

wi' the broom." "Get oot the road, Mr. Black," and so on they went till I thought there would be a fight sometimes, but there was little chance of that, for I am persuaded the two old gentlemen (and they were gentlemen) thought there were not two better fellows than themselves, or better players, either, and I daresay it would not have been easy to find their match at that time at the grand game o' curlin'. As both stones of the right kind and cash to shape them properly were scarce in those old times, the late Mr. Perry, a keen curler, and a very ingenious mechanic, having been a turner in metal at the celebrated works of Mr. Smith at Deanston in Perthshire, thought he would try good solid maple to represent curling stones, and succeeded so well that for many years there was nothing else. They used to get rather light after a year or two, and after a while Mr. Perry loaded them with lead, which kept them steadier. Now and then a poor block would get an "awfu' crack," and would actually be knocked into two or three pieces. The command would issue in a wicked tone from the skip's mouth—"red the road," which frequently ended in the way above mentioned. Although curlers are not considered a dangerous class of people, they have a secret word and sign, and have to be examined every year, and if they make the slightest mistake in giving the word or making the sign, they have to pay a fine, which goes to the general fund, and every new member has to be initiated and pay his entrance fee. All improper language or quarrelling was strictly forbidden, and fines were imposed for swearing, and the rules used to be strictly enforced, and I hope are so still. Old Mr. Black presented the club with a pair of beautiful handles to be played for every year, and the successful player was the champion or captain of the club, and held the handles till they were won from him by some better or more fortunate player. The curling club, I may say (and I am sorry for it) is the only institution of long standing in Fergus which has always flourished. There was a very good library formed in 1836, I believe, and for a while it did very well, but finally it got into a very melancholy sickly state, and would have died altogether unless Mr. Fordyce had taken it in charge and nursed it and begged for it, and and punched up people in a persevering manner to aid it, and in fact infused a little life into it. After a while "The Farmers' and Mechanics' Institute" was formed, and the old library made over to it. Well, as long as we got a government grant the Institute did nicely, but when the grant was withdrawn the Institute, like the Library, got into the same weakly state, and only for the praiseworthy efforts of a few individuals would also soon expire.

Sir Francis Head was succeeded as Governor of Upper Canada by Sir George Arthur. The Lower Province was in a very unsettled state, and in truth the outburst of 1837 and 1838 almost put an end to Canadian progress. Confidence was sadly shaken, emigration was almost stopped, and very little was doing in the country at all. Fergus was at a standstill, but the clearings were extending, and the settlers were obliged to persevere, as it was impossible to sell or go