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MANITOBA

HISTORICAL AND

SCIENTIFIC SOCIETY

WINNIPEG.

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NOTES AND COMMENTS

ON

Harmon's Journal,

1800-1820.

—BY—

REV. PROFESSOR BRYCE, M. A., LL. B.,
CORRESPONDING SECRETARY.

A paper read before the Society on the evening of 13th December, 1883.

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EARLY DAYS.

The Reminiscences of a Fur Trader. Mr. Harmon's Experiences in the Northwest.

At the regular meeting of the Historical and Scientific Society, Dec. 13th, 1883, the proceedings were of an interesting nature. We give here the paper read by Rev. Professor Bryce on Fur-trader Harmon's book, which was very well received. A vote of thanks was accorded to Professor Bryce for his paper, and also to Mr. Alexander Kippen, who presented Harmon's book to the society. The following gentlemen were elected members of the society: Rev. Principal King, Rev. C. B. Pitblado, Messrs. F. E. Gautier, J. A. Campbell, W. W. Buchanan, Wm. Martin, W. D. Russell, F. L. Patton, W. S. Grant, Wm. Lindsay (Stonewall), Wm. Ashdown, sr., Wilson Irwin, Dr. Ralston. In connection with the proposed exhibition scheme it was informally stated that a number of people had promised to lend articles, and there is a prospect of a sufficient collectiod being obtained. It was arranged that at the next meeting, two weeks from date, Mr. J. H. Panton will read a paper dealing with some places of last summer's trip to Calgary.

The following interesting paper was read by Rev. Prof. Bryce :—

The arrival of the Selkirk Colonists on the banks of Red River in 1812, is the era when to most persons the historic period of the Winnipeg District begins. It is quite true that occasional references are made to an earlier period in the archives of the old Government of New France, which are now in Paris, and to some extent known to us through the researches of Mr. Margry. The explorers referred to in these records came northwestward from Lake Superior from 1731-52, and built forts at a number of points in our region. On Lake of the Woods was Fort St. Charles, at the mouth of Winnipeg River Fort Maurepas, at the Forks near the site of this city was Fort Rouge, at Portage la Prairie Fort de La Reine, between Lakes Winnipeg and Manitoba Fort Dauphin, and near the Saskatchewan mouth Fort Bourbon. The references made to these are very meagre however, and have not muchmore interest for us than the famous expedition of Lewis and Clarke, up the Missouri in 1804-6, or than the wanderings of Hennepin at an earlier date up the Mississippi. Their continuity was lost, and when our present history began, as I have been assured by one of Lork Selkirk's earliest band of Colonists, there was no trace of these forts remaining. While the Nor'west Company and Hudson's Bay Company had, before 1812, forts in the district referred to, it is somewhat striking that the books referring to Rupert's Land up to that date chiefly deal with the regions further north. Sir Alexander Mackenzie (1789-93) in his absorbing book carries us to the regions beyond—to far away Athabasca, the Peace River, and the mighty stream named after himself. Hearne (1769-72) deals with the subarctic territory Northwest of Hudson's Bay to the Arctic Sea. Jonathan Carver (1766-68) leaves us a most interesting account of a journey far northwestward. Alexander Henry (1800-1816) passes throught the district, but he too is largely taken up with the free trade in the Saskatchewan and the distant ports, while we could have wished that there could have been placed in our hands in printed form, what still remains only a manuscript, the journal of Mr. David Thompson, surveyor of the Nor'west Company (1796-98), and which describes the country and the posts to some extent at that date.

In this remarkable absence of historical data of our Winnipeg district, it is with real delight that I announce through the kind offices of Mr. A. Kippen, Mr. C. N. Bell, a member of our society has obtained from Prince Albert the only copy that I am aware of as being in the country of

HARMON'S JOURNAL (1800-1820).

I had met it in the Hudson's Bay Company Library in London, but it is a

372

genuine prize to fall into the hands of our society. I am reminded by the finding of this prize so far West as Prince Albert, of a visit to Gladstone, 100 miles west of Winnipeg, a few years ago when in so new and unlikely a place, a settler who had carried west his household gods, gave me the copy of the celebrated "Breeches Bible" printed in 1644. What makes this present the more interesting is that in Ottawa a daughter of the traveller is still living and known to the writer and other members of this society. On account of the rarity of the book I propose to give a sketch of some interesting facts scattered through it for the members of our society, with notes and comments upon them.

