

trade in these parts and in other places, many people went into it, called by the old firms "private traders." So eager were these that they and the agents of the old firms would follow the Indian into his hunting ground to get the first sight of his furs and urge him to sell, carrying to him the cursed firewater. There can be no doubt but the Indian people of these countries would be far more numerous, and have far more stamina of mind and body to-day but for the fur trade and the men engaged in it. I never heard that any one of these men was ever suspected of being good men. Perhaps the Smith family, of Port Hope, and they operated in these parts, might be considered an exception. They had a good name, and this still lives. The others are scattered; also their wealth. They crazed the Indian with the firewater, took it to him everywhere, and when crazed they robbed him. They sent among the Indians bad men, who corrupted him and his family, and left him diseased in body as well as mind—a disease he could not help transmitting to following generations. It was thought, even long ago, that the money made in the fur trade with the Indians in this country was all blood-stained. In the foregoing I try to convey a conception of the transition period of our country between the old fur trade times and settlement.