow of strong paddle-wheel steamers built for the purpose; and following in their wake, we come in due time to the immense lumber mills that have the spring of their most profitable existence in the exhaustless floods that fling themselves in unappeasable fury over the chasm of the Chaudière.

One of the first impressions made upon the visitor is that of wonder at the way in which the rushing, roaring river has been tamed and trained by many a deep device in solid stone and massive timber, until it cheerfully submits to do man's bidding, and patiently revolves the huge machinery whereby a whilom forest monarch is rapidly reduced to yellow planks. A man named Philemon Wright, who hailed from New England, was the first to make the Chaudière his slave; and compatriots of his still hold the lead there, the establishment of works by them upon a large scale dating from 1853.

The most interesting time at which to visit these mills, which run day and night all summer long, is after dark, when they are illuminated by the electric light that invests the scene with a weird picturesqueness not unworthy the pencil of a Doré. The swift swirling torrent of the mill-race, the dark, mysterious pools, where all unconscious of their coming fate the rough red logs huddle close together, the pulsating roar of ponderous machinery, broken every moment by the startling shriek of the circular saw, or the strange cries of brawny toilers, all bathed in whitest glow or plunged in darkest gloom, combine to form a picture that photographs itself forever upon the memory.

Another writer has so graphically described the operation of log-sawing that, as I cannot improve upon his description, I will therefore borrow it: 'Set thirty or more in a row, the tremendous saws form what is called a "gate," and toward this uncompromising combination the logs, having first been drawn up out of the water on an inclined plane, deftly handled and coaxed into position, are irresistibly impelled, one succeeding the other, day and night. For a moment the glistening steel dances before the forest innocent—a veritable "dance of death," then with a crash and a hiss

the ugly-looking teeth make the first bite, and for five or six minutes eat their way steadily through the tough fibre, till that which enters the machine's mighty jaws a mere log emerges as sawn planks, and after a few more rapid operations becomes well-trimmed lumber ready for the markets of the world.'

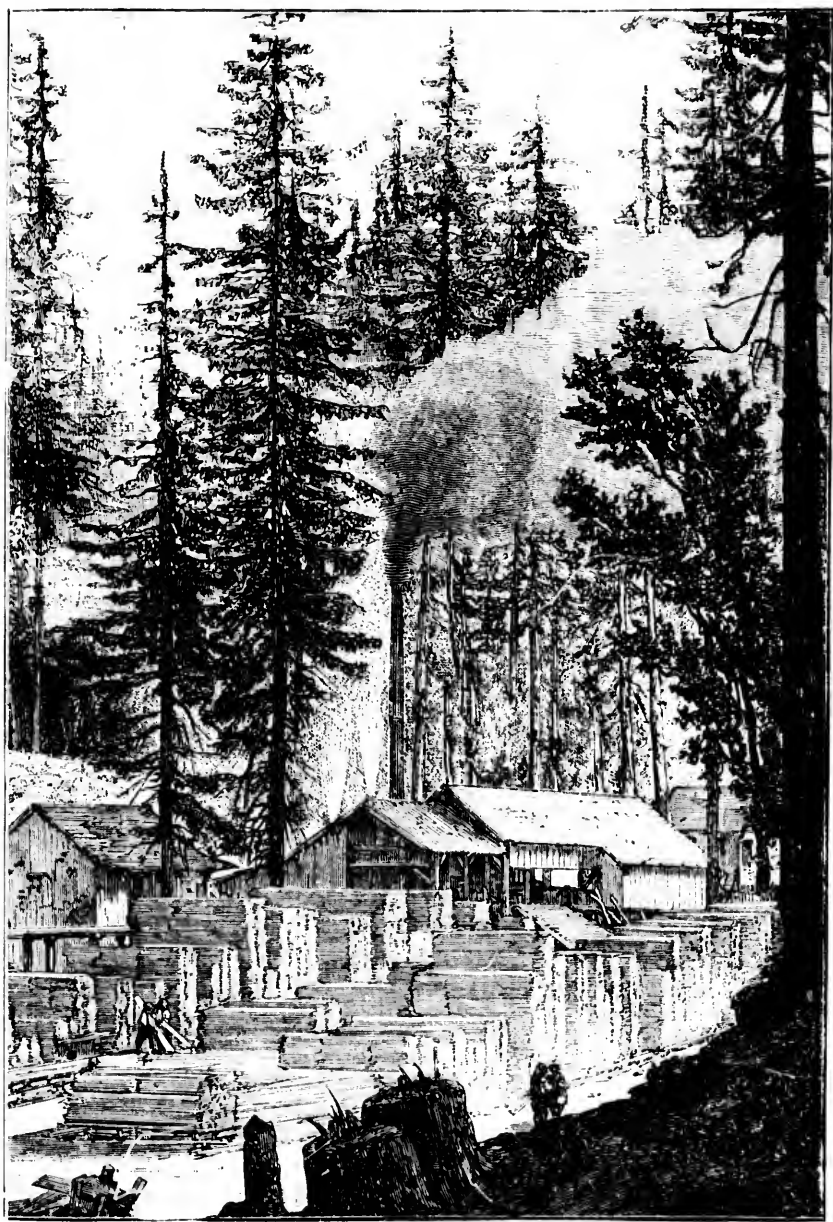
While, of course, the sawing of deals and planks constitutes the chief business at the mills, there are also large quantities of box shooks, laths, railroad ties, pickets, &c., turned out there. The process of lath-making is very interesting to watch, especially as it is entirely in the hands of boys. Odds and ends of planks are first cut by circular saws into the length of a lath, and then passed through a machine where a set of tiny circulars slices them into laths with amazing rapidity. Into one side goes the strip, out at the other come the laths, to be caught up by a quick-fingered lad, and sorted with a speed almost bewildering, the defective ones disappearing into a hole at his feet, the perfect ones being laid in a kind of cradle beside him, where they accumulate until there are enough to make the regulation bundle, when another boy whisks them off to be tied up for market.

For six days of every week, between the coming down of the logs in the spring and the closing of

the river in the autumn, the buzz and whirr and shriek of wheel, and pulley, and saw cease not day nor night. The workmen are divided into day-shifts and night-shifts, each putting in eleven hours steady work. The wages paid are good, the highest being one hundred dollars a month to the mill foreman, the sawyers getting from forty to sixty dollars, edgers and trimmers from thirty to forty dollars, and the general help about thirty dollars a month. A more cheerful, contented, or active lot of workers could hardly be found anywhere. It is true the fine old days have somewhat gone by when the 'lumber kings,' as the great mill-owners were called, exercised an authority over their mills and tributary territory that was so regal in many of its aspects as to give good ground for their grandiose title. Yet much of the old semi-paternal, semi-despotic influence lingers, and it may with pride be recorded that with a single exception those hateful, harmful things called 'strikes' and 'lock-outs' are unknown to the twelve thousand hewers and fashioners of wood in this Ottawa district.

