GEORGE BRYCE

THE REMARKABLE HISTORY OF THE HUDSON'S BAY COMPANY

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Содержание

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The Remarkable History of the Hudson's Bay Company / Including that of the French Traders of North-Western / Canada and of the North-West, XY, and Astor Fur Companies

PREFACE

The Hudson's Bay Company! What a record this name represents of British pluck and daring, of patient industry and hardy endurance, of wild adventure among savage Indian tribes, and of exposure to danger by mountain, precipice, and seething torrent and wintry plain!

In two full centuries the Hudson's Bay Company, under its original Charter, undertook financial enterprises of the greatest magnitude, promoted exploration and discovery, governed a vast domain in the northern part of the American Continent, and preserved to the British Empire the wide territory handed over to Canada in 1870. For nearly a generation since that time the veteran Company has carried on successful trade in competition with many rivals, and has shown the vigour of youth.

The present History includes not only the record of the remarkable exploits of this well-known Company, but also the accounts of the daring French soldiers and explorers who disputed the claim of the Company in the seventeenth century, and in the eighteenth century actually surpassed the English adventurers in penetrating the vast interior of Rupert's Land.

Special attention is given in this work to the picturesque history of what was the greatest rival of the Hudson's Bay Company, viz. the North-West Fur Company of Montreal, as well as to the extraordinary spirit of the X Y Company and the Astor Fur Company of New York.

A leading feature of this book is the adequate treatment for the first time of the history of the well-nigh eighty years just closing, from the union of all the fur traders of British North America under the name of the Hudson's Bay Company. This period, beginning with the career of the Emperor-Governor. Sir George Simpson (1821), and covering the life, adventure, conflicts, trade, and development of the vast region stretching from Labrador to Vancouver Island, and north to the Mackenzie River and the Yukon, down to the present year, is the most important part of the Company's history.

For the task thus undertaken the author is well fitted. He has had special opportunities for becoming acquainted with the history, position, and inner life of the Hudson's Bay Company. He has lived for nearly thirty years in Winnipeg, for the whole of that time in sight of Fort Garry, the fur traders' capital, or what remains of it; he has visited many of the Hudson's Bay Company's posts from Fort William to Victoria, in the Lake Superior and the Lake of the Woods region, in Manitoba, Assiniboia, Alberta, and British Columbia; in those districts he has run the rapids, crossed the portages, surveyed the ruins of old forts, and fixed the localities of long-forgotten posts; he is acquainted with a large number of the officers of the Company, has enjoyed their hospitality, read their journals, and listened with interest to their tales of adventure in many out-of-the-way posts; he is a lover of the romance, and story, and tradition of the fur traders' past.

The writer has had full means of examining documents, letters, journals, business records, heirlooms, and archives of the fur traders both in Great Britain and Canada. He returns thanks to the custodians of many valuable originals, which he has used, to the Governor of the Hudson's Bay Company in 1881, Right Hon. G. J. Goschen, who granted him the privilege of consulting all Hudson's

Bay Company records up to the date of 1821, and he desires to still more warmly acknowledge the permission given him by the distinguished patron of literature and education, the present Governor of the Hudson's Bay Company, Lord Strathcona and Mount Royal, to read any documents of public importance in the Hudson's Bay House in London. This unusual opportunity granted the author was largely used by him in 1896 and again in 1899.

Taking the advice of his publishers, the author, instead of publishing several volumes of annals of the Company, has condensed the important features of the history into one fair-sized volume, but has given in an Appendix references and authorities which may afford the reader, who desires more detailed information on special periods, the sources of knowledge for fuller research.

PREFACE

TO THE THIRD EDITION

The favor which has been shown to the "Remarkable History of the Hudson's Bay Company" has resulted in a large measure from its being written by a native-born Canadian, who is familiar with much of the ground over which the Company for two hundred years held sway.

A number of corrections have been made and the book has been brought up to date for this Edition.

It has been a pleasure to the Author, who has expressed himself without fear or favor regarding the Company men and their opponents, that he has received from the greater number of his readers commendations for his fairness and insight into the affairs of the Company and its wonderful history.

George Bryce.

Kilmadock, Winnipeg,

August 19, 1910.

CHAPTER I
THE FIRST VOYAGE FOR TRADE

Famous Companies – "The old lady of Fenchurch Street" – The first voyage – Radisson and Groseilliers – Spurious claim of the French of having reached the Bay – "Journal published by Prince Society" – The claim invalid – Early voyages of Radisson – The Frenchmen go to Boston – Cross over to England – Help from Royalty – Fiery Rupert – The King a stockholder – Many hitherto unpublished facts – Capt. Zachariah Gillam – Charles Fort built on Rupert River – The founder's fame.

Charles Lamb – "delightful author" – opens his unique "Essays of Elia" with a picturesque description of the quaint "South Sea House." Threadneedle Street becomes a magnetic name as we wander along it toward Bishopsgate Street "from the Bank, thinking of the old house with the oaken wainscots hung with pictures of deceased governors and sub-governors of Queen Anne, and the first monarchs of the Brunswick dynasty – huge charts which subsequent discoveries have made antiquated – dusty maps, dim as dreams, and soundings of the Bay of Panama." But Lamb, after all, was only a short time in the South Sea House, while for more than thirty years he was a clerk in the India House, partaking of the genius of the place.

The India House was the abode of a Company far more famous than the South Sea Company, dating back more than a century before the "Bubble" Company, having been brought into existence on the last day of the sixteenth century by good Queen Bess herself. To a visitor, strolling down Leadenhall Street, it recalls the spirit of Lamb to turn into East India Avenue, and the mind wanders back to Clive and Burke of Macaulay's brilliant essay, in which he impales, with balanced phrase and perfect impartiality, Philip Francis and Warren Hastings alike.

The London merchants were mighty men, men who could select their agents, and send their ships, and risk their money on every sea and on every shore. Nor was this only for gain, but for philanthropy as well. Across yonder is the abode of the New England Company, founded in 1649, and re-established by Charles II. in 1661 – begun and still existing with its fixed income "for the propagation of the Gospel in New England and the adjoining parts of America," having had as its first president the Hon. Robert Boyle; and hard by are the offices of the Canada Company, now reaching its three-quarters of a century.

Not always, however, as Macaulay points out, did the trading Companies remember that the pressure on their agents abroad for increased returns meant the temptation to take doubtful or illicit methods to gain their ends. They would have recoiled from the charge of Lady Macbeth, —

"Wouldst not play false,
And yet wouldst wrongly win."

Yet on the whole the Merchant Companies of London bear an honourable record, and have had a large share in laying the foundations of England's commercial greatness.

Wandering but a step further past East India Avenue, at the corner of Lime and Leadenhall Streets, we come to-day upon another building sitting somewhat sedately in the very heart of stirring and living commerce. This is the Hudson's Bay House, the successor of the old house on Fenchurch Street, the abode of another Company, whose history goes back for more than two centuries and a quarter, and which is to-day the most vigorous and vivacious of all the sisterhood of companies we have enumerated. While begun as a purely trading Company, it has shown in its remarkable history not only the shrewdness and business skill of the race, called by Napoleon a "nation of shopkeepers," but it has been the governing power over an empire compassing nearly one half of North America,

it has been the patron of science and exploration, the defender of the British flag and name, and the fosterer, to a certain extent, of education and religion.

Not only on the shores of Hudson Bay, but on the Pacific coast, in the prairies of Red River, and among the snows of the Arctic slope, on the rocky shores of Labrador and in the mountain fastnesses of the Yukon, in the posts of Fort William and Nepigon, on Lake Superior, and in far distant Athabasca, among the wild Crees, or greasy Eskimos, or treacherous Chinooks, it has floated the red cross standard, with the well-known letters H. B. C. – an "open sesame" to the resources of a wide extent of territory.

The founding of the Company has features of romance. These may well be detailed, and to do so leads us back several years before the incorporation of the Company by Charles II. in 1670. The story of the first voyage and how it came about is full of interest.

Two French Protestant adventurers – Medard Chouart and Pierre Esprit Radisson – the former born near Meaux, in France, and the other a resident of St. Malo, in Brittany – had gone to Canada about the middle of the seventeenth century. Full of energy and daring, they, some years afterwards, embarked in the fur trade, and had many adventures.

Radisson was first captured by the Iroquois, and adopted into one of their tribes. After two years he escaped, and having been taken to Europe, returned to Montreal. Shortly afterwards he took part in the wars between the Hurons and Iroquois. Chouart was for a time assistant in a Jesuit mission, but, like most young men of the time, yielded to the attractions of the fur trade. He had married first the daughter of Abraham Martin, the French settler, after whom the plains of Abraham at Quebec are named. On her death Chouart married the widowed sister of Radisson, and henceforth the fortunes of the two adventurers were closely bound up together. The marriage of Chouart brought him a certain amount of property, he purchased land out of the proceeds of his ventures, and assumed the title of Seignior, being known as "Sieur des Groseilliers." In the year 1658 Groseilliers and Radisson went on the third expedition to the west, and returned after an absence of two years, having wintered at Lake Nepigon, which they called "Assiniboines." It is worthy of note that Radisson frankly states in the account of his third voyage that they had not been in the Bay of the North (Hudson Bay).

The fourth voyage of the two partners in 1661 was one of an eventful kind, and led to very important results. They had applied to the Governor for permission to trade in the interior, but this was refused, except on very severe conditions. Having had great success on their previous voyage, and with the spirit of adventure inflamed within them, the partners determined to throw off all authority, and at midnight departed without the Governor's leave, for the far west. During an absence of two years the adventurers turned their canoes northward, and explored the north shore of Lake Superior.

It is in connection with this fourth voyage (1661) that the question has been raised as to whether Radisson and his brother-in-law Groseilliers visited Hudson Bay by land. The conflicting claim to the territory about Hudson Bay by France and England gives interest to this question. Two French writers assert that the two explorers had visited Hudson Bay by land. These are, the one, M. Bacqueville de la Potherie, Paris; and the other, M. Jeremie, Governor of the French ports in Hudson Bay. Though both maintain that Hudson Bay was visited by the two Frenchmen, Radisson and Groseilliers, yet they differ entirely in details, Jeremie stating that they captured some Englishmen there, a plain impossibility.

Oldmixon, an English writer, in 1708, makes the following statement: – "Monsieur Radisson and Monsieur Gooselier, meeting with some savages in the Lake of the Assinipouals, in Canada, they learnt of them that they might go by land to the bottom of the bay, where the English had not yet been. Upon which they desired them to conduct them thither, and the savages accordingly did it." Oldmixon is, however, inaccurate in some other particulars, and probably had little authority for this statement.

THE CRITICAL PASSAGE

The question arises in Radisson's Journals, which are published in the volume of the Prince Society.

For so great a discovery the passage strikes us as being very short and inadequate, and no other reference of the kind is made in the voyages. It is as follows, being taken from the fourth voyage, page 224: —

"We went away with all hast possible to arrive the sooner at ye great river. We came to the seaside, where we finde an old house all demolished and battered with boullets. We weare told yt those that came there were of two nations, one of the wolf, and the other of the long-horned beast. All those nations are distinguished by the representation of the beasts and animals. They tell us particularities of the Europians. We know ourselves, and what Europ is like, therefore in vaine they tell us as for that. We went from isle to isle all that summer. We pluckt abundance of ducks, as of other sort of fowles; we wanted not fish, nor fresh meat. We weare well beloved, and weare overjoyed that we promised them to come with such shipps as we invented. This place has a great store of cows. The wild men kill not except for necessary use. We went further in the bay to see the place that they weare to pass that summer. That river comes from the lake, and empties itself in ye river of Sagnes (Saguenay) called Tadousac, wch is a hundred leagues in the great river of Canada, as where we are in ye Bay of ye North. We left in this place our marks and rendezvous. The wild men yt brought us defended us above all things, if we would come quietly to them, that we should by no means land, & so goe to the river to the other side, that is to the North, towards the sea, telling us that those people weare very treacherous."

THE CLAIM INVALID

We would remark as follows: —

1. The fourth voyage may be traced as a journey through Lake Superior, past the pictured rocks on its south side, beyond the copper deposits, westward to where there are prairie meadows, where the Indians grow Indian corn, and where elk and buffalo are found, in fact in the region toward the Mississippi River.

2. The country was toward that of the Nadoneseronons, i.e. the Nadouessi or Sioux; north-east of them were the Christinos or Crees; so that the region must have been what we know at present as Northern Minnesota. They visited the country of the Sioux, the present States of Dakota, and promised to visit the Christinos on their side of the upper lake, evidently Lake of the Woods or Winnipeg.

3. In the passage before us they were fulfilling their promise. They came to the "seaside." This has given colour to the idea that Hudson Bay is meant. An examination of Radisson's writing shows us, however, that he uses the terms lake and sea interchangeably. For example, in page 155, he speaks of the "Christinos from the bay of the North Sea," which could only refer to the Lake of the Woods or Lake Winnipeg. Again, on page 134, Radisson speaks of the "Lake of the Hurrons which was upon the border of the sea," evidently meaning Lake Superior. On the same page, in the heading of the third voyage, he speaks of the "filthy Lake of the Hurrons, Upper Sea of the East, and Bay of the north," and yet no one has claimed that in this voyage he visited Hudson Bay. Again, elsewhere, Radisson uses the expression, "salted lake" for the Atlantic, which must be crossed to reach France.

4. Thus in the passage "the ruined house on the seaside" would seem to have been one of the lakes mentioned. The Christinos tell them of Europeans, whom they have met a few years before, perhaps an earlier French party on Lake Superior or at the Sault. The lake or sea abounded in islands. This would agree with the Lake of the Woods, where the Christinos lived, and not Hudson Bay.

Whatever place it was it had a great store of cows or buffalo. Lake of the Woods is the eastern limit of the buffalo. They are not found on the shores of Hudson Bay.

5. It will be noticed also that he speaks of a river flowing from the lake, when he had gone further in the bay, evidently the extension of the lake, and this river empties itself into the Saguenay. This is plainly pure nonsense. It would be equally nonsensical to speak of it in connection with the Hudson Bay, as no river empties from it into the Saguenay.

Probably looking at the great River Winnipeg as it flows from Lake of the Woods, or Bay of Islands as it was early called, he sees it flowing north-easterly, and with the mistaken views so common among early voyageurs, conjectures it to run toward the great Saguenay and to empty into it, thence into the St. Lawrence.

6. This passage shows the point reached, which some interpret as Hudson Bay or James Bay, could not have been so, for it speaks of a further point toward the north, toward the sea.

7. Closely interpreted, it is plain that Radisson had not only not visited Hudson or James Bay, but that he had a wrong conception of it altogether. He is simply giving a vague story of the Christinos. [1]

On the return of Groseilliers and Radisson to Quebec, the former was made a prisoner by order of the Governor for illicit trading. The two partners were fined 4000*l.* for the purpose of erecting a fort at Three Rivers, and 6000*l.* to go to the general funds of New France.

A GREAT ENTERPRISE

Filled with a sense of injustice at the amount of the fine placed upon them, the unfortunate traders crossed over to France and sought restitution. It was during their heroic efforts to secure a remission of the fine that the two partners urged the importance, both in Quebec and Paris, of an expedition being sent out to explore Hudson Bay, of which they had heard from the Indians. Their efforts in Paris were fruitless, and they came back to Quebec, burning for revenge upon the rapacious Governor.

Driven to desperation by what they considered a persecution, and no doubt influenced by their being Protestant in faith, the adventurers now turned their faces toward the English. In 1664 they went to Port Royal, in Acadia, and thence to New England. Boston was then the centre of English enterprise in America, and the French explorers brought their case before the merchants of that town. They asserted that having been on Lake Assiniboine, north of Lake Superior, they had there been assured by the Indians that Hudson Bay could be reached.

After much effort they succeeded in engaging a New England ship, which went as far as Lat. 61, to the entrance of Hudson Straits, but on account of the timidity of the master of the ship, the voyage was given up and the expedition was fruitless.

The two enterprising men were then promised by the ship-owners the use of two vessels to go on their search in 1665, but they were again discouraged by one of the vessels being sent on a trip to Sable Isle and the other to the fisheries in the Gulf of St. Lawrence. Groseilliers and Radisson, bitterly disappointed, sought to maintain their rights against the ship-owners in the Courts, and actually won their case, but they were still unable to organize an expedition.

At this juncture the almost discouraged Frenchmen met the two Royal Commissioners who were in America in behalf of Charles II. to settle a number of disputed questions in New England and New York. By one of these, Sir George Carteret, they were induced to visit England. Sir George was no other than the Vice-Chamberlain to the King and Treasurer of the Navy. He and our adventurers sailed for Europe, were captured by a Dutch ship, and after being landed on the coast of Spain, reached England.

[1] Mr. Miller Christie, of London, and others are of opinion that Radisson visited Hudson Bay on this fourth voyage.

Through the influence of Carteret they obtained an audience with King Charles on October 25th, 1666, and he promised that a ship should be supplied to them as soon as possible with which to proceed on their long-planned journey.

Even at this stage another influence came into view in the attempt of De Witt, the Dutch Ambassador, to induce the Frenchmen to desert England and go out under the auspices of Holland. Fortunately they refused these offers.

The war with the Dutch delayed the expedition for one year, and in the second year their vessel received orders too late to be fitted up for the voyage. The assistance of the English ambassador to France, Mr. Montague, was then invoked by Groseilliers and Radisson, now backed up by a number of merchant friends to prepare for the voyage.

Through this influence, an audience was obtained from Prince Rupert, the King's cousin, and his interest was awakened in the enterprise.

It was a remarkable thing that at this time the Royal House of England showed great interest in trade. A writer of a century ago has said, "Charles II., though addicted to pleasure, was capable of useful exertions, and he loved commerce. His brother, the Duke of York, though possessed of less ability, was endowed with greater perseverance, and by a peculiar felicity placed his chief amusement in commercial schemes whilst he possessed the whole influence of the State." "The Duke of York spent half his time in the business of commerce in the city, presiding frequently at meetings of courts of directors."

It will be seen that the circumstances were very favourable for the French enthusiasts who were to lead the way to Hudson Bay, and the royal personages who were anxious to engage in new and profitable schemes.

The first Stock Book (1667) is still in existence in the Hudson's Bay House, in London, and gives an account of the stock taken in the enterprise even before the Company was organized by charter. First on the list is the name of His Royal Highness the Duke of York, and, on the credit side of the account, "By a share presented to him in the stock and adventure by the Governor and Company, 300*l.*"

The second stockholder on the list is the notable Prince Rupert, who took 300*l.* stock, and paid it up in the next two years, with the exception of 100*l.* which he transferred to Sir George Carteret, who evidently was the guiding mind in the beginning of the enterprise. Christopher, Duke of Albemarle – the son of the great General Monk, who had been so influential in the restoration of Charles II. to the throne of England, was a stockholder for 500*l.*

Then came as stockholders, and this before the Company had been formally organized, William, Earl of Craven, well known as a personal friend of Prince Rupert; Henry, Earl of Arlington, a member of the ruling cabal; while Anthony, Earl of Shaftesbury, the versatile minister of Charles, is down for 700*l.* Sir George Carteret is charged with between six and seven hundred pounds' worth of stock; Sir John Robinson, Sir Robert Vyner, Sir Peter Colleton and others with large sums.

As we have seen, in the year 1667 the project took shape, a number of those mentioned being responsible for the ship, its cargo, and the expenses of the voyage. Among those who seem to have been most ready with their money were the Duke of Albemarle, Earl of Craven, Sir George Carteret, Sir John Robinson, and Sir Peter Colleton. An entry of great interest is made in connection with the last-named knight. He is credited with 96*l.* cash paid to the French explorers, who were the originators of the enterprise. It is amusing, however, to see Groseilliers spoken of as "Mr. Gooseberry" – a somewhat inaccurate translation of his name.

Two ships were secured by the merchant adventurers, the *Eaglet*, Captain Stannard, and the *Nonsuch Ketch*, Captain Zachariah Gillam. The former vessel has almost been forgotten, because after venturing on the journey, passing the Orkneys, crossing the Atlantic, and approaching Hudson Straits, the master thought the enterprise an impossible one, and returned to London.

Special interest attaches to the *Nonsuch Ketch*. It was the successful vessel, but another notable thing connected with it was that its New England captain, Zachariah Gillam, had led the expedition of 1664, though now the vessel under his command was one of the King's ships. [2]

It was in June, 1668, that the vessels sailed from Gravesend, on the Thames, and proceeded on their journey, Groseilliers being aboard the *Nonsuch*, and Radisson in the *Eaglet*. The *Nonsuch* found the Bay, discovered little more than half a century before by Hudson, and explored by Button, Fox, and James, the last-named less than forty years before. Captain Gillam is said to have sailed as far north as 75° N. in Baffin Bay, though this is disputed, and then to have returned into Hudson Bay, where, turning southward, he reached the bottom of the Bay on September 29th. Entering a stream, the Nemisco, on the south-east corner of the Bay – a point probably not less than 150 miles from the nearest French possessions in Canada – the party took possession of it, calling it, after the name of their distinguished patron, Prince Rupert's River.

Here, at their camping-place, they met the natives of the district, probably a branch of the Swampy Crees. With the Indians they held a parley, and came to an agreement by which they were allowed to occupy a certain portion of territory. With busy hands they went to work and built a stone fort, in Lat. 51° 20' N., Long. 78° W., which, in honour of their gracious sovereign, they called "Charles Fort."

Not far away from their fort lay Charlton Island, with its shores of white sand, and covered over with a growth of juniper and spruce. To this they crossed on the ice upon the freezing of the river on December 9th. Having made due preparations for the winter, they passed the long and dreary time, finding the cold excessive. As they looked out they saw "Nature looking like a carcase frozen to death."

In April, 1669, however, the cold was almost over, and they were surprised to see the bursting forth of the spring. Satisfied with their journey, they left the Bay in this year and sailed southward to Boston, from which port they crossed the ocean to London, and gave an account of their successful voyage.

The fame of the pioneer explorer is ever an enviable one. There can be but one Columbus, and so for all time this voyage of Zachariah Gillam, because it was the expedition which resulted in the founding of the first fort, and in the beginning of the great movement which has lasted for more than two centuries, will be memorable. It was not an event which made much stir in London at the time, but it was none the less the first of a long series of most important and far-reaching activities.

[2] A copy of the instructions given the captains may be found in State Papers, London, Charles II., 251, No. 180.

CHAPTER II
HUDSON'S BAY COMPANY FOUNDED

Royal charters – Good Queen Bess – "So miserable a wilderness" – Courtly stockholders – Correct spelling – "The nonsense of the Charters" – Mighty rivers – Lords of the territory – To execute justice – War on infidels – Power to seize – "Skin for skin" – Friends of the red man.

The success of the first voyage made by the London merchants to Hudson Bay was so marked that the way was open for establishing the Company and carrying on a promising trade. The merchants who had given their names or credit for Gillam's expedition lost no time in applying, with their patron, Prince Rupert, at their head, to King Charles II. for a Charter to enable them more safely to carry out their plans. Their application was, after some delay, granted on May 2nd, 1670.

The modern method of obtaining privileges such as they sought would have been by an application to Parliament; but the seventeenth century was the era of Royal Charters. Much was said in England eighty years after the giving of this Charter, and again in Canada forty years ago, against the illegality and unwisdom of such Royal Charters as the one granted to the Hudson's Bay Company. These criticisms, while perhaps just, scarcely cover the ground in question.

As to the abstract point of the granting of Royal Charters, there would probably be no two opinions to-day, but it was conceded to be a royal prerogative two centuries ago, although the famous scene cannot be forgotten where Queen Elizabeth, in allowing many monopolies which she had granted to be repealed, said in answer to the Address from the House of Commons: "Never since I was a queen did I put my pen to any grant but upon pretext and semblance made to me that it was both good and beneficial to the subject in general, though private profit to some of my ancient servants who had deserved well… Never thought was cherished in my heart that tended not to my people's good."

The words, however, of the Imperial Attorney-General and Solicitor-General, Messrs. Bethel and Keating, of Lincoln's Inn, when appealed to by the British Parliament, are very wise: "The questions of the validity and construction of the Hudson's Bay Company Charter cannot be considered apart from the enjoyment that has been had under it during nearly two centuries, and the recognition made of the rights of the Company in various acts, both of the Government and Legislature."

The bestowal of such great privileges as those given to the Hudson's Bay Company are easily accounted for in the prevailing idea as to the royal prerogative, the strong influence at Court in favour of the applicants for the Charter, and, it may be said, in such opinions as that expressed forty years after by Oldmixon: "There being no towns or plantations in this country (Rupert's Land), but two or three forts to defend the factories, we thought we were at liberty to place it in our book where we pleased, and were loth to let our history open with the description of so wretched a Colony. For as rich as the trade to those parts has been or may be, the way of living is such that we cannot reckon any man happy whose lot is cast upon this Bay."

