PAUL KANE

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PAUL KANE

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By ALBERT H. ROBSON
Author of
CANADIAN LANDSCAPE PAINTERS

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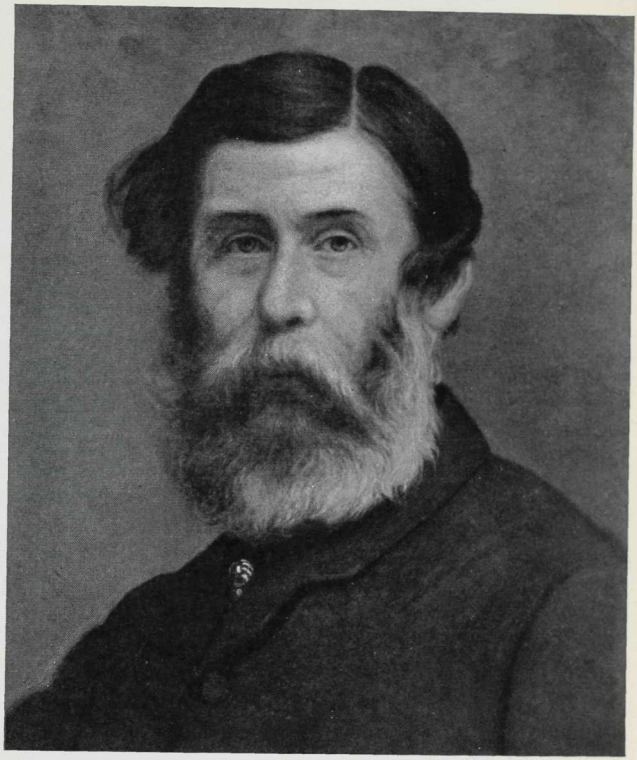

PAUL KANE

from a painting by F. A. Verner

PAUL KANE

1810 – 1871

PAUL KANE is a romantic figure in Canadian Art. The record of his life and accomplishments is an amazing story of determined persistency towards the goal of his boyhood ambition, and an astounding tale of travel, adventure, hardship and brilliant accomplishment. He was one of Canada's earliest painters, a truly great pioneer who has left for us a pictorial record of the work and play, the costumes and habits of our aborigines from the Great Lakes to the Pacific Ocean. Not only did he leave a magnificent and extensive collection of pictures but he supplemented his painted records with a written narrative of his *Wanderings of an Artist among the Indians of North America*, a book which is now a classic of Canadian travel literature.

Contrary to the widely accepted belief that Kane was a Canadian by birth, he was born at Mallow, County Cork, Ireland, on September 3, 1810. He was the son of Michael Kane, who, according to the records of the British War Office, was born in Lancashire in 1775 and enlisted in the Royal Artillery on February 2, 1793. After serving in Ireland during the Rebellion of 1798 he was honourably discharged with the rank of Corporal and settled in Mallow where he engaged in business. Michael Kane had five children, James, Fred, Oliver, Paul and Mary; the last three were born in Ireland. According to family records, the name was spelt Keane in Ireland. When and where it was changed to Kane is not known.

Michael Kane and his family came to Canada in 1818 or 1819, just before the close of the reign of George III, and made their home in "Muddy" York (Toronto). He established a business as a wine and spirits merchant on the west side of Yonge Street between Adelaide and King Streets. He died on July 18, 1851, at the age of 78, according to the inscription on the stone over his grave in St. James Cemetery.