An important and indispensable adjunct to the mill is the piling ground. Having been in the water for months before they are sawn, the logs are, of course, thoroughly 'water-logged,' and after

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Lumber Sawmill, Canada.—P. 199.

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they have been converted into lumber it is necessary to get them thoroughly dry again. This is accomplished by piling them up in huge stacks, constructed in such a way that the air has free play all around each plank, and thus disposed they remain from three months to a year, until sometimes the outer ones, instead of being a golden yellow, become a dirty gray, or even black. Looking out from the cliff behind the Parliament Buildings one sees miles upon miles of these lumber piles extending far up and down the river banks, and constituting a very prominent, if not picturesque feature of the landscape.

While as a rule the pick of the logs are cut into deals for the English market, yet a very large proportion is sawn into ten, twelve, and fourteen-inch boards, which are exported to the United States. Part of the latter go by rail, but the majority by canal barge, and every summer the Ottawa River is crowded with fleets of these cumbrous craft. They are usually owned by the captain, and he often takes his whole family on board with him; so that it is a common thing to see a bunch of these boats moored in one of the coves awaiting a cargo, and in the meantime festooned with the family washing, and swarming

with troops of dirty but happy and evidently well-fed youngsters. The barges are towed by steamer down the Ottawa to the St Lawrence, and along that mighty stream to Sorel, whence they proceed up the Richelieu River, and across Lake Champlain to Whitehall, then down the Hudson to Albany or New York.

I have left for treatment by itself a branch of the lumber business which, although much smaller in its proportion than the production of sawn lumber, and, indeed, steadily decreasing, is still of too great importance to be passed by unnoticed. I refer to what is called the 'square-timber trade.'

By square timber is meant whole tree trunks, roughly squared with broad axes, and separated into lengths that vary according to the quality of the tree, but, as a rule, fall within forty feet. These great, unwieldy timbers are made up into 'cribs,' a crib being about twenty-four feet wide by thirty to forty feet long, and containing some twenty-five pieces held together by cross pieces called 'traverses,' strongly pinned on, four of the largest timbers being then laid upon the traverses, and fixed firmly. The cribs are in their turn combined into rafts, some of which are of such immense size (comprising, perhaps, over one hun-

dred cribs) as to constitute regular floating islands.

Were the course of the Ottawa smooth and regular, these great rafts with their little cabins, which look like magnified dog-kennels, for the crew to sleep in, and fireplaces to cook their meals at, might pursue their solemn stately course by the aid of sail, and oar, and current, down to the St Lawrence intact. But, broken as the river is into frequent falls and riotous rapids, this is quite out of the question. So, at each of the falls, there are 'slides' prepared, whereby the perils of the watery precipice may be avoided. These slides are very elaborate and expensive affairs, and are, in most cases, maintained by the government, a toll being exacted from the rafts that use them. They are simply artificial channels constructed in close proximity to the falls, the walls and bottom being lined with smooth, strong timber work, and ballasted with mighty stones. In order to go through the slides, the great rafts must, of course, be resolved into their component cribs, and then made up again after the swift descent is accomplished. The longest and steepest slides are those at Chaudière Falls, and 'shooting the slides' is an experience of thrilling novelty, which no

tourist visiting the Canadian capital should think of neglecting. It may not inaptly be likened to tobogganing on water. Let me try to convey some idea of what it is like.

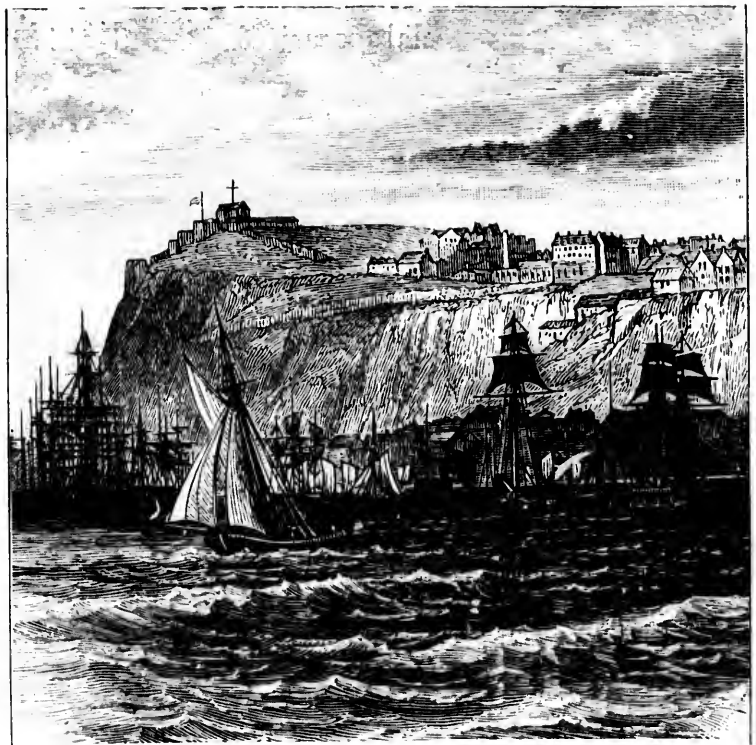
Ascending to the slide's summit, you jump aboard a passing crib before it is fairly under way. Soon you are conscious of gathering speed; the slide slants sharply downward, the water begins to ripple and splash beside you; in another moment, with a sudden shock, your unwieldy bark having taken its plunge, is gliding down the smooth descent at a pace that makes you hold your breath and tightly hug the biggest beam. Now you have reached the bridge, and as you shoot beneath, you just have time to see what is before, and you feel your heart leap to your mouth as, with a shudder and a groan, the great crib, poising for an awful moment on the watery verge, dives headlong into the dark, foam-flecked whirlpool. The timbers strain and spread apart, the waves burst up fiercely between your feet, the spray springs high and falls in drenching showers. For one harrowing second, you bitterly repent your rashness in making the venture; then with quick buoyancy, the crib rises again, shakes off its aqueous burden, and hurries onward, dipping and rising, until

with one last dive the perilous passage is over, and you are floating quietly out on the placid river.

Many distinguished visitors, from the Prince of Wales and Princess Louise downward through the social strata, have enjoyed the experience of shooting the slides. Cribs put together with more than usual care, and planked so as to prevent wetting, are used on such special occasions. And this is very necessary, because there is a certain amount of actual danger to be reckoned with in taking one's chances upon the first crib that happens along. You may get to the bottom with nothing worse than a soaked coat, or you may just at the most critical moment find your loosely compacted craft summarily separating into its individual 'sticks,' and then it is a case of 'jump for your life.' When the writer went down, the crib immediately in advance of him and the crib behind him broke up completely, happily without injury to anybody, although the one he had selected preserved its integrity to the finish.