The Charter certainly opens with a breath of unrestrained heartiness on the part of the good-natured King Charles. First on the list of recipients is "our dear entirely beloved Prince Rupert, Count Palatine of the Rhine, Duke of Bavaria and Cumberland, etc," who seems to have taken the King captive, as if by one of his old charges when he gained the name of the fiery Rupert of Edgehill. Though the stock book of the Company has the entry made in favour of Christopher, Duke of Albemarle, yet the Charter contains that of the famous General Monk, who, as "Old George," stood his ground in London during the year of the plague and kept order in the terror-stricken city. The explanation of the occurrence of the two names is found in the fact that the father died in the year of the granting of the Charter. The reason for the appearance of the name of Sir Philip Carteret in the Charter is not so evident, for not only was Sir George Carteret one of the promoters of the Company,

but his name occurs as one of the Court of Adventurers in the year after the granting of the Charter. John Portman, citizen and goldsmith of London, is the only member named who is neither nobleman, knight, nor esquire, but he would seem to have been very useful to the Company as a man of means.

The Charter states that the eighteen incorporators named deserve the privileges granted because they "have at their own great cost and charges undertaken an expedition for Hudson Bay, in the north-west parts of America, for a discovery of a new passage into the South Sea, and for the finding of some trade for furs, minerals, and other considerable commodities, and by such their undertakings, have already made such discoveries as to encourage them to proceed farther in pursuance of their said design, by means whereof there may probably arise great advantage to Us and our kingdoms."

The full name of the Company given in the Charter is, "The Governor and Company of Adventurers of England, trading into Hudson Bay." They have usually been called "The Hudson's Bay Company," the form of the possessive case being kept in the name, though it is usual to speak of the bay itself as Hudson Bay. The adventurers are given the powers of possession, succession, and the legal rights and responsibilities usually bestowed in incorporation, with the power of adopting a seal or changing the same at their "will and pleasure"; and this is granted in the elaborate phraseology found in documents of that period. Full provision is made in the Charter for the election of Governor, Deputy-Governor, and the Managing Committee of seven. It is interesting to notice during the long career of the Company how the simple machinery thus provided was adapted, without amendment, in carrying out the immense projects of the Company during the two and a quarter centuries of its existence.

The grant was certainly sufficiently comprehensive. The opponents of the Company in later days mentioned that King Charles gave away in his sweeping phrase a vast territory of which he had no conception, and that it was impossible to transfer property which could not be described. In the case of the English Colonies along the Atlantic coast it was held by the holders of the charters that the frontage of the seaboard carried with it the strip of land all the way across the continent. It will be remembered how, in the settlement with the Commissioners after the American Revolution, Lord Shelburne spoke of this theory as the "nonsense of the charters." The Hudson's Bay Company was always very successful in the maintenance of its claim to the full privileges of the Charter, and until the time of the surrender of its territory to Canada kept firm possession of the country from the shore of Hudson Bay even to the Rocky Mountains.

The generous monarch gave the Company "the whole trade of all those seas, streights, and bays, rivers, lakes, creeks, and sounds, in whatsoever latitude they shall be, that lie within the entrance of the streights commonly called Hudson's Streights, together with all the lands, countries, and territories upon the coasts and confines of the seas, streights, bays, lakes, rivers, creeks, and sounds aforesaid, which are not now actually possessed by any of our subjects, or by the subjects of any other Christian prince or State."

The wonderful water system by which this great claim was extended over so vast a portion of the American continent has been often described. The streams running from near the shore of Lake Superior find their way by Rainy Lake, Lake of the Woods, and Lake Winnipeg, then by the River Nelson, to Hudson Bay. Into Lake Winnipeg, which acts as a collecting basin for the interior, also run the Red River and mighty Saskatchewan, the latter in some ways rivalling the Mississippi, and springing from the very heart of the Rocky Mountains. The territory thus drained was all legitimately covered by the language of the Charter. The tenacious hold of its vast domain enabled the Company to secure in later years leases of territory lying beyond it on the Arctic and Pacific slopes. In the grant thus given perhaps the most troublesome feature was the exclusion, even from the territory granted, of the portion "possessed by the subjects of any other Christian prince or State." We shall see afterwards that within less than twenty years claims were made by the French of a portion of the country on the south side of the Bay; and also a most strenuous contention was put forth at a later date for the French explorers, as having first entered in the territory lying in the basin of the Red and

Saskatchewan Rivers. This claim, indeed, was advanced less than fifty years ago by Canada as the possessor of the rights once maintained by French Canada.

The grant in general included the trade of the country, but is made more specific in one of the articles of the Charter, in that "the fisheries within Hudson's Streights, the minerals, including gold, silver, gems, and precious stones, shall be possessed by the Company." It is interesting to note that the country thus vaguely described is recognized as one of the English "Plantations or Colonies in America," and is called, in compliment to the popular Prince, "Rupert's Land."

Perhaps the most astounding gift bestowed by the Charter is not that of the trade, or what might be called, in the phrase of the old Roman law, the "usufruct," but the transfer of the vast territory, possibly more than one quarter or a third of the whole of North America, to hold it "in free and common socage," i.e., as absolute proprietors. The value of this concession was tested in the early years of this century, when the Hudson's Bay Company sold to the Earl of Selkirk a portion of the territory greater in area than the whole of England and Scotland; and in this the Company was supported by the highest legal authorities in England.

To the minds of some, even more remarkable than the transfer of the ownership of so large a territory was the conferring upon the Company by the Crown of the power to make laws, not only for their own forts and plantations, with all their officers and servants, but having force over all persons upon the lands ceded to them so absolutely.

The authority to administer justice is also given in no uncertain terms. The officers of the Company "may have power to judge all persons belonging to the said Governor and Company, or that shall live under them, in all causes, whether civil or criminal, according to the laws of this kingdom, and execute justice accordingly." To this was also added the power of sending those charged with offences to England to be tried and punished. The authorities, in the course of time, availed themselves of this right. We shall see in the history of the Red River Settlement, in the very heart of Rupert's Land, the spectacle of a community of several thousands of people within a circle having a radius of fifty miles ruled by Hudson's Bay Company authority, with the customs duties collected, certain municipal institutions established, and justice administered, and the people for two generations not possessed of representative institutions.

One of the powers most jealously guarded by all governments is the control of military expeditions. There is a settled unwillingness to allow private individuals to direct or influence them. No qualms of this sort seem to have been in the royal mind over this matter in connection with the Hudson's Bay Company. The Company is fully empowered in the Charter to send ships of war, men, or ammunition into their plantations, allowed to choose and appoint commanders and officers, and even to issue them their commissions.

There is a ludicrous ring about the words empowering the Company to make peace or war with any prince or people whatsoever that are not Christians, and to be permitted for this end to build all necessary castles and fortifications. It seems to have the spirit of the old formula leaving Jews, Turks, and Saracens to the uncovenanted mercies rather than to breathe the nobler principles of a Christian land. Surely, seldom before or since has a Company gone forth thus armed *cap-à-pie* to win glory and profit for their country.

An important proviso of the Charter, which was largely a logical sequence of the power given to possess the wide territory, was the grant of the "whole, entire, and only Liberty of Trade and Traffick." The claim of a complete monopoly of trade was held most strenuously by the Company from the very beginning. The early history of the Company abounds with accounts of the steps taken to prevent the incoming of interlopers. These were private traders, some from the English colonies in America, and others from England, who fitted out expeditions to trade upon the Bay. Full power was given by the Charter "to seize upon the persons of all such English or any other subjects, which sail into Hudson's Bay or inhabit in any of the countries, islands, or territories granted to the said Governor and Company, without their leave and license in that behalf first had and obtained."

The abstract question of whether such monopoly may rightly be granted by a free government is a difficult one, and is variously decided by different authorities. The "free trader" was certainly a person greatly disliked in the early days of the Company. Frequent allusions are made in the minutes of the Company, during the first fifty years of its existence, to the arrest and punishment of servants or employés of the Company who secreted valuable furs on their homeward voyage for the purpose of disposing of them. As late as half a century ago, in the more settled parts of Rupert's Land, on the advice of a judge who had a high sense of its prerogative, an attempt was made by the Company to prevent private trading in furs. Very serious local disturbances took place in the Red River Settlement at that time, but wiser counsels prevailed, and in the later years of the Company's régime the imperative character of the right was largely relaxed.

The Charter fittingly closes with a commendation of the Company by the King to the good offices of all admirals, justices, mayors, sheriffs, and other officers of the Crown, enjoining them to give aid, favour, help, and assistance.

With such extensive powers, the wonder is that the Company bears, on the whole, after its long career over such an extended area of operations, and among savage and border people unaccustomed to the restraints of law, so honourable a record. Being governed by men of high standing, many of them closely associated with the operations of government at home, it is very easy to trace how, as "freedom broadened slowly down" from Charles II. to the present time, the method of dealing with subjects and subordinates became more and more gentle and considerate. As one reads the minutes of the Company in the Hudson's Bay House for the first quarter of a century of its history, the tyrannical spirit, even so far at the removal of troublesome or unpopular members of the Committee and the treatment of rivals, is very evident.

This intolerance was of the spirit of the age. In the Restora tion, the Revolution, and the trials of prisoners after rebellion, men were accustomed to the exercise of the severest penalties for the crimes committed. As the spirit of more gentle administration of law found its way into more peaceful times the Company modified its policy.

The Hudson's Bay Company was, it is true, a keen trader, as the motto, "Pro Pelle Cutem" – "skin for skin" – clearly implies. With this no fault can be found, the more that its methods were nearly all honourable British methods. It never forgot the flag that floated over it. One of the greatest testimonies in its favour was that, when two centuries after its organization it gave up, except as a purely trading company, its power to Canada, yet its authority over the wide-spread Indian population of Rupert's Land was so great, that it was asked by the Canadian Government to retain one-twentieth of the land of that wide domain as a guarantee of its assistance in transferring power from the old to the new régime.

The Indian had in every part of Rupert's Land absolute trust in the good faith of the Company. To have been the possessor of such absolute powers as those given by the Charter; to have on the whole "borne their faculties so meek"; to have been able to carry on government and trade so long and so successfully, is not so much a commendation of the royal donor of the Charter as it is of the clemency and general fairness of the administration, which entitled it not only officially but also really, to the title "The Honourable Hudson's Bay Company."

CHAPTER III
METHODS OF TRADE

Rich Mr. Portman – Good ship *Prince Rupert*– The early adventurers – "Book of Common Prayer" – Five forts – Voting a funeral – Worth of a beaver – To Hudson Bay and back – Selling the pelts – Bottles of sack – Fat dividends – "Victorious as Cæsar" – "Golden Fruit."

The generation that lived between the founding of the Company and the end of the century saw a great development in the trade of the infant enterprise. Meeting sometimes at the place of business of one of the Committee, and afterwards at hired premises, the energetic members of the sub-committee paid close attention to their work. Sir John Robinson, Sir John Kirke, and Mr. Portman acted as one such executive, and the monthly, and at times weekly meetings of the Court of Adventurers were held when they were needed. It brings the past very close to us as we read the minutes, still preserved in the Hudson's Bay House, Leadenhall Street, London, of a meeting at Whitehall in 1671, with His Highness Prince Rupert in the chair, and find the sub-committee appointed to carry on the business. Captain Gillam for a number of years remained in the service of the Company as a trusted captain, and commanded the ship *Prince Rupert.* Another vessel, the *Windingoo*, or *Wyvenhoe Pinck*, was soon added, also in time the *Moosongee Dogger*, then the *Shaftsbury*, the *Albemarle*, and the *Craven Bar*k – the last three named from prominent members of the Company. Not more than three of these ships were in use at the same time.

The fitting out of these ships was a work needing much attention from the sub-committee. Year after year its members went down to Gravesend about the end of May, saw the goods which had been purchased placed aboard the ships, paid the captain and men their wages, delivered the agents to be sent out their commissions, and exercised plenary power in regard to emergencies which arose. The articles selected indicate very clearly the kind of trade in which the Company engaged. The inventory of goods in 1672 shows how small an affair the trade at first was. "Two hundred fowling-pieces, and powder and shot; 200 brass kettles, size from five to sixteen gallons; twelve gross of knives; 900 or 1000 hatchets," is recorded as being the estimate of cargo for that year.

A few years, however, made a great change. Tobacco, glass beads, 6,000 flints, boxes of red lead, looking-glasses, netting for fishing, pewter dishes, and pewter plates were added to the consignments. That some attention was had by the Company to the morals of their employés is seen in that one ship's cargo was provided with "a book of common prayer, and a book of homilies."

About June 1st, the ship, or ships, sailed from the Thames, rounded the North of Scotland, and were not heard of till October, when they returned with their valuable cargoes. Year after year, as we read the records of the Company's history, we find the vessels sailing out and returning with the greatest regularity, and few losses took place from wind or weather during that time.

The agents of the Company on the Bay seem to have been well selected and generally reliable men. Certain French writers and also the English opponents of the Company have represented them as timid men, afraid to leave the coast and penetrate to the interior, and their conduct has been contrasted with that of the daring, if not reckless, French explorers. It is true that for about one hundred years the Hudson's Bay Company men did not leave the shores of Hudson Bay, but what was the need so long as the Indians came to the coast with their furs and afforded them profitable trade! By the orders of the Company they opened up trade at different places on the shores of the Bay, and we learn from Oldmixon that fifteen years after the founding of the Company there were forts established at (1) Albany River; (2) Hayes Island; (3) Rupert's River; (4) Port Nelson; (5) New Severn. According to another authority, Moose River takes the place of Hayes Island in this list.

These forts and factories, at first primitive and small, were gradually increased in size and comfort until they became, in some cases, quite extensive.

The plan of management was to have a governor appointed over each fort for a term of years, and a certain number of men placed under his direction. In the first year of the Hudson's Bay Company's operations as a corporate body, Governor Charles Bailey was sent out to take charge of Charles Fort at Rupert's River. With him was associated the French adventurer, Radisson, and his nephew, Jean Baptiste Groseilliers. Bailey seems to have been an efficient officer, though fault was found with him by the Company. Ten years after the founding of the Company he died in London, and was voted a funeral by the Company, which took place by twilight to St. Paul's, Covent Garden. The widow of the Governor maintained a contention against the Company for an allowance of 400*l.*, which was given after three years' dispute. Another Governor was William Lydall, as also John Bridgar, Governor of the West Main; and again Henry Sargeant, Thomas Phipps, Governor of Fort Nelson, and John Knight, Governor of Albany, took an active part in the disputes of the Company with the French. Thus, with a considerable amount of friction, the affairs of the Company were conducted on the new and inhospitable coast of Hudson Bay.

To the forts from the vast interior of North America the various tribes of Indians, especially the Crees, Chipewyans, and Eskimos, brought their furs for barter. No doubt the prices were very much in favour of the traders at first, but during the first generation of traders the competition of French traders from the south for their share of the Indian trade tended to correct injustice and give the Indians better prices for their furs.

The following is the standard fixed at this time: —

Guns	made a winter beaver skins for largest, one for medium, eight for smallest
Powder	a beaver for 1½ lb.
Shot	a beaver for 4 lbs.
Hatchets	a beaver for a great and little hatchet
Knives	a beaver for eight great knives and eight jack knives
Beads	a beaver for ½ of beads
Laced coats	six beavers for one
Plain coats	five beavers for one plain red coat
Coats for women, laced, 2 yds.	six beavers
Coats for women, plain	five beavers
Tobacco	a beaver for 1 lb.
Powder-horn	a beaver for a large powder-horn and two small ones
Kettles	a beaver for 1 lb. of kettle
Looking-glass and comb	two skins

The trade conducted at the posts or factories along the shore was carried on by the local traders so soon as the rivers from the interior – the Nelson and the Churchill – were open, so that by the time the ship from London arrived, say in the end of July or beginning of August, the Indians were beginning to reach the coast. The month of August was a busy month, and by the close of it, or early in September, the ship was loaded and sent back on her journey.

By the end of October the ships arrived from Hudson Bay, and the anxiety of the Company to learn how the season's trade had succeeded was naturally very great. As soon as the vessels had arrived in the Downs or at Portsmouth, word was sent post haste to London, and the results were laid before a Committee of the Company. Much reference is made in the minutes to the difficulty of preventing the men employed in the ships from entering into illicit trade in furs. Strict orders were given to inspect the lockers for furs to prevent private trade. In due time the furs were unladen from the ships and put into the custody of the Company's secretary in the London warehouse.

The matter of selling the furs was one of very great importance. At times the Company found prices low, and deferred their sales until the outlook was more favourable. The method followed was

to have an auction, and every precaution was taken to have the sales fair and aboveboard. Evidences are not wanting that at times it was difficult for the Court of Adventurers to secure this very desirable result.

The matter was not, however, one of dry routine, for the London merchants seem to have encouraged business with generous hospitality. On November 9th, 1681, the sale took place, and the following entry is found in the minutes: "A Committee was appointed to provide three dozen bottles of sack and three dozen bottles of claret, to be given to buyers at ye sale. Dinner was also bespoken at 'Ye Stillyard,' of a good dish of fish, a loyne of veal, two pullets, and four ducks."

As the years went on, the same variations in furs that we see in our day took place. New markets were then looked for and arrangements made for sending agents to Holland and finding the connections in Russia, that sales might be effected. In order to carry out the trade it was necessary to take large quantities of hemp from Holland in return for the furs sent. The employment of this article for cordage in the Navy led to the influence of important members of the Company being used with the Earl of Marlborough to secure a sale for this commodity. Pending the sales it was necessary for large sums of money to be advanced to carry on the business of the Company. This was generally accomplished by the liberality of members of the Company itself supplying the needed amounts.

The Company was, however, from time to time gratified by the declaration of handsome dividends. So far as recorded, the first dividend was declared in 1684, and judged by modern standards it was one for which a company might well wait for a number of years. It was for 50 per cent. upon stock. Accordingly, the Earl of Craven received 150*l.*, Sir James Hayes 150*l.*, and so on in proportion. In 1688 another dividend of a like amount of 50 per cent. on the stock resulted, and among others, Hon. Robert Boyle, Earl Churchill, and Sir Christopher Wren had their hearts gladdened. In 1689 profits to the extent of 25 per cent. on the stock were received, and one of the successful captains was, in the exuberance of feeling of the stockholders, presented with a silver flagon in recognition of his services. In 1690, however, took place by far the most remarkable event of a financial kind in the early history of the Company. The returns of that year from the Bay were so large that the Company decided to treble its stock. The reasons given for this were: —

(1) The Company has in its warehouse about the value of its original stock (10,500*l.*). (2) The factories at Fort Nelson and New Severn are increasing in trade, and this year the returns are expected to be 20,000*l.* in beaver. (3) The factories are of much value. (4) Damages are expected from the French for a claim of 100,000*l.*

The Company then proceeded to declare a dividend of 25 per cent., which was equivalent to 75 per cent. on their original stock.

It was a pleasing incident to the sovereign of the realm that in all these profits he was not forgotten. In the original Charter the only recompense coming to the Crown, for the royal gift, was to be the payment, when the territory was entered upon, of "two elks and two black beavers." This may have been a device for keeping up the royal claim, but at any rate 300*l.* in the original stock-book stood to the credit of the sovereign. It had been the custom to send a deputation to present in person the dividends to His Majesty, and the pounds sterling were always changed to guineas.

On this occasion of the great dividend, King William III. had but lately returned from his victories in Ireland. The deputation, headed by Sir Edward Dering, was introduced to the King by the Earl of Portland, and the following address, hitherto, so far as known to the writer, unpublished, was presented along with the noble gift: —

"Your Majestie's most Loyal and Dutiful subjects beg leave to congratulate your Majestie's Happy Return here with Honor and Safety. And we do daily pray to Heaven (that Hath God wonderfully preserved your Royall Person) that in all your undertakings Your Majestie may be as victorious as Cæsar, as beloved as Titus, and (after all) have the long and glorious Reigne and Peacefull end of Augustus.

"On this happy occasion we desire also most humbly to present to your Majestie a dividend of *Two Hundred and twenty-five guineas* upon three hundred pounds stock in the Hudson's Bay Company, now Rightfully delivered to your Majestie. And although we have been the greatest sufferers of any Company from those common enemies of all mankind the French, yet when your Majestie's just Arms shall have given Repose to all Christendom, we also shall enjoy our share of these great Benefits and do not doubt but to appeare often with this golden fruit in our hands, under the happy influence of Your Majestie's most gracious protection over us and all our Concerns."

It is true that towards the end of the seventeenth century, as we shall afterwards see, the trade of the Company was seriously injured by the attacks of the French on the Bay, but a quarter of a century in which the possibility of obtaining such profits had been shown was sufficient to establish the Company in the public favour and to attract to it much capital. Its careful management from the first led to its gaining a reputation for business ability which it has never lost during two and a quarter centuries of its history.

CHAPTER IV
THREE GREAT GOVERNORS

Men of high station – Prince Rupert primus – Prince James, "nemine contradicente" – The hero of the hour – Churchill River named – Plate of solid gold – Off to the Tower.

The success of the Hudson's Bay Company, and the influence exerted by it during so long a period, has often been attributed to the union of persons of station and high political influence with the practical and far-seeing business men of London, who made up the Company. A perusal of the minutes of the first thirty years of the Company's history impresses on the mind of the reader that this is true, and that good feeling and patriotism were joined with business tact and enterprise in all the ventures. From the prosperous days of Queen Elizabeth and her sea-going captains and explorers, certainly from the time of Charles II., it was no uncommon thing to see the titled and commercial classes co-operating, in striking contrast to the governing classes of France, in making commerce and trade a prominent feature of the national life.

The first Governor of the Hudson's Bay Company, Rupert, Prince of Bavaria, grandson by the mother's side of James I. of England, is a sufficiently well-known character in general history to require no extended notice. His exploits on the Royalist side in the Civil War, his fierce charges and his swiftness in executing difficult military movements, led to his name being taken as the very embodiment of energy and prowess. In this sense the expression, "the fiery Rupert of debate" was applied to a prominent parliamentarian of the past generation.

After the restoration of Charles II., Prince Rupert took up his abode in England, finding it more like home to him than any Continental country. Enjoying the plaudits of the Cavaliers, for whom he had so strenuously fought, he was appointed Constable of Windsor, a no very onerous position. From the minutes of the Hudson's Bay Company we find that he had lodgings at Whitehall, and spent much of his time in business and among scientific circles – indeed, the famous toys called "glass tears," or "Rupert's drops," were brought over by him to England from the Continent to interest his scientific friends.

We have seen already the steps taken by the returned Commissioners from the American Colonies to introduce Radisson and Groseilliers to Prince Rupert, and through him to the royal notice.

The success of the expedition of Gillam and the building of Charles Fort on Hudson Bay led to the Prince consenting to head the new Company. He had just passed the half century of his age when he was appointed Governor of the vast *terra incognita* lying to the west of the Bay to which, in his honour, was given the name Rupert's Land.

The Company lost no time in undertaking a new expedition. Prince Rupert's intimate friend, the Earl of Craven, was one of the incorporators, and it was with this nobleman that Prince Rupert's widowed mother, the Princess Elizabeth, had found a home in the days of adversity.

The close connection of the Hudson's Bay Company with the Court gave it, we see very plainly, certain important advantages. Not only do the generous terms of the Charter indicate this, but the detailing of certain ships of the Royal Navy to protect the merchantmen going out to Hudson Bay shows the strong bond of sympathy. Certainly nothing less than the thorough interest of the Court could have led to the firm stand taken by the English Government in the controversies with France as to the possession of Hudson Bay.

Several excellent paintings of the Prince are in existence, one by Vandyke in Warwick Castle, showing his handsome form, and another in Knebworth, Hertford. The Prince was unfortunately not free from the immorality that was so flagrant a feature of the Court of Charles II. At that time this

was but little taken into account, and the fame of his military exploits, together with the fixing of his name upon so wide an extent of the earth's surface, have served to give posterity an interest in him.

For twelve successive years Prince Rupert was chosen Governor at the General Court of Adventurers, and used his great influence for the Company. He died on November 29th, 1682, at the comparatively early age of sixty-three.

The death of the first Governor was a somewhat severe trial for the infant Company. The Prince's name had been one to conjure by, and though he had been ably supported by the Deputy-Governor, Sir James Hayes, yet there was some fear of loss of prestige to the Adventurers on his unexpected death.

