

CHAPTER XVIII

SCOTTISH BORDER TRADERS

THE strong individuality of the Scotsman shows itself in his willingness to colonise and to face the dangers and novelties of a new country. His success is based on two qualities that go to make up this trait of character—namely, courage and adaptability. The Scotsman is not afraid of new conditions, and he has the patience and power of observation required to fit into new circumstances. In the Fur Country of a century ago it needed remarkable courage to face the environment of the wild beasts and wilder men of the fur trade. There was no law to protect the newcomer, and the Indians, in their ignorant state and constant feuds, were bound to involve the white man in their disputes, and to meet these the fur trader required the wisdom of a Solon, and the resources of a Machiavelli. Accordingly, when several Companies were trading in the same district and young Scotsmen came out and put in their apprenticeship with them, there was a tendency among the bolder spirits to fly off from the main body and carry on a trade for themselves as soon as they could select a good district and compass