The writer, D. W. Harmon, was an American from Vergennes, in the State of Vermont, and was born in the year 1778. Attracted north to Montreal by the fame of the Nor'west Company, which offered not only adventure for the young and the brave, but also a competence for the energetic and the capable, the young Vermonter had left home at the age of 22, and bound himself for seven years to undergo the hardships of the fur trade. There are in the possession of this society specimens as old as the year 1784, being before Harmon's day, of the agreements by which the Nor'westers bound their employes. Washington Irving in one of his books has given us with all his brilliancy of description an account of the Nor'west Traders of Canada, and certainly their life was full of the picturesque as thus they sallied forth from Montreal in search of the Western Colchis to bring back the golden fleece. To one who has gone up the Ottawa it is interesting to follow the youth, new to his work, leaving Lachine on 29th April, 1800, portaging the loads, repairing canoes, marking bales, killing game, passing the site of the city of Ottawa "the three kettles," counting with melancholy feeling the fourteen crosses at Roche Capitaine Portage, marking as they did an equal number of victims to the dangerous navigation of the Rapids, and as the voyagers left one stream to go up or down another, they pulled off their hats and made the sign of the cross for protection. How natural amid their dangers, when at one single rapid, could he counted no less than 30 memorial crosses of their companions gathered in by the voracious deep! With interesting minuteness the journal chronicles the journey through Lakes Huron and Superior, to the Grand Portage, the great rendezvous of the Nor'west Company. This was on the shore northwest of Isle Royale and some forty-five miles southwest of the great fort erected on Thunder Bay at the mouth of the Kaministiquia, which was named after William McGillivray, the head of the Nor'west Company, Fort William. The voyageurs who had accompanied our traveller now returned to Montreal, and those who carried him forward were a new and daring set of men. They looked contemptuously on the voyageurs from Montreal to Grand Portage, whom they called "mangeurs de lard," pork eaters, from the dried provisions used in the absence of game coming up the lakes. The inland voyageurs rejoiced in the name "coureurs des bois" or wood rangers, going as they did to Athabasca and the Rocky Mountains. Omitting many interesting incidents, Harmon is found on July 29th coming into our Winnipeg district as he crossed the Lake of the Woods.

Before noting some points of interest in a more collected form we shall give a few of the entries in the journal of the traveller as he goes from Lake of the Woods to Swan River.

July 31st, 1800. Mouth of the River Winipick (sic). "Here the Nor'west Company and the Hudson's Bay Company have each a fort. The soil is good; among the fruit I observe the red plum; the grape also grows wild in this vicinity."

Note.—Here appears the furthest point (except Rainy Lake) towards Lake Superior to which the Hudson's Bay Company at this date had gone. In 1774 the two companies had first met at Fort Cumberland on the Saskatchewan, and there was nothing but conflict for forty-seven years till their union. This post, "Lake Winnipeg," was founded in 1795. Fort Alexander is still maintained in this locality by the H. B. Co.

Aug. 3rd. The same place.—"As a substitute for bread, we now make use of what the natives call pimican, which consists of lean meat, dried and pounded fine and then mixed with melted fat. This compound is put into bags, made of the skins of the buffalo, etc., and when cold it becomes a solid body. Pimican is a very palatable, nourishing and healthy food."

Aug. 8.—"This evening Mons. Mayotte took a woman of this country for a wife. All the ceremonies attending such an event are the following: When a person is desirous of taking one of the daughters of the natives, he makes a present to the

parents of the damsel, of such articles as he supposes will be most acceptable, and among them rum is indispensable, for of that all the savages are fond to excess. Should the parents accept the articles offered, the girl is clothed in the Canadian fashion."

Note—This was long before the arrival of a clergyman in the Northwest. Further notice will be taken of Nor'wester customs as to marriage.

Aug. 10.—"Although we are not in want of provisions, yet our people have killed a dog to eat, the flesh of which, they say, is delicious "

Note.—This was not the Indians but the Nor'west voyageurs.

Harmon now leaves with his party, sailing northward half the length of Lake Winnipeg, and enters the river Dauphine, which leads to his destination.

LAKE WINNIPEG.

Aug. 17.—"The country about this lake is low; and is overspread with pretty heavy timber, and the soil appears to be good."

RIVER DAUPHINE.