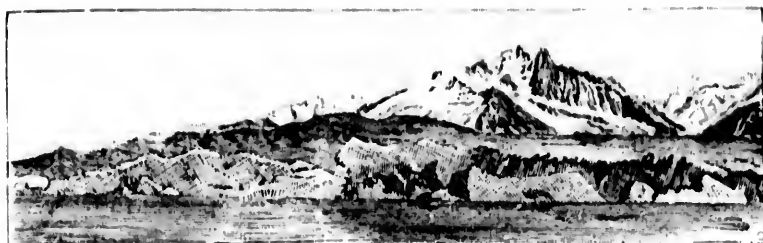
With a leisureliness that irresistibly reminds an onlooker of one of those glaciers which Mark Twain proposed to utilise for the purposes of 'slow

freight' the rafts creep on down the Ottawa and St Lawrence to Quebec, where they are stowed away, stick by stick, in the gaping holds of waiting ships, and carried off across the ocean to Great Britain.




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CHAPTER XIII.

THE MEDITERRANEAN OF CANADA.



THE history of human effort to pierce the ice-defended mysteries of the Arctic Zone is invested not only with deepest interest but with the most moving pathos. Franklin and his gallant shipmates battling bravely, but alas! hopelessly, for life amidst the pitiless, pathless ice-floes, and Henry Hudson, thrust forth from his own ship in a tiny skiff by his mutinous, murderous crew, to find a grave in the waters of the mighty inland sea that would alone preserve his remembrance, are names associated in our minds with feelings of tenderest sympathy not less than of warmest admiration. Those who bore them were to the western continent what Livingstone was to Africa; and to their self-sacrificing heroism we are indebted in like manner for additions to the sum of human knowledge whose worth cannot be estimated.

Seeing that the first motive which impelled men to pit themselves against the terrors of those thrilling regions of thick-ribbed ice was the hope of discovering a safer and speedier passage for the wondrous treasures of the East than the storm-beset route around the Cape of Good Hope afforded, it is exceedingly interesting to find that an important question of to-day is whether or not a practicable commercial highway can be established through the inland ocean which bears the name of Hudson to the very heart of the American continent. The hope of a north-west passage to the Indies has long ago been abandoned. Indeed, the cutting of the Suez Canal would have finally superseded the enterprise, even though there had been prospects of a successful issue. But a north-west passage to the North-west itself is an altogether different thing; and it is some account of the explorations which have been carried on to this end that is the purpose of this paper.

If we look carefully at the map of North America, and note how far the vast bulk of Hudson Bay thrusts itself inland, it is evident at once that the examination of this mighty sea, with a view to determining its possibilities in the way of navigation, could be simply a question of time. So

long as only the eastern and central parts of Canada were settled, the St Lawrence did well enough; but once the tide of population began to flow over the boundless prairies of the West, and to garner from them such harvests as not even Egypt might surpass, the men who chafed at the long and costly overland passage their grain must undergo turned their eyes toward the great bay that seemed to promise a means of relief, and they demanded that the Government of Canada should take measures to ascertain whether the promise could be fulfilled or no.

Parliament is proverbially slow to move. You must be very much in earnest, very persistent, and, above all things, have some influence over a constituency or two, in order to gain any favours from it. Fortunately for their enterprise, those who were interested in Hudson Bay possessed all these valuable qualifications; and so in the early part of January 1884, we find a Committee of the House of Commons appointed to take into consideration the question of its navigation with power to send for persons, papers, and records. The Committee sat for nearly two months, examined a number of persons who either had, or were supposed to have, some knowledge of the subject;

plunged deep into the records of the Hudson Bay Company, which went to show that for two centuries their vessels had navigated the bay every year; and altogether carried out their instructions in a very thorough and creditable manner, concluding their labour by bringing in a report which the Government considered ample justification for granting a sufficient sum of money to cover the expenses of systematic investigation.

The first exploring expedition set forth from the harbour of Halifax in the month of July 1884. It comprised a single vessel, the Newfoundland steam whaler *Neptune*, under command of Lieutenant A. R. Gordon, Assistant Superintendent of the Meteorological Service of Canada, and having on board Dr Robert Bell, of the Geological Survey, seven observers, and twelve station-men. The *Neptune* was not just the most desirable sort of a vessel for the purpose. She was as slow as a snail, afforded at best very cramped accommodation, and moreover, having seen long service in the odoriferous occupation of whaling, was rich in reminiscences of the business, which could never, by any possibility, have been mistaken for scents from Araby the blest. Her redeeming feature was her sturdy strength, which enabled her to submit unharmed to the

fiereest buffeting, not only of the wind and wave, but of ice-floe and rock-reef also. Setting forth from Halifax on 22d July 1884, the *Neptune*, sailing up through the Gulf of St Lawrence and Straits of Belle Isle, coasted along the bleak, forbidding Labrador shore until she arrived at Cape Chudleigh, which forms one of the lips of the mouth of Hudson Straits. Many icebergs were encountered on the way, and constant vigilance had to be exercised to guard against their coming to too close quarters.

At Cape Chudleigh a dense fog enveloped the vessel, and kept her a close prisoner for several days. When it cleared away she pushed on through the strait, and looked about until a fine harbour was discovered on the north-western shore of the cape, which was evidently just the place for Observatory Station No. 1. As some slight consolation for having to spend the winter there, the station was called Port Burwell, in honour of the observer who was placed in charge, together with two station-men to keep him company. The same pleasant compliment was paid each of the other observers left behind during the progress of the expedition, and future geographers will therefore please take note of Ashe Inlet on the north side

of the strait, a little more than midway between the ocean and the bay ; Stupart's Bay, immediately opposite on the southern shore ; Port De Boucherville on Nottingham Island ; and Port Laperrière on Digges Island. At each of these places an observer and two station-men were established in snug huts, taken out for the purpose, and fitted up with unstinted stores of food, fuel, furs, and every necessary comfort, besides, of course, a complete set of such instruments as would be required for the observations as to movements of the ice, tides, and winds. The observers were also instructed to note down carefully everything of importance as to the migrations of mammals, birds, and fish, and also as to the growth of grasses. In fact, they were to find out everything they possibly could ; and it may be said here that, without exception, they discharged their duties in a thoroughly satisfactory manner, and thus accumulated an immense mass of information about a region of country hitherto almost unknown.