Paul Kane was eight or nine years old when he arrived in York. He gives us a glimpse of his boyhood days when he wrote: "I had been accustomed to see hundreds of Indians about my native village, then Little York, muddy and dirty, just struggling into existence." As a matter of fact the town was not an imposing sight; it consisted of two hundred houses scattered along the low land of the waterfront and surrounded by primæval forest. The report of duck hunters' guns in the reedy marshes at dawn echoed through the streets, and at night the red glare of numerous jacklights glided over the waters of the bay indicating the activity of natives spearing fish. In 1819, Paul Kane was registered as a pupil at the District Grammar School which he attended until 1826. The one important fact of his school days is that he received drawing lessons from Mr. Drury, the eccentric drawing master who gave him his first rudimentary tuition in draughtsmanship. Aside from his art studies Kane's greatest interest seems to have been in the Indians camped near the outskirts of the town. These early influences evoked in Kane a passion for self-expression, a deeply rooted desire to depict on canvas the life of the Indians.

School days ended early in the pioneer town, and when 16 Kane secured employment at Conger's furniture factory where he remained

until 1830. His desire to paint was so keen that during this period he procured materials from New York and painted several portraits. His ambition was to study in Europe and devote himself to painting a series of pictures illustrative of the North American Indian and scenery. He possessed neither influence nor means, but, with a determined spirit, proceeded to make his dreams come true.

The town of York was surging with activity in 1830. The little settlement had trebled in population since Kane had first arrived. The new Parliament Buildings on King Street were completed and opened with the first annual bazaar. The first buildings of Upper Canada College were being erected at the corner of Simcoe and King Streets. All about him was an atmosphere of barter, trade and land speculation, with little or no thought or time for any consideration of the cultural aspects of life. Looking back over the years, and trying to visualize the environment, it is remarkable that Kane was able to maintain the singleness of purpose toward his ambitions.

At the age of 20, Paul Kane went to Cobourg where he painted portraits of Sheriff and Mrs. Conger, her sister Mrs. Percy, Sheriff Ruttan and other local notables. With his meagre savings slightly augmented by these commissions he returned home. The town became a city and changed its name to Toronto, but political unrest was brewing and active trouble was not far away. In 1836, Kane left for Detroit. After five years in the United States he finally procured transportation to Marseilles on a ship sailing from New Orleans in June, 1841.

Having succeeded in getting to Europe, Kane visited the Galleries of Paris, Geneva, Milan, Venice, Verona, Bologna, Florence,

Rome and Naples, and occupied himself copying and studying the works of the great masters. From Naples he joined a party of Syrian explorers on their way to Jerusalem. En route they were deserted by their Arab guides who stole all their goods and supplies and left them stranded. Kane made his way back to Jaffa, from there to Egypt, and took ship for Italy. In Italy he gathered up the copies of famous paintings he had made in the Galleries and with a Scottish artist, Stewart Watson, went to London. They took lodgings in Russell Street near the British Museum and spent some time there.

Kane returned to Toronto, in 1844, after an absence of nine years. He was greatly impressed with the changes that had taken place. The Rebellion of 1837 was an event of the past. Responsible Government, the cause of so much turmoil and trouble, was definitely established. Upper Canada was entering on a period of rapid expansion and the city had grown to a population of about twenty thousand.

Having now acquired some proficiency in his chosen art, Kane lost no time in starting the work of his boyhood dreams. On June 17, 1845, with no companions but his portfolio, a box of paints, a gun and ammunition, he took the most direct route to Lake Simcoe and went from there by boat to Orillia where he crossed over to Sturgeon Bay on Lake Huron. Here Kane hired a guide and canoe; after paddling all night he arrived at Penetanguishene and left early the following morning on a packet boat for Owen Sound. Hearing of a council meeting of Indians about forty miles west, he started out on foot with an Indian to carry his pack and act as guide. Their journey he describes as a disagreeable

one through the woods and swamps, with the rain coming down in torrents. After spending a night in the woods, supperless and without shelter, they arrived about noon the next day at the Ojibway Indian village of Saugeen. A night in the woods in June without food, without shelter, with clothes soaking wet and no protection from the mosquitoes would cast an effective damper on the enthusiasm of most men. No word of discouragement, however, appears in Kane's journal. He had a self-imposed mission in life, and obstacles and hardships were but part of the day's work. Quite apart from his magnificent accomplishment in work produced, his resourcefulness and determination and the light-hearted manner with which he faced hardships throughout all his travels, merit our great admiration.