Aug. 20.—"We see a great number of swans, bustards, pelicans, etc.

Aug. 24.—Little Lake Winnipick (Winnepegoosis).

Aug. 30.—"We are now nearly across the lake, which is about 120 miles long, and from five to thirty broad. The land about it is generally low and well covered with timber, which consists of a species of pine, birch, poplar, aspen, willow, etc. We here take, in nets, the white-fish, which are excellent."

Sept. 1.—"I have passed the day in reading the Bible, and in meditating on my present way of living; and, I must confess, that it too much resembles that of a savage."

Oct. 9.—"We are now encamped around a large fire, with plenty of food; I have given to each of the people a dram, and we have all ceased to think of the fatigue and trouble of the day. To make a place to lie down, the people scrape away the snow and lay down a few branches of the pine, (Note—the spruce) such as this country in every part produces; and on this we spread a blanket or two and cover ourselves with another. A day of hard labour and great fatigue will enable a person to sleep soundly on such a bed; and to obtain refreshment such as a sluggard will seek for in vain on a bed of down."

LIFE AT A NOR'WEST FORT.

Our traveller has at last arrived in the part of the country where for some years his lot is to be cast. The older residents of Manitoba are all familiar with the "Swan River District." It is now a part of this Province, and, lying west of Lake Winnipegoosis, is say 250 miles northwest of this city. The young trader of twenty-two is at once thrown into his work, which is nothing less than taking charge of a fort. The superintendent of Swan River Fort is to accompany Harmon so far and begin the enterprise of erecting another fort, and allow the novice to proceed. We must be careful to realize what is meant by a fort. The two forts on Red River up to last year—Upper and Lower Fort Garry—were worthy of the name. We may well bear a grudge to the H. B. Co., from an archæological point of view, that our Fort Garry, in which we took so just a pride, is now a thing of the past, and that the company with two hundred years of a most picturesque history, succumbed to the spirit of the hour and cleared away this historic land-mark. This, in passing; but the forts that the disputants as to the boundary-line of Ontario are continually reminding us of as being scattered with such profusion over the Northwest in French days, were certainly not nearly such formidable objects should one desire to attack them, as the famous windmill which brought Don Quixote to grief in his war-like adventure, Mons. Perigne, of Swan River Fort, sallies forth valiantly, with six men, on the borders of winter to erect a fort at Bird Mountain. Harmon's Fort, one hundred miles to the west of Swan River Fort, is named Alexandria. It is interesting to read that it stood on the bank of the Assiniboine, or Upper Red River. It was westward of Fort Pelly. The stockade around Fort Alexandria was 256 ft. x 142 ft. Those familiar with Northwest life can picture to themselves the buildings arranged one side of the square on the interior, the stores according to a regular plan, leaving the central space for the natives to gather and hold their pow-wow. In this case the buildings were whitewashed inside and outside with a while earth, which travelers so far west as the Bow River in the Rocky Mountains may still see used in the absence of lime for the same purpose. Harmon found matters a good deal different from the surroundings of his quiet Puritan home in Vermont. In reply to his reproof given his men for playing cards on Sunday, he is informed

that there is no "Sunday in this country, and no God nor devil," and before his second month had expired he was witness in the fort itself of an Indian brawl in which eight families of Crees participated, and regarding which he makes the very mild comment, "to see a house full of drunken Indians, consisting of men, women and children, is a most unpleasant sight." It is, we are bound in justice to state, one of the distinguishing features of the Hudson's Bay Company, as contrasted with the Nor'westers, in their dealings with the Indians, that they would not sell strong drink to Indians. The Nor'westers bear an unenviable reputation on this subject.

One of the first fetes the young fort-master saw was the celebration of

ST. ANDREW'S DAY.

Those of us who live in Winnipeg are familiar enough with this annual festival, and it affords the sons of Scotland an opportunity to air their eloquence. Probably this celebration of November 30th, 1800, is the earliest on record in Manitoba. Mr. Archibald Norman McLeod, whom readers of the history of 1816 will recognize as one of the prominent Nor'-west officers, was at this time Bourgeois-"shop-keeper" of Alexandria Fort, and being Scotch the day must be observed. The celebration seems to have partaken somewhat of a French character, no doubt from the employes having been chiefly French-Canadians. We are told that the people of the fort, agreeably to the custom of the country, early in the morning presented him with a cross, etc., and at the same time a number of others who were at his door discharged a volley or two of muskets." Soon after, they were invited into the hall, where they received a reasonable dram, after which Mr. McLeod made them a present, I am afraid, of a further supply of the same article. The evening closed with a grand entertainment. I fear this mode of celebrating St. Andrew's day has not yet entirely disappeared from the world.

