

communication with the outside world. The supplies of the settlement had to be brought by ox-carts over the prairie from St. Paul to Fort Garry, a distance of more than 500 miles; and the mail, conveyed by a carrier on horseback, arrived but once a week. Gradually, however, the civilising influence of the East extended to the Red River.

Well do I remember the advent of the first sewing-machine, and the sensation caused by the arrival of the first piano—truly an event in the history of the settlement. Tallow dips reigned supreme, and the first coal oil was sold at from 14s. to 16s. per gallon. Now, gas and the electric light are common. I had something to do with the introduction of civilised ideas. I formed, for instance, the first theatre in the North-West, and from the stage sprang the first church in Winnipeg. It was in this wise. Having organised an amateur theatrical troupe from native talent, a hall in one of the buildings was fitted up as a theatre. The attempt was crude, it must be admitted, and I don't know that we ever tried "Hamlet," or anything so high-flown. Pantomime was indeed our forte. One day Archdeacon McLean, now Bishop of Saskatchewan, suggested that the theatre should be utilised on Sunday evenings for religious services. Consent was given, and I agreed to act as first sexton. I regret to say, on behalf of the dramatic art, that the Archdeacon drew better audiences on Sunday evening than the theatrical troupe did during the week. The result was a threatened collapse of the floor of the theatre. One Sunday evening, hearing some ominous cracks from the overburdened floor, I rushed out, and with the aid of the shopkeeper underneath, having obtained a number of poplar poles, we propped up the devout worshippers overhead. It was well the services of the church forbade applause, or else I fear the whole congregation would have found themselves in the depths below, rather than in the realms above. It is needless to say there were no more services in that church. The Archdeacon adjourned to the Court-house adjoining Fort Garry, and soon afterwards Holy Trinity was built. Having seen the danger of buildings collapsing and falling to the earth, the idea of preventing them from being blown up was next conceived, and the first general powder-house in the country established; but it was not a success, as you will understand when you know that it was no uncommon thing for a trader to seat himself on a keg of gunpowder near the camp-fire, and smoke his pipe in the most leisurely way. The Hudson's Bay Company were the bankers as well as the rulers of the settlement, and the currency of the country consisted of gold and silver coins and blankets; not the domestic article of that name, but merely a sort of bank-note circulated by the Company in something the same form as that issued by the Bank of England. To bring the settlement into closer communication with the outside world, a stage running three times a week, *via* the United States, was established in 1869.