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"A SKIN FOR A SKIN."

BY JULIAN RALPH.

THOSE who go to the newer parts of Canada to-day will find that several of those places which their school geographies displayed as Hudson Bay posts a few years ago are now towns and cities. In them they will find the trading stations of old now transformed into general stores. Alongside of the head offices of the great corporation, where used to stand the walls of Fort Garry, they will see the principal store of the city of Winnipeg, an institution worthy of any city, and more nearly to be likened to Whiteley's Necessary Store in London than to any shopping-place in New York. As in Whiteley's you may buy a house, or anything belonging in or around a house, so you may in this great Manitoban establishment. The great retail emporium of Victoria, the capital of British Columbia, is the Hudson Bay store; and in Calgary, the metropolis of Alberta and the Canadian plains, the principal shopping-place in a territory beside which Texas dwindles to the proportions of a park is the Hudson Bay store.

These and many other shops indicate a new development of the business of the last of England's great chartered monopolies, but instead of marking the manner in which civilization has forced it to abandon its original function, this merely demonstrates that the proprietors have taken advantage of new conditions while still pursuing their original trade. It is true that the huge corporation is becoming a great retail shop-keeping company. It is also true that by the surrender of its monopolistic privileges it got a consolation prize of money and of twenty millions of dollars' worth of land, so that its

chief business may yet become that of developing and selling real estate. But to-day it is still, as it was two centuries ago, the greatest of fur-trading corporations, and fur-trading is to-day a principal source of its profits.

Reminders of their old associations as forts still confront the visitor to the modern city shops of the company. The great shop in Victoria, for instance, which, as a fort, was the hub around which grew the wheel that is now the capital of the province, has its fur trade conducted in a sort of barn-like annex of the bazar; but there it is, nevertheless, and busy among the great heaps of furs are men who can remember when the Hydahs and the Tlinkets and the other neighboring tribes came down in their war canoes to trade their winter's catch of skins for guns and beads, vermilion, blankets, and the rest. Now this is the mere catch-all for the furs got at posts farther up the coast and in the interior. But upstairs, above the store, where the fashionable ladies are looking over laces and purchasing perfumes, you will see a collection of queer old guns of a pattern familiar to Daniel Boone. They are relics of the fur company's stock of those famous "trade guns" which disappeared long before they had cleared the plains of buffalo, and which the Indians used to deck with brass nails and bright paint, and value as no man to-day values a watch. But close to the trade guns of romantic memory is something yet more highly suggestive of the company's former position. This is a heap of unclaimed trunks, "left," the employés will tell you, "by travellers, hunters, and explor-

ers who never came back to inquire for them."

It was not long ago that conditions existed such as in that region rendered the disappearance of a traveller more than a possibility. The wretched, squat, bow-legged, dirty laborers of that coast, who now dress as we do, and earn good wages in the salmon-fishing and canning industries, were not long ago very numerous, and still more villanous. They were not to be compared with the plains Indians as warriors or as men, but they were more treacherous, and wanting in high qualities. In the interior to-day are some Indians such as they were who are accused of cannibalism, and who have necessitated warlike defences at distant trading-posts. Travellers who escaped Indian treachery risked starvation, and stood their chances of losing their reckoning, of freezing to death, of encounters with grizzlies, of snow-slides, of canoe accidents in rapids, and of all the other casualties of life in a territory which to-day is not half explored. Those are not the trunks of Hudson Bay men, for such would have been sent home to English and Scottish mourners; they are the luggage of chance men who happened along, and outfitted at the old post before going farther. But the company's men were there before them, had penetrated the region farther and earlier, and there they are to-day, carrying on the fur trade under conditions strongly resembling those their predecessors once encountered at posts that are now towns in farming regions, and where now the locomotive and the steamer are familiar vehicles. Moreover, the status of the company in British Columbia is its status all the way across the North from the Pacific to the Atlantic.

To me the most interesting and picturesque life to be found in North America, at least north of Mexico, is that which is occasioned by this principal phase of the company's operations. In and around the fur trade is found the most notable relic of the white man's earliest life on this continent. Our wild life in this country is, happily, gone. The frontiersman is more difficult to find than the frontier, the cowboy has become a laborer almost like any other, our Indians are as the animals in our parks, and there is little of our country that is not threaded by railroads or wagonways. But in new or western Canada

this is not so. A vast extent of it north of the Canadian Pacific Railway, which hugs our border, has been explored only as to its waterways, its valleys, or its open plains, and where it has been traversed much of it remains as Nature and her near of kin, the red men, had it of old. On the streams canoes are the vehicles of travel and of commerce; in the forests "trails" lead from trading-post to trading-post, the people are Indians, half-breeds, and Esquimaux, who live by hunting and fishing as their forebears did; the Hudson Bay posts are the seats of white population; the post factors are the magistrates.

All this is changing with a rapidity which history will liken to the sliding of scenes before the lens of a magic-lantern. Miners are crushing the foot-hills on either side of the Rocky Mountains, farmers and cattle-men have advanced far northward on the prairie and on the plains in narrow lines, and railroads are pushing hither and thither. Soon the limits of the inhospitable zone this side of the Arctic Sea, and of the marshy weakly wooded country on either side of Hudson Bay, will circumscribe the fur-trader's field, except in so far as there may remain equally permanent hunting-grounds in Labrador and in the mountains of British Columbia. Therefore now, when the Hudson Bay Company is laying the foundations of widely different interests, is the time for halting the old original view that stood in the stereopticon for centuries, that we may see what it revealed, and will still show far longer than it takes for us to view it.

The Hudson Bay Company's agents were not the first hunters and fur-traders in British America, ancient as was their foundation. The French, from the Canadas, preceded them no one knows how many years, though it is said that it was as early as 1627 that Louis XIII. chartered a company of the same sort and for the same aims as the English company. What ever came of that corporation I do not know, but by the time the Englishmen established themselves on Hudson Bay, individual Frenchmen and half-breeds had penetrated the country still farther west. They were of hardy, adventurous stock, and they loved the free roving life of the trapper and hunter. Fitted out by the merchants of Canada, they would pursue the waterways which

there cut up the wilderness in every direction, their canoes laden with goods to tempt the savages, and their guns or traps forming part of their burden. They would be gone the greater part of a year, and always returned with a store of furs to be converted into money, which was, in turn, dissipated in the cities with devil-may-care jollity. These were the *courriers du bois*, and theirs was the stock from which came the *voyageurs* of the next era, and the half-breeds, who joined the service of the rival fur companies, and who, by-the-way, reddened the history of the Northwest territories with the little bloodshed that mars it.

Charles II. of England was made to believe that wonders in the way of discovery and trade would result from a grant of the Hudson Bay territory to certain friends and petitioners. An experimental voyage was made with good results in 1668, and in 1672 the king granted the charter to what he styled "the Governor and Company of Adventurers of England trading into Hudson's Bay, one body corporate and politique, in deed and in name, really and fully forever, for Us, Our heirs, and Successors." It was indeed a royal and a wholesale charter, for the king declared, "We have given, granted, and confirmed unto said Governor and Company sole trade and commerce of those Seas, Straights, Bays, Rivers, Lakes, Creeks, and Sounds, in whatsoever latitude they shall be, that lie within the entrance of the Straights commonly called Hudson's, together with all the Lands, Countries, and Territories upon the coasts and confines of the Seas, etc., . . . not already actually possessed by or granted to any of our subjects, or possessed by the subjects of any other Christian Prince or State, with the fishing of all sorts of Fish, Whales, Sturgeons, and all other Royal Fishes, . . . together with the Royalty of the Sea upon the Coasts within the limits aforesaid, and all Mines Royal, as well discovered as not discovered, of Gold, Silver, Gems, and Precious Stones, . . . and that the said lands be henceforth reckoned and reputed as one of Our Plantations or Colonies in America called Rupert's Land." For this gift of an empire the corporation was to pay yearly to the king, his heirs and successors, two elks and two black beavers whenever and as often as he, his heirs, or his successors "shall happen to enter

into the said countries." The company was empowered to man ships of war, to create an armed force for security and defence, to make peace or war with any people that were not Christians, and to seize any British or other subject who traded in their territory. The king named his cousin, Prince Rupert, Duke of Cumberland, to be first governor, and it was in his honor that the new territory got its name of Rupert's Land.

