

VIII.—*The Five Forts of Winnipeg.*

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Five forts around which gather the most interesting events connected with the history of Rupert's Land and the Canadian Northwest were erected within what are now the limits of the City of Winnipeg. These were not mere continuations or renewals of the same fort; they were all built on different sites, and represented different important movements. These are: Fort Rouge, Fort Gibraltar, Fort Douglas, the original Fort Garry, and the recent Fort Garry. The first erection upon the future site of the metropolis of Northwestern Canada was Fort Rouge: this was built almost exactly one hundred and fifty years ago.

FORT ROUGE.—This small station of the French explorers, so named probably from its being on the Miskouesipi or Blood-red River of the Cristenaux aborigines, was hardly built and named before it was given up. The adventurous explorers found other points more suitable for the purposes of a rendezvous in their work of fur-trading and discovery. In addition to this, the fact of the Red Fort being on the south side of the Assiniboine exposed it to the incursions of the fiery bands of Sioux. The warpath of the Sioux from the river of the west (the Missouri) was along the south bank of the Assiniboine,—the very name of Assiniboine River meaning "River of the Stony Sioux," and showing the proximity of the dreaded Dakotas. Coming from the last port on Lake Superior in 1731, the adventurous French Canadian, Varennes de la Verandrye, and his sons dotted the margin of their watery way with hurriedly constructed forts or stations. At the exit from Rainy Lake are still to be seen the faint remains of Fort St. Pierre, built in the first year of exploration. Massacre Island on Lake of the Woods, on which a portion of de la Verandrye's party was murdered by the Sioux, was opposite a post erected on the south-west side of the lake, in 1732, with the name Fort St. Charles. The dashing waters of the Maurepas (now Winnipeg River) bore the voyageurs down to the lake, called, from its turbid waters, *Win-nipiy* or Winnipeg. Exactly in what year de la Verandrye ascended Red River and built his Red Fort, we do not know: probably 1735 is not far from the time. From investigating the maps of the daring fur-trader sent home to Paris, through the governor of New France, we learn of the short life of Fort Rouge. The following are some of the documents that attest its existence:—

(1.) In the archives at Paris is a map thus named: "Map containing the new discoveries of the west in Canada, seas, rivers, lakes, and the nations who dwell there, in the year 1737. Discovery of the western sea joined to a letter of M. Beauharnois, October 14th, 1737 (prepared by Varennes de la Verandrye)." On this map is marked a fort near the site of the present town of Portage la Prairie—"Maurepas," the name afterwards given to the