Having established the stations one by one, the *Neptune* then turned northward to visit Chesterfield Inlet and Marble Island, thence southward to Fort Churchill, the future Liverpool of that region if the hopes of the Hudson Bay Railway pro-

motors shall ever be realised; and southward still to Fort York, the present commercial metropolis of the bay, if so fine a term may be applied to a place whose business activity is compressed into a week or two out of each year, and is then limited to receiving a cargo from and providing a return cargo for a single ship.

All this took from August 6th to September 12th. On the evening of the latter day, the *Neptune* struck out across the broad bosom of the bay for Digges Island, and beginning with Port Laperrière, made a farewell tour of the various stations, after which her course was shaped homewards; St John's, Newfoundland, being reached by October 11th, when the voyage came to an end.

The results of the expedition were very considerable, although, of course, they were only preliminary. In reference to the ice, which had hitherto been supposed to be the most formidable barrier to the navigation of the waters, Lieutenant Gordon, the commander of the expedition, reported that on close inspection its terror very largely disappears. The ice met with during his cruise could be divided into three classes, each class having a separate origin: namely, icebergs from the glaciers of Fox Channel, heavy Arctic ice from

the channel itself, and ordinary field-ice being that formed on the shores of the bay and strait. No icebergs were encountered in Hudson Bay, nor were any reported as having been seen there in the past; but in the strait a good many were met with, principally along the northern shore, where a number were stranded in the coves, while some others were passed in mid-channel. They were not thought, however, to form any greater barriers to navigation than do those met with in Belle Isle Strait, nor were they more numerous than they frequently are in those waters. The field-ice encountered, although it would have compelled an ordinary iron steamer to go dead slow, gave no trouble to the *Neptune*, the vessel running at full speed between the pans, and rarely touching one of them.

The following summer a second expedition, in charge of the same commander as before, went up to the Bay, this time in a much superior vessel, H.M.S. *Alert*, which had been lent for the purpose by the British naval authorities. In every respect, except perhaps speed, a better vessel than this steamship could hardly have been selected. She had been specially rebuilt for the Nares Arctic expedition of 1876, and was so constructed as to

be capable of resisting great ice-pressure, while her engines gave a very creditable amount of steam for a small expenditure of coal. It being deemed essential to determine, so far as possible, the time of the opening of Hudson Straits for navigation, a much earlier start was made than before; the *Alert* steaming out of Halifax harbour on the 27th May.

Unfortunately, however, the fates saw fit to frustrate this design, for, after making her way with much difficulty, but no mishap, through fields of ice and banks of fog right up to the mouth of the strait, on the 16th June, the ice set solid to the ship, fore and aft, rafting and piling up all around her, and the next day it was discovered that the iron stern-plates had been broken off some distance below the water. This was a most serious injury, as Lieutenant Gordon did not dare drive his ship at all hard through the ice, and from that day until July 6th was compelled to let her drift about, the plaything and sport of the pitiless Ice-King. Thus much precious time was lost, and a still further delay occasioned by the necessity of returning to Newfoundland for repairs, which took until nearly the end of the month, so that August had come before the first station, Port Burwell, was

reached. The observer and his assistants were found in excellent health, and reported having passed a very pleasant winter, even if the cold did happen to freeze the mercury solid sometimes.

The round of the different stations was then made, and the men who had spent the winter there were replaced by fresh garrisons, the number in each case being the same as before. With two exceptions, the men were found in perfect health, the exceptions being one of the observers, who was suffering from a slight attack of scurvy, and one of the station hands, who had fallen a victim to that disease. In the latter case, the fault lay entirely with the unfortunate fellow, as during the winter months he spent the greater part of his time in bed, and persistently neglected every precaution against an attack. After visiting Fort Churchill, where, as may be readily supposed, the advent of the *Alert* was hailed with delight by the little band of residents, and where her departure was delayed by a violent storm that lasted over a week, the return voyage was entered upon, the parting rounds of the stations made, and their tiny garrisons were left to the cold and darkness of a second long and dreary Arctic winter.

The third expedition, in which the *Alert* was

again used, sailed on June 24, 1886, and had far better luck than its immediate predecessor, as no special difficulty or cause of delay was experienced, the season proving to be somewhat earlier than the previous year, and the ice consequently in a much more disorganised condition. It is true that while ramming at a thick bar of ice a little more than half way through the strait, the screw got worsted in the encounter to the extent of one blade; but as the same accident had occurred on both previous trips, Lieutenant Gordon knew exactly how to repair the damage, and little time was lost. The stations were visited in turn, and all their occupants taken off, as they were to be maintained no longer. This duty accomplished, an excursion was made to the Marble Island in the northern part of the bay, a great resort of whalers, in whose chief harbour there is a spot called Deadman's Island, because of the number of graves dotting its bleak and barren back with pathetic memorials of those who had gone out from their New Bedford homes to return no more forever.

Forts York and Churchill were then called at, and a survey made of the latter place with a view of ascertaining its commercial capabilities, the result being that it was pronounced admirably

suited for the water terminus of a railroad system, and easily convertible into a port fit for doing a business of great magnitude. The estuary of the Nelson River, by the shores of which Fort York stands, is, on the other hand, declared by Lieutenant Gordon to be one of the most dangerous places in the world for shipping; so that, if Hudson Bay ever does become the summer outlet for the commerce of the Great North-west, Churchill harbour must undoubtedly be the shipping port. Some day or other there may be a boom up there, and this little bit of information may prove very valuable; but I present it freely to my readers notwithstanding, and they can use it as they see fit.

Having thus glanced briefly at the movement of three expeditions, my next business is to rescue the more important results of their explorations from the quick oblivion of the blue-book, and make them public property; a task that has been rendered materially more interesting through the kindness of Mr W. A. Ashe, observer at Ashe Inlet, in placing at my disposal the extensive and valuable notes made by him during his winter sojourn.

First of all, a word or two in reference to the Hudson Bay itself. The proportions of this inland ocean are such as to give it a prominent place among

the geographical features of the world. One thousand three hundred miles in length, by six hundred miles in breadth, it extends over twelve degrees of latitude, and covers an area not less than half a million square miles. Of the five basins into which Canada is divided, that of Hudson Bay is immeasurably the largest, the extent of country draining into it being estimated at three million square miles. To swell the mighty volume of its waters there come rivers which take their rise in the Rocky Mountains on the east and the Labrador wilderness on the west; while southward, its river roots stretch far down below the forty-ninth parallel, until they tap the same lake source whence flows a stream into the Gulf of Mexico. Strange as it may seem, it is perfectly possible that a passing breath of wind should determine whether the ultimate destiny of the rain-drop falling into that little lake be the balmy bosom of the Mexican Gulf or the chilly grasp of the Arctic ice-floe.