In the company were the Duke of Albemarle, Earl Craven, Lords Arlington and Ashley, and several knights and baronets, Sir Philip Carteret among them. There were also five esquires, or gentlemen, and John Portman, "citizen and goldsmith." They adopted the witty sentence, "*Pro pelle cutem*" (A skin for a skin), as their motto, and established as their coat of arms a fox sejant as the crest, and a shield showing four beavers in the quarters, and the cross of St. George, the whole upheld by two stags.

The "adventurers" quickly established forts on the shores of Hudson Bay, and began trading with the Indians, with such success that it was rumored they made from twenty-five to fifty per cent. profit every year. But they exhibited all of that timidity which capital is ever said to possess. They were nothing like as enterprising as the French *courriers du bois*. In a hundred years they were no deeper in the country than at first, excepting as they extended their little system of forts or "factories" up and down and on either side of Hudson and James bays. In view of their profits, perhaps this lack of enterprise is not to be wondered at. On the other hand, their charter was given as a reward for the efforts they had made, and were to make, to find "the Northwest passage to the Southern seas." In this quest they made less of a trial than in the getting of furs; how much less we shall see. But the company had no lack of brave and hardy followers. At first the officers and men at the factories were nearly all from the Orkney Islands, and those islands remained until recent times the recruiting-source for this service. This was because the Orkney men were inured to a rigorous climate, and to a diet largely composed of fish. They were subject to less of a change in the company's service than must have been endured by men from almost any part of England.

I am going, later, to ask the reader to visit Rupert's Land when the company had shaken off its timidity, overcome its obstacles, and dotted all British America with its posts and forts. Then we shall see the interiors of the forts, view the strange yet not always hard or uncouth life of the company's factors and clerks, and glance along the trails and water-courses, mainly unchanged to-day, to note the work and surroundings of the Indians, the *voyageurs*, and the rest who inhabit that region. But, fortunately, I can first show, at least roughly, much that is interesting about the company's growth and methods a century and a half ago. The information is gotten from some English Parliamentary papers forming a report of a committee of the House of Commons in 1749.

Arthur Dobbs and others petitioned Parliament to give them either the rights of the Hudson Bay Company or a similar charter. It seems that England had offered £20,000 reward to whosoever should find the bothersome passage to the Southern seas *viâ* the North Pole, and that these petitioners had sent out two ships for that purpose. They said that when others had done no more than this in Charles II.'s time, that monarch had given them "the greatest privileges as lords proprietors" of the Hudson Bay territory, and that those recipients of royal favor were bounden to attempt the discovery of the desired passage. Instead of this, they not only failed to search effectually or in earnest for the passage, but they had rather endeavored to conceal the same, and to obstruct the discovery thereof by others. They had not possessed or occupied any of the lands granted to them, or extended their trade, or made any plantations or settlements, or permitted other British subjects to plant, settle, or trade there. They had established only four factories and one small trading-house; yet they had connived at or allowed the French to encroach, settle, and trade within their limits, to the great detriment and loss of Great Britain. The petitioners argued that the Hudson Bay charter was monopolistic, and therefore void, and at any rate it had been forfeited "by non-user or abuser."

In the course of the hearing upon both sides, the "voyages upon discovery," according to the company's own showing,

were not undertaken until the corporation had been in existence nearly fifty years, and then the search had only been prosecuted during eighteen years, and with only ten expeditions. Two ships sent out from England never reached the bay, but those which succeeded, and were then ready for adventurous cruising, made exploratory voyages that lasted only between one month and ten weeks, so that, as we are accustomed to judge such expeditions, they seem farcical and mere pretences. Yet their largest ship was only of 190 tons burden, and the others were a third smaller—vessels like our small coasting schooners. The most particular instructions to the captains were to trade with all natives, and persuade them to kill whales, sea-horses, and seals; and, subordinately and incidentally, "by God's permission," to find out the Strait of Annian, a fanciful sheet of water, with tales of which that irresponsible Greek sea-tramp, Juan de Fuca, had disturbed all Christendom, saying that it led between a great island in the Pacific (Vancouver) and the mainland into the inland lakes. To the factors at their forts the company sent such lukewarm messages as, "and if you can by any means find out any discovery or matter to the northward or elsewhere in the company's interest or advantage, do not fail to let us know every year."

The attitude of the company toward discovery suggests a Dogberry at its head, bidding his servants to "comprehend" the Northwest passage, but should they fail, to thank God they were rid of a villain. In truth, they were traders pure and simple, and were making great profits with little trouble and expense.

They brought from England about £4000 worth of powder, shot, guns, fire-steels, flints, gun-worms, powder-horns, pistols, hatchets, sword blades, awl blades, ice chisels, files, kettles, fish-hooks, net lines, burning-glasses, looking-glasses, tobacco, brandy, goggles, gloves, hats, lace, needles, thread, thimbles, breeches, vermilion, worsted sashes, blankets, flannels, red feathers, buttons, beads, and "shirts, shoes, and stockings." They spent, in keeping up their posts and ships, about £15,000, and in return they brought to England castor, whale fins, whale oil, deer horns, goose quills, bed feathers, and skins—in all of a value of about £26,000 per annum. I have taken the average

RYVAL TRADERS RACING TO THE INDIAN CAMP.



for several years in that period of the company's history, and it is in our money as if they spent \$90,000 and got back \$130,000, and this is their own showing under such circumstances as to make it the course of wisdom not to boast of their profits. They had three times trebled their stock and otherwise increased it, so that having been 10,500 shares at the outset, it was now 103,950 shares.

And now that we have seen how natural it was that they should not then bother with exploration and discovery, in view of the remuneration that came for simply sitting in their forts and buying furs, let me pause to repeat what one of their wisest men said casually, between the whiffs of a meditative cigar, last summer: "The search for the north pole must soon be taken up in earnest," said he. "Man has paused in the undertaking because other fields where his needs were more pressing, and where effort was more certain to be rewarded with success, had been neglected. This is no longer the fact, and geographers and other students of the subject all agree that the north pole must next be sought and found. Speaking only on my own account and from my knowledge, I assert that whenever any government is in earnest in this desire, it will employ the men of this fur service, and they will find the pole. The company has posts far within the arctic circle, and they are manned by men peculiarly and exactly fitted for the adventure. They are hardy, acutely intelligent, self-reliant, accustomed to the climate, and all that it engenders and demands. They are on the spot ready to start at the earliest moment in the season, and they have with them all that they will need on the expedition. They would do nothing hurriedly or rashly; they would know what they were about as no other white men would—and they would get there."