At Saugeen, Kane seriously started his life work of recording Indian life. He spent ten days there painting picturesque personages of the Ojibway tribe. During the following five months he made sketches of the Indians round Georgian Bay, Manitoulin Island, Sault Ste. Marie, Mackinaw, Green Bay and Fox River, then returned to Toronto by way of Fond du Lac, Sheboggan and Buffalo. He arrived home on December 1, having accomplished a grand summer's work.

The following spring, on March 1, Kane visited Lachine to interview Sir George Simpson, Governor of the Hudson's Bay Company. He was anxious to procure the co-operation of the Hudson's Bay Company for his ambitious scheme to penetrate into the interior of the Great West. Here he would see the Indians in their primitive setting, for their contacts with the whites were so slight as not to have rubbed off the glamour of original conditions.

Sir George received Kane cordially, displayed a lively interest in his paintings of the previous summer and not only offered to facilitate his plans but also gave him a commission to paint twelve canvases for the Company. Highly delighted, Kane returned to Toronto and got his materials ready for the trip.

On May 9, 1846, Paul Kane started on what must surely be the most adventurous, arduous and romantic sketching trip ever made in the history of painting, a trip which occupied nearly three years. At the very outset of his journey, through a misunderstanding, he missed the Hudson's Bay steamer at Mackinaw. Bitterly disappointed, Kane procured a small boat and with a blanket for a sail, left to overtake the steamer. After a day and a night of most violent exertion, and to the utter astonishment of Sir George Simpson, he overtook the vessel at Sault Ste. Marie. Since the brigade of canoes had left for Fort William, and Sir George's canoes were too heavily laden to give Kane passage, he had to wait for a small steamer sailing for Fort William four days later, with the hope of joining the brigade there. Disappointment again faced Kane; the brigade had left the day before he arrived. Procuring a canoe and three men, they were soon straining at their paddles and succeeded in overtaking the brigade ten hours later.

The brigade consisted of three large birch-bark canoes (about 28 feet long) with eight men and supplies in each. The order of travel was to break camp at three or four o'clock in the morning and paddle until eight, when they would stop for breakfast, then continue their journey until one hour before sundown, when they would make camp for the night. Following a custom of the voyageurs, the paddlers were allowed a rest of two or three minutes,

every hour, to fill their pipes, and distances between places were referred to as so many pipes. Travelling was strenuous work, frequently intercepted with arduous and difficult portages. He mentions one portage through four miles of swamp where they waded up to their waists in mud and water. But portages were opportunities for Kane; he writes: "Whilst the men were engaged in making the portage, I took advantage of the delay to make a sketch." For nearly three weeks the brigade worked its way westward through those dreary miles of rivers and lakes, sprinkled with such profusion among the maze of great rolling grey and rust-coloured granite hills which separate the Great Lakes from the prairies. Day after day they travelled through this land of tufted spruce and feathery tamarack, of tangled underbrush and treacherous muskeg. Kane was impressed with the wild beauty of the country and seized every opportunity to work. His diary states that he made a sketch of an impressive waterfall during the heaviest shower of rain he ever experienced. Opportunities also occurred to make paintings of Indians. His ability to produce likenesses made a remarkable impression on the primitive minds of the Red Men. A party of Saulteaux Indians came to see the "Great Medicine-Man who could make Indians." Throughout his entire trip the Indians held him in awe as a miracle man, and this attitude towards him sometimes facilitated his work, but more frequently it made them fearful of some mystical power he might have over them.

