

company's charter. Not only so, but these intruders were guilty of intercepting Indians on their way to the forts; and, what made the matter worse, the furs the red man bore were already pledged to the company for advances made them. Now, the Hudson's Bay officials were not the men to endure this sort of thing in silence. For the most part they were Scotchmen of the sturdiest type, and the aggressions of the Canadians, Scotch though many of them were, also, aroused in them an angry spirit which could lead but in one direction. Sooner or later the matter must resolve itself into a question of force, and in the mean time they were ready to say with Wordsworth that

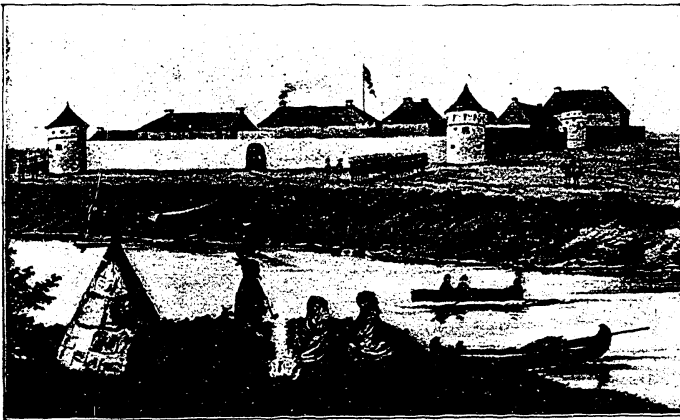
" . . . the good old rule
Sufficeth them, the simple plan,
That they should take who have the power,
And they should keep who can."

It would appear that the Canadians disputed the right of the company to exercise any monopoly in the northwest, and in proportion to the weakness of their position were strong in its reiteration. It seems equally clear that from the first they did not hesitate to resort to violence and intimidation in order to gain their ends. But the worst feature of all was their introduction of fire-water into these territories, which hitherto had known nothing of humanity's chief curse. Owing to the advantages of its position, the company was able to offer higher prices to the Indians than its rivals could, and, in order the better to obtain and retain control of the poor red man, the latter resorted to the importation of

spirits, for which he at once manifested the frantic passion that was lying dormant awaiting the advent of the tempter. It had been from the first a leading principle of the company that no spirits should on any account be sold to the Indians, and it is one of the brightest leaves in their laurels that their officials so long adhered to this in spite of many temptations.

Close upon the introduction of the accursed fire-water into their dealings the elements of violence and bloodshed, hitherto happily unknown, began to manifest themselves between the red man and his white brother. The most daring and turbulent spirits were now attracted to the Canadian fur trade, and if we follow Professor Bryce, the chief qualities sought in those sent out from Montreal were a love of violence and a thorough hatred of the Hudson's Bay Company. They were not long, however, in finding out their folly in resorting to strong drink as a means of increasing their trade, for while it did undoubtedly give them a temporary advantage over the company, retribution followed fast. In the year 1780, at Eagle Hills, on the Saskatchewan, the rendezvous of the Montreal traders, a liberal allowance of grog was bestowed upon a large band of Indians, and one of the traders, who had had some trouble with a chief, put a big dose of laudanum into his glass by way of subduing his aggressiveness. The experiment proved a complete success in that regard, for the Indian never awakened from the drunken stupor into which

he immediately fell. But his friends and followers, not appreciating the situation, arose in their wrath, attacked the camp, killed the offending trader as well as several of the men, and sent the survivors flying for their lives, leaving a fine collection of valuable furs behind. A little later, two posts on the Assiniboine River were attacked



FORT GARRY, 1871.