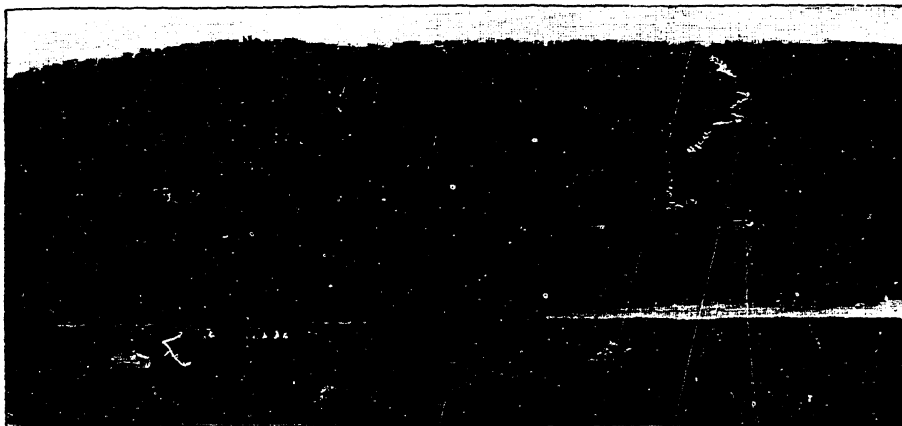


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FORT DUNVEGAN, ATHABASCA.

THE ROMANTIC STORY OF A GREAT CORPORATION.

(THE HUDSON'S BAY TRADING COMPANY.)—PART II. (*Conclusion.*)

BY J. MACDONALD OXLEY.

AS I have already pointed out, the Hudson's Bay Company was slow in extending its operations beyond the region directly tributary to the bay, and its officials seemed to prefer that the Indians should come to them instead of their going out to seek the Indians. But now the Nor-Westers pushed away north and west until they not only touched the feet of the Rocky Mountains, but fearlessly scaled that mighty barrier, and floated upon the waters of the Peace River. At the first they met with no active opposition from their older rivals, and it is possible that the two organizations might never have come into active conflict but for a series of events, not directly connected with the fur trade, which precipitated the struggle. Lord Selkirk was a philanthropic Scotch nobleman, whose kind heart was stirred to its depths by the woes of his fellow-countrymen at the times of the "Highland clearances," and he determined to devote his resources to finding for some of them, at least, the opportunity in the New World across the Atlantic "to redress the balance of the Old." He had heard of the wonderful prairies of the North-West, waiting only to be tickled with the hoe to make them laugh into abundant harvests; and after planting a successful colony in Prince Edward Island, he forwarded another instalment of emigrants, *via* Hudson's

Bay, to the plains of the Red River, establishing a colony there, which in later years became the nucleus of a new province.

The North-West Company at once took alarm. It wanted those fertile plains preserved as hunting-grounds, and did not relish the idea of their being populated by the overflowing thousands of Great Britain. Every possible obstacle was placed in the way of the colonists. Intimidation, and even violence, were resorted to, and the lives of the poor emigrants filled with terror. This conduct strongly incensed the good earl against the new company, and, to enable him the better to punish them, he bought all the Hudson's Bay Company's stock he could obtain, until, holding some forty thousand pounds' worth out of a capital of one hundred and five thousand pounds, he had the controlling interest. At once he began to exert himself against the obnoxious Nor-Westers. Rousing up the Hudson Bays from their lethargy he instituted a vigorous competition. Wherever the former established a fort, the latter built another near by. Every method which artifice, fraud, or even violence could suggest was adopted, to outwit each other and to obtain the furs of the Indians, who did not care what company got their furs so long as they were well paid for them. Ballantyne re-