Although seemingly so remote from the needs of humanity, Hudson Bay has been the scene of many a conflict, its possession being fiercely disputed by the French and English for a period extending over two centuries. An interesting relic of those tumultuous days is still to be seen in

what is without doubt the largest ruin in North America—Fort Prince of Wales, whose battered walls stand out prominently upon the point at the west side of the entrance to Churchill Harbour. Begun in 1733, it occupied several years in building; and when completed must have looked very imposing, with its lofty stone battlements and two-score menacing cannon. Yet strong as it was, Governor Hearne, who had charge in 1782, surrendered, without firing a shot, to the French Admiral La Perouse, when he appeared before him in a seventy-four, accompanied by two frigates, and summoned him to yield. La Perouse spiked and dismounted the guns, partially destroyed the walls, and then sailed off with his prisoners, leaving the fort to a neglect and silence that has never been broken since, except when perchance some curious visitor explores its fast-crumbling ruins.

The chief reason for the deep interest manifested in the bay by the two great rivals was their desire to control the lucrative fur trade, for which it offered so excellent an outlet. The famous Hudson Bay Company was formed under the patronage of Prince Rupert in 1688, and forthwith proceeded to establish forts along the shore, beginning with Moose Factory at the foot of James

Bay. Forts Albany, York, and Churchill followed in due time, and regular communication has been maintained between them and Great Britain, the records showing that with the exception of one year (1779) a ship has annually visited Moose Factory for one hundred and fifty-one years and York Factory for ninety-seven years.

The native Indians and Eskimo were from the first delighted at the establishment of these forts, and at no time have the relations between them and their white brethren been otherwise than perfectly harmonious. They scour the country far and wide for furs, and bringing them to the fort, obtain in exchange ammunition, guns, hatchets, knives, beads, and other articles dear to the savage heart, and essential to their wild life. They are a harmless, inoffensive people as a rule, and have readily listened to the missionaries sent to minister to their spiritual necessities, the consequent improvement in their life being easily perceptible.

The Indians of these regions have so much in common with the ordinary red man as to call for no special remark; but the Eskimo present an individuality and interest that render them peculiarly attractive, as a subject of study at all events, and Mr Ashe's acute and sympathetic ob-

servations help us greatly toward a better understanding of those little-known people. For more than a year he dwelt amongst them on an island on the north side of the strait, at about the middle point of its length, his home being a frame house, sixteen by twenty feet in dimensions, in which he and his two men successfully endured a climate whose mean temperature was nineteen degrees below freezing-point, permitting snow to lie in shady places the whole year round, and making a snow-storm possible in the height of summer.

It is a sad and gloomy land. In winter the world lies buried beneath its monotonous robe of white. In summer it reminds one of a Doré illustration to the *Inferno*; for, without a sign of vegetation save a sickly growth of moss in sheltered nooks, the bare, bleak rocks lie tumbled about in chaotic confusion, wearying the eye and chilling the soul with their unmitigated sternness. Amid such surroundings do the Eskimo spend their life, passing from cradle to grave without one faintest gleam of the glorious beauty of flower-strewn meadow or billowy-verdured forest. And yet they are far from being an unhappy or unintelligent race. On the contrary, they are both

cheerful and bright by nature, to a degree that puts them upon a higher level than many of the Indians who have much greater advantages. In the matter of mechanical ability, for instance, examine the tool-box of an Eskimo when he considers it well furnished, and what does it contain? A well-worn file, an indifferent saw, a few rusty nails, a cheap penknife, and a very inferior sheath-knife. What would the ordinary mechanic of civilisation accomplish with such implements as these? Yet with these poor tools the Eskimo will repair the locks of their guns, make harpoons and spears, put together their kayaks and umiaks, and manufacture all sorts of things out of walrus ivory. They will take the blade out of one penknife, alter it so as to be of suitable size, and place it in another handle, drilling with a broken needle the hole for the pin on which the blade turns, having first by means of fire carefully untempered the part of the blade to be drilled.

The appearance of these Eskimo is suggestive of patience and perseverance. They are short and squat of figure, the men averaging five feet three inches and the women five feet in height. Their breadth is apt to vary according as the fates have sent them plenty of seal or not. Their

eyes and hair are of the very blackest, the latter being as straight as horse-hair and not less coarse. A favourite amusement among the women is for two of them to select a hair out of their heads, and looping one through the other, to pull on the ends held in their hands until one of the hairs gives way, to the vast delight of the fat little lady whose capillary strength wins in this odd tug-of-war.

The men generally sport a moustache and occasionally a beard, the usual thing, however, being a tuft on the chin. They have very flat noses and high cheek-bones, so that if you were to hold a straight rule from one of the eye-balls to the other, it would in many cases fail to touch the bridge of the nose. Their eyes have an upward tendency at the corners, their complexion is of a light brown tinge often dashed with red, their mouths wide but not thick-lipped, their teeth very irregular and considerably more like rusty iron than gleaming pearl in colour, while in the women they are apt to be worn down almost to the gums by their custom of chewing, until it is soft enough to be easily sewn, the sun-stiffened sealskin out of which their garments are made. However lacking in attractive qualities the Eskimo

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Eskimo Woman and Child.—P. 223.



belle may appear to the civilised eye, she possesses one element of beauty which even the most charming residents of Belgravia might fairly covet, and that is exquisitely small hands and feet. While her southern sister compresses her feet into the tightest of French *bottines*, and yet is not satisfied, the houri of Hudson Straits puts on first a sealskin stocking with the fur inside, then another made out of the skin of a duck, loon, or raven, with its feathers still on, then one or two more of sealskin, and lastly the boot itself, notwithstanding all of which wrapping her foot seems small and dainty.

The Eskimo costume consists in summer of sealskins, and in winter of reindeer skins, the latter being always worn in duplicate, one set with the fur next the body the other with the fur outside; an arrangement that is even better than the famous one of Brian O'Lynn, who, according to the old song, having no breeches to wear, got him a sheepskin to make him a pair, and then

With the skinny side out, and the woolly side in,
He was fine and warm was Brian O'Lynn.

The pattern of their garments varies not a whit from generation to generation. The coat, which

does not button, but is hauled on over the head, has a large capuchin, in Eskimo language, 'amook,' at the back of the neck. The only difference between the coats of the men and women lies in the latter being graced with a tail, both 'fore and aft' so to speak, upon which the feminine fondness for ornamentation is indulged to the full extent of the wearer's means, so that they may be seen adorned with numerous rows of beads and bits of brass or copper, such things as the works of a clock not being despised, for instance. A very popular form of decoration consists of table-spoons, which they break in two, and arrange in various devices, grouping the handles in one place and the bowls in another.

