

### XIII.

#### A Long Letter from a Pioneer

Mr. George Skene, one of the first Presbyterian elders ordained in Fergus, came to this country in the fall of 1834. After his arrival he wrote an account of his impressions and doings to friends in Scotland, keeping a copy of his letters. By the courtesy of a grandson, Mr. Wm. H. Skene, the editor of these papers had the privilege of using these letters, and he cannot do better than publish a few of them. They are interesting, not only for the first hand information which they contain, but also for the quaintness of the style.

The first letter is addressed to the Misses Rose, and is dated Fergus, Jan. 1835. With a few omissions and verbal changes, it runs as follows :

"I have to beg your pardon for being so dilatory in writing you after we arrived and had settled here, but I believe the principal reason has been our great distance from the Post-Office, viz., 18 miles, and not knowing whom we could trust to in taking a letter there and and paying it. I had just time to write a letter to Mill of Gight (which is through your hands before you receive this, I hope) and got it sent down by Andrew Grant, who was going to Guelph. Another reason was that winter was staring us in the face and our house was to build and get made habitable before its arrival, making us so very busy that indeed I could not think of nor engage in anything else ; for the old one we lodged in was not very comfortable, being scarcely wind or water tight, and about 15 feet square, to contain James Duguid and family, James Walker, Andrew Grant and ourselves—being fourteen in number—and all our luggage. Then we had fully a mile and a half to go morning and evening to the place we were building on.

I shall now give you our proceedings from Quebec to this place, (about seven hundred miles.) As soon as we anchored before the former, the captain of the Sir W. W. (Sir William Wallace?) went on shore and engaged with a steamboat to take us forward to Montreal, as he knew we were all going there except three, and brought the steamer along with him without any orders from us, nor did we so much as surmise that he had any intention of that kind ; but upon the arrival of the steamer I told both him and the other captain that I was not sure if I would go with him, at any rate not till I knew his terms and had seen his accommodation (in which all the other passengers joined me) ; so a few of us went on board of her, and being satisfied, got off our luggage and left the Sir W. W.

While all this was going on James Walker, Andrew Grant and another lad had gone ashore for some provisions, and knew nothing of what was going on. About two hours after we had come aboard the