I mention this not merely for the novelty of the suggestion and the interest it may excite, but because it contributes to the reader's understanding of the scope and character of the work of the company. It is not merely Western and among Indians, it is hyperborean and among Esquimaux. But would it not be passing strange if, beyond all that England has gained from the careless gift of an empire to a few favorites by Charles II., she should yet possess the honor and

glory of a grand discovery due to the natural results of that action?

To return to the Parliamentary inquiry into the company's affairs one hundred and forty years ago. If it served no other purpose, it drew for us of this day an outline picture of the first forts and their inmates and customs. Being printed in the form our language took in that day, when a gun was a "musquet" and a stockade was a "palisadoe," we fancy we can see the bumptious governors—as they then called the factors or agents—swelling about in knee-breeches and cocked hats and colored waistcoats, and relying, through their fear of the savages, upon the little putty-pipe cannon that they speak of as "swivels." These were ostentatiously planted before their quarters, and in front of these again were massive double doors, such as we still make of steel for our bank safes, but, when made of wood, use only for our refrigerators. The views we get of the company's "servants"—which is to say, mechanics and laborers—are all of trembling varlets, and the testimony is full of hints of petty sharp practice toward the red man, suggestive of the artful ways of our own Hollanders, who bought beaver-skins by the weight of their feet, and then pressed down upon the scales with all their might.

The witnesses had mainly been at one time in the employ of the company, and they made the point against it that it imported all its bread (*i. e.*, grain) from England, and neither encouraged planting nor cultivated the soil for itself. But there were several who said that even in August they found the soil still frozen at a depth of two and a half or three feet. Not a man in the service was allowed to trade with the natives outside the forts, or even to speak with them. One fellow was put in irons for going into an Indian's tent; and there was a witness who had "heard a Governor say he would whip a Man without Tryal; and that the severest Punishment is a Dozen of Lashes." Of course there was no instructing the savages in either English or the Christian religion; and we read that, though there were twenty-eight Europeans in one factory, "witness never heard Sermon or Prayers there, nor ever heard of any such Thing either before his Time or since." Hunters who offered their services got one-half what they shot or trapped, and the captains of vessels kept in the bay



THE BEAR-TRAP.

were allowed "25 l. per cent." for all the whalebone they got.

One witness said: "The method of trade is by a standard set by the Governors. They never lower it, but often double it, so that where the Standard directs 1 Skin to be taken they generally take Two." Another said he "had been ordered to shorten the measure for Powder, which ought to be a Pound, and that within these 10 Years had been reduced an Ounce or Two." "The Indians made a Noise sometimes, and the Company gave them their Furs again." A bookkeeper lately in the service said that the company's measures for powder were short, and yet even such measures were not filled above half full. Profits thus made were distinguished as "the overplus trade," and signified what skins were got more than were paid for, but he could not say whether such gains went to the company or to the governor. (As a matter of fact, the factors or governors shared

in the company's profits, and were interested in swelling them in every way they could.)

There was much news of how the French traders got the small furs of martens, foxes, and cats, by intercepting the Indians, and leaving them to carry only the coarse furs to the company's forts. A witness "had seen the Indians come down in fine *French* cloaths, with as much Lace as he ever saw upon any Cloaths whatsoever." He believed if the Company would give as much for the Furs as the *French*, the *Indians* would bring them down;" but the French asked only thirty marten-skins for a gun, whereas the company's standard was from thirty-six to forty such skins. Then, again, the company's plan (unchanged to-day) was to take the Indian's furs, and then, being possessed of them, to begin the barter.

This shouldering the common grief upon the French was not merely the result of the chronic English antipathy to

their ancient and their lively foes. The French were swarming all around the outer limits of the company's field, taking first choice of the furs, and even beginning to set up posts of their own. Canada was French soil, and peopled by as hardy and adventurous a class as inhabited any part of America. The *courriers du bois* and the *bois-brûlés* (half-breeds), whose success afterward led to the formation of rival companies, had begun a mosquito warfare, by canoeing the waters that led to Hudson Bay, and had penetrated 1000 miles farther west than the English. One Thomas Barnett, a smith, said that the French intercepted the Indians, forcing them to trade, "when they take what they please, giving them Toys in Exchange; and fright them into Compliance by Tricks of Sleight of Hand; from whence the *Indians* conclude them to be Conjurers; and if the *French* did not compel the *Indians* to trade, they would certainly bring all the Goods to the *English*."

This must have seemed to the direct, practical English trading mind a wretched business, and worthy only of Johnny Crapeau, to worst the noble Briton by monkeyish acts of conjuring. It stirred the soul of one witness, who said that the way to meet it was "by sending some *English* with a little Brandy." A gallon to certain chiefs and a gallon and a half to others would certainly induce the natives to come down and trade, he thought.

But while the testimony of the English was valuable as far as it went, which was mainly concerning trade, it was as nothing regarding the life of the natives compared with that of one Joseph La France, of Missili-Mackinack (Mackinaw), a traveller, hunter, and trader. He had been sent as a child to Quebec to learn French, and in later years had been from Lake Nipissing to Lake Champlain and the Great Lakes, the Mississippi, the Missouri, the Ouinipigue (Winnipeg) or Red River, and to Hudson Bay. He told his tales to Arthur Dobbs, who made a book of them, and part of that became an appendix to the committee's report. La France said:

"That the high price on *European* Goods discourages the Natives so much, that if it were not that they are under a Necessity of having Guns, Powder, Shot, Hatchets, and other Iron Tools for their Hunting, and Tobacco, Brandy, and some Paint for Luxury, they would not go

down to the Factory with what they now carry. They leave great numbers of Furs and Skins behind them. A good Hunter among the *Indians* can kill 600 Beavers in a season, and carry down but 100" (because their canoes were small); "the rest he uses at home, or hangs them upon Branches of Trees upon the Death of their Children, as an Offering to them; or use them for Bedding and Coverings: they sometimes burn off the Fur, and roast the Beavers, like Pigs, upon any Entertainments; and they often let them rot, having no further Use of them. The Beavers, he says, are of Three Colours—the Brown-reddish Colour, the Black, and the White. The Black is most valued by the Company, and in *England*; the White, though most valued in *Canada*, is blown upon by the Company's Factors at the Bay, they not allowing so much for these as for the others; and therefore the *Indians* use them at home, or burn off the Hair, when they roast the Beavers, like Pigs, at an Entertainment when they feast together. The Beavers are delicious Food, but the Tongue and Tail the most delicious Parts of the whole. They multiply very fast, and if they can empty a Pond, and take the whole Lodge, they generally leave a Pair to breed, so that they are fully stocked again in Two or Three Years. The *American* Oxen, or Beeves, he says, have a large Bunch upon their Backs, which is by far the most delicious Part of them for Food, it being all as sweet as Marrow, juicy and rich, and weighs several Pounds.

"The Natives are so discouraged in their Trade with the Company that no Peltry is worth the Carriage; and the finest Furs are sold for very little. They gave but a Pound of Gunpowder for 4 Beavers, a Fathom of Tobacco for 7 Beavers, a Pound of Shot for 1, an Ell of coarse Cloth for 15, a Blanket for 12, Two Fish-hooks or Three Flint for 1; a Gun for 25, a Pistol for 10, a common Hat with white Lace, 7; an Ax, 4; a Billhook, 1; a Gallon of Brandy, 4; a chequer'd Shirt, 7; all of which are sold at a monstrous Profit, even to 2000 per Cent. Notwithstanding this discouragement, he computed that there were brought to the Factory in 1742, in all, 50,000 Beavers and above 9000 Martens.