WINTER BUFFALO HUNT.

No sooner had the new year of 1801 passed, with its festivities, than the question of winter supplies arose. Men, women and children must hie away to the buffalo plains to engage in the hunt. The traveller in Manitoba of less than ten years ago often met father, mother, sons and daughters all in from Edmonton or the Far West on a trading expedition. Many families of the Metis were as nomadic as the Bedouins. In the winter expedition to the buffalo, the hunters and their families lived in tents made of the skins of the buffalo, moose and elk. One tent was made of from ten to twenty-five skins sewed together and spread and supported on poles, they had a sugar-loaf form. Such a tent would hold from ten to fifteen persons. Harmon accompanied the hunters, and saw herds of "at least thousands of buffaloes." The herds were so tame that, at this season, they allowed human beings to approach within a few rods of them. One is reminded of the rather improbable tales told of Fort Pembina early in this century, that buffalo rubbed themselves contentedly against the stockade of the enclosure, and would allow a person to touch them with a stick through the palisades of the fort. The party was quite successful, and returned with their sledges loaded with meat, and feasted for the remainder of the winter. While speaking of transport, it may be well to note a fact mentioned by Harmon of some importance. At Alexandria he states,

HORSES ARE TO BE BOUGHT

of the natives for a mere trifle. They are said to have been well-built, strong and tolerably fleet. The presence of the horse at this early period on our Northwestern prairies is something striking to those familiar with their great scarcity at the time of the Selkirk colonists ten or twelve years after. It is well known the horse is not indigenous to America, and the occurrence in such abundance at Swan River would indicate a considerable commerce with Central America, whence, introduced by the Spaniards, the creature so useful for the vast plains must have been brought up the Mississippi and Missouri valleys, and reached our northern latitudes. That, however, the horse was much later than the dog in this region is shown by the Cree name for horse: "mis-ta-tim," meaning "big dog." The every-day life of a free trader could hardly be monotonous, but even in it episodes of a more striking kind occur. Harmon was on one occasion found adopting the role of

AN INDIAN MEDICINE MAN.

About July, 1802, one of the hunters in his employ complained of having poor fortune in hunting. He complained that whenever he fell upon the trail of some animal he was followed by an evil spirit. As he approached the animal, the evil spirit, just before he had come near enough to take aim, with a terrible voice

frightened both himself and the game. Like Tantalus, the poor hunter was always disappointed on the verge of success. Harmon undertook to exorcise the demon. He took several drugs, mixed them, sealed them up in white paper tied them to the stock of the hunter's gun, and told him to throw the paper behind him toward the alarming voice when he heard it, and that it would stop the spirit's tongue. He further warned him not to look behind him, but to pursue the animal, and he would undoubtedly kill, him. His remedy succeeded, and Harmon, while rising to a high position of regard among the Indians, at least commands our appreciation as having had a knowledge of human nature.

LOCAL PHENOMENA.

With his eyes open to the resources of the country, our author speaks of what was a considerable feature in old Red River days, the manufacture of salt from Salt Springs in the neighbourhood of Lakes Manitoba and Winnipegoosis. Only a few years ago salt of a stong quality could be got in the Fort Garry store from the Salt Springs of Lake Manitoba. So early as Harmon's time in the Swan River country water from salt springs was boiled down and tolerable salt procured. It seems to be found here in the upper Silurian or Devonian strata, as in Ontario and New York State, and will no doubt yet prove a useful native industry, on a much firmer basis than land speculation or paper towns. He also speaks of sugar being made from the sap of the maple—not of course the true maple—but the "Negundo Aceroides" so well known to us all. The Misasquitomunuck (service berry) berries receive, as is proper their meed of praise. A feature that we do not care to mention is also noted—the grasshoppers. This is the earliest notice (July 23rd, 1802,) unless it be Indian stories of these pests, that has come to my knowledge. We are quite familiar with the fact that the Selkirk Colonists in in 1818 and 1819 suffered from these terrible enemies of the farmer, but even at this early date the American Desert to the Southwest of us was sending its unwelcome messengers to us.

