

If there be anything in a name, one need have no difficulty in settling what nation little Archie's father belonged to, and you had only to take a good look at him to see that his name fitted him, for he was a Scotchman in every line of his face and turn of his body. They called him 'Big Donald' in the North-West, for he stood full six feet high, and was so stout of limb, broad of shoulder, and deep of chest, that exertion seemed to fatigue him no more than danger appalled him. He had not a handsome face, but, better than that, a transparently frank, honest one; and with his shaggy eyebrows, heavy moustache, and dense brown beard, from whose midst issued a voice of startling depth and volume, commanded universal respect among the *voyageurs*, *bois-brulées* (half-breeds), and Indians who formed the subjects of his realm.

For the factor of an important fort in those days held little short of regal sway over the men who were under him, and the Indians who came to barter their precious peltries for his beads and blankets and kettles and hatchets. He was responsible only to the Company, whose headquarters were at Montreal, thousands of miles distant, and so long as the number of packs sent yearly from his district showed no falling off, he could do pretty much as he liked, without interference from anybody.

Donald M'Kenzie had sailed across from Scotland when just out of his teens, to make his way in the New World as best he might, with nothing but keen wits, strong hands, a brave heart, and a clear conscience to help him. Meeting in Montreal with a brother Scot, a few years his