The members of the Company were anxious to keep up, if possible, the royal connection, but they were by no means clear as to the choice of the only available personage who came before their view. James, Duke of York, was a man with a liking for business, but he was not a popular favourite. The famous *jeu d'esprit* of Charles II. will be remembered. When James informed Charles II. that there was a conspiracy on foot to drive him from the throne, "No, James," said Charles, "they will never kill me to make you king."

The minutes of the Company show that much deliberation took place as to the choice of a successor to Prince Rupert, but at length, in January, 1683, at a General Court, the choice was made, and the record reads: – "His Royal Highness the Duke of York was chosen Governor of the Company, 'Nemine contradicente.' "The new Governor soon had reasons to congratulate himself on his election, for on April 21st, 1684, Sir James Hayes and Sir Edward Dering reported to the Adventurers their having paid 150 guineas to His Royal Highness as a dividend on the stock held by him. Prince James was chosen Governor for three successive years, until the year when, on the death of Charles, he became King. While James was not much in favour as a man, yet he possessed decided administrative ability, and whether this was the cause or not, certainly the period of his governorship was a successful time in the history of the Company.

Failing a prince or duke, the lot could not have fallen upon a more capable man than was chosen as the Duke of York's successor for the governorship. On April 2nd, 1685, at a General Court of the Adventurers, the choice fell upon one of the most remarkable men of his time, the Right Hon. John Lord Churchill, afterwards Duke of Marlborough. Lord Churchill had not yet gained any of his great victories. He was, however, at this time a favourite of the Duke of York, and no doubt, on the recommendation of James, had been brought before the Court of Adventurers. He was one of the most adroit men of his time, he was on the highway to the most distinguished honours, and the Adventurers gladly elected him third governor.

On April 2nd, 1685, the new governor threw himself heartily into the work of the Company. No doubt one so closely connected with the public service could be of more practical value than even a royal duke. The great dividend of which we have already spoken followed the years of his appointment.

The success attained but stimulated the Company to increase their trade and widen the field of their operations. The river running into the west side of the Bay, far to the north, was named in honour of the new governor, Churchill River, and in 1686 expansion of trade was sought by the decision to settle at the mouth of this river and use it as a new trading centre for the north and west. Without any desire to annoy the French, who claimed the south end of the Bay, it was determined to send a ship to the southern part of Hudson Bay, and a few months later the *Yonge* frigate was dispatched. The fear of attacks from the French, who were known to be in a very restless condition, led to the request being made to the Government to station a military force at each fort in Hudson Bay. It was also the desire of the Company that steps should be taken to protect them in their Charter rights and to prevent illegal expeditions from going to trade in the Bay. All this shows the energy and hopefulness of the Company under the leadership of Lord Churchill.

The part taken by Lord Churchill in the opposition to James, and his active agency in inducing William of Orange to come to England, are well known. He was a worshipper of the rising sun. On the arrival of William III., Lord Churchill, who was soon raised to the peerage as Earl of Marlborough, was as popular, for the time, with the new king as he had been with his predecessor. His zeal is seen in his sending out in June, 1689, as governor, the instructions that William and Mary should be proclaimed in the posts upon the shores of Hudson Bay. He was able shortly after to report to his Company that 100 marines had been detailed to protect the Company's ships on their way to Hudson Bay. The enthusiasm of the Company at this mark of consideration obtained through the influence of Lord Churchill, was very great, and we learn from the minutes that profuse thanks were given to the governor, and a piece of plate of solid gold, of the value of 100 guineas, was presented to him for his distinguished services. Legislation was also introduced at this time into Parliament for the purpose of giving further privileges to the Adventurers.

But the rising tide of fortune was suddenly checked. Disaster overtook the Governor. William had found some reason for distrusting this versatile man of affairs, and he suspected him of being in correspondence with the dethroned James. No doubt the suspicion was well founded, but the King had thought it better, on account of Marlborough's great talents, to overlook his unfaithfulness. Suddenly, in May, 1692, England was startled by hearing that the Earl of Marlborough had been thrown into the Tower on an accusation of high treason. For seven years this determined soldier had led the Company to success, but his imprisonment rendered a change in the governorship a necessity. Marlborough was only imprisoned for a short time, but he was not re-elected to the position he had so well filled. At the General Court of Adventurers in November of the year of Marlborough's fall, Sir Stephen Evance was chosen Governor. This gentleman was re-elected a number of times, and was Governor of the Company at the close of the century.

Two decades, and more, of the formative life of the Company were thus lived under the ægis of the Court, the personal management of two courtly personages, and under the guidance of the leading general of his time. As we shall see afterwards, during a part of this period the affairs of the Company were carried on in the face of the constant opposition of the French. Undoubtedly heavy losses resulted from the French rivalry, but the pluck and wisdom of the Company were equally manifested in the confidence with which they risked their means, and the strong steps taken to retain their hold on Hudson Bay. This was the golden age of the Hudson's Bay Company. When money was needed it was often cheerfully advanced by some of the partners; it was an honour to have stock in a Company which was within the shadow of the throne; its distinguished Governors were re-elected so long as they were eligible to serve; again and again the Committee, provided with a rich purse of golden guineas, waited on His Majesty the King to give return for the favour of the Royal Charter; and never afterward can the historian point in the annals of the Company to so distinguished a period.

CHAPTER V
TWO ADROIT ADVENTURERS

Peter Radisson and "Mr. Gooseberry" again – Radisson *v*. Gillam – Back to France – A wife's influence – Paltry vessels – Radisson's diplomacy – Deserts to England – Shameful duplicity – "A hogshead of claret" – Adventurers appreciative – Twenty-five years of Radisson's life hitherto unknown – "In a low and mean condition" – The Company in Chancery – Lucky Radisson – A Company pensioner.

A mysterious interest gathers around two of the most industrious and, it must be added, most diplomatic and adroit of the agents of the Company, the two Frenchmen, Pierre Esprit Radisson and Medard Chouart, afterwards the Sieur de Groseilliers. Acquainted with the far northern fur trade, their assistance was invaluable. We have seen in a former chapter that finding little encouragement either in New France or their mother country, they had transferred their services to England, and were largely instrumental in founding the Hudson's Bay Company.

In the first voyage of the adventurers to Hudson's Bay, it came about that while Groseilliers was lucky in being on the *Nonsuch* ketch, which made its way into the Bay, on the other hand, Radisson, to his great chagrin, was on board the companion ship, the *Eaglet*, which, after attempting an entrance and failing, returned to England.

It has been stated that during the time of his enforced idleness in London, while the party was building Charles Fort on Prince Rupert's River, Radisson was busy interesting the leading men of the city in the importance of the adventure. Immediately on the return of the company of the *Nonsuch*, steps were taken for the organization of the Hudson's Bay Company. This, as we have seen, took place in May, 1670, and in the same year Radisson and Groseilliers went out with Governor Bailey, and assisted in establishing trade on the shores of the Bay.

On their return, in the autumn of 1671, to London, the two adventurers spent the winter there, and, as the minutes of the Company show, received certain money payments for their maintenance. In October, 1673, the sloop *Prince Rupert* had arrived at Portsmouth from Hudson Bay, and there are evidences of friction between Radisson and Captain Gillam. Radisson is called on to be present at a meeting of the General Court of the Company held in October, and afterwards Gillam is authorized to advance the amounts necessary for his living expenses.

In the Company minutes of June 25th, 1674, is found the following entry: – "That there be allowed to Mr. Radisson 100 pounds per annum from the time of his last arrival in London, in consideration of services done by him, out of which to be deducted what hath been already paid him since that time, and if it shall please God to bless this Company with good success hereafter that they shall come to be in a prosperous condition they will then re-assume the consideration thereof."

During the next month a further sum was paid Radisson.

The restless Radisson could not, however, be satisfied. No doubt he felt his services to be of great value, and he now illustrated what was really the weakness of his whole life, a want of honest reliability. The Company had done as well for him as its infant resources would allow, but along with Groseilliers he deserted from London, and sought to return to the service of France under the distinguished Prime Minister Colbert.

The shrewd Colbert knew well Radisson's instability. This feature of his character had been further emphasized by another event in Radisson's life. He had married a daughter of Sir John Kirke, one of the Hudson's Bay Company promoters, and a member of the well-known family which had distinguished itself in the capture of Canada, nearly fifty years before. This English and domestic connection made Colbert suspicious of Radisson. However, he agreed to pay Radisson and Groseilliers the sum of their debts, amounting to 400*l.*, and to give them lucrative employment. The

condition of his further employment was that Radisson should bring his wife to France, but he was unable to get either his wife or her father to consent to this. The Kirke family, it must be remembered, were still owners of a claim amounting to 341,000*l.* against France, which had been left unsettled during the time of Champlain, when England restored Canada to France.

For seven years Radisson vacillated between the two countries. Under the French he went for one season on a voyage to the West Indies, and was even promised promotion in the French marine. At one time he applied again to the Hudson's Bay Company for employment, but was refused. The fixed determination of his wife not to leave England on the one hand, and the settled suspicion of the French Government on the other, continually thwarted him. At length, in 1681, Radisson and Groseilliers were sent by the French to Canada, to undertake a trading expedition to Hudson Bay. The lack of money, and also of full confidence, led to their venture being poorly provided for. In July, 1682, rendezvous was made at Ile Percée, in the lower St. Lawrence, by Radisson in a wretched old vessel of ten tons, and by Groseilliers in a rather better craft of fifteen tons burthen.

No better could be done, however, and so, after many mishaps, including serious mutinies, dangers of ice and flood, and hairbreadth escapes, the two vessels reached the mouth of the Hayes River on Hudson Bay. They determined to trade at this point. Groseilliers undertook to build a small fort on this river, and Radisson went inland on a canoe expedition to meet the natives. In this Radisson was fairly successful and gathered a good quantity of furs.

The French adventurers were soon surprised to find that an English party had taken possession of the mouth of the Nelson River, and were establishing a fort. Radisson opened communication with the English, and found them in charge of Governor Bridgar, but really led by young Gillam, son of the old captain of the *Nonsuch*. The versatile Frenchman soon met a fine field for his diplomatic arts. He professed great friendship for the new comers, exchanged frequent visits with them, and became acquainted with all their affairs. Finding the English short of provisions, he supplied their lack most generously, and offered to render them any service.

Governor Bridgar was entirely unable to cope with the wiles of Radisson. Matters were so arranged that Jean Baptiste Groseilliers, his nephew, was left in charge of the forts, to carry on the trade during the next winter, and with his brother-in-law, Groseilliers, and Governor Bridgar, somewhat of a voluntary prisoner, Radisson sailed away to Canada in Gillam's ship. On reaching Canada Governor De la Barre restored the ship to the English, and in it Bridgar and Gillam sailed to New England, whence in due time they departed for England. The whole affair has a Quixotic appearance, and it is not surprising that Radisson and Groseilliers were summoned to report themselves to Colbert in France and to receive his marked displeasure. Their adventure had, however, been so successful, and the prospects were so good, that the French Government determined to send them out again, in two ships, to reap the fruits of the winter's work of the younger Groseilliers.

Now occurred another of Radisson's escapades. The French expedition was ready to start in April. The day (24th) was fixed. Radisson asked for delay, pleading important private business in England. On May 10th he arrived in England, and we find him, without any compunction, entering into negotiations with the Hudson's Bay Company, and as a result playing the traitor to his engagements in France, his native country.

The entry in the Company's minutes bearing on this affair is as follows: —

"May 12th, 1684.

> "Sir James Hayes and Mr. Young, that Peter Esprit Radisson has arrived from France; that he has offered to enter their service; that they took him to Windsor and presented him to His Royal Highness; that they had agreed to give him 50*l.* per annum, 200*l.* worth of stock, and 20*l.* to set him up to proceed to Port Nelson; and his brother (in-law) Groseilliers to have 20*s.* per week, if he come from France over to Britain and be true. Radisson took the oath of fidelity to the Company."

A few days later Radisson took the ship *Happy Return* to Hudson Bay. Sailing immediately to Hayes River, Radisson found that his nephew, J. Baptiste Groseilliers, had removed his post to an island in the river. On his being reached, Radisson explained to him the change that had taken place, and that he proposed to transfer everything, establishment and peltry, to the Hudson's Bay Company. Young Groseilliers, being loyal to France, objected to this, but Radisson stated that there was no option, and he would be compelled to submit. The whole quantity of furs transferred to Radisson by his nephew was 20,000 – an enormous capture for the Hudson's Bay Company. In the autumn Radisson returned in the Hudson's Bay Company's ship, bringing the great store of booty.

At a meeting of the Committee of the Company (October 7th), "a packet was read from Pierre Radisson showing how he had brought his countrymen to submit to the English. He was thanked, and a gratuity of 100 guineas given him." It is also stated that "a promise having been made of 20*s.* per week to Groseilliers, and he not having come, the same is transferred to his son in the bay." The minute likewise tells us that "Sir William Young was given a present of seven musquash skins for being instrumental in inviting Radisson over from France." From this we infer that Sir William, who, as we shall afterwards see, was a great friend and promoter of Radisson, had been the active agent in inducing Radisson to leave the service of France and enter that of the English Company.

The Company further showed its appreciation of Radisson's service by voting him 100*l.* to be given to four Frenchmen left behind in Hudson Bay. Jean Baptiste Groseilliers, nephew of Radisson, was also engaged by the Company for four years in the service at 100*l.* a year. Radisson seems to have had some dispute with the Company as to the salary at this time. On May 6th, 1685, his salary when out of England was raised to 100*l.* a year, and 300*l.* to his wife in case of his death. Radisson refused to accept these terms. The Company for a time would not increase its offer, but the time for the ship to sail was drawing nigh, and the Committee gave way and added to the above amount 100*l.* of stock to be given to his wife. John Bridgar was appointed Governor at Port Nelson for three years, and Radisson superintendent of the trade there. Radisson was satisfied with the new terms, and that the Company was greatly impressed with the value of his services is seen in the following entry: "A hogshead of claret being ordered for Mr. Radisson, 'such as Mr. R. shall like.'"

In the year 1685-6 all hitherto printed accounts of Radisson leave our redoubtable explorer. We are, for the history up to this date, much indebted to the Prince Society of Boston for printing an interesting volume containing the journals of Radisson, which are preserved in the British Museum in London and in the Bodleian Library in Oxford.

Dr. N. E. Dionne, the accomplished librarian of the Legislative Library, Quebec, has contributed to the proceedings of the Royal Society of Canada very appreciative articles entitled, "Chouart and Radisson." In these he has relied for the detail of facts of discovery almost entirely on the publication of the Prince Society. He has, however, added much genealogical and local Canadian material, which tends to make the history of these early explorers more interesting than it could otherwise be.

A resident of Manitoba, who has shown an interest in the legends and early history of Canada, Mr. L. A. Prudhomme, St. Boniface, Judge of the County, has written a small volume of sixty pages on the life of Radisson. Like the articles of Dr. Dionne, this volume depends entirely for its information on the publication of the Prince Society.

Readers of fiction are no doubt familiar with the appearance of Radisson in Gilbert Parker's novel, "The Trail of the Sword." It is unnecessary to state that there seems no historic warrant for the statement, "Once he attempted Count Frontenac's life. He sold a band of our traders to the Iroquois." The character, thoroughly repulsive in this work of fiction, does not look to be the real Radisson; and certainly as we survey the bloody scene, which must have been intended for a period subsequent to Frontenac's return to Canada in 1689, where Radisson fell done to death by the dagger and pistol of the mutineer Bucklaw and was buried in the hungry sea, we see what was purely imaginary. Of course, we do not for a moment criticize the art of the historic novelist, but simply state that the

picture is not that of the real Radisson, and that we shall find Radisson alive a dozen or more years after the tragic end given him by the artist.

These three works, as well as the novel, agree in seeing in Radisson a man of remarkable character and great skill and adroitness.

FURTHER HISTORY

The Prince Society volume states: "We again hear of Radisson in Hudson Bay in 1685, and this is his last appearance in public records as far as is known." The only other reference is made by Dionne and Prudhomme in stating that Charlevoix declares "that Radisson died in England."

Patient search in the archives of the Hudson's Bay Company in London has enabled the writer to trace the history of Radisson on for many years after the date given, and to unearth a number of very interesting particulars connected with him; indeed, to add some twenty-five years hitherto unknown to our century to his life, and to see him pass from view early in 1710.

In 1687, Radisson was still in the employ of the Company, and the Committee decided that he should be made a denizen or subject of England. He arrived from Hudson Bay in October of this year, appeared before the Hudson's Bay Company Committee, and was welcomed by its members. It was decided that 50*l.* be given as a gratuity to the adventurer till he should be again employed. On June 24th, 1688, Radisson again sailed in the ship for Hudson Bay, and during that year he was paid 100*l.* as 50 per cent. dividend on his 200*l.* worth of stock, and in the following year 50*l.* as 25 per cent. dividend on his stock. As the following year, 1690, was the time of the "great dividend," Radisson was again rejoiced by the amount of 150*l.* as his share of the profits.

The prosperity of the Company appears to have led to an era of extravagance, and to certain dissensions within the Company itself. The amounts paid Radisson were smaller in accordance with the straits in which the Company found itself arising from French rivalry on the Bay. In 1692 Sir William Young is seen strongly urging fuller consideration for Radisson, who was being paid at the reduced rate of 50*l.* a year.

In the Hudson's Bay Company letter-book of this period we find a most interesting memorial of Sir William Young's in behalf of Radisson, with answers by the Company, on the whole confirming our narrative, but stating a few divergent points.

We give the memorial in full.

Dated December 20th, 1692, being plea of William Young, in behalf of Pierre Esprit Radisson: —

"Radisson, born a Frenchman, educated from a child in Canada, spent youth hunting and commercing with the Indians adjacent to Hudson Bay, master of the language, customs, and trade.

"Radisson being at New England about twenty-seven or twenty-eight years past, met there with Colonel Nichols, Governor of New York, and was by him persuaded to go to England and proffer his services to King Charles the Second, in order to make a settlement of an English factory in that bay.

"At his arrival, the said King, giving credit to Radisson for that undertaking, granted to Prince Rupert, the Duke of Albemarle, and others, the same Charter we do still claim by, thereby constituting them the proprietors of the said bay, under which authority he, the said Radisson, went immediately and made an English settlement there according to his promises.

"On his return to England the King presented him with a medal and gold chain. When rejected by the Company, he was compelled to return to Canada, his only place of abode. Joined the French and led an expedition to Hudson Bay. With the aid of Indians destroyed Company's factory and planted a New England factory in Port Nelson River.

"During the winter Radisson did no violence to the English, but supplied them with victuals, powder, and shot when their ship was cast away. Refused a present from the Indians to destroy the English, and gave them a ship to convey them away. Afterwards settled the French factory

higher up the same river, where his alliance with the Indians was too strong for New England or Old England, and immediately after he went to France. Mr. Young, member of the Hudson's Bay Company, with leave from Sir James Hayes, deputy-governor, tried to hire him back to Hudson's Bay Company's service with large promises. During negotiations, Radisson unexpectedly arrived in London. Company's ships were ready to sail. Had just time to kiss the King's hand at Windsor and that of the Duke of York, then governor. They commended him to the care and kindness of Sir James Hayes and the Hudson's Bay Company, and commanded that he should be made an English citizen, which was done in his absence.

"Before sending him, the Company gave him two original actions in Hudson's Bay Company stock, and 50*l.* for subsistence money, with large promises of future rewards for expected service.

"Arriving at Port Nelson he put Company in entire possession of that river, brought away the French to England, and took all the beavers and furs they had traded and gave them to the Company without asking share of the profits, although they sold for 7,000*l.*

"He was kindly welcomed in England and again commended by the King. Committee presented him with 100 guineas, and entered in the books that he should have 50*l.* added to the former 50*l.*, until the King should find him a place, when the last 50*l.* should cease. Had no place given him. Sir Edward Dering, deputy governor, influenced Committee to withdraw 50*l.*, so he had only 50*l.* to maintain self, wife, and four or five children, and servants, 24*l.* of this going for house-rent. When chief factor at Nelson, was tempted by servants to continue to cheat the Company, was beaten because he refused.

Prays for payment of 100*l.* and arrears, because:

"1. All but Sir Edward Dering think it just and reasonable.

"2. No place was given in lieu of 50*l.*

"3. Of fidelity to the Company in many temptations.

"4. He never asked more than the Company chose to give.

"5. Imprisoned in bay in time of trade for not continuing to cheat the Company.

"6. The Company received from Port Nelson, after he gave it them, 100,000*l.* worth of furs, which is now believed would have been lost, with their whole interest in the bay, if he had not joined them when invited.

"7. The original actions and the 100*l.* revert to the Company at his death.

"8. Income inadequate to maintain wife and children in London.

"9. Debts great from necessity. Would be compelled to leave wife and children and shift for himself.

"10. He cannot sell original actions, since they cease with his life.

"11. Of King Charles' many recommendations to kindness of Company.

"12. French have a price on his head as a traitor, so that he cannot safely go home.

"13. Mr. Young further pleads that as Mr. Radisson was the author of the Company's prosperity, so he (Mr. Young) was the first to persuade him to join their service. That he (Mr. Young) had been offered a reward for his services in persuading him, which he had utterly refused. But now that this reward be given in the form of maintenance for Radisson in his great necessity, &c."

The Committee passes over the sketch of Radisson's life, which they do not gainsay.

In the second paragraph, they observe that Mr. Young stated their neglect to maintain Mr. Radisson without mentioning their reasons for so doing, which might have shown whether it was their unkindness or Radisson's desert.

They go on to take notice of the fact that about 1681 or 1682, Radisson and Groseilliers entered into another contract with the Company and received 20*l.* Soon afterwards they absconded, went

to France, and thence to Canada. Next year they joined their countrymen in an expedition to Port Nelson, animated by the report of Mr. Abram to the Company that it was the best place for a factory. They took their two barks up as far as they durst for fear of the English. Then the French in the fall built a small hut, which Mr. Young says was too strong for either New England or Old England without guns or works – a place merely to sleep in, manned only with seven French.

This expedition, Mr. Young saith, was at first prejudicial to the Company, but afterward of great advantage, which he cannot apprehend.

In another place Mr. Young is pleased to state that the New England settlement was so strong that the Old could not destroy it. Old England settlement was only a house unfortified, which Bridgar built to keep the goods dry, because Gillam's boat arrived late.

"1. Mr. Young says all are in favour of Radisson but Sir Edward Dering, we have not met with any who are in favour but Mr. Young. Those who give gratuity should know why.

"2. That he had no place or honour given him is no reason for giving gratuity, there being no contract in the case.

"3. Never found him accused of cheating and purloining, but breach of contract with Company, after receiving their money, we do find him guilty of.

"4. Says he never did capitulate with the Company. Find he did (see minutes), May 6th, 1685.

"5. Cannot believe Radisson was beaten by the Company's servants. Greater increase of furs after he left, &c., &c., &c."

This memorial and its answer show the rather unreasonable position taken by the Company. In the time of its admiration for Radisson and of fat dividends, it had provided liberal things; but when money became scarce, then it was disposed to make matters pleasing to itself, despite the claims of Radisson. In the year following the presenting of the memorial, it is stated in the minutes that "Radisson was represented to the Company as in a low and mean condition." At this time it was ordered that 50*l.* be paid Radisson and to be repaid out of the next dividend.

The unreasonable position assumed by the Company, in withholding a part of the salary which they had promised in good faith, filled Radisson with a sense of injustice. No doubt guided by his friend, Sir William Young, who, on account of his persistence on behalf of the adventurer, was now dropped from the Committee of the Company, Radisson filed a bill in Chancery against the Company, and in July, 1694, notice of this was served upon the Committee.

Much consternation appears to have filled their minds, and the Deputy-Governor, Sir Samuel Clark, reported shortly after having used 200*l.* for secret service, the matter being seemingly connected with this case.

Notwithstanding the great influence of the Company, the justice of Radisson's claims prevailed, and the Court of Chancery ordered the payment of arrears in full. The Committee afterwards met Sir William Young and Richard Craddock, who upheld Radisson's claim. It is reported that they agreed to settle the matter by paying Radisson 150*l.*, he giving a release, and that he should be paid, under seal, 100*l.* per annum for life, except in those years when the Company should make a dividend, and then but 50*l.* according to the original agreement. Radisson then received, as the minutes show, his salary regularly from this time.

In 1698, the Company asked for the renewal by Parliament of its Charter. Radisson petitioned Parliament for consideration, asking that before the request made by the Company for the confirmation of the privileges sought were granted, a clause should be inserted protecting him in the regular payment of the amounts due to him from time to time by the Company.

