

SIR JAMES DOUGLAS.

THE late Sir James Douglas was a man who could scarcely have failed to make his mark under any conditions of society in which he might have been placed; but it so fell out that early in life he was enrolled in a service which was peculiarly calculated to stimulate and develop the special characteristics for which he was most eminent. Among the many personages who, from obscure beginnings, have risen to fame and fortune in the service of the great fur-trading companies of the North-West, Sir James Douglas will always occupy a foremost place. His achievements in the pathless wilds of the American continent furnish no inapt parallel to the marvellous career of Robert Clive in India during the last century. If his success was less brilliant than was that of the founder of British Empire in India, it was at least of sufficient splendour to suggest a comparison; and the success of Sir James Douglas was clouded by no serious faults such as must ever be associated with Clive's great name. The success of both was almost entirely due to their individual characters, and owed but little to adventitious circumstances. It is no abuse of language to say that James Douglas was born with a positive genius for administration. He began life without means, without education, and without influential friends. He lived to be the founder of two colonies, with both of which his name must ever be in-

separably associated. He established two Governments, in both of which he himself occupied the highest place. He was invested by his Sovereign with titles and dignities which might well have satisfied the aspirations of a much more ambitious mind. Unlike many men who have been the sole architects of their own fortunes, he was never spoiled by prosperity, but bore his high honours with a quiet dignity which would have become the proudest scion of aristocracy. When he died, full of years, and all good things which this life affords, he was mourned by thousands who had long regarded him in the light of their common patron; and his memory is still cherished by the inhabitants of an entire Province.

He was born in or near Demerara, in British Guiana, South America, on the 14th of August, 1803. As his name indicates, he was of Scottish origin. His father, who was in humble circumstances, had emigrated from Scotland to British Guiana not long before his son's birth. Both his parents died while he was a mere boy, and he was thus left to fight the battle of life at a very early age. In the summer of 1815, when he had barely completed his twelfth year, he accompanied an elder brother to the North-West Territory, and engaged in the service of the famous North-West Company. In those times the rivalry between that Company and the still more famous one into which it was finally absorbed was at