

of Minnesota, southward of this line. From Canada to the Red River the route (if a track known only to hunters can be so called) lies through Lake la Pluie, over some hundred miles of marshes, inland waters, and *portages*. From the peopled parts of Minnesota it is accessible by a short and easy route over prairies. The settlement itself extends some fifty miles along the Red and Assiniboine rivers. The alluvial soil of their banks is wonderfully fertile. Eighteen years of uninterrupted cropping have been endured by it in some places. Behind the river banks extend vast plains of grass. The climate, it is true, is not attractive; a more than Russian winter and a more than Canadian summer—eight months of frost and four months of mosquitoes. But in favorable seasons the produce is enormous. The settlers are described as reveling in rude abundance; their only drawback the absolute impossibility hitherto of exporting their overplus or importing the commodities of civilized life except through the distant waters of Hudson's Bay, open only two or three months in the year.

On this secluded island in the wilderness dwell some twelve or fifteen thousand British subjects—farmers, hunters, fishermen. They have been very mildly governed for some fifty years past by the Hudson's Bay Company; they have a bishop and clergy, a recorder, a governor, with all appliances, found for them at very trifling expense to themselves. And so long as the late Mr. Ellice, popularly termed the Bear, lived, they had in England a kind of pope, or head lama, whom they venerated at a distance, and who was ever active and vigilant in protecting them against the dreaded invasion of foreigners, British or American. For the truth is that the Hudson's Bay Company petted and encouraged these simple folks for good reasons of its own. Its rulers were excessively anxious to prevent interlopers from meddling with their fur trade to the north, and they were always ready to point to this "thriving agricultural community" as a proof that they had a soul for greater things than the pursuit of fur-bearing animals—that they were, in truth, enlightened patrons of civilization.

It might have been thought that a community so secluded and so cared for would at least be at peace within itself. But, alas for the imperfection of human nature! nothing could be further from the fact. Ever since its foundation by Lord Selkirk sixty years ago, the settlement has been a scene of permanent intestine division. It has two persuasions—Anglican and Roman Catholic; two languages—English and French; with numbers nearly equal, with a considerable dose of the savage Indian element at the service of either party when required. Its foundations were laid in strife. Lord Selkirk brought there a stock of hardy Highlanders from Sutherland, and established them under the protection of the Hudson's Bay Company. But the Northwest Company of Montreal strove with the former for their vast monopoly, or a share of it. They surrounded the infant colony with a cordon of "half-breeds"—offspring of Canadians and Indian women, popularly termed "*Les Bois Brûlés*;" and ultimately actual war broke out between them. The Scots were for a time outnumbered by their wild enemies. Governor Semple, a brave and righteous man, was killed in a skirmish in 1816. Then the authorities on both sides got frightened, and peace was made. The companies coalesced. And the little settlement, like infant Rome, was made to admit within one ring fence its Romans and Sabines—British settlers and half-breeds on the one side, Canadian half-breeds on the other—to live together on as good terms as they might. This the colonists accomplished judiciously by settling apart at the opposite ends of the occupied ground. Since that time a kind of hollow peace has prevailed between them, but not without interruptions. In 1836 "a person styling himself General Dickson, of the Indian liberating army—one of those premature filibusters whom America has so often sent forth—came from Washington, and made an effort to seduce the servants of the company with the pretended object of uniting all the Indians in one nation, of which he was to be chief under the title of Montezuma the Second." He, his brigadier, aides-de-camp, and officers, "dressed in grand uniforms," were overtaken by winter, and reached Red River in sorry plight—poor Montezuma with the loss of his toes—where the company, from the very necessity of the case, were compelled to feed and warm their enemies until they could be sent home in the summer. About 1847 a gentle man named Isbister, who had, we think, been in the service of the company, aimed at effecting the liberation of the settlers from its government, arousing a considerable spirit of opposition to it in this country, and somewhat dangerous disaffection—so its servants complained—among the people themselves. But the danger passed away, and little more was heard of "Assinibola," except its new and ambitious name, until it was sold, with other territories, by the Hudson's Bay Company to the home government on behalf of Canada, and Canada was finally placed in possession.

We now receive information that this transfer has been the signal for disaffection and armed revolt. The governor sent from Canada Mr. McDougal, making his way to his post through the United States, there being, in fact, no other road, has been stopped on the frontier by armed men, and remains at Pembina, in Minnesota, issuing mild proclamations to his obstinate subjects. But there is one feature in the case which, with our present information, we are quite unable to explain. It is this: that the malcontents are represented as belonging not to the British, but to the Canadian section of