"The smaller Game, got by Traps or Snares, are generally the Employment of the Women and Children; such as the Martens, Squirrels, Cats, Ermines, &c. The Elks, Stags, Reindeer, Bears, Tygers, wild Beeves, Wolves, Foxes, Beavers, Otters, Corcajeu, &c., are the employment of the Men. The *Indians*, when they kill any Game for Food, leave it where they kill it, and send their wives next Day to carry it home. They go home in a direct Line, never missing their way, by observations they make of the Course they take upon their going out. The Trees all bend towards the South, and the Branches on that Side are larger and stronger than on the North Side; as also the Moss upon the Trees. To let their

Wives know how to come at the killed Game, they from Place to Place break off Branches and lay them in the Road, pointing them the Way they should go, and sometimes Moss; so that they never miss finding it.

"In Winter, when they go abroad, which they must do in all Weathers, before they dress, they rub themselves all over with Bears Greaze or Oil of Beavers, which does not freeze; and also rub all the Fur of their Beaver Coats, and then put them on; they have also a kind of Boots or Stockings of Beaver's Skin, well oiled, with the Fur inwards; and above them they have an oiled Skin laced about their Feet, which keeps out the Cold, and also Water; and by this means they never freeze, nor suffer anything by Cold. In Summer, also, when they go naked, they rub themselves with these Oils or Grease, and expose themselves to the Sun without being scorched, their Skins always being kept soft and supple by it; nor do any Flies, Bugs, or Musketoos, or any noxious Insect, ever molest them. When they want to get rid of it, they go into the Water, and rub themselves all over with Mud or Clay, and let it dry upon them, and then rub it off; but whenever they are free from the Oil, the Flies and Musketoos immediately attack them, and oblige them again to anoint themselves. They are much afraid of the wild Humble Bee, they go naked in Summer, that they avoid them

as much as they can. They use no Milk from the time they are weaned, and they all hate to taste Cheese, having taken up an Opinion that it is made of Dead Men's Fat. They love Prunes and Raisins, and will give a Beaver-skin for Twelve of them, to carry to their Children; and also for a Trump or Jew's Harp. The Women have all fine Voices, but have never heard any Musical Instrument. They are very fond of all Kinds of Pictures or Prints, giving a Beaver for the least Print; and all Toys are like Jewels to them."

He reported that "the *Indians* west of Hudson's Bay live an erratic Life, and can have no Benefit by tame Fowl or Cattle. They seldom stay above a Fort-night in a Place, unless they find Plenty of Game. After having built their Hut, they disperse to get Game for their Food, and meet again at Night, after having killed enough to maintain them for that Day. When they find Scarcity of Game, they remove a League or Two farther; and thus they traverse through woody Countries and Bogs, scarce missing One Day. Winter or Summer, fair or foul, in the greatest Storms of Snow."

It has been often said that the great



HUSKIE DOGS FIGHTING.



PAINTING THE ROBE.

Peace River, which rises in British Columbia and flows through a pass in the Rocky Mountains into the northern plains, was named "the Unchaga," or Peace, "because" (to quote Captain W. F. Butler) "of the stubborn resistance offered by the all-conquering Crees, which induced that warlike tribe to make peace on the banks of the river, and leave at rest the beaver-hunters"—that is, the Beaver tribe—upon the river's banks. There is a sentence in La France's story that intimates a more probable and lasting reason for the name. He says that some Indians in the southern centre of Canada sent frequently to the Indians along some river near the mountains "with presents, to confirm the peace with them." The story is shadowy, of course, and yet La France, in the same narrative, gave other information which proved to be correct, and none which proved ridiculous. We know that there were "all-conquering" Crees, but there were also inferior ones called the Swampies, and there were others of only intermediate valor. As for the Beavers, Captain Butler himself offers other proof of their mettle besides their "stubborn resistance." He says that on one occasion a young Beaver chief shot the dog of

another brave in the Beaver camp. A hundred bows were instantly drawn, and ere night eighty of the best men of the tribe lay dead. There was a parley, and it was resolved that the chief who slew the dog should leave the tribe, and take his friends with him. A century later a Beaver Indian, travelling with a white man, heard his own tongue spoken by men among the Blackfeet near our border. They were the Sarcis, descendants of the exiled band of Beavers. They had become the most reckless and valorous members of the warlike Blackfeet confederacy.

La France said that the nations who "go up the river" with presents, to confirm the peace with certain Indians, were three months in going, and that the Indians in question live beyond a range of mountains beyond the Assiniboins (a plains tribe). Then he goes on to say that still farther beyond those Indians "are nations who have not the use of fire-arms, by which many of them are made slaves and sold"—to the Assiniboins and others. These are plainly the Pacific coast Indians. And even so long ago as that (about 1740), half a century before Mackenzie and Vancouver met on the Pacific coast, La France had told the story of an Indian who had

gone at the head of a band of thirty braves and their families to make war on the Flatheads "on the Western Ocean of America." They were from autumn until the next April in making the journey, and they "saw many Black Fish spouting up in the sea." It was a case of what the Irish call "spoiling for a fight,"

their wildest period were tremendous. Far up in the wilderness of British America there are legends of visits by the Iroquois. The Blackfeet believe that their progenitors roamed as far south as Mexico for horses, and the Crees of the plains evinced a correct knowledge of the country that lay beyond the Rocky Mountains



COURRIER DU BOIS.

for they had to journey fifteen hundred miles to meet "enemies" whom they never had seen, and who were peaceful, and inhabited more or less permanent villages. The plainsmen got more than they sought. They attacked a village, were outnumbered, and lost half their force, besides having several of their men wounded. On the way back all except the man who told the story died of fatigue and famine.

The journeys which Indians made in

in their conversations with the first whites who traded with them. Yet those white men, the founders of an organized fur trade, clung to the scene of their first operations for more than one hundred years, while the bravest of their more enterprising rivals in the Northwest Company only reached the Pacific, with the aid of eight Iroquois braves, one hundred and twenty years after the English king chartered the senior company! The

French were the true Yankees of that country. They and their half-breeds were always in the van as explorers and traders, and as early as 1731 M. Varennes de la Verandrye, licensed by the Canadian government as a trader, penetrated the West as far as the Rockies, leading Sir Alexander Mackenzie to that extent by more than sixty years.

But to return to the first serious trouble the Hudson Bay Company met. The investigation of its affairs by Parliament produced nothing more than the picture I have presented. The committee reported that if the original charter bred a monopoly, it would not help matters to give the same privileges to others. As the questioned legality of the charter was not competently adjudicated upon, they would not allow another company to invade the premises of the older one.

At this time the great company still hugged the shores of the bay, fearing the Indians, the half-breeds, and the French. Their posts were only six in all, and were mainly fortified with palisaded enclosures, with howitzers and swivels, and with men trained to the use of guns. Moose Fort and the East Main factory were on either side of James Bay, Forts Albany, York, and Prince of Wales followed up the west coast, and Henley was the southernmost and most inland of all, being on Moose River, a tributary of James Bay. The French at first traded beyond the field of Hudson Bay operations, and their castles were their canoes. But when their great profits and familiarity with the trade tempted the thrifty French capitalists and enterprising Scotch merchants of Upper Canada into the formation of the rival Northwest Trading Company in 1783, fixed trading-posts began to be established all over the Prince Rupert's Land, and even beyond the Rocky Mountains in British Columbia. By 1818 there were about forty Northwest posts as against about two dozen Hudson Bay factories. The new company not only disputed but ignored the chartered rights of the old company, holding that the charter had not been sanctioned by Parliament, and was in every way unconstitutional as creative of a monopoly. Their French partners and *engagés* shared this feeling, especially as the French crown had been first in the field with a royal charter. Growing bolder and bolder, the Northwest Company resolved to drive the Hud-

son Bay Company to a legal test of their rights, and so in 1803-4 they established a Northwest fort under the eyes of the old company on the shore of Hudson Bay, and fitted out ships to trade with the natives in the strait. But the Englishmen did not accept the challenge; for the truth was they had their own doubts of the strength of their charter.