In the summer each family has its own home, but in winter two or more families live together for the sake of increased warmth and economy of fuel. The summer residence is a tent made of sealskins with the hair scraped off, giving much the appearance of yellowish parchment, which is stretched over poles of drift-wood arranged in the ordinary cone shape. The door is always toward the water by whose side they are camped, and at the opposite side of the tent is the bed, composed of moss covered with seal-skin. As they sleep with

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Eskimo Winter Houses. — P. 225.



head pointing doorward, they necessarily lie down hill, owing to the natural slope of the land toward the shore. This does not seem either a comfortable or healthy position, but apparently they are none the worse for it. On either side of the doorway is their larder, consisting of exceedingly repulsive-looking and malodorous piles of seal meat and blubber.

The winter habitations are made entirely of snow, and are generally built under the sheltering lee of a rock, in the drift that accumulates there. The builders begin by marking out a circle on the snow about fifteen feet in diameter, which represents the inner side of the walls, and with a saw or long-bladed knife they cut out blocks of snow, from three to six feet long by a foot thick, from inside the circle they have marked; then, placing the blocks around the circle, they carry the walls up spirally (not in tiers) until they meet in a keystone above, at a distance of about nine feet from the excavated level of the floor. The result is, except as to colour, the production of a gigantic bee-hive, over the door or in the centre of the roof of which is set a big block of fresh-water ice to serve the purpose of a window in lighting an interior that,

although stainless white at first, is soon blackened by the ever-smoking, evil-smelling lamps the inmates use.

The furniture of these human hives is very simple, as may be readily supposed. It consists of a bed-place or divan along the side of the 'Igloo' opposite the door, and two fireplaces, one on either hand as you enter. The former are made of firmly-packed snow, and raised about three feet above the floor, the divan having its outer edge faced with a pole to prevent it from crumbling away when used as a seat in the day-time. The beds are made up in the following manner: first, a layer of moss spread over the snow; next, a layer of sealskin; then a layer of bear or deer skin; and finally the sleeping-bags, which resemble exaggerated pillowslips, only that fur takes the place of linen, and the fur is double, so that there may be hair both inside and outside. Into these bags, of which each adult has one, the Eskimo, stripped to the bare buff, creeps for the night, and sleeps very comfortably. Up to the age of ten the children share their parents' bag; after that they are promoted to having one of their own.

Their fires are nothing more than lamps rudely fashioned out of soapstone, and so arranged as to

be self-supplying, a mass of blubber being hung in such close proximity to the flame that the fat is converted into oil, which, dripping into the bowl below, is consumed by means of a moss wick. As the lamp has no chimney, and both oil and wick are of the poorest, the result is the reverse of brilliant; neither light nor heat being obtained in what we would consider satisfactory quantity. Just above the lamps a sealskin is stretched to prevent the heat thawing the roof away, a precaution that seems scarcely necessary, seeing that the ordinary temperature of these snow huts is twenty-seven degrees at the roof and twenty-four degrees at the level of the beds; in other words, from five to eight degrees below freezing-point. Pray, pause for a moment, good people, as you read this by cosy firesides, or in register-heated chambers, where the thermometer keeps comfortably near the seventies, and try to realise what it means. What sort of a time would you have, with the air chilled to ten degrees below zero outside, and warmed to only twenty-five above, inside? Verily, one-half the world does not know, and indeed can hardly understand, how the other half lives.

In order to keep out as much cold as possible,

the doorways are very low and very narrow, a fact which explains the curious phrase with which the hosts speed their parting guest, namely, 'Tabourke apernick in atit,' that is, 'Good bye, don't bump your head.'

Next to his children, the most important members of an Eskimo's household are his dogs, they being essential to his hunting in summer and travelling in winter. They are very wild, wolfish animals, only half domesticated, and possessing marvellous digestive powers. A pup that Mr Ashe was rearing, being left to amuse himself in the house one day, did so very effectually by devouring stockings, gloves, the greater part of a top-boot, and many smaller articles of a similar nature, none of which apparently disagreed with him. In travelling the dogs are harnessed to the sledges by traces of white whaleskin, the oldest and most trustworthy on the lead, the others in pairs on either side of his line; a dozen constituting a full team, and the whole being controlled by a driver who runs beside them, wielding a whip with a lash thirty feet long, which in his hands can take a tuft of hair out of the most distant dog with unfailing accuracy. Where there is no beaten track some one must precede the dogs to show them the way, but on a well-defined

route they will trot along merrily by themselves at a rate of five or six miles an hour.

Often, when a pause is made for a rest, or to ice the runners of the sledge, a discussion will arise among the dogs as to whether all are pulling their fair share. From barks they soon come to bites, and a scrimmage ensues which would cast the liveliest corner of Donnybrook Fair into the shade. The dancing driver with his cracking whip, the snarling, struggling dogs entangled in their traces, and the overturned sled, combine to make up a scene that defies description.

The Eskimos are very good to their dogs, sharing their last bite with them when food is scarce. So fond are they of them, too, that it is exceedingly difficult to purchase a good team. The Hudson Bay Company employés find these dogs very useful in their work, and there are large packs of them at every fort. They are famous fish-eaters, and great are the rejoicings in dog-town when a catch of porpoises or white whales is effected; for then they may gorge themselves to their heart's content upon the rich and juicy meat of the marine monsters.

The Eskimo language is very soft and pleasing to the ear, but difficult to acquire, principally be-

cause of the peculiar use of the accent and the difference a wrong placing of it makes, as a word incorrectly pronounced seems to be quite unintelligible. Mr Ashe's first attempts at conversation were so conspicuously unsuccessful that he was much discouraged. For instance, he said one day to a young neighbour: 'Ibbe micky tiddleman picaniminy petuang-a-too,' meaning thereby to remark in a friendly way: 'Your dog had five puppies: they are dead;' but in reality testing his visitor's self-control by the offensive assertion: 'You are a dog. You have not five children.'

Although known to the world as Eskimo or Esquimaux, these dwellers in the far north call themselves 'Innuït,' which means 'the people,' as if they were the only people in the world. The generally accepted derivation of the term Eskimo is from the Indian word 'Eskimautsic,' signifying 'eaters of raw meat;' but Mr Ashe suggests another derivation that is at least very plausible and worthy of notice. The whaler of to-day calls the Eskimo 'Huskies,' a word that is not far removed from 'Husickie,' and that again from 'Isickie,' which is the Innuït word for a male. Now, what seems more probable than that the earliest visitors to those icy regions in seeking information

as to what the inhabitants called themselves were understood as wanting to know whether they were males or females, and, receiving the reply 'Isickie,' turned it into 'Eskimo' before handing it down to us? The Eskimo call their white visitors, whom they are always glad to see, 'Kedloonah,' that is the 'crested people;' as they at first supposed the hats worn by them were part of their physical constitution.

