

rattlesnakes, and mosquitoes, in the swamps of the western district, honored Montreal with his presence towards the end of the year 1804. The advent of a real, live lord had rarely, if ever, gladdened the eyes of Montrealers, and he was lionized and feasted accordingly,—especially by the partners of the Northwestern Company, from whom he had the address to obtain all the information he desired regarding the extent and value of their trade and mode of conducting it; information which, although not immediately acted upon, was not lost sight of. Gradual encroachments on the Northwest Company's trading-grounds were either supinely tolerated or feebly resisted, till—like the stealthy approaches of the tiger, ready to take the fatal leap—Lord Selkirk, soon after the close of the last American war, conveyed another colony of Highlanders to the Indian country, and by force established them at the Red River,—territory to which the Hudson Bay Company had no better claim than they had to the large tract silently yielded to Russia, or the colonies recently erected into provinces on the coast of the Pacific, without compensation, or reference whatever to their illegal claims.

Resistance or extermination being the only alternatives left to the Canada Company, a kind of civil war ensued. Hired ruffians, the scum of Southern Europe, discharged from foreign regiments in British pay, were by his Lordship's emissaries armed and dispatched to the Red River. Scenes of treachery, robbery, and murder,—unequalled by even the revengeful atrocities of savages,—became matters of daily occurrence, almost unnoticed by either the Colonial or Imperial authorities. A magistrate (the late Mr. Justice Fletcher) was, indeed, sent up, armed with guns, pistols, and proclamations, but he effected nothing. However well-inclined to crush out freedom in any shape, the oligarchy that had so long misruled Canada had no military means to assist the Hudson Bay Company; while Lords Liverpool and Castlereagh, fully occupied with popular commotions at home—on one side aware of the illegality of the

Hudson Bay Company's pretensions and proceedings, on the other side balanced by their Parliamentary interest—interfered on neither side.

After many years of open war and mutual destruction, the exhausted belligerents were glad to compromise by amalgamation.

Exclusive of the Northwest Company, most of the merchants and traders in Montreal were more or less engaged in the fur-trade, at that time the staple of Canada. Conspicuous among the merchants were the houses of Forsyth, Richardson, & Co.; James and Andrew McGill; Auldjo, Maitland, & Co.; John McGill; David David, and others less extensively. Their peltries were obtained from the northwest territory of the United States. Their agents were established at Michilimackinac or at Detroit, where the supplies for their Indian trade were stored, and thence dispatched in bark canoes to the various trading-posts along the lakes, or on the banks of the Rivers Miami, Illinois, Wabash, Renard, Wisconsin, and other great branches of the Mississippi. Most of the furs and peltries from these parts were, in the course of the month of October, annually disposed of at Teasdale's Coffee-house, Montreal, by auction, being chiefly purchased for New York and other places in the States. Teasdale's Coffee-house, the westernmost of three large three-story houses on the south side of Capital street, was situated on the high bank overlooking the Harbor. Some idea of the astonishing force of the ice may be imagined by what I have heard from an eye-witness, as a fact, that in one Spring, at the shoving of the ice, it was accumulated to such a height as to rise over the bank and up to the roofs of these houses, so as to send its fragments into the street behind.

In those days, when the labors of the day were over, the merchants and their clerks spent their evenings at Teasdale's, some to converse about business, others to play backgammon or draughts,—all smoking *popuay*,—an Indian weed used to mix with tobacco,—and imbibing cold gin-and-water—seldom