They pursued a different and for them an equally bold course. That hard-headed old nobleman the fifth Earl of Selkirk came uppermost in the company as the engineer of a plan of colonization. There was plenty of land, and some wholesale evictions of Highlanders in Sutherlandshire, Scotland, had rendered a great force of hardy men homeless. Selkirk saw in this situation a chance to play a long but certainly triumphant game with his rivals. His plan was to plant a colony which should produce grain and horses and men for the old company, saving the importation of all three, and building up not only a nursery for men to match the *courriers du bois*, but a stronghold and a seat of a future government in the Hudson Bay interest. Thus was ushered in a new and important era in Canadian history. It was the opening of that part of Canada; by a loop-hole rather than a door, to be sure.

Lord Selkirk's was a practical soul. On one occasion in animadverting against the Northwest Company he spoke of them contemptuously as fur-traders, yet he was the chief of all fur-traders, and had been known to barter with an Indian himself at one of the forts for a fur. He held up the opposition to the scorn of the world as profiting upon the weakness of the Indians by giving them alcohol, yet he ordered distilleries set up in his colony afterwards, saying, "We grant the trade is iniquitous, but if we don't carry it on others will; so we may as well put the guineas in our own pockets." But he was the man of the moment, if not for it. His scheme of colonization was born of desperation on one side and distress on the other. It was pursued amid terrible hardship, and against incessant violence. It was consummated through bloodshed. The story is as interesting as it is important. The facts are obtained mainly from "Papers relating to the Red River Settlement, ordered to be printed by the House of Commons, July 12, 1819." Lord Selkirk owned 40,000

A FUR-TRADER IN THE COUNCIL, TERRE.



of the £105,000 (or shares) of the Hudson Bay Company; therefore, since 25,000 were held by women and children, he held half of all that carried votes. He got from the company a grant of a large tract around what is now Winnipeg, to form an agricultural settlement for supplying the company's posts with provisions. We have seen how little disposed its officers were to open the land to settlers, or to test its agricultural capacities. No one, therefore, will wonder that when this grant was made several members of the governing committee resigned. But a queer development of the moment was a strong opposition from holders of Hudson Bay stock who were also owners in that company's great rival, the Northwest Company. Since the enemy persisted in prospering at the expense of the old company, the moneyed men of the senior corporation had taken stock of their rivals. These doubly interested persons were also in London, so that the Northwest Company was no longer purely Canadian. The opponents within the Hudson Bay Company declared civilization to be at all times unfavorable to the fur trade, and the Northwest people argued that the colony would form a nursery for servants of the Bay Company, enabling them to oppose the Northwest Company more effectually, as well as affording such facilities for new-comers as must destroy their own monopoly. The Northwest Company denied the legality of the charter rights of the Hudson Bay Company because Parliament had not confirmed Charles II.'s charter.

The colonists came, and were met by Miles McDonnell, an ex-captain of Canadian volunteers, as Lord Selkirk's agent. He styled himself "captain" and "governor," though he admitted he had no warrant to do so. The immigrants landed on the shore of Hudson Bay, and passed a forlorn winter. They met some of the Northwest Company's people under Alexander McDonnell, a cousin and brother-in-law to Miles McDonnell. Although Captain Miles read the grant to Selkirk in token of his sole right to the land, the settlers were hospitably received and well treated by the Northwest people. The settlers reached the place of colonization in August, 1812. This place is what was known as Fort Garry until Winnipeg was built. It was at first called "the Forks of the Red River," because the Assiniboin

there joined the Red. Lord Selkirk outlined his policy at the time in a letter in which he bade Miles McDonnell give the Northwest people solemn warning that the lands were Hudson Bay property, and they must remove from them; that they must not fish, and that if they did their nets were to be seized, their buildings were to be destroyed, and they were to be treated "as you would poachers in England."

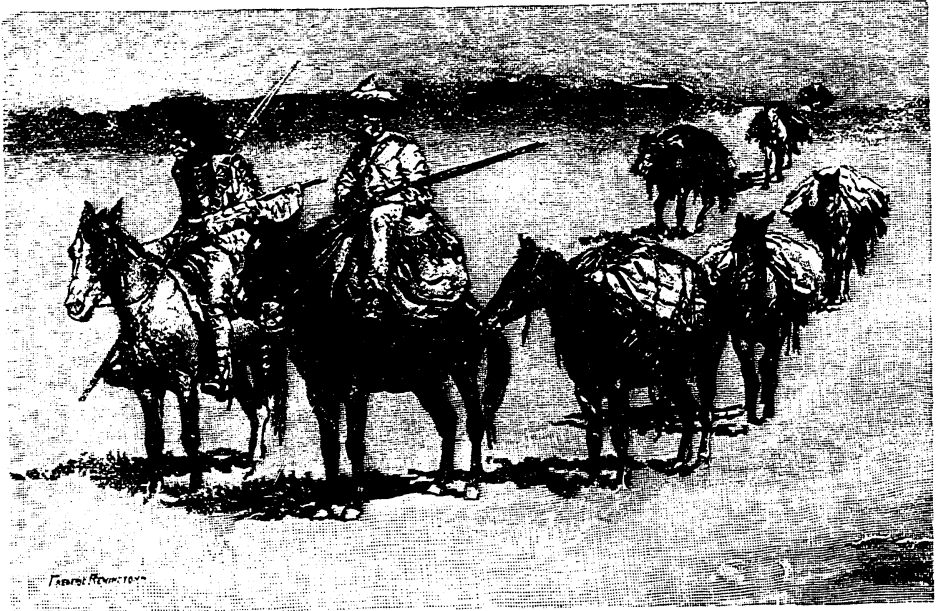
The trouble began at once. Miles accused Alexander of trying to inveigle colonists away from him. He trained his men in the use of guns, and uniformed a number of them. He forbade the exportation of any supplies from the country, and when some Northwest men came to get buffalo meat they had hung on racks in the open air, according to the custom of the country, he sent armed men to send the others away. He intercepted a band of Northwest canoe-men, stationing men with guns and with two field-pieces on the river; and he sent to a Northwest post lower down the river demanding the provisions stored there, which, when they were refused, were taken by force, the door being smashed in. For this a Hudson Bay clerk was arrested, and Captain Miles's men went to the rescue. Two armed forces met, but happily slaughter was averted. Miles McDonnell justified his course on the ground that the colonists were distressed by need of food. It transpired at the time that one of his men while making cartridges for a cannon remarked that he was making them "for those — Northwest rascals. They have run too long, and shall run no longer." After this Captain Miles ordered the stoppage of all buffalo-hunting on horseback, as the practice kept the buffalo at a distance, and drove them into the Sioux country, where the local Indians dared not go.

