

Lake Athabasca, and, little more than a year before Archie arrived, had, through his sterling good qualities, reached the important and responsible position of factor of the fort, so that his ultimate promotion to a partnership in the Company was only a question of time.

When once he could consider himself settled, it might be for a score of years, he very wisely looked about him for a companion and helpmate. It need hardly be explained that he had a very limited range of choice in making his selection. There was no such thing as society in the ordinary sense of the term at the forts. The tide of settlement had not yet touched those continuous wilds which the North-West and Hudson's Bay Fur Companies sought jealously to keep for themselves as a fur preserve, but which were destined to be the home of millions. Beside the employees of the Companies, a few enterprising spirits who ventured to do a little trading and trapping on their own account, and the Indians, whose lodges and wigwams were scattered at wide intervals over the rolling plains or hidden among the depths of the forest, there was no other human life.

But fortune favoured Donald M'Kenzie and sent him a good wife nevertheless. He had not been long on the lookout when there came to the fort a hardy *voyageur*, having with him his wife and daughter, and no sooner had the factor's eyes fallen upon the latter, than he said to himself with an exultant chuckle, 'Hech, Donald lad!—but she's a brow one. It's