On June 13 they entered the Red River and soon arrived at Fort Garry. Kane was now on the great Prairies, that land of adventure and romance he had dreamed of as a school boy at York. Buffalo were still running the plains, and the various tribes of

Indians were still carrying on their hereditary warfare against each other. Here Kane joined with a band of half-breeds and was an active participant in his first buffalo hunt. Even the excitement of the chase did not stop him from seeing pictorial possibilities and a passage describing the incident is worth quoting here. "I again joined in the pursuit; and coming up with a large bull, I had the satisfaction of bringing him down at the first fire. Excited by my success, I threw down my cap and galloping on, soon put a bullet through another enormous animal. He did not, however, fall, but stopped and faced me, pawing the earth, bellowing and glaring savagely at me. The blood was streaming profusely from his mouth, and I thought he would soon drop. The position in which he stood was so fine that I could not resist the desire of making a sketch. I accordingly dismounted, and had just commenced, when he suddenly made a dash at me. I had hardly time to spring on my horse and get away from him, leaving my gun and everything else behind. When he came up to where I had been standing, he turned over the articles I had dropped, pawing fiercely as he tossed them about, and then retreated towards the herd. I immediately recovered my gun, and having reloaded, again pursued him, and soon planted another shot in him; and this time he remained on his legs long enough for me to make a sketch."

Kane occupied himself sketching in the neighbourhood of Fort Garry for about three weeks. While he expressed great delight in the profusion of the wild flower growth on the prairies he seldom painted landscapes except as a setting for the human drama. His main interest was in human beings and the dramatic and picturesque ceremonies of the Indians. The swampy areas of the prairies made travelling difficult and insect life was a constant annoyance. On

returning to Fort Garry, from the buffalo hunt, he mentions one uncomfortable night and wrote in his diary: "I tried to compose myself to sleep, but found it impossible from the myriads of mosquitoes which appeared determined to extract the last drop of blood from my body." From Fort Garry, Kane made an eight-day journey by boat to Norway House, sketching on the way. The Indians round this post were the Mas-ka-qua tribe, or Swamp Indians, and he spent nearly a month here before moving on with a Hudson's Bay Brigade up the Saskatchewan to Carlton House, where he arrived on September 7.

At Carlton House, Kane procured horses and started on the long trek across the unbroken prairies to Fort Edmonton. On this portion of his trip he passed through the country inhabited by Cree Indians. He experienced the awesome and terrifying sight of prairie fires; he crossed the swollen rivers Indian fashion, his horse swimming and Kane being towed grimly hanging on to the horse's tail. He travelled in what he refers to as true voyageur's style, unburdened by blankets, tent or food of any kind, not even a grain of salt, trusting solely to the gun. He writes that for three days, while approaching Edmonton House, they fell in with immense numbers of buffalo covering the plains as far as the eye could see and filling the air with dust almost to suffocation.

On the morning of October 6, he left Fort Edmonton with a small party to cross the Rockies. After nearly a month of rough travelling, they arrived at Jasper House in the mountains. Proceeding up the Athabaska Pass they encountered severe winter weather with gales and heavy snow and were forced to abandon their horses and travel on snowshoes. Progress over the deep snow

and up the difficult trail was slow, and it was not until November 12 that the little party arrived at the Punch Bowl which forms the head-waters of the Athabaska flowing east and the Columbia river flowing west. Starting on the downward slope to the Pacific, they traced their way along the river gorge. Time after time they had to wade waist-deep through the frigid waters of the swift-running mountain river filled with drifting ice. Their wet clothes froze stiff with the intense cold and the replacing of their snow-shoes over frozen moccasins added to their discomfort. Kane mentions that they had to cross the river twenty-five times before breakfast one morning and twelve times more before camping for the night. Almost perished from cold and hunger, they finally arrived at Boat Encampment and started on the 1,200-mile trip down the Columbia by boats, arriving at Fort Vancouver on December 8.

Fort Vancouver was the largest post in the Hudson's Bay domains. Two Chief Factors, eight or ten clerks and two hundred voyageurs and their Indian wives, composed the settlement. It was a cosmopolitan assembly of English, French, Iroquois, Sandwich Islanders, Crees and Chinooks, each speaking their own language.