But though Captain McDonnell was aggressive and vexatious, the Northwest Company's people, who had begun the mischief, even in London, were not now passive. They relied on setting the half-breeds and Indians against the colonists. They urged that the colonists had stolen Indian real estate in settling on the land, and that in time every Indian would starve as a consequence. At the forty-fifth annual meeting of the Northwest Company's officers, August, 1814, Alexander McDonnell said, "Nothing but the

complete downfall of the colony will satisfy some, by fair or foul means—a most desirable object, if it can be accomplished; so here is at it with all my heart and energy.” In October, 1814, Captain McDonnell ordered the Northwest Company to remove from the territory within six months.

The Indians, first and last, were the friends of the colonists. They were be-

servants doing a trifling service for Captain Miles McDonnell, he sent him upon a journey for which every *engagé* of the Northwest Company bound himself liable in joining the company; that was to make the trip to Montreal, a voyage held *in terrorem* over every servant of the corporation. More than that, he confiscated four horses and a wagon belonging to this



BUFFALO MEAT FOR THE POST.

friendied by the whites, and in turn they gave them succor when famine fell upon them. Many of Captain Miles McDonnell's orders were in their interest, and they knew it. Katawabetay, a chief, was tempted with a big prize to destroy the settlement. He refused. On the opening of navigation in 1815 chiefs were bidden from the country around to visit the Northwest factors, and were by them asked to destroy the colony. Not only did they decline, but they hastened to Captain Miles McDonnell to acquaint him with the plot. Duncan Cameron now appears foremost among the Northwest Company's agents, being in charge of that company's post on the Red River, in the Selkirk grant. He told the chiefs that if they took the part of the colonists "their camp fires should be totally extinguished." When Cameron caught one of his own

man, and charged him on the company's books with the sum of 800 livres for an Indian squaw, whom the man had been told he was to have as his slave for a present.

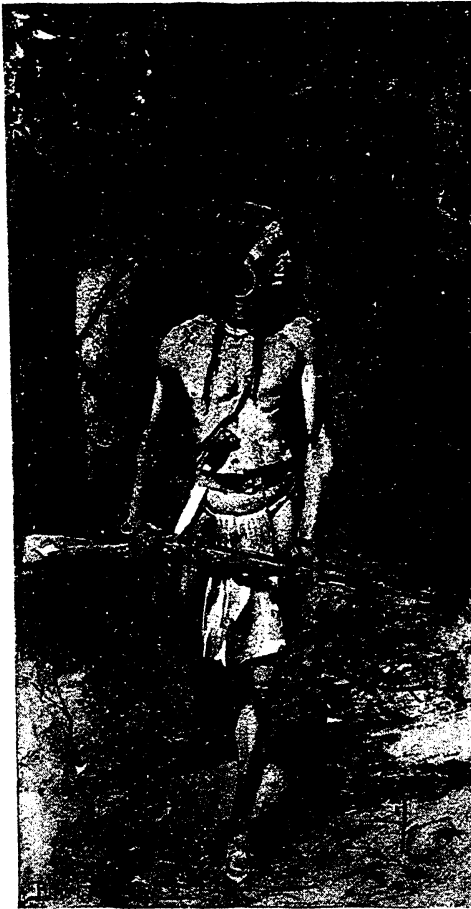
But though the Indians held aloof from the great and cruel conspiracy, the half-breeds readily joined in it. They treated Captain McDonnell's orders with contempt, and arrested one of the Hudson Bay men as a spy upon their hunting with horses. There lived along the Red River, near the colony, about thirty Canadians and seventy half-breeds, born of Indian squaws and the servants or officers of the Northwest Company. One-quarter of the number of "breeds" could read and write, and were fit to serve as clerks; the rest were literally half savage, and were employed as hunters, canoe-men, "packers" (freighters), and

guides. They were naturally inclined to side with the Northwest Company, and in time that corporation sowed dissension among the colonists themselves, picturing to them exaggerated danger from the Indians, and offering them free passage to Upper Canada. They paid at least one of the leading colonists £100 for furthering discontent in the settlement, and four deserters from the colony stole all the Hudson Bay field-pieces, iron swivels, and the howitzer. There was constant irritation and friction between the factions. In an affray far up at Isle-à-la-Crosse a man was killed on either side. Half-breeds came past the colony singing war-songs, and notices were posted around Fort Garry reading, "Peace with all the world except in Red River." The Northwest people demanded the surren-

der of Captain McDonnell that he might be tried on their charges, and on June 11, 1815, a band of men fired on the colonial buildings. The captain afterward surrendered himself, and the remnant of the colony, thirteen families, went to the head of Lake Winnipeg. The half-breeds burned the buildings, and divided the horses and effects.

But in the autumn all came back with Colin Robertson, of the Bay Company, and twenty clerks and servants. These were joined by Governor Robert Semple, who brought 160 settlers from Scotland. Semple was a man of consequence at home, a great traveller, and the author of a book on travels in Spain. But he came in no conciliatory mood, and the foment was kept up. The Northwest Company tried to starve the colonists, and Governor Semple destroyed the enemy's fort below Fort Garry. Then came the end—a decisive battle and massacre.

Sixty-five men on horses, and with some carts, were sent by Alexander McDonnell, of the Northwest Company, up the river toward the colony. They were led by Cuthbert Grant, and included six Canadians, four Indians, and fifty-four half-breeds. It was afterward said they went on innocent business, but every man was armed, and the "breeds" were naked, and painted all over to look like Indians. They got their paint of the Northwest officers. Moreover, there had been rumors that the colonists were to be driven away, and that "the land was to be drenched with blood." It was on June 19, 1816, that runners notified the colony that the others were coming. Semple was at Fort Douglas, near Fort Garry. When apprised of the close approach of his assailants, the governor seems not to have appreciated his danger, for he said, "We must go and meet those people; let twenty men follow me." He put on his cocked hat and sash, his pistols, and shouldered his double-barrelled fowling-piece. The others carried a wretched lot of guns—some with the locks gone, and many that were useless. It was marshy ground, and they straggled on in loose order. They met an old soldier who had served in the army at home, and who said the enemy was very numerous, and that the governor had better bring along his two field-pieces.



THE INDIAN HUNTER OF 1750.

"No, no," said the governor; "there is no occasion. I am only going to speak to them."

Nevertheless, after a moment's reflection, he did send back for one of the great guns, saying it was well to have it in case of need. They halted a short time for the cannon, and then perceived the Northwest party pressing toward them on their horses. By a common impulse the governor and his followers began a retreat, walking backwards, and at the same time spreading out a single line to present a longer front. The enemy continued to advance at a hand-gallop. From out among them rode a Canadian named

Boucher, the rest forming a half-moon behind him. Waving his hand in an insolent way to the governor, Boucher called out, "What do you want?"

"What do you want?" said Governor Semple.

"We want our fort," said Boucher, meaning the fort Semple had destroyed.

"Go to your fort," said the governor.

"Why did you destroy our fort, you rascal?" Boucher demanded.

"Scoundrel, do you tell me so?" the governor replied, and ordered the man's arrest.

Some say he caught at Boucher's gun. But Boucher slipped off his horse, and on the instant a gun was fired, and a Hudson Bay clerk fell dead. Another shot wounded Governor Semple, and he called to his followers,

"Do what you can to take care of yourselves."

Then there was a volley from the Northwest force, and with the clearing of the smoke it looked as though all the



INDIAN HUNTER HANGING DEER OUT OF THE REACH OF WOLVES.

governor's party were killed or wounded. Instead of taking care of themselves they had rallied around their wounded leader. Captain Rogers, of the governor's party, who had fallen, rose to his feet, and ran toward the enemy crying for mercy in English and broken French, when Thomas McKay, a "breed" and Northwest clerk, shot him through the head, another cutting his body open with a knife.

