

its height, and there was plenty of hard work to be done in its service by young men of willing hands, cool brains, dauntless courage, adventurous spirit, and robust constitution. All these qualifications were united in the person of young James Douglas in a very uncommon degree, and wanted but time and opportunity for their full development. His active, nomadic life, spent largely in the open air, furnished in itself a more admirable physical training than any gymnasium could have afforded, and by the time he had reached manhood he was known throughout the whole of the North-West for a man of almost miraculous vigour and endurance. His frame was cast in a powerful mould; his physical strength was prodigious; and his coolness under circumstances of imminent danger excited the astonishment even of those daring, adventurous spirits among whom his lot was cast. His pre-eminence, however, was not confined to feats of strength and endurance. He was equally remarkable for his tact in dealing with the aborigines, and for his excellent judgment in transacting the business of his employers. Whenever a mission requiring the exercise of exceptional prudence and sagacity was determined upon, there never was any dispute as to who was the most fitting agent to be entrusted with it. He had the rare capacity for preserving strict discipline among wild and lawless men, and was always able to enforce obedience to his commands by the mere force of his personal presence and character. The facts of his early life in the North-West have never been made public with any approach to fulness of detail, and there is probably no man now living who is possessed of sufficient data to present a connected narrative of his career previous to the time of his taking up his permanent abode in Vancouver's Island in 1846.

The rivalry between the North-West and Hudson's Bay Companies was terminated

by their amalgamation in 1821. Young Douglas, who had entered the service of the former in a subordinate capacity about six years previously, continued in the employ of the amalgamated company, in which he soon rose to a position of influence. He rapidly grew in favour with his superior officers, who fully recognized his merits, and in course of time he became a Chief Factor of the Company. In the discharge of his multiform duties he visited nearly every corner of the North-West which has ever been traversed by the foot of a white man, and passed through innumerable adventures and hairbreadth escapes. On one occasion when conducting an important mission in New Caledonia—now the mainland of British Columbia—he was seized by one of the Indian tribes while passing through their territory, and detained as a captive for many weeks. He at last contrived to make good his escape, and after enduring privations to which a weaker frame and a feebler will would inevitably have succumbed, arrived in safety at one of the Company's forts. He had long been given up as lost, and was welcomed as one risen from the dead. In 1827 he married Miss Connolly, a daughter of the Chief Factor at Red River. By this lady he had a numerous family, five of whom still survive. His eldest and only surviving son is Mr. James W. Douglas, late M.P.P. for the city of Victoria.

Sometime in or about the year 1833, Mr. Douglas became the Chief Agent of the Hudson's Bay Company for all their territory west of the Rocky Mountains. Soon after being appointed to this responsible position he made his headquarters at Fort Vancouver, in what was then the territory of Oregon. In 1842 he passed over from Fort Vancouver to Vancouver's Island, for the purpose of establishing an Indian trading post there on behalf of the Company. At a point which has since been called