DOWN THE ASSINIBOINE.

The ability to open up new means of transport, and discover as the country was explored by their employes untried routes, was a thing in which the Nor'-west Company far exceeded the Hudson's Bay Company before the union of the two companies. The Nor'westers and their men were chiefly colonists having their headquarters in Montreal, while the Hudson's Bay Company's men were chiefly from Britain and could not be expected to show the same adaptability as those brought up in the new world. Accordingly we find the route by way of Lakes Winnipeg and Winnipegoosis largely given up at this time for the later journey, which has remained to this day, by way of the Assiniboine. Harmon now gets orders (1804) to come southward to meet the superintendent of the district, a Mr. Chaboillez, to transport goods from what was considered the head of navigation on the Assiniboine to his post. This Mr. Chaboillez seems to have had his headquarters near the mouth of the Souris, where at this date there were three forts, Brandon House, belonging to the Hudson's Bay Company, after which the City of Brandon is named; Assiniboine House, belonging to the Nor'-west Company: and Souris River Fort, belonging to the X. Y. Company, an offshoot of the Nor'west Company between the years of 1796 and 1804, and to which for the time being belonged the well-known traders, Edward Ellice and Sir Alexander Mackenzie. The junction of the Souris and the Assiniboine is evidently among the key points of the fur trade of the southern district. I had the pleasure of visiting, on the western journey of the Historical Society this summer, the sites of these forts, and was glad to find them still recognizable. I made measurements of them, and will give details of their history and topography in our forthcoming report. At this time (1804) it is interesting to notice a circumstance mentioned by our author, as showing the impingement on the Northwest fur trade of a great exploratory expedition further south. Harmon is informed by Mr. Chamboillez, that Captains Clarke & Lewis, with a hundred and eighty soldiers, had arrived at the Mandan village on the Missouri, a point three days' march southwestward of Souris mouth, some 80 miles south of the boundary line. They had sent a message to Mr. Chamboillez to visit them. On their arrival they hoisted the American flag, and Mr. C. stated they had behaved honorably to his people, who had gone thither to trade with the natives. A pleasing exchange of international courtesies! The local traders of the three forts at the Souris mouth seem to have been on good terms with one another, as an entertainment of the

usual exuberant character is described by Harmon. On the 30th of May, 1805, our explorer with upwards of forty men, in five boats and seven canoes, came down the Assinniboine, leaving Souris mouth behind.

On June 13th they reached Portage la Prairie, where was a fort of the Nor'-west Company called "Miserable," but beautifully situated. Opposite the fort there is stated to have been the plain we know so well, sixty miles long and from one to ten wide. We feel quite crest-fallen as citizens of the Northwestern metropolis at the meagre notice given by Harmon of our locality. Here it is:

June 19th.—"The Forks. At this place the upper and lower Red Rivers form a junction. The country around is pleasant, the soil appears to be excellent, and it is tolerably well timbered with oak, basswood, walnut, elm, poplar, aspen, birch, etc. Grape vines and plum trees are also seen." Alas! the change! Where are our forests now?

Passing down Red River, through Lake Winnipeg, and back to the Grand Portage by the route through which he came, Harmon visited Fort William—then the New Fort—whence, after a short stay, he departs, now to go to the far Northwest—Lake Athabasca, Peace River and the Rocky Mountains. We can only select a few illustrative features of his new home.

DOMESTIC RELATIONS.