Cuthbert Grant (who, it was charged,

had shot Governor Semple) now went to the governor, while the others despatched the wounded.

Semple said, "Are you not Mr. Grant?"

"Yes," said the other.

"I am not mortally wounded," said the governor, "and if you could get me conveyed to the fort, I think I should live."

But when Grant left his side an Indian named Ma-chi-ca-taou shot him, some say through the breast, and some have it that he put a pistol to the governor's head. Grant could not stop the savages. The bloodshed had crazed them. They slaughtered all the wounded, and, worse yet, they terribly maltreated the bodies. Twenty-two Hudson Bay men were killed, and one on the other side was wounded.

There is a story that Alexander McDonnell shouted for joy when he heard the news of the massacre. One witness, who did not hear him shout, reports that he exclaimed to his friends: "*Sacré nom de Dieu! Bonnes nouvelles; vingt-deux Anglais tués!*" (—! Good news; twenty-two English slain!) It was afterward alleged that the slaughter was approved by every officer of the Northwest Company whose comments were recorded.

It is a saying up in that country that

twenty-six out of the sixty-five in the attacking party died violent deaths. The record is only valuable as indicating the nature and perils of the lives the hunters and half-breeds led. First, a Frenchman dropped dead while crossing the ice on the river, his son was stabbed by a comrade, his wife was shot, and his children were burned; "Big Head," his brother, was shot by an Indian; Coutonohais dropped dead at a dance; Battosh was mysteriously shot; Lavigne was drowned; Fraser was run through the body by a Frenchman in Paris; Baptiste Morallé, while drunk, was thrown into a fire by inebriated companions and burned to death; another died drunk on a roadway; another was wounded by the bursting of his gun; small-pox took the eleventh; Duplisis was empaled upon a hay-fork, on which he jumped from a haystack; Parisien was shot, by a person unknown, in a buffalo-hunt; another lost his arm by carelessness; Gardapie, "the brave," was scalped and shot by the Sioux; so was Vallée; Ka-te-tee-goose was scalped and cut in pieces by the Gros-Ventres; Pe-me-can-toss was thrown in a hole by his people; and another Indian and his wife and children were killed by lightning. Yet another was gored to death by a buffalo. The rest of the twenty-six died by being frozen, by drowning, by drunkenness, or by shameful disease.

It is when things are at their worst that they begin to mend, says a silly old proverb; but when history is studied these desperate situations often seem part of the mend-

ing, not of themselves, but of the broken cause of progress. There was a little halt here in Canada, as we shall see, but the seed of settlement had been planted, and thenceforth continued to grow. Lord Selkirk came with all speed, reaching Canada in 1817. It was now an English colony, and when he asked for a body-guard, the government gave him two sergeants and twelve soldiers of the



MAKING THE SNOW-SHOE.

Régiment de Meuron. He made these the nucleus of a considerable force of Swiss and Germans who had formerly served in that regiment, and he pursued a triumphal progress to what he called his territory of Assiniboin, capturing all the Northwest Company's forts on the route, imprisoning the factors, and sending to jail in Canada all the accessories to the massacre, on charges of arson, murder, robbery, and "high misdemeanors." Such was the prejudice against the Hudson Bay Company and the regard for the home corporation that all were acquitted, and suits for very heavy damages were lodged against him.

Selkirk sought to treat with the Indians for his land, which they said belonged to the Chippeways and the Crees. Five chiefs were found whose right to treat was acknowledged by all. On July 18, 1817, they deeded the territory to the king, "for the benefit of Lord Selkirk," giving him a strip two miles wide on either side of the Red River from Lake Winnipeg to Red Lake, north of the United States boundary, and along the Assiniboin from Fort Garry to the Muskrat River, as well as within two circles of six miles radius around Fort Garry and Pembina, now in Dakota. Indians do not know what miles are; they measure distance by the movement of the sun while on a journey. They determined two miles in this case to be "as far as you can see daylight under a horse's belly on the level prairie." On account of Selkirk's liberality they dubbed him "the silver chief." He agreed to give them for the land 200 pounds of tobacco a year. He named his settlement Kildonan, after that place in Helmsdale, Sutherlandshire, Scotland. He died in 1821, and in 1836 the Hudson Bay Company bought the land back from his heirs for £84,000. The Swiss and Germans of his regiment remained, and many retired servants of



A HUDSON BAY MAN (QUARTER-BREED).

the company bought and settled there, forming the aristocracy of the place—a queer aristocracy to our minds, for many of the women were Indian squaws, and the children were "breeds."

Through the perseverance and tact of the Right Hon. Edward Ellice, to whom the government had appealed, all differences between the two great fur-trading companies were adjusted, and in 1821 a coalition was formed. At Ellice's suggestion the giant combination then got from Parliament exclusive privileges beyond the waters that flow into Hudson Bay, over the Rocky Mountains and to the Pacific, for a term of twenty years. These extra privileges were surrendered in 1838, and were renewed for twenty years longer. Then, in 1858, it happened that they expired, and the rush for gold occurred in New Caledonia (now British Columbia). That territory then became a crown colony, and it and Vancouver Island, which had taken on a colonial character at the time of the Cali-

fornia gold fever (1849), were united in 1866. The extra privileges of the fur-traders were therefore not again renewed. In 1871 all the colonies of Canada were confederated, and whatever presumptive rights the Hudson Bay Company got under Charles II.'s charter were vacated in consideration of a payment by Canada of \$1,500,000 cash, half of all surveyed lands within the fertile belt, and 50,000 acres surrounding the company's posts. It is estimated that the land grant amounts to seven millions of acres, worth twenty millions of dollars, exclusive of all town sites.

Thus we reach the present condition of the company, 230 years old, maintaining 200 central posts and unnumbered dependent ones, and trading in Labrador on the Atlantic; at Massett, on Queen Charlotte Island, in the Pacific; and deep within the Arctic Circle in the North. The company was newly capitalized not long ago with 100,000 shares at £20 (ten millions of dollars), but, in addition to its dividends, it has paid back seven pounds in every twenty, reducing its capital to £1,300,000. The stock, however, is quoted at its original value. The supreme control of the company is vested in a governor, deputy governor, and five directors, elected by the stockholders in London. They delegate their powers to an executive resident in this country, who was until lately called the "Governor of Rupert's Land," but now is styled the chief commissioner, and is in absolute charge of the company and all its operations. His term of office is unlimited. The present incumbent is Mr. J. Wrigley, and the president is Sir Donald A. Smith, one of the foremost spirits in Canada, who worked his way up from a clerkship in the company. The business of the company is managed on the outfit system, the most old-fogyish, yet by its officers declared to be the most perfect, plan in use by any corporation. The method is to charge against each post all the supplies that are sent to it between June 1st and June 1st each year, and then to set against this the product of each post in furs and in cash received. It used to take seven years to arrive at the figures for a given year, but, owing to improved means of transportation, this is now done in two years.