In reference to their religious beliefs and superstitions the Eskimo are remarkably reticent, for the reason, probably, that their intercourse has chiefly been with rough, rude sailors, and they are afraid of having their cherished ceremonies made the butt of the white man's ridicule.

As regards matrimonial matters, they generally have but one wife, and never more than two at the same time. No formal preliminaries in the way of a marriage service seem to be undertaken. When a couple come to the same way of thinking, the man takes the woman from her home, sometimes even without asking her parents' consent, and installs her into his own igloo as the fire-tender and 'slavey' thereof. Usually the relation is a happy one. Sometimes, however, incompatibility of temper reveals itself, and then

the uncongenial wife is returned to her former home, no formal divorce being required.

Eskimo parents are not apt to be overburdened with children, five being considered a large family. This is due to the lack of farinaceous food, which renders it necessary to postpone weaning until the children are five or six years old. What poor, dear Artemus Ward would call 'episodes' are quite unknown among them; and when assured that triplets or even quartets were not impossible in the South, their admiration of the white man was vastly increased.

The dead are buried in the snow in the winter time, and among the rocks in the summer, piles of stones being heaped upon them to keep off the wolves and dogs. With the male dead they bury a knife and spear. Before the era of guns they buried also a bow and arrow, but when these became obsolete they did not put a gun in their place, arguing soundly enough that he must be a poor hunter indeed who cannot get all the game he needs in the happy hunting-grounds with a knife and spear as his only weapons. It would appear as if there were advanced thinkers, moreover, who hold that even the knife and spear are not necessary in a land of such unlimited

plenty, and who accordingly deprive the dead man of both, for it is very rarely that graves are found still containing these articles. With the women they bury nothing, holding that somebody will hunt game for them in the next world just as they have done in this.

The Eskimo pantheon is pretty well occupied, there being gods to preside over the different natural phenomena, such as the rain, snow, ice, tides, and so forth, and others controlling human destiny in the chase, at home, and elsewhere. Their explanation of the tides is very naïve. The genius of the waters, it seems, wishing to cross the straits dryshod, caused the water that filled them to heap itself up at one side, and then, when it had passed over, to fall back into its place again, which it did with such momentum as to go on oscillating to and fro ever since. They have no lack of priests, and under their direction make various offerings to propitiate the deities, particularly when the seasons are bad and seals are scarce.

Their social customs are full of interest and individuality. Their way of eating, for instance, is decidedly peculiar. Cutting a long strip of gory, greasy meat from the mass before him, the

Eskimo gourmand takes one end of it in his mouth, and then pulling at the other until it is strained tight, with a quick slash of the knife, past his mouth and nose, he severs a mouthful, and swallows it without mastication, repeating the operation rapidly until the limit of his storage capacity is reached. A civilised spectator watching an Eskimo family at dinner cannot fail to be struck with the wisdom of Providence in giving these people such short noses, as were the features any longer they would infallibly suffer early abbreviation.

In the matter of amusements the Eskimo are not badly off. They have a form of cup-and-ball, the ball being a block of ivory pierced with holes at different angles, into one of which the player strives to insert an ivory peg as the block falls, the position of the hole determining the value of the stroke. Another game closely resembles dominoes, and contains pieces running as high as 'double-thirties;' but the sequences are not regularly carried out, the breaks in them seeming to be without system. When they can borrow or purchase a pack of cards they will play euchre and high-low-jack with considerable skill; and they also enjoy draughts, having learned these

games from the whalers. They have a game exactly like solitaire, with the exception that ivory pegs take the place of glass balls. The special amusement of the women is a species of 'cat's-cradle,' which has been brought to such perfection that they develop from twenty to thirty different figures in it. Indeed, they are extremely clever in performing tricks with string, winding and twisting a piece in and out among their fingers, and then disentangling it by a single pull on one end.

Such are some of the manners and customs of the quaint, harmless, and—despite their dirt—lovable people, whose home is among the dreary regions to the north and south of Hudson Straits. They have many admirable traits of character. They are wonderfully patient and enduring in times of trial and suffering; honest and intelligent to an unlooked-for degree, perfectly fearless in the chase, yet so peace-loving in their disposition that quarrels are almost unknown; hospitable, docile, keenly appreciative of kindness, and ready to share their last bite with their white visitors; willing to work when opportunity offers, and content with small remuneration. So many good points have they, indeed, that the sad certainty

of their gradual extermination is rendered all the sadder thereby. The most careful estimate of their numbers in the Hudson Straits region at present is one thousand five hundred; but this, of course, is only an approximation, as their own system of counting, which generally runs 'one, two, three, a great many,' renders anything like an accurate census impossible. Each year finds their food supply diminishing, thanks mainly to the enterprise of the whalers and sealers. As the numbers of the seals decrease, the number of the Eskimo must decrease also, and the end, though it may be long delayed, seems inevitable.

Although the region inhabited (if that term can be rightly applied to tiny settlements scattered at vast intervals over boundless wastes) by the Eskimo is utterly worthless for agricultural purposes, the waters it surrounds contain sources of wealth which, strange to say, have hitherto been monopolised by the Dundee and New Bedford whalers, just as the fur trade has been monopolised by the English Hudson Bay Company; the Canadians, to whom the region belongs, deriving scarcely any benefit from it whatever. Formerly, the whale fisheries of the bay were extremely valuable, but of late years this leviathan has so

decreased in numbers as to render his chase precariously profitable, and his extinction an early possibility. From a table prepared by Dr Boas, it appears that between 1846 and 1875 inclusive, the United States sent one hundred and thirteen vessels to the Hudson Bay whale-fishing, and that they obtained one thousand six hundred and twenty barrels of sperm, fifty-six thousand and nine hundred barrels of whale oil, and nearly a million pounds of whalebone, which, considering that the average size of the ship is only two hundred and forty tons, makes it clear that there has been a handsome margin of profit.

The right whale—which, in consequence of the high price of whalebone, namely, about 12,000 dols. a ton, is by far the richest prize a whaler can capture—attains a size of from fifty to eighty feet. It was once readily found in the northern part of the bay, but now is rarely seen, and the pursuers have to go farther and farther north every year. The white whale, on the other hand, still abounds at the York, Nelson, and Churchill rivers. They go up with the tide every day in great numbers, and seem quite tame, bobbing up serenely and blowing within twenty feet of the boats. They are caught in nets and also by rows of stakes driven into the

mud, and taken to the forts where they are flenched, the blubber taken out, the skins cured, and the carcass put by for the food of the dogs in winter. As these whales average about forty gallons of oil each, and their skins are valuable, they are worth from twenty to thirty dollars apiece. The narwhal or unicorn and the walrus still exist in considerable numbers, and well repay the trouble of hunting them; while the seal, it need hardly be said, swarms upon the ice in countless numbers during the greater part of the year, and to a large extent constitutes the Eskimo's commissariat. Of the fish, the salmon is the only one having commercial value. It is caught in large quantities by the company and sent to England fresh in a refrigerator ship specially built for the trade.

