

THE CANADIAN ILLUSTRATED NEWS.



VOL. I—No. 14.]

HAMILTON, C.W., SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 14, 1863.

[33 PER ANNUM, IN ADVANCE
SINGLE COPIES 6 CENTS.]

HON. JAMES MORRIS, RECEIVER GENERAL, AND M. L. C.

In the year 1801, a ship left the River Clyde, in Scotland, with passengers for Canada. For the long space of two months, that vessel labored and plunged in the ocean, on a passage which the steamer from Glas-

gow now accomplish easily in ten or twelve days. Among the passengers, was a child, three years old. In the town of Brockville, county of Leeds, Upper Canada, a stranger having discovered that it is an aristocratic place, by the handsome villas on its outskirts, as well as in its streets, may look at the Court House on a pleasant elevation, near to which are substantial bank buildings, and then may possibly enquire, 'whose pretty house is that, with white railings in front, shaded from the summer sun by leafy trees, that with the carriage at the door, in which the elderly gentleman has just taken his seat?' 'That,' your companion will reply, 'is the residence of the Hon. James Morris, and that is the gentleman himself.' Then, if I, when no longer a stranger, am asked, 'who is Mr. Morris?' I reply, 'He was the child who came out in the ship that plunged and labored in the ocean on the long passage in 1801.' If you ask, 'what more of him?' I rejoin, 'travel with me to the Rapid du Plat, on the St. Lawrence, in the county of Dundas, and on the Canada shore of all the rapids which interrupt navigation on a stretch of ninety miles west of Montreal. Observe the grand series of canals, the stupendous lock-gates and lock chambers; study the advantages to commerce afforded by those works, not yet surpassed in magnitude in the world, if indeed equalled; observe the crowds of vessels, American as well as Canadian, freighted with the produce of Canada West, and of the States bordering on the western lakes; that produce on passage to Montreal, from whence it will be carried by ocean ships to Britain or France. At the lower termination of the Rapid Du Plat, observe the thriving town

which has arisen since the outflow of the canal at that place, gave available water-power for machinery and birth to manufactures. Take note of the saw-mills and other works of the ingenious Benjamin Chaffy, whose handsome residence, we admired outside of Brockville, the manufacturer of these lock gates

for all these canals; the inventor of machinery, a wonder of mechanical genius, unprovoked on the pressure of sudden exigencies, without which it was hardly possible that some of the piers of the Victoria Bridge at Montreal, could have been founded. Among the boulders in the deep, impetuous river, this thriving town is named

Morrisburgh, in honor of James Morris, who, as Postmaster-General of the Province, was the first to concede to it a Post Office; and who as a Government Commissioner for the construction of the St. Lawrence Canals, begun in 1838, and finished in 1859, is associated in Provincial history with those monuments of enterprise, constructed

by a Province, but worthy of an Empire.

If it be asked in what way else is Mr. Morris related to the history of the Province, the postal treaty with the United States may be named. That was negotiated by him at Washington in 1861. The five cent uniform Canada postage, instead of the confusion of postal rates which averaged about sixteen cents, was introduced by him. And when the control of the Provincial mails was finally transferred from the Imperial to the Canadian Government, he was Postmaster General. He has also enjoyed the high distinction of filling the Speaker's chair in the Legislative Council. The more prominent incidents of his life, so far as known to me, may be thus consecutively stated:

He was born at Paisley, in Scotland, in 1790. His father, Alexander Morris, came to Canada in 1801, lived some years in Montreal, and then removed westward to the township in which Brockville stands. James was educated under Mr. Nelson, at Sorel, father of Dr. Wolford Nelson of Montreal. With his brothers, the late Hon. Wm. Morris of Perth, and Alexander Morris of Brockville, he engaged in business as a merchant at the latter town, soon after leaving school.

In July, 1837, Mr. Morris was returned as one of the members for the county of Leeds, to the House of Assembly of Upper Canada, and has been a member of the Legislature ever since. In 1838 he was appointed Commissioner for improving the St. Lawrence navigation, and held the commission until the canals were completed.

In 1841, Mr. Poulett Thomson, Governor General of Canada, having effected a Legislative union of the Lower and Upper Provinces, there



HON. JAMES MORRIS, RECEIVER GENERAL AND M. L. C.