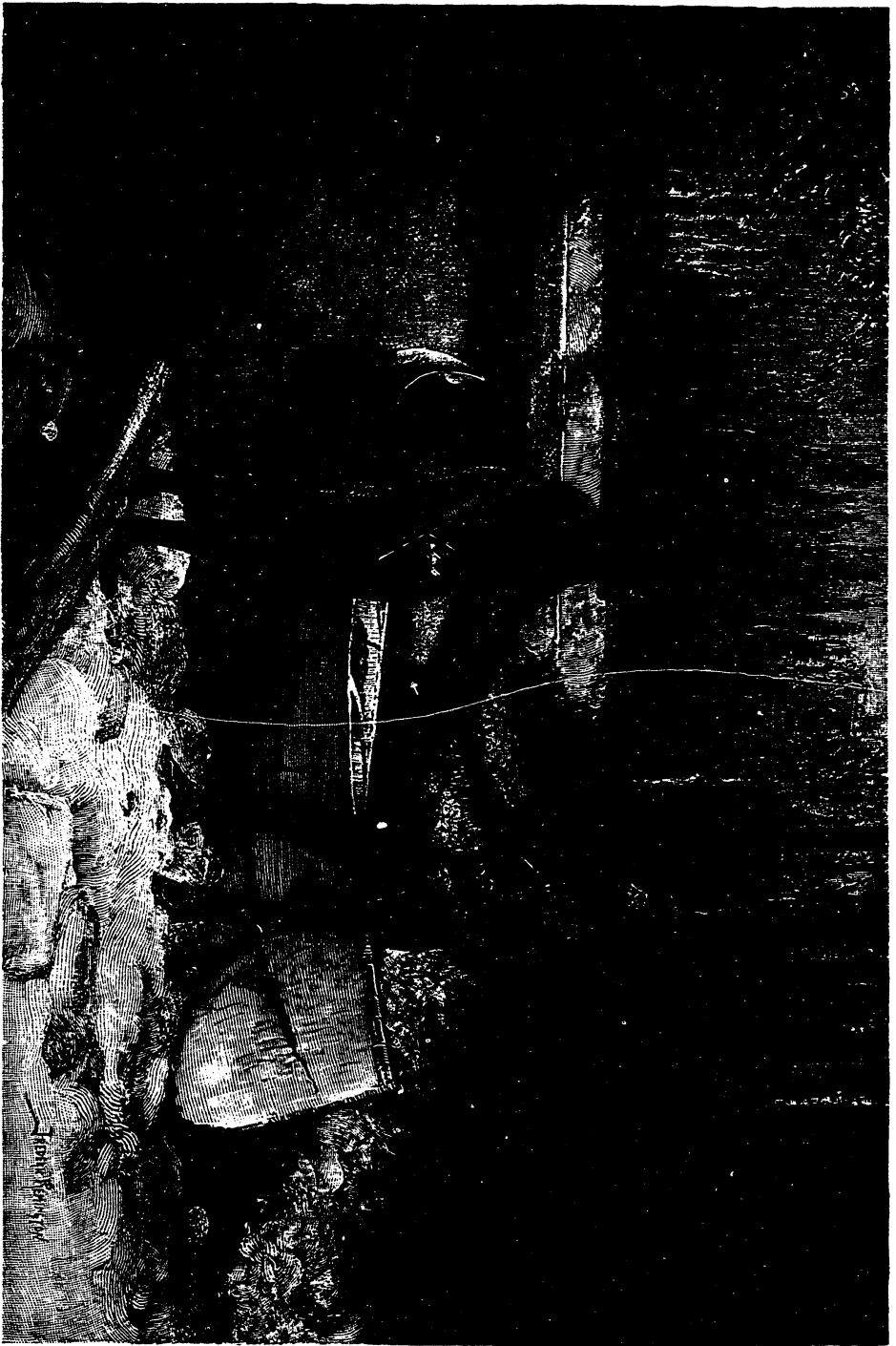
Almost wherever you go in the newly settled parts of the Hudson Bay territory you find at least one free trader's shop set

up in rivalry with the old company's post. These are sometimes mere storehouses for the furs, and sometimes they look like, and are partly, general country stores. There can be no doubt that this rivalry is very detrimental to the fur trade from the stand-point of the future. The great company can afford to miss a dividend, and can lose at some points while gaining at others, but the free traders must profit in every district. The consequence is such a reckless destruction of game that the plan adopted by us for our seal-fisheries—the leasehold system—is envied and advocated in Canada. A greater proportion of trapping and an utter unconcern for the destruction of the game at all ages are now ravaging the wilderness. Many districts return as many furs as they ever yielded, but the quantity is kept up at fearful cost by the extermination of the game. On the other hand, the fortified wall of posts that opposed the development of Canada, and sent the surplus population of Europe to the United States, is rid of its palisades and field-pieces, and the main strongholds of the ancient company and its rivals have become cities. The old fort on Vancouver Island is now Victoria; Fort Edmonton is the seat of law and commerce in the Peace River region; old Fort William has seen Port Arthur rise by its side; Fort Garry is Winnipeg; Calgary, the chief city of Alberta, is on the site of another fort; and Sault Ste. Marie was once a Northwest post.

But civilization is still so far off from most of the "factories," as the company's posts are called, that the day when they shall become cities is in no man's thought or ken. And the communication between the centres and outposts is, like the life of the traders, more nearly like what it was in the old, old days than most of my readers would imagine. My Indian guides were battling with their paddles against the mad current of the Nipigon, above Lake Superior, one day last summer, and I was only a few hours away from Factor Flanagan's post near the great lake, when we came to a portage, and might have imagined from what we saw that time had pushed the hands back on the dial of eternity at least a century.

Some rapids in the river had to be avoided by the brigade that was being sent with supplies to a post far north at the head of Lake Nipigon. A cumbrous

THE COURRIER DU HOIS AND THE SAVAGE.



big-timbered little schooner, like a surf-boat with a sail, and a square-cut bateau had brought the men and goods to the "carry." The men were half-breeds as of old, and had brought along their women and children to inhabit a camp of smoky tents that we espied on a bluff close by; a typical camp, with the blankets hung on the bushes, the slatternly women and half-naked children squatting or running about, and smudge fires smoking between the tents to drive off mosquitoes and flies. The men were in groups below on the trail, at the water-side end of which were the boats' cargoes of shingles and flour and bacon and shot and powder in kegs, wrapped, two at a time, in rawhide. They were dark-skinned, short, spare men, without a surplus pound of flesh in the crew, and with longish coarse black hair and straggling beards. Each man carried a tomp-line, or long stout strap, which he tied in such a way around what he meant to carry that a broad part of the strap fitted over the crown of his head. Thus they "packed" the goods over the portage, their heads sustaining the loads, and their backs merely steadying them. When one had thrown his burden into place, he trotted off up the trail with springing feet, though the freight was packed so that 100 pounds should form a load.

For bravado one carried 200 pounds, and then all the others tried to pack as much, and most succeeded. All agreed that one, the smallest and least muscular-looking one among them, could pack 400 pounds.

As the men gathered around their "smudge" to talk with my party, it was seen that of all the parts of the picturesque costume of the *voyageur* or *bois-brûlé* of old—the capote, the striped shirt, the pipe-tomahawk, plumed hat, gay leggings, belt, and moccasins—only the red worsted belt and the moccasins have been retained. These men could recall the day when they had tallow and corn meal for rations, got no tents, and were obliged to carry 200 pounds, lifting one package, and then throwing a second one atop of it without assistance. Now they carry only 100 pounds at a time, and have tents and good food given to them.

We will not follow them, nor meet, as they did, the York boat coming down from the north with last winter's furs. In another article I will endeavor to lift the curtain from before the great fur country beyond them, to give a glimpse of the habits and conditions that prevail throughout a majestic territory where the rivers and lakes are the only roads, and canoes and dog-sleds are the only vehicles.