Kane had visions of the future development of the western seaboard. On a trip to a Hudson's Bay Post at Oregon City he writes of "passing two cities that are to be. One of them contains but two houses and the other is not much more advanced." He remained on the Pacific coast for seven months studying the manners and customs of the native tribes and sketching and painting with enthusiasm. Procuring a native dug-out canoe and two Indian guides he visited Vancouver Island and explored the east side,

then crossed over to the mainland and made many sketches in the Indian villages along the coast.

On July 1, 1848, Kane began his return journey up the Columbia River and through the mountains to Fort Edmonton, arriving on December 5. After spending Christmas and New Year's at this Post, he travelled to Fort Pitt where he lingered a month sketching the Cree Indians before returning to Edmonton. On April 12 he left for Rocky Mountain House, 180 miles up the Saskatchewan, to study the Blackfeet Indians and from there joined the York Factory Brigade, going to Norway House, which was reached on June 18. From Norway House he returned to Toronto passing over the same route he had traversed on his outward journey, arriving home in October.

Paul Kane returned to Toronto with more than five hundred sketches of the country and inhabitants, illustrative of a then remote and interesting part of the continent. He also brought back a diary of his journey, a collection of costumes and curiosities and vast experience and knowledge to draw upon. He had shown stamina, resourcefulness and ability to get the material he desired. Our parlour-car artists of to-day may well doff their hats to this sturdy pioneer. One wonders how he kept his sketches intact on such an arduous journey, how he maintained the energy and enthusiasm to work under the physical strain of the trip. The hardships he must have endured are almost beyond our conception to-day—travelling those vast distances under the sweltering heat of the summer sun, sleeping out in the snow in sub-zero weather, penetrating rugged unbroken country, navigating almost impossible water-ways and facing blizzards and prairie fires. Then too, there

were the countless hazards of hunger, wild beasts and barbarians, as well as the torments of insect pests which would have sapped the energies of a lesser man. The hardships are touched upon but lightly and impersonally in his journal; his enthusiasm quite overshadows them.

During his astonishing journey among the Indians Paul Kane gathered sufficient material to work with for the balance of his life. He rented a studio, Room 9, Wellington Buildings, 64 King Street West, Toronto, and set to work on the twelve canvases for the Hudson's Bay Company. In 1850, the Legislature commissioned Kane to paint twelve pictures for the House and the sum of 500 pounds was voted for this purpose. His most generous patron, however, was the Honourable George W. Allan, who purchased from him one hundred canvases, which were afterwards bought by Sir Edmund Osler and presented to the University of Toronto. This important collection is now housed in the Royal Ontario Museum. Kane also brought back from the west, for Mr. Allan, a splendid collection of Indian head dresses, costumes and curiosities, much of which was borrowed to add colour to masquerade parties and disappeared. What remains of this collection is also in the Museum.

In 1853, Paul Kane married Miss Harriet Clinch of Cobourg, Ontario, an amateur painter of some skill. By 1858 he had completed the manuscript of his book, and with a selection of his canvases sailed for London to arrange about the publishing, and to superintend the reproduction of his pictures. *Wanderings of an Artist among the Indians of North America* was published by Longmans, London, in 1859. A French edition by Aymot appeared in Paris,

France, in 1861, and a Danish edition two years later. In 1925, The Radison Society of Canada published a reprint with a Foreword by Lawrence J. Burpree.

Upon his return to Toronto, Kane built a house at 40 Wellesley Street, which at that time was quite out in the country. A toll-gate still existed on Yonge Street, at Bloor, and the northern limit of the city was Carlton and College Streets.

Failing eyesight cast a tragic shadow over the last years of Kane's life. He gave up his studio in 1866. He believed his eyes had been weakened by the glare of the sun on the snow during his long tramps in the west. On February 20, 1871, in his 61st year, he died at his home on Wellesley Street, leaving his widow, two sons and a daughter. It is gratifying to know that his name is perpetuated in the Canadian Rockies in Mount Kane, 10,000 feet high, and in the Kane Glacier.

