

# OLD PENETANGUIHENE

Sketches of its Pioneer, Naval and Military Days.

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## CHAPTER X.

### THE FUR TRADE.

As already shown, the primary aim in projecting the Military road and in building Penetanguishene Post, was mainly the improvement of the routes of the fur trade, coupled with Military and Naval defence and the needs of transportation, settlement being a secondary consideration. The story of the inception and development of the Post, its place in the Military and Naval scheme, has been recounted in the preceding pages. Simultaneously, with the Military constructions, attention was directed to fostering the fur trade and promoting its interests. Depots and storehouses were erected to facilitate the diversion from former fur routes, turning the current of trade thitherward, and soon the new station assumed its share in the traffic, which, in the same region, had its infancy nearly two centuries before.

The facts of history point unmistakably to the home of the ancient Huron as the cradle of the fur trade of the Canadian west, beginning with the first Huron fur fleet that reached Quebec. Within sight of Gloucester and Christendom Bays on the borderlands of the Huron, was planted, long ago, the germ of the western fur trade, co-incident with pioneer French missions, almost a necessary adjunct, soon passing its original bounds and gradually encircling these inland waters. These shores witnessed its rise and progress, and here were passed those stages of expansion and development which marked its subsequent operations; and from which region it spread rapidly in all directions over a large part of the west, ultimately reaching the Rocky Mountains and the Pacific coast. This profitable industry has continued in Penetanguishene with fluctuations to the present time, for we have our fur dealers still with us.

Apart from the first descent of the Hurons to Quebec to trade, actual barter in furs began in the Huron country very