

thing there was to be seen. "No," said he, "we're not likely to forget that year, because we were forced to go to Fort Abercrombie to get flour. But it did seem very strange that the Sunday before the grasshoppers arrived in the Colony (Manitoba was then known by this name), Bishop Anderson preached in St. Andrew's Church about the plagues of the children of Israel, and before the next Sunday the hoppers had come here in millions, yes millions of them, that they even darkened the sun."

An historical fact, vouched for by records of that period.

"How was Christmas time observed in the old days?" the man of eighty-four winters in Manitoba was asked.

"Just about the same as Sunday was," he replied. "There wasn't much in the way of fun, but at New Year's lots of it; then everybody was out for a good time. A whole week of holiday and great preparing of food, which kept the women folk busy for several days; every night a dance somewhere around, lots of fun in Red River settlement at New Year."

"You happened to speak of a windmill just now, what sort of flour did they make; was it as good as that we buy today?"

"It was, the very best of flour, and although people may think what I am going to say is wrong, down at the Fort you could get the very best of goods. There is no need to think we had nothing but rubbish in the Colony."

"How about churches in your early days, Mr. Fidler; were there any in the country?" the writer asked.

"Why of course there were, in the earliest times that I can call to mind there were ministers here. Presbyterian, Church of England, Roman Catholics. Along the Red River were churches at Kildonan, Middlechurch, St. Andrew's and Mapleton, one at St. James and another at Headingly. St. John's College in Winnipeg has been there for many years, and there was a college over in St. Boniface which my father showed me when I was a little boy."

The memory of Fidler is pregnant with actual fact. The institution to which he has reference is the arch episcopal headquarters of Western Canada's Roman Catholicism, which received its first pupils in 1821. St. John's College dates from a later period; a ladies' school was also located in the same neighborhood. In brief allusion, Mr. Fidler referred to the illustrious men in Manitoban record without the names of whom future history would not be complete. Machray, of St. John's; Tache, of St. Boniface; Anderson, whose footmarks are indelibly stamped in St. Andrew's; and the saintly Black, the memory of whom will ever remain verdant in Kildonan upon Red River.

When the conversation harks back to the early days in Manitoba and an old-timer is present, the tragic murder of Thomas Scott, the Fort Garry martyr of immortal memory, is certain to form a topic of the reminiscences. Thomas Fidler is one of the few men living today who were present in Fort Garry upon the eventful date, March 4, 1870, when that dark tragedy was enacted. In respect of the disposition of Scott's remains, many theories have been advanced. The version of Thomas Fidler concerning Scott's last earthly resting place, accords with that of other men to whom the writer has spoken on the subject.

"They," Fidler is alluding to the rebels, "put Scott's corpse into quicklime, and people said that a large grindstone was fastened to his neck, after which he was thrown into the Red River near the old Hudson's Bay mill. No, I don't think this ever happened. Scott's corpse was taken across the Assiniboine river and put into a pit which had been dug for it; I always heard this was somewhere south of the Fort, no, I don't know where, but it wasn't far from the Fort. Oh! yes, some folks tried to say that his body was taken out of the river at Selkirk a few weeks afterwards, and buried there. I think they knew better than that, but you could hear all manner of stories at the time."

Fidler furthermore remarked that it was entirely owing to the intervention of Tache that several other men were not shot upon the day Scott met his tragic fate. The venerable Tache was

absent from St. Boniface at the time, and information having been given him of the affair at Emerson, travelled without stop in a Red River cart to Fort Garry, his timely arrival the preventive means whereby further taking of human life was averted.

In speaking of Middlechurch, which in these days can be enumerated a northern suburb of Winnipeg, Fidler remembers the brutal killing of a peddler by some Indians in the early sixties. The scalp of this victim was exhibited by his murderers during the same day at the Fort.

"The Colony was usually peaceful, although it was a do-as-you-like country," said Fidler. "No, I never saw what you would call a policeman, in fact I've never seen one in my life."

That the parish of Kildonan has figured in the limelight of various disturbances is a matter of record. In close adjacence to the limits of that municipality with Winnipeg, the monument to Governor Semple, murdered in 1813, may be noticed at the roadside in Seven Oaks, a short distance from the

car barns in St. Johns. Mr. Fidler can recall a skirmish within this neighborhood in the forties, when he watched the contestants—Indians—through the windows of a windmill, and several men were killed.

"I used to make a trip every year to York Factory, went in June and started back in October. They call it Selkirk now where we started from, then up Lake Winnipeg to Warren's Landing, after that it was boat and portage; yes, and it was hard work, too."

Thomas Fidler is today hale and hearty. He can be termed as marvelous in his walking prowess, for with regularity he trudges to the residence of a daughter, sixteen miles from his home. To Fidler, the three score years and ten of the Psalmist are as a story related in the long ago, and when he is speaking of the old times, there is sometimes a pause, he appears as submerged in the mazes of thought land. It cannot be wondered at, when it is recollected that his memory refers back to times when in the Manitoba of to-

day the Indian chased the buffalo, even over the ground upon which the great city of Winnipeg has arisen, and where on Fidler has seen the smoke of the teepee arising, and listened to the weird sound of the tom tom when the aborigine of Rupert's Land was engaged in the dance of the tribes.

And when the writer was leaving Fidler's abode, the octogenarian accompanied him for a short distance along the road. Pointing to the hill of the tree crown away in the distance, the old man remarked:

"I went there with my father when I was a very little fellow to watch out for buffalo; that's a long time ago, isn't it?"

In bidding him farewell, the writer expressed the hope of calling again at his cottage away in the woods, and expressed the desire that Fidler may live into the years of the centenarian. If agile walk and robust appearance are criterionary of such, it is possible that such will transpire.

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