Kane's paintings have greater historical and ethnological value than intrinsic artistic merit. Judged by the standards of to-day his pictures lack light and colour. But it is obviously unfair to judge his work by present-day standards, he lived in another age. Our ideas of landscape painting have changed since the advent of impressionism and Kane belongs definitely to his own time. His work is unquestionably of great importance, and his name is an honoured one among our pioneer painters.

PLATE I. AN INDIAN ENCAMPMENT ON LAKE HURON. Canvas 18 x 29

Courtesy of The Art Gallery of Toronto

In his journal Kane described this picture as follows:

"THE wigwams are made of birch-bark stripped from the trees in large pieces and sewed together with long fibrous roots, which are stretched upon eight or ten poles tied together at the top and stuck in the ground at the required circle of the tent, a hole being left at the top to let the smoke go out. The fire is made in the centre of the lodge and the inmates sleep all around with their feet towards it. They make their mohcocks or kettles of birch-bark, in which they cook fish and game. This is done by putting red-hot stones into the water, and it is astonishing how quickly an Indian woman will boil a fish in this way. The Indians around Lake Huron raise a good deal of corn, which is dried and then pounded in a sort of mortar, which is made out of a hollow log, as represented in this sketch."

This picture was doubtless painted from a sketch made during the summer of 1845, shortly after the artist's return from Europe. It follows the traditional brown and green colour formulas he had acquired abroad; nevertheless it is a fine record of facts and well presented.

Plate II. WINTER-TRAVELLING IN DOG-SLEDS
Canvas 18 x 29

Courtesy of The Royal Ontario Museum

THE artist travelled with a happy bridal party from Edmonton House to Fort Pitt, a distance of 200 miles. It was mid-January, the snow averaged three feet deep, the thermometer dropped to 47 below zero, and they were seven days en route. The party consisted of the bride and groom and nine men. They had three carioles and six sledges with four dogs to each, forming a long and picturesque cavalcade. All the dogs were gaudily decorated with bright-coloured saddle cloths, fringed and bedecked with bells and feathers in a most fantastic manner. During the trip they trusted entirely to their prowess as hunters for a supply of food, as was the custom of these early voyageurs, and Kane remarks that they killed seventeen buffalo on the journey for feeding themselves and the dogs. Despite the extreme cold, Kane made sufficient drawings and notes to complete this interesting record of winter travel.

Plate III. INDIANS WEAVING
Canvas 18 x 29

Courtesy of The Royal Ontario Museum

THIS picture is credited with being the most authentic document in existence on early Indian weaving. It shows with minuteness the actual method of spinning the yarn and the primitive loom in operation. The blankets were woven from mountain goats' wool mixed with dogs' hair; much of the wool used was gathered from the low branches of trees which had caught tufts of the wool from passing sheep. The sketch was made among the Flatheads of the West Coast, and the seated figure at the right would probably be a slave taken from a round-head tribe. The whole canvas is full of informative material about the life of the Indian, and is an excellent example of Kane's ability to grapple with problems of complicated drawing enveloped in the dim light of an interior.

PLATE IV. WHITE MUD PORTAGE, WINNIPEG RIVER. Canvas $17\frac{1}{2}$ x $28\frac{3}{4}$

Courtesy of The National Gallery, Ottawa

PAUL KANE was travelling with four canoes manned by thirty men, twenty-seven of whom were Indians. The party, however, was followed by a whole fleet of light canoes containing the Indian wives and children. Two of the canoes contained brides who had been married in the morning. On this portion of his homeward trip, Kane was again "dreadfully tormented with mosquitoes," and their provisions were greatly depleted by the party of women and children following who always came up to their encampment for food. The smaller canoes with the Indian squaws and children are seen approaching the Portage and carrying their canoes across.

Plate V. INDIANS PLAYING AT ALCOLOH
Canvas 18 x 29

Courtesy of The National Gallery, Ottawa

THIS is a sketch of the Shualpee Indians at play. The game consists in rolling an iron ring, three inches in diameter, with six beads of different colours bound by strings to the inner edge of the circle. The ring is rolled along the ground until it strikes a stick intercepting it. The two competitors who follow it each throw a dart under it at the moment of its rebound, the object being that the ring should, in falling, rest upon the dart. The beads in closest proximity to the dart count towards the game according to their colour. This game was played by all the Indians on the Columbia River.

Plate VI. CAW-WACHAM
Canvas 25 x 30

Courtesy of The Royal Ontario Museum

THE custom of flattening the head was indulged in by a number of West Coast tribes. The process is as follows: The Indian mothers all carry their infants strapped to a piece of board covered with moss or loose fibres of cedar bark. In order to flatten the head, they place a pad on the infant's forehead, on the top of which is laid a piece of smooth bark bound on by leather bands passing through holes in the board on either side and kept lightly pressed across the front of the head. This process commences at birth and continues for eight to twelve months by which time the head has lost its natural shape and has acquired a most unnatural wedge-like appearance.

Flat-heads looked with contempt even upon the white men for having round heads and took their slaves from among round-head Indians. Nearly half of Kane's pictures are careful and well-painted portraits of Indians.

This picture of a flat-head woman and baby is typical of his splendid craftsmanship and carefully considered detail of costume and accessory. Quite apart from its value as a "record," the canvas has a certain formal dignity in composition.

Plate VII. BLACKFOOT CHIEF AND SUBORDINATES. Canvas 25 x 30

Courtesy of The National Gallery, Ottawa

A GROUP of Indian Chiefs who were heading a large party of warriors against the Crees and Assiniboines. Paul Kane met them on the prairies as they were moving towards Edmonton. His magical "powers" of making pictures deeply impressed the Indians and he was solemnly placed in the best position at a medicine dance that he might work his incantations (that is to say, make a sketch) for their success in an anticipated battle the next day. The centre figure is Big Snake, a chief with a notorious reputation among the whites and feared by his own people. Mis-Ke-Me-Kin, The Iron Collar, a Blood Indian Chief with his face painted red is on the right. On the extreme left is a chief called Little Horn, with a buffalo robe draped around him, and between him and Big Snake is Wah-nis-stow, The White Buffalo, a principal chief of the Sar-cee tribe. In the background stand two less important chiefs; one of them has the lower half of his face painted black, being in half mourning for some friend.

In this canvas, as in all Kane's portraits, infinite care was taken to present accurately all details of costume and ornaments, which adds to the historic value of his work.

PLATE VIII. FORT GARRY—VIEW OF RED RIVER SETTLEMENT. Canvas 18 x 29

Courtesy of The Royal Ontario Museum

WHEN Kane visited Fort Garry the settlement stretched along the banks of the river about fifty miles and extended back from the water, according to the original grant from the Indians, as far as a person can distinguish a man from a horse on a clear day. The settlers numbered about three thousand, who lived in a land of plenty as far as mere food and clothing was concerned. There was an abundance of game, buffalo and fish close at hand and the land was fertile. As far as the luxuries of life were concerned, they were almost unattainable, as there was no market nearer than St. Paul on the Mississippi River, a distance of nearly 700 miles over an unbroken and trackless prairie.

The scene as represented by Kane has an air of rural tranquility. On the opposite side of the river stands famed St. Boniface, the Catholic Cathedral, with its glittering tin covered spires seen for miles across the prairies.

> The bells of the Roman Mission
> That call from their turrets twain,
> To the boatman on the river,
> To the hunter on the plain.

Although Whittier had never seen the West, the romantic situation of the Church appealed to his imagination and he wrote "The Red River Voyageur" from which the above is quoted. Two or three miles further down there was a Protestant church, and on the horizon at the right is seen the sturdily-built Hudson Bay trading post. The picture is carefully painted, subtle in tone and colour, and is an important record of bygone days.

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