At the time of his petition to Parliament he states that he has four young children, and has only the 100*l.* a year given by the Company to live on. In the year 1700 he was still struggling with his straitened circumstances, for in that year he applied to the Company to be appointed warehouse-keeper for the London premises, but his application was refused. His children, of whom he is said to have had nine, appear to have passed over to Canada and to have become a part of the Canadian

people. His brother-in-law, Groseilliers, had also returned to his adopted Canada, but is stated to have died before 1698.

Regularly during the succeeding years the quarterly amount is voted to Radisson by the Company, until January 6th, 1710, when the last quota of 12*l.* 10*s.* was ordered to be given. About this time, at the ripe age of seventy-four, passed away Pierre Esprit Radisson, one of the most daring and ingenious men of his time. We know nothing of his death, except from the fact that his pension ceased to be paid.

Judge Prudhomme, to whose appreciative sketch of Radisson in French we have already referred, well summarizes his life. We translate: —

"What a strange existence was that of this man! By turns discoverer, officer of marine, organizer and founder of the most commercial company which has existed in North America, his life presents an astonishing variety of human experiences.

"He may be seen passing alternately from the wigwams of the miserable savages to the court of the great Colbert; from managing chiefs of the tribes to addressing the most illustrious nobles of Great Britain.

"His courage was of a high order. He looked death in the face more than a hundred times without trepidation. He braved the tortures and the stake among the Iroquois, the treacherous stratagems of the savages of the West, the rigorous winters of the Hudson Bay, and the tropical heat of the Antilles.

"Of an adventurous nature, drawn irresistibly to regions unknown, carried on by the enthusiasm of his voyages, always ready to push out into new dangers, he could have been made by Fenimore Cooper one of the heroes of his most exciting romances.

"The picture of his life consequently presents many contrasts. The life of a brigand, which he led with a party of Iroquois, cannot be explained away.

"He was blamable in a like manner for having deserted the flag of France, his native country. The first time we might, perhaps, pardon him, for he was the victim of grave injustice on the part of the government of the colony.

"No excuse could justify his second desertion. He had none to offer, not one. He avowed very candidly that he sought the service of England because he preferred it to that of France.

"In marrying the daughter of Mr. John Kirke, he seems to have espoused also the nationality of her family. As for him, he would have needed to change the proverb, and, in the place of 'One who marries a husband takes his country,' to say, 'One who marries a wife takes her country.'

"The celebrated discover of the North-West, the illustrious Le Verendrye, has as much as Radisson, and even more than he, of just reason to complain of the ingratitude of France; yet how different was his conduct!

"Just as his persecutions have placed upon the head of the first a new halo of glory, so they have cast upon the brow of the second an ineffaceable stain.

"Souls truly noble do not seek in treason the recompense for the rights denied them."

(For a detailed chronological account of Radisson's life, see Appendix B, page 487.)

CHAPTER VI
FRENCH RIVALRY

The golden lilies in danger – "To arrest Radisson" – The land called "Unknown" – A chain of claim – Imaginary pretensions – Chevalier de Troyes – The brave Lemoynes – Hudson Bay forts captured – A litigious governor – Laugh at treaties – The glory of France – Enormous claims – Consequential damages.

The two great nations which were seeking supremacy in North America came into collision all too soon on the shores of Hudson Bay. Along the shore of the Atlantic, England claimed New England and much of the coast to the southward. France was equally bent on holding New France and Acadia. Now that England had begun to occupy Hudson Bay, France was alarmed, for the enemy would be on her northern as well as on her southern border. No doubt, too, France feared that her great rival would soon seek to drive her golden lilies back to the Old World, for New France would be a wedge between the northern and southern possessions of England in the New World.

The movement leading to the first voyage to Hudson Bay by Gillam and his company was carefully watched by the French Government. In February, 1668, at which time Gillam's expedition had not yet sailed, the Marquis de Denonville, Governor of Canada, appointed an officer to go in search of the most advantageous posts and occupy the shores of the Baie du Nord and the embouchures of the rivers that enter therein. Among other things the governor gave orders "to arrest especially the said Radisson and his adherents wherever they may be found."

Intendant Talon, in 1670, sent home word to M. Colbert that ships had been seen near Hudson Bay, and that it was likely that they were English, and were "under the guidance of a man des Grozeliers, formerly an inhabitant of Canada."

The alarm caused the French by the movements of the English adventurers was no doubt increased by the belief that Hudson Bay was included in French territory. The question of what constituted ownership or priority of claim was at this time a very difficult one among the nations. Whether mere discovery or temporary occupation could give the right of ownership was much questioned. Colonization would certainly be admitted to do so, provided there had been founded "certain establishments." But the claim of France upon Hudson Bay would appear to have been on the mere ground of the Hudson Bay region being contiguous or neighbouring territory to that held by the French.

The first claim made by France was under the commission, as Viceroy to Canada, given in 1540 by the French King to Sieur de Roberval, which no doubt covered the region about Hudson Bay, though not specifying it. In 1598 Lescarbot states that the commission given to De La Roche contained the following: "New France has for its boundaries on the west the Pacific Ocean within the Tropic of Cancer; on the south the islands of the Atlantic towards Cuba and Hispaniola; on the east, the Northern Sea which washes its shores, embracing in the north the land called Unknown toward the Frozen Sea, up to the Arctic Pole."

The sturdy common sense of Anglo-Saxon England refused to be bound by the contention that a region admittedly "Unknown" could be held on a mere formal claim.

The English pointed out that one of their expeditions under Henry Hudson in 1610 had actually discovered the Bay and given it its name; that Sir Thomas Button immediately thereafter had visited the west side of the Bay and given it the name of New Wales; that Captain James had, about a score of years after Hudson, gone to the part of the Bay which continued to bear his name, and that Captain Fox had in the same year reached the west side of the Bay. This claim of discovery was opposed to the fanciful claims made by France. The strength of the English contention, now enforced by actual

occupation and the erection of Charles Fort, made it necessary to obtain some new basis of objection to the claim of England.

It is hard to resist the conclusion that a deliberate effort was made to invent some ground of prior discovery in order to meet the visible argument of a fort now occupied by the English. M. de la Potherie, historian of New France, made the assertion that Radisson and Groseilliers had crossed from Lake Superior to the Baie du Nord (Hudson Bay). It is true, as we have seen, that Oldmixon, the British writer of a generation or two later, states the same thing. This claim is, however, completely met by the statement made by Radisson of his third voyage that they heard only from the Indians on Lake Superior of the Northern Bay, but had not crossed to it by land. We have disposed of the matter of his fourth voyage. The same historian also puts forward what seems to be pure myth, that one Jean Bourdon, a Frenchman, entered the Bay in 1656 and engaged in trade. It was stated also that a priest, William Couture, sent by Governor D'Avaugour of New France, had in 1663 made a missionary establishment on the Bay. These are unconfirmed statements, having no details, and are suspicious in their time of origination. The Hudson's Bay Company's answer states that Bourdon's voyage was to another part of Canada, going only to 53° N., and not to the Bay at all. Though entirely unsupported, these claims were reiterated as late as 1857 by Hon. Joseph Cauchon in his case on behalf of Canada *v.* Hudson's Bay Company. M. Jeremie, who was Governor of the French forts in Hudson Bay in 1713, makes the statement that Radisson and Groseilliers had visited the Bay overland, for which there is no warrant, but the Governor does not speak of Bourdon or Couture. This contradiction of De la Potherie's claim is surely sufficient proof that there is no ground for credence of the stories, which are purely apocryphal. It is but just to state, however, that the original claim of Roberval and De la Roche had some weight in the negotiations which took place between the French and English Governments over this matter.

M. Colbert, the energetic Prime Minister of France, at any rate made up his mind that the English must be excluded from Hudson Bay. Furthermore, the fur trade of Canada was beginning to feel very decidedly the influence of the English traders in turning the trade to their factories on Hudson Bay. The French Prime Minister, in 1678, sent word to Duchesnau, the Intendant of Canada, to dispute the right of the English to erect factories on Hudson Bay. Radisson and Groseilliers, as we have seen, had before this time deserted the service of England and returned to that of France. With the approval of the French Government, these facile agents sailed to Canada and began the organization, in 1681, of a new association, to be known as "The Northern Company." Fitted out with two small barks, *Le St. Pierre* and *La Ste. Anne*, in 1682, the adventurers, with their companions, appeared before Charles Fort, which Groseilliers had helped to build, but do not seem to have made any hostile demonstration against it. Passing away to the west side of the Bay, these shrewd explorers entered the River Ste. Therese (the Hayes River of to-day) and there erected an establishment, which they called Fort Bourbon.

This was really one of the best trading points on the Bay. Some dispute as to even the occupancy of this point took place, but it would seem as if Radisson and Groseilliers had the priority of a few months over the English party that came to establish a fort at the mouth of the adjoining River Nelson. The two adventurers, Radisson and Groseilliers, in the following year came, as we have seen, with their ship-load of peltries to Canada, and it is charged that they attempted to unload a part of their cargo of furs before reaching Quebec. This led to a quarrel between them and the Northern Company, and the adroit fur traders again left the service of France to find their way back to England. We have already seen how completely these two Frenchmen, in the year 1684, took advantage of their own country at Fort Bourbon and turned over the furs to the Hudson's Bay Company.

The sense of injury produced on the minds of the French by the treachery of these adventurers stirred the authorities up to attack the posts in Hudson Bay. Governor Denonville now came heartily to the aid of the Northern Company, and commissioned Chevalier de Troyes to organize an overland expedition from Quebec to Hudson Bay. The love of adventure was strong in the breasts of the young

French *noblesse* in Canada. Four brothers of the family Le Moyne had become known for their deeds of valour along the English frontier. Leader among the valorous French-Canadians was Le Moyne D'Iberville, who, though but twenty-four years of age, had already performed prodigies of daring. Maricourt, his brother, was another fiery spirit, who was known to the Iroquois by a name signifying "the little bird which is always in motion." Another leader was Ste. Helene. With a party of chosen men these intrepid spirits left the St. Lawrence in March, 1685, and threaded the streams of the Laurentian range to the shore of Hudson Bay.

After nearly three months of the most dangerous and exciting adventures, the party reached their destination. The officers and men of the Hudson's Bay Company's service were chiefly civilians unaccustomed to war, and were greatly surprised by the sudden appearance upon the Bay of their doughty antagonists. At the mouth of the Moose River one of the Hudson's Bay Company forts was situated, and here the first attack was made. It was a fort of considerable importance, having four bastions, and was manned by fourteen guns. It, however, fell before the fierce assault of the forest rangers. The chief offence in the eyes of the French was Charles Fort on the Rupert River, that being the first constructed by the English Company. This was also captured and its fortifications thrown down. At the same time that the main body were attacking Charles Fort, the brothers Le Moyne, with a handful of picked men, stealthily approached in two canoes one of the Company's vessels in the Bay and succeeded in taking it.

The largest fort on the Bay was that in the marshy region on Albany River. It was substantially built with four bastions and was provided with forty-three guns. The rapidity of movement and military skill of the French expedition completely paralyzed the Hudson's Bay Company officials and men. Governor Sargeant, though having in Albany Fort furs to the value of 50,000 crowns, after a slight resistance surrendered without the honours of war. The Hudson's Bay Company employés were given permission to return to England and in the meantime the Governor and his attendants were taken to Charlton Island and the rest of the prisoners to Moose Fort. D'Iberville afterwards took the prisoners to France, whence they came back to England.

A short time after this the Company showed its disapproval of Governor Sargeant's course in surrendering Fort Albany so readily. Thinking they could mark their disapprobation more strongly, they brought an action against Governor Sargeant in the courts to recover 20,000*l.* After the suit had gone some distance, they agreed to refer the matter to arbitration, and the case was ended by the Company having to pay to the Governor 350*l.* The affair, being a family quarrel, caused some amusement to the public.

The only place of importance now remaining to the English on Hudson Bay was Port Nelson, which was near the French Fort Bourbon. D'Iberville, utilizing the vessel he had captured on the Bay, went back to Quebec in the autumn of 1687 with the rich booty of furs taken at the different points.

These events having taken place at a time when the two countries, France and England, were nominally at peace, negotiations took place between the two Powers.

Late in the year 1686 a treaty of neutrality was signed, and it was hoped that peace would ensue on Hudson Bay. This does not seem to have been the case, however, and both parties blame each other for not observing the terms of the Act of Pacification. D'Iberville defended Albany Fort from a British attack in 1689, departed in that year for Quebec with a ship-load of furs, and returned to Hudson Bay in the following year. During the war which grew out of the Revolution, Albany Fort changed hands again to the English, and was afterwards retaken by the French, after which a strong English force (1692) repossessed themselves of it. For some time English supremacy was maintained on the Bay, but the French merely waited their time to attack Fort Bourbon, which they regarded as in a special sense their own. In 1694 D'Iberville visited the Bay, besieged and took Fort Bourbon, and reduced the place with his two frigates. His brother De Chateauguay was killed during the siege.

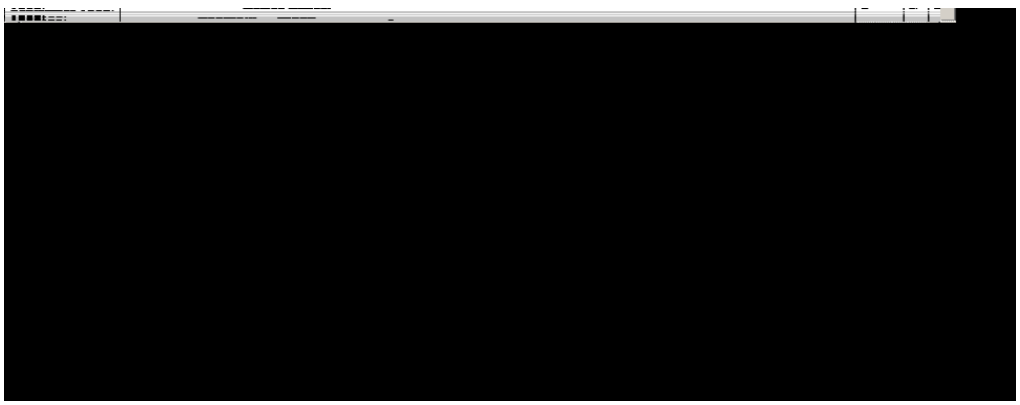
In 1697 the Bay again fell into English hands, and D'Iber ville was put in command of a squadron sent out for him from France, and with this he sailed for Hudson Bay. The expedition

brought unending glory to France and the young commander. Though one of his warships was crushed in the ice in the Hudson Straits and his remaining vessels could nowhere be seen when he reached the open waters of the Bay, yet he bravely sailed to Port Nelson, purposing to invest it in his one ship, the *Pelican*. Arrived at his station, he observed that he was shut in on the rear by three English men-of-war. His condition was desperate; he had not his full complement of men, and some of those on board were sick. His vessel had but fifty guns; the English vessels carried among them 124. The English vessels, the *Hampshire*, the *Dering*, and the *Hudson's Bay*, all opened fire upon him. During a hot engagement, a well-aimed broadside from the *Pelican* sank the *Hampshire* with all her sails flying, and everything on board was lost; the *Hudson's Bay* surrendered unconditionally, and the *Dering* succeeded in making her escape. After this naval duel D'Iberville's missing vessels appeared, and the commander, landing a sufficient number of men, invested and took Port Nelson. The whole of the Hudson Bay territory thus came into the possession of the French. The matter has always, however, been looked at in the light of the brilliant achievement of this scion of the Le Moynes.

Few careers have had the uninterrupted success of that of Pierre Le Moyne D'Iberville, although this fortune reached its climax in the exploit in Hudson Bay. Nine years afterwards the brilliant soldier died of yellow fever at Havana, after he had done his best in a colonization enterprise to the mouth of the Mississippi which was none too successful. Though the treaty of Ryswick, negotiated in this year of D'Iberville's triumphs, brought for the time the cessation of hostilities, yet nearly fifteen years of rivalry, and for much of the time active warfare, left their serious traces on Hudson's Bay Company affairs. A perusal of the minutes of the Hudson's Bay Company during this period gives occasional glimpses of the state of war prevailing, although it must be admitted not so vivid a picture as might have been expected. As was quite natural, the details of attacks, defences, surrenders, and parleys come to us from French sources rather than from the Company's books. That the French accounts are correct is fully substantiated by the memorials presented by the Company to the British Government, asking for recompense for losses sustained.

In 1687 a petition was prepared by the Hudson's Bay Company, and a copy of it is found in one of the letter-books of the Company. This deals to some extent with the contention of the French king, which had been lodged with the British Government, claiming priority of ownership of the regions about Hudson Bay. The arguments advanced are chiefly those to which we have already referred. The claim for compensation made upon the British Government by the Company is a revelation of how seriously the French rivalry had interfered with the progress of the fur trade. After still more serious conflict had taken place in the Bay, and the Company had come to be apprehensive for its very existence, another petition was laid before His Majesty William III., in 1694. This petition, which also contained the main facts of the claim of 1687, is so important that we give some of the details of it. It is proper to state, however, that a part of the demand is made up of what has since been known as "consequential damages," and that in consequence the matter lingered on for at least two decades.

The damages claimed were: —



CHAPTER VII
RYSWICK AND UTRECHT

The "Grand Monarque" humbled – Caught napping – The Company in peril – Glorious Utrecht – Forts restored – Damages to be considered – Commission useless.

Louis XIV. of France, by his ambition and greed in 1690, united against himself the four nations immediately surrounding him – Germany, Spain, Holland, and England, in what they called "The Grand Alliance." Battles, by land and sea for six years, brought Louis into straits, unrelieved by such brilliant episodes as the naval prodigies wrought by D'Iberville on Hudson Bay. In 1696, "Le Grand Monarque" was sufficiently humbled to make overtures for peace. The opposing nations accepted these, and on May 9th, 1697, the representatives of the nations met at William III.'s Château of Neuberg Hansen, near the village of Ryswick, which is in Belgium, a short distance from the Hague.

Louis had encouraged the Jacobite cause, James III. being indeed a resident of the Castle of St. Germain, near Paris. This had greatly irritated William, and one of the first things settled at the Treaty was the recognition of William as rightful King of England.

Article VII. of the Treaty compelled the restoration to the King of France and the King of Great Britain respectively of "all countries, islands, forts, and colonies," which either had possessed before the declaration of war in 1690. However satisfactory this may have been in Acadia and Newfoundland, we find that it did not meet the case of the Hudson Bay, inasmuch as the ownership of this region was, as we have seen, claimed by both parties before the war. In the documents of the Company there is evidence of the great anxiety caused to the adventurers when the news reached London, as to what was likely to be the basis of settlement of the Treaty. The adventurers at once set themselves to work to bring influence to bear against the threatened result. The impression seemed to prevail that they had been "caught napping," and possibly they could not accomplish anything. Their most influential deputation came to the Hague, and, though late in the day, did avail somewhat.

No doubt Article VII. of the Treaty embodies the results of their influence. It is so important for our purpose that we give it in full: – "Commissioners should be appointed on both sides to examine and determine the rights and pretensions which either of the said Kings have to the places situated in Hudson Bay; but the possession of those places which were taken by the French during the peace that preceded this war, and were retaken by the English during this war, shall be left to the French, by virtue of the foregoing articles. The capitulation made by the English on September 5th, 1695, shall be observed according to the form and tenor; the merchandises therein mentioned shall be restored; the Governor at the fort taken there shall be set at liberty, if it be not already done; the differences which have arisen concerning the execution of the said capitulation and the value of the goods there lost, shall be adjudicated and determined by the said commissioners; who immediately after the ratification of the present Treaty, shall be invested with sufficient authority for the setting of the limits and confines of the lands to be restored on either side by virtue of the foregoing article, and likewise for exchanging of lands, as may conduce to the mutual interest and advantage of both Kings."

This agreement presents a few salient points: —

1. The concession to France of rights (undefined, it is true), but of rights not hitherto acknowledged by the English.

2. The case of the Company, which would have been seriously prejudiced by Article VII., is kept open, and commissioners are appointed to examine and decide boundaries.

3. The claim for damages so urgently pressed by the Hudson's Bay Company receives some recognition in the restoration of merchandize and the investigation into the "value of the goods lost."

4. On the whole, the interests of the Hudson's Bay Company would seem to have been decidedly prejudiced by the Treaty.

The affairs of the Company were in a very unfortunate condition for fifteen years after the Treaty of Ryswick. The Treaty took place in the very year of D'Iberville's remarkable victories in the Bay. That each nation should hold that of which it was in actual possession meant that of the seven Hudson's Bay Company forts, only Fort Albany was left to the Company. The Company began to petition at once for the appointment of the Commissioners provided by the Treaty, to settle the matter in dispute. The desperate condition of their affairs accounts for the memorials presented to the British Government by the Company in 1700 and in the succeeding year, by which they expressed themselves as satisfied to give the French the southern portion of the Bay from Rupert's River on the east and Albany Fort on the west. About the time of the second of these proposals the Hudson's Bay Company sent to the British Government another petition of a very different tone, stating their perilous condition, arising from their not receiving one-fifth of the usual quantity of furs, even from Fort Albany, which made their year's trade an absolute loss; they propose that an expedition of "three men-of-war, one bomb-vessel, and 250 soldiers" should be sent to dislodge the French and to regain the whole Bay for them, as being the original owners. No steps on the part of the Ryswick Commissioners seem to have been taken toward settling the question of boundaries in Hudson Bay.

The great Marlborough victories, however, crushed the power of France, and when Louis XIV. next negotiated with the allies at Utrecht – "The Ferry of the Rhine" – in 1713, the English case was in a very different form from what it had been at the Treaty of Ryswick. Two years before the Treaty, when it was evident that the war would be brought to an end, the Hudson's Bay Company plucked up courage and petitioned strongly to be allowed the use of the whole of Hudson Bay, and to have their losses on the Bay repaid by France. Several times during the war had France sued for peace at the hands of the allies, but the request had been refused. To humble France seemed to be the fixed policy of all her neighbours. At the end of the war, in which France was simply able to hold what she could defend by her fortresses, the great kingdom of Louis XIV. found itself "miserably exhausted, her revenue greatly fallen off, her currency depreciated thirty per cent., the choicest of her nobles drafted into the army, and her merchants and industrious artisans weighed down to the ground by heavy imposts." This was England's opportunity, and she profited by it. Besides "the balance of power" in Europe being preserved, Great Britain received Nova Scotia, Newfoundland, certain West India Islands, and the undisturbed control of the Iroquois.

Sections X. and XI. of the Treaty are of special value to us in our recital. By the former of these the entire west coast of Hudson Bay became British; the French were to evacuate all posts on the Bay and surrender all war material within six months; Commissioners were to be appointed to determine within a year the boundary between Canada and the British possessions on Hudson Bay. Section XI. provided "that the French King should take care that satisfaction be given, according to the rule of justice and equity, to the English Company trading to the Bay of Hudson, for all damages and spoil done to their colonies, ships, persons, and goods, by the hostile incursions and depredations of the French in time of peace." This was to be arrived at by Commissioners to be appointed.

If the Hudson's Bay Company, to quote their own language in regard to the Treaty of Ryswick, had been left "the only mourners by the peace," they were to be congratulated on the results of the Treaty of Utrecht. As in so many other cases, however, disputed points left to be settled by Commissioners lingered long before results were reached. Six years after the Treaty of Utrecht, the Memorial of the Hudson's Bay Company shows that while they had received back their forts, yet the line of delimitation between Canada had not been drawn and their losses had not been paid.

In the preceding chapter we have a list of the claims against the French as computed in 1694, amounting to upwards of 200,000*l.*; now, however, the amount demanded is not much above 100,000*l.*, though the Memorial explains that in making up the above modest sum, they had not counted up the loss of their forts, nor the damage done to their trade, as had been done in the former

case. Immediately after the time of this Memorial of the Company, the Commissioners were named by Great Britain and France, and several meetings took place. Statements were then given in, chiefly as to the boundaries between the British and French possessions in the neighbourhood of Hudson Bay and Canada. The Commissioners for several years practised all the arts of diplomacy, and were farther and farther apart as the discussions went on. No result seems to have been reached, and the claims of the Hudson's Bay Company, so far as recorded, were never met. Peace, however, prevailed in Hudson Bay for many years; the Indians from the interior, even to the Rocky Mountains, made their visits to the Bay for the first forty years of the eighteenth century, and the fur trade, undisturbed, became again remunerative.

