



## CHAPTER II.

**L**ONG before the vision of a confederation of the British Provinces entered into the brain of any man, Lord Selkirk, coming to the wilds of North America, found a tract of country fertile in soil, and fair to look upon. He arrived in this unknown wilderness when it was summer, and all the prairie extending over illimitable stretches till it was lost in the tranquil horizon, was burning with the blooms of a hundred varieties of flowers. Here the "tiger rose," like some savage queen of beauty, rose to his knees and breathed her sultry balm in his face. Aloof stood the shy wild rose, shedding its scent with delicate reserve; but the wild pea, and the convolvulus, and the augur flower, and the insipid daisy, ran riot through all the grass land, and surfeited his nostrils with their sweets. Here and there upon the mellow level stood a clump of poplars or white oaks, prim, like virgins without suitors, with their robes drawn close about them; but when over the unmeasured plain the wind blew, they bowed their heads: as if saluting the stranger who came to found a colony in the wilderness of which they were sentinels. Here too, in the hush, for the first time, the planter's ear heard a far-off, nigh indistinct, sound of galloping thunder. He knew not what it meant, and his followers surmised that it might be the tumult of some distant waterfall, borne hither now because a storm was at hand, and the denser air was a better carrier of the sound. And