



and Isle Royale, and discovered what is still called the Mimong Mine. He speaks of those great copper boulders which some obscure race, importing perhaps the arts of Asiatic antiquity into what we call the new world, had utilized unknown centuries before; and after tossing wearily on the "great sea water," we can hardly doubt that he would gladly rest on the quiet expanse of Thunder Bay and perhaps chant his plaintive mass on the banks of the still-flowing Kaministiquia.

These were the days when Gallican missionary enthusiasm was purest and loftiest and most ardent. But as the years went on "the epoch of saints and martyrs was passing away, and the Canadian Jesuit became less and less an apostle and more and more an explorer." During the greater part of the succeeding century, the history of the Lake Superior district centred in the peltry traffic. This most lucrative enterprise was carried on in a spirit of fierce competition, and, for a lengthened interval amidst positive warfare, first between the French and English, and later (1766-1821) between the Hudson Bay and Northwest Companies. During all that period Sault Ste Marie was known principally as a fur-trading post, fortified by the French for purposes of protection against the aggressive policy of their rivals.

In the early years of the eighteenth century another point, now a mission, gradually rose into importance. In 1731 Pierre-Gauthier de Varennes, *Sieur de la Verendrye* undertook his memorable journey across the continent, in the hope of reaching the Pacific. Skirting the shores of Lake Superior from Grand Portage eastward, he reached the Kamanestigoya, where was a fort constructed we are told in 1717 by Robertel de Lanoue. This was unquestionably the modern Kaministiquia, near the mouth of which is *Fort William*. It is affirmed that this fort had a predecessor, and assuming it to have been constructed ten years earlier, we learn that Christian worship, which almost invariably accompanied the trading-house, was celebrated beneath the rugged terraces of Mt. McKay fifty years after the establishment of the mission at Sault Ste Marie. In 1762 we are brought to the days of the British occupancy, and in 1784 to those of the Northwest Fur Company. Then the new fort built to accommodate their princely trade and named after a gentleman connected with the company, became a place of first importance. Always the centre of a busy industry, the population at the annual conference of partners, traders and voyageurs swelled to several thousand, and for two weeks banqueting, revelry and license were universal.

Approaching our own time, the great trade was retreating northward and *Fort William* saw quieter days till awakened by the shriek of the locomotive. A transient visit had been paid to it by Bishop Mountain (the third Bishop of Quebec) on his way to Red River in 1843, and he then consecrated the little cemetery near by. But the earliest permanent religious agency was established by the Jesuits about 40 years ago, and Peres Du Ranquet and Chonin were the pioneer missionaries. The former was highly esteemed for his self denial and devotion by all who knew him, and his gentle, reverend face is familiar to the writer. The establishment consists at present of a church, convent and school, and on either side of these buildings, and about one quarter of a mile apart are two great wooden crosses, defining the space which the Indian chief originally permitted the missionaries to call their own.