It was not to have been expected that the tone of life prevailing among restless and reckless adventurers, such as entered the fur trade, mingling with a savage and dependent people, would be of the highest order. The custom of the country of making what was virtually a bargain and sale of marriageable maidens by their parents, for à consideration of a material kind, seems to us undesirable enough. Harmon relates, with considerable frankness, the proposal made him by a Cree chief to give him one of his daughters, and could such matters be made matter of open negotiation the proposal was by no means a dishonoring one. Said he: "I am fond of you, and my wish is to have my daughter with the white people, for she will be treated better by them than by her own relations." The fur trader politely declined the proposal, though, he says, it would have secured the father's furs and also those of all of his band. Among the officers of the fur companies there seems to have prevailed, in some cases, a system somewhat resembling the morganatic marriages of Germany. Harmon thus states it: "It is customary for all gentlemen who remain for any length of time, in this part of the world to have a female companion, with whom they can pass their time more socially and agreeably, than to live a lonely life, as they must do, if single: and when they return to their native land, they place the ci-devant wife under the protection of some honest man, with whom she can pass the remainder of her days in this country, much more agreeably, than it would be forcible for her to do, were she to be taken down into the civilized world, to the manners, customs and language of which she would be an entire stranger." This custom, while not so heartless, nor so debasing as others that might be named, could hardly be supposed to satisfy a man seemingly of such moral ideas as Harmon was. Accordingly the wife he selected from among the dusky maidens of the land, was retained by him as lawful wife when he retired some 15 years afterwards from the fur trading service to take up his abode in the East. His wife, for so she must be called, though recognized as such by no legal formalities—for such were impossible in the wilderness—was the daughter of a French Canadian who had married from among the Snare Indians, at the base of the Rocky Mountains. While in the Northwest, mention is made of the birth of three children, the eldest of whom, George Harmon, was sent to Vermont as a boy to be educated, but whose death caused the deepest sorrow to father and mother in their far away Northern home. When in 1819 the time came for the fur trader to leave the country he says: "The mother of my children will accompany me; and if she shall be satisfied to remain in my native land, I design to make her regularly my wife by formal marriage. * * * I am under a moral obligation not to dissolve the connection if she is willing to continue it. Ever since my own mind was turned effectually to the subject of religion I have taken pains to instruct her in the great doctrines and duties of Christianity. My exertions have not been in vain." During the retirement of his Athabaska life, the echo of the

STIRRING TIMES ON THE RED RIVER

in 1815-16 came to him by letters. He, of course, looked at these events from a Northwester standpoint. In November, 1816, the news reached him of the great conflict in June, by which Governor

Semple and some twenty of Lord Selkirk's employes were cruelly put to death. As was the usual way of putting it, Lord Selkirk's colonists and the Hudson's Bay Company were the aggressors in seizing Nor'West forts, in carrying Nor'Western officers to Hudson's Bay, and even in sallying forth upon the Bois Brules, who, Harmon's informant tells him, were many of them without gun or ammunitien. Those who have paid more attention to the subject know how incorrect a version of the affair this is. Lord Selkirk is spoken of as having the frenzy of a madman, in still resolving to pursue his wild projects. In 1819 our author reached Fort William, homeward bound, having done good service for nearly twenty years to his employers, having occupied positions of trust, even over the mountains in New Caledonia, and retired, not only with unsullied reputation, but with the character of a Christian gentleman. The work of editing his journal was well done by a Vermont clergyman named Daniel Haskel. In the preface written by this gentleman is an account of a proposed scheme, of which, so far as I know, there is no other account. This was the establishment of a

NOR'WEST ELYSIUM

in the interior for retired officers, traders and trappers and their families. Anyone familiar with the conflicts of the Hudson's Bay Company and the Nor'west Company can see the meaning of this. The Red River Colony had been established by Lord Selkirk. All efforts to destroy it had failed. The appearance of the noble Earl himself on the banks of the Red River with his hundred or two of De Meurons had dashed the hopes of the Nor'west Company of gaining supremacy there. The half-breed families were beginning to gather round the Red River settlement. Should this take place to any large extent, the Hudson's Bay Company must win in the race of competition. In the establishments of the Nor'west Company there were at the time from twelve to fifteen hundred women and children, wholly or in part of Indian extraction. The attractions of a settlement on Red River could not be resisted by many of these, and so they would be lost as Nor'west workers and employes. The Nor'west Company proposed to start a rival settlement in the Rainy River Country. To make a beginning in cultivating the land, erecting mills and the like, the company proposed to give $15,000 or $20,000 and appoint one of the partners superintendent of the settlement. The partners and clerks in the Indian country itself had subscribed several thousand dollars to begin a school either at Rainy Lake or Fort William for the benefit of the children at the several posts, who would be sent to this centre for education. It was further proposed to begin missionary enterprises in the new settlement. How different the history of the Red River settlement would have been had this scheme gone on, it would be difficult to say for the Nor'westers had great influence with the Bois-Brules. As it was, these elements of our population had in 1870 grown to 10,000 on the banks of Red River, besides the many employed at posts of the Hudson's Bay Co. all over the Northwest. The centre of gravity of the Northwest might have been at Fort Francis instead of Fort Garry had the scheme gone on, but it received its death blow by the union of the two great fur companies in 1821.