There are not many species of land animals: the polar bear, wolf, wolverine, arctic fox, reindeer, polar hare, and lemming being the principal ones. They are all pretty numerous still, but their ranks are undoubtedly thinning as the demands of the fur trade increase; and some day or other they will be so scarce as to render the business of catering them no longer remunerative. Indeed, as it is now, no matter how hospitable, genial,

or talkative an official at one of the Hudson Bay Company's forts may be, under no circumstances can he be seduced into the admission that his post is run at a profit to the company; according to him, it is kept up just for the benefit of the Indians and Eskimo; in other words, for philanthropic rather than for commercial purposes. Accordingly, if this showing be true, the end of the fur trade is already within sight.

But it is not because of its human inhabitants, nor of its quarries for the hunter on land or sea, that the Hudson Bay region has special interest for us to-day. We might be content to leave it to the chill obscurity which has been so long its lot were it not that, as already indicated, the central part of Canada and the north-west of the United States are asking whether it does not afford a solution of the problem how to secure for their products the cheapest and most expeditious road to the best markets. A glance at the map will be sufficient to make clear that the shortest possible route between the regions referred to and Europe lies through Hudson Bay. Careful calculations have shown that the city of Winnipeg, for instance, is at least eight hundred miles nearer Liverpool by the Hudson Bay route than by the St Lawrence,

and the difference in favour of the former increases, of course, the farther you advance north-westward. If, as has been pointed out, you take the central point of the agricultural lands of the Canadian north-west, you will find that the distance from it to Winnipeg is about the same as to Churchill, the finest harbour of the bay. Now, the distance between Churchill and Liverpool is a little less (about sixty-four miles) than it is between Montreal and that great *entrepôt* of commerce. The conclusion, consequently, is that as between the said centre and Liverpool there is a saving of the whole distance from Winnipeg to Montreal by the use of the Hudson Bay, which means in miles no less than one thousand two hundred and ninety-one *viâ* Lake Superior, and one thousand six hundred and ninety-eight *viâ* Chicago.

Seeing how ardent, energetic, and hopeful the Manitobans have been in this matter, it is not a little disappointing to find that such competent authorities as Lieutenant Gordon and Mr Ashe are by no means sanguine as to the success of the route. The latter has pointed out that apart from the ice question, which is quite serious enough in itself, there are other difficulties which have to be reckoned with, such as the dangers attendant upon

a passage along an unknown, unlighted coast-line, with few harbours of refuge, and very little room to ride out a gale; extreme depth of water, one hundred fathoms being often found right up to the shore, with generally very defective holding ground where the depths are moderate. In foul weather no sounding is possible that would be of value; a vessel would receive no warning of her proximity to the coast until it was, perhaps, too late to save her from destruction. Furthermore, it must not be forgotten that the proximity of the straits to the magnetic pole renders the ordinary compass perfectly useless, and even the Thomson compass becomes liable to aberration if there are any disturbing elements on shipboard.

The most serious objection of all, however, to the Hudson Bay route is the ice that fills these waters with its destructive floes and bergs. No ordinary steamer could safely venture into its midst. The bow must be armoured and the whole frame strengthened to withstand the rude buffeting that is so inevitable. All this, of course, means increased cost and decreased carrying capacity; and even then the lesson of the three expeditions would seem to be that the period of navigation for such a vessel is from the 15th July

to the 15th October, with a possibility of navigation from 1st July to 1st November. Whether a railroad system eight hundred miles in length and a fleet of steamships of a very costly kind can be employed with profit where the season for transportation is not more than three or at the most four months in duration, constitutes the problem upon the solution of which depends the future of the Inland Ocean of the North.

THE END.

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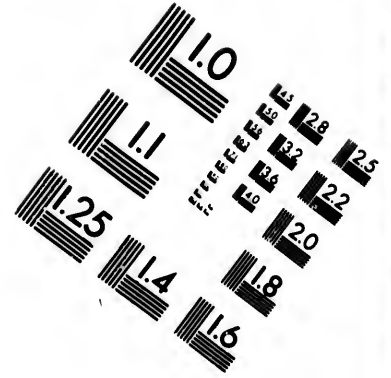
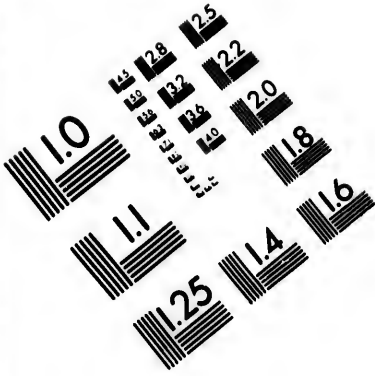
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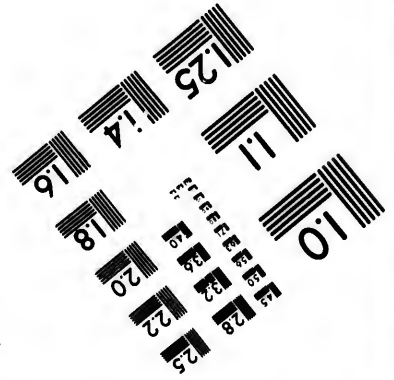
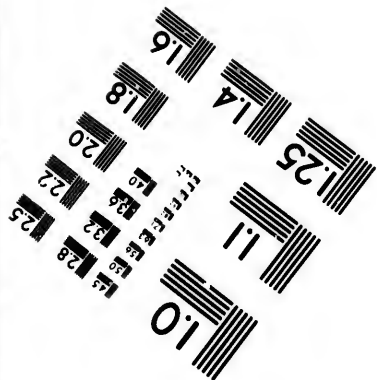
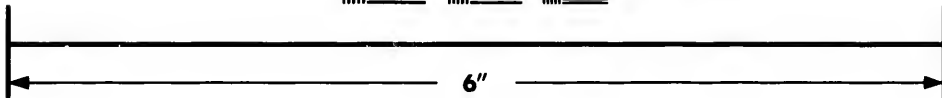
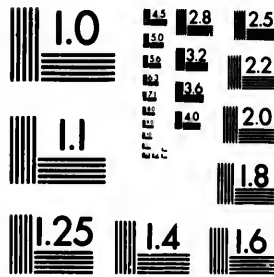
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