CHAPTER VIII
DREAM OF A NORTH-WEST PASSAGE

Stock rises – Jealousy aroused – Arthur Dobbs, Esq. – An ingenious attack – Appeal to the "Old Worthies" – Captain Christopher Middleton – Was the Company in earnest? – The sloop *Furnace*– Dobbs' fierce attack – The great subscription – Independent expedition – "Henry Ellis, gentleman" – "Without success" – Dobbs' real purpose.

When peace had been restored by the Treaty of Utrecht, the shores of the Bay, which had been in the hands of the French since the Treaty of Ryswick, were given over to Great Britain, according to the terms of the Treaty; they have remained British ever since. The Company, freed from the fears of overland incursions by the French from Canada, and from the fleets that had worked so much mischief by sea, seems to have changed character in the *personnel* of the stockholders and to have lost a good deal of the pristine spirit. The charge is made that the stockholders had become very few, that the stock was controlled by a majority, who, year after year, elected themselves, and that considering the great privileges conferred by the Charter, the Company was failing to develop the country and was sleeping in inglorious ease on the shores of Hudson Bay. Certain it is that Sir Bibye Lake was re-elected Governor year after year, from 1720 to 1740.

It would appear, however, to have been a spirit of jealousy which animated those who made these discoveries as to the Company's inaction. The return of peace had brought prosperity to the traders; and dividends to the stockholders began to be a feature of company life which they had not known for more than a quarter of a century. As we shall see, the stock of the Company was greatly increased in 1720, and preparations were being made by the Committee for a wide extension of their operations.

About this time a man of great personal energy appears on the scene of English commercial life, who became a bitter opponent of the Company, and possessed such influence with the English Government that the Company was compelled to make a strenuous defence. This was Arthur Dobbs, Esq., an Irishman of undoubted ability and courage. He conducted his plan of campaign against the Company along a most ingenious and dangerous line of attack.

He revived the memory among the British people of the early voyages to discover a way to the riches of the East, and appealed to the English imagination by picturing the interior of the North American Continent, with its vast meadows, splendid cascades, rich fur-bearing animals, and numberless races of Indians, picturesquely dressed, as opening up a field, if they could be reached, of lucrative trade to the London merchants. To further his purpose he pointed out the sluggish character of the Hudson's Bay Company, and clinched his arguments by quoting the paragraph in the Charter which stated that the great privileges conferred by generous Charles II. were bestowed in consideration of their object having been "The Discovery of a New Passage into the South Sea." Dobbs appealed to the sacrifices made and the glories achieved in earlier days in the attempt to discover the North-West Passage. In scores of pages, the indefatigable writer gives the accounts of the early voyages.

We have but to give a passage or two from another author to show what a powerful weapon Dobbs wielded, and to see how he succeeded in reviving a question which had slumbered well nigh a hundred years, and which again became a living question in the nineteenth century.

This writer says: – "It would lead us far beyond our limits were we to chronicle all the reasons urged, and the attempts made to 'finde out that short and easie passage by the North-west, which we have hitherto so long desired.' Under the auspices of the 'Old Worthies' really – though ostensibly countenanced by kings, queens, and nobles – up rose a race of men, daring and enthusiastic, whose names would add honour to any country, and embalm its history.

"Commencing with the reign of Henry VII., we have first, John Cabot (1497), ever renowned; for he it was who first saw and claimed for the 'Banner of England,' the American continent. Sebastian, his son, follows in the next year – a name honourable and wise. Nor may we omit Master Robert Thorne of Bristol (1527); Master Hore (1536); and Master Michael Lok (1545), of London – men who knew 'cosmography' and the 'weighty and substantial reasons' for 'a discovery even to the North Pole.' For a short time Arctic energy changed its direction from the North-west to the North-east (discoveries of the Muscovy Company), but wanting success in that quarter, again reverted to the North-west. Then we find Martin Frobisher, George Best, Sir Humphrey Gilbert, James Davis, George Waymouth, John Knight, the cruelly treated Henry Hudson, James Hall, Sir Thomas Button, Fotherbye, Baffin and Bylot, 'North-west' Luke Fox, Thomas James, &c.

"Thus, in the course of sixty years – now breaking the icy fetters of the North, now chained by them; now big with high hope 'of the Passage,' then beaten back by the terrific obstacles, as it were, guarding it – notwithstanding, these men never faltered, never despaired of finally accomplishing it. Their names are worthy to be held in remembrance; for, with all their faults, all their strange fancies and prejudices, still they were a daring and glorious race, calm amid the most appalling dangers; what they did was done correctly, as far as their limited means went; each added something that gave us more extended views and a better acquaintance with the globe we inhabit – giving especially large contributions to geography, with a more fixed resolution to discover the 'Passage.' By them the whole of the eastern face of North America was made known, and its disjointed lands in the North, even to 77 deg. or 78 deg. N. Their names will last while England is true to herself."

Mr. Dobbs awakened much interest among persons of rank in England as to the desirability of finding a North-West Passage. Especially to the Lords of the Admiralty, on whom he had a strong hold, did he represent the glory and value of fitting out an expedition to Hudson Bay on this quest.

Dobbs mentions in his book the unwilling efforts of the Hudson's Bay Company to meet the demand for a wider examination of the Bay which took place a few years after the Peace of Utrecht. In 1719, Captain James Knight received orders from the Company to fit out an expedition and sail up the west coast of the Bay. This he did in two ships, the *Albany* frigate, Captain George Barlow, and the *Discovery*, Captain David Vaughan. Captain John Scroggs, in the ship *Whalebone*, two years afterward, sailed up the coast in search of the expedition. It is maintained by the opponents of the Company that these attempts were a mere blind to meet the search for a North-West Passage, and that the Company was averse to any real investigation being made.

It is of course impossible to say whether this charge was deserved or not. The fact that no practicable North-West Passage has ever been discovered renders the arguments drawn from the running of the tides, &c., of no value, and certainly justifies the Company to some extent in its inaction. The fact that in 1736 the Hudson's Bay Company yielded to the claim raised by Dobbs and his associates, is to be noted in favour of the Company's contention that while not believing in the existence of the North-West Passage, they were willing to satisfy the excited mind of the English public. Their expedition of the *Churchill* sloop, Captain Napper, and the *Musquash* sloop, Captain Crow, accomplished nothing in solving the question in dispute.

Disappointed with the efforts made by the Company at his request, Dobbs, in 1737, took in hand to organize an expedition under Government direction to go upon the search of the "Passage." At this time he opened communication with Captain Christopher Middleton, one of the best known captains in the service of the Hudson's Bay Company. Middleton, being satisfied with the Company's service, refused to leave it. Dobbs then asked him to recommend a suitable man, and also arranged with Middleton to be allowed to examine the records kept of his voyages, upon the Hudson's Bay Company ships. This, however, came to nothing.

About 174 °Captain Middleton had cause to differ with the Company on business matters, and entertained Dobbs' proposition, which was that he should be placed in command of a British man-

of-war and go in search of the long-sought North-West Passage. Middleton gave the Hudson's Bay Company a year's notice, but found them unwilling to let him retire.

He had taken the step of resigning deliberately and adhered to it, though he was disappointed in his command not being so remunerative as he expected. In May, 1741, Captain Middleton received his orders from the Lords of the Admiralty to proceed upon his journey and to follow the directions given him as to finding a North-West Passage. These had been prepared under Dobbs' supervision. Directions are given as to his course of procedure, should he reach California, and also as to what should be done in case of meeting Japanese ships. Middleton was placed in charge of Her Majesty's sloop the *Furnace*, and had as a companion and under his orders the *Discovery Pink*, William Moore, Master. In due time, Hudson Bay was reached, but in August the season seemed rather late to proceed northward from "Cary's Swan's Nest," and it was decided to winter in the mouth of Churchill River.

On July 1st, 1742, the expedition proceeded northward. Most complete observations were made of weather, land, presence of ice, natives of the coast, depth of bay, rivers entering bay, tides, and any possible outlets as far as 88 deg. or 89 deg. W. longitude. Observations were continued until August 18th, when the expedition sailed home to report what it had found.

Captain Middleton read an important paper on "The Extraordinary Degrees and Surprising Effects of Cold in Hudson Bay," before the Royal Society in London.

No sooner had Middleton reached the Orkneys on his return voyage than he forwarded to Dobbs, who was in Ireland, a letter and an abstract of his journal. Lest this should have gone astray, he sent another copy on his arrival in the Thames. The report was, on the whole, discouraging as to the existence of a north-west passage.

Dobbs, however, was unwilling to give up his dream, and soon began to discredit Middleton. He dealt privately with the other officers of the ships, Middleton's subordinates, and with surprising skill turned the case against Captain Middleton.

The case of Dobbs against Captain Middleton has been well stated by John Barrow. Middleton was charged with neglect in having failed to explore the line of coast which afforded a probability of a passage to the north-west. The principal points at issue appear to have been in respect to the following discoveries of Middleton, viz. the Wager River, Repulse Bay, and the Frozen Strait. As regards the first, Mr. Dobbs asserted that the tide came through the so-called river from the westward; and this question was settled in the following year by Captain Moore, who entirely confirmed Captain Middleton's report.

Repulse Bay, which well deserves the name it bears, was no less accurately laid down by Captain Middleton, and of the Frozen Strait, Sir Edward Parry remarks, "Above all, the accuracy of Captain Middleton is manifest upon the point most strenuously urged against him, for our subsequent experience has not left the smallest doubt of Repulse Bay and the northern part of Welcome Bay being filled by a rapid tide, flowing into it from the eastward through the Frozen Strait."

Dobbs, by a high order of logic chopping, succeeded in turning the case, for the time being, against Captain Middleton. Seldom has greater skill been used to win a cause. He quotes with considerable effect a letter by Sir Bibye Lake, addressed to the Governor of the Prince of Wales Fort, Churchill River, reading: "Notwithstanding an order to you, if Captain Middleton (who is sent ahead in the Government's service to discover a passage north-west) should by inevitable necessity be brought into real distress and danger of his life and loss of his ship, in such case you are then to give him the best assistance and relief you can." Dobbs' whole effort seems to be to show that Middleton was hiding the truth, and this, under the influence of his old masters, the Hudson's Bay Company. A copy of Dobbs' Criticisms, laid before the Lords of the Admiralty, was furnished Captain Middleton, and his answer is found in "Vindication of the Conduct," published in 1743.

"An Account of the Countries adjoining to Hudson Bay" by Arthur Dobbs, Esq., is a book published in the year after, and is really a book of note. A quarto, consisting of upwards of 200 pages, it showed a marvellous knowledge of colonization in America, of the interior of the continent at that

time, and incidentally deals with Captain Middleton's journal. Its account of the journey of "Joseph La France, a French Canadese Indian," from Lake Superior by way of Lake Winnipeg to Hudson Bay, is the first detailed account on record of that voyage being made. Evidently Arthur Dobbs had caught the ear of the English people, and the Company was compelled to put itself in a thorough attitude of defence.

Dobbs with amazing energy worked up his cause, and what a writer of the time calls, "The long and warm dispute between Arthur Dobbs, Esq. and Captain Middleton," gained much public notice. The glamour of the subject of a north-west passage, going back to the exploits of Frobisher, Baffin, and Button, touched the national fancy, and no doubt the charge of wilful concealment of the truth made against the Hudson's Bay Company, repeated so strenuously by Dobbs, gained him adherents. Parliament took action in the matter and voted 20,000*l.* as a reward for the discovery of a north-west passage. This caused another wave of enthusiasm, and immediately a subscription was opened for the purpose of raising 10,000*l.* to equip an expedition for this popular enterprise. It was proposed to divide the whole into 100 shares of 100*l.* each. A vigorous canvass was made to secure the amount, and the subscription list bears the names of several nobles, an archbishop, a bishop, and many esquires. A perusal of the names suggests that a number of them are Irish, and no doubt were obtained by Mr. Dobbs, who was often at Lisburn in Ireland. The amount raised was 7,200*l.* The expedition, we hear afterwards, cost upwards of 10,000*l.*, but the money needed was, we are told, willingly contributed by those who undertook the enterprise. Mr. Dobbs, as was suitable, was a leading spirit on the Committee of Management.

Two ships were purchased by the Committee, the *Dobbs* galley, 180 tons burden, Captain William Moore, and the *California*, 140 tons, Captain Francis Smith. On May 24th, 1746, the two vessels, provisioned and well fitted out for the voyage, left the mouth of the Thames, being in company with the two ships of the Hudson's Bay Company going to the Bay, the four ships being under the convoy of the ship *Loo*, of forty guns, as France was at this time at war with England. The voyage was rather prosperous, with the exception of a very exciting incident on board the *Dobbs* galley. A dangerous fire broke out in the cabin of the vessel, and threatened to reach the powder-room, which was directly underneath, and contained "thirty or forty barrels of powder, candles, spirits, matches, and all manner of combustibles." Though, as the writer says, "during the excitement, you might hear all the varieties of sea eloquence, cries, prayers, curses, and scolding, mingled together, yet this did not prevent the proper measures being taken to save the ship and our lives."

The story of the voyage is given to us in a very interesting manner by Henry Ellis, gentleman, agent for the proprietors of the expedition. Though nearly one hundred pages are taken up with the inevitable summaries of "The Several Expeditions to discover a North-West Passage," yet the remaining portion of the book is well written. After the usual struggle with the ice in Hudson Strait, as it was impossible to explore southward during the first season, the *Dobbs* galley and the *California* sailed for Port Nelson, intending to winter there. They arrived on August 26th. Ellis states that they were badly received by the Hudson's Bay officers at the first. They, however, laid up their ships in Hayes River, and built an erection of logs on the shore for the staff. The officers' winter quarters were called "Montague House," named after the Duke of Montague, patron of the expedition. After a severe winter, during which the sailors suffered with scurvy, and, according to Ellis, received little sympathy from the occupants of York Fort, the expedition left the mouth of the Hayes River on June 24th, to prosecute their discovery. After spending the summer coasting Hudson Bay and taking careful notes, the officers of the vessels gladly left the inhospitable shore to sail homeward, and the two ships arrived in Yarmouth Roads on October 14th, 1747.

"Thus ended," says Ellis, "this voyage, without success indeed, but not without effect; for though we did not discover a north-west passage … we returned with clearer and fuller proofs … that evidently such a passage there may be." It will be observed that Ellis very much confirms Captain Middleton's conclusions, but Mr. Dobbs no doubt made the best of his disappointment, and, as we

shall see, soon developed what had been from the first his real object, the plan for founding a rival company.

CHAPTER IX
THE INTERESTING BLUE-BOOK OF 1749

"Le roi est mort" – Royalty unfavourable – Earl of Halifax – "Company asleep" – Petition to Parliament – Neglected discovery – Timidity or caution – Strong "Prince of Wales" – Increase of stock – A timid witness – Claims of discovery – To make Indians Christians – Charge of disloyalty – New Company promises largely – Result nil.

Arthur Dobbs, Esq., was evidently worsted in his tilt with the Hudson's Bay Company. His fierce onslaught upon Captain Middleton was no doubt the plan of attack to enable him to originate the expedition of the *Dobbs* galley and *California*. Even this voyage had brought little better prospect of the discovery of a north-west passage, except the optimistic words of Ellis, the use of which, indeed, seemed very like the delectable exercise of "extracting sunbeams from cucumbers."

But the energy of the man was in no way dampened. Indeed, the indications are, as we survey the features of the time, that he had strong backing in the governing circles of the country. Time was when the Hudson's Bay Company basked in the sunshine of the Court. It is, perhaps, the penalty of old institutions that as rulers pass away and political parties change, the centre of gravity of influence shifts. Perhaps the Hudson's Bay Company had not been able to use the convenient motto, "Le Roi est mort: Vive le Roi!" At any rate the strong Court influence of the Company had passed away, and there is hardly a nobleman to be found on the list of stockholders submitted by the Company to the Committee of the Lords.

On the other hand, when Henry Ellis, the historian of the expedition, writes his book in the year after his return, he is permitted to dedicate it to His Royal Highness Frederick, Prince of Wales, is privileged to refer in his dedication to a "gracious audience" allowed him by the Prince after his return, and to speak of "the generous care" expressed by the Prince "for the happy progress of his design." Again, in a similar dedication of a book written four years afterwards by Joseph Robson, a former employé of the Hudson's Bay Company, but a book full of hostility to the Company, allusion is made to the fact that the Earl of Halifax, Lord Commissioner of Trade and Plantations, gave his most hearty approval to such plans as the expedition sought to carry out. It is said of Lord Halifax, who was called the Father of Colonies: "He knows the true state of the nation – that it depends on trade and manufactures; that we have more rivals than ever; that navigation is our bulwark and Colonies our chief support; and that new channels should be industriously opened. Therefore, we survey the whole globe in search of fresh inlets which our ships may enter and traffic." Those familiar with the work of Lord Halifax will remember that the great colonization scheme by which Nova Scotia was firmly grappled to the British Empire and the City of Halifax founded, was his; and the charge made by Dobbs that for a generation the "Company had slept on the shores of the Bay," would appeal with force to a man of such energetic and progressive nature as the Lord Commissioner.

Accordingly, Dobbs now came out boldly; not putting the discovery of the North-West Passage in the front of his plan, but openly charging the Hudson's Bay Company with indolence and failure, and asking for the granting of a charter to a rival company.

As summed up by the sub-committee to which the petition of Dobbs and his associates was submitted, the charges were: —

I. The Company had not discovered, nor sufficiently attempted to discover, the North-West Passage into the southern seas.

II. They had not extended their settlements to the limits given them by their Charter.

III. They had designedly confined their trade within very narrow limits:

(*a*) Had abused the Indians.
(*b*) Had neglected their forts.
(*c*) Ill-treated their own servants.
(*d*) Encouraged the French.

The Hudson's Bay Company, now put on their mettle, exhibited a considerable amount of activity, and filed documents before the Committee that in some respects met the charges against them. They claimed that they had in the thirty years preceding the investigation done a fair amount of exploratory work and discovery. In 1719, they had sent out the *Albany* frigate and *Discovery* to the northern regions, and neither of them returned to tell the tale. In the same year its vessels on the Bay, the *Prosperous* and the *Success*, one from York Factory, the other from Prince of Wales Fort, had sailed up the coast on exploratory expeditions. Two years afterward, the *Prosperous*, under Kelsey, made a voyage, and the *Success*, under Captain Napper, had sailed from York Fort and was lost. In the same year the *Whalebone*, under Captain John Scroggs, went from England to Prince of Wales Fort, and after wintering there, in the following year made a decided effort on behalf of the Passage, but returned unsuccessful. In the year when Dobbs became so persistent (1737) James Napper, who had been saved from the wreck of the *Success* sixteen years before, took command of the *Churchill* from Prince of Wales Fort, but on the exploration died, and the vessel returned. The Musquash, under Captain Crow, accompanied the Churchill, but returned with no hope of success. This was the case presented by the Hudson's Bay Company. It was still open to the opponents of the Company to say, as they did, that the Hudson's Bay Company was not in earnest, wanted nothing done to attract rivals, and were adepts in concealing their operations and in hoodwinking the public.

A more serious charge was that they had not sought to reach the interior, but had confined their trade to the shores of the Bay. Here it seems that the opponents of the Company made a better case. It is indeed unaccountable to us to-day, as we think that the Company had now been eighty years trading on the Bay and had practically no knowledge of the inheritance possessed by them. At this very time the French, by way of Lake Superior, had journeyed inland, met Indian tribes, traded with them, and even with imposing ceremonies buried metal plates claiming the country which the Hudson's Bay Company Charter covered as lying on rivers, lakes, &c., tributary to Hudson Bay. It is true they had submitted instructions to the number of twenty or thirty, in which governors and captains had been urged to explore the interior and extend the trade among the Indian tribes. But little evidence could be offered that these communications had been acted on.

The chief dependence of the Company seems to have been on one Henry Kelsey, who went as a boy to Hudson Bay, but rose to be chief officer there. The critics of the Company were not slow to state that Kelsey had been a refugee from their forts and had lived for several seasons among the Indians of the interior. Even if this were so, it is still true that Kelsey came to be one of the most enterprising of the wood-runners of the Company. Dobbs confronted them with the fact that the voyage from Lake Superior to Hudson Bay had been only made once in their history, and that by Joseph La France, the Canadian Indian. Certainly, whether from timidity, caution, inertia, or from some deep-seated system of policy, it was true that the Company had done little to penetrate the interior.

The charge that the Company abused the Indians was hardly substantiated. The Company was dependent on the goodwill of the Indians, and had they treated them badly, their active rivals, the French, would simply have reaped the benefit of their folly. That the price charged the Indians for goods was as large as the price paid for furs was small, is quite likely to have been true. Civilized traders all the world over, dealing with ignorant and dependent tribes, follow this policy. No doubt the risks of life and limb and goods in remote regions are great, and great profits must be made to meet them. It is to be remembered, however, that when English and French traders came into competition, as among the Iroquois in New York State, and afterwards in the Lake Superior district, the quality of

the English goods was declared by the Indians better and their treatment by the English on the whole more honest and aboveboard than that by the French.

That traders should neglect their own forts seems very unlikely. Those going to the Hudson Bay Main expected few luxuries, and certainly did not have an easy life, but there was on the part of the Company a vast difference in treatment as compared with that given to the fur traders in New France as they went to the far west. No doubt pressure for dividends prevented expenditure that was unnecessary, but a perusal of the experience of Champlain with his French fur company leads us to believe that the English were far the more liberal and considerate in the treatment of employés.

The fortress of the River Churchill, known as the Prince of Wales Fort, with its great ruins to be seen to-day, belonging to this period, speaks of a large expense and a high ideal of what a fort ought to be. During the examination of witnesses by the Committee, full opportunity was given to show cases of ill-treatment of men and poor administration of their forts. Twenty witnesses were examined, and they included captains, merchants, and employés, many of whom had been in the service of the Company on the Bay, but whether, as Robson says, "It must be attributed either to their confusion upon appearing before so awful an assembly, or to their having a dependence on the Company and an expectation of being employed again in their service," little was elicited at all damaging to the Company.

The charge of the fewness of the forts and the smallness of the trade was more serious. That they should have a monopoly of the trade, and should neither develop it themselves, nor allow others to develop it, would have been to pursue a "dog in the manger" policy. They stated that they had on an average three ships employed solely on their business, that their exports for ten years immediately preceding amounted to 40,240*l.* and their imports 122,835*l.*, which they claimed was a balance of trade satisfactory to England.

The objection that the whole capital of the Company at the commencement, 10,500*l.*, was trifling, was perhaps true, but they had made great profits, and they used them in the purchase of ships and the building of forts, and now had a much more valuable property than at the beginning. That they had been able to increase their stock so largely was a tribute to the profits of their business and to its ability to earn dividends on a greatly increased capital stock.

The increase of stock as shown by the Company was as follows: —

At this time there was a movement to greatly increase the stock, but the stringency of the money market checked this movement, and subscriptions of ten per cent. were taken, amounting to 3,150*l.* only. This was also trebled and added to the original 94,500*l.*, making a total stock of 103,950*l.*

Some three years after the investigation by the Committee, one of the witnesses, Joseph Robson, who gave evidence of the very mildest, most non-committal character, appears to have received new light, for he published a book called, "An Account of Six Years' Residence in Hudson's Bay." He says in the preface, speaking of the evidence given by him in the investigation, "For want of confidence and ability to express myself clearly, the account I then gave was far from being so exact and full as that which I intended to have given." What the influence was that so effectually opened Robson's eyes, we do not know. The second part of this work is a critique of the evidence furnished by the Company, and from the vigour employed by this writer as compared with the apathy shown at the investigation, it is generally believed that in the meantime he had become a dependent of Dobbs.

The plea put forward by the petitioners for the granting of a charter to them contained several particulars. They had, at their own cost and charges, fitted out two ships, the *Dobbs* galley and *California*, in search of the North-West Passage to the West and Southern Ocean. Their object was,

they claimed, a patriotic one, and they aimed at extending the trade of Great Britain. They maintained that though the reward offered had been 20,000*l.*, it was not sufficient to accomplish the end, as they had already spent more than half of that sum. Not withstanding this, they had discovered a number of bays, inlets, and coasts before unknown, and inasmuch as this was the ground of the Charter issued by Charles II. to the Hudson's Bay Company, they claimed like consideration for performing a similar service.

The petitioners made the most ample promise as to their future should the charter be granted. They would persevere in their search for the passage to the Southern Ocean of America, of which, notwithstanding the frequent failures in finding it, they had a strong hope. The forward policy of Lord Halifax of extensive colonization they were heartily in favour of, and they undertook to settle the lands they might discover. The question had been raised during the investigation, whether the Company had done anything to civilize the natives. They had certainly done nothing. Probably their answer was that they were a trading company, and never saw the Indians except in the months of the trading season, when in July and August they presented themselves from the interior at the several factories. The petitioners promised, in regard to the natives, that they would "lay the foundation for their becoming Christians and industrious subjects of His Majesty." Beyond the sending out of a prayer-book from time to time, which seemed to indicate a desire to maintain service among their servants, the Company had taken no steps in this direction.

The closing argument for the bestowal of a charter was that they would prevent French encroachments upon British rights and trade on the continent of America. The petition makes the very strong statement that the Hudson's Bay Company had connived at, or allowed French and English to encroach, settle, and trade within their limits on the south side of the Bay. Whatever may have been in the mind of the petitioners on this subject of conniving with the French, a perusal of the minutes of the Company fails to show any such disposition. The Company in Charles II.'s times was evidently more anti-French than the Government. They disputed the claim of the French to any part of the Bay, and strongly urged their case before the English Commissioners at the Treaty of Ryswick. One of their documents, seemingly showing them to be im pressed with the claim of priority of ownership of the French King, did propose a division of the Bay, giving the south part of the Bay to the French and the remainder to themselves. It is easy to understand a trading company wishing peace, so that trade might go on, and knowing that Hudson Bay, with its enormous coast line, afforded wide room for trade, proposing such a settlement.

No doubt, however, the reference is to the great competition which was, in a few years, to extend through the interior to the Rocky Mountains. This was to be indeed a battle royal. Arthur Dobbs, judging by his book, which shows how far ahead he was of his opponents in foresight, saw that this must come, and so the new Company promises to penetrate the interior, cut off the supply of furs from the French, and save the trade to Britain. A quarter of a century afterwards, the Hudson's Bay Company, slow to open their eyes, perceived it too, and as we shall see, rose from their slumbers, and entered the conflict.

The Report was made to the Privy Council, expressing appreciation of the petition, and of the advanced views enunciated, but stating that the case against the Hudson's Bay Company had not yet been made out. So no new charter was granted!

CHAPTER X
FRENCH CANADIANS EXPLORE THE INTERIOR

The "Western Sea" – Ardent Duluth – "Kaministiquia" – Indian boasting – Père Charlevoix – Father Gonor – The man of the hour: Verendrye – Indian map maker – The North Shore – A line of forts – The Assiniboine country – A notable manuscript – A marvellous journey – Glory but not wealth – Post of the Western Sea.

Even the French in Canada were animated in their explorations by the dream of a North-West Passage. The name Lachine at the rapids above Montreal is the memorial of La Salle's hope that the Western Sea was to be reached along this channel. The Lake Superior region seems to have been neglected for twenty years after Radisson and Groseilliers had visited Lake Nepigon, or Lake Assiniboines, as they called it.

But the intention of going inland from Lake Superior was not lost sight of by the French explorers, for on a map (Parl. Lib. Ottawa) of date 1680, is the inscription in French marking the Kaministiquia or Pigeon River, "By this river they go to the Assinepoulacs, for 150 leagues toward the north-west, where there are plenty of beavers."

The stirring events which we have described between 1682 and 1684, when Radisson deserted from the Hudson's Bay Company and founded for the French King Fort Bourbon on the Bay, were accompanied by a new movement toward Lake Superior, having the purpose of turning the stream of trade from Hudson Bay southward to Lake Superior.

At this time Governor De La Barre writes from Canada that the English at Hudson Bay had that year attracted to them many of the northern Indians, who were in the habit of coming to Montreal, and that he had despatched thither Sieur Duluth, who had great influence over the western Indians. Greysolon Duluth was one of the most daring spirits in the service of France in Canada. Duluth writes (1684) to the Governor from Lake Nepigon, where he had erected a fort, seemingly near the spot where Radisson and Groseilliers had wintered.

Duluth says in his ardent manner: "It remains for me, sir, to assure you that all the savages of the north have great confidence in me, and that enables me to promise you that before the lapse of two years not a single savage will visit the English at Hudson Bay. This they have all promised me, and have bound themselves thereto, by the presents I have given, or caused to be given them. The Klistinos, Assinepoulacs, &c., have promised to come to my fort… Finally, sir, I wish to lose my life if I do not absolutely prevent the savages from visiting the English."

Duluth seems for several years to have carried on trade with the Indians north and west of Lake Nepigon, and no doubt prevented many of them from going to Hudson Bay. But he was not well supported by the Governor, being poorly supplied with goods, and for a time the prosecution of trade by the French in the Lake Superior region declined. The intense interest created by D'Iberville in his victorious raids on Hudson Bay no doubt tended to divert the attention of the French explorers from the trade with the interior. The Treaties of Ryswick and Utrecht changed the whole state of affairs for the French King, and deprived by the latter of these treaties of any hold on the Bay, the French in Canada began to turn their attention to their deserted station on Lake Superior.

Now, too, the reviving interest in England of the scheme for the discovery of the North-West Passage infected the French. Six years after the Treaty of Utrecht, we find (MSS. Ottawa) it stated: "Messrs. de Vaudreuil and Begin having written last year that the discovery of the Western Sea would be advantageous to the Colony, it was approved that to reach it M. de Vaudreuil should establish these posts, which he had proposed, and he was instructed at the same time to have the same established

without any expense accruing to the King – as the person establishing them would be remunerated by trade."

In the year 1717 the Governor sent out a French lieutenant, Sieur De la Noue, who founded a fort at Kaministiquia. In a letter, De la Noue states that the Indians are well satisfied with the fort he has erected, and promise to bring there all those who had been accustomed to trade at Hudson Bay. Circumstances seem to have prevented this explorer from going and establishing a fort at Tekamiouen (Rainy Lake), and a third at the lake still farther to the north-west.

It is somewhat notable that during the fifty years succeeding the early voyages of Radisson and Groseilliers on Lake Superior, the French were quite familiar with the names of lakes and rivers in the interior which they had never visited. It will be remembered, however, that the same thing is true of the English on Hudson Bay. They knew the names Assiniboines, Christinos, and the like as familiar terms, although they had not left the Bay.

The reason of this is easily seen. The North-West Indian is a great narrator. He tells of large territories, vast seas, and is, in fact, in the speech of Hiawatha, "Iagoo, the great boaster." He could map out his route upon a piece of birch-bark, and the maps still made by the wild North-Western Indians are quite worthy of note.

It will be observed that the objection brought by the French against the Hudson's Bay Company of clinging to the shores of the Bay, may be equally charged against the French on the shore of Lake Superior, or at least of Lake Nepigon, for the period from its first occupation of at least seventy years. No doubt the same explanation applies in both cases, viz. the bringing of their furs to the forts by the Indians made inland exploration at that time unnecessary.

But the time and the man had now come, and the vast prairies of the North-West, hitherto unseen by the white man, were to become the battle-ground for a far greater contest for the possession of the fur trade than had yet taken place either in Hudson Bay or with the Dutch and English in New York State.

The promoting cause for this forward movement was again the dream of opening up a North-West Passage. The hold this had upon the French we see was less than that upon Frobisher, James, Middleton, or Dobbs among the English. Speaking of the French interest in the scheme, Pierre Margry, keeper of the French Archives in Paris, says: "The prospect of discovering by the interior a passage to the *Grand Océan*, and by that to China, which was proposed by our officers under Henry IV., Louis XIII., and Louis XIV., had been taken up with renewed ardour during the Regency. Memorial upon memorial had been presented to the Conseil de Marine respecting the advisability and the advantage of making this discovery. Indeed, the Père de Charlevoix was sent to America, and made his great journey from the north to the south of New France for the purpose of reliably informing the Council as to the most suitable route to pursue in order to reach the Western Sea. But the ardour which during the life of Philip of Orleans animated the Government regarding the exploration of the West became feeble, and at length threatened to be totally extinguished, without any benefit being derived from the posts which they had already established in the country of the Sioux and at Kaministiquia."

"The Regent, in choosing between the two plans that Father Charlevoix presented to him at the close of his journey for the attainment of a knowledge of the Western Sea, through an unfortunate prudence, rejected the suggestion, which, it is true, was the most expensive and uncertain, viz. an expedition up the Missouri to its source and beyond, and decided to establish a post among the Sioux. The post of the Sioux was consequently established in 1727. Father Gonor, a Jesuit missionary who had gone upon the expedition, we are told, was, however, obliged to return without having been able to discover anything that would satisfy the expectations of the Court about the Western Sea."

At this time Michilimackinac was the depôt of the West. It stood in the entrance of Lake Michigan – the Gitche Gumee of the Indian tribes, near the mouth of the St. Mary River, the outlet of Lake Superior; it was at the head of Lake Huron and Georgian Bay alike. Many years afterwards

it was called the "Key of the North-West" and the "Key of the Upper Lakes." A round island lying a little above the lake, it appealed to the Indian imagination, and, as its name implies, was likened by them to the turtle. To it from every side expeditions gathered, and it became the great rendezvous.

At Michilimackinac, just after the arrival of Father Gonor, there came from the region of Lake Superior a man whose name was to become illustrious as an explorer, Pierre Gaultier de Varennes, Sieur de la Verendrye. We have come to know him simply by the single name of Verendrye.

This great explorer was born in Three Rivers, the son of an old officer of the French army. The young cadet found very little to do in the New World, and made his way home to France. He served as a French officer in the War of the Spanish Succession, and was severely wounded in the battle of Malplaquet. On his recovery, he did not receive the recognition that he desired, and so went to the western wilds of Canada and took up the life of a "coureur de bois."

Verendrye, in pursuing the fur trade, had followed the somewhat deserted course which Radisson and Groseilliers had long before taken, and which a decade before this La Noue had, as we have seen, selected. The fort on Lake Nepigon was still the rendezvous of the savages from the interior, who were willing to be turned aside from visiting the English on Hudson Bay. From the Indians who assembled around his fort on Lake Nepigon, in 1728, Verendrye heard of the vast interior, and had some hopes of reaching the goal of those who dreamt of a Western Sea.

An experienced Indian leader named Ochagach undertook to map out on birch bark the route by which the lakes of the interior could be reached, and the savage descanted with rapture upon the furs to be obtained if the journey could be made. Verendrye, filled with the thought of western discovery, went to Quebec, and discussed his purpose with the Governor there. He pointed out the route by way of the river of the Assiniboels, and then the rivers by which Lake Ouinipegon might be reached. His estimate was that the Western Sea might be gained by an inland journey from Lake Superior of 500 leagues.

Governor Beauharnois considered the map submitted and the opinions of Verendrye with his military engineer, Chaussegros De Lery; and their conclusions were favourable to Verendrye's deductions. Verendrye had the manner and character which inspired belief in his honesty and competence. He was also helped in his dealings with the Governor at Quebec by the representations of Father Gonor, whom we have seen had returned from the fort established among the Sioux, convinced that the other route was impracticable.

Father Gonor entirely sympathized with Verendrye in the belief that the only hope lay in passing through the country of the Christinos and Assiniboels of the North. The Governor granted the explorer the privilege of the entire profit of the fur trade, but was unable to give any assistance in money. Verendrye now obtained the aid of a number of merchants in Montreal in providing goods and equipment for the journey, and in high glee journeyed westward, calling at Michilimackinac to take with him the Jesuit Father Messager, to be the companion of his voyage. Near the end of August, 1731, the expedition was at Pigeon River, long known as Grand Portage, a point more than forty miles south-westward of the mouth of the Kaministiquia.

This was a notable event in history when Verendrye and his crew stood ready to face the hardships of a journey to the interior. No doubt the way was hard and long, and the men were sulky and discouraged, but the heroism of their commander shone forth as he saw into the future and led the way to a vast and important region.

Often since that time have important expeditions going to the North-West been seen as they swept by the towering heights of Thunder Cape, and, passing onward, entered the uninviting mouth of Kaministiquia.

Eighty-five years afterward, Lord Selkirk and his band of one hundred De Meuron soldiers appeared here in canoes and penetrated to Red River to regain the lost Fort Douglas.

One hundred and twenty-six years after Verendrye, according to an account given by an eye-witness – an old Hudson's Bay Company officer – a Canadian steamer laden high above the decks

appeared at the mouth of the Kaministiquia, bearing the Dawson and Hind expedition, to explore the plains of Assiniboia and pave the way for their admission to Canada.

One hundred and thirty-nine years after Verendrye, Sir Garnet Wolseley, with his British regulars and Canadian volunteers, swept through Thunder Bay on their way to put down the Red River rebellion.

And now one hundred and sixty-nine years after Verendrye, the splendid steamers of the Canadian Pacific Railway Company thrice a week in summer carry their living cargo into the mouth of the Kaministiquia to be transported by rail to the fast filling prairies of the West.

Yes! it was a great event when Verendrye and his little band of unwilling voyageurs started inland from the shore of Lake Superior.

Verendrye, his valiant nephew, De La Jemeraye, and his two sons, were the leaders of the expedition. Grand Portage avoids by a nine mile portage the falls and rapids at the mouth of the Pigeon River, and northward from this point the party went, and after many hardships reached Rainy Lake in the first season, 1731. Here, at the head of Rainy River, just where it leaves the Lake, they built their first fort, St. Pierre. The writer has examined the site of this fort, just three miles above the falls of Rainy River, and seen the mounds and excavations still remaining. This seems to have been their furthest point reached in the first season, and they returned to winter at Kaministiquia. In the next year the expedition started inland, and in the month of June reached their Fort St. Pierre, descended the Rainy River, and with exultation saw the expanse of the Lake of the Woods.

The earliest name we find this lake known by is that given by Verendrye. He says it was called Lake Minitie (Cree, Ministik) or Des Bois. (1) The former of these names, Minitie, seems to be Ojibway, and to mean Lake of the Islands, probably referring to the large number of islands to be found in the northern half of the Lake. The other name (2), Lac des Bois, or Lake of the Woods, would appear to have been a mistranslation of the Indian (Ojibway) name by which the Lake was known. The name (3) was "Pikwedina Sagaigan," meaning "the inland lake of the sand hills," referring to the skirting range of sand hills running for some thirteen miles along the southern shore of the Lake to the east of the mouth of Rainy River, its chief tributary.

Another name found on a map prepared by the Hudson's Bay Company in 1748 is (4) Lake Nimigon, probably meaning the "expanse," referring to the open sheet of water now often called "La Traverse." Two other names, (5) Clearwater Lake and (6) Whitefish Lake, are clearly the extension of Clearwater Bay, a north-western part of the Lake, and Whitefish Bay, still given by the Indians to the channel to the east of Grande Presqu'île.

On the south-west side of the Lake of the Woods Verendrye's party built Fort St. Charles, probably hoping then to come in touch with the Sioux who visited that side of the lake, and with whom they would seek trade. At this point the prospect was very remote of reaching the Western Sea. The expenses were great, and the fur trade did not so far give sufficient return to justify a further march to the interior. Unassisted they had reached in 1733 Lake Ouinipegon (Winnipeg), by descending the rapid river from Lake of the Woods, to which they gave the name of Maurepas.

The government in Quebec informed the French Minister, M. de Maurepas, that they had been told by the adventurous Jemeraye that if the French King would bear the expense, they were now certain that the Western Sea could be reached. They had lost in going to Lake Ouinipegon not less than 43,000 livres, and could not proceed further without aid. The reply from the Court of France was unfavourable; nothing more than the free privilege of the fur trade was granted the explorers.

In the following year Verendrye built a fort near Lake Ouinipegon, at the mouth of the Maurepas River (which we now know as Winnipeg River), and not far from the present Fort Alexander. The fort was called Fort Maurepas, although the explorers felt that they had little for which to thank the French Minister. Still anxious to push on further west, but prevented by want of means, they made a second appeal to the French Government in 1735. But again came the same reply of refusal. The explorers

spent their time trading with the Indians between Lake Winnipeg and Grand Portage, and coming and going, as they had occasion, to Lake Superior, and also to Michilimackinac with their cargoes.

While at Fort St. Charles, on the shores of the Lake of the Woods, in 1736, a great disaster overtook the party. Verendrye's eldest son was very anxious to return to Kaministiquia, as was also the Jesuit priest, Anneau, who was in company with the traders. Verendrye was unwilling, but at last consented. The party, consisting of the younger Verendrye and twenty men, were ruthlessly massacred by an ambush of the Sioux on a small island some five leagues from Fort St. Charles, still known as Massacre Island.

A few days afterwards the crime was discovered, and Verendrye had difficulty in preventing his party from accepting the offer of the Assiniboines and Christinos to follow the Sioux and wreak their vengeance upon them. During the next year Fort Maurepas was still their farthest outpost.

The ruins of Fort St. Charles on the south side of the north-west angle of the Lake of the Woods were in 1908 discovered by St. Boniface Historical Society and the remains of young Verendrye's party found buried in the ruins of the chapel.

Though no assistance could be obtained from the French Court for western discovery, and although the difficulties seemed almost insurmountable, Verendrye was unwilling to give up the path open to him. He had the true spirit of the explorer, and chafed in his little stockade on the shores of Lake Winnipeg, seeking new worlds to conquer.

If it was a great event when Verendrye, in 1731, left the shores of Lake Superior to go inland, it was one of equal moment when, penniless and in debt, he determined at all hazards to leave the rocks and woods of Lake Winnipeg, and seek the broad prairies of the West. His decision being thus reached, the region which is now the fertile Canadian prairies was entered upon.

We are fortunate in having the original journal of this notable expedition of 1738, obtained by Mr. Douglas Brymner, former Archivist at Ottawa. This, with two letters of Bienville, were obtained by Mr. Brymner from a French family in Montreal, and the identity of the documents has been fully established.

This journal covers the time from the departure of Verendrye from Michilimackinac on July 20th, till say 1739, when he writes from the heart of the prairies. On September 22nd the brave Verendrye left Fort Maurepas for the land unknown. It took him but two days with his five men to cross in swift canoes the south-east expanse of Lake Winnipeg, enter the mouth of Red River, and reach the forks of the Red and Assiniboine Rivers, where the city of Winnipeg now stands.

It was thus on September 24th of that memorable year that the eyes of the white man first fell on the site of what is destined to be the great central city of Canada. A few Crees who expected him met the French explorer there, and he had a conference with two chiefs, who were in the habit of taking their furs to the English on Hudson Bay.

The water of the Assiniboine River ran at this time very low, but Verendrye was anxious to push westward. Delayed by the shallowness of the Assiniboine, the explorer's progress was very slow, but in six days he reached the portage, then used to cross to Lake Manitoba on the route to Hudson Bay. On this portage now stands the town of Portage la Prairie.

The Assiniboine Indians who met Verendrye here told him it would be useless for him to ascend the Assiniboine River further, as the water was so low. Verendrye was expecting a reinforcement to join his party, under his colleague, M. de la Marque. He determined to remain at Portage la Prairie and to build a fort. Verendrye then assembled the Indians, gave them presents of powder, ball, tobacco, axes, knives, &c., and in the name of the French King received them as the children of the great monarch across the sea, and repeated several times to them the orders of the King they were to obey.

It is very interesting to notice the skill with which the early French explorers dealt with the Indians, and to see the formal way in which they took possession of the lands visited. Verendrye states that the Indians were greatly impressed, "many with tears in their eyes." He adds with some *naïveté*, "They thanked me greatly, promising to do wonders."

On October 3rd, Verendrye decided to build a fort. He was joined shortly after by Messrs. de la Marque and Nolant with eight men in two canoes. The fort was soon pushed on, and, with the help of the Indians, was finished by October 15th. This was the beginning of Fort de la Reine. At this stage in his journal Verendrye makes an important announcement, bearing on a subject which has been somewhat discussed.

Verendrye says, "M. de la Marque told me he had brought M. de Louvière to the forks with two canoes to build a fort there for the accommodation of the people of the Red River. I approved of it if the Indians were notified." This settles the fact that there was a fort at the forks of the Red and Assiniboine Rivers, and that it was built in 1738.

In the absence of this information, we have been in the habit of fixing the building of Fort Rouge at this point from 1735 to 1737. There can now be no doubt that October, 1738, is the correct date. From French maps, as has been pointed out, Fort Rouge stood at the mouth of the Assiniboine, on the south side of the river, and the portion of the city of Winnipeg called Fort Rouge is properly named.

It is, of course, evident that the forts erected by these early explorers were simply winter stations, thrown up in great haste.

Verendrye and his band of fifty-two persons, Frenchmen and Indians, set out overland by the Mandan road on October 18th, to reach the Mandan settlements of the Missouri. It is not a part of our work to describe that journey. Suffice it to say that on December 3rd he was at the central fort of the Mandans, 250 miles from his fort at Portage la Prairie.

Being unable to induce his Assiniboine guides and interpreters to remain for the winter among the Mandans, Verendrye returned somewhat unwillingly to the Assiniboine River. He arrived on February 10th at his Fort de la Reine, as he says himself, "greatly fatigued and very ill."

Verendrye in his journal gives us an excellent opportunity of seeing the thorough devotion of the man to his duty. From Fort Michilimackinac to the Missouri, by the route followed by him, is not less than 1,200 miles, and this he accomplished, as we have seen with the necessary delay of building a fort, between July 20th and December 3rd – 136 days – of this wonderful year of 1738.

Struggling with difficulties, satisfying creditors, hoping for assistance from France, but ever patriotic and single-minded, Verendrye became the leading spirit in Western exploration. In the year after his great expedition to the prairies, he was summoned to Montreal to resist a lawsuit brought against him. The prevailing sin of French Canada was jealousy. Though Verendrye had struggled so bravely to explore the country, there were those who whispered in the ear of the Minister of the French Court that he was selfish and unworthy. In his heart-broken reply to the charges, he says, "If more than 40,000 livres of debt which I have on my shoulders are an advantage, then I can flatter myself that I am very rich."

In 1741 a fruitless attempt was made to reach the Mandans, but in the following year Verendrye's eldest surviving son and his brother, known as the Chevalier, having with them only two Canadians, left Forte de la Reine, and made in this and the succeeding year one of the most famous of the Verendrye discoveries. This lies beyond the field of our inquiry, being the journey to the Missouri, and up to an eastern spur of the Rocky Mountains. Parkman, in his "A Half Century of Conflict," has given a detailed account of this remarkable journey.

Going northward over the Portage la Prairie, Verendrye's sons had discovered what is now known as Lake Manitoba, and had reached the Saskatchewan River. On the west side of Lake Manitoba they founded Fort Dauphin, while at the west end of the enlargement of the Saskatchewan known as Cedar Lake, they built Fort Bourbon and ascended the Saskatchewan to the forks, which were known as the Poskoiac. Tardy recognition of Verendrye's achievements came from the French Court in the explorer being promoted to the position of captain in the Colonial troops, and a short time after he was given the Cross of the Order of St. Louis. Beauharnois and his successor Galissionière had both stood by Verendrye and done their best for him. Indeed, the explorer was just about to

proceed on the great expedition which was to fulfil their hopes of finding the Western Sea, when, on December 6th, he passed away, his dream unrealized. He was an unselfish soul, a man of great executive ability, and one who dearly loved his King and country. He stands out in striking contrast to the Bigots and Jonquières, who disgraced the name of France in the New World.

From the hands of these vampires, who had come to suck out the blood of New France, Verendrye's sons received no consideration. Their claims were coolly passed by, their goods shamelessly seized, and their written and forcible remonstrance made no impression. Legardeur de St. Pierre, more to the mind of the selfish Bigot, was given their place and property, and in 1751 a small fort was built on the upper waters of the Saskatchewan, near the Rocky Mountains, near where the town of Calgary now stands. This was called in honour of the Governor, Fort La Jonquière. A year afterward, St. Pierre, with his little garrison of five men, disgusted with the country, deserted Fort La Reine, which, a few weeks after, was burned to the ground by the Assiniboines.

The fur trade was continued by the French in much the same bounds, so long as the country remained in the hands of France.

We are fortunate in having an account of these affairs given in De Bougainville's Memoir, two years before the capture of Canada by Wolfe. The forts built by Verendrye's successors were included under the "Post of the Western Sea" (La Mer de l'Ouest). Bougainville says, "The Post of the Western Sea is the most advanced toward the north; it is situated amidst many Indian tribes, with whom we trade and who have intercourse with the English, toward Hudson Bay. We have there several forts built of stockades, trusted generally to the care of one or two officers, seven or eight soldiers, and eighty *engagés Canadiens*. We can push further the discoveries we have made in that country, and communicate even with California."

This would have realized the dream of Verendrye of reaching the Western Sea.

"The Post of La Mer de l'Ouest includes the forts of St. Pierre, St. Charles, Bourbon, De la Reine, Dauphin, Poskoiac, and Des Prairies (De la Jonquière), all of which are built with palisades that can give protection only against the Indians."

"The post of La Mer de l'Ouest merits special attention for two reasons: the first, that it is the nearest to the establishments of the English on Hudson Bay, and from which their movements can be watched; the second, that from this post, the discovery of the Western Sea may be accomplished; but to make this discovery it will be necessary that the travellers give up all view of personal interest."

Two years later, French power in North America came to an end, and a generation afterward, the Western Sea was discovered by British fur traders.

CHAPTER XI
THE SCOTTISH MERCHANTS OF MONTREAL

Unyielding old Cadot – Competition – The enterprising Henry – Leads the way – Thomas Curry – The older Finlay – Plundering Indians – "Grand Portage" – A famous mart – The plucky Frobishers – The Sleeping Giant aroused – Fort Cumberland – Churchill River – Indian rising – The deadly smallpox – The whites saved.

The capture of Canada by General Wolfe in 1759 completely changed the course of affairs in the Western fur country. Michilimackinac and Sault Ste. Marie had become considerable trading centres under the French *régime*, but the officers and men had almost entirely been withdrawn from the outposts in the death struggle for the defence of Quebec and Montreal.

The conquest of Canada was announced with sorrow by the chief captain of the West, Charles de Langlade, on his return after the capitulation of Montreal. The French Canadians who had taken Indian wives still clung to the fur country. These French half-breed settlements at Michilimackinac and neighbouring posts were of some size, but beyond Lake Superior, except a straggler here and there, nothing French was left behind. The forts of the western post fell into decay, and were in most cases burnt by the Indians. Not an army officer, not a priest, not a fur trader, remained beyond Kaministiquia.

The French of Michilimackinac region were for a time unwilling to accept British rule. Old trader, Jean Baptiste Cadot, who had settled with his Indian wife, Anastasie, at Sault Ste. Marie, and become a man of wide influence, for years refused to yield, and a French Canadian author says: "So the French flag continued to float over the fort of Sault Ste. Marie long after the *fleur-de-lis* had quitted for ever the ramparts of Quebec. Under the shadow of the old colours, so fruitful of tender memories, he was able to believe himself still under the protection of the mother-country." However, Cadot ended by accepting the situation, and an author tells us that like Cadot, "were the La Cornes, the Langlades, the Beaujeus, the Babys, and many others who, after fighting like lions against England, were counted a little later among the number of her most gallant defenders." For several years, however, the fur trade was not carried on.

The change of flag in Canada brought a number of enterprising spirits as settlers to Quebec and Montreal. The Highland regiments under Generals Amherst and Wolfe had seen Montreal and Quebec. A number of the military became settlers. The suppression of the Jacobite rebellion in Scotland in 1745 had led to the dispersion of many young men of family beyond the seas. Some of these drifted to Montreal. Many of the Scottish settlements of the United States had remained loyal, so that after the American Revolution parties of these loyalists came to Montreal. Thus in a way hard to explain satisfactorily, the English-speaking merchants who came to Canada were largely Scottish. In a Government report found in the Haldimand papers in 1784, it is stated that "The greater part of the inhabitants of Montreal (no doubt meaning English-speaking inhabitants) are Presbyterians of the Church of Scotland." It was these Scottish merchants of Montreal who revived the fur trade to the interior.

Washington Irving, speaking of these merchants, says, "Most of the clerks were young men of good families from the Highlands of Scotland, characterized by the perseverance, thrift, and fidelity of their country." He refers to their feasts "making the rafters resound with bursts of loyalty and old Scottish songs."

The late Archbishop Taché, a French Canadian long known in the North-West, speaking of this period says, "Companies called English, but generally composed of Scotchmen, were found in Canada to continue to make the most of the rich furs of the forests of the North. Necessity obliged

them at first to accept the co-operation of the French Canadians, who maintained their influence by the share they took in the working of these companies… This circumstance explains how, after the Scotch, the French Canadian element is the most important."

The first among these Scottish merchants to hie away from Montreal to the far West was Alexander Henry, whose "Travels and Adventures in Canada and the Indian Territories between the years 1760 and 1766" have the charm of narrative of an Irving or a Parkman. He knew nothing of the fur trade, but he took with him an experienced French Canadian, named Campion. He appeared at Michilimackinac two years after the conquest by Wolfe, and in the following year visited Sault Ste. Marie with its stockaded fort, and formed a friendship with trader Cadot. In the following year, Henry was a witness of the massacre at Michilimackinac, so graphically described by Parkman in his "Conspiracy of Pontiac." Henry's account of his own escape is a thrilling tale.

In 1765 Henry obtained from the Commandant at Michilimackinac licence of the exclusive trade of Lake Superior. He purchased the freight of four canoes, which he took at the price of 10,000 good, merchantable beavers. With his crew of twelve men, and supplies of fifty bushels of prepared Indian corn, he reached a band of Indians on the Lake who were in poverty, but who took his supplies on trust, and went off to hunt beaver. In due time the Indians returned, and paid up promptly and fully the loans made to them. By 1768 he had succeeded in opening up the desired route of French traders, going from Michilimackinac to Kaministiquia on Lake Superior and returning. His later journeys we may notice afterwards.

Of the other merchants who followed Henry in reviving the old route, the first to make a notable adventure was the Scotchman Thomas Curry. Procuring the requisite band of voyageurs and interpreters, in 1766 he pushed through with four canoes, along Verendrye's route, even to the site of the old French Fort Bourbon, on the west of Cedar Lake, on the lower Saskatchewan River. Curry had in his movement something of the spirit of Verendrye, and his season's trip was so successful that, according to Sir Alexander Mackenzie, his fine furs gave so handsome a return that "he was satisfied never again to return to the Indian country."

Another valorous Scotchman, James Finlay, of Montreal, took up the paddle that Curry had laid down, and in 1768, with a force equal to that of Curry, passed into the interior and ascended the Saskatchewan to Nipawi, the farthest point which Verendrye had reached. He was rewarded with a generous return for his venture.

But while these journeys had been successful, it would seem that the turbulent state of the Indian tribes had made other expeditions disastrous. In a memorial sent by the fur traders a few years later to the Canadian Government, it is stated that in a venture made from Michilimackinac in 1765 the Indians of Rainy Lake had plundered the traders of their goods, that in the next year a similar revolt followed, that in the following year the traders were compelled to leave a certain portion of their goods at Rainy Lake to be allowed to go on to Lake Ouinipique. It is stated that the brothers, Benjamin and James Frobisher, of Montreal, who became so celebrated as fur traders, began a post ten years after the conquest. These two merchants were Englishmen. They speedily took the lead in pushing forward far into the interior, and were the most practical of the fur traders in making alliances and in dealing successfully with the Indians. In their first expedition they had the same experience in their goods being seized by the thievish Indians of Rainy Lake; but before they could send back word the goods for the next venture had reached Grand Portage on Lake Superior, and they were compelled to try the route to the West again. On this occasion they managed to defy the pillaging bands, and reached Fort Bourbon on the Saskatchewan. They now discovered that co-operation and a considerable show of force was the only method of carrying on a safe trade among the various tribes. It was fortunate for the Montreal traders that such courageous leaders as the Frobishers had undertaken the trade.

The trade to the North-West thus received a marvellous development at the hands of the Montreal merchants. Nepigon and the Kaministiquia, which had been such important points in the

French *régime*, had been quite forgotten, and Grand Portage was now the place of greatest interest, and so continued to the end of the century.

It is with peculiar interest a visitor to-day makes his way to Grand Portage. The writer, after a difficult night voyage over the stormy waters of Lake Superior, rowed by the keeper of a neighbouring lighthouse, made a visit a few years ago to this spot. Grand Portage ends on a bay of Lake Superior. It is partially sheltered by a rocky island which has the appearance of a robber's keep, but has one inhabitant, the only white man of the region, a French Canadian of very fair means. On the bay is to-day an Indian village, chiefly celebrated for its multitude of dogs. A few traces of the former greatness of the place may be seen in the timbers down in the water of the former wharves, which were extensive. Few traces of forts are now, a century after their desertion by the fur traders, to be seen.

The portage, consisting of a road fairly made for the nine or ten miles necessary to avoid the falls on Pigeon River, can still be followed. No horse or ox is now to be found in the whole district, where at one time the traders used this means of lightening the burden of packing over the portage. The solitary road, as the traveller walks along it, with weeds and grasses grown up, brings to one a melancholy feeling. The bustle of voyageur and trader and Indian is no more; and the reflection made by Irving comes back, "The lords of the lakes and forests have passed away."

And yet Grand Portage was at the time of which we are writing a place of vast importance. Here there were employed as early as 1783, by the several merchants from Montreal, 500 men. One half of these came from Montreal to Grand Portage in canoes of four tons burden, each managed by from eight to ten men. As these were regarded as having the least romantic portion of the route, meeting with no Indians, and living on cured rations, they were called the "mangeurs de lard," or pork eaters. The other half of the force journeyed inland from Grand Portage in canoes, each carrying about a ton and a half. Living on game and the dried meat of the buffalo, known as pemmican, these were a more independent and daring body. They were called the "coureurs de bois."

For fifteen days after August 15th these wood-runners portaged over the nine or ten miles their burdens. Men carrying 150 lbs. each way have been known to make the portage and return in six hours. When the canoes were loaded at the west end of the portage with two-thirds goods and one-third provisions, then the hurry of the season came, and supplies for Lake Winnipeg, the Saskatchewan, and far distant Athabasca were hastened on apace. The difficulties of the route were at many a décharge, where only the goods needed to be removed and the canoes taken over the rapids, or at the portage, where both canoes and load were carried past dangerous falls and fierce rapids. The dash, energy, and skill that characterized these mixed companies of Scottish traders, French voyageurs, half-breed and Indian *engagés*, have been well spoken of by all observers, and appeal strongly to the lovers of the picturesque and heroic.

A quarter of a century after the conquest we have a note of alarm at the new competition that the Company from Hudson Bay had at last undertaken. In the Memorial before us it is stated that disturbance of trade is made by "New Adventurers." It is with a smile we read of the daring and strong-handed traders of Montreal saying, "Those adventurers (evidently H. B. Co.), consulting their own interests only, without the least regard to the management of the natives or the general welfare of the trade, soon occasioned such disorders, &c… Since that time business is carried on with great disadvantages."

This reference, so prosaically introduced, is really one of enormous moment in our story. The Frobishers, with their keen business instincts and daring plans, saw that the real stroke which would lead them on to fortune was to divert the stream of trade then going to Hudson Bay southward to Lake Superior. Accordingly, with a further aggressive movement in view, Joseph Frobisher established a post on Sturgeon Lake, an enlargement of the Saskatchewan, near the point known by the early French as Poskoiac.

A glance at the map will show how well chosen Sturgeon Lake Fort was. Northward from it a watercourse could be readily followed, by which the main line of water communication from the

great northern districts to Hudson Bay could be reached and the Northern Indians be interrupted in their annual pilgrimage to the Bay. But, as we shall afterward see, the sleeping giant of the Bay had been awakened and was about to stretch forth his arms to grasp the trade of the interior with a new vigour. Two years after Frobisher had thrown down the pledge of battle, it was taken up by the arrival of Samuel Hearne, an officer of the Hudson's Bay Company, and by his founding Fort Cumberland on Sturgeon Lake, about two miles below Frobisher's Fort. Hearne returned to the Bay, leaving his new fort garrisoned by a number of Orkney men under an English officer.

During the same year an explorer, on behalf of the Hudson's Bay Company, visited Red River, but no fort was built there for some time afterward. The building of Fort Cumberland led to a consolidation on the part of the Montreal merchants. In the next year after its building, Alexander Henry, the brothers Frobisher, trader Cadot, and a daring trader named Pond, gathered at Sturgeon Lake, and laid their plans for striking a blow in retaliation, as they regarded it, for the disturbance of trade made by the Hudson's Bay Company in penetrating to the interior from the Bay.

Cadot, with four canoes, went west to the Saskatchewan; Pond, with two, to the country on Lake Dauphin; and Henry and the Frobisher brothers, with their ten canoes and upwards of forty men, hastened northward to carry out the project of turning anew the Northern Indians from their usual visit to the Bay. On the way to the Churchill River they built a fort on Beaver Lake. In the following year, a strong party went north to Churchill or English River, as Joseph Frobisher now called it. When it was reached they turned westward and ascended the Churchill, returning at Serpent's Rapid, but sending Thomas Frobisher with goods on to Lake Athabasca.

From the energy displayed, and the skill shown in seizing the main points in the country, it will be seen that the Montreal merchants were not lacking in ability to plan and decision to execute. The two great forces have now met, and for fifty years a battle royal will be fought for the rivers, rocks, and plains of the North Country. At present it is our duty to follow somewhat further the merchants of Montreal in their agencies in the North-West.

There can be no doubt that the competition between the two companies produced disorder and confusion among the Indian tribes. The Indian nature is excitable and suspicious. Rival traders for their own ends played upon the fears and cupidity alike of the simple children of the woods and prairies. They represented their opponents in both cases as unreliable and grasping, and party spirit unknown before showed itself in most violent forms. The feeling against the whites of both parties was aroused by injustices, in some cases fancied, in others real. The Assiniboines, really the northern branch of the fierce Sioux of the prairies, were first to seize the tomahawk. They attacked Poplar Fort on the Assiniboine. After some loss of life, Bruce and Boyer, who were in charge of the fort, decided to desert it. Numerous other attacks were made on the traders' forts, and it looked as if the prairies would be the scene of a general Indian war.

The only thing that seems to have prevented so dire a disaster was the appearance of what is ever a dreadful enemy to the poor Indian, the scourge of smallpox. The Assiniboines had gone on a war expedition against the Mandans of the Missouri River, and had carried back the smallpox infection which prevailed among the Mandan lodges. This disease spread over the whole country, and several bands of Indians were completely blotted out. Of one tribe of four hundred lodges, only ten persons remained; the poor survivors, in seeking succour from other bands, carried the disease with them. At the end of 1782 there were only twelve traders who had persevered in their trade on account of the discouragements, but the whole trade was for two or three seasons brought to an end by this disease.

The decimation of the tribes, the fear of infection by the traders, and the general awe cast over the country turned the thoughts of the natives away from war, and as Masson says, "the whites had thus escaped the danger which threatened them."

Two or three years after the scourge, the merchants of Montreal revived the trade, and, as we shall see, made a combination which, in the thoroughness of its discipline, the energy of its operations,

the courage of its promoters, and the scope of its trade, has perhaps never been equalled in the history of trading companies.

CHAPTER XII
DISCOVERY OF THE COPPERMINE

Samuel Hearne – "The Mungo Park of Canada" – Perouse complains – The North-West Passage – Indian guides – Two failures – Third journey successful – Smokes the calumet – Discovers Arctic Ocean – Cruelty to the Eskimos – Error in latitude – Remarkable Indian woman – Capture of Prince of Wales Fort – Criticism by Umfreville.

Such an agitation as that so skilfully planned and shrewdly carried on by Arthur Dobbs, Esq., could not but affect the action of the Hudson's Bay Company. The most serious charge brought against the Company was that, while having a monopoly of the trade on Hudson Bay, it had taken no steps to penetrate the country and develop its resources. It is of course evident that the Company itself could have no reason for refusing to open up trade with the interior, for by this means it would be expanding its operations and increasing its profits. The real reason for its not doing so seems to have been the inertia, not to say fear, of Hudson's Bay Company agents on the Bay who failed to mingle with the bands of Indians in the interior.

Now the man was found who was to be equal to the occasion. This was Samuel Hearne. Except occasional reference to him in the minutes of the Company and works of the period, we know little of Samuel Hearne. He was one of the class of men to which belonged Norton, Kelsey, and others – men who had grown up in the service of the Company on the Bay, and had become, in the course of years, accustomed to the climate, condition of life, and haunts of the Indians, thus being fitted for active work for the Company.

Samuel Hearne became so celebrated in his inland expe ditions, that the credit of the Hudson's Bay Company leaving the coast and venturing into the interior has always been attached to his name. So greatly, especially in the English mind, have his explorations bulked, that the author of a book of travels in Canada about the beginning of this century called him the "Mungo Park of Canada." In his "Journey," we have an account of his earlier voyages to the interior in search of the Coppermine River. This book has a somewhat notable history.

In the four-volume work of La Perouse, the French navigator, it is stated that when he took Prince of Wales Fort on the Churchill River in 1782, Hearne, as governor of the fort, surrendered it to him, and that the manuscript of his "Journey" was seized by the French commander. It was returned to Hearne on condition that it should be published, but the publication did not take place until thirteen years afterwards. It is somewhat amusing to read in Perouse's preface (1791) the complaint that Hearne had not kept faith with him in regard to publishing the journal, and the hope is expressed that this public statement in reminding him of his promise would have the desired effect of the journal being published.

Four years afterwards Hearne's "Journey" appeared. A reference to this fine quarto work, which is well illustrated, brings us back in the introduction to all the controversies embodied in the work of Dobbs, Ellis, Robson, and the "American Traveller."

Hearne's orders were received from the Hudson's Bay Company, in 1769, to go on a land expedition to the interior of the continent, from the mouth of the Churchill as far as 70 deg. N. lat., to smoke the calumet of peace with the Indians, to take accurate astronomical observations, to go with guides to the Athabasca country, and thence northward to a river abounding with copper ore and "animals of the fur kind," &c.

It is very noticeable, also, that his instructions distinctly tell him "to clear up the point, if possible, in order to prevent further doubt from arising hereafter respecting a passage out of Hudson Bay into the Western Ocean, as hath lately been represented by the 'American Traveller.'" The

instructions made it plain that it was the agitation still continuing from the days of Dobbs which led to the sending of Hearne to the north country.

Hearne's first expedition was made during the last months of the year 1769. It is peculiarly instructive in the fact that it failed to accomplish anything, as it gives us a glimpse of the difficulties which no doubt so long prevented the movement to the interior. In the first place, the bitterly severe months of November and December were badly chosen for the time of the expedition. On the sixth day of the former of these months Hearne left Prince of Wales Fort, taking leave of the Governor, and being sent off with a salute of seven guns. His guide was an Indian chief, Chawchinahaw. Hearne ascertained very soon, what others have found among the Indians, that his guide was not to be trusted; he "often painted the difficulties in the worst colours" and took every method to dishearten the explorer. Three weeks after starting, a number of the Indians deserted Hearne.

Shortly after this mishap, Chawchinahaw and his company ruthlessly deserted the expedition, and two hundred miles from the fort set out on another route, "making the woods ring with their laughter." Meeting other Indians, Hearne purchased venison, but was cheated, while his Indian guide was feasted. The explorer remarks: – "A sufficient proof of the singular advantage which a native of this country has over an Englishman, when at such a distance from the Company's factories as to depend entirely on them for subsistence."

Hearne arrived at the fort after an absence of thirty-seven days, as he says, "to my own mortification and the no small surprise of the Governor." Hearne was simply illustrating what has been shown a hundred times since, in all foreign regions, viz., native peoples are quick to see the inexperience of men raw to the country, and will heartlessly maltreat and deceive them. However, British officers and men in all parts of the world become at length accustomed to dealing with savage peoples, and after some experience, none have ever equalled British agents and explorers in the management and direction of such peoples.

Early in the following year Hearne plucked up courage for another expedition. On this occasion he determined to take no Europeans, but to trust to Indians alone. On February 23rd, accompanied by five Indians, Hearne started on his second journey. Following the advice of the Governor, the party took no Indian women with them, though Hearne states that this was a mistake, as they were "needed for hauling the baggage as well as for dressing skins for clothing, pitching our tent, getting firing, &c." During the first part of the journey deer were plentiful, and the fish obtained by cutting holes in the ice of the lakes were excellent.

Hearne spent the time of the necessary delays caused by the obtaining of fish and game in taking observations, keeping his journal and chart, and doing his share of trapping. Meeting, as soon as the spring opened, bands of Indians going on various errands, the explorer started overland. He carried sixty pounds of burden, consisting of quadrant, books and papers, compass, wearing apparel, weapons and presents for the natives. The traveller often made twenty miles a day over the rugged country.

Meeting a chief of the Northern Indians going in July to Prince of Wales Fort, Hearne sent by him for ammunition and supplies. A canoe being now necessary, Hearne purchased this of the Indians. It was obtained by the exchange of a single knife, the full value of which did not exceed a penny. In the middle of this month the party saw bands of musk oxen. A number of these were killed and their flesh made into pemmican for future use. Finding it impossible to reach the Coppermine during the season, Hearne determined to live with the Indians for the winter.

The explorer was a good deal disturbed by having to give presents to Indians who met him. Some of them wanted guns, all wanted ammunition, iron-work, and tobacco; many were solicitous for medicine; and others pressed for different articles of clothing. He thought the Indians very inconsiderate in their demands.

On August 11th the explorer had the misfortune to lose his quadrant by its being blown open and broken by the wind. Shortly after this disaster, Hearne was plundered by a number of Indians who joined him.

He determined to return to the fort. Suffering from the want of food and clothing, Hearne was overtaken by a famous chief, Matonabbee, who was going eastward to Prince of Wales Fort. The chief had lived several years at the fort, and was one who knew the Coppermine. Matonabbee discussed the reasons of Hearne's failure in his two expeditions. The forest philosopher gave as the reason of these failures the misconduct of the guides and the failure to take any women on the journey. After maintaining that women were made for labour, and speaking of their assistance, said Matonabbee, "women, though they do everything, are maintained at a trifling expense, for as they always stand cook, the very licking of their fingers in scarce times is sufficient for their subsistence." Plainly, the northern chief had need of the ameliorating influence of modern reformers. In company with the chief, Hearne returned to the fort, reaching it after an absence of eight months and twenty-two days, having, as he says, had "a fruitless or at least an unsuccessful journey."

Hearne, though beaten twice, was determined to try a third time and win. He recommended the employment of Matonabbee as a guide of intelligence and experience. Governor Norton wished to send some of the coast Indians with Hearne, but the latter refused them, and incurred the ill-will of the Governor. Hearne's instructions on this third journey were "in quest of a North-West Passage, copper-mines, or any other thing that may be serviceable to the British nation in general, or the Hudson's Bay Company in particular." The explorer was now furnished with an Elton's quadrant.

This third journey was begun on December 7th, 1770. Travelling sometimes for three or four days without food, they were annoyed, when supplies were secured, by the chief Matonabbee taking so ill from over-eating that he had to be drawn upon a sledge. Without more than the usual incidents of Indian travelling, the party pushed on till a point some 19 deg. west of Churchill was reached, according to the calculations of the explorer. It is to be noted, however, that Hearne's observations, measurements, and maps, do not seem to be at all accurate.

Turning northward, as far as can be now made out, about the spot where the North-West traders first appeared on their way to the Churchill River, Hearne went north to his destination. His Indian guides now formed a large war party from the resident Indians, to meet the Eskimos of the river to which they were going and to conquer them.

The explorer announces that having left behind "all the women, children, dogs, heavy baggage, and other encumbrances," on June 1st, 1771, they pursued their journey northward with great speed. On June 21st the sun did not set at all, which Hearne took to be proof that they had reached the Arctic Circle. Next day they met the Copper Indians, who welcomed them on hearing the object of their visit.

Hearne, according to orders, smoked the calumet of peace with the Copper Indians. These Indians had never before seen a white man. Hearne was considered a great curiosity. Pushing on upon their long journey, the explorers reached the Coppermine River on July 13th. Hearne was the witness of a cruel massacre of the Eskimos by his Indian allies, and the seizure of their copper utensils and other provisions, and expresses disgust at the enormity of the affair. The mouth of the river, which flows into the Arctic Ocean, was soon reached on July 18th, and the tide found to rise about fourteen feet.

Hearne seems in the narrative rather uncertain about the latitude of the mouth of the Coppermine River, but states that after some consultation with the Indians, he erected a mark, and took possession of the coast on behalf of the Hudson's Bay Company.

In Hearne's map, dated July, 1771, and purporting to be a plan of the Coppermine, the mouth of the river is about 71 deg. 54´ N. This was a great mistake, as the mouth of the river is somewhere near 68 deg. N. So great a mistake was certainly unpardonable. Hearne's apology was that after the breaking of his quadrant on the second expedition, the instrument which he used was an old Elton's quadrant, which had been knocking about the Prince of Wales Fort for nearly thirty years.

Having examined the resources of the river and heard of the mines from which the Copper Indians obtained all the metal for the manufacture of hatchets, chisels, knives, &c., Hearne started southward on his return journey on July 18th. Instead of coming by the direct route, he went with the Indians of his party to the north side of Lake Athabasca on December 24th. Having crossed the lake, as illustrating the loneliness of the region, the party found a woman who had escaped from an Indian band which had taken her prisoner, and who had not seen a human face for seven months, and had lived by snaring partridges, rabbits, and squirrels. Her skill in maintaining herself in lonely wilds was truly wonderful. She became the wife of one of the Indians of Hearne's party. In the middle of March, 1772, Hearne was delivered a letter, brought to him from Prince of Wales Fort and dated in the preceding June. Pushing eastward, after a number of adventures, Hearne reached Prince of Wales Fort on June 30th, 1772, having been absent on his third voyage eighteen months and twenty-three days. Hearne rejoices that he had at length put an end to the disputes concerning a North-West Passage through Hudson Bay. The fact, however, that during the nineteenth century this became again a living question shows that in this he was mistaken.

The perseverance and pluck of Hearne have impressed all those who have read his narrative. He was plainly one of the men possessing the subtle power of impressing the Indian mind. His disasters would have deterred many men from following up so difficult and extensive a route. To him the Hudson's Bay Company owes a debt of gratitude. That debt consists not in the discovery of the Coppermine, but in the attitude presented to the Northern Indians from the Bay all the way to Lake Athabasca. Hearne does not mention the Montreal fur traders, who, in the very year of his return, reached the Saskatchewan and were stationed at the Churchill River down which he passed.

First of white men to reach Athapuscow, now thought to have been Great Slave Lake, Samuel Hearne claimed for his Company priority of trade, and answered the calumnies that his Company was lacking in energy and enterprise. He took what may be called "seizen" of the soil for the English traders. We shall speak again of his part in leading the movement inland to oppose the Nor'-Westers in the interior. His services to the Hudson's Bay Company received recognition in his promotion, three years after his return home from his third voyage, to the governorship of the Prince of Wales Fort. To Hearne has been largely given the credit of the new and adventurous policy of the Hudson's Bay Company.

Hearne does not, however, disappear from public notice on his promotion to the command of Prince of Wales Fort. When war broke out a few years later between England and France, the latter country, remembering her old successes under D'Iberville on Hudson Bay, sent a naval expedition to attack the forts on the Bay. Umfreville gives an account of the attack on Prince of Wales Fort on August 8th and 9th, 1772. Admiral de la Perouse was in command of these war vessels, his flagship being *Le Sceptre*, of seventy-four guns. The garrison was thought to be well provided for a siege, and La Perouse evidently expected to have a severe contest. However, as he approached the fort, there seemed to be no preparations made for defence, and, on the summons to surrender, the gates were immediately thrown open.

Umfreville, who was in the garrison and was taken prisoner on this occasion, speaks of the conduct of the Governor as being very reprehensible, but severely criticizes the Company for its neglect. He says: – "The strength of the fort itself was such as would have resisted the attack of a more considerable force; it was built of the strongest materials, the walls were of great thickness and very durable (it was planned by the ingenious Mr. Robson, who went out in 1742 for that purpose), it having been forty years in building and attended with great expense to the Company. In short, it was the opinion of every intelligent person that it might have made an obstinate resistance when attacked, had it been as well provided in other respects; but through the impolitic conduct of the Company, every courageous exertion of their servants must have been considered as imprudent temerity; for this place, which would have required four hundred men for its defence, the Company, in its consummate wisdom, had garrisoned with only thirty-nine."

In this matter, Umfreville very plainly shows his animus to the Company, but incidentally he exonerates Hearne from the charge of cowardice, inasmuch as it would have been madness to make defence against so large a body of men. As has been before pointed out, we can hardly charge with cowardice the man who had shown his courage and determination in the three toilsome and dangerous journeys spoken of; rather would we see in this a proof of his wisdom under unfortunate circumstances. The surrender of York Factory to La Perouse twelve days afterwards, without resistance, was an event of an equally discouraging kind. The Company suffered great loss by the surrender of these forts, which had been unmolested since the Treaty of Utrecht.

CHAPTER XIII
FORTS ON HUDSON BAY LEFT BEHIND

Andrew Graham's "Memo." – Prince of Wales Fort – The garrison – Trade – York Factory – Furs – Albany – Subordinate forts – Moose – Moses Norton – Cumberland House – Upper Assiniboine – Rainy Lake – Brandon House – Red River – Conflict of the Companies.

The new policy of the Company that for a hundred years had carried on its operations in Hudson Bay was now to be adopted. As soon as the plan could be developed, a long line of posts in the interior would serve to carry on the chief trade, and the forts and factories on Hudson Bay would become depôts for storage and ports of departure for the Old World.

It is interesting at this point to have a view of the last days of the old system which had grown up during the operations of a century. We are fortunate in having an account of these forts in 1771 given by Andrew Graham, for many years a factor of the Hudson's Bay Company. This document is to be found in the Hudson's Bay Company house in London, and has been hitherto unpublished. The simplicity of description and curtness of detail gives the account its chief charm.

Prince of Wales Fort. – On a peninsula at the entrance of the Churchill River. Most northern settlement of the Company. A stone fort, mounting forty-two cannon, from six to twenty-four pounders. Opposite, on the south side of the river, Cape Merry Battery, mounting six twenty-four pounders with lodge-house and powder magazine. The river 1,006 yards wide. A ship can anchor six miles above the fort. Tides carry salt water twelve miles up the river. No springs near; drink snow water nine months of the year. In summer keep three draught horses to haul water and draw stones to finish building of forts.

Staff: – A chief factor and officers, with sixty servants and tradesmen. The council, with discretionary power, consists of chief factor, second factor, surgeon, sloop and brig masters, and captain of Company's ship when in port. These answer and sign the general letter, sent yearly to directors. The others are accountant, trader, steward, armourer, ship-wright, carpenter, cooper, blacksmith, mason, tailor, and labourers. These must not trade with natives, under penalties for so doing. Council mess together, also servants. Called by bell to duty, work from six to six in summer; eight to four in winter. Two watch in winter, three in summer. In emergencies, tradesmen must work at anything. Killing of partridges the most pleasant duty.

Company signs contract with servants for three or five years, with the remarkable clause: "Company may recall them home at any time without satisfaction for the remaining time. Contract may be renewed, if servants or labourers wish, at expiry of term. Salary advanced forty shillings, if men have behaved well in first term. The land and sea officers' and tradesmen's salaries do not vary, but seamen's are raised in time of war."

A ship of 200 tons burden, bearing provisions, arrives yearly in August or early September. Sails again in ten days, wind permitting, with cargo and those returning. Sailors alone get pay when at home.

The annual trade sent home from this fort is from ten to four thousand made beaver, in furs, felts, castorum, goose feathers, and quills, and a small quantity of train oil and whalebone, part of which they receive from the Eskimos, and the rest from the white whale fishery. A black whale fishery is in hand, but it shows no progress.

York Factory. – On the north bank of Hayes River, three miles from the entrance. Famous River Nelson, three miles north, makes the land between an island. Well-built fort of wood, log on log. Four bastions with sheds between, and a breastwork with twelve small carriage guns. Good class of quarters, with double row of strong palisades. On the bank's edge, before the fort, is a half-moon

battery, of turf and earth, with fifteen cannon, nine-pounders. Two miles below the fort, same side, is a battery of ten twelve-pounders, with lodge-house and powder magazine. These two batteries command the river, but the shoals and sand-banks across the mouth defend us more. No ship comes higher than five miles below the fort.

Governed like Prince of Wales Fort. Complement of men: forty-two. The natives come down Nelson River to trade. If weather calm, they paddle round the point. If not, they carry their furs across. This fort sends home from 7,000 to 33,000 made beaver in furs, &c., and a small quantity of white whale oil.

Severn Fort. – On the north bank of Severn River. Well-built square house, with four bastions. Men: eighteen. Commanded by a factor and sloop master. Eight small cannon and other warlike stores. Sloop carries furs in the fall to York Factory and delivers them to the ship, with the books and papers, receiving supply of trading goods, provisions, and stores. Severn full of shoals and sand banks. Sloop has difficulty in getting in and out. Has to wait spring tides inside the point. Trade sent home, 5,000 to 6,600 made beaver in furs, &c.

Albany Fort. – On south bank of Albany River, four miles from the entrance. Large well-built wood fort. Four bastions with shed between. Cannon and warlike stores. Men: thirty; factor and officers. River difficult. Ship rides five leagues out and is loaded and unloaded by large sloop. Trade, including two sub-houses of East Main and Henley, from 10,000 to 12,000 made beaver, &c. (This fort was the first Europeans had in Hudson Bay, and is where Hudson traded with natives.)

Henley House. – One hundred miles up the river from Albany. Eleven men, governed by master. First founded to prevent encroachments of the French, when masters of Canada, and present to check the English.

East Main House. – Entrance of Slude River. Small square house. Sloop master and eleven men. Trade: 1000 to 2000 made beaver in furs, &c. Depth of water just admits sloop.

Moose Factory. – South bank of Moose River, near entrance. Well-built wood fort – cannon and warlike stores. Twenty-five men. Factor and officers. River admits ship to good harbour, below fort. Trade, 3,000 to 4,000 made beavers in furs, &c. One ship supplies this fort, along with Albany and sub-forts.

These are the present Hudson's Bay Company's settlements in the Bay. "All under one discipline, and excepting the sub-houses, each factor receives a commission to act for benefit of Company, without being answerable to any person or persons in the Bay, more than to consult for good of Company in emergencies and to supply one another with trading goods, &c., if capable, the receiver giving credit for the same."

The movement to the interior was begun from the Prince of Wales Fort up the Churchill River. Next year, after his return from the discovery of the Coppermine, Samuel Hearne undertook the aggressive work of going to meet the Indians, now threatened from the Saskatchewan by the seductive influences of the Messrs. Frobisher, of the Montreal fur traders. The Governor at Prince of Wales Fort, for a good many years, had been Moses Norton. He was really an Indian born at the fort, who had received some education during a nine years' residence in England. Of uncultivated manners, and leading far from a pure life, he was yet a man of considerable force, with a power to command and the ability to ingratiate himself with the Indians. He was possessed of undoubted energy, and no doubt to his advice is very much due the movement to leave the forts in the Bay and penetrate to the interior of the country. In December of the very year (1773) in which Hearne went on his trading expedition inland, Norton died.

In the following year, as we have seen, Hearne erected Cumberland House, only five hundred yards from Frobisher's new post on Sturgeon Lake. It was the intention of the Hudson's Bay Company also to make an effort to control the trade to the south of Lake Winnipeg. Hastily called away after building Cumberland House, Hearne was compelled to leave a colleague, Mr. Cockings, in charge

of the newly-erected fort, and returned to the bay to take charge of Prince of Wales Fort, the post left vacant by the death of Governor Norton.

The Hudson's Bay Company, now regularly embarked in the inland trade, undertook to push their posts to different parts of the country, especially to the portion of the fur country in the direction from which the Montreal traders approached it. The English traders, as we learn from Umfreville, who was certainly not prejudiced in their favour, had the advantage of a higher reputation in character and trade among the Indians than had their Canadian opponents. From their greater nearness to northern waters, the old Company could reach a point in the Saskatchewan with their goods nearly a month earlier in the spring than their Montreal rivals were able to do. We find that in 1790 the Hudson's Bay Company crossed south from the northern waters and erected a trading post at the mouth of the Swan River, near Lake Winnipegoosis. This they soon deserted and built a fort on the upper waters of the Assiniboine River, a few miles above the present Hudson's Bay Company post of Fort Pelly.

A period of surprising energy was now seen in the English Company's affairs. "Carrying the war into Africa," they in the same year met their antagonists in the heart of their own territory, by building a trading post on Rainy Lake and another in the neighbouring Red Lake district, now included in North-Eastern Minnesota. Having seized the chief points southward, the aroused Company, in the next year (1791), pushed north-westward from Cumberland House and built an establishment at Ile à la Crosse, well up toward Lake Athabasca.

Crossing from Lake Winnipeg in early spring to the head waters of the Assiniboine River, the spring brigade of the Hudson's Bay Company quite outdid their rivals, and in 1794 built the historic Brandon House, at a very important point on the Assiniboine River. This post was for upwards of twenty years a chief Hudson's Bay Company centre until it was burnt. On the grassy bank of the Assiniboine, the writer some years ago found the remains of the old fort, and from the well-preserved character of the sod, was able to make out the line of the palisades, the exact size of all the buildings, and thus to obtain the ground plan.

Brandon House was on the south side of the Assiniboine, about seventeen miles below the present city of Brandon. Its remains are situated on the homestead of Mr. George Mair, a Canadian settler from Beauharnois, Quebec, who settled here on July 20th, 1879. The site was well chosen at a bend of the river, having the Assiniboine in front of it on the east and partially so also on the north. The front of the palisade faced to the east, and midway in the wall was a gate ten feet wide, with inside of it a look-out tower (guérite) seven feet square. On the south side was the long store-house. In the centre had stood a building said by some to have been the blacksmith's shop. Along the north wall were the buildings for residences and other purposes. The remains of other forts, belonging to rival companies, are not far away, but of these we shall speak again.

The same activity continued to exist in the following year, for in points so far apart as the Upper Saskatchewan and Lake Winnipeg new forts were built. The former of these was Edmonton House, built on the north branch of the Saskatchewan. The fort erected on Lake Winnipeg was probably that at the mouth of the Winnipeg River, near where Fort Alexander now stands.

In 1796, another post was begun on the Assiniboine River, not unlikely near the old site of Fort de la Reine, while in the following year, as a half-way house to Edmonton on the Saskatchewan, Carlton House was erected. The Red River proper was taken possession of by the Company in 1799. Alexander Henry, junr., tells us that very near the boundary line (49 degrees N.) on the east side of the Red River, there were in 1800 the remains of a fort.

Such was the condition of things, so far as the Hudson's Bay Company was concerned, at the end of the century.

In twenty-five years they had extended their trade from Edmonton House, near the Rockies, as far as Rainy Lake; they had made Cumberland House the centre of their operations in the interior, and had taken a strong hold of the fertile region on the Red and Assiniboine Rivers, of which to-day the city of Winnipeg is the centre.

Undoubtedly the severe competition between the Montreal merchants and the Hudson's Bay Company greatly diminished the profits of both. According to Umfreville, the Hudson's Bay Company business was conducted much more economi cally than that of the merchants of Montreal. The Company upon the Bay chiefly employed men obtained in the Orkney Islands, who were a steady, plodding, and reliable class. The employés of the Montreal merchants were a wild, free, reckless people, much addicted to drink, and consequently less to be depended upon.

The same writer states that the competition between the two rival bodies of traders resulted badly for the Indians. He says: "So that the Canadians from Canada and the Europeans from Hudson Bay met together, not at all to the ulterior advantage of the natives, who by this means became degenerated and debauched, through the excessive use of spirituous liquors imported by these rivals in commerce."

One thing at any rate had been clearly demonstrated, that the inglorious sleeping by the side of the Bay, charged by Dobbs and others against the old Company, had been overcome, and that the first quarter of the second century of the history of the Hudson's Bay Company showed that the Company's motto, "Pro Pelle Cutem," "Skin for Skin," had not been inappropriately chosen.

CHAPTER XIV
THE NORTH-WEST COMPANY FORMED

Hudson's Bay Company aggressive – The great McTavish – The Frobishers – Pond and Pangman dissatisfied – Gregory and McLeod – Strength of the North-West Company – Vessels to be built – New route from Lake Superior sought – Good-will at times – Bloody Pond – Wider union, 1787 – Fort Alexandria – Mouth of the Souris – Enormous fur trade – Wealthy Nor'-Westers – "The Haunted House."

The terrible scourge of smallpox cut off one-half, some say one-third of the Indian population of the fur country. This was a severe blow to the prosperity of the fur trade, as the traders largely depended on the Indians as trappers. The determination shown by the Hudson's Bay Company, and the zeal with which they took advantage of an early access to the Northern Indians, were a surprise to the Montreal traders, and we find in the writings of the time, frequent expressions as to the loss of profits produced by the competition in the fur trade.

The leading fur merchants of Montreal determined on a combination of their forces. Chief among the stronger houses were the Frobishers. Joseph Frobisher had returned from his two years' expedition in 1776, "having secured what was in those days counted a competent fortune," and was one of the "characters" of the commercial capital of Canada.

The strongest factor in the combination was probably Simon McTavish, of whom a writer has said "that he may be regarded as the founder of the famous North-West Company." McTavish, born in 1750, was a Highlander of enormous energy and decision of character. While by his force of will rousing opposition, yet he had excellent business capacity, and it was he who suggested the cessation of rivalries and strife among themselves and the union of their forces by the Canadian traders.

Accordingly the North-West Company was formed 1783-4, its stock being apportioned into sixteen parts, each stockholder supplying in lieu of money a certain proportion of the commodities necessary for trade, and the Committee dividing their profits when the returns were made from the sale of furs. The united firms of Benjamin and Joseph Frobisher and Simon McTavish administered the whole affair for the traders and received a commission as agents.

The brightest prospect lay before the new formed Company, and they had their first gathering at Grand Portage in the spring of 1784. But union did not satisfy all. A viciously-disposed and self-confident trader, Peter Pond, had not been consulted. Pond was an American, who, as we have seen in 1775, accompanied Henry, Cadot, and Frobisher to the far North-West. Two years later he had gone to Lake Athabasca, and forty miles from the lake on Deer River, had built in 1778 the first fort in the far-distant region, which became known as the Fur Emporium of the North-West. Pond had with much skill prepared a great map of the country for presentation to the Empress Catherine of Russia, and at a later stage gave much information to the American commissioners who settled the boundary line under the Treaty of Paris.

Pond was dissatisfied and refused to enter the new Company. Another trader, Peter Pangman, an American also, had been overlooked in the new Company, and he and Pond now came to Montreal, determined to form a strong opposition to the McTavish and Frobisher combination. In this they were successful.

One of the rising merchants of Montreal at this time was John Gregory, a young Englishman. He was united in partnership with Alexander Norman McLeod, an ardent Highlander, who afterwards rose to great distinction as a magnate of the fur trade. Pangman and Pond appealed to the self-interest of Gregory, McLeod & Company, and so, very shortly after his projected union of all the Canadian interests, McTavish saw arise a rival, not so large as his own Company, but in no way to be despised.

To this rival Company also belonged an energetic, strong-willed Scotchman, who afterwards became the celebrated Sir Alexander Mackenzie, his cousin Roderick McKenzie – a notable character, a trader named Ross, and also young Finlay, a son of the pioneer so well known twenty years before in the fur trading and civil history of Canada. Pond signalized himself by soon after deserting to the older Company.

The younger Company acted with great vigour. Leaving McLeod behind to manage the business in Montreal, the other members found themselves in the summer at Grand Portage, where they established a post. They then divided up the country and gave it to the partners and traders. Athabasca was given to Ross; Churchill River to Alexander Mackenzie; the Saskatchewan to Pangman; and the Red River country to the veteran trader Pollock.

The North-West Company entered with great energy upon its occupation of the North-West country. We are able to refer to an unpublished memorial presented by them, in 1784, to Governor Haldimand, which shows very well their hopes and expectations. They claim to have explored and improved the route from Grand Portage to Lake Ouinipique, and they ask the governor to grant them the exclusive privilege of using this route for ten years.

They recite the expeditions made by the Montreal traders from their posts in 1765 up to the time of their memorial. They urge the granting of favours to them on the double ground of their having to oppose the "new adventurers," as they call the Hudson's Bay Company, in the north, and they claim to desire to oppose the encroachments of the United States in the south. They state the value of the property of the Company in the North-West, exclusive of houses and stores, to be 25,303*l.* 3*s.* 6*d*; the other outfits also sent to the country will not fall far short of this sum. The Company will have at Grand Portage in the following July 50,000*l.* (original cost) in fur. They further ask the privilege of constructing a small vessel to be built at Detroit and to be taken up Sault Ste. Marie to ply on Lake Superior, and also that in transporting their supplies on the King's ships from Niagara and Detroit to Michilimackinac, they may have the precedence on account of the shortness of their season and great distance interior to be reached.

They state that they have arranged to have a spot selected at Sault Ste. Marie, whither they may have the fort transferred from Michilimackinac, which place had been awarded by the Treaty of Paris to the Americans. They desire another vessel placed on the lakes to carry their furs to Detroit. This indicates a great revival of the fur trade and vigorous plans for its prosecution.

A most interesting statement is also made in the memorial: that on account of Grand Portage itself having been by the Treaty of Paris left on the American side of the boundary on Lake Superior, they had taken steps to find a Canadian route by which the trade could be carried on from Lake Superior to the interior. They state that they had sent off on an expedition a canoe, with provisions only, navigated by six Canadians, under the direction of Mr. Edward Umfreville, who had been eleven years in the service of the Hudson's Bay Company, and who along with his colleague, Mr. Verrance, knew the language of the Indians.

We learn from Umfreville's book that "he succeeded in his expedition much to the satisfaction of the merchants," along the route from Lake Nepigon to Winnipeg River. The route discovered proved almost impracticable for trade, but as it was many years before the terms of the treaty were carried into effect, Grand Portage remained for the time the favourite pathway to the interior.

The conflict of the two Montreal companies almost obscured that with the English traders from Hudson Bay. True, in some districts the competition was peaceful and honourable. The nephew of Simon McTavish, William McGillivray, who afterwards rose to great prominence as a trader, was stationed with one of the rival company, Roderick McKenzie, of whom we have spoken, on the English River. In 1786 they had both succeeded so well in trade that, forming their men into two brigades, they returned together, making the woods resound with the lively French songs of the voyageurs.

The attitude of the traders largely depended, however, on the character of the men. To the Athabasca district the impetuous and intractable Pond was sent by the older Company, on his desertion to it. Here there was the powerful influence of the Hudson's Bay Company to contend against, and the old Company from the Bay long maintained its hold on the Northern Indians. To make a flank movement upon the Hudson's Bay Company he sent Cuthbert Grant and a French trader to Slave Lake, on which they established Fort Resolution, while, pushing on still farther, they reached a point afterwards known as Fort Providence.

The third body to be represented in Athabasca Lake was the small North-West Company by their *bourgeois*, John Ross. Ross was a peaceable and fair man, but Pond so stirred up strife that the employés of the two Companies were in a perpetual quarrel. In one of these conflicts Ross was unfortunately killed. This added to the evil reputation of Pond, who in 1781 had been charged with the murder of a peaceful trader named Wadin, in the same Athabasca region.

When Roderick McKenzie heard at Ile à la Crosse of the murder, he hastened to the meeting of the traders at Grand Portage. This alarming event so affected the traders that the two Companies agreed to unite. The union was effected in 1787, and the business at headquarters in Montreal was now managed by the three houses of McTavish, Frobisher, and Gregory. Alexander Mackenzie was despatched to Athabasca to take the place of the unfortunate trader Ross, and so became acquainted with the region which was to be the scene of his triumphs in discovery.

The union of the North-West fur companies led to extension in some directions. The Assiniboine Valley, in one of the most fertile parts of the country, was more fully occupied. As in the case of the Hudson's Bay Company, the occupation of this valley took place by first coming to Lake Winnipeg and ascending the Swan River (always a fur trader's paradise), until, by a short portage, the Upper Assiniboine was reached.

The oldest fort in this valley belonging to the Nor'-Westers seems to have been built by a trader, Robert Grant, a year or two after 1780. It is declared by trader John McDonnell to have been two short days' march from the junction of the Qu'Appelle and Assiniboine.

Well up the Assiniboine, and not far from the source of the Swan River, stood Fort Alexandria, "surrounded by groves of birch, poplar, and aspen," and said to have been named after Sir Alexander Mackenzie. It was 256 feet in length by 196 feet in breadth; the "houses, stores, &c., being well built, plastered on the inside and outside, and washed over with a white earth, which answers nearly as well as lime for white-washing."

Connected with this region was the name of a famous trader, Cuthbert Grant, the father of the leader of the half-breeds and Nor'-Westers, of whom we shall speak afterwards. At the mouth of Shell River on the Assiniboine stood a small fort built by Peter Grant in 1794.

When the Nor'-Westers became acquainted with the route down the Assiniboine, they followed it to its mouth, and from that point, where it joined the Red River, descended to Lake Winnipeg and crossed to the Winnipeg River.

In order to do this they established in 1785, as a halting place, Pine Fort, about eighteen miles below the junction of the Souris and Assiniboine Rivers. At the mouth of the Souris River, and near the site of the Brandon House, already described as built by the Hudson's Bay Company, the North-West Company built in 1795 Assiniboine House. This fort became of great importance as the depôt for expeditions to the Mandans of the Missouri River.

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