

To resume, however. We had during all this time been travelling on American soil, but when about sixty miles from our destination we crossed the international boundary, and passed from the United States into British territory. Never shall I forget the scene that presented itself when I first saw Fort Garry. Hundreds of Indian lodges and tipis covered the plain, many of the aborigines and plain hunters having congregated at the spot to obtain supplies for the winter hunt. Half a mile from the fort stood about a dozen houses, the homes and shops of the free traders, and there were not, I suppose, one hundred white men, all told, living in the place where to-day is a city of over 30,000 inhabitants. Signs of an approaching change in the form of government were apparent when I arrived in the country. The Hudson's Bay Company were the ostensible rulers, and under their jurisdiction a court was held regularly for the settlement of disputes, and a tax of 4 per cent. levied on all imports; but there lacked respect for the authority of the company's officers. The *Nor'-Wester*, a rabid little newspaper, published in the neighbourhood of Fort Garry, bitterly opposed the company, and assisted in no small degree in fanning popular discontent. The first few years I spent in the North-West under the Hudson's Bay Company's rule were nevertheless amongst the happiest of my life. No nearer approach to perfect freedom have I ever seen or known. No burdensome taxes, no exacting laws, no lawyers, no rents; every man free to do as he liked so long as he held in proper regard the person and property of his neighbour. A single constable represented the police force, but even the dignity of this worthy functionary did not at times prevent the key of his own gaol being turned upon him by the young men when bent upon enjoying themselves. But people never know when they are well off, and therefore, as I have already said, a desire for change began to show itself.

A few miles north of Fort Garry was a settlement consisting of the descendants of the hardy sons of Scotland, who came to the North-West in 1812 and 1814, under the care of Lord Selkirk. Time would fail me to recount the many hardships and trials these settlers endured from depredations by Indians, from floods, and other disasters, but some idea of their pluck and perseverance is shown by the fact that it was not till 1827 that they became really settled in their homes. Fifteen years' battle with adversity could not break the Scottish spirit of these pioneers; and to-day their settlement, known as the parish of Kildonan, is one of the finest spots in the whole North-West.

Soon after my arrival I became connected with the fur trade, joining the free traders, in opposition to the Hudson's Bay Company. The firm in which I became a partner employed many traders, to whom we granted outfits or supplies of goods, ranging from 300*l.* to 1,000*l.* each in value. Our mode was to place a hundred per cent. advance on the first cost of the goods, and at that rate they were